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Stage costume and the representation of history in Britain, 1776-1834

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Contents

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Declaration

I hereby declare that except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the contents of this thesis are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in these or any other universities, apart from pages 230-236 and 239-240, which incorporate and develop analyses first proposed in my Master's dissertation 'Picturesque History: James Robinson Planché and Historical Costume in the Early Nineteenth-century Theatre' (Ecole normale supérieure de Lyon, 2011).

This thesis is my own work and contains nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationships between stage costume and British historical culture in the period 1776-1834. Until the painstakingly researched antiquarian stagings of the mid-nineteenth century, the history of historical stage costume has typically been described in terms of a stereotyped 'Van Dyck dress'. Yet the period witnessed the expansion of antiquarianism and portrait print collecting, the development of the Picturesque and Neo-Gothic aesthetics, the success of historical novels and a general desire to know more about the habits and costumes of the past. This interdisciplinary analysis situates stage costume within the wider visual and historical culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Drawing on theatrical material related to the London theatres as well as paintings, engravings, book illustrations, shows and exhibitions, this study argues that the representation of historical stage costume in the visual arts reflects new ways of conceiving and depicting history, in which interest in the everyday life of past periods and a focus on the material and the visual were fundamental. My research suggests that historical costume in the theatre and its representation in theatrical portraiture played a role in a broader process that sought to define British art and identity.

The first chapter maps out advances in the knowledge of historical dress and explores how historical costume became a key feature in theatrical portraiture. The second chapter explores contemporary conceptions and uses of anachronism in relation to shifting notions of historical truth in the representation of dress in the arts. The third chapter demonstrates how costume was used to create visual representations of historical continuity, a process that signalled new conceptions of historiography. The following three chapters focus on depictions of the costume of different periods. They suggest that representations of historical dress in the theatre helped shape the period's historical imagination. A study of classical costume enables an examination of contemporary debates about authenticity, while reconstructions of Scottish dress and English medieval costume reflect prevalent aesthetic trends and thoughts about British identity and the responsibility of art and the theatre in teaching national history. The final chapter considers representations of historical figures beyond the theatre: an examination of portraits in extra-illustrated books and of tinselled toy theatre sheets demonstrates novel ways of engaging with history that evince a new concern with the materiality of stage costume and effected a theatricalisation of the past.

Table of Illustrations

Introduction

Having attempted, to no avail, to persuade the managers of the London patent theatres to follow his advice on costume and scenery, draughtsman and antiquarian John Carter set out on a journalistic crusade to convince the public of the necessity of 'costumic' accuracy in the staging of British history. Between 1799 and 1802, Carter published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a series of *Critiques* in which he dissected such productions as purported to be accurate, detailing the anachronisms, errors and inconsistencies of the staging. Signed 'An artist and an antiquary', the *Critiques* were subtitled *Of the Impropriety of Theatrical Representations, as far as they relate to the Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations, when brought forward as illustrative of the Ancient History of this Country.*[1]

Carter was (and still is) mostly known as a draughtsman for the Society of Antiquaries (of which he became a member) and as a stout proponent of the Gothic style.[2] But he also had a keen interest in music and the theatre, especially as regarded the accuracy of set and costume. He even wrote and set to music two historical operas which, according to contemporaries, he exhibited in a kind of miniature theatre with scenery and figures which he designed himself.[3] Carter viewed the stage as 'the more immediate source of information to all degrees of people'.[4] It was therefore a public duty to stage historical plays, and especially Shakespeare's, with as much antiquarian accuracy as possible – a matter of public instruction as well as respect for 'the great characters of our ancestors'.[5]

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[1] Nine *Critiques* appeared between 1799 and 1802. In 1808, Carter also published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a long letter of 'Hints to the Managers of Covent Garden Theatre', in which he used a similar method to that employed in the *Critiques*. The identification of Carter as the author of these texts was made in the same periodical, 94:1 (May 1824), p.387.

[2] See J. Mordaunt Crook, *John Carter and the Mind of the Gothic Revival* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1995) and Bernard Nurse and J. Mordaunt Crook, 'John Carter, FSA (1748-1817): "The Ingenious, and Very Accurate Draughtsman"', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 91 (2011), pp.211–252. Over twenty years, from 1797 to 1817, Carter wrote about 380 articles for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, most of them on architectural topics (J. Mordaunt Crook, 'Carter, John (1748–1817)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/4791 [accessed 6 September 2016].

[3] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 87:2 (October 1817), pp.363-366, p.365; 'On dramatic costume', 95:1 (January 1825), pp.3-4, p.3.

[4] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 72:1 (March 1802), p.231.

[5] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 69:1 (February 1799), pp.113-14.

In the fourth *Critique*, Carter conjured up an image of himself as a medieval champion, defending 'the honour of our ancient history against the theatrical despoilers of its fair truth and honour' and attacking the 'usurpers of Antiquity's just rights' along with

> . . . their dramatic strongholds, which have too long held in 'durance vile' the eyes, ears, and understandings, of the frequenters of our theatres, blinded, stunned, and perverted, by their auxiliary forces, the painters, taylors, and machinists, who, with adamantine chains, have bounded them in a senseless charm to give eternal applause to whatever moonstruck ideas they may pass off as the antient costume of this country.[6]

Carter occasionally did justice to the talents of set painters in the representation of existing medieval buildings, although he was rarely happy with the way such sets were used in the productions. Carter's attitude is an extreme example of an antiquarian's intolerance towards any form of deviation from archaeological truth, and his articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine* abound with sarcasm. Yet his diatribes against inaccurate staging reflect fundamental issues in the historical culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. Highlighting the central place of stage costume in the representation of the past and in the construction of a shared sense of historical and literary heritage, they display the conception of a national literary canon, a sense of reverence for English history and a concern for the role of theatre in the portrayal of the past. Whether historical accuracy was indeed necessary in the visual arts and in dramatic performance was an issue debated throughout the period, as this thesis will show. Furthermore, Carter's assumption of the role of a champion of historical veracity reveals the importance of the Middle Ages in the British historical imagination.

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[6] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 70:1 (April 1800), p.318. Original spellings have been retained throughout in quotations from contemporary sources and book titles, unless they were visibly introducing confusion.

To Carter's calls for punctilious antiquarianism, theatre managers opposed the 'prejudice' of the audience in favour of existing costuming practices, and the necessity to please spectators in the galleries. Yet it was precisely the last quarter of the eighteenth century that witnessed the first consistent efforts towards historical accuracy in theatrical costume, motivated by the desire to meet the demands of an audience attracted by visual spectacle, in which costume played a central part, and by an impetus for authenticity in the staging of historical drama. These two preoccupations were the result both of a form of historical consciousness which emerged in the early eighteenth century and was reinforced throughout the long eighteenth century, and of a taste for the picturesque. They were also influenced by neo-classical aesthetics in art and architecture, and by a nascent Romantic imagination which lay emphasis on the evocation of past environments in literature and in the visual arts. The performing arts responded to these aesthetic movements while adapting to the expectations of spectators and the realities of a commercialised theatre.[7]

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This thesis proposes an examination of these aesthetic, historical and social changes, studied from the viewpoint of stage costume and its evolution towards greater authenticity and historical accuracy. Through an analysis of performers' clothing and its representations in the visual arts, it explores the relationship between the development of historical stage costume and the construction of historical thought and historical culture in Britain. The second half of the eighteenth century evinces a greater attention on the part of the public to historical

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[7] Theatre audiences in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been studied in Harry William Pedicord, *The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1954), Leo Hughes, *The Drama's Patrons; a Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971) and Frederick Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd: London Popular Theatre, 1780-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). On the commercialisation of culture in the eighteenth century, see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa, 1982), especially Plumb's chapter 'The Commercialisation of Leisure', pp.265-285, on the commercialisation of popular entertainment.

authenticity and archaeological accuracy in the representation of the past, whether on the stage or in history painting. These concerns were related, as will be examined below, to discourses on national history, canonical drama and a native school of art. Focusing on the period 1776-1834, this thesis argues that stage costume promoted and reflected views of the past that contributed to shape British art and identity.

Throughout this study, the precise analysis of costumes and productions is embedded within a discussion of the artistic and cultural contexts of eighteenth-century Britain. My research draws together and investigates material ranging from literature to painting to the performing arts and the press, while its backdrop is the history of ideas in Britain in the eighteenth century. The links between sets and costumes on the one hand, and the historical, aesthetic and cultural discourses that framed them on the other, enable us to explore the mutually enriching relationship between the theatre and other parts of the cultural world of eighteenth-century Britain. Inevitably, portraits of actors in roles from historical drama constitute the central part of the corpus of images and documents studied here. Where possible, paintings and prints of actors in costume are considered in relation to actual performances. However, these images are best approached not as documentary evidence of specific productions, but rather as expressions of the period's historical imagination and reflections of perceptions of the past, as represented through stage costume. In order to understand how this historical imagination was shaped, this analysis also investigates studies and depictions of historical dress in other contexts: antiquarian research on civil and military dress, together with popular accounts and descriptions of dress, allow us to build a more complex picture of the visual culture of the period.

Additionally, the thesis situates representations of historical stage costume within the exhibition culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, regarding its sites and practices as important components within the process of recreating historical dress (which is to say, the actual clothing worn by people in the past) in a period when costume did not belong to the theatre or the canvas exclusively. The relationships between theatre and the visual arts, on the one

hand,[8] and the growing taste for spectacle and exhibitions, on the other, suggest that historical costume is best approached as a common feature of a variety of pictorial and performing genres. As a consequence, the following chapters discuss displays and exhibitions that helped shape the period's historical culture through emphasis on historical costume and objects. The interdisciplinary nature of this inquiry sheds light on the reciprocal influences between the artistic, theatrical, historical and print cultures of the period and thereby enables us to widen our understanding of both theatrical culture and the history of art and ideas in Britain. It should be noted, however, that while the thesis examines the development of historical costume and its wider implications within British culture, the focus on theatrical culture is inevitably focused on London. New theatre plays often premiered in the metropolis, in particular at the two playhouses that were licensed to perform spoken drama: Drury Lane and Covent Garden.[9] Nonetheless, in order to reconstruct a fuller picture of the relationships between costume and perceptions of history, productions from other theatres are sometimes discussed here.[10] It has also proved relevant occasionally to refer to other dramatic genres, such as pantomimes and melodramas, in so far as they frequently relied on the evocation of a past – albeit an often fantasized one.

During the period under study, a concern with the appearance and apparel of the peoples of earlier historical eras became intrinsic to the recovery and aestheticisation of the past. Reflection on costume, defined as the element of clothing specific to a human group, was far from being a recent phenomenon in the eighteenth century. Early modern explorers in Africa and the Americas, for instance,

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[8] Iain Mackintosh has described the period 1730 to 1830 as a 'Golden Age' because 'the fine and theatre arts were then more closely intertwined than ever before or since' (Iain Mackintosh, 'Introduction', in Iain Mackintosh and Geoffrey Ashton, *The Georgian Playhouse: Actors, Artists, Audiences and Architecture, 1730-1830* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1975), n. pag.).

[9] In 1766 the Haymarket theatre obtained a patent to perform legitimate drama in the summer, when Covent Garden and Drury Lane were closed. On London theatres in the eighteenth century, see Allardyce Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audience in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Sybil Marion Rosenfeld (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980) and the introductions to each volume of George Winchester Stone et al., *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960).

[10] Non-patent theatres and their productions are discussed in Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

had responded to European societies' ethnographic desire to learn about newly-discovered human communities by depicting the natives' clothes in 'costume books'.[11] Some elements of these collections of dresses were used in the staging of masques and operas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were interesting to spectators because of their exoticism, their contrast to everyday clothing. Stage costumes for tragedies and comedies, however, were far from innovative. A performer's wardrobe in the mid-eighteenth century was very often made of clothes given by wealthy patrons or bought from second-hand shops. Many actors had to provide their own costumes and famous actors and actresses, who could afford a richer wardrobe, were often anxious to be seen wearing the latest fashions on stage. In the case of plays set in the Middle Ages or in Antiquity, only the main actors' costumes received special attention. Following the Restoration, chronological anteriority had begun to be indicated by emblematic items of 1630s fashion, such as ruffs or lace collars, producing an ensemble that has come to be referred to as 'Van Dyck dress', after the artist most closely associated with that period.

The clothes worn by actors on stage were not always perceived in relation to the part they were playing, and the role of the costume designer did not emerge until the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the eighteenth century saw changes in the perception of stage costume in relation to the characters it clothed. There developed a conception of stage costume proper, and an understanding of its potential to represent and stage the history of the nation. The desire to know about the life of earlier peoples was a fundamental component of British culture. Britons not only demonstrated a continuing interest in political history, as discussed below, but developed a new taste for social aspects of the past and for the life of lower-status figures, such as the women, artisans, criminals or physically deformed people listed in the last 'Classes' of James Granger's *Biographical History of England* (1769). Interest in dress made history tangible and accessible to a public that was much wider than the market for specialist publications on costumes and manners.

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[11] Michael Gaudio, 'The Truth in Clothing: The Costume Studies of John White and Lucas de Heere', in Kim Sloan, ed., *European Visions: American Voices* (London: British Museum Research Publication 172, 2009), pp.24-32, p.24.

Historical costume was therefore researched, reconstructed and used in performance, and its authentic character was used as a justification for the theatre. Indeed, as John Brewer notes, 'hostility to the stage was deeply embedded in the English Protestant consciousness' and the theatre often came under criticism on grounds of immorality: the nature of the stories represented, the songs and dances, combined to the reputation of actors – and especially actresses – as people of low morals made the theatre a seductive and dangerous place.[12] Managers who produced plays with authentic sets and costumes could claim to be teaching history to their audiences. In this respect, theatre in this period shared characteristics with a range of shows that were (or claimed to be) both instructive and visually appealing. My research on historical costume therefore includes analyses of the period's exhibition culture and situates the taste for costume within the popularity of shows, exhibitions and museums.[13]

In her study of theatrical dress in seventeenth-century France, Anne Verdier views stage costume as a 'lieu commun' – a 'common place' where tailor, actor and spectator meet, and an interface between the real and the fictional.[14] In line with the view outlined by Verdier, I propose to approach historical stage costume as a 'common place' for the creators of the garment, the actor, the spectator and the character, but above all as a space of physical and visual encounter with the past. In so far as my research is concerned with visual culture and the diffusion of representations of the past through historical costume, the sources I investigate are primarily theatrical portraits. My use of the term 'theatrical portrait' is here

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[12] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp.333-34. Some famous performers, such as Garrick, Sarah Siddons and her brother John Philip Kemble, sought to improve the respectability of the actor by adopting genteel habits. Antitheatrical prejudices were fought against, most notably by Leigh Hunt in his essay 'Enjoyments of the Theatre' (1830), in which he argued that drama could be a means of improving human morality (see Serena Baiesi and Fabio Liberto, 'Appendix - The Romantics' Debates on Theatre and Drama : A Selected Anthology', in Lilla Maria Crisafulli, and Cecilia Pietropoli, eds., *The Languages of Performance in British Romanticism* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), pp.243-326).
[13] The classic work on entertainments in London from 1600 to 1862 is Richard Daniel Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1978). A presentation of the 'museum industry' focusing on the early nineteenth century can be found in Patricia Falguières, 'Catlin, la peinture et l'"industrie du musée"', *Gradhiva*, 2006, pp.39-53.
[14] Anne Verdier, *Histoire et poétique de l'habit de théâtre en France au XVIIe siècle (1606-1680)* (Vijon: Lampsaque, 2006), p.189.

restricted to portraits of actors in character, depicted in a particular moment of the dramatic action.[15] Sadly, the very small number of surviving eighteenth-century stage costumes makes it difficult to compare pictorial documents with actual costumes, and there are no costume designs for London dramatic productions prior to James Robinson Planché's *Costume of Shakespeare's . . . King John, King Henry the Fourth, As You Like It, etc.* (1823-25).[16] The most precise account of the workings of a theatre wardrobe in the period under study is the diary of Mary Rein, who was wardrobe mistress at Drury Lane from 1794 to 1815 and is considered the first known English costumer. Rein's journal for the years 1803-04 survives and offers insight into the organisation and activities of a costume workshop, such as the employees' working conditions, the theatre's production schedule and its relationships with local suppliers and trades. Unfortunately, there is very little information about the nature of the costumes that passed through the hands of Rein and her assistants, as the journal does not describe garments in great detail.[17]

Nevertheless, in some cases, which are detailed in the chapters below, the portraits can be reliably associated with the costumes worn in specific productions. Most of the time, however, I do not consider the body of theatrical prints and paintings studied in this thesis to be accurate records of actual costumes, tangible creations of material worn on the stage by real people. Rather, I analyse them as pictorial expressions of historical consciousness: the portraits are re-presentations of actors and actresses as well as representations of historical figures. They reveal how historical characters were perceived through gestures, costumes and accessories. That is why it is fruitful, in the context of this study of historical

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[15] As Geoffrey Ashton notes, the term is sometimes used for 'portraits of actors and actresses out of costume' (*Pictures in the Garrick Club: A Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings, Watercolours and Sculpture* (London: Garrick Club, 1997), p.xxvi).

[16] The earliest extant British stage costume relevant to this study is Edmund Kean's outfit for Richard III (see chapter 7), at the Museum of London. The Victoria and Albert Museum holds a set of mid-eighteenth century Italian costumes that were created for private theatricals at Meleto Castle in Tuscany. It includes good examples of costumes in the 'Roman' style (see chapter 4) but otherwise no distinctively historical costumes.

[17] Susan Brown, 'Women's Production Skills in London's Theatres: Mary Rein's Costume Workshop', paper presented at the Society for Theatre Research conference 'Theatre in the Regency era: Plays, Performance, Practice 1795-1843', Downing College, University of Cambridge, 30 July 2016. The Folger Shakespeare Library also holds the journal of the Drury Lane prompter for the period 1812-1818, but it does not include very much information about the costuming either (I am indebted for this precision to Abbie Weinberg, of the Folger Shakespeare Library).

consciousness, to compare depictions of stage costume with representations of historical events and figures in history painting and in book illustration.

The term 'costume' is Italian in origin, which is sometimes indicated by the spelling 'costumè' in eighteenth-century texts. The word comes from the domain of painting, referring to the characteristics of a people, place or era, especially those that can be apprehended through sight, such as dress, architecture and objects – what we could now call 'local colour'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the theory of painting* (1715): 'Not only the Story, but . . . the Habits, Arms, Manners . . . and the like, must correspond. This is call'd the observing the Costume.'[18] The gradual use of the term in the field of theatre reflects significant developments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century staging: theatre became perceived as a visual as well as a verbal art. In the long eighteenth century, both Drury Lane and Covent Garden were rebuilt and enlarged several times. Many complained that the vastness of the new auditoria created visual and acoustic problems and detracted spectators from the actors and the play.[19] The enlarged Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres had become, in the words of playwright Richard Cumberland, 'theatres for spectators rather than playhouses for hearers . . . The splendor of the dresses, the ingenuity of the machinist and the rich display of dresses, aided by the captivating charms of the music, now in great degree supersede the labours of the poet.'[20] In view of these issues, it became important for managers to offer a visual spectacle to complement the traditional text-based performance. This was a great period for stage design, as innovations in lighting and in the mechanics of scenery created new opportunities for the staging of a variety of plays.[21] Garrick had improved lighting at Drury Lane by removing overhanging chandeliers and using wing- and footlights with reflectors. In 1817, the

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[18] Jonathan Richardson, *An essay on the theory of painting* (London, 1715), quoted in 'costume, n.' *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2016), www.oed.com [accessed 15 September 2016].
[19] Covent Garden was expanded in 1782 and again in the 1790s, and rebuilt after it burnt down in 1808 (this last auditorium had 2,800 seats and many private boxes). Drury Lane was redesigned in 1775 and completely rebuilt in 1791 (when it reopened in 1794, it could hold 36,000 spectators) and again after the fire of 1809 (Brewer (1997), pp.384-85).
[20] Quoted in Brewer (1997), p.385.
[21] See Sybil Marion Rosenfeld, *Georgian Scene Painters and Scene Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Lyceum Theatre became the first playhouse in England to be lit by gaslight,[22] and when Drury Lane followed suit the same year, a commentator reflected on the effects of the new lighting system on the perception of costume and scenery: '. . . it will serve to render the countenance, attitude, and costume of the performers, with the character of the scenery, so much more visible to the audience, and those circumstances must be deemed of the utmost importance by every one capable of appreciating the proper effect of dramatic representation.'[23] These technical innovations made actors, costumes and scenery more visible and encouraged managers to develop the pictorial aspects of their productions. As Pierre Frantz has noted, the notion of costume implied the unity of the production and spelled out new principles of harmony.[24] It also meant that costumes could be made from a greater range of materials: with better lighting, stage tailors could use darker colours and fabrics that do not reflect light, such as wool and cotton.[25]

It is sometimes difficult to establish the meaning given to the term 'costume' in eighteenth-century works: while it was sometimes used to refer exclusively to stage dresses or historical costume, it more generally designated the characteristic features of a civilisation or culture. Studying eighteenth-century 'costume' thus implies looking at manners and habits – another polysemic phrase, including both dress and customs. In my analysis of theatrical costume, I have not always found it relevant to try and distinguish too sharply between the various meanings of the term 'costume'. Indeed, the notion of the stage picture makes costume inseparable from other elements of the staging, such as scenery and props (referred to as 'decorations').[26] Moreover, criticisms of historical inconsistencies in staging were aimed at both sets and costumes. Nevertheless, this thesis takes stage costume as its focus because, as dress was then a recently developed field of antiquarian

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[22] Richard Pilbrow, *Stage Lighting Design: The Art, the Craft, the Life* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1997), pp.172-3.

[23] *Morning Chronicle*, 30 August 1817, p.3.

[24] Pierre Frantz, *L'Esthétique du tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998), pp.86 and 90.

[25] Gösta M. Bergman, *Lighting in the Theatre* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977), pp.204-5.

[26] The most relevant study of the notion of stage picture in the eighteenth century is in Pierre Frantz (1998). Although Frantz's study is concerned with French staging and theory, his discussion of 'costume' in eighteenth-century theatre is largely relevant to the British stage.

research, analyses of costume shed light on the evolutions of stage practice, the perception of history through objects and fabrics, and the way real or fictional historical characters were represented in a variety of media: on the stage, in the pictorial arts, in exhibition rooms, and in events such as masked balls and pageants. By the 1820s the word was regularly used with the more restricted meaning of 'dress', as exemplified in titles such as Planché's *History of British Costume*. Another sign of this contraction of meaning is the use of the plural to refer to stage dresses. For instance, playbills for Charles Kemble and Planché's production of *King John* in 1823 inform readers that 'the costumes are published'.[27]

This thesis proposes to show that the invention of stage costume took place at a time when Britain was reappraising its origins and attempting to comprehend and recreate its past through literature, painting, theatre and museums. One of the central concerns here is therefore the exploration of the deeper link between costume and national identity in the historical and cultural context of the period. As spectators like Carter expressed it, costume was perceived as an important means for representing classical as well as national history. Reconstructions of costume on the stage can therefore be interpreted as proposing specific visions of British history. As will be discussed in the chapters below, the period under scrutiny bears witness to a growing taste for the history of Britain and the various landscapes, cultures and traditions of the countries that made up the kingdom of Great Britain. Theatre auditoriums, with their organisation into boxes, pit and gallery, gave an ordered image of the nation in miniature. It is therefore important to investigate whether theatre could foster a sense of national identity through performances of historical drama in front of an audience who – although necessarily restricted to metropolitan dwellers who could afford the time and money spent at the theatre – was nevertheless symbolic of the public at large. Although the role of the theatre in the constitution of the public sphere has received critical attention, little attempt

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[27] The playbill for 24 November 1823 is reproduced in Evelyn B. Richmond, 'Historical Costuming: A Footnote', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 11 (1960), pp.233-34, plate between pp.232 and 233, from an original in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.

has been made to consider fully how stage costume relates to constructions of a collective British identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[28]

Moreover, this study situates discussions of the relationship between costume and British identity within the context of artistic discourses and projects relating to the development of a British school of painting. In order to encourage the production of 'great art' in Britain, and in emulation of the French and Italian schools, the Royal Academy of Arts was founded in 1768. In the discourses he addressed to Royal Academy students, its first president Joshua Reynolds encouraged the study of the old masters, in particular the painters of Renaissance Rome and Florence, and restated the prevailing hierarchy of genres, the highest of which was history painting, which Reynolds called the 'grand style' or 'grand manner' of painting. Yet artists soon challenged the hierarchy of genres, and particularly the generic distinction between portraiture and history painting. By portraying sitters in various allegorical guises, for instance, Joshua Reynolds himself was borrowing the visual codes of the grand style with the aim of 'approaching [his subject] to a general idea'.[29] Edgar Wind has identified the conversation piece and the painting of exotic scenes as two fundamental antecedents to the new type of history painting in the eighteenth century, noting that the taste for the 'documentary painting of distant marvels' contributed to the 'revolution in stagecraft' that instituted scenic effect as a main feature of the performance.[30] The characteristics of both antecedents were united in the genre of theatrical portraiture, which emerged in the eighteenth century. The career of painter Johann Zoffany, for instance, illustrates these relationships, as it embraced all of these

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[28] See Brewer (1997), pp.351-423. Most studies of the emergence of 'the public' and the public sphere in the eighteenth century are indebted to Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). Most relevant for the purposes of this thesis are Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: 'The Body of the Public'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) and David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

[29] Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on art*, ed. by Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), Fourth Discourse, p.72.

[30] Edgar Wind, 'The Revolution of History Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1939, pp.116–27, pp.118-120.

genres: conversation pieces, exotic scenes and theatrical portraiture.[31] Portraits of actors in character may be considered as a means of blurring the generic boundaries between portraiture and history painting, thereby expanding the field of subjects considered appropriate to high art.[32]

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In the chapters that follow, stage costume and its representation in the visual arts are studied in the context of the development and evolution of historical consciousness in Britain and its link with the picturesque sensibility and the Romantic imagination in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The search for authenticity, be it on stage, on canvas or on paper, came first from a desire for coherence in the staging of plays set in the Middle Ages and in classical Antiquity. This concern was especially important for plays by Shakespeare, who in the eighteenth century became the 'national poet': the staging of his history plays, in particular, had to reflect Shakespeare's genius and England's glorious history.[33] A similar attitude was found in historical painting and book illustrations from the mid-eighteenth century, exemplified by such enterprises as Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery (opened 1789) and Thomas Lawrence's project to create a new genre of 'half-history painting' – a genre the painter illustrated by portraying the tragic actor John Philip Kemble in roles from tragedies belonging to the canon of the time.[34] Interest in history is characteristic of the post-Glorious Revolution period, during which Britain's past was rediscovered thanks to the work of antiquarians and artists.

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[31] Zoffany's contributions to each of these genres are discussed in Martin Postle, ed., *Johan Zoffany RA: Society Observed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

[32] The major studies of theatrical portraiture in the eighteenth century are by Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter, 1991) and 'Thomas Lawrence's "Half-History" Portraits and the Politics of Theatre', *Art History*, 14 (1991), pp.225-49, and Maria Ines Aliverti, *La Naissance de l'acteur moderne: l'acteur et son portrait au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

[33] On interpretations and reinventions of Shakespeare in the period under study, see Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) and Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) and *The Romantics on Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 1997).

[34] See West (1991b), pp.225-49.

As a consequence, eighteenth-century Britain viewed itself as part of a historical continuum that could be traced back in the cultural imagination to the Anglo-Saxon era. As will be discussed below, this attitude can be placed in the context of the writings of Whig historians, which justified William of Orange's accession by showing it to be consistent with Britain's historical trajectory. The rejection of a Catholic monarch in favour of a Protestant one was explained through recourse to the Reformation as a foundational event in English history. Furthermore, the new constitution was likened to the Saxon law in use in England before the Norman Conquest.

The growth of historical awareness in the eighteenth century was precipitated by a series of events that prompted Britons to look to the past. The beginning of excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii (in 1737 and 1748 respectively) stimulated European-wide interest in and exploration of the remains of classical Antiquity.[35] This was not only the province of historians and antiquarians; members of both the aristocratic and middle classes appropriated classical notions of morality, virtue and liberty, encouraged by the prevalence of classical education in Britain.[36] The presence of Herculaneum in eighteenth-century culture as the epitome of past splendour can be discerned in Tate Wilkinson's memoirs, in which the manager of York's Theatre Royal refers to 'an old wardrobe I found in the ruins of my theatrical Herculaneum, and which was of great antiquity, and had appertained to Roman emperors, kings, &c.'[37] The classical model was particularly suited to a nation with an imperial destiny: the emphasis on classical history and literature in public schools provided young Britons with a wealth of inspiring examples relating to war, empire and sacrifice for the state, while the fact

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[35] The involvement of British aristocrats, artists and dealers in archaeological pursuits and excavations in Greece and in Italy are discussed in Ilaria Bignamini et al., *Digging and Dealing in Eighteenth-Century Rome*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasures of Antiquity: British Collectors of Greece and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[36] Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.60-62; Viccy Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). See also Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[37] Tate Wilkinson, *Memoirs of His Own Life*, 4 vols (York, 1790), vol.I, p.86, quoted in A. M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p.388.

that the societies they admired were extinct illuminated, by contrast, the superiority and power of the British Empire.[38] History, following the teachings of Greek historians such as Polybius, was viewed as 'the best school where a man may learn how to conduct himself in all the situations of life'.[39] Although the classical exemplum remained valid throughout the long eighteenth century, Britons also began to look to more recent and local history as a model for political action and artistic productions in various domains, such as architecture and set design in the theatre. The political events and aesthetic sensibilities discussed in the next paragraphs brought English medieval history to the attention of the public through renewed interest in historical writings, architecture, monuments and other artefacts.

Furthermore, to the prevailing conception of the past as a source of moral examples (or warnings) was progressively added an awareness that the past could prove to be of relevance to the present.[40] The sense of rupture created by the revolutions of the seventeenth century and their aftermaths triggered a desire to turn to the past to assert the continual character of certain institutions. Economic and political changes in eighteenth-century Europe, most importantly the French Revolution and subsequent Empire, prompted many to look at what had been lost in the transformations these events caused. A number of political events in the long eighteenth century thus fostered enquiries into English history. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Hanoverian succession in 1714 had established Protestantism and liberty, enshrined in the Constitution, as defining characteristics of British identity and history. In the course of the eighteenth century, Whig historians and intellectuals invoked British history, and especially the medieval period, to justify those events. Although the phrase 'whig interpretation of history' is often associated with Herbert Butterfield's seminal work of 1931, Butterfield did not discuss eighteenth-century historians in detail.[41] Hugh Trevor-Roper identified Paul de Rapin-Thoyras' *Histoire d'Angleterre* (1823) as 'the classic whig history'.

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[38] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp.170-171.

[39] Polybius, quoted in Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London: Profile Books, 2002), p.12.

[40] Ibid., pp.10-13.

[41] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931).

Rapin argued that England owed its economic and political power in Europe to the fact that its free constitution had been preserved through the centuries, presenting England as a model of liberty and the Whigs as the guardians of this inheritance. In the 1750s, however, David Hume's *History of England* presented history as a narrative of social progress, a view which supplemented earlier ideas of an ancient legacy. Hume's philosophy of history was so influential that Whigs in the second half of the century attempted to write a new history, one that incorporated both Hume's historical philosophy and Whig politics. Charles James Fox and James Macintosh began to gather material, but it was only in the mid-nineteenth century, in Lord Macaulay's *History of England* (1849), that this new whig interpretation of history found its expression.[42]

As Katie Trumpener summarises, 'the eighteenth century's new awareness of period is due not only to the increasing pace of economic modernization and cultural change but also to the lasting sense of historical rupture caused by the political and religious developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.'[43] In the 1760s, antiquarianism became a widespread pastime. Many publications made the relics of the past increasingly present in the period's literary and visual culture. Classic works by French antiquarians such as Bernard de Montfaucon and Michel-François Dandré-Bardon[44] were staples of antiquarians' and connoisseurs' libraries in Britain, but they were now complemented by research on British monuments, artefacts and topography. William Stukeley, for example, was one of the first to draw attention to the necessity of preserving and studying archaeological remains, which he viewed as sources of information about the past. He pioneered the study of megalithic sites, publishing historical, archaeological and

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[42] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Introduction', in Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*, ed. by Hugh Trevor-Roper (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

[43] Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.149.

[44] Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (Paris, 1719-1724) and *Les Monumens de la monarchie françoise* (Paris, 1729-33) and Dandré-Bardon's *Costumes des anciens peuples* (Paris, 1772 and 1774) were regarded, not only in France but also in Britain, as important sources of information on archaeology and historical dress.

topographical accounts of Stonehenge, Avebury and other sites in the 1740s.[45] Antiquarian societies were founded in London (1707) and in Scotland (1780); the Society of Antiquaries of London was granted a Royal Charter in 1751 and charged with 'the encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries'.[46] It was not just objects that generated a heightened historical consciousness. In 1765, Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* awoke British readers to the ballads of the past. Five years previously, the unprecedented success of James MacPherson's Ossian poems had begun to shape a new awareness of Britain's Celtic origins and traditions and encouraged sympathetic identification with Celtic people and culture.[47] Verbal and visual works about the history and traditions of the Celtic peripheries offered an alternative national history that accorded well with the prevalent sensibilities of the age.

Finally, the rediscovery, representation and recreation of Britain's past can be linked to the various aesthetic movements of the eighteenth century. The first Neo-Gothic was the result of a new conception of history and of its remains.[48] Medieval ruins took on an aesthetic and symbolic value which reminded observers that they were part of the same history. Ruins in eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland were tangible evidence of the Reformation, of Elizabethan campaigns in

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[45] William Stukeley, *Stonehenge: A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (London, 1740); *Abury: A Temple of the British Druids, with Some Others, Described* (London, 1743).

[46] The Society of Antiquaries of London, Royal Charter, 1751, quoted in Isabelle Baudino, Jacques Carré and Frédéric Ogée, *Art et Nation : la fondation de la Royal Academy of Arts : 1768-1836* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004). For an account of the history and activities of the Society of Antiquaries of London, see Susan M. Pearce, *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1707-2007* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2007). Antiquarianism in Britain (including the several antiquarian societies) is discussed in Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon, 2004).

[47] Trumpener (1997), p.76.

[48] The revival of Gothic art and architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been studied as early as 1872 by Charles Eastlake (*A History of the Gothic Revival* (London: Longmans, Green and Co.)) and then by Kenneth Clark in 1928 (*The Gothic Revival, an Essay in the History of Taste* (London: Constable & Co.)). I have found especially useful Michael J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), Michel Baridon, *Le Gothique des Lumières* (Brionne: G. Monfort, 1991) and Michael Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Of interest are also Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale, 1981) and (although dealing mainly with the Victorian period) Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin, 2008).

Ireland, and of the reign of Cromwell. They were thus 'historically significant' and shared characteristics with archaeological artefacts: they were both signs of the destructive power of time, and of the 'power of culture to endure its vicissitudes'.[49] As places of 'transaction between past, present and future', ruins prompted reflections on time on a melancholy mode.[50] Ruins held an important place in the aesthetic category of the Picturesque, which was first formulated in relation to painting in the second half of the eighteenth-century, and is generally characterised by the visual harmony achieved through the interesting tension of different elements – ruins, rugged forms, natural or man-made components of landscape, etc.[51] The development of a Romantic sensibility also helped create an exotic and nostalgic vision of the past. As opposed to antiquarians like Bryan Faussett, Joseph Strutt or Sir John Soane, who strove to preserve the remains of the past, artists and architects in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries imagined and reconstructed the past. The interest in picturesque landscapes, ruins and the emotions they generated in the viewer found an expression in the theatre, where productions from the 1770s were strongly marked by the taste for Picturesque and Romantic reconstructions of the past, as will be discussed below.

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[49] Trumpener (1997), pp.149 and 28.

[50] Sabrina Ferri, 'Time in Ruins: Melancholy and Modernity in the Pre-Romantic Natural Picturesque', *Italian Studies*, 69 (2014), pp.204-30, p.205. The significance of ruins in eighteenth-century and Romantic aesthetics has been analysed, for instance, by Anne Janowitz in *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), Laurence Goldstein in *Ruins and Empire: The Evolution of a Theme in Augustan and Romantic Literature* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977) and Inger Sigrun Brodey, *Ruined by Design: Shaping Novels and Gardens in the Culture of Sensibility* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[51] Martin Price, 'The Picturesque Moment', in Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, eds., *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp.259-292, p.277. Scholarship on the Picturesque is extensive; most useful for my study have been Michael Charlesworth, 'The Ruined Abbey : Picturesque and Gothic Values', in Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.62-80; Michael Charlesworth, *The Gothic Revival, 1720-1870: Literary Sources & Documents*, 3 vols (Mountfield: Helm Information, 2002), vol.I.

Since the 1980s, a number of scholars have discussed the various processes and the cultural, social and political implications of representing the past in art and in writing. Art historian Sam Smiles, for instance, has analysed the various visual presentations of Britain as an antique land through a network of images likening the country to classical Greece and Rome, demonstrating the fundamental role of prints and other images in the creation of perceptions of Britain's pre-medieval past. Rosemary Mitchell's *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830-1870*, meanwhile, pioneered the study of history book illustrations.[52] Mitchell's survey begins in 1830 but includes the study of forms of history writing that developed in the eighteenth century.[53] By analysing the relationship between text and image in history textbooks and historical novels, Mitchell has highlighted the significance of book illustration in the creation and dissemination of visions of history, and shown that such images reflect successive of modes of historiography: from eighteenth-century didactic 'philosophical history' to 'Picturesque history' (characterised by the elicitation of empathy through dramatic scenes and authentic detail), which in turn was replaced by a manner of history writing that relied on scientific methods.

Exploring the relationships between the history of art and visual culture in the context of the growth of historical consciousness in the nineteenth century, Stephen Bann's seminal writings on the representation of history develop a number of concepts that have enabled me to enrich my analysis of the evocation of the past through stage costume.[54] Bann's distinction between metonymic and synecdochic ways of evoking the past is especially relevant to the study of costume, either as a material object on the stage or in a two-dimensional print or painting.[55] In addition,

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[52] Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000).

[53] Mitchell analyses, for instance, the evolutional of philosophical history towards picturesque history as well as the popularity of David Hume's and Sarah Trimmer's histories of England.

[54] Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); *The Inventions of History: Essays on the Representation of the Past* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), *Romanticism and the Rise of History*, Studies in Intellectual and Cultural History (New York: Maxwell Macmillan, 1995).

[55] Bann (1984), pp.85-87.

Mark Salber Phillips's approach to historical writing in the eighteenth century, which encompasses a variety of genres such as biography and antiquarian studies of customs and manners, provides a useful theoretical framework to investigate other forms of visual history such as stage costume, history painting and book illustration. By drawing attention to other modes of historical writings than histories written on the classical model, and by highlighting the significance of accounts of the dress and habits of past peoples, Phillips's study suggests that eighteenth-century historical culture can be considered from different fields of enquiry.[56] More recently, the relationship between fashionable dress and perceptions of history has been explored by Timothy Campbell in *Historical Style: Fashion and the New Mode of History, 1740-1830*.[57] Campbell argues that the formation of historical thought in eighteenth-century Britain was partly determined by fashion, as the cyclical nature of fashion and the type of clothing each trend left behind helped shape perceptions of periodisation and history. His research establishes dress as a textual and visual archive, from the point of view of the twenty-first-century historian, to study larger aspects of the history of ideas of a given period.

In its focus on theatrical portraiture, the present study is greatly indebted to Shearer West's *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble*, which opened new perspectives on the genre. West has analysed the ways in which images of tragic actors and actresses were constructed from a combination of acting and artistic principles. Examining the appropriation of art theory in theatre criticism and biography and the interrelationships between the 'grand style' promoted by the Royal Academy and the style of acting that developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, West concludes that actors were constituted as aesthetic objects endowed with a moral function similar to that of history painting.[58] She shows at the same time that theatrical portraits, whose aim was to *suggest* performances rather than record them, were also marketable commodities, which 'exploit[ed] the fame of the actor and the topicality of his latest

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[56] Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[57] Timothy Campbell, *Historical Style: Fashion and the New Mode of History, 1740-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[58] West (1991a), pp.100-113.

performance in an irresistible combination'.[59] An acknowledgement of this twofold dimension of the theatrical portrait underlies several of the analyses in the chapters below. Additionally, Anne Hollander's conception of clothes as visual art involved in image-making and participating in the creation of visual fictions also provides a helpful methodological basis to approach the study of stage costume on the stage and in art.[60] Finally, this thesis draws upon the valuable primary material established in two catalogues of theatrical portraits: Geoffrey Ashton's catalogue of the collections of the Garrick Club and Kalman A. Burnim and Philip. H. Highfill's record of the portraits of actors in characters published by John Bell.[61]

The scholarship alluded to here has collectively drawn attention to a body of texts and images traditionally set aside in favour of professional histories and history painting. They demonstrate that perceptions of history and historical figures rely on images constructed through modes of representation that made use of existing depictions of the past as well as of a network of aesthetic discourses on art and theatre. However, despite obvious reciprocal influences between the stage, the canvas and the worlds of fashion, and Campbell's demonstration of the relationship between clothing and historical consciousness in the long eighteenth century, little attention has hitherto been paid to perceptions of historical costume on the stage, except to comment upon its inconsistencies and anachronisms, or to chart its progress towards more accuracy and realism, in particular through the efforts of Kemble and Planché.[62] There is as yet no sustained analysis of stage costume in its relation to the historical imagination and visual culture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is the issue which this thesis proposes to address, extending the methodologies employed by West, Smiles and Campbell to the specific domain of historical costume as it was used on the eighteenth- and

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[59] Ibid., p.28.

[60] Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (New York: Avon, 1980).

[61] Geoffrey Ashton, *Pictures in the Garrick Club* (London: Garrick Club, 1997); Kalman A. Burnim and Philip H. Highfill, *John Bell, Patron of British Theatrical Portraiture: A Catalog of the Theatrical Portraits in His Editions of Bell's Shakespeare and Bell's British Theatre* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998).

[62] See for instance Paul Reinhardt, 'The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880)', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 20 (1968), pp.524-44 and Wilhelm Kopp, *Das Tragödienkostüm von Betterton bis Kemble in seiner Entwicklung zur historischen Treue (1660-1817)* (Bonn: L. Neuendorff, 1929).

nineteenth-century stage and depicted in portraits of actors in character. It opens new perspectives on historical stage costume and its place in the visual and historical culture of the period 1776-1834, and demonstrates that an in-depth study of costume and its depictions enables us to approach many fundamental issues of the period regarding the past, its representation in text and image, and its role in British culture and identity in the long eighteenth century.

Scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain have analysed from various perspectives the notion of British national identity, sometimes referred to as 'Britishness'. For historians such as Linda Colley, national identity rests on institutions: monarchy, Protestantism, Empire.[63] According to Colley, the British nation was shaped in the eighteenth century through opposition to the European Catholic and absolute monarchies, and by fears of those countries' political and cultural influence. Colley's oppositional definition of Britishness helps us understand audience responses in a context where the national dramatic productions (with Shakespeare at their centre) were seen as being threatened by foreign imports: by Italian opera, for instance, and later by the wealth of dramatic pieces translated or largely adapted from French plays or from the German of Kotzebue.[64] However, the world of the theatre exemplifies the circulation of ideas and literature between eighteenth-century European countries. The research of French antiquarians, for instance, had long been admired in Britain, and was used in artistic productions. Moreover, the discovery or rediscovery of the Celtic peripheries in the eighteenth century created or drew a more complex and varied picture of the nation's landscapes, languages, history and traditions, so that it is necessary to qualify Colley's definition of Britishness with a more inclusive and inwardly-defining one. Keith Robbins, for example, has interpreted British identity in the nineteenth century as a homogeneous concept created by interactions and exchanges between English, Welsh and Scottish cultures.[65] Meanwhile, in his investigation of the role of history in the formation of national consciousness, Peter

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[63] Colley (2005).

[64] Brewer (1997), pp.366-371; Douglas Milburn, Jr., 'The Popular Reaction to German Drama in England at the End of the Eighteenth Century.', *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, 55 (1969), pp.149-162.

[65] Keith Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: Integration and Diversity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

Mandler observes that the conception of nationhood developed concurrently with the idea of history. The French Revolution, by mobilising a people ready to fight for the idea of nation awoke Europeans to the idea that each nation had its own path determined by its past. In the early nineteenth century, Mandler notes, claims for political enfranchisement were accompanied by calls for cultural enfranchisement too, 'a demand for acknowledgement of the people as a unified body with common traditions, common habits, a common history and a common future'.[66] In so far as historical plays on the stage offered the spectacle of a national past, it will be relevant, in the course of this analysis, to consider if and how representations of historical figures in costume promote or reflect this conception of the people as a unified body.

Benedict Anderson has defined nations as imagined political communities, in which national consciousness is based on an image of communion between individual members of a human group conceived 'as both inherently limited and sovereign', and whose past is perceived as immemorial.[67] Of particular interest in the context of this thesis is Anderson's emphasis on the importance of language as a way to create a sense of home and kinship, and on the role of the medium of print in the connection of individuals within a community. The eighteenth-century 'print revolution' made books and prints more easily available to buy, borrow or peruse.[68] The public's responses to reading about or watching their ancestors in printed plays, on the stage, or in the enormously popular novels of Walter Scott, demonstrate that a sense of inheritance was created by the literature and drama of the period. Furthermore, the long eighteenth century saw an increase in the circulation of representations of British history, through illustrations of historical scenes in book illustration and reproductions of history paintings and through the portrayal, in print or on canvas, of actors in historical characters. As John Brewer notes, prints from works of history and literature 'were the domestic equivalent of the larger engraving projects – Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, Thomas Macklin's Poets Gallery,

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[66] Mandler (2002), pp.13 and 20.
[67] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
[68] Brewer (1997), pp.170-187.

and Henry Fuseli's ill-fated Milton Gallery – which capitalized on the growing sense of a British national heritage, a history and culture whose recovery was important in shaping a sense of British identity.'[69] Drawing on Anderson's analysis of nations as imagined communities and his concern with the fundamental role of the visual in the representation of the past, this thesis investigates how representations of historical stage costume contributed to the formation of a national body of spectators of history.

'English' and 'British' were often used interchangeably in the period under study.[70] The terms 'British' and 'Britishness' are preferred here, because the theatrical and historical cultures explored in this thesis incorporate elements that were issued from Scotland, Wales and Ireland as well as England, and were in part shaped by the circulation of ideas and artists between the countries that formed the United Kingdom of Great Britain (after the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1707) and, after 1800, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The success of actor William Henry West Betty in 1803-04, whose portrayal of Norval in John Home's *Douglas* (1756) is discussed in chapter 5, offers an interesting example: here was an English actor who trained in Ireland, achieved star status in Ireland, Scotland and England, and was portrayed by Cornish artist John Opie in a role from a tragedy written by a Scottish minister. The fluidity of the terms 'English' and 'British' might obscure deliberate marketing strategies, for instance in collections of literary works: thus the title of John Bell's poetry anthology, *The Poets of Great Britain Complete From Chaucer to Churchill* (109 volumes, 1776-83) was perhaps a way to suggest he was improving on Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Most*

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[69] Ibid., p.463. These gallery projects are studied in Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), Sean Joseph Higgins, 'Thomas Macklin's Poets' Gallery. Consuming the Sister-Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century London' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2002) and Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Equally significant in shaping perceptions of British history was Robert Bowyer's Historic Gallery, discussed in Cynthia E. Roman, 'Pictures for Private Purses: Robert Bowyer's Historic Gallery and Illustrated Edition of David Hume's History of England' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1997).

[70] For instance in writings about a national school of painting, as Holger Hoock observes in *The King's Artists : The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), p.11.

Eminent English Poets (1779-81), and at the same time a technique to market the books to a nationwide public.

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The sixty-odd years between Garrick's retirement and the lavish historical productions of the early Victorian period have been referred to in a variety of ways by theatre historians.[71] The chronological boundaries used here correspond to what is often described as the Romantic age or period.[72] However, I do not primarily focus on costume as the expression or product of a Romantic sensibility or culture (which one could succinctly, if somewhat inadequately, characterise by a taste for the sublime and an emphasis on individuality and expressivity, in a period deeply influenced by American and European revolutionary changes),[73] even if it constitutes, as this thesis hopes to demonstrate, a central aspect of that period. I have therefore avoided referring to the period under study as 'Romantic', and the chronological boundaries for my research have been established instead by specific, key events in the historiography of costume.

In 1776, engraver and antiquarian Joseph Strutt published the third and final volume of *Þorða Angel-cynnan, or, A compleat view of the manners, customs, arms, habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England*. Strutt was among the first to publish illustrated accounts of English costume and his works inspired many subsequent

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[71] Linda Kelly entitled her biography of John Philip Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons 'the Kemble Era', while Joseph Donoghue referred to 'the age of Kean'. More recently, Celestine Woo has described the period from Garrick to Edmund Kean as 'Romantic', but Donald Roy and Victor Emeljanow use the phrase 'Romantic and revolutionary' to cover the period 1789-1860. See Linda Kelly, *The Kemble Era: John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons, and the London Stage* (London: Bodley Head, 1980); Joseph W. Donohue, *Theatre in the Age of Kean*, Drama and Theatre Studies (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975); Celestine Woo, *Romantic Actors and Bardolatry: Performing Shakespeare from Garrick to Kean* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Donald Roy and Victor Emeljanow, eds., *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). A recent conference of the Society for Theatre Research (July 2016) focused on theatre in the Regency era, a period it defined as starting in 1795 and ending with the Theatres Act of 1843, which relaxed the licensing regime in use since 1737 and ended the monopoly of the patent theatres.
[72] See for instance Iain McCalman, ed., *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[73] The various definitions proposed by scholars of Romanticism are surveyed in Frederick Burwick, *Romanticism: Keywords*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), pp.267-272.

historians, antiquarians and artists. The publication of *Þorða Angel-cynnan* coincided with the last performances of David Garrick, who was arguably the century's greatest stage celebrity and whose fame inspired a large number of portraits, both in and out of character. Until his retirement in 1776, Garrick, as an actor and manager, was responsible for a number of innovations that were central to the presentation of history on the stage: the more frequent use of 'Old English Dress' for historical characters, for instance. He also removed spectators from the stage and in 1771 engaged artist Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg as Drury Lane's principal set designer, two steps that effectively augmented the illusion of the play.[74] 1776 is also a significant date in the history of book publication and illustration in Britain, since the first volumes of *Bell's British Theatre* appeared that year. John Bell's serial publication of dramatic works in the repertory owed its success in great part to its illustrations: theatrical portraits and vignette scenes were sold with each issue, often engraved after artists who had trained at the Royal Academy and were well-versed in the conventions and potentials of portraiture and history painting.[75] 1776 therefore marks the beginning of a period of national interest in the theatre and its role in the representation of the past – a past whose details were becoming increasingly well-known thanks to research into costumes and habits.

The theatricalisation of social and political life is a phenomenon that intensified in the second part of the eighteenth century, particularly in Britain and in France.[76] The development of a historical consciousness and the attention given to stage costume led to numerous historical reconstructions outside the theatre:

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[74] Nancy J. Doran Hazelton, *Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Shakespearean Staging* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), pp.23-24. For a study of theories of illusion in eighteenth-century Europe, see Frederick Burwick, *Illusion and the Drama: Critical Theory of the Enlightenment and Romantic Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991). On Loutherbourg's work as a stage designer, see Sybil Rosenfeld, 'The Eidophusikon Illustrated', *Theatre Notebook*, 18:2 (1963), pp.52-54 and two unpublished dissertations: Rüdiger Joppien, 'Die Szenenbilder Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourgs; eine Untersuchung zu ihrer Stellung zwischen Malerei und Theater' (Cologne, 1972) and Ralph G. Allen, 'The Stage Spectacles of Philip James de Loutherbourg' (Yale University, 1972).

[75] The portraits in Bell's edition of plays are catalogued in Burnim and Highfill (1998).

[76] Throughout this study, I use the term 'theatricalisation' to refer to the assumption by non-dramatic works of qualities characteristic of the theatre (in text as well as performance). I restrict the term 'dramatisation' to the remediation of a text, event, account, painting, etc. into a theatrical play and/or performance: dramatisations of Walter Scott's novels, for instance, are studied in chapter 5.

pageants, fancy dress balls, historical ceremonies, etc. Some of these events are historically significant and provide fundamental chronological markers. For instance, George IV's crowning ceremony in 1819 included a procession whose participants wore Tudor and Stuart costumes. In 1822, the king wore a kilt when he made his entrance into Holyrood Palace, in what was the first visit to Scotland of a Hanoverian monarch. On the same occasion, Sir Walter Scott organised a procession whose distinctive element was the sporting of tartan, which had become a symbol of Scottish national identity and had been used frequently in the theatre since the late eighteenth century. The theatricalisation of such events enables us to relate the assertion of a national identity to the history and habits specific to a community and represented by costume. It is therefore particularly important to include the first decades of the nineteenth century within this analysis of representations of historical costume. The period under scrutiny concludes with the publication of James Robinson Planché's *History of British costume* in 1834. This work is both the first history devoted exclusively to British costume and, to borrow dress historian Aileen Ribeiro's phrase, one of 'the last great product[s] of a long antiquarian tradition.' It marks the end of a period of discovery of historical costume and the beginning of an era of large-scale historically accurate revivals in the theatre, national fascination with Gothic architecture, and re-enactments of the past in forms like pageants, masked balls and *tableaux vivants*. Examining the evolution of representations of historical dress and costume in the period 1776 to 1834 therefore allows us to see how perceptions of the past evolved in relation to aesthetic, cultural and political changes in Britain. The place of sentiment in literature and history, the expressions of the Picturesque and neo-classical tastes, the vogue of medievalism and perceptions of the British Empire, are only some of the significant issues of the period that can be investigated through a survey of costuming practices in the theatre and in art.

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This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first three set out to situate perceptions of historical costume on the stage within the cultural context of a growing historical awareness that found its expression in the desire to know the manners and customs of previous centuries. Historical dress thus became a point of access to the past as well as an aid to the learning of history and one of the focal points in a debate about the accurate depiction of the country's history.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of costuming practices at the beginning of the period under study and explores how historical costuming became essential to the presentation of dramatic characters. Although conventional historical costumes continued to be used, the period inherited David Garrick's reforms in the dressing of historical plays, and the increased attention to historical dress was demonstrated in the last quarter of the eighteenth century by the works of historians and antiquarians who sought to gather information on social aspects of the past. At the same time, the success of *Bell's British Theatre* helped spread visual representations of specific dramatic characters thanks to its engraved theatrical portraits. Those produced by James Roberts, one of the portrait-painters most frequently employed by Bell, evince a particular interest in the detail of stage costume. Although Roberts's costumes are often described as fanciful, they testify to the evolution towards a more precise representation of period costume, through a network of references to well-known portraits of historical figures.

The problems generated by the tension between dramatic costuming conventions and the new interest in historical dress are explored in more detail in chapter 2, which focuses on perceptions of and responses to anachronisms in stage costume. The late eighteenth century saw rising criticism of inconsistencies in the staging of plays set in the past, especially as many productions claimed to present accurate historical costumes. Interest in the customs and manners of the past had created expectations among those in the audience who had access to history books and antiquarian publications. Nevertheless, anachronism had its virtues: it was variously appreciated as a source of amusement and as a conceptual tool to bridge the gap between past and present while antiquarianism, on the contrary, could have adverse effects on the artistic integrity of performances. These sometimes

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conflicting views on anachronism explain why stereotypical Van Dyck and sixteenth-century outfits continued to hold the stage until the 1820s.

The main challenges to anachronistic stage costume were linked to a new perception of chronology, one that was shaped by the visual culture of the period. Chapter 3 demonstrates that representations of historical dress in prints, history books and publications on costume increasingly relied on comparisons and juxtapositions between periods, fostering a conception of historical continuity expressed visually through the depiction of changes in costume.

The next three chapters focus on specific London productions and related portraits of actors in character in order to analyse how the issues explored in the previous chapters were expressed in the stage costumes used to represent various historical periods. Among the many theatrical and artistic productions that took history as their subject, the plays and artworks discussed here have been chosen because they are indicative of the ways in which British artists and audiences engaged with the past through representations of costume. These case studies propose to investigate periods that occupied a significant place in British historical culture: Republican Rome, medieval and eighteenth-century Scotland, and medieval England. Although the plays studied here are now rarely read – let alone staged –, they were all well-known and part of the repertory of the period. The ways in which they were advertised, performed and published, and the visual works they inspired, enable us better to understand how stage costume related to perceptions of British history and identity.

I first study how evolutions of Roman costume strove to create the authenticity yearned for by antiquarians and enjoyed by audiences. An analysis of the set and costume of John Howard Payne's tragedy *Brutus* (Drury Lane, 1818) emphasises the relationships between the stage and the visual arts. The staging of *Brutus* was influenced by a history painting by French artist Guillaume Lethière depicting Brutus's condemnation of his sons to death, and the production found an afterlife in the life-size portrait of Edmund Kean in the title role by James Northcote. The links between the production, the paintings and other representations of Roman Antiquity demonstrate that historical stage costume was part of a large

network of images that aimed at making the past more directly accessible to modern audiences.

Chapter 5 focuses on representations of British identity through Scottish costume in historical plays set in Scotland. The widespread conception of the past as a 'foreign country'[77] endowed Scottish history with a twofold exoticism – in space as well as in time. Although Scottish history was not as widely read and illustrated as English history, Scottish culture captured Britain's historical and artistic imagination, even before the European- and society-wide success of Walter Scott's works. Dressing medieval characters from John Home's tragedy *Douglas* and from dramatisations of Walter Scott's poems and novels, for instance, meant endorsing certain ideas about Scotland and its place in British culture. Portraits of famous actors in these roles, such as Master Betty as Norval in *Douglas*, contributed to debates on British identity, its antiquity and its Celtic heritage.

The political events of the English Middle Ages were even more significant in defining British identity, as is explored in chapter 6. Eighteenth-century historians such as John Pinkerton suggested that national history, not just classical, was an essential part of the cultural and political identity of a state. They encouraged investigations of early and medieval English history, believing that this would give new impetus to patriotism and literature.[78] Moreover, modern spectators increasingly viewed themselves as the descendants of the medieval inhabitants of England. This sense of lineage combined with the idea that performances of historical drama were spectacles of visual history, and many among the public began to feel that it was a moral duty to demand that medieval costume and armour should be portrayed accurately. Respect for the political and cultural achievements of the past implied that representations of them should be as authentic as possible, and costume was one of the most immediate and relatable means to reach this goal. This chapter focuses on dramatisations of the figure of Edward the Black Prince and on Charles Kemble and James Robinson Planché's

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[77] According to David Lowenthal, in the late eighteenth century the past was conceived 'as a different realm… a congeries of foreign lands endowed with unique histories and personalities' (*The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.xvi).
[78] Smiles (1994), pp.8-9.

acclaimed antiquarian production of *King John* in 1823, analysing them in the context of the nation's growing interest in the political events of the Middle Ages as well as its costumes, armour and weapons. It examines why and how accurate historical dress became essential to the performances of national history offered by the theatre, and how it reflected ideas about the place of history in collective identity.

Finally, Chapter 7 investigates uses of history and historical costume in the context of what has been called the eighteenth-century 'culture of anthology'. My contention is that historical costume, as it was explored in text and image, exemplifies a gradual move from fragmentation to unity. On the one hand, the popularity of the format of the anecdote established a new channel for the circulation of information on historical dress. On the other, the insertion of documents depicting historical costumes in extra-illustrated book and the reconstruction of stage costume in tinsel prints, using similar materials to those used on stage, are processes that recreate unity out of discrete elements. They simultaneously contributed, like many of the artworks discussed in this thesis, to the theatricalisation of the past.

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As Fernand Braudel has remarked, 'the history of costume is less anecdotal than would appear. It touches on every issue – raw materials, production processes, manufacturing costs, cultural stability, fashion and social hierarchy.'[79] Braudel's comment highlights the necessity of mobilising a variety of disciplinary approaches in order to study dress history in a suitably rigorous manner. While sharing these interdisciplinary aims, this thesis does not purport to be a history of stage costume in the period 1776-1834. Although its starting point is indeed clothing worn on the stage, it considers costume not merely as it was made and worn, but also as it was perceived, described and represented in the visual arts, from the point of view of

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[79] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Structure of Everyday Life*, trans. by Siân Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.311.

the history of art and the history of ideas, in the context of the rise of historical awareness and imagination in Britain. The relationships between theatre, the arts, history and society have required an interdisciplinary investigation, which has highlighted the reciprocal influences between these fields. In taking this approach, this thesis extends the archive in the domain of the history of ideas and history of art through its study of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historical imagination from the point of view of stage costume and its representation in the arts.

Most of the theatrical material studied here relates to tragedies, but relevant plays from other genres, such as melodramas and pantomimes, periodically come into focus as well. This thesis does not discuss costume in opera or ballet. Although many theatre plays incorporated dancing and singing, and the world of the theatre and that of the opera often mixed[80] (for instance in 1791 when the Drury Lane company moved to the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket, for the duration of the building works of the new Drury Lane playhouses), approaches to costuming and staging in general were quite distinct. Theatres had wardrobe keepers, tailors and seamstresses (also called mantua-makers) but no costume designers as such, and the makers of the costumes were only very rarely credited on playbills. Ballet costumes were extremely codified, and the Italian opera in London had begun to employ costume designers much earlier than the theatres did.[81]

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[80] See Ian Woodfield, *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-Century London: The King's Theatre, Garrick and the Business of Performance*, Cambridge Studies in Opera (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[81] See Michael Burden, 'Stage and Costume Designers Working at the Italian Opera in London: The Evidence of the Librettos 1710-1801', *Theatre Notebook*, 65 (2011), pp.126–51. Discussions of early modern stage costume in masques, opera and ballet feature prominently in Anne Hollander's chapter on stage costume, although she also comments upon theatrical and cinematic costume. On opera and ballet in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Berta Joncus and Jeremy Barlow, eds., *'The Stage's Glory': John Rich, 1692-1761* (Newark : University of Delaware Press, 2011); Judith Milhous, Robert D. Hume et al., *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 and 2001); Edward J. Dent, *The Rise of Romantic Opera*, ed. by Winton Dean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Edward A. Langhans, 'The Children of Terpsichore', in Shirley Strum Kenny, ed., *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1984), pp.143-145; Edward Nye, *Mime, Music and Drama on the Eighteenth-Century Stage: The Ballet d'Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Although this thesis is about the historical imagination studied from the point of view of historical stage costume, historical dress also features largely in the analyses offered in the chapters delineated above. This is because, in order to assess the precise role played by the theatre and the arts, it is necessary to investigate the visual culture of the period and the various representations and interpretations of historical dress, even before this dress was adapted, or re-imagined, for the stage and in the images related to it.

Chapter 1

'With a large ruff, and all the costume of the times':

historical costume in the 1770s

William Hamilton's depiction of the signing of the preliminary articles of the 1783 Versailles peace treaties in Barnard's *New, Impartial and Complete History of England* offers a surprising depiction of a Spanish diplomat (Figure 1). These treaties were part of the Peace of Paris, which ended the American revolutionary wars: the preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain and France and Spain were signed by Alleyne Fitzherbert, Charles Gravier de Vergennes and the Count of Aranda on 20 January 1783 at Versailles. This was one of the most recent events covered by Barnard's *History*, which was published the same year. In the illustration, the English ambassador and the French minister plenipotentiary wear eighteenth-century suits, bag wigs and buckled shoes. In stark contrast, the third protagonist is a moustachioed man, dressed in a short doublet with pointed collar and cuffs, slashed breeches, a cape, and shoes with rosettes. The Spanish minister plenipotentiary is easily identified by his incongruous seventeenth-century dress. This type of outfit, consisting of narrow knee-breeches and a doublet with short skirts, sometimes with puffed and slashed sleeves, had been established as the Spanish national dress in 1623, when the king of Spain banned French fashion from his court – and was known in the theatre as 'the Spanish dress'.[1] By the eighteenth century, this costume and its female equivalent were established for Spanish and Italian characters on the British stage, and were an easy way to identify such figures.[2] Because these costumes were associated with the early seventeenth century, they were also sometimes used in historical plays.

Hamilton's representation of the signing of the articles of peace shows the persistence of the conception of the theatrical 'Spanish dress' as the national

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[1] James Laver, *Costume in the Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1964), p.99; Diana De Marly, *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940* (London: Batsford, 1982), p.54.

[2] Such as Don Pedro and Don John in the frontispiece to Rowe's 1709 edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (Laver (1964), p.99). The costume is also referred to as 'the Italian dress.'

costume of Spain. As a viewing aid, it makes the Spanish diplomat instantly recognisable among the men assembled in the room. But this is not the only effect of the costume: because it was perceived as historical, it reinforces the historically significant character of so recent an event as the signing of the treaties. And because it is a costume worn on stage, it endows the scene with a theatrical quality. The theatricalisation of the signing of the articles lends more gravity and visibility to the event: the signing is made more visually striking and is emphasized by the repoussoir furniture on the right hand side of the image. Hamilton's historical scenes for Barnard are not the most aesthetically accomplished of his works, but the image reflects the influence of theatrical practice on the representation of history and national identities.

Spanish dress was also popular in masquerades throughout the period: of the twenty-three masqueraders mentioned individually in a review of a private masked fête in 1819, five wore Spanish dresses.[3] Eighteenth-century portraits of actors in character show the prevalence of this type of dress for plays set in Spain or Italy, or locations associated with these countries, such as Illyria in *Twelfth Night* (present-day Albania) and Portugal in Susanna Centlivre's *The Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret* (Figure 2). In the course of the eighteenth century, the use of Spanish dress merged with two other costuming practices in art and the theatre, namely the use of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dress to denote various historical and moral qualities. This chapter seeks to delineate the evolution from indications of an 'indefinite past' to a more precise characterization of dramatic characters, including references to specific historical periods, through stage costume and its representation in theatrical portraits. It will first be necessary to give a brief overview of historical costume on the stage in the second half of the eighteenth century, before situating the growing concern for historical verisimilitude within the expanding field of antiquarianism and the interest in social aspects of the past. This will enable us to place innovations and responses to them

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[3] *Morning Chronicle*, 27 May 1819, p.2. Other popular types of fancy dress included historical and oriental costume (five and three guests respectively) as well as comic stage characters (three guests). On masquerade outfits, see Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730 to 1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture*, (New York: Garland Pub., 1984).

within the context of the period's theatrical, historical and visual culture. Finally, a study of James Roberts's theatrical portraits for John Bell's editions of British drama will provide a starting point to study evolutions towards a more precise representation of period costume, through a network of references to well-known portraits of historical figures – even when the general shapes of the conventional stage costumes remained unchanged.

Stage costume in the 1770s

At the beginning of the period under study, stage costume was referred to as 'dresses' and 'cloaths'. The term 'shapes' was also applied to describe full dress of a specific type, such as 'Roman shapes'. When the term 'costume' began to be used in the late eighteenth century, it was employed to encapsulate a variety of cultural characteristics pertaining to a nation or and era, including not only dress but also architecture and objects. The earliest use of 'costume' to mean 'the style of clothing, hairdressing, and personal adornment typical of a particular place, period, group, etc.' recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a caption from Samuel Johnson's 1775 *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, describing 'Dr. Johnson in his Hebridean Costume'. Despite this early instance, the use of the word in this sense did not become more widespread until the early nineteenth century, and it gradually took on an exclusively sartorial meaning.[4] By the 1830s, the term was used in antiquarian publications, James Robinson Planché's seminal *History of British Costume* appearing in 1834.

David Garrick, who became one of the managers of Drury Lane in 1747 and remained at this playhouse until his retirement in 1776, was concerned that his actors be dressed with greater accuracy, for he 'appreciated that the general public was attracted by the claim to authenticity in costume.'[5] As early as 1757, publisher Thomas Jefferys praised the changes made by Garrick's 'Genius and Judgement', describing as 'heterogeneous and absurd' the 'Mixtures of foreign and ancient

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[4] 'Costume, n.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [accessed 1 October 2016].
[5] De Marly (1982), p.52.

Modes, which formerly debased our Tragedies, by Representing a Roman general in a full bottomed Peruke, and the Sovereign of an Eastern empire in Trunk Hose.'[6] Garrick's main innovation in the domain of costume was the increased use of 'old English dress' in historical plays, a trend which was picked up by the rival Covent Garden theatre, so that a large number of plays were advertised at both theatres as 'dress'd in the Habits of the Times'.[7] Stage characters that had a strong historical status, such as Richard III and Henry VIII, were traditionally dressed in a sixteenth-century doublet and trunk hose.[8] The costume of Falstaff, another much-loved character who was strongly associated, thanks to Shakespeare, with the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, had to include so much padding that instead of the short trunk hose of the sixteenth-century pattern, which showed most of the actor's legs, Falstaff became clothed in the doublet and long breeches of the 1630s.[9] Richard III, Henry VIII and Falstaff retained this conventional costume (which was correct in the case of Henry VIII) as late as the 1830s. Spanish characters – and also villains and some historical figures – were dressed in a conventional costume called the Spanish or Italian dress. This was made up of a short close-fitting jacket worn with a short cloak and slashed knee-breeches, a ruff or falling collar and a plumed hat.[10] Other conventional costumes included Turkish dress, used for a variety of oriental or exotic roles, 'Old English dress', and classical Roman costume, the latter of which will be studied in more detail in the third chapter.

This generic approach to historical costume was modified over the years by the introduction of a new type of historical costume, linked to evolutions in portraiture. As will be discussed more precisely in the course of this chapter, the Rococo period had seen a move away from Roman costume as the preferred dress for portraits and favoured instead the style of the 1630s, which was perceived as

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[6] Thomas Jefferys, *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Antient and Modern. Particularly Old English Dresses. After the designs of Holbein, Vandyke, Hollar, and others. With an account of the authorities, from which the figures are taken; and some short historical remarks on the subject. To which are added the habits of the principal characters on the English stage.* (London, 1757-72), vol.I, p.xiii.

[7] Raymond J. Pentzell, 'Garrick's Costuming', *Theatre Survey*, 10 (1969), pp.18-42, pp.21-22.

[8] This is the costume worn by David Garrick in William Hogarth's 1745 portrait of Garrick as Richard III (Figure 152).

[9] De Marly (1982), pp.42-45 and p.46.

[10] Pentzell (1969), pp.19-20.

reflecting qualities of elegance, neatness and intimacy. Associated with the dress worn by Van Dyck's sitters, this costume featured details such as slashes and large collars with deep points, often trimmed with lace, which became known as Vandykes. It was perceived as the ideal dress for seventeenth-century plays, but was also used for a large number of historical characters, especially the protagonists of Shakespeare's history plays.[11]

This new costume, however, was modified to suit eighteenth-century tastes in fashion: the long, straight breeches were shortened into knee breeches, the high waists became normal waistlines and the sleeves, which were full and round in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, became narrower.[12] Charlotte Melmoth, portrayed as Queen Elizabeth by Daniel Dodd (Figure 3), thus wears close-fitting sleeves; the contemporary curved neckline is retained but the costume is given a historical look thanks to the addition of the high pointed collar. An attempt at rounder, slashed sleeves is visible in another, later portrait of the actress in the same role, although the pointed collar is absent (Figure 4). The similarities between the portraits, however, suggest that the royal status of the character was indicated by the small crown and the ermine trim of the dress, while the 'old-time' quality was connoted by either the collar or the slashed sleeves, and in both cases by the symmetrical rows of jewels down the front of the bodice.

Two qualifications must be made to this outline of costuming practices for historical characters. First of all, only lead performers were dressed with particular attention. Some were allowed to order their costumes from tailors external to the theatre; others paid a set sum to the manager to have their costumes made by the tailors and mantua-makers employed by the theatre. All performers were expected to provide the most common items such as shirts and breeches, stockings, and gloves. The remainder of the outfit could be supplied from the theatre wardrobes, or purchased new or second-hand, depending on the performer's financial resources. Minor actors and extras had to provide their own stage dress, or used garments from the theatre wardrobe. This situation persisted throughout the

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[11] De Marly (1982), p.52.

[12] Ibid. As De Marly notes, 'a revival is always a compromise between the past and the present.'

period: in 1827, Thomas Rede's *The Road to The Stage* listed 'Feathers, hats, ruffs, collars, boots, shoes, swords, belts, ornaments of every description, tight white pantaloons, fleshings, sandals, wigs, stockings, buckles, and breeches' among the indispensable items of wardrobe a performer should possess. A 'first tragedian' should furthermore own 'a star and hat ornament, and a blue garter, wanted in all our historical plays' as well as 'complete dresses for Hamlet, Richard and Macbeth and Rolla; and with them, and the stock, he may manage to dress a variety of characters'.[13] The roles mentioned were generally associated with four types of costume often used in the theatre: Van Dyck, sixteenth-century, Scottish and exotic or classical dress. Rede's list thus reflects both stage conventions and the practice of adapting outfits to suit a variety of characters. There was therefore very little visual unity in the appearance of the characters in the same performance, and London audiences had to wait for the revivals of John Philip Kemble for productions that evinced a concern for this. Secondly, women's stage dress, which often fell under the influence of fashion, was much more resistant to costume reform. A print entitled *The Tragic and Comic Muse crowning her Favorite Daughters* shows how fashionable dresses could be modified to suggest Van Dyck or Spanish costume (Figure 5). The image depicts four actresses from the 1770s in famous roles: Calista in Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (set in Genoa), Belvidera in Otway's *Venice Preserved*, Estefania in Fletcher's *Rule a Wife And Have a Wife* (set in Seville) and Clarinda in Benjamin Hoadly's *The Suspicious Husband*. On the whole, the poses and dresses are consistent with other depictions of these actresses in the same roles. The costumes of Italian and Spanish characters all incorporate elements from seventeenth century dress, such as slashes, pointed lace and asymmetrical strands of pearls. The print demonstrates how historicising details could be added to modern dress; in most cases they were probably removable decorations.

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[13] Leman Thomas Rede, *The Road to the Stage, Or, The Performer's Preceptor* (London: Joseph Smith, 1827), p.22.

Antiquarian costume books

As Pentzell has stressed, the costuming practices outlined above were dictated by theatrical convention rather than by ignorance of medieval and classical clothing, for by the last quarter of the century important works on costume had become available. Bernard de Montfaucon's *Monumens de la monarchie françoise* (1729-33) and Joseph Strutt's *Horda Angel-cynnan: Or, A Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England* (1774-6), for example, were both included in Garrick's library.[14] Montfaucon's history of the French monarchy was illustrated with full-length and bust portraits of monarchs and noblemen, as well as images taken from contemporary manuscripts and funeral monuments, while Strutt's study of English habits dealt with a variety of topics such as dress, arms and armour, marriages and burials, and sports and pastimes – with plates of figures and artefacts taken from original sources. The eighteenth century saw the development of interest in the 'dresses and habits' of past and exotic peoples. Antiquarians began to study the everyday life of people from the past, in the context of a widening of the objects of history that now encompassed the field of 'the social', as evinced in the topics studied and illustrated by Strutt.[15] This gradually influenced the theatre, where inconsistencies in costume and setting, were increasingly noticed and criticised by members of the audience (as will be detailed in chapter 2).

Early modern antiquarianism had its origins in the Renaissance, but in eighteenth-century Britain a series of factors led to the growth of antiquarianism as a means to recover the country's past. The interest in the customs and dress of past people derived from a new awareness of British history. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was the starting point for a wide-ranging reflection on the origins of the nation and the role of Protestantism in the British national identity.[16] This inspired an intensification of research into Britain's medieval past: historians and antiquarians

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[14] Pentzell (1969), p.20.

[15] See Phillips (2001) and Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[16] According to Linda Colley, Protestantism was a key factor in the constitution of British national identity in opposition to other European, Roman Catholic monarchies. See Colley (2005), pp.11-54.

studied not only the political events of the Middle Ages, but their research also focused on philology, literature, poetry and popular ballads, as well as the objects and customs of the past.[17] One of the ways in which the political changes effected by the Glorious Revolution were given historical legitimacy was to describe them as a return to the liberties enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxons before the Norman Conquest of 1066, which inaugurated, in this view, a period of cultural decay and political oppression by a foreign and Catholic power.[18] The myth of a 'Norman yoke' has been discussed by Christopher Hill, while Michel Baridon has studied the role of the 'political myth' created by the idealisation of the pre-conquest political system in the early development of the Neo-Gothic taste in Britain.[19] Saxon institutions, especially the mixed constitution whereby the monarch was elected by both the common people and the nobility, were seen as ideal, as opposed to the absolute power associated with contemporary Catholic rulers. It became common in political vocabulary to find references to 'Saxon' or 'Gothic' institutions, and Neo-Gothic buildings became the emblems of the Saxon liberties that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had restored. The rediscovery of the past encouraged by this view of history intensified after the Hanoverian succession in 1714. Rosemary Sweet, in her detailed survey of eighteenth-century antiquarianism, ascribes the renewed interest in Anglo-Saxon history and antiquities in that period to the sense of the shared origins of the new rulers and the native Britons.[20] Sweet stresses the importance of antiquarian studies of the Saxon period in establishing the legitimacy of the Church of England and in fostering a sense of nationhood. Thus the political events of the early eighteenth century generated new interest in pre-Conquest history. In the course of the century, this interest gradually widened and many antiquarians began

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[17] Thomas Preston Peardon, *The Transition in English Historical Writing, 1760-1830* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933). See also Alexander (2007), especially chapter 1: 'The Advent of the Goths: The Medieval in the 1760s' (pp.1-23).

[18] The tensions between Saxons and Normans are portrayed in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820), set in 1194. The happy ending of the novel hints at the resolution of these tensions through the reconciliation of Ivanhoe (a Saxon nobleman who decides to follow the Norman king Richard I) and his father, and the suggestion that the coarse Saxon way of life was refined by Norman customs, while the arrogance of the Normans became tempered by frequent contact and intermarriages.

[19] Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), pp.50-122; Baridon (1991).

[20] Sweet (2004), p.189

to study monuments and artefacts from later medieval periods. Studying history no longer meant investigating political history only. Antiquarians sought to elucidate other aspects of life in the past, such as costume, language and manners. By the late eighteenth century, this would come to inform the staging of historical plays.

Mark Salber Phillips has situated the eighteenth-century interest in manners and customs (a term which shares origins with the word 'costume') in the century's discourse of the social, a 'characteristically postclassical interpenetration of public and private life, which gave new meanings to both.'[21] According to Phillips, eighteenth-century historiography is characterised by its 'recentering of historical narrative'[22] to include sentiments and manners. The rather flexible phrase 'manners and customs' therefore epitomised the eighteenth century's concern for manners as a place of intersection between moral and philosophical or learned discourses.[23] The reorientation from political action to social issues and from action to experience gave rise to a variety of works of historical writing not usually considered by students of historiography, such as biographies and literary histories. Publications about manners and customs, including costume books, evoked 'the textures of life in another age' and fostered a new definition of history with society at its centre.[24]

Studying dress was part of this trend to supplement political history with facts relating to the everyday life of former centuries. When Joseph Strutt published his seminal *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* in 1796-99, there was already a long-established tradition of costume books in Europe, going back to François Desprez's 1562 *Recueil de la diversité des habits*. In an article on the costume studies of John White and Lucas de Heere, Michael Gaudio has argued that the depiction of dress in sixteenth-century costume books was a response to the ethnographic desire to know a certain human community: 'in the costume book, you are what you wear, a logic that opens up the world to a new

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[21] Phillips (2001), p.18.
[22] Ibid., p.263.
[23] Ibid., p.147.
[24] Ibid., p.20.

kind of order based on descriptive taxonomy.'[25] Early costume books therefore concentrated on contemporary dress – even when they include a few images of historical dress, as Aileen Ribeiro notes, 'there is no real sense of a history of costume.'[26] The eighteenth century saw the rise of the interest in historical costume, a corollary to a 'new patriotic interest in history', related to the rise of history painting, with its growing emphasis on accurate depiction of costume and setting, and the popularity of illustrated histories of England. [27] The antiquarians' research was brought to the public in a new type of costume book, one that presented a chronological view of the variations in the dress of a single nation. Some publications combined three approaches, such as Thomas Jefferys's *Collection of the dresses of different nations, antient and modern*, which included clothing organised by period and geographical area, historical figures, and a choice of protagonists from English plays. The full title of Jefferys's book, whose first volume appeared in 1757, is revealing: *A collection of the dresses of different nations, antient and modern: particularly old English dresses: after the designs of Holbein, Vandyke, Hollar, and others: with an account of the authorities, from which the figures are taken: and some short historical remarks on the subject: to which are added the habits of the principal characters on the English stage.* The title evinces an early concern for historical sources and reveals a link between painting, history and theatre.

As will be detailed in the sixth chapter of this thesis, the birth of costume histories, as opposed to mere costume books, can be traced to the early nineteenth century.[28] However, already in the eighteenth century, the reproduction of dress through the ages was perceived as part of the history of a people. This can be seen in the title of another publication by Strutt: *Horda Angel-cynnan: Or, a Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England* (three volumes, 1774-6). The title makes explicit the author's attempt to convey a

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[25] Gaudio (2009), p.24.
[26] Aileen Ribeiro, 'Antiquarian Attitudes—Some Early Studies in the History of Dress', *Costume*, 28 (1994), pp.60-70, p.69 (note 5).
[27] Ibid., pp.60-1.
[28] See Ribeiro (1994) and Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

comprehensive representation of the inhabitants of a particular country, using their language to emphasise their particular identity and culture. In this respect, the approach to costume is similar to that of earlier 'ethnographical' costume books, among which Vecellio's *Habiti antichi, et moderni di tutto il mondo* (1590) proved a valuable source of information for costume designers. The term 'habits' itself is particularly significant. It meant both one's external appearance or fashion, and the 'cultural habits', 'ways of life ingrained, at the deepest level, in one's behaviour.'[29] This is the term used by Strutt in his main antiquarian publications, *Dresses and Habits* and *A Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits &c. of the Inhabitants of England*. This implies that the costume studies are indicators of the culture of a particular time and place. As Gaudio concludes: ''Habits', then, is a word that conflates and synthesizes the related conceptions of a person's costume and his or her culture and morals.'

The most influential costume antiquarian of our period is without doubt Joseph Strutt, as indicated by the great number of subsequent paintings, engravings and costume designs that acknowledge a debt to his drawings from medieval manuscripts. Strutt began his series of publications on dress with *Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* in 1773, and then went on to study secular costume as well. His studies of 'dresses and habits' represent the sartorial side of the interest in 'manners and customs'. Strutt's works illustrate familiar themes of the history of manners, but what distinguishes them is the attention to visual evidence of the life of past peoples. An engraver by trade, as Phillip notes, Strutt appreciated the immediacy of images as a form of description, and made engravings a major component of his publications. The comments about the plates emphasised their accuracy and suggested the superiority of image over verbal description in the understanding of past habits.[30]

Both earlier and eighteenth-century costume books relied on a visual dimension; yet what the new costume books offered was a pictorial history of the

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[29] Gaudio (2009), p.28.

[30] Phillips (2001), pp.159-160. Phillips quotes a comment from Strutt's *Chronicle of England* (1778-79): Saxon agriculture, wrote Strutt, 'will be far better understood, by being represented to the eye as given by the Saxons themselves, than by the most elaborate description.'

evolution of dress in a certain country. This is suggested by the titles of two of Strutt's publications, *Horda Angel-cynnan: Or, a Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England* and *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (published by subscription in two volumes in 1796 and 1799). Strutt's works were abundantly illustrated with plates taken from original manuscripts, as Strutt believed the authenticity of the source material was primordial. The benefits of costume as a visual marker of history are summarised by Planché in the preface to his *History of British Costume* (1834):

> The historian, the novelist, the painter, and the actor, have discovered in attention to costume a new spring of information, and a fresh source of effect. Its study, embellished by picture and enlivened by anecdote, soon becomes interesting even to the young and careless reader; and at the same time that 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.[31]

Costume books were therefore perceived as visual histories as well as source books for artistic effect. Many theatrical productions of the early nineteenth century claimed to be dramatic forms of history thanks to their use of costume and setting. This was the case, for instance, of the melodrama *Robert the Bruce; or, the Battle of Bannockburn*, performed at the Royal Coburg Theatre in 1819. 'History', wrote a reviewer in the *Morning Chronicle*, '. . . is there elicited in the happiest manner. Its incidents and situations – its scenery, machinery, the costume of the dresses and decorations so peculiar to Scotia's land, are there characteristically given in a style of superior excellence.'[32] In the nineteenth century some antiquarian publications specialised in medieval and military costume, such as Charles Alfred Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (1817-32) and Samuel Rush Meyrick's *Critical*

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[31] James Robinson Planché, *History of British Costume* (London, 1834), pp.xi-xii.
[32] *Morning Chronicle*, 25 May 1819, p.4.

Enquiry into Ancient Armour (1824). Both works were abundantly used by theatre managers for revivals of historical plays in the nineteenth century.

The suggestion of history in theatrical portraiture: James Roberts's illustrations for John Bell

The remainder of this chapter focuses on perceptions of Van Dyck dress as historical dress in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and on the use of historicising details in the first series of portraits published by Bell in the 1770s. In the following analysis of James Roberts's theatrical miniatures, I hope to demonstrate that although historical stage costume was often stereotypical, artists could play with the period's conventions and visual references to create outfits that effectuated more complex characterisation.

Aileen Ribeiro has shown how elements of seventeenth-century dress were included in eighteenth-century female portraits. This was motivated by the desire to achieve a timeless and 'romantic' look, sometimes associated with certain masquerade costumes such as pastoral dresses, while retaining a fashionable appearance thanks to contemporary hairstyles and the general cut of the dresses. The style of dress from the 1630s, visible in portraits by Van Dyck and Lely, was taken up by Kneller and popularised by drapery painters, in particular Joseph van Aken.[33] Ribeiro has explained that the masquerade was the catalyst for the early eighteenth-century expansion of what she calls the 'fancy dress portrait'.[34] By the 1770s, a number of fancy dress details and historical features had moved from the portrait, the stage and the masked fête to make regular appearances in everyday wear.[35] According to Deborah Cherry and Jennifer Harris, the presence of costumes and gestures inspired by Van Dyck's portraits in works by Gainsborough corresponded to the desire of patrons whose wealth had been recently acquired to

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[33] Aileen Ribeiro, 'Some Evidence of the Influence of the Dress of the Seventeenth Century on Costume in Eighteenth-Century Female Portraiture', *The Burlington Magazine*, 119 (1977), pp.832 and 834-40.

[34] Aileen Ribeiro, '"Van Dyck in Check Trousers" at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh', *The Burlington Magazine*, 120 (1978), pp.556-59, p.556.

[35] Aileen Ribeiro (1977), p.840.

validate their status by being portrayed in a historicising way. Van Dyck dress thus lent not only elegance but also legitimacy to the *nouveau riches* sitters.[36] In the theatre, this style merged with the Spanish dress. Because of their similarities, Spanish dress and Van Dyck dress (the phrase used by theatre historians to refer to the stage costume based on 1630s fashion) eventually combined to become the standard historical costume. The general historical silhouette was that of the short Spanish suit, while the whole costume was adorned with a large number of slashes.[37] From portraits, Van Dyck dress moved to the stage and became the usual costume for historical heroes.[38]

The way the period referred to historical costume is rather generic. Accounts of masquerades as late as the 1810s mention a 'Miss Dickinson, in a rich Old English dress of black velvet, trimmed with point lace'[39] and 'a Lady of Ancient Times.'[40] Garrick referred to Van Dyck dress as 'Olde English',[41] but this was not the only type of costume to fall under the denomination: the term 'Old English' was applied to any type of period costume, from the Middle Ages to the reign of Charles I. However, it was sometimes used with precise reference to a specific reign. The masked fête described by the *Morning Chronicle* on 27 May 1819 was attended by a 'Mr. Ellis, in a superb old English dress of black velvet and gold, i.e. the costume in the reign of Queen Elizabeth', while at Almack's Masked and Fancy Dress Ball in July 1819 appeared 'Mrs. and Miss Simpson, in Old English dresses of the time of John. From the same Court came Mrs. and Miss Brook, Mrs. and the Misses Howard'.[42] Even if the medieval costumes are likely to have been rather generic, the comment suggests the ladies wore dresses that looked as if they were from the same period, which had the effect of inscribing the masqueraders into a shared medieval past, and even into the same political space: the court of King John.

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[36] Deborah Cherry and Jennifer Harris, 'Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and the Seventeenth-Century Past: Gainsborough and Van Dyck', *Art History*, 5 (1982), pp.287-309.
[37] De Marly (1982), p.54.
[38] Ibid., p.52.
[39] *Morning Chronicle*, 5 June 1813, p.3.
[40] *Morning Chronicle*, 27 May 1819, p.2.
[41] De Marly (1982), p.52.
[42] *Morning Chronicle,* 8 July 1819, p.3.

The conflation of past and present through costume is illustrated in chapter IX of Maria Edgeworth's novel *Belinda* (1801), which stages a game of chess between Clarence Hervey and a Spanish visitor. Their host, Lady Delacour, promises to give the winner a silver chess-man, as Queen Elizabeth once did to one of her courtiers as a mark of favour. She leaves the room, only to reappear 'dressed in the character of Queen Elizabeth, in which she had once appeared at a masquerade, with a large ruff, and all the costume of the times'. The winner, Harvey, immediately takes on the role of Sir Walter Raleigh to pay compliments to the queen. Lady Delacour's assumption of the role and the dress of Elizabeth has the two-fold effect of turning characters into historical figures (Harvey is thus referred to as 'the favoured courtier' and 'Sir Walter Raleigh') and her own room into a stage – for the rest of the company, who had first watched the game of chess, then formed the audience of the role-playing taking place between Harvey and Lady Delacour. Playing chess becomes playing history, and the narrator makes use of the language of theatrical criticism to describe the scene: 'The characters were well supported; both the actor and actress were highly animated, and seemed so fully possessed by their parts as to be insensible to the comments that were made upon the scene.'[43] The ruff is the most significant part of the costume and serves to anchor the scene in the Elizabethan past. It highlights the potential of costume to elicit and even re-enact the past, and also shows how a part of a garment was used synecdochically to evoke a whole era: a ruff for the reign of Elizabeth I, a Van Dyck collar for the seventeenth century – and other periods as well, as will be discussed below.

John Bell's edition of Shakespeare's *King John* is illustrated with a portrait of actress Ann Barry as Constance, after a drawing by young Royal Academy student James Roberts (Figure 6). Barry's costume, which is remarkable for its profusion of pearls and its huge overskirt, incorporates the pointedness of Van Dyck collars and cuffs into a pattern used at the hem of the skirt and as trimming at the top and bottom of the bodice. In his representation of Constance, Roberts trims the dress with what looks like a very long series of small slashes or of puffed sections of

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[43] Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda*, fourth edn. (London, 1821), pp.222-225.

fabric. This type of decoration was used on ladies' sleeves in the second half of the sixteenth century, as suggested by miniatures of Queen Elizabeth and other ladies from the period (Figure 7). It is not impossible that Roberts saw the portrait by Anthonis Mor in Horace Walpole's collection at Strawberry Hill which was then believed to depict Anne Stanhope, Duchess of Somerset (*c.*1510–1587). The Duchess's dress is decorated with a series of tiny slashes linked together on the bodice and shoulders, and small lines of round slashes on the sleeves. The portrait is mentioned in a list of 'curious portraits' not yet engraved, in the second edition (1775) of Granger's *Biographical History.*[44] It seems the first engraved version of that painting was made and published in 1795 by Silvester Harding in his *Biographical Mirrour* [*sic*] (Figure 8).[45] Barry's dress shows decorations that may or may not be actual slashing, but produce the same effect. Here Roberts makes use of a historical detail reinterpreted as a trimming motif on an eighteenth-century outfit. It is used on the bodice to create asymmetry, a characteristic of seventeenth-century dress that often appears in eighteenth-century 'Van Dyck' portraits.[46] It was also a recurrent feature in Roberts's tragedy costumes, such as Princess Catherine's dress in *Henry V* (Figure 9).

Between 1773 and 1797, Bell issued 178 volumes of British plays, each illustrated with a vignette scene and a portrait of a contemporary actor in character. The plays were published serially and their price was within the reach of middle-class customers: single plays could be bought for six pence, or volumes for two shillings and six pence each.[47] Cheap prices and illustrations account for the huge popularity of Bell's editions. For his first series of plays by Shakespeare, the portraits were drawn by James Roberts, Robert Dighton and Thomas Parkinson, who were

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[44] Vol. IV, p.373. The list was supplied by Walpole and is organised by reign.

[45] F. G. Waldron and Silvester Harding, *The Biographical Mirrour, Comprising a Series of Ancient and Modern English Portraits, of Eminent and Distinguished Persons, from Original Pictures and Drawings*, 3 vols (London, 1795-1810).

[46] Ribeiro notes that 'asymmetrical jewellery, mainly pearls' is one of the defining features of Van Dyck dress. 'Such jewellery is often worn diagonally and the asymmetrical nature of this kind of dress is enhanced by the use of scarves and loose floating draperies' (1977, p.834).

[47] The same plays were also available in higher quality editions, printed on royal paper and with 'first proof impressions' of the prints, for one shilling each or five shillings and three pence per volume; the small plays were printed on demy paper with 'rather fainter impressions of the prints' (advertisement in the *Morning Post*, 12 December 1777, p.1).

then relatively unknown artists.[48] James Roberts, who drew all of the female characters in Bell's edition of Shakespeare, also realised many of the portraits for the first edition of *Bell's British Theatre* (twenty-one volumes, 1776-78 and 1780-81). Roberts's portraits, as we have seen in his depiction of Constance, evince a mixture of eighteenth-century fashion, historicising elements and a good deal of sartorial fantasy. Scholars agree that the costumes in Roberts's drawings – and more generally in many of the portraits in Bell's editions – are often unreliable sources of information about the actual costumes worn on stage. Milhous remarks that 'decoration often appears more important to him than reportage.'[49] While the current stage practice was to modify existing costumes with removable decorations, much of Roberts's 'elaborate decoration is integral, not modifiable.' Furthermore, many of his actresses' skirts, with their elaborate layering and long trains, seem to bear 'no relation to known dress-making practice.'[50] However, Roberts's sense of detail is fascinating and shows how much he was concerned with the visual effect of the costume.

The following pages will show that historical characterisation was at the core of Roberts's theatrical portraiture and was achieved through a system of emblems and allusions to historical figures whose images were widely available to the public through reproductive prints. If he sometimes employed the generic Van Dyck costume traditionally in use in the theatres of his time, Roberts also made more specific references to decorative patterns of Tudor fashion in order to deepen the historical characterisation of some of the roles, in some instances leading to the conflation of theatrical character and historical figure.

Newspaper advertisements for *Bell's British Theatre* in 1777 specified that the publication's portraits would offer a 'lively likeness' of the performers and a

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[48] West (1991a), p.52.

[49] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'The British Library Panizzi Lectures 2011: The Publication of Plays in Eighteenth Century England: Playwrights, Publishers, and the Market; Lecture III: Publishers, Collections, Illustrations' <http://www.bl.uk/podcasts/panizzi_lecture3_text_2011.pdf> [accessed 12 March 2016], p.31.

[50] Milhous and Hume, p.31. According to Milhous and Hume, 'Roberts indulged his artistic license'. On Samuel De Wilde's depictions of actors in roles they did not play, Burnim and Highfill have observed: 'Thus here [in the portrait of Joseph George Holman as Douglas], as is so often the case, the painter seems to be the *costumier manqué*, presenting the character as *he* would have dressed it' (Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.32).

'spirited preservation of the character'. They were to be 'all painted from life, with permission by Mr. Roberts, of the Royal Academy'. The advertisement reveals Bell's desire to make the scheme appear prestigious: the portraits are 'painted' and not drawn (in fact, the prints state 'delineavit', not 'pinxit'), and the reference to the Royal Academy was meant to locate the publishing venture within the domain of high art. This is reinforced by the mention that volumes have already been 'completed *in a grand stile*' (my emphasis), and that the continuation will have 'splendour'. The publishing strategy was thus to stress the prestige of owning books in the collection, even if one of the main characteristics of the venture was publication in very large numbers.[51] Roberts's original theatrical portraits are actually miniatures in pen, ink and watercolour on vellum. They were dispersed at the Bell sale of 1793 and a large number of them are preserved in the British Museum's Burney Collection.

Roberts's drawings attest to the influence of Swiss artist Jean-Louis Fesch in the depiction of performers in character.[52] Between 1760 and the French Revolution, Fesch and his partner Whirsker painted a large number of miniatures of actors from the French and English stages.[53] Although Fesch lived in Paris, his miniatures were sought after by collectors and theatre lovers on both sides of the Channel. Walpole owned a group of fifteen 'small drawings of English and French comedians; by Fesch',[54] and Garrick, who was interested in what was happening on

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[51] There are no surving records of the sales of Bell's publications; Milhous and Hume have computed that Bell would have needed to sell between 2,000 and 2,500 books to cover the direct costs of publishing his *British Theatre* (Milhous and Hume (2011), pp.33-34).

[52] Fesch was variously referred to as De Fesch, Foèch, Faesch, Johann Ludwig Werhardt Fäsch. The most comprehensive study of Fesch's work to date is Maria Ines Aliverti's essay 'The Miniatures of Jean Louis Fesch and Their Printed Versions. A Theatrical Paper Museum', trans. by Peter Mark Eaton, *Acting Archives Review Supplement*, 10 (2011), pp.1-63. Joël Huthwohl's beautifuly illustrated *Costumes & Comédiens des Lumières; Miniatures de Fesch et Whirsker; Collection de la Comédie-Française* (Moulins: Centre national du costume de scène, 2011) focuses on the works in the collections of the Comédie-Française.

[53] Whirsker's surname (but not his first name, which remains unknown) appears on the title-page of the first edition of *Les Metamorphoses de Melpomène et de Thalie* (see Huthwohl (2011), pp.28-30).

[54] Horace Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole* (Strawberry Hill, 1784), p.41. The extra-illustrated edition owned by Richard Bull (now in the Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington) contains four original drawings by Fesch, probably all of French actors, but I have been unable to find a detailed list of the miniatures owned by Walpole, or if these miniatures were part of his collection.

the Paris stage, ordered several miniatures.[55] A collection of Fesch's scenes from the Comédie-Française and the Comédie-Italienne were engraved and published as *Les Métamorphoses de Melpomène et de Thalie* in Paris (1769 and 1782). In 1772, the collection was published in London by Robert Sayer.[56] A few years earlier, Sayer and his partner John Smith had published *Dramatic Characters, or Different portraits of the English stage,* a collection of portraits of contemporary British actors in character (Figure 10). A second edition of the *Dramatic Characters*, by Sayer only, appeared in 1773 with added plates, some of which credit Fesch for the first time. Fesch's miniatures 'are thought to be the earliest visual record of scenes from the English stage and a source for later artists'.[57] Fesch based some of his designs on theatrical conversation pieces by painters such as Johan Zoffany and Benjamin Wilson, breaking them up, most of the time, into individual portraits.[58] According to Maria Ines Aliverti, this was part of Sayer's marketing strategy: the popularity of theatrical conversation pieces in that period meant that by publishing both quality engravings and smaller ones derived from the paintings, Sayer could reach a large and diverse public (Figure 11, Figure 12).[59] The representation of individual (or a pair of) actors, sometimes taken from a larger painting, has the effect of focusing attention on the costume, gesture and facial expression. Contrary to the theatrical conversation piece, which records a particular scene and to some extent recreates the experience of the playhouse, the miniatures invite close study of the performer's visual and acting qualities. Quotations from the play, which would

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[55] Huthwohl (2011), p.26 and pp.207-8, quoting David Garrick, *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick, with the Most Celebrated Persons of His Time,* ed. by James Boaden (London, 1831-32), vol.II, p.466 (this was a letter by Fesch who was sending Garrick portraits of six French performers). The miniatures owned by Walpole were bought by a Mr Hull, most likely Edward Hull, a curiosity dealer from Wardour Street, at the famous 1842 sale of the contents of Strawberry Hill. Some of Garrick's or Walpole's miniatures may have found their way into the collection of the book collector and dramatic critic George Daniel, whose album 'Garrick and his contemporaries' contains thirteen miniatures by Fesch (Folger Shakespeare Library, ART Vol. d94 no.92a-g and no.93a-f).

[56] Aliverti (2011), pp.13-14.

[57] Sidney Jackson Jowers and John Cavanagh, *Theatrical Costume, Masks, Make-up and Wigs: A Bibliography and Iconography* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.202. The miniatures published by Sayer are abundantly used by James Robinson Planché as representatives of eighteenth-century stage costume in his *Cyclopedia Of Costume* (London, 1879), vol.II, pp.404-7.

[58] Aliverti (2011), p.34; see pages 35-38 for a list of theatrical conversation pieces that directly inspired, or are closely related to, miniatures by Fesch.

[59] Ibid., p.39.

become an important feature of later famous series of theatrical portraits, are absent from the Sayer miniatures, obliging the viewer to focus more on the visual characteristics of the actor than on what he is saying.

Fesch's drawings established a formula used by several theatrical portraitists: the actors, no more than two per miniature in the *Dramatic Characters*, are shown in profile, in a specific moment of the action. They are depicted against a blank background, a small shadow at their feet referencing the sitters' three-dimensionality.[60] The costumes are drawn with great detail, although the colouring of Fesch's gouaches tends to be more vivid than that of Roberts's watercolours. All of Roberts's figures for the illustrations of Bell's plays are drawn in this manner. The representation of single figures (historical or theatrical) against a blank background, casting a small shadow, is a technique also found in works aiming at showcasing the features or costumes of their subjects: it was used by Thomas Jefferys in his 1757 *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* as well as by Roberts's father, also James Roberts, in his illustrated guidebook to the clothed funeral effigies at Westminster Abbey.[61] Later in the century, the same technique was used by Conrad Martin Metz, Samuel Wale and William Hamilton in their portraits of English rulers in illustrated histories of England (see chapter 3).[62] The very long trains or overskirts that curve on the ground at the feet of the actress, thus framing her skirt, are a feature that also appeared in the representation of tragic costume in Fesch's miniatures. For instance, the trailing overskirt of Roberts's Miss Barsanti as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Mrs Yates as Isabella in Garrick's *tragedy Isabella; or, the Fatal Marriage* are similar to the dress in *Mlle Dumesnil as Jocaste and Lekain as Oedipus in* Oedipus by Voltaire (Figure 13, Figure 14). Fesch's formula for the presentation of actors was adopted by other artists: in 1776, publisher

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[60] Some of Fesch's miniatures at the Comédie-Française depict the performers standing on a wooden floor, such as *Brizard(?) as Mithridate* and *Augé as Tartuffe* (reproduced in Hutwohl, pp.69 and 128).

[61] The effigies 'serve to give a striking idea of the persons and dresses of those great personages when living' (James Roberts and Henry Roberts, *A View of the Wax Work Figures in King Henry the 7th's Chapel, Westminster Abbey*, 2nd edn (London, 1769), Preface, p.v). To avoid confusion, James Roberts senior is sometimes called James Roberts I, and his son James Roberts II.

[62] Metz in Raymond's *New, Universal, and Impartial History of England* (1777-90), Wale and Hamilton in Barnard's *A New, Comprehensive, and Complete History of England* (1783); Wale also contributed full-page full-length portraits to both Barnard's and Raymond's histories.

Joseph Wenman began to publish a series of plays, with portraits of actors in character. His printer James Harrison joined the project in 1778, and a total of 158 plays were published between 1777 and 1781.[63] The portraits, drawn by an anonymous artist, depict actors against a white background, with a small shadow, accompanied by a quotation from the play (Figure 15). But the costume in Wenman and Harrison's prints is much less fantastic than Fesch's and Roberts's. Sometimes, the 'crude drawings' published by Wenman provide 'a check on Roberts's accuracy'.[64]

Roberts was more generally interested in historicising detail than the artists of the cheaply-produced engravings published by Wenman and Harrison were. Despite Roberts's particular taste for small waists and panniered dresses with improbably long trains, there is evidence in the costumes of deliberate attempts at historicising the whole. Whether this is part of Roberts's artistic license or whether this reflects actual performances is not always certain. In both cases however, the result is historicisation through costume. A close study of Roberts's drawings shows how artists (and probably tailors and actors) perceived historical dress and used elements of it in their portrayal of theatrical historical figures. Roberts's portraits of Elizabeth Hartley as Jane Shore offer particularly good examples of this, in so far as she is the only actress to have been represented twice by the same artist in the same historical role. Nicholas Rowe's *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714) was one of the most performed tragedies of the period – Rowe was the most successful of Shakespeare's imitators in the eighteenth century, and both *Jane Shore*'s style and subject matter were inspired by Shakespeare. Elizabeth Hartley was an indifferent actress, but her beauty and striking Titian-red hair drew crowds to the theatre, which is probably the reason why she appears several times in *Bell's British Theatre*. She was particularly famous as Jane Shore and was depicted in this role by Joshua Reynolds.[65] The play is a moving 'she-tragedy' recounting the fall of Edward IV's mistress Jane Shore after his death in 1483. For his first drawing of Jane Shore for

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[63] Thomas Frank Bonnell, *The Most Disreputable Trade: Publishing the Classics of English Poetry 1765-1810* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.180.
[64] Milhous and Hume (2011), p.31.
[65] The portrait is in a private collection. Hartley sat for many other artists, including Romney, Cosway and Kauffmann.

Bell[66] (Figure 16), James Roberts portrayed the character as she appeared at the beginning of the play, before her destitution. This enabled him to indulge his taste for intricate ornamentation and to use visual references to historical costume.

Hartley wears a dark dress with a large criss-cross decorative pattern, a pearl necklace and a pearl headdress. Her skirt, bodice and stomacher are trimmed with pearls and her skirt is hemmed by pointed lace. The criss-cross pattern forming a kind of large quatrefoil of fabric flowers does not appear on any of the known portraits by Fesch. As a feature of stage costume, the fabric lattice seems to be an invention of Roberts, as it does not feature on other depictions of performers throughout the period. It appears, as large decorative flowers, on the skirt of Susannah Cibber's costume for Monimia, and a similar 'quatrefoil' shape is created by pearls on the skirt of Elizabeth Younge in the character of Hermione.[67] But nowhere is the pattern used as extensively as on Hartley's dress. This shape could be created by pulling the underlining fabric through the slashes, or it could also be created by decorative lengths of fabric stitched onto the dress.

This pattern was known through a variety of engravings of one (possibly two) portraits of Queen Elizabeth I. Indeed, Hartley wears a dress of the type worn by Elizabeth in the 'Ditchley' portrait painted by Gheeraerts the Younger (*c.*1592-94) (Figure 17). Janet Arnold describes the Ditchley dress as a gown of white silk 'decorated all over with a trellis-work of strips of puffed cypress caught down at the intersections with jewels mounted on rosettes of the same material.'[68] Variations of this gown appear on a drawing by Isaac Oliver (Royal Collection), an engraving by Crispin van der Passe the Elder and one by William Rogers.[69] The small disparities, such as the arrangement of the silk puffs and the use of jewels or pearls in different ways, can be explained if, as Arnold suggests, Gheeraerts and Oliver both had

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[66] The engraved version was published on 10 April 1776, in the first volume of the 1776-7 *Bell's British Theatre* series (Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.148).

[67] Cibber last acted Monimia in 1764. According to Burnim and Highfill (1998, p.118), it is possible that Roberts saw her act when he was younger. Younge's portrait as Hermione in *The Distressed Mother* appeared in *Bell's British Theatre*, vol.I (1776) (see for instance Victoria and Albert Museum number S.1924-2013).

[68] Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: Maney, 1988), p.43. Cypress is a light transparent fabric originating from Cyprus.

[69] Ibid., p.45.

sittings, for which the Queen's gown was arranged differently.[70] This suggests that the trellis-work, pearls and jewels were indeed removable ornaments. The dress and pose of Oliver's portrait were chosen by the famous antiquarian and engraver George Vertue for his portrait of Elizabeth, published in 1732 (Figure 18). Smaller versions of Oliver's painting had been engraved and printed regularly through the seventeenth century. An early seventeenth-century posthumous oil portrait, which was heavily retouched in the eighteenth century, depicts the queen in a dress decorated with fabric crosses of a similar size to Hartley's (Figure 19).[71]

The trellis pattern also appears on miniatures representing Elizabeth in her Parliament robes. This pattern would have been familiar to visitors to Westminster Abbey, since a similar one was used on the sleeves and stomacher of the wooden effigy of the Queen, in the collection of funeral effigies that was one of the Abbey's sights. The effigy was restored in 1760 and several parts of it were replaced, including the dress.[72] A significant difference between this dress and pictorial representations of Elizabeth's gowns is that the trellis-work on the effigy's dress is embroidered rather than created by puffed fabric (Figure 20). As Janet Arnold writes, 'the sleeves, stomacher and petticoat of red satin decorated with paste jewels, etc., are almost certainly adapted from a theatrical costume contemporary with the conversion of the figure. Each item, especially the petticoat, was altered to correspond more closely to an eighteenth-century idea of a sixteenth-century costume. The velvet over-skirt and mantle were real garments from a different source.'[73] If the dress had indeed been used on stage, this could mean that the criss-cross pattern was traditionally associated with Queen Elizabeth in the theatre, although it does not appear on later theatrical portraits such as those of Charlotte

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[70] Ibid., p.47.
[71] National Portrait Gallery number 542. The portrait was almost completely painted over in the eighteenth century, and some components of Elizabeth's outfit were painted out, probably because they looked quaint in the eighteenth century
(http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw02082/Queen-Elizabeth-I?LinkID=mp01452&displayStyle=thumb&role=sit&rNo=13 [accessed 14 March 2016]).
[72] Anthony Harvey and Richard Mortimer, eds., *The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey*, rev. edn. (first edition 1994) (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p.157.
[73] Costume analysis by Janet Arnold, in Harvey and Mortimer (2003), p.160.

Melmoth in *The Earl of Essex*.[74] The gold embroidery would have reflected light and made the actress's appearance even more splendid. Another possibility is that the red satin sleeves, stomacher and forepart were embroidered with metal thread when the dress was adapted for the effigy. If this is the case, it would confirm the identification of the trellis pattern to Queen Elizabeth. At any rate, the image of Elizabeth wearing this type of dress was circulated thanks to James Roberts senior's book of engravings of the clothed effigies in Westminster Abbey, reinforcing the association in the minds of the public (Figure 21).

Hartley's dress visibly takes its inspiration from these portraits of Elizabeth. Roberts used the criss-cross pattern created by the decorations on both skirt and sleeves. He also reproduced the style of jewellery worn by the Queen, two strands of pearls gathered together on the chest, as well as the pointed lace cuffs and the pearls lining the stomacher. The criss-cross or flower motif created by the lengths of puffed fabric is very regular and symmetrical. It serves to evoke a medieval, almost Gothic past. While this particular type of decoration created volume on the sleeves, it seems to have made the skirt rather rigid, like the armour-skirt of actress Sophia Baddeley in the role of Joan of Arc (Figure 22). The folds on the skirt do not crease the pattern or the fabric; rather it seems that Roberts painted the lines of the folds over the finished drawing to give some movement to the costume.

The designers of the costume (whether Roberts, Hartley or someone connected to Covent Garden) deliberately included sartorial details alluding to, or recreating, one of Queen Elizabeth's famous dresses. The effect is a more authentic recreation of the past through costume: instead of the generic, heavy slashing of Spanish or Van Dyck dress, the visual sources of the costume were specific images of Tudor garments. The colour of Hartley's outfit is adapted to the stage tradition according to which tragic females wore dark colours. On the drawing, the decorations are painted a kind of reddish brown, but they seem to be much paler on the engraved version. Unsurprisingly, the actress's hair is done in the style of the

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[74] As depicted by Collyer after Dodd, published in Lowndes' *New English Theatre* (1777), and by Terry after (?)Stothard, published by Harrison (1779). The trellis pattern reappears on a large mezzotint by William Ward after Richard Westall, *The Earl of Essex's first interview with Queen Elizabeth, after his return from Ireland* (1791).

1770s, but it is topped with a contemporised version of the attifet, a heart-shaped headdress from the sixteenth century. Like her dress, Hartley's attifet is adorned with pearls. In the eighteenth century, pearled headdresses were used in fancy dress to evoke the sixteenth century.[75] Roberts thus represents Jane Shore as a sixteenth-century lady from head to toe. Compared to many other tragedy costumes in Roberts's drawings, Elizabeth Hartley's lacks the complex layering of sleeves, overskirt, veil and train often found in other costumes. It is my contention that this costume for Jane Shore was a deliberate effort to replace the character in a consciously English, early modern past. The association through similar costume of Jane Shore with Queen Elizabeth works to give the stage character of Jane Shore increased historical validity. The subject matter was taken from English history and the fact that the main character was mentioned in Shakespeare, alongside the style of the tragedy itself, written in imitation of Shakespeare (and therefore echoing the Elizabethan period), already elevated the play to the rank of serious historical drama. Hartley's costume reinforced this dimension and although the dress did not correspond to the period dramatised in the tragedy, the invocation of Queen Elizabeth through an actual garment gave the story of 'so repentant a prostitute'[76] the quality of an illustration of English history.

Roberts's work for Bell evinces a greater sense of historical detail than many of the illustrations for the publisher's later editions of plays. In Edward Francis Burney's 1786 portrait of Mrs Barnes as Anne Boleyn in *Henry VIII* (Figure 23), the only historicising details are the double lace cuffs and the urn in the background, but none of them are particularly efficient at evoking the sixteenth century. Furthermore, while many portraits of actresses show mixtures of historical, Van Dyck dress and Spanish dress, Roberts evinces a clear distinction between oriental or foreign dress, Spanish and Italian dress, and costume for historical characters. Roberts's qualities of observation are apparent in a letter by his fellow Royal Academy student James Northcote, which contains a short sketch of Roberts's occupations at Joshua Reynolds's house: 'little Roberts is a constant visitor much

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[75] Aileen Ribeiro (1984), p.306.
[76] The *Morning Chronicle* of 2 November 1778 reported that Mrs Yates 'was much too superbly habited, for so penitent a prostitute as Jane Shore' (p.2).

oftener than I desire, he shows Sir Joshua every little foolish thing which he does and spends hours in the Galery [*sic*] looking and sketching amongst the pictures, even while people are there to see them as they are continualy [*sic*] for the whole day'.[77] Roberts's costumes in illustrations for Bell demonstrate his large iconographical knowledge through his adaptation of specific works of art to historical stage costume.

One of the most iconic passages in *Jane Shore* is in Act V, scene 1, when the heroine, in simple clothes, goes and begs at Lady Alicia's door, and is rejected. This was the passage chosen by 'the Lowndes consortium',[78] whose *Jane Shore* (1776) was illustrated by a portrait of Mrs Yates against a Gothic background (Figure 24). The costume and staging for this scene was often commented upon. Thus, when the tragedy was staged at Covent Garden in 1778, both Mrs Yates (Jane Shore) and Mrs Crawford (Alicia) wore white dresses in the second part of the play, so that 'when Alicia burst forth from her mansion…there appeared to be two Jane Shores before the audience'.[79] The critic stressed the function of costume in the creation of 'contrast of character' and stage effect. The ladies' dresses for this particular production were deemed improper: too superb for Jane Shore and too humble for Alicia.[80] A year after the first portrait of Hartley as Jane Shore was published, Bell issued a second portrait of her in the same role by Roberts (published on 7 November 1777) (Figure 25).[81] This time the portrait illustrates the passage of the play when the beggared Jane knocks at Alicia's door. The heroine's costume in this part of the play is meant to be a simple white dress. Her repentant attitude, which her costume does not really betray, is indicated by her humble gesture and the small crucifix around her neck. This time, Hartley wears a contemporary dress ornamented with Van Dyck details: a laced stomacher, pointed cuffs, slashed sleeves and a wide collar. Hartley wears Roberts's trademark overskirt gathered

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[77] James Northcote to Samuel Northcote, 8 April 1772 (Royal Academy of Arts, London, GB/0397 NOR/9).

[78] A term coined by Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume to designate a group of publishers, led by Thomas Lowndes, whose illustrated *New English Theatre* was the only serious competitor to *Bell's British Theatre* (Milhous and Hume (2011), pp.20-21).

[79] *Morning Chronicle*, 2 November 1778, p.2.

[80] Ibid.; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 2 November 1778, pp.1-2.

[81] Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.149.

asymmetrically at the sides. There is nothing medieval or Tudor about this costume, instead it features codified elements of Van Dyck dress such as the large lace collar, which recalls that worn by Helena Fourment in her portrait by Rubens (now at the Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon) (Figure 26). In the eighteenth century, the painting was attributed to Van Dyck and was seen as one of the archetypes of seventeenth-century portraiture. It was reproduced in drawing manuals, such as *The Artist's Vade-Mecum* (which went through three editions between 1762 and 1776). Helena Fourment's pose and dress was popular at masquerades as well as in portraiture.[82] The difference in style between the two Jane Shore portraits seems to suggest that Roberts was playing with the contemporary practice of historical costuming, clothing the same character in dresses from different periods. Roberts's costumes, however structurally improbable with their huge bunched-up skirts and heavy trains, must have helped shape the readers' theatrical imagination and subsequent expectations. Given the great popularity of Bell's plays, the images provided a generation of readers with detailed representations of the characters and their costumes. For the provincial readership of Bell's plays, these images would have been the only point of contact with the world of the London theatres. They reveal how artists perceived historical costume and adapted it to their representations of historical theatrical characters.

A similar technique can be observed in Hartley's costume for Mary Queen of Scots in John Banks's she-tragedy *The Albion Queens* (Figure 27). While the dress as a whole does not correspond to any specific portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, the costume incorporates details generally associated with her: the crucifix pendant on the necklace and the hanging beads or pearls at the front of the dress recall several portraits of Mary Stuart (Figure 28, Figure 29). The puffed upper parts of the sleeves were worn in the 1570s. The deep lace collar or V-shaped ruff appears to be the only one of this kind in Robert's portraits for Bell. A similar, but not identical ruff is

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[82] Ribeiro (1977), p.834. An interesting example of a portrait based on Ruben's painting is John Faber's 1751 print of Peg Woffington as Mrs Ford, analysed by Chloe Wigston Smith in 'Dressing Up Character: Theatrical Paintings from the Restoration to the Mid-Eighteenth Century', in Daniel James Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle, eds., *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), pp.70-105, pp.83-84.

worn by Jane Pope in Roberts' portrait of her as Mrs Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Figure 30). The dress of Mary Queen of Scots was one of the most popular kinds of fancy dress in the eighteenth century.[83] In one instance, parts of Helena Fourment's dress were used as elements of the dress for a costume of the Scottish Queen,[84] which indicates a further conflation of history and portraiture as well as a conception of periodization that encompassed the seventeenth as well as the sixteenth century. Elizabethan dress was also becoming a popular choice for portraits: in 1785, Richard Cosway painted a miniature of neo-classical sculptor Anne Seymour Damer in Elizabethan dress (Figure 31), perhaps to evoke Mary Queen of Scots.[85] With such a variety of clothes and accessories being used in costumes of Mary Stuart, we can wonder what these dresses really looked like, and how their wearers ensured they would be identified as Mary. It is therefore likely that these outfits incorporated the same signifiers as Roberts used in his portrait of Hartley: square necklines and Tudor-connoted lace collars, a crown, crucifix and, as in many costumes evoking the Tudor era, a profusion of pearls. Surprisingly, Hartley's dress in *The Albion Queens* shares many characteristics with the portrait of Jane Shore published by Silvester Harding in 1790 (Figure 32), an indication that the figure of Jane Shore, maybe by virtue of her being mentioned by Shakespeare and being the heroine of Rowe's Shakespeare-inspired tragedy, was perceived as a Tudor woman.

Why was Hartley depicted in these roles? The use of a pattern associated with Queen Elizabeth on the dress of Jane Shore – a character perceived as a prostitute (however penitent) – seems ironic. The choice possibly reflects the sensual nature of the popularity of Elizabeth Hartley, one of the queens of the stage in the 1770s. Bell's editors perhaps thought the actress embodied the ambivalent natures of the characters depicted: both were beautiful heroines, yet with a flavour of controversy. Praised for her beauty, Jane Shore, although repentant in Rowe's

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[83] Ribeiro (1978), p.556.
[84] Ribeiro (1984), p.310.
[85] Stephen Lloyd, *Richard Cosway* (London: Unicorn Press, 2005), p.54. For perceptions and representations of Mary Queen of Scots in eighteenth-century Britain, see part three of Jayne Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots: Romance and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2005). Chapter 4 focuses on Bank's tragedy *The Albion Queens*.

play, was notorious for being the mistress of several noblemen. Equally, Mary Queen of Scots had come to be seen as a woman who allowed herself to be ruled by her passions, a fault that made her partly responsible for her own downfall.[86]

The majority of spectators in the eighteenth century did not generally object to historical inaccuracies in costume, although voices were heard by the end of the century asking for more consistency in the representation of characters and historical periods.[87] Yet Roberts's drawings show that to artists, performers and viewers, historical detail was important even if the general shape and style of the costume was still inspired by eighteenth-century court dress. It seems this only applied to (relatively recent) English history. There is no such precise historical detail in Roberts's depiction of, for instance, the Saxon character Rodogune (as incarnated by Mrs Ward) or the Egyptian queen Cleopatra (represented by Hartley and Younge). This is not because of a lack of visual sources that would have enabled Roberts to be more precise in the depiction of Saxon and Egyptian characters: the appearance and costume of the Saxons, for instance, were discussed and illustrated in Richard Verstegan's *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence In Antiquities: Concerning the Most Noble, and Renowned English Nation* (1605), John Speed's *The History of Great Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* (1611), and more recently in Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* (volume IV, 1772) and Strutt's *Þorða Angel-cynnan* (1774). Roberts's dresses for historical ladies show that the standard sixteenth-century or Van Dyck dress was not perceived as sufficiently accurate for medieval or sixteenth-century characters such as Jane Shore. Roberts's interesting use of slashing evinces the desire to incorporate more specific historicising details and adds to the complexity of the costume. Roberts's images show his relish in the materiality of costume: his character plates for Bell give a sense of the visual effects of various fabrics, and they precisely depict a wide range of decorations, in terms both of shapes and materials. This shows that what the portraits in Bell's editions had to

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[86] Alison Weir, *Mary, Queen of Scots and the Murder of Lord Darnley* (New York: Random House, 2011), p.4.
[87] See the introductions to parts 4 and 5 of Stone et al. (1960).

convey was not so much the emotional illusion of a physical presence, as was the case with many oil portraits of performers,[88] but a likeness and the representation of a character in costume to be scrutinised and relocated in the context of the play, which is indicated by the quotation under the portrait.

The originality of Roberts's drawings in the field of British theatrical portraiture lies in their level of detail, combined with historical fantasy in the representation of performers in costume. Roberts was perhaps the first British artist to include so many decorations in theatrical portraits. His drawings make visible the links between masquerade dress, stage costume and the taste for portrait collecting. The presentation of actors against a white background reflects an age in which text was still central to the performance, with audiences focusing on the actors' gestures, expressions and costumes. Later editions of *Bell's British Theatre* include portraits set against reconstituted or invented backgrounds, which reflects the greater importance acquired by the stage picture in a given production. Technical developments in sets and lighting, combined with larger auditoriums, meant that splendid decorations and spectacular scene changes would become as much part of the performance as the actors' delivery and attitudes.

Roberts's depiction of stage costume is representative of a trend observable in various artistic and literary fields: the increased reliance on original documents to represent historical dress with some degree of accuracy, even when this was adapted to modern fashions and the requirement of stage effect. While Van Dyck dress was the conventional 'old-time' clothing (to use Anne Hollander's phrase[89]), the incorporation of precise historical elements into the representation of historical stage costume reveals a growing consciousness on the part of the artist of the periodization of dress. The fact that this approach was used for English characters only is significant: it suggests that historical figures from English history deserved more accuracy than others. As Edgar Wind observed as early as 1938, 'the desire to be historically accurate in the designing of costumes was first inspired by a patriotic interest in one's own past and was originally confined to subjects of national

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[88] Aparna Gollapudi, 'Selling Celebrity: Actors' Portraits in Bell's Shakespeare and Bell's British Theatre', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 36 (2012), pp.54-81, p.59.
[89] Hollander (1980), p.264.

history.' This was evidenced by the London theatrical season of 1762-63: '*Henry the Fourth*, *Richard the Third*, and *Jane Shore* were produced 'in the habits of the times,' but *Tamberlaine*, *Hamlet*, and *Barbarossa* were not.' [90] In the 1760s the phrase encompassed a variety of outfits; a decade later Roberts's portraits show that historical costume could be depicted with slightly more precision. The theatrical portraits sold with Bell's editions of British canonical plays played a role in the dissemination of notions of the periodization of costume. As such they are part of a wider trend in the period's visual culture: the presentation of culture and knowledge in the form of anthologies and anecdotes as well as the importance of the visual in the telling of history.

The evolutions that took place between the mid-century and the 1780s in the representation of historical dress both on stage and in theatrical portraits suggest that the historicisation of dramatic characters was becoming an essential aspect of staging and theatrical portraiture. As more information about the customs and costumes of the past was becoming available to the public, theatre audiences became more historically-informed and began to be discontented by anachronisms in costume and staging.

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[90] Wind (1938), pp.118-9, quoting Kopp (1929), p.69.

Chapter 2

Negotiating anachronism

During the period 1776-1834, many commentators saw the purpose of plays, novels and poems set in specific historical periods as instructing the reader or spectator about the customs of the period in question. While Walter Scott's poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) was praised for being 'highly picturesque and illustrative of early savage Highland manners', each canto offering 'an exact description of some particular scene frequent during the times of Scottish feudality', some imitators of Scott's poetry fell short of this requirement. Thus William Sotheby's *Constance de Castile* (1810), a ten-canto poem set in fourteenth-century Spain, failed to instruct the reader in habits of the past: 'he is not diffuse enough in manners, and the reader rises from its perusal, certainly pleased with many of its minute parts, but knowing as little of the customs and spirit of the times, as when he sat down.'[1] Good-quality drama was likewise instructive as well as entertaining, and theatre managers were aware of the financial advantages of this educational argument. Thus a puff piece placed in the *Times* of 22 August 1835 invited audiences to go and see *Richard III* as a quicker alternative to reading about the Wars of the Roses, indicating the persistence of the argument well into the nineteenth century.[2] Theatre being perceived as an illustration of history, it was therefore logical that 'the anachronisms are rejected by memory, as insulting what was gotten with so much worthless pains in our youth, and might as well never have been attained.'[3]

In the previous chapter, we have seen that historical dress had become a key feature of the evocation of the past in the theatre as well as in art and literature. The most significant change in perceptions of theatrical dress taking place in the second half of the eighteenth century is the move from criticism of the lack of

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[1] *La Belle Assemblée; or, Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine*, Issue XIV (date unknown), pp.344-6.
[2] 'Those who have not time to read the history of the wars of York and Lancaster should go and see them at this theatre' (*The Times*, 22 August 1835, p.6).
[3] A comment about the afterpiece *Amphytrion Revived* at the Haymarket (*The Oracle*, 1 September 1792, p.3).

verisimilitude in the representation of social status, to the criticism of costume in terms of the period it was supposed to represent. However, the conventional Van Dyck dress continued to hold the stage until the late eighteenth century, even when its anachronistic nature became objectionable. The period saw the increasing availability of information about the costumes and customs of the past, and it is therefore relevant to wonder what accounts for the persistence of some historical costumes, while other types of costumes were reformed. This chapter will address the following questions: how were anachronisms perceived in the theatre? How did perceptions of sartorial anachronism evolve when antiquarianism became a more widespread pursuit? How did performances and theatrical painting negotiate the tension between the desire for more accuracy and the technical demands specific to the stage? Was the outcome of this negotiation carried over to other contexts of representation of history, such as the novel and history painting, and did these genres in turn influence the theatre? Van Dyck dress and the generic sixteenth-century costume used for historical plays have been described by contemporaries as well as later students of stage costume as anachronistic.[4] For much of the eighteenth century, stage managers often had to resort to one of two types of anachronisms: either staging a play set in the past in modern dress, as was the case for many tragedies (especially *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*), or resorting to the generic Van Dyck costume or its variations, the Italian or Spanish dress.

The problems of anachronistic stage costume

Anachronisms in stage costume were often perceived as a sign of poor taste and symptomatic of the bad quality of a production. A letter published in the *St. James's Chronicle* in 1788 compared the costume of characters as they would appear in the paintings for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, and as they might appear on the stage. The intended readership of the letter are those among Boydell's

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[4] See for instance John Genest in *Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830: In Ten Volumes* (Bath, 1832), John Doran in *'Their Majesties' Servants': Annals of the English Stage from Thomas Betterton to Edmund Kean*, 2 vols (London: Allen & Co., 1864), and more recently De Marly (1982).

subscribers who 'have formed their Ideas of Shakspeare's characters, according to their respective appearances at Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.'[5] The letter-writer advises not to expect costumes and poses transposed literally from the stage to the canvas. Under cover of warning ignorant subscribers, the letter rails against contemporary stage costuming and other 'Offences against Propriety': 'In a Playhouse, Anachronisms are so little guarded against, that discordant Devices, and modern Arms, are frequently associated with ancient Ensigns and Weapons peculiar to distinct Nations, and Ages remote from each other. . .' The author implies that the sort of people who unquestionably enjoy the appearance of Shakespearean characters on the stage would not realise how superior their pictorial counterparts would be. The letter evokes the Shakespeare Gallery as a high art venture unconnected to the stage, which is 'disgraced by congenial Absurdities'. Theatre is thus set in opposition to high art, despite the obvious links between the two arts: among them, the common source material, the participation of painters in the production of stage scenery and the fact that works of art were called 'performances'. In the letter, performance and theatrical painting are both on the side of bad taste: the 'correct Eye' is never satisfied by the actors' poses in Zoffany's theatrical paintings, because stage attitudes lose their beauty when they are fixed on canvas. Paintings based on Shakespearean subjects run the risk of being unfairly judged by 'tasteless Individuals' influenced by anachronistic theatrical costuming:

> Let therefore the uninformed Subscriber to Messieurs Boydell, be
> taught to dismiss all Hope of seeing our Shakspearian Heroes
> invested with the meretricious Foppery of the modern Stage, lest
> he should hereafter find himself disposed to quarrel with Reynolds
> and West, because their Richards and Richmonds are deprived of
> white Silk Stockings, and encounter without the Carte and Tierce
> of modern Fencers. Let the same *Rank of Spectators* also be
> prepared to feel no Disappointment, if the Start of Fuseli's Hamlet
> should appear unregulated by the lessons of Le Picq, and the Robe

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[5] *St. James's Chronicle*, 9-11 September 1788.

of Romney's Ariel float in easy curves, uncopied from the
Operatical Taylorism of Signor Lupino.[6]

The author distinguishes between two sorts of spectators to the Gallery and suggests that keen theatre-goers do not necessarily make good connoisseurs of art. Because Shakespeare was the author most strongly associated with English literature and identity, the accurate costuming of his heroes on the stage became a matter of national dignity.

On an artistic and moral level, inconsistencies and anachronisms were seen as a denaturation of Shakespeare's works. In 1779, performances of *Othello* at Drury Lane were guilty of both anachronism and inconsistency. One reviewer complained:

We were at a loss to guess . . . why Iago, Cassio, and Montano should all wear regimentals of a different sort? The dressing the officers under Othello in modern regimentals is certainly an absurd anachronism, but if they are to wear modern uniforms, they should surely be dressed according to their rank. On Saturday evening it looked as if Iago, a Colonel of the Regulars, Cassio, a militia Ensign, and Montano, a Westminster Volunteer Captain, had met to get drunk together.[7]

In this case, the anachronisms in costuming were identified but tolerated. The main problems were the inconsistencies in the choice of military uniforms, because they gave a contradictory picture to what was being performed. What the audience were given to see through the costumes was a different and morally problematic interpretation of the play, in which eminent Venetian characters became British drunkards. Even at the end of the period, when a greater variety of historical costumes had become available and were used on the stage, some plays were still

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[6] Charles Le Picq (1744-1806) was a French choreographer and dancer; Thomas Luppino was a costume designer at the London Opera.
[7] *Morning Chronicle*, 18 October 1779, p2.

got up with anachronistic costumes – which critics were now quick to notice. When *Cymbeline* was performed at Covent Garden in 1822, Charles Mayne Young performed Iachimo in a Roman toga, while Leonatus Posthumus (played by William Charles Macready) and Cloten were dressed in sixteenth-century clothes. 'We cannot understand such a variety of costume,' the *Examiner* wrote. '. . . We are aware that the play is all anachronism and anomaly; but such being the case, there is the less occasion to make it the more so.'[8] The reviewer implies that anachronisms in *Cymbeline* are a negative feature of the play. Yet, as we shall see later, there were some who found value in Shakespeare's anachronisms, and in anachronism in general. The demands for accuracy also applied to the text of Shakespeare's plays. While most of his works were performed in the adapted versions of Colley Cibber and Garrick, there was a rising desire to recover the original texts of the plays. This is illustrated, for instance, in the promptbooks of John Philip Kemble, whose revivals of many of Shakespeare's tragedies in the early nineteenth century were characterised by greater attention to accuracy of staging and were more faithfully based on Shakespeare's text than other Shakespearean productions.[9]

In most cases, however, anachronisms were condemned as offences against the 'truth of history'. This truth of history – often invoked by detractors of fanciful or anachronistic sets and costumes – is rarely defined in contemporary writings, but the phrase, used in this theatrical context, is telling. It reveals, firstly, that the conception of costume as a part of history had become widespread. Secondly, it implies that costume could participate in a narrative of or discourse on history, and therefore that it could be deceptive or truthful in relation to history. This opens the possibility of an ideological or political use of historical costume, and stage costume more generally. Already in the 1720s, according to John Doran, concern was voiced about the political implications of the shabby costumes used for royal characters: 'Duncan and Julius Caesar . . . had worn the same robes for a century; and it was

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[8] *The Examiner*, 23 June 1822, p.396.
[9] Charles Harlen Shattuck, *John Philip Kemble Promptbooks* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974).

suggested that monarchy was brought into contempt by poorly-clad representatives.'[10]

In his *Critiques* published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the architect, antiquarian and lover of historical drama John Carter complained about the inconsistencies of costuming in the London theatres, which converted 'the transactions of past times . . . into a ridiculous farrago of absurdities.'[11] The fourth *Critique* (April 1800) thus listed anachronisms in recent productions of Shakespeare's histories, such as *Richard III* at Drury Lane, in which actors were dressed 'in the usual half-and-half mode, made up from the portraits of Charles I's reign, and from unrestrained fancy.' He again invited managers to demonstrate more taste and historical sense in the staging of Shakespeare:

> Thus classically shewn to a people, naturally partial to the usages
>
> of their own country, Shakspeare's historic plays would become a
>
> captivating source of information and instruction to the patriot,
>
> the historian, and the artist.[12]

Campaigning for 'the true embellishment of our theatrical performances when historical, and when the great characters of our ancestors are to be brought before our eyes', Carter repeatedly presented accurate staging as an aesthetic, educational and patriotic duty.[13] The public, he declared, was already 'desirous to behold in mimic scenes the reflected brightness of their [the public's ancestors']) splendid day.' Carter's arguments reflect the conception that the stage presented views of the nation's ancestors. It was therefore necessary 'that the stage should become the faithful mirror of past times' and should reflect 'the dignity of our history'.[14]

At the turn of the century, then, the idea that the stage was a 'mirror of the times' was given greater visual emphasis. The phrase recalls Hamlet's description of

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[10] Doran (1864), vol.II, p.419.

[11] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 69:2 (November 1799), p.937.

[12] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 70:1 (April 1800), p.319.

[13] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 69:1 (February 1799), pp.113-14.

[14] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 71:1 (May 1801), p.403.

the players as 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the times'.[15] Yet it is significant that Carter and his contemporaries replaced the metaphor of the chronicles – that is, textual records of past events and culture – with the image of the mirror, which implies visuality as well as the identicalness of the object and its representation. Pierre Frantz has suggested that the notion of 'costume', as a principle of harmony, implied that plays were seen as part of the visual as much as the literary culture of the time. It gave history a visual quality that certified it as authentic, since it could be apprehended in visible, tangible objects.[16] The truth of history that the theatre 'mirrors' is therefore inherently dependent on the visual elements of the performance: sets, costumes and accessories. This suggests a certain dissatisfaction with history as merely a source of exempla, that could be transposed from one century to the next. For Carter and his fellow antiquarians, the truth of history was not only found in narratives of events, it was also located in the evocation of the specificities of the place and time in which those events took place.

From the end of the eighteenth century, theatre and exhibition reviews conveyed the sense that it was *bon ton* to identify and criticise anachronisms. The expressed contempt for them was, of course, an indirect display of one's historical understanding and cultural superiority. In December 1777, Hannah More's tragedy *Percy* was performed at Covent Garden. Based on the popular 'Ballad of Chevy Chase' and with a prologue and epilogue by Garrick, the play was reasonably popular and ran for twenty nights that season. Although the set and costume were appreciated, William Thomas Lewis (known as 'Gentleman' Lewis), who played Percy, was criticised for wearing the star of the Order of the Garter. One particular piece of criticism rings with the self-importance of a spectator who was able to identify the anachronism and who pretends to dismiss it:

Altho' we allow much for the glare of theatric heroes and stage stars, Mr. Lewis was rather too fond of it, in decorating Earl Percy with one, since the last King of England (if my reading does not fail

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[15] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), II, 2, l.462.
[16] Frantz (1998), pp.90-91.

me) engaged in a crusade, was Edward the First; and every child knows that the third of that name, of glorious memory, instituted the order. Anachronisms of this kind are factitious distinctions which merit disclaims and good sense smiles at.[17]

Yet it is likely that the garter star was worn to indicate status and honour rather than as a temporal indicator. It is probably for this reason that Kemble wore the garter as part of his costume as Hotspur (*Henry IV*, part 1), even after it was pointed out to him that Hotspur had never been a member of the Order.[18] Thus Richard Lane's lithograph of Kemble in the character of Hotspur, published in 1826, depicts him wearing the garter (Figure 33). This portrait was part of a set of eight, entitled *Illustrations of the late John Philip Kemble, drawn on stone by Richard J. Lane from pictures painted in his life-time by John Boaden*, which implies that the lithographs are faithful reproductions of the paintings, and the paintings themselves accurate records of Kemble's acting and costuming practices.[19]

Anachronism as entertaining

From the perspective of a playwright, deliberate anachronisms could be used to enrich a dramatic plot. Thus Thomas Davies in his *Dramatic Micellanies* [*sic*] accounts for Shakespeare's use of a later event in *Henry VIII*:

Shakspeare has selected such parts of Henry's life as would rather reflect honour than disgrace on his memory. Though, in general, he

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[17] *Morning Chronicle*, 17 January 1778, p.4.
[18] Genest (1832), vol.VIII, p.618.
[19] Not every artist was drawn into the process of historicisation: there are no distinctively medieval elements – and no garter – in Fuseli's painting *The Dispute between Hotspur, Glendower, Mortimer, and Worcester about the Division of England*, which is said to depict Kemble as both Hotspur and Glendower (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery). Fuseli's costuming is usually quite idiosyncratic, and even if the long slashes on Hotspur's and Glendower's sleeves might be reminiscent of the sixteenth-century costume often used to clothe historical stage characters, in this painting the lack of precise historical detail concentrates the viewer's attention onto the figures' expressions and attitudes.

had confined himself to that period of his history which is comprehended in about twelve or thirteen years, from the attainder of Buckingham to the christening of Queen Elizabeth, — he has, notwithstanding, by the help of an anachronism, contrived to insert the insidious plot of Cranmer's enemies to ruin him in the king's favour, and Henry's generous resentment of their treachery.[20]

Yet nineteenth-century scholars also found value in Shakespeare's introduction of modern objects to classical and historical plays. In his *Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners* (1807), antiquarian Francis Douce suggested that the anachronisms in Shakespeare's plays could be a source of amusement for the informed reader. A whole section of the *Illustrations of Shakespeare* is devoted to 'the anachronisms and some other incongruities of Shakspeare', which Douce presents 'as an object of amusement' (vol.II, pp.281-296). Similarly, Douce views frontispieces to early eighteenth-century editions of plays as a source of enjoyment to the learned viewer (Figure 34): 'The cuts to Mr. Rowe's edition of Shakspear, and those to the first octavo edition of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, are at present extremely valuable, as they serve to record many pleasant absurdities that will not fail to excite a smile in the beholder.' Interestingly, he seems to regard these images as faithful records of stage practice. This is only partially true of the illustrations in the Rowe edition of Shakespeare's plays (published in six volumes in 1709), but it is in keeping with Douce's perception of what the theatre should be: 'a true and perfect mirror of history and manners'.[21] Douce's sense of amusement at

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[20] Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Micellanies* [*sic*]*: Consisting of Critical Observations on Several Plays of Shakespeare: With a Review of His Principal Characters, and Those of Various Eminent Writers, as Represented by Mr. Garrick and Other Celebrated Comedians. With Anecdotes of Dramatic Poets, Actors, &c* (London, 1784), vol.I, p.421.

[21] Francis Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners: With Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakespeare; on the Collection of Popular Tales Entitled Gesta Romanorum; and on the English Morris Dance* (London, 1807), vol.II, pp.283-284. Douce's interest in anachronisms as a source of amusement in image as well as in text is further demonstrated by his collection of early woodcuts containing anachronisms, pasted into a scrapbook he labelled 'Anachronisms and Absurdities' (Bodleian library, Oxford; see J. G. Mann, 'Instances of Antiquarian Feeling in Medieval and Renaissance Art', *Archaeological Journal*, 89 (1932), pp.254-74, p.254).

Shakespeare's anachronisms is perceptible, for instance, in the tone in which he lists the 'plentiful crop of blunders' in *King Lear*, or in his evocation of Anthony, who 'talks of *packing cards*, and deals out his *knaves*, *queens*, *hearts*, and *trumps*, as if he were a whist-player.'[22]

In some cases, anachronisms were an integral component of the plot, as in *Melodrame* [*sic*] *Mad! Or; The Siege of Troy* by Thomas Dibdin, given at the Surrey Theatre in 1819. The piece was advertised as a 'comic, pathetic, historic, anachronismatic [*sic*], ethic, epic melange, 'full of doleful mirth and right merrie conceit''. The piece is better described as a burlesque in the tradition of plays-within-plays, like Villiers' *The Rehearsal* or Sheridan's *The Critic*, although it has no obvious satire. Anachronisms are here the foundation of the play's intended humour, which relies on the spectator's basic historical and literary knowledge. The *Theatrical Inquisitor* damned the play as a "sad amalgamation of absurdities', while recognising that 'it is not at all adapted for a Surrey audience. It is too scientific and *recherchè* [*sic*].'[23] A large part of the humour of the play indeed relies on the audience's ability to identify and interpret the borrowings from canonical authors. The play includes many references to and quotations from plays, often transformed or in the shape of malapropisms (such as *Lodowhiskey* for *Lodoiska* in Act I, scene 1). Some scenes are almost entirely made up of lines from Shakespeare, such as the battle scene in Act II, scene 3 which recasts the combat between Hector and Achilles as a mixture of Bosworth Field and the final battle in *Macbeth*, thanks to quotations and borrowings from *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. Yet *Melodrame Mad!* was popular, as testified by the existence, in the Victoria and Albert museum, of a silk programme announcing its 41st performance, followed by the 101st representation of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian.* One of the main attractions of the play, beside the amusement created by the mixture of classical characters and modern language and objects, was surely the impressive scenes representing fires and destruction that were popular in pantomimes and melodramas.

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[22] Douce (1807), vol.II, pp.295 and 293.
[23] *The Theatrical Inquisitor, Or, Monthly Mirror*, vol.XIV, p.468.

'The Trojan dresses are all Greek to me,' declares Whipstitch the tailor, to which the theatre housekeeper replies, 'the Greek princesses wore little or nothing, so our ladies may go in their own clothes' (I, 1). The anxiety of the tailor and wardrobe-keeper reflects how important costumes were for this kind of stage productions. The theatre housekeeper, Glib, never answers the wardrobe-keepers' questions in I,1 ('Be it for fancy dress, or modern Dandy?' 'Plain skirts or flounces?'). The wardrobe-keepers' ignorance of Trojan costume makes them consider Greek costume, which eventually becomes modern dress, sometimes with humorous anachronistic effect: Achilles thus comes out of his tent in his morning gown (II,1). Afterwards, 'Helen's boudoir. . . furnished with all the luxuriance of Classic elegance, &c. &c.' is shown. The *et caeteras* provide a kind of ironic comment on the setting, implying that the characteristics of the boudoir, of which this was 'positively [the] First Appearance', are well-known to the reader, and probably corresponds to an exuberant version of neo-classical interior decoration. This ironic use of neo-classical fashion is applied to costume too: the play's extended paratextual information announces 'Dresses, *a la Grec* [sic], from the classic Scissars and Needles of Mr. Brett and Miss Freelove'. The paratext evokes the set of the play in a pseudo-archaeological tone: the scenery is 'taken from several Spots in Greece (and Troy)', but 'the Artists being prevented, by our present Neutrality, from attending the Siege, have left the task of Invention and Execution to the talent of Mr. Wilson' and his assistants. The 'old walls of Troy' are 'bran new' [sic], and the 'Entré [sic] of Trojan Cavalry' turns out to be the 'gallop' of 'a Corps of Velocipedes' led by 'Major-General Hector'. The play's self-defeating claim to authenticity introduces the many avowed anachronisms. A recurrent one is the theme of insurance against fire.

> *Ap Truncheon*. And there were no firemen or fire engines at the
> Siege of Troy?
> *Dennis.* More the pity – for if ould Priam had been insured –
> *Mac Classic.* Where wad yer play had been?

Dennis. In the fire, honey, instead of the city.[24]

At the end of the siege, Jupiter decides to stop the destruction of the city and sends Genii bearing the names of London's most famous fire insurance companies to extinguish the fire.[25] Significantly, the author of *The Siege of Troy* parodies the argument of the justification of the stage as an image of what should be, through the introduction of anachronistic objects.

> *Mac Classic.* … ye begin w'an anachronasm [*sic*] or blunder in limine … Why, man, here's a Grecian chief in a sentry box smoking a pipe o' tobacco.
> *Dennis (gravely).* The stage, sir, should reflect men and manners, not only as they are, but as they ought to be; and if the Greeks had been warmed with a whiff and a whiskey-bottle, the siege would have been settled in a single campaign.

Dennis suggests that his play is a rewriting of history as it should have been. According to this idea, anachronism would then be endowed with a kind of moral function. Unsurprisingly, however, reviews of the play – or rather puff pieces – alluded to the value of anachronisms as a source of amusement: 'the classical story is so blinded by the anachronism of modern manners,' writes the *Morning Post*, 'that humour and interest rapidly succeed each other.'[26]

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[24] I,1. See also II,2: Thersites sings 'No house will for heat be endur'd,/We'll make'em too hot for the holders;/And Aeneas, unless he's insur'd,/ May be off with his dad on his shoulders.'

[25] At the end of the play, in the tradition of the changing scenes of pantomimes and melodramas, the fire engines change to pedestals and the burning city to 'a beautiful allegorical palace of safety and the Arts by Insurance'. David Worrall has analysed the play as a reflection of the transformation of London from a city based on manufacturing to an international financial centre (David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship, and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.265-6 and 271-3.

[26] *Morning Post*, 22 June 1819, p.3.

Necessary anachronism

In *Melodrame Mad*!, anachronisms were integral to the plot and the humour of the play, with anachronisms in costume a logical part of the process. In other contexts, in the theatre as well as in art and literature, anachronistic costume was seen as necessary in order to provide audiences with attractive representations of the past. In *Ivanhoe* (1819), Walter Scott presents the merging of the costume of different periods as unavoidable, unobjectionable and even beneficial to the story. His argument is based on a distinction between classes of readers: the general reader, to whom his work is directed, would not identify slight tamperings with chronology. In the 'Dedicatory Epistle', the author confesses he 'may have confused the manners of two or three centuries, and introduced, during the reign of Richard the First, circumstances appropriated to a period either considerably earlier, or a good deal later than that era', acknowledging from the outset a conflation of periods. This attitude is evidenced in the tournament scene at the beginning of the novel, in which the Prior of Jorvaulx wears a pair of crakows – a type of shoes which only came into use in the fourteenth century. But Scott then declares, 'It is my comfort, that errors of this kind will escape the general class of readers, and that I may share in the ill-deserved applause of those architects, who, in their modern Gothic, do not hesitate to introduce, without rule or method, ornaments proper to different styles and to different periods of the art.'[27] The novel is compared to neo-Gothic architecture made of many parts from diverse periods. Despite the 'ill-deserved' success of this type of architecture, it is to the same popularity that Scott aspires. The general class of readers, it is implied, is not knowledgeable enough to notice anachronisms, although it is still able to enjoy novels and architecture. Only antiquarians and historians are able to distinguish the accurate from the fabricated, the real from the imitation. The passage is representative of Scott's use, in the

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[27] Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe: A Romance*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1820), vol.I, pp.xxvii-xxviii.

epistle, of metaphors and metonymies relating to dress and the visual arts to evoke both history and the writing of historical novels.

Scott does not use the term anachronism, but writes instead of translation and familiarisation. He presents the writing of a historical novel as a process of adaptation to make past periods 'interesting and intelligible'[28] to modern readers:

> It is true, that I neither can, nor do pretend, to the observation of complete accuracy, even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon or in Norman-French, and which prohibits my sending forth to the public this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde, prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period in which my story is laid. 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.[29]

Thus the historical novel does not offer a re-enactment of the past, but evokes it in a way that makes sense for the modern reader. This rationale enables Scott to justify the chronological liberties in some aspects of his work, especially in relation to costume: he attempted to avoid 'the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity' in order to reach 'that extensive neutral ground, the large proportion, that is, of manners and sentiments which are common to us and to our ancestors'.[30]

In practice, this can be observed in the care Scott takes to compare the medieval costume of his characters to modern garments, a recurrent process which creates a bridge between readers and characters (referred to as 'our ancestors' many times in the epistle), while limiting the quantity of technical antiquarian terms. For Scott, anachronism, or rather the conflation of the costume of different

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[28] Ibid., p.xvii.
[29] Ibid., p.xvi-xvii.
[30] Ibid., pp.xviii and xix.

periods, is a tool to translate the past, to refashion it so as to make it relevant to modern readers and bridge the gap between them and their ancestors. One of the ways in which Scott reaches this 'common ground' is by systematically likening medieval garments to contemporary ones. This makes the characters' costumes visually more intelligible; with the same stroke it makes them more relatable for the modern reader. Thus Ivanhoe, disguised as a pilgrim in his father's hall, wears a slavin: 'a cloak or mantle of coarse black serge, enveloped his whole body. It was in shape something like the cloak of a modern hussar, having similar flaps for covering the arms, and was called a "Sclaveyn", or "Slavonian".'[31] In the early nineteenth century, several regiments of dragoons in the British army were redesigned as hussar regiments. But the picturesqueness of the uniform of Hungarian hussars had made it popular in the theatre from the mid-eighteenth century. Garrick played the part of Tancred (in James Thomson's tragedy *Tancred and Sigismunda*) in this uniform, and Elizabeth Younge is dressed as a hussar in Francis Wheatley's *A Scene in Twelfth Night Act III* (1771) (Figure 35).[32] The main features of a hussar costume would therefore be known to many of Scott's readers. In this description, Scott brings together medieval costume, modern military uniform and antiquarianism. He provides the reader with a comprehensive description of the garment: its technical characteristics, including its shape, colour, material and texture, a modern visual equivalent, and last but not least, two variations on its medieval name.

This merging of old and new costume is expressed powerfully in Scott's image of the minstrel coronet. *Ivanhoe* is presented as 'the presumptuous attempt, to frame for myself a minstrel coronet, partly out of the pearls of pure antiquity, and partly from the Bristol stones and paste, with which I have endeavoured to imitate them.'[33] The metaphor recasts the writer as a medieval minstrel while simultaneously turning him into a designer of historical garments, like a stage tailor trying to achieve effect with imitation jewels. According to Timothy Campbell, the image of the coronet 'aggressively hybridizes the ancient and the modern', which is understood as 'fashionable modernity' as well as imitation. Scott thus 'insists upon

[31] Ibid., pp.65-66.
[32] De Marly (1982), pp.57-58.
[33] Scott (1820), vol.I, pp.xxviii-xxix.

the passable equivalence of contemporary manufactured material to the distinct productions of earlier ages.'[34] Yet Scott uses the image in order to apologise for his decision to clothe his 'actors', as he calls his characters, in costumes from different centuries. If Scott praises modernity, it is in the ability of modern techniques, and by extension of himself as a writer, to recreate an authentic-looking past through a variety of anachronistic costumes. Throughout the Dedicatory Epistle, Scott opposes 'precise imitation' to minute imitation. Precision, not exhaustiveness, is expected of the artist, and representation of the past need not mean re-enactment. The image of the coronet, part old and part new, reflects Scott's manner of evoking medieval dress throughout the novel (as in Ivanhoe's hussar/pilgrim coat), and creates a sense of the past as a garment that can be recovered, reproduced or reconstituted through a combination of genuine and imitation materials. It evinces a new perception of history and of the historical novelist in terms of costume. Sartorial metonymies are used elsewhere in the epistle, as when ancient Scottish and British 'traditions and manners' are evoked through two types of cloth representative of each country, Scottish tartan and English Kendal green.[35]

Anachronism and illusion: the adverse effects of historical accuracy

Some theatre-goers went further than Scott and declared that anachronism sustained theatrical illusion better than accurate costuming. In 1833, a visitor to Charles Mathews' exhibition of theatrical portraits[36] looked back on the modern costume used in some tragedies in the eighteenth century, as shown in some portraits. This prompted thoughts on historical costume and the tolerance of anachronisms. How could spectators accept this type of costume? Interestingly, anachronisms in costume are also supposed to be a challenge for the actor, who

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[34] Campbell (2016), p.167.

[35] 'The Kendal green, though its date is more ancient, ought surely to be as dear to our feelings, as the variegated tartans of the north' (Ibid., p.vii).

[36] In the early nineteenth century, comic actor and theatre manager Charles Mathews assembled a large collection of theatrical portraits. In 1835, the 349 paintings and drawings were bought and donated to the Garrick Club.

had to 'successfully overcome… the preposterous anachronism.'[37] To account for this situation, the visitor makes two remarks. First, he reminds the reader that, even in the 1830s, the stage is full of anachronisms. Secondly, he reports the opinion of an unnamed 'veteran author and critic' 'that not only was there no defect in the illusion of the scene experienced at the time; but that the adoption of more appropriate costume was felt by him rather as an hindrance to the enjoyment, because of its imperfection, as well as from the effect of a sudden change in custom.' Costume reform towards more historical accuracy would have damaged the theatrical illusion, party based on stage tradition.

Historical costumes could miss their effect and elicit laughter rather than admiration, obtaining a sense of ridicule instead of verisimilitude and picturesqueness. Costume from the first part of the eighteenth century lent a burlesque quality to a play, even if its subject was serious, like *The Royal Fugitive, or the Rights of Hospitality*. Written by Charles Kemble and performed at Covent Garden in 1829, this was a historical drama set after the battle of Culloden, and whose protagonists are Prince Charles Stuart and a variety of noble-minded characters. However, the play's costumes were not old enough to generate interest in their historical quality; on the contrary, they looked ludicrous on stage:

> The comparatively modern nature of the story renders the dresses
> of the characters, and especially of the English soldiery . . . rather
> grotesque than picturesque . . . it is a disadvantage arising from
> the author not having been able to adopt costume more ancient
> than the date of his story.[38]

That early eighteenth-century costume caused enjoyment, even in the 1830s, is indicated by Henry Crabb Robinson's comments about the play *Beau Nash* (Haymarket Theatre, 1834): 'A principal amusement arose from the costume of

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[37] *The Spectator* (256), 25 May 1833, p.480.

[38] *Morning Chronicle*, 27 November 1829, p.3. The play was first performed at the Haymarket under the title *The Wanderer*, with a different hero. According to the *Morning Chronicle*, this was because political sentiment about the Jacobite rebellion was still too strong for a play based on Bonnie Prince Charlie to be performed without causing agitation.

George II. All the ladies were in hoops – We had a country dance in hoops and wigs – the Gentlemen were in powder.'[39]

However, strict adherence to the customs of the times represented could also have disastrous visual effects. In 1791, the costume of Francis North's play *The Kentish Barons* (Haymarket Theatre) was both praised for its historical accuracy and blamed for its ridiculous effect. *The Kentish Barons*, set in the fourteenth century, was described as 'a play upon old English manners' and 'a jumble of Tragedy, Comedy and Opera'.[40] It enjoyed reasonable success and ran for ten nights in its first and only season.[41] 'The chief excellence of this piece', wrote *The Oracle*, 'is the preservation of costume.'[42] The male characters were indeed shod in the fourteenth-century crakows or poulaines, whose long toes were attached to their knees with chains. Although the costumes were generally 'gorgeous, and fastidiously correct', they were also 'somewhat too cumbrous and heavy'.[43] In the case of *The Kentish Barons*, the attempt at historical accuracy fell flat and elicited laughter.[44] James Boaden, Kemble's biographer, suggested that eagerness for accuracy of costume should be tempered by a sense of 'grace':

> [North's] antiquarian zeal had run costume much beyond
> convenience. They who amuse themselves with Strutt's
> collections, or glean from the useful chapters with which Dr. Henry
> enriched his History of England, may have learned, that there was
> a time when our beaux wore enormous pikes to their boots or
> shoes ; and that these were chained to the knees of the wearer; so

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[39] Henry Crabb Robinson, *The London Theatre 1811-1866: Selections from the Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. by Eluned Brown (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1966), 17 July 1834 (pp.143-4).

[40] James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.: Including a History of the Stage, from the Time of Garrick to the Present Period*, 2 vols (London, 1825), vol.II, p.42; Genest (1832), vol.VII, p.38. The play is reproduced in Jeffrey N. Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas, 1789-1825* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).

[41] Cox (1992), p.16.

[42] *The Oracle*, 27 June 1791, quoted in *The London Stage*, part 5, vol.2, p.1367.

[43] *The Diary, or, Woodfall's Register,* 27 June 1791, p.3.

[44] 'The author had availed himself of strict *Costumè* [*sic*], and perhaps the better to secure his actors, he had got hold of *each of them by the foot*. Bensley, who walks the *true tragic*, could not always step for the chain which went down to his toe' (*The World*, 27 June 1791, p.3).

as to exhibit a man, at perfect liberty, walking in fetters. The author's punctilious exactness, excited a smile, and perhaps to see the solemn Bensley skating through a scene in these cumbrous appendages was rather a severe tax upon gravity— 'For Right, too rigid, hardens into wrong.'[45]

The passage reflects the popularity of works such as Strutt's studies of historical costume, but also suggests that this information, translated onto the stage, could be inappropriate. The misquotation from Pope's *Essay on Man* appeals to reason as an enabler of compromise.[46] Boaden, a great admirer of Kemble's costume reforms, contrasts Norths's punctilious antiquarianism with Kemble's, which was carried 'as far only as he found grace; there he stopt.'[47]

Interest in history and the intensification of antiquarian pursuits, together with the availability of information, both in text and image, about the past meant that artists were more able than ever to depict a historical event with accurate architecture, costumes and objects. Yet too much zeal for antiquarianism in the representation of the past was criticised in painting too. Between 1787 and 1789, Benjamin West was employed to paint eight scenes from the history of Edward III for the King's Audience Chamber at Windsor Castle. West's pictures focus on events related to the Order of the Garter and its members, and they abound with banners, armorial bearings and regalia (Figure 36). The focus of antiquarians like Samuel Rush Meyrick on original sources and artefacts suggests that the representation of history was viewed as the archaeological depiction of past times and events. At first sight, the importance given to individual objects appears diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Royal Academy regarding the representation of history, in particular in the domain of costume. For Joshua Reynolds, the presence of period-specific costume would detract the viewer from the universal meaning of the subject: 'the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists, in my opinion, in being

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[45] Boaden (1825), vol.II, p.43.
[46] The original lines, from Epistle III, are: 'In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw, / Entangle justice in her net of law, / And right, too rigid, harden into wrong; / Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.'
[47] Boaden (1825), vol.II, p.43.

able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.'[48] The painter needs to distinguish between 'modern fashions' and 'the habits of nature', and therefore local and temporary ornaments must be discarded.[49] What Reynolds calls 'minute circumstantial parts' (dress, furniture, the set of the scene) should not compete with the principal element of the composition and should not make the artist's industry conspicuous.[50] This attitude towards costume is what enables portrait-painting to be improved, deploying what Reynolds termed the 'grand style'.[51] Reynolds was a great admirer of Sarah Siddons and praised her costume choices: on the stage, she wore long flowing gowns with high waists and hairstyles in the neo-classical style, which was seen as being acceptably close to nature (Figure 37). In his seventh Discourse, Reynolds reminds his audience that dress is not part of the man and 'is only an amusement for the antiquarian; and if it obstructs the general design of the piece, it is to be discarded'[52].

This is precisely the reproach made in relation to West's historical paintings for Windsor Castle. When *Edward III with the Black Prince after the Battle of Crécy* and *Queen Philippa at the Battle of Neville's Cross* (Figure 38) were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1793, they were criticised for 'the general prevalence of heraldic ornaments over the action of the scene, and the character of its personages.' 'The figure of Philippa is concealed in the weighty envelopment of Royal garments', complained one critic, while the scene of Edward III embracing his son after Crécy 'is so filled with the insignia of orders and countries, with banners and armorial bearings, that the field of battle is, at first view, not to be distinguished from the platform of a coronation procession.'[53] The volume of antiquarian detail gives an undesirable ponderousness to the scene. In his biography of West, John Galt pits the painter against Reynolds on the subject of historical dress and objects. West is

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[48] Reynolds (1997), Third Discourse, p.44.
[49] Ibid., pp.48-9.
[50] Ibid., Fourth Discourse, pp.58-59.
[51] 'Thus if a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent, which has annexed to it no ideas of meanness from its being familiar to us' (Ibid., Fourth Discourse, p.72).
[52] Ibid., Seventh Discourse, p.128.
[53] *Morning Herald*, 30 April 1793.

said to have declared, in response to Reynolds advising him to use classical dress for the *Death of General Wolfe* (1770), that 'the same truth that guides the pen of the historian should govern the pencil of the artist'.[54] Galt insists on the pains taken by West to research the period of Edward III's reign for his Windsor paintings. According to the biographer, the taste for classical art and literature had obscured the claims of British history. West appears as an anti-Reynolds, an artist who sees value in Britain's past and its material productions. Yet the reception of his 'Edward III series' shows that antiquarianism in paintings could overwhelm the scene and make it difficult to 'read' the historical event depicted.[55]

Artists like West and antiquarians like Meyrick and Douce (and even Jefferys and Strutt before them) formulated a different standard for assessing history painting: the educative value of a history painting relied not only in the subject represented, but also in the degree of accuracy in the dress, objects and architecture represented. As we shall see in greater detail in the sixth chapter of this thesis, balancing the demands of antiquarianism with the requirement of effect often proved difficult. Indeed, a few well-chosen anachronisms, such as the presence of black servants in Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, or Dorothy Jordan wearing a Nelson cap as part of her costume for Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* could create very good stage effects.[56] Artistic productions of the period thus reflect ambivalent attitudes towards anachronism and the 'truth of history': on the one hand, both modern costume and the conventional 'historical' dress resorted to by theatres as the generic costume of the past were increasingly criticised for their anachronistic nature. On the other hand, the authority of stage tradition and the requirement to achieve visual effect – especially in the rebuilt theatres of the early nineteenth century, which were so large that the effect of a

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[54] John Galt, *The Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West, Esq* (London, 1820), p.48.

[55] On the 'Edward III' paintings, see Wendy Greenhouse, 'Benjamin West and Edward III: A Neoclassical Painter and Medieval History', *Art History*, 8 (1985), pp.178-91.

[56] 'Monk' Lewis was of course aware of the anachronism, but his desire to achieve good effect prevailed, as he explained in the second edition of the play (1798, p.101). 'Mrs. Jordan has set the fashion for the Nelson Cap. In the character of Beatrice, no matter for the Anachronism, she wore a head dress made in the form of a Sailor's Cap, with the letters H.N. embroidered, and adorned with laurel. It had a most tasteful effect" (*Morning Chronicle*, 13 October 1798, p.2). A few days later the *Oracle* reported that 'Mrs Jordan's introduction of the Nelson Cap has been uncommonly profitable to the Milliner, who has already sold 300' (*Oracle*, 17 October 1798, p.2).

performance had to rely in a large part on the visual rather than the auditory – led managers and actors to choose anachronism over historical accuracy. A similar disposition can be observed in literature and the visual arts, where the taste for antiquarianism and for the representation of historical costumes produced a paradox: the minuteness of historical detail was seen as superfluous and detrimental to the quality of the work, so that many spectators felt that a less archaeological setting would be more appropriate. Perceptions of historical dress and its role in the arts indicate shifting definitions of, and approaches to, the 'truth' of history. The study of costume and its uses throws light on the period's efforts to find balance between the new interest in historical dress and the requirements of characterization and visual effect in the arts.

Chapter 3

Creating chronology: visual representations of historical continuity

In September 1786, German writer Sophie von La Roche, who was then staying in London, visited Kensington Palace. She was particularly struck by the portraits of British monarchs and related her impressions in her travel diary: 'Such an array of the different periods of dress, of so many kings and queens, makes a curious spectacle.'[1] La Roche's comment reflects the function of the gallery of portraits as visual entertainment, at the same time as it expresses the writer's sensibility to changes in costume over time. During her stay in London, La Roche often commented on the costumes she encountered in her sightseeing: the 'court dress' that clothed the wax effigy of the Duchess of Richmond in Westminster Abbey, the 'splendid' costume, 'in form as seen on sentries stationed at the lists in pictures of old tourneys' of a Beefeater and the silver-embroidered dress in a picture of Queen Elizabeth at the Tower of London.[2] Often in La Roche's diary, historical costume prompts thoughts on English history and comparisons between past and present. La Roche was also a keen theatre-goer, although her references to stage costumes are not as detailed. Yet her interest in, and description of, historical dress show that historical stage costume must not be viewed in isolation, as only one aspect of the theatrical culture of the age. Instead, it is crucial to recognise that historical figures (as embodied by actors) and their dress were part of a wider network of images of history, in particular portraits and depictions of historical dress. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, knowledge about and representations of costume increasingly became critical contributors to historical awareness. Through a variety of stand-alone images and book illustrations, historical costume participated in the development of a sense of chronology and British history. This is exemplified, for instance, by the publication of chronological

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[1] Sophie von La Roche, *Sophie in London 1786: Being the Diary of Sophie v. La Roche*, trans. by Clare Williams (London: J. Cape, 1933), p.232. This is a translation of the London section of La Roche's travel diary *Tagebuch Einer Reise Durch Holland Und England* (Offenbach am Main, 1788).
[2] La Roche (1933), pp.118, 127 and 128.

accounts of evolutions in costume, often extensively illustrated. As the years advanced, the visual culture around the history of costume became increasingly important.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. It first seeks to contextualise representations of historical costume in the visual culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by analysing a range of printed material offering views of historical dress, such as costume books, history book illustrations and graphic satires. Secondly, it explores how studies and depictions of historical costume helped foster a sense of chronology and periodization in the historical imagination of the age. In the theatre, this meant that many spectators became more discriminating about managerial claims to 'accurate' costuming. From the end of the eighteenth century, we can observe the adoption of what can be called a comparative method in the representation of costume in history books as well as in stand-alone prints. In various contexts, prints were published that present, within the same plate, costumes of different periods. Sometimes the evolution of dress and fashion is the subject of the image; at other times the picture offers an indirect (and, on occasion, inaccurate) history of costume. This section will consider projects by artists and publishers that focus on the juxtaposition of views of historical dress, from the mid-eighteenth to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Presenting clothed figures side by side, these images encourage viewers to compare and contrast, and often to reconstruct a chronology of events and changes in dress.

Synchrony and diachrony: Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations*

This comparative method appears to have been initiated by Thomas Jefferys in his seminal costume book *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Antient and Modern* (1757-72). The accompanying text is presented as a means to overcome the limitations of the plates in the depiction of the dresses. It consists of a few general remarks on dress and a cursory sketch of changes in European dress over time, followed by a list of sources for each image and (in some, but not all,

cases) historical or technical remarks about the person or the costume depicted. The whole is 'disposed as an Index to the Work', a formulation that emphasizes the pre-eminence of the visual.[3] Although the project of the book is to include both historical and exotic dress, the costumes are presented in no particular chronological order. The series illustrating England in volume II begins with the Tudors. Henry VII's predecessor Richard III, however, only appears in the section dealing with popular theatrical costumes.[4] Volume IV goes back in time, then jumps to the seventeenth century: the section headed 'Great Britain' (plates 177 to 191) includes 'an ancient Breton', a Saxon, a Dane, a Norman, three Picts and two Caledonians. These portraits are followed by four 'English Ladies' from 1641 and one 'English woman'.[5] This section thus offers a summary of the ancient history of Britain, presenting a chronology of the successive invasions by the Romans, Vikings and Normans, as well as a visual description of the island's aboriginal inhabitants. The first four figures and their dresses are taken from a work published in the previous century by English cartographer John Speed (Figure 39). The title page of the 1627 (second) edition of Speed's *History of Great Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* and its accompanying atlas *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* represents an arched stone construction bearing the word 'Britannia', with niches housing statues of representatives of the five peoples who settled in Britain: 'a Britaine' (called 'ancient Breton' in Jefferys), a Roman, a Saxon, a Dane and a Norman.[6] The five other portraits, of Picts and Caledonians, are taken from Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588).

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[3] Jefferys (1757-72), vol. I, p.viii. See also p.xiii.

[4] This suggests two phenomena – that the costume of Richard III was a popular dress at masquerades (see below), and that the period's perception of the king was strongly indebted to Shakespeare.

[5] The first four English ladies were drawn after a set of allegorical etchings of the four seasons by Wenceslaus Hollar (1641), the last one after Speed (1626).

[6] The *History of Great Britain* and the *Theatre* were first published in 1611-12. The *Theatre* is 'the earliest English attempt at producing an atlas on a grand scale' and 'a notable contribution to British topography' (Sarah Bendall, 'Speed, John (1551/2-1629)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/26093 [accessed 5 May 2016]). In 1627 Speed also published *A Prospect of the most Famous Parts of the World*, a world atlas with insets containing figures clothed in the costume of the countries shown on the maps.

The original drawings were made by John White after a trip to America in 1585, during which he realised several watercolours of Native Americans, subsequently engraved by Theodore de Bry as illustrations to Herriot's *Report*. The book has a supplement entitled 'Some images of the Pictes, which in old tyme dyd habite one part of the Great Bretainne', which contains five images of Picts and ancient Britons (four of them after drawings by White, one after Le Moyne).[7] The comparison between depictions of Algonquins and of ancient Picts and Britons was intended to emphasize Britain's primitive past.[8] Yet, as Sam Smiles has noted, the poses and muscularity of White's figures associated them with the classical imagery of the period's high art (Figure 40). The effect of such classicisation was to offset the negative image of primitivism and to dignify the figures.[9] This reading of White's images offers some explanation of the apparent discrepancy between ancient Britons and seventeenth-century English ladies in Jefferys's costume book, suggesting a kind of connection between the 'classical' Picts and the ladies, who are wearing costumes of a period which was considered, in the eighteenth century, to be the epitome of taste in Britain.[10] These sets of images were significant in the popularisation of representations of the past inhabitants of Britain over many decades. The costumes depicted are largely fanciful (Speed's in particular), but what is fascinating is the incredible posterity of Speed's and De Bry's images. In his *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations*, Jefferys was recycling images that were, in some cases, already more than a century old.[11]

The seemingly haphazard chronological order of the chapters in *A Collection of Dresses and Habits* is perhaps a result of the publication in four volumes over several years. Volume IV was published in 1772 and the choice to include pictures of ancient Britons, beyond the visual and authoritative appeal of Speed's works, was

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[7] See Kim Sloan, *A New World: England's First View of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) and Kim Sloan, ed., *European Visions: American Voices* (London: British Museum Research Publication 172, 2009).

[8] Sam Smiles, 'John White and British Antiquity: Savage Origins in the Context of Tudor Historiography', in Sloan (2009), pp.106-112, p.108.

[9] Ibid., pp.107 and 110.

[10] On the 'discovery' of the history and social organisation of Ancient Britons, see Sweet (2004), Chapter 4: 'The Ancient Britons', pp.119-153.

[11] In the period under study, the images also appeared in *A Museum for Young Gentlemen and Ladies* (1799) and George Lyttleton's *History of England* (1803) (Smiles (2009), p.111).

perhaps influenced by the success of Macpherson's Ossian poems, which appeared from 1760. Studying the surprising combinations of different types of costumes and the way some of them are described, Aileen Ribeiro has suggested that Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* might have been intended as a source of designs for artists, stage designers and makers of masquerade costumes.[12] The inclusion of costumes for favourite stage characters and allegories, the detailed description of the fabrics and colours of certain dresses (especially women's),[13] and the large number of Renaissance and seventeenth-century costumes indeed point to the world of the masquerade. As Chloe Wigston Smith has shown, *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* gives pride of place to the visual over the textual. The costume book therefore appears as visual entertainment, and the choice of costumes and their mode of representation blur the distinction between authentic and fictional costume.[14] Although Jefferys arranged the figures of the invaders in the same section, he broke down into several plates what Speed had presented synchronically. The effect is ambiguous: the costumes are presented individually, as potential models for masquerade dresses, yet precisely by being set in succession, they re-establish a diachronic continuity between the five figures. The following portraits of Picts and Caledonians invite the reader to compare the costume of the 'invaders' to that of the 'natives'. That historical and documentary qualities were ascribed to Jefferys's (or Speed's and De Bry's) prints is demonstrated by their reproduction in a range of eighteenth and nineteenth-century publications. In the decades after the publication of Jefferys's *Collection*, the sets of images discussed above were recuperated by historians and presented as accurate representations of historical costume in illustrated histories of England.

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[12] Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France, 1750-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp.183 and 210.

[13] See for instance the analysis of the two plates depicting the character Imoinda (from Southerne's play *Oroonoko*) in Chloe Wigston Smith, 'Dressing the British: Clothes, Customs, and Nation in W. H. Pyne's 'The Costume of Great Britain'', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, 38 (2009), pp.143-71, pp.157-8.

[14] Wigston Smith (2009), p.156-8.

Juxtapositions: ancient Britons and Anglo-Saxon kings in illustrated histories of England

The most popular history of England of the first half of the eighteenth century was Paul de Rapin-Thoyras' *Histoire d'Angleterre*, published in 1724 and translated (with a continuation) by Nicholas Tindal in 1726-28 and 1731. Rapin's *History* was 'the first complete and up-to-date history of England'[15] and fostered a number of adaptations and retellings, such as John Lockman's *New History of England* (1729) and William Guthrie's *General History of England* (1744-51). The following decades saw the publication of Hume's and Smollett's histories (1754-62 and 1757-58), and from the 1770s the number of published histories of England increased. While the early histories were illustrated with symbolic portraits of rulers (such as George Vertue's illustrations for Tindal's translation of Rapin, published in 1732-1733), from the 1740s they began to include figural scenes of famous events in English history.[16] Many histories were issued in parts, and engravings could be bought separately and inserted in the bound volumes according to the publisher's instructions.[17] In 1777, publisher John Cooke innovated in the style of illustrations. George Frederick Raymond's *New, Universal, and Impartial History of England* (published in parts by Cooke and his son Charles from 1777 to 1790) was illustrated with the usual portraits and scenes, but the novelty was a series of plates each depicting four Anglo-Saxon kings 'in the Habits of the Time in which they reigned.' The portraits were drawn by Conrad Martin Metz[18] and engraved by Charles Grignion (1721-1810). The five plates depict Anglo-Saxon kings, from Ethelred to Harold II, and each is given a coat of arms (Figure 41). The king's dresses evince the

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[15] Hugh Trevor-Roper in Macaulay (1979), p.10.

[16] The first seems to be the sixth edition of Lockman's *New History of England* in 1747.

[17] 'Instructions to the binder' were included in the book. George Vertue's illustrations for Nicholas Tindal's translation of Paul de Rapin-Thoyras' *Histoire d'Angleterre* were issued by subscription from 1733, and then published separately in 1736 (Simon Keynes, 'The Cult of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), pp.225-356, p.273). For histories of England published in parts prior to 1750, see Roy McKeen Wiles, *Serial Publication in England before 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

[18] Conrad Martin Metz (1749-1827), born in Germany, moved to London in 1781 where he studied engraving under Francesco Bartolozzi. He specialised in imitations of drawings by Old Masters, notably with his *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings* (London, 1789). Metz's work for Raymond's *History* also included full-page portraits and illustration of recent military events.

familiar combination of elements intended to connote the past, widely used in the theatre and in history painting: plumes and capes, plated armour, and unexpectedly, features of Van Dyck dress. Thus, Athelstan is depicted with slashed sleeves (Figure 41), and both Edwy and Edward the Martyr wear paned trunk hoses and garters (Figure 42, Figure 43). Only in a few of the portraits is costume associated with the king in a meaningful way. For instance, Edgar wears a tunic and carries a bow, an allusion to the hunting party during which he was said to have met his future consort Elfrida (Figure 42).[19] Alfred the Great is depicted as a harpist, a reference to the then well-known story of Alfred infiltrating the Danish camp disguised as a musician. The plain tunic and sandals give him the appearance of a Celtic bard, while the hand gesture alludes to Alfred's wisdom and fostering of the liberal arts.[20] King Canute's dress (Figure 43) is probably inspired by that of the Dane on the Speed frontispiece, and resembles the outfit of the Dane on the uncredited plate, from the same book, entitled *Portraits of a Roman Commander, a Saxon Chief, a Danish General & a Norman, all habited in the respective Dresses of the Times in which they invaded and conquered England, at different Periods* (Figure 44). The new format enables the viewer to compare, at a glance, the dress and attitudes of four kings. Despite the obvious anachronisms in dress, the title of the plates and the coat of arms attributed to each king strive to give the engravings some kind of antiquarian quality. The full title of Raymond's *History* heavily stresses the reliable character attributed to the book by its authors: *A New, Universal, and Impartial History of England, from the Earliest Authentic Records, and Most Genuine Historical Evidence, to the End of the Present Year*. This device probably helped shape a certain image of Anglo-Saxon kings in the minds of the public, although it is likely that readers mostly remembered the symbolic elements of the outfits: the full armour for Edmund II, known as Edmund Ironside, or, as we have seen, Alfred's harp and Edgar's bow.

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[19] See for instance Edgar's equipment and attendants in William Hamilton's *King Edgar's First Interview with Queen Elfrida* (1774; oil on canvas, Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire).

[20] On representations of King Alfred through the centuries, see Keynes (1999), especially pp.274-290 on the development of the cult of King Alfred, and its political implications, in the eighteenth century.

The four-portrait plate format was adopted by Alexander Hogg, another successful publisher of cheap serial works, for Edward Barnard's *New, Comprehensive, and Complete History of England* (1783). The portraits of rulers in Barnard's *History* were drawn by William Hamilton, who also contributed a number of vignettes and a plate illustrating ancient weapons. Hamilton's portraits evince a deliberate reflexion about the dresses of the Anglo-Saxon period: while Metz had mostly applied a formula for historical dress such as armour and slashed garments, Hamilton's Anglo-Saxon kings are all clothed in tunics and long mantles (Figure 45). Even the costume of the Danish general, whose representation is an almost exact copy of Speed's, has been modified to match that of the other rulers. The distinctive wide, scalloped white collar of the Dane in Speed and in Jefferys has become a small pointed collar similar to that worn by kings Edmund I and Edwy in the Raymond engravings. The frogging on the Dane's coat has been retained, but the coat is worn open and has essentially been converted into a mantle or cape. The rulers in this series of plates are all united, then, by the style of their dress. Thanks to such unification through costume, Julius Caesar and the Danish General are made part of a lineage of British rulers. Through the four-portrait presentation, negative judgements of value about 'invaders' are suspended. Like the Anglo-Saxon kings, they are rulers and military chiefs (note that Speed's Dane has become a General) and are given a coat of arms too.

The visual presentation inaugurated by Metz and taken up by Hamilton invites the reader to think about costume in relation to the period in which its bearer lived, and to compare the four figures depicted on the same page. In Barnard's work, in particular, the presence of illustrations of artefacts such as coins and weapons suggests that readers were interested in the archaeological aspects of history – costumes and objects as well as the traditional narrative of past political events. The title of the plates make clear that the representation of costume is at the core of the illustrative project: the word 'dresses' and 'habits' are the subject of the sentence describing the picture: 'Portraits and Dresses', 'Habits and Characters'. While the 'portraits in habits' in Raymond are restricted to medieval kings, Barnard also included more recent costumes such as the 'Various Habits and Characters at

Different Periods of the History of England' (facing p.374), which depicts figures taken from portraits by Kneller and other artists, and four 'Celebrated Female Portraits, with the respective Habits worn at different Periods of the History of England', featuring Elizabeth of York and Jane Seymour (painted after Holbein's painting on the wall of the Privy Chamber in the Palace of Whitehall), and two female portraits from 1640 after Van Dyck: a 'Lady of Quality' and 'a Lady Mayoress of London' (facing p.396). Although costume books were often organised by country or period,[21] many images depicting British historical costume juxtapose two or more figures in costumes from different periods. Thus the first of the five plates depicting 'Portraits and Dresses of the most Remarkable Personages & Sovereigns in England Prior to the Norman Conquest' in Barnard's *History* (Figure 46) conflates quite different periods in its choice of subjects: an ancient Briton, Queen Boadicea, a Druid and a Pict. Visually, weapons and nakedness bring together the ancient Briton and the Pict, while Boadicea and the druid wear similar long pleated gowns.

In his *History of England* (1777-90), Raymond chose to have all four invaders of Britain represented on the same page, as John Speed had done on the title-page of his *Theatre*. While Jefferys had fragmented Speed's image into a set of individual portrait plates, the illustrations in Raymond (and in Bernard after him, to a certain extent) recovers the unity that was present in Speed's title-page. The reader is invited to contrast the costumes depicted. However, in spite of – or perhaps because of – the variations in clothing, the images also hint at a continuity between the periods evoked through the various costumes. As a consequence, the reader-viewer is linked to the former inhabitants of Britain, a process reinforced by the frequent reference to ancient and medieval Britons as the 'ancestors' of modern Britons: antiquarian Joseph Strutt thus described his *Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* as the first work in English 'sufficiently extensive and regular to display the prevalent fashions of our ancestors through

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[21] For instance William H. Pyne's *The Costume of Great Britain* (London, 1805) and Thomas Hope's *Costume of the Ancients* (London, 1809).

every century.'[22] The phrase testifies to a sense of shared descent and heritage, establishing a clear temporal continuity between the figures depicted in history books. It was also used in novels of historical ambitions, such as Henrietta Rouviere Mosse's *A Peep at our Ancestors: An Historical Romance* (1807).[23]

Comparison: Robert Dighton's fashionables

The 'display of prevalent fashions' over time was a topic taken up by actor and artist Robert Dighton senior (1752-1814) in two prints comparing male and female outfits from 1700 and 1800. A miniature painter who had attended the Royal Academy schools in the 1770s, Dighton was also a celebrated actor and singer at Sadler's Wells Theatre.[24] According to Dennis Rose, 'it was the stage that, no doubt, started his interest in facial expressions and the study of human nature.'[25] His interest in the details of dress is certainly manifest in his watercolours of London life, his distinctive full-length humorous portraits and other images such as his series of mezzotints of the seasons featuring costumes for each month of the year. Dighton's print *Fashionable Females in 1700 - in 1800* (Figure 47) and its male counterpart *A Man of Fashion in 1700/A Fashionable man in 1800* (Figure 48) (1800) pitch contemporary fashion against that of a hundred years before. Two figures are placed symmetrically against a blank background, gauging each other's outfit. In each image, both costumes are finely delineated. They are equally beautiful and interesting. Notwithstanding the difference in the style of the dresses, the way in

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[22] Joseph Strutt, *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (London, 1796), vol.I, p.iii. The term is also often used by Planché, who believed that actors were 'the representatives of our heroic ancestors' and should be dressed with fitting dignity (James Robinson Planché, 'Letter to the Editor of The Album', *The Album*, III (May-August 1823), pp.298-304, p.302). See also his *Recollections and Reflections of J.R. Planché (Somerset Herald): A Professional Biography*, 2 vols (London, 1872), p.224.

[23] On the increasing re-historicisation of the novel in the eighteenth century, see Karen O'Brien, 'History and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68 (2005), pp.397–413.

[24] Dennis Rose, *Life, Times and Recorded Works of Robert Dighton (1752-1814) Actor, Artist and Printseller and Three of His Artist Sons: Portrayers of Georgian Pageantry and Wit* (Great Britain: D. Rose, 1981), p.12. On the life and works of the Dighton family, see also David Padbury, *A View of Dightons: The Dighton Family, Their Times, Caricatures and Portraits* (London: Cartoon Museum, 2007).

[25] Ibid., p.12.

which they are represented brings their similarities to the fore. Indeed they are not that different: the ladies' overskirts, for instance, are both trimmed. The 1700 overskirt is decorated with large white ruffles, while the white 1800 gown is lined with a thin red border that recalls the toga praetexta, designating the wearer as a follower of neo-classical fashion. The symmetrical disposition reinforces the dynamic movement created by the dresses and their decorations. The engravings present fashion as a phenomenon not static, but lively and evolving over time. Dighton seems to have been interested in bringing out the shape, colour and details of the costumes and not in judgements of value. The pictures invite thoughts about fashion as a universal phenomenon and about notions of permanence and transformation. In *Fashionable Females*, plumes replaced the fontange as the favoured headdress of the day, but they both have similar colours and a similar effect: crowning the head with a light, white contraption. The men both wear decorative objects: a sword for the earlier gentleman and a wooden, pastoral-looking walking stick for the 1800 dandy. The latter looks with curiosity at the other man through his quizzing glass, which suggests that there could be amusement in the perusal of costume from earlier years. At the same time, it invites the viewer of the engraving to adopt a similar critical glance. The light satirical dimension of the prints lies perhaps in the suggestion of the universality and fickleness of fashion: each of the figures is desirous to appear to full fashionable advantage, yet the characters from 1800 fail to recognise that however strange they think past costumes may look, they themselves in turn could be objects of scrutiny. The comparative method used in these prints thus invites us to be both appreciative of the fineries of costume and critical of fashion's excesses.

The mode of representation, a full-length figure against a white background, is reminiscent of the visual formula used for costume illustrations, fashion plates and theatrical portraits (see chapter 1). Dighton used it for his profile portraits of famous actors: John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons and George Frederick Cooke among others. His son Richard (1795-1880) followed in his father's footsteps and at his father's death took over the production of full-length side portraits, in particular depictions of famous performers in costume (see his portrait of Kean as Brutus in

chapter 4). The idea of the transformation brought about by dress is present in another of Dighton's popular prints, *A fashionable lady in dress & undress* (Figure 49). The image emphasises both the transformative power of time, which ages bodies, and the transformative power of clothes, which efficiently conceal the damages of time. Dighton's symmetrical engravings are interesting in that they generate an ambivalent reading: fashion is acknowledged to be somewhat superficial, yet it is evoked as a universal interest and the costumes are depicted as beautiful and effective at serving their purpose. The symmetrical comparative device was used to great effect in the more caricatural prints *Life and Death contrasted - or, an essay on Woman* (Figure 50) and its pair *Life and Death contrasted - or, an essay on Man* (1784). In these *memento mori* images, clothes, games and pastimes conceal the mortality of the body. Dighton's originality in the representation of historical and contemporary costume in his *Fashionable* prints is to represent the transformative power of time in a dynamic and visually attractive way, created by the bisection of the image at the same time as it depicts an interaction between figures from different periods. In *Fashionable Females* in particular, the curves of the dress guide the viewer's gaze from one costume to the other.

Learning through play: historical jigsaw puzzles and accurate costumes

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, information about historical costume became available through a wider range of objects and media. Historical accuracy, which had been a selling point for theatrical productions and art exhibitions, became an attraction in other contexts too. The educational value given to accurate representation of costume is perceptible, for instance, in educational games such as jigsaw puzzles.[26] Although the invention of jigsaw puzzles in Europe is disputed, the first British ones are usually credited to printmaker John

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[26] See Caroline G. Goodfellow, *How We Played: Games from Childhood Past* (Stroud: History Press, 2008), Chapter 6: 'History Made Easy' [unpaginated eBook edition, 2012]; Linda Hannas, *The English Jigsaw Puzzle, 1760-1890* (London: Wayland Publishers, 1972); see also Caroline G. Goodfellow, *A Collector's Guide to Games and Puzzles* (London: Apple, 1991).

Spilsbury (1739-1769), who started producing 'dissected maps' in the 1760s.[27] The game quickly grew in popularity and by the end of the century the process had extended to history as well. One of the earliest jigsaw puzzles taking history as its subject was made in the 1780s (Figure 51).[28] Each piece consists of a medallion portrait of a king or queen of England, from William I to George II, surrounded by text giving the dates of the monarch, the main political figures and the significant events of his or her reign. The portraits of medieval kings are generally imagined images with no significant effort at accuracy of costume. However, the type of events mentioned is revealing of the growing interest in the history of manners. The text is a mixture of political and military events, and of episodes relating to civil society and everyday life: inventions, architecture, etc. Thus the piece featuring Henry II mentions, alongside the well-known events of his reign (such as the assassination of Thomas à Becket and the king's penance), 'Glass first used for windows', 'England divided into six circuits for Judges 1176' and 'London Bridge began to be built in Stone'. That non-political events of this type should become akin to historical markers suggest the expansion of the notion of historical culture to envelop changes in the customs and habits of the English people as well as the main political changes.

In 1788 John Wallis, one of the period's most successful publishers of children's books and games,[29] issued a jigsaw puzzled entitled *Chronological Tables of English History for the Instruction of Youth* (Figure 52). The puzzle was republished, hand-coloured, in 1799. Conceived in a similar way to the 'Kings and Queens of England' jigsaw, it shows thirty-two bust portraits of English kings and queens, above a table including biographical elements and a list of significant events from each reign. The presentation is reminiscent of the full-length portraits of monarchs with biographical information placed at their feet, engraved after Samuel Wale, that appeared as illustrations to Barnard's and Raymond's histories of England. The 'table' format itself was used in history books such as Sarah Trimmer's

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[27] Anne Douglas Williams, *The Jigsaw Puzzle: Piecing Together a History* (New York: Berkley Books, 2004), pp.19-20.
[28] Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood, museum number B.54-1993.
[29] Peter Hunt, ed., *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.247.

Description of a Set of Prints of English History (1792). The jigsaw joins text and image, set in chronological order. The player's task is to reconstruct a temporal and visual continuity between the pieces. The reconstructed image gives the impression of an unbroken line of monarchs. At the same time, it offers a picture of the evolution of royal clothing over time, although the dress of the first medieval kings is certainly imaginative.

The association between history, costume and education was taken further in the first quarter of the next century. *The Principal Events in the History of England; to the Reign of George the III*, published in December 1815 by William Darton, Joshua Harvey and Samuel Darton, bears the revealing subtitle, 'the Characters in each event are represented in the appropriate Costumes of the different periods'.[30] This particular jigsaw puzzle testifies not only to the success of innovative ways of teaching history, but also to the belief that costume could play an attractive and important role in this teaching. Images are the central components of this jigsaw, with texts acting as captions to the depictions of events. Impressively, given the small scale of each piece, the images are very precise and full of detail, such as the drowning native Briton in the scene depicting the landing of Julius Caesar (Figure 53). The costumes are indeed generally accurate, including that of women, whose clothing in art and on the stage was often too influenced by contemporary fashion to embrace important changes in costuming. The depiction of Henry II on his throne (Figure 54) is visibly inspired by a medieval manuscript. Moreover, the attention to the dress of figures in the background as well as soldiers reflects the growing notion in the theatre that all characters in a play should be dressed consistently in order to achieve an effective stage picture. In the marriage scene between Henry VII and Elizabeth of York (Figure 55), both Elizabeth and the ladies behind the couple wear medieval headdresses. In a similar way, battle scenes often include heraldic references, and a glance at the completed jigsaw offers a view of the evolution of military costume and armour from the Roman landing to

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[30] Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood, museum number B.54-1993. The Dartons and Harvey were publishers known for children's books and educational material. See Lawrence Darton, *The Dartons: An Annotated Check-List of Children's Books, Games and Educational Aids Issued by Two Publishing Houses 1787-1876* (London: British Library, 2004).

the death of Nelson. While most eighteenth and nineteenth-century jigsaws delineating English history start with the Norman Conquest,[31] the first of the forty-eight scenes of *The Principal Events in the History of England* is a picture of Ancient Britons. This jigsaw focuses on events rather than reigns, which accounts for the absence of, for instance, a depiction of Queen Elizabeth. Instead, the jigsaw shows the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The creators of the game have chosen events with a theatrical quality, events that lend themselves well to pictorial representation. The Hanoverian Succession, for example, is not represented, whereas the battle of Culloden, the escape of Prince Charles Edward Stuart and the Gordon Riots of 1780 are.

With historical jigsaw puzzles, players were also viewers. Piece by piece, they were actively involved in the reconstruction of history and the creation of chronology in the form of an ordered suite of images and their descriptions. In the Museum of Childhood's copy of 'The Principal Events in the History of England', the image and text of each event are on the same piece. In other versions of the game (in the Birmingham and Norwich Museums), the text has been cut separately, opening the possibility of an image-only approach to history, before scene and caption are reunited.

Historical games were not viewed uncritically. Walter Scott, in the chapter from *Waverley* devoted to Edward Waverley's education, questions the consequences of teaching history and other disciplines through play:

> I am aware I may be here reminded of the necessity of rendering
> instruction agreeable to youth . . . but an age in which children are
> taught the driest doctrines by the insinuating method of
> instructive games, has little reason to dread the consequences of
> study being rendered too serious or severe. The history of England
> is now reduced to a game at cards, the problems of mathematics
> to puzzles and riddles, and the doctrines of arithmetic may, we are

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[31] Goodfellow (2008), Chapter 6. Another notable exception was the popular 'Wallis's New Game of Universal History and Chronology': in this spiral race game first issued in 1814, the first 75 spaces (out of a total of 138) are devoted to events before Hastings, starting with Adam and Eve.

assured, be sufficiently acquired by spending a few hours a week at a new and complicated edition of the Royal Game of the Goose. There wants but one step further, and the Creed and Ten Commandments may be taught in the same manner, without the necessity of the grave face, deliberate tone of recital, and devout attention, hitherto exacted from the well-governed childhood of this realm. It may, in the meantime, be subject of serious consideration, whether those who are accustomed only to acquire instruction through the medium of amusement may not be brought to reject that which approaches under the aspect of study; whether those who learn history by the cards may not be led to prefer the means to the end; and whether, were we to teach religion in the way of sport, our pupils may not thereby be gradually induced to make sport of their religion.[32]

As far as the history of England was concerned, Scott needed not worry too much, for interest in the historical versions of games such as jigsaw puzzles and spiral race games dwindled in the mid-nineteenth century.[33] By then, however, the first truly researched histories of costume had appeared, and the increased number of illustrated historical novels and historical genre paintings had played a key role in the popularization of costumes of different periods.

Towards the first dress histories

The first British antiquarian to adopt a scholarly approach to the history of costume was Joseph Strutt in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. His publications focused on images, all taken from original artefacts such as funeral effigies and manuscripts. What these new costume books offered was a pictorial history of the evolution of dress in a specific country. The reference to the visual

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[32] Walter Scott, *Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, 1814), vol.I, pp.34-35.
[33] Goodfellow (2008), Chapter 6.

appears in the title of two of Strutt's publications, *A Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Habits etc., of the Inhabitants of England* (1774-6; three volumes) and *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (published by subscription in two volumes, 1796 and 1799). The works fall into two parts: a long general introduction dealing with the principal characteristics of English dress at various times, followed by the plates reproducing (sometimes with a few modifications) the artefacts on which interesting costumes appear. Strutt was described by his contemporary antiquarian Richard Gough as 'the English Montfaucon',[34] and more recently as 'the father of dress historians.'[35] In 1842, in acknowledgement of the significance of Strutt's research, James Robinson Planché published a new edition of the *Dress and Habits*. Planché was by then an established playwright and costume designer as well as an antiquarian and successful dress historian, and his interest in Strutt's work demonstrates the seminal nature of Strutt's research, in particular its attitude to sources and its use of the visual.

However, between the time of Strutt and that of Planché, several works on costume were published. They are now of little value to the student of dress history, but they attest to the growing taste for representations of historical costume in Britain. In 1814 and 1815 Colonel Charles Hamilton Smith, a friend of Samuel Rush Meyrick, published two books on historical costume: *Selections of the Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland* and *The Ancient Costumes of Great Britain and Ireland*. 'Ancient' here describes the period ranging from the seventh to the sixteenth century. Smith's depictions and descriptions of historical costume are, as scholars have noted, very inaccurate in places.[36] In particular, the inclusion of Druids and Celtic figures reflects popular interest in Celtic tribes and Druidical mysticism, but the images evince 'little understanding of the costume of the period,

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[34] *Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain* (1786), vol.I, p.3; quoted in Ribeiro (1994), p.66. Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741) was a French Benedictine monk and antiquarian who published some of the eighteenth century's most important books of archaeological research: *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719-1724) and *Les Monumens de la monarchie françoise* (1729-33).

[35] Ribeiro (1994), p.66.

[36] Ribeiro (1994), p.70. Lou Taylor (2004) describes the *Selections of the Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland* as 'a veritable fantasy of dress history' (p.30).

which Smith construes as vaguely medieval.' Like Strutt's publications, Smith's books comprise a series of large plates preceded by an introduction and description of each costume. But Smith viewed the antiquarian approach to dress as 'dry, tasteless and inelegant'[37], and set about producing a history of costume that was more visually appealing, at the expense of historical accuracy.[38] In spite of this tampering with accuracy – or perhaps because of his eye for embellishment – Smith often provided information about correctness of costume to Edmund Kean, Charles Kean and William Charles Macready.[39]

Significant advances in dress history were made by the Rev. Thomas Dudley Fosbroke, who published an *Encyclopædia of Antiquities* in 1825 and, the same year, a *Synopsis of Ancient Costume, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and English*, a shorter work derived from the *Encyclopædia*. Both are essentially descriptive works illustrated by a few plates. In his account of English costume (chapter XX in the *Encyclopædia*), Fosbroke espoused Strutt's organisation of costumes by century rather than by reign. His information on costume is derived from the work of earlier authors on costume, such as Strutt's *Dresses and Habits* (1796-1799) and Smith and Meyrick's *Costume of the Original Inhabitants of the British Islands* (1815). These works are also the sources for the two plates that constitute Fosbroke's illustrations of English costume, with some original figures taken from manuscripts, monument brasses, paintings, etc. The *Encyclopædia* includes 'some general remarks for ascertaining the Æras of Figures in the Middle Ages' while in the *Synopsis* the 'short general rules for ascertaining this era' can be found at the end of each section. Both works end with an alphabetical glossary of garments. Although the distinction between text and full-page illustration is maintained, the plates in the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Synopsis of Ancient Costume* are innovative in that they present a linear evolution of costume on the same page.

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[37] *Selections of the Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland,* p.v, quoted in Ribeiro (1994), p.68.
[38] See Ribeiro (1994), p.68.
[39] Christine E. Jackson, 'Smith, Charles Hamilton (1776–1859)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/25786, [accessed 21 Aug 2016]. The *Selections of the Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland* was also included by Planché in his list of works 'which may be consulted with advantage by the artist, with [Planché's] own, for a commentary' (Planché (1834), pp.xiv-xv).

Figures taken from various sources are brought together and aligned chronologically in four neat rows of five or six characters. *British, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-English, and English costume* (Figure 56) includes figures ranging from 'a Briton of the interior, with a brindled cows' hide' to 'a lady of the thirteenth century in her wimple.' The next plate, entitled *English Costume*, illustrates dresses from the fourteenth century to the reign of Charles II. Each plate thus enables the viewer to scan many centuries and to visually comprehend changes in costume. The figures stand on the same ground, emphasising the contiguity of the figures and thereby suggesting continuity between the periods represented by each costume. The idea of evolution and chronology is therefore implicit in images from Fosbroke's works, more than in those of his predecessors.

This systematic presentation and analysis of historical costumes heralds the painstaking research of James Robinson Planché. Playwright, antiquarian and Somerset herald, Planché's first forays into the history of costume took place when he was charged with accurately costuming Charles Kemble's Covent Garden production of *King John* in 1823 (see chapter 5). Ten years later, Planché published a *History of British Costume* (1834), which was followed many years afterwards by *A Cyclopaedia of Costume* (1876 and 1897). The *History of British Costume* was 'the first serious dress history book to be marketed to a popular rather than elitist public.'[40] For the purposes of this study, what is interesting in this book is the disposition of text and image. Earlier works on costume observed a distinct organisation, with a few pages of introduction followed by a long series of plates, or a large body of text interspersed with full-page illustrations. In the *History of British Costume*, illustrations are set within the text. The reader is thus able to visualize immediately what the text describes. The images are carefully captioned with detailed references to the sources (like Strutt, and contrary to Jefferys, Planché never used images previously published). The flow of text and illustration presents the history of dress in a flowing chronological unfolding. Continuity between the periods studied is matched by the continuity (and contiguity) of text and illustration. Planché's antiquarian works mark the beginning of a Victorian fascination with the

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[40] Taylor (2004), p.37.

past in all its forms. By the time the second edition of the *History of British Costume* was published (1847), so much more information in the forms of books and works of art had become available that Planché expressed the sense of progress in historical consciousness and the knowledge of historical costume in a new preface: 'the value of some correct ideas on the subject of Ancient Costume, has no longer to be pointed out either to the professional student or the general reader.'[41] Planché's *Cyclopaedia of Costume*, according to Ribeiro, is 'the last great product of a long antiquarian tradition.'[42]

This short survey of representations of historical costume from Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* (1757) to Planché's seminal *History of British Costume* (1834) enables us to draw several conclusions. From independent images to collections of plates, and from individual plates set in succession to the display of several periods on the same page, published works on costume evince the importance of the visual as a way to know the world and learn about the past, and as an attractive feature of history books and educational tools. These works also demonstrate the amount of image-recycling in the field of historical dress. Lastly, a short look at the titles of these publications delineates changes in language: the terms 'dresses' or 'habits' were progressively replaced by the word 'costume', which until the early nineteenth century was only used as a synonym of 'custom' or 'local colour'. The first recorded use of the verb 'to costume' in the sense of 'to provide with a costume or dress; to arrange the costume or get-up of a theatrical piece' dates from 1823; the word 'costumer' is recorded in 1830 and 'costumier' in 1831.[43]

In his fundamental study of Walter Scott and the historical novel, Georg Lukács argued that the French revolution and its aftermath was the origin of a new sense of history as non-static, as a process.[44] The material studied in this chapter

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[41] James Robinson Planché, *History of British Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd edn (London, 1847), p.xi.

[42] Ribeiro (1994), p.68.

[43] Dates and definition from 'costume, v.', 'costumer, n.' and 'costumier, n.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [accessed 1 October 2016].

[44] Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (London: Merlin, 1962).

demonstrate that the move from a rigid contrast between past and present to a sense of chronology and continuity is reflected and fostered by representations of historical costume. The comparative method of the eighteenth century evolved into the visual expression of change through a different mode of representation of the historical dress of various periods. In the following chapters, the fundamental role of costume in historical culture will be further illustrated through analyses of performances and works of art. Focusing on works dealing with events in ancient Rome, Scotland and medieval England, they explore the ties between historical dress, as it was reconstructed on the stage and represented in portraiture, and perceptions of history and of the nation. Theses case studies offer examples of this new conception of continuity between past and present, and of the role of costume in the construction of a national community – even if the costume in question, as will be studied in the next chapter, was not of British but of Roman origin.

Chapter 4

Ancient costume and the authentic representation of the past in 1818:

Edmund Kean in *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin*

Garrick and his contemporaries, in a drawing of a scene from the tragedy *The Roman Father*, present a fine picture of the state of classical costume in the 1750s (Figure 57).[1] In the centre, Spranger Barry as Publius Horatius wears the conventional 'Roman shape', a combination of plumed helmet, decorated breastplate, buskins and, most striking of all, a kind of wide-brimmed stiffened skirt worn over knee-breeches.[2] On the right-hand side of the drawing, Garrick as Horatius (the 'Roman father' of the title) wears a slightly more historical-looking costume, in which the stiff skirt is replaced by a limp one covered with *lambriquins* or *lambarakins* – the strips of jagged or scalloped fabric that ornamented the bottom of a breastplate and covered the top of the skirt. Since the seventeenth century, this stylised Roman dress had been used for a variety of tragedy heroes. By the late 1750s, it came to be used for Greek and Roman heroes exclusively.[3] Garrick is often credited with the first attempts to make classical costumes more authentic.[4] However, the conventional costumes for Greek and Roman characters remained inspired by military dress, even when they clothed civil characters. The ladies are dressed in the bodices and hooped skirts of the mid-eighteenth century, with only a few elements evoking an earlier historical period, such as the scalloped sleeve tops. Other depictions of actresses in classical roles suggest that this was indeed the prevalent mode of representing classical dress on the stage in the 1770s.

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[1] The arrangement of the figures, the wooden floor and the background of the picture suggest that the drawing recorded an actual performance. William Whitehead's tragedy, adapted from Pierre Corneille's *Horace*, premiered at Drury Lane on 24 February 1750. Kalman A. Burnim has suggested the background of the scene may represent a scene-drop 'placed at the proscenium-line' (*David Garrick, Director* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973, p.92)).

[2] This skirt-like garment is called 'tonnelet' in French, but it seems that the English equivalent, 'tonlet', is only used to refer to actual armour and never (to my knowledge) to stage costume.

[3] Pentzell (1969), pp.27-29.

[4] Ibid., p.26. As Pentzell notes, however, it is unclear how widespread the tonnelet was in Britain. It is mostly associated with actor James Quin, whose often reproduced portrait as Coriolanus depicts an extreme version of the garment.

The combination of modern dress and a few historicising garments or details was thought sufficient to evoke the past, and in no way disruptive of theatrical illusion.[5] Towards the end of the 1780s, neo-classical tastes in fashion began to influence theatre costume: hoops were not worn outside court and female silhouettes accordingly became more slender,[6] while white fabrics and tunics were used to evoke classical Antiquity (Figure 58). Towards the end of the century, Sarah Siddons's general adoption of neo-classical clothing and hairstyles meant that her outfits for Greek and Roman characters, such as Euphrasia in *The Grecian Daughter*, aligned with contemporary ideas of classical dress (Figure 59).

In France, in the second half of the eighteenth century, costume reform had been initiated by a number of Parisian actors. Mlle Clairon (Claire-Joseph Léris, 1723-1803), a renowned actress of the Comédie-Française, abandoned the voluminous hoops of female fashion in 1752, a step towards reform that was applauded by both Marmontel and Diderot.[7] 'The only fashion to follow is the costume of the role one is playing', she wrote in her memoirs.[8] Her colleague Lekain (Henri-Louis Kain, 1729-1778) succeeded in having spectators removed from the stage and introduced more accuracy in his costumes, for instance by having a Greek costume made for his role as Orestes in *Andromaque*, instead of the traditional Roman shape.[9] Although they had little direct influence on the other side of the

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[5] In the 1720, the writer Aaron Hill had tried to bring more historical accuracy to the representation of ancient costume on the stage, but his attempts went largely unnoticed. On Hill and his work, see Christine Gerrard, *Aaron Hill: The Muses' Projector, 1685-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[6] De Marly (1982), pp.59-60.

[7] 'I found her dressed in the habit of a sultana; without hoop, her arms half-naked, and in the truth of Oriental costume.' Marmontel reports Mlle Clairon's response to the success of her innovation: 'don't you see that it ruins me? In all my characters, the costume must now be observed; the truth of declamation requires that of dress' (Marmontel, *Memoirs*, quoted in A. M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p.295). Diderot was even more enthusiastic: 'Oh Clairon! . . . Do not let custom and prejudice get the better of you. Trust your taste and your genius. Show us Nature and truth; that is the duty of those we love' ('De la poésie dramatique', quoted in Nagler (1959), p.301). Diderot's ideal of a more natural drama gave birth to the 'genre sérieux', or bourgeois drama. On Diderot's theory of illusion, see Frederick Burwick (1991), pp.44-58.

[8] *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon*, quoted in Nagler (1959), p.302. In the same passage, Mlle Clairon explains that historical and ethnographic propriety is actually quite relative: 'costume exactly copied, however, is not practicable: it would be indecent and ridiculous…the dresses of antiquity are proper only for statues and paintings.'

[9] Babault et al., *Annales dramatiques: ou Dictionnaire général des Théâtres* (Paris, 1810), tome 5, p.342.

Channel, these innovations are important for they were taken further by the most famous French actor of the late eighteenth century, François-Joseph Talma. Furthering the reforms initiated by Lekain, Mlle Clairon, Mme Favart and others, Talma strove for accuracy in historical costumes. His major innovation was his costume in the role of the tribune Proculus in Voltaire's *Brutus*, which premiered on 17 November 1790. While other actors were wearing silk garments, powdered wigs and golden breastplates, Talma chose to wear a wool toga. He wore his hair short and unpowdered and his legs and arms were naked. This costume, similar to the one he later wore as Titus (Figure 60), caused a scandal and ultimately increased Talma's fame.[10] The actor's successes and his costume innovations were reported in Britain and, when he died in 1826, British newspapers presented him as the greatest actor in 'the revolution in the costume of the stage' and stressed his connections with the arts, in particular with the painter Jacques-Louis David.[11]

In Britain, the proponents of costume reform were John Philip Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons. Kemble's *Henry VIII* of 1788 at Drury Lane was the first of a series of revivals that purported to have historically accurate costumes and scenery. Kemble's aim was to make his production of *Henry VIII* 'the nearest thing to reality that imitation ever achieved.'[12] Kemble was famous for his aristocratic dignity and was often compared to Talma (Figure 61).[13] He excelled in majestic Roman roles such as Cato, from Addison's tragedy, and Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Even in 1816, when a more romantic style of acting had become popular, the young William Charles Macready was impressed by Kemble's impersonation of Cato:

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[10] Mara Fazio, *François-Joseph Talma. Le théâtre et l'histoire de la Révolution à la Restauration*, tr. Jérôme Nicolas (Paris : CNRS Editions, 2011), p.45. Stephen Orgel notes that Talma also played Halmet in 'a 16th century German academic gown' (Stephen Orgel, 'Seeing Through Costume', *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*, 26 (2008), p.102. According to Helen Phelps Bailey, the extent of Talma's innovations, at least as far as Hamlet is concerned, is debatable (Helen Phelps Bailey, *Hamlet in France: From Voltaire to Laforgue* (Geneva: Droz, 1964), pp.44-45).
[11] *Morning Chronicle*, 24 October 1826, p.4. The long obituary from the *Morning Chronicle* incorporated translations of articles published in French papers.
[12] Boaden (1825)*, vol.I, p.237.
[13] William Charles Macready, who saw Talma act in France, described his acting as 'a model for the sculptor's art' and referred to him as 'the most finished artist of his time…equalling Kemble in dignity, unfettered by his stiffness and formality' (Macready, *Reminiscences* (1875), quoted in Nagler (1959), pp.469 and 471).

But there was Kemble! As he sat majestically in his curule chair, imagination could not supply a grander or more noble presence. In face and form he realized the most perfect ideal that ever enriched the sculptor's or the painter's fancy, and his deportment was in accord with all of outward dignity and grace that history attributes to the *patres conscripti* [the Roman Senate].[14]

Like Talma, Kemble included the architecture and costumes of classical Rome in his revivals of tragedies set in Antiquity.[15] In a letter to his sister, the actor and playwright John Howard Payne described Kemble's appearance as Coriolanus:

I can never forget Kemble's *Coriolanus*, his *entrée* was the most brilliant I ever witnessed. His person derived a majesty from a scarlet robe which he managed with inimitable dignity. The Roman energy of his deportment, the seraphic grace of his gesture, and the movements of his perfect self-possession displayed the great mind, daring to command, and disdaining to solicit, admiration. His form derived an additional elevation, of perhaps two inches, from his sandals.[16]

George Henry Harlow's full-length portrait of Kemble as Coriolanus (Figure 62) focuses on the visual impact of this costume, rather than on the celebrated classicism of his deportment. Contrary to Thomas Lawrence and Peter Francis Bourgeois, who both represented Coriolanus in a severe dark robe, standing gravely by the hearth of Tullius Aufidius (Figure 63, Figure 64), Harlow's painting depicts Coriolanus in a moment of action rather than reflection. The work announces a new

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[14] Macready, *Reminiscences*, quoted in Nagler (1959), pp.451-2. Macready was, however, disappointed in Kemble's costume, which he did not think particularly accurate.

[15] Herschel Clay Baker, *John Philip Kemble; the Actor in His Theatre* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p.129.

[16] John Howard Payne, letter to Eloise Payne, 19 June 1817, quoted in Gabriel Harrison, *The Life and Writings of John Howard Payne* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1875), p.47.

style of acting, in which visual effects were given more weight in the performance, and the increasing role given to historical costume. The viewer is stuck by the wide expanse of the red cloak, made even more prominent by the small frame of the painting.[17] The painting also focuses on Coriolanus' sandals, which are almost the only element of the staging depicted with real precision. Kemble wears the same sandals as in his portrait as Cato by Lawrence (Figure 65). It is likely that the leather sandals, decorated with metal crescents, were part of Kemble's wardrobe and were used for both Cato and Coriolanus. It is also possible that Harlow (who had been a pupil of Lawrence) copied them from Lawrence's *Kemble as Cato*. At any rate it is significant that both artists perceived the pair of sandals as a fundamental part of Kemble's reconstruction of Roman costume.

Kemble's attention to costume and detail is reflected in his portrait as Cato, in which he wears short hair, a white tunic, a praetexta toga and a pair of sandals. The picture represents the scene in which Cato, expecting death, reflects upon Plato's thoughts on the immortality of the soul. The picture is said to have been 'painted by candle light, and is thus coloured in nearly the same tone as Mr. Kemble appeared in upon the stage when he performed Cato.'[18] To the playgoer, the painting would have offered an alternative experience to that of the theatre, enabling the viewer to observe details of Kemble's costume, while recreating the lighting conditions of the performance.

By the time of Edmund Kean's success on the London stage, togas and tunics were widely accepted as both historically accurate and decent representations of Roman costume, although most actors probably wore flesh-coloured leg and arm coverings. In 1818, Kean accepted the title role of *Brutus; or, the Fall of Tarquin*, a new tragedy by John Howard Payne, an American playwright and actor who was then working in London. The roles of stately Romans were commonly thought to be

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[17] Coriolanus' red cloak is a prominent item of clothing in other representations of the character, such as Richard Cosway's miniature of *c*.1810 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) and Richard Westall's *Volumnia pleading with Coriolanus* (*c*. 1800, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D. C.), in which it might be possible to recognise the features of Kemble and Siddons in Coriolanus and Volumnia.

[18] *Morning Chronicle*, 12 March 1823, p.3.

the province of Kemble, and after his popular success as Iago, Sherlock and Richard III, Kean was challenging the most famous actor of the period.

The Roman hero of Payne's tragedy, Lucius Junius Brutus, hides his opposition to the tyrannical monarchy of Tarquin the Proud by pretending to be a fool. When a Roman lady, Lucretia, is raped by Tarquin's son, Brutus leads the people to Tarquin's palace and they overthrow the monarchy. A republic is established and Brutus is elected consul. Soon afterward, a plot against the republic is discovered. Brutus's own son Titus is found to be one of the conspirators and the consul has no other choice than to sentence his son to death, as that is the fate of the other traitors. The play premiered on 3 December 1818 at Drury Lane Theatre, starring Edmund Kean as Brutus and David Fisher as his son Titus. It was favourably received and reinforced Kean's popularity. The success of the production was a welcome source of income for Drury Lane, whose finances had been struggling for several years under Sheridan's management. The production was praised for its degree of historical reconstruction and for Kean's interpretation of Brutus. On 5 December, the *Morning Chronicle* published a letter that is indicative of how a production like *Brutus* could be received by the audience:

> I was present at the first representation of the Tragedy of Brutus, at Drury-Lane, and as I am, fortunately for myself, no critic, I was heartily delighted. The play was got up with great pomp, yet classic minuteness of detail, and I do not recollect any dramatic exhibition that ever filled my imagination so completely with the magnificence of mighty Rome; I dreamt of it all night, and flew to Livy in the morning to read with new interest the scenes that had been so splendidly illustrated.[19]

The correspondent describes the play as a visual experience which makes such an impact on the spectator's imagination that it was extended in dreaming and in reading. The letter presents the response of an educated spectator who, beyond

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[19] *Morning Chronicle*, 5 December 1818, p.3.

the visual and auditory pleasure of the performance, established a link between the events staged and the source text (or one of the source texts). Here it is interesting to note that the play was perceived as a faithful illustration of history rather than a rewriting or an interpretation. The play creates a return to the text, which is read with new interest. The status of the play as an illustration and the visual pleasure felt during the performance suggest that *Brutus* offered everything that an educated spectator could desire in a historical play – a spectacular illustration of classical texts that fascinated sight and facilitated imagination.

The playbill for *Brutus* (Figure 66) lists the cast for the main roles and advertises a series of 'scenes' or tableaux. It is indicated that the view of Rome in the last act is taken from a painting entitled *The Judgement of Brutus*, by the French artist Lethière, which was then exhibited in the Egyptian Hall's Roman Gallery of Fine Arts, Piccadilly (Figure 67).[20] *Brutus* therefore appears as a performance that contributed to develop the historical imagination of the period. Its costume, in particular, was disseminated in prints and portraits of Kean in the title role. Highlighting the intertwinement of staging and painting in the period under study, the following pages examine the role of set and costume in the illustration of the past offered by Payne's tragedy and its pictorial counterparts.

Iconography and political significance of the episode

A critic writing in the *Theatrical Inquisitor* declared: 'All the events of Roman History are as familiar to persons with any tincture of learning as those of our own; and the story of Lucretia, and the consequent overthrow of the Tarquins, is known to every school-boy.'[21] The story of Brutus and of the advent of the Roman republic was indeed well known. It was told, among others, by Livy, an author who was part of the classical education received by members of genteel society. The fall of the Roman monarchy was included in many history textbooks written for children. Such

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[20] On the Egyptian Hall and his owner William Bullock, see the biography by Michael Costeloe, *William Bullock: Connoisseur and Virtuoso of the Egyptian Hall : Piccadilly to Mexico (1773-1849)* (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2008).
[21] *The Theatrical Inquisitor, Or, Monthly Mirror*, 13 (1818), p.450.

books were often illustrated with images that played a fundamental role in the learning process. For instance, the third and subsequent editions of John Lockman's *A New Roman History, by Question and Answer* (1749) include an illustration of the execution of Brutus's sons (Figure 68).[22]

Closer to our period, Brutus appears in a collection of engravings published by Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), a famous educationalist and the author of many textbooks, in particular on history and religious education. This collection, which probably dates from 1789, is composed of scenes taken from Roman history and designed to be put up in the child's classroom, thus bringing together interior decoration and learning.[23] A book entitled *A Description of a Set of Prints of Roman History contained in a set of easy lessons* was published alongside the engravings to help with the interpretation of the images. Plate IX (Figure 69) depicts 'Brutus Passing Sentence on his Sons'. By contrast to John Lockman, Sarah Trimmer chose to represent a less violent scene: the judgment rather than the execution. The characters' clothes are generic and conjure up a remote time period which is only identified as classical antiquity thanks to the costume of a soldier. That same costume is used indifferently in Trimmer's engravings to signify Greek or Roman Antiquity. It corresponds to the traditional representation of the classical soldier, as he can be observed in the theatre throughout the long eighteenth century. Trimmer's history books and engravings are representative of the classical conception of history as a source of moral exempla (the author remarks that had they been Christians and not Pagans, Lucretia would have borne her fate with patience instead of committing suicide, and Brutus would never had sentenced his sons to death – which a Christian people would never have allowed anyway). The representation of Brutus's young sons arouses pity, and the spectator is invited to

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[22] *The Sons of Brutus beheaded before their Father*, in John Lockman, *A New Roman History, by Question and Answer . . . The Third Edition Corrected, And Adorned with Sixteen Copper-Plates Representing the Most Memorable Occurrences* (London, 1749) facing p.35. The first two editions (1737 and 1740) did not have illustrations.

[23] *A Series of Prints of Roman history, Designed as ornaments for those apartments in which children receive the first rudiments of their education* [1789?]. On the same principle, Sarah Trimmer published scenes from ancient history (1788), religious history and from the history of England. According to an early biography, she conceived this educational project while reading *Adèle et Théodore* by Madame de Genlis (Sarah Trimmer, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer* (London, 1814), p.51).

respond like the character in the shadow, on the left-hand side of the image: he hides his face in his toga, a gesture that we also find in Lethière's painting. These textual and visual representations of Brutus formed part of the historical as well as visual culture of the period.

Since the Renaissance, many European artists had depicted passages from Livy's history, and the figure of Brutus was well-known in the artistic, literary and theatrical world of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe. In Germany, for instance, the episode of the judgement of Brutus was depicted by Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein and Heinrich Füger.[24] Jacques-Louis David exhibited his *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* at the Paris Salon of August 1789, where it was found to be resonant with recent revolutionary events and was admired for its stoic depiction of personal sacrifice in the interest of the state.[25] The judgement of Brutus was also a subject depicted by Angelika Kauffmann and the physician, porcelain manufacturer and enthusiastic painter John Wall.[26] Since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Britain had seen itself as the champion of liberty in Europe. In the British culture of the long eighteenth century, the character of Brutus functioned as the embodiment of liberty, just like the figure of Cato the younger, who was hallowed as a symbol of resistance to tyranny by Addison's eponymous tragedy.[27]

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[24] Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein*, Brutus Discovers the Names of His Sons on the List of Conspirators and Sentences Them to Death* (1785/1795, Kunsthaus, Zurich); Heinrich Füger*, Judgement of Brutus* (1799, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart).

[25] On the neo-classicism of David's *Brutus*, see Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp.76-83; on the relationships between David and the French Revolution, see David Lloyd Dowd, *Pageant-Master of the Republic: Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1969) and Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). The reception of David in Britain is studied in William Vaughan, '"David's Brickdust" and the Rise of the British School', in Alison Yarrington and Kelvin Everest, eds., *Reflections of Revolution: Images of Romanticism* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.134-58. Another popular subject emblematic of patriotic sacrifice was Manlius Torquatus's condemnation of his son to death (also told by Livy), which was the topic of the French Prix de Rome in 1799.

[26] Angelika Kauffmann, *Brutus Condemning his Sons to Death* (preparatory drawing, 1788; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa); John Wall (1708-1776), *The Judgement of Brutus* (Museum of Royal Worcester, Worcester).

[27] *Cato* was first played in London in 1713 and enjoyed a continued success throughout the long eighteenth century, which was due in a great part to its status as an allegory of the conflicts between Britain and France. The political and philosophical significance of *Cato* is discussed in M. M. Kelsall, 'The Meaning of Addison's Cato', *The Review of English Studies,* 17 (1966), pp.149-62. Cato was one

In the course of the century, Brutus had been the subject of half a dozen plays. This helps to explain why John Howard Payne was accused of plagiarism in 1818 – in particular from Voltaire's *Brutus* and Cumberland's *The Sybil, or, The Elder Brutus* (in fact, the latter was neither published nor played).[28] There followed a large debate in the London newspapers. Some correspondents defended Payne; 'A Collator of Tragedies' asserted that Payne's talent resided in the effect created on the spectators, while 'Aeschylus' believed Payne contributed to the world of *belles-lettres* by making a theatre play from Brutus, not a closet play like the works he took inspiration from. What is certain is that Payne's tragedy enjoyed considerably more success than any other play on the same subject performed in Britain.[29]

Brutus, Kean, Northcote

The study of Kean's costumes for the character of Brutus sheds light upon the varied aspects of the reconstruction and representation of classical dress in the nineteenth century. Thanks to reviews in the press and images produced during the theatrical season 1818-19 (and some subsequent performances), it is possible to reconstruct Kean's wardrobe as Brutus. Bearing in mind that these portraits cannot

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of John Philip Kemble's most celebrated roles. For a comparison between performances of Cato in the long eighteenth century and Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Kemble in character, see Daniel O'Quinn, 'Half-History, or The Function of Cato at the Present Time', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 27 (2015), pp.479-507. O'Quinn argues that several performances (including Kemble's 1811 revival) functioned as comments on George III's politics, and were therefore 'half-historical', like Lawrence's painting. On the influence of *Cato* on eighteenth-century American politics, see Fredric M. Litto, 'Addison's Cato in the Colonies', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 23 (1966), pp.431-49, and John C. Shields, *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), pp.173-196.

[28] These accusations appeared in *The Caledonian Mercury*, 31 December 1818 and the *Morning Post*, 22 December 1818, p.2. Voltaire's *Brutus* was first played in Paris in 1730 and was coldly received. It was revived in 1790 and fared better then, as a result of the combination of its revolutionary theme, the popularity of French actor François-Joseph Talma and the contributions of neo-classical painter Jacques-Louis David to the staging (Kenneth N. McKee, 'Voltaire's Brutus During the French Revolution', *Modern Language Notes*, 56 (1941), pp.100-106).

[29] Nathaniel Lee's *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1680) enjoyed popular success before it was banned for its political allusions (J. M. Armistead, 'Lee, Nathaniel (1645x52–1692)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/16301 [accessed 4 December 2015]). Voltaire's *Brutus*, in William Duncombe's adaptation *Junius Brutus*, was 'very coldly received' when performed in London in 1734 and William Shirley's *The Roman Sacrifice* (1777) was criticised for its bad language, uninteresting plot and inaccuracy of costumes and scenery (*Morning Chronicle*, 19 December 1777, p.2).

be interpreted as entirely reliable testimonies of specific productions, it is nonetheless possible to draw conclusions as to how Roman costume was presented and received by viewers, by comparing pictorial and textual descriptions of Kean. He seems to have worn three costumes for the role, which correspond to the three facets of Brutus's life in the tragedy: the fool, the soldier and the consul.

The period of Kean's popularity coincided with the beginnings of the genre of the melodrama in Britain. As a matter of fact, Kean had built his reputation on great Shakespearian roles that could lend themselves to melodramatic interpretations, arousing surprise and emotion in the audience: Richard III, Othello and Shylock.[30] The character of Brutus could also lend itself to this style of acting. Indeed, as in many melodramas, the hero first appears in disguise, before revealing his courage and his true identity. Because his life is threatened by king Tarquin the Proud, Brutus pretends to be a fool, and it is in this disguise that he appears in Act I. Depictions of Kean at the beginning of the play show him wearing a simple garment, a short tunic gathered on the shoulder by fibulae.

An 1819 print by Robert Cruikshank depicts Brutus in his disguise as a fool, while suggesting the cunning hidden behind the character's apparent idiocy (Figure 70). Although the simplicity of the costume and the quotation from the play recreate the image of Brutus as a fool, Kean's facial expression is more complex and hints at the presence of a hero behind the simpleton. This is even more striking in an engraving from 1818 by Richard Dighton in which Kean is shown in the same pose (Figure 71). The costume is fuller with more pleating, but in the same style as that in Cruikshank's print. The folds of the dress and the curls of the hair are drawn more elaborately, and the artist reproduced with great precision Kean's intense gaze and his smirk as he replies to Tullia who is asking his name. It is possible that Brutus's costume was modified in the course of the season, but the image is more likely to have a satirical scope. Indeed, Dighton was known for his slightly caricatured portraits of London celebrities, whom he depicted in full-length profile. The voluminous tunic and the abundance of pleats could therefore be an evocation

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[30] Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge Introduction to English Theatre, 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.209.

of Kean's pride, or possibly of excessive care in his appearance. By showing Kean in the costume of Brutus in the first act, the portrait might be inviting the spectator to take Brutus's reply at face value: 'How art thou call'd ? – A fool'.

However, it is the simpler costume which had the longest posterity, thanks to a portrait painted and engraved by the miniaturist Samuel John Stump in 1819 (Figure 72). Stump depicts Kean in three-quarter view, wearing a dark tunic identical to that portrayed in Cruikshank, including the fold of the fabric on the chest. The painting, probably the one exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1819 under the title *Mr Kean as Junius Brutus*, was engraved several times in the nineteenth century. This costume also appears in a caricature from 1819 entitled *The Judgment of Brutus ; or, The Dramatic Censor*, which refers to a dispute between Kean and the playwright Charles Bucke (Figure 73). It is also interesting to note that this representation of Kean is the one that was used as a frontispiece to his biography published in 1835, two years after his death (Figure 74).[31] These images suggest that the tunic of Brutus was strongly associated with Kean as an actor and also as a man. It is possible here that the plebeian-looking tunic was felt to be particularly suited to Kean, who was often perceived as a man of the people. By contrast, John Philip Kemble was celebrated for his classical and dignified acting, and portraits of him in the Roman roles of Cato and Coriolanus depict him wearing a Roman general's armour, a toga or a long dramatic cloak.

In Acts III and IV, Kean wore a Roman soldier's costume. No document indicates that this costume was the object of any particular research, perhaps because it already had a long history in the theatre and in the historical imagination of the long eighteenth century. It was used to represent Greek and Roman costume indifferently and was traditionally made up of a breastplate, a skirt and its lambarakins, laced sandals, a cloak and a feather helmet. There is no precise description of Kean's costume and visual sources evince great differences. However, they suggest that it included the traditional elements of the dress of a classical soldier as it was represented in the theatre, in painting and in illustrations of history books.

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[31] Bryan Waller Proctor, *The Life of Edmund Kean* (London, 1835).

Prints of Kean in Brutus's second dress, such as Cruikshank's portrait (Figure 74), show great variations as far as the breastplate, the lambarakins and the cloak are concerned. Nevertheless, they suggest that Kean might have been armed with a square shield and metal-crested helmet. Many of them also feature a similar ankle buckle. These elements may therefore have been part of Kean's actual costume. This must remain a guess, as these prints cannot be regarded as reliable records of the performances. Nonetheless, despite their differences, they provide an indication of what the artists viewed as essential features of a Roman soldier's dress. At any rate, Kean's costume and accessories correspond to information that was available from costume books and casts of classical bas-reliefs. Brutus's second dress enables us to observe evolutions in perceptions of historical costume. The contrast is striking if we compare these prints to the 'Roman shapes' used in Garrick's time, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Already in the 1770s, spectators voiced concerns that the dresses worn by actors in classical roles might not be historically accurate, however effectful they may have been on the stage. The production of William Shirley's *The Roman Sacrifice* (1777) included costumes that were both already known to the audience (and therefore uninteresting) and inaccurate:

> Perhaps it was because the character [of Vitellia, Brutus's wife] was very insignificant, that Mrs. Yates's dress was very superb. She looked more like a Princess at a puppet show, than a Roman matron, and the wife of Brutus . . . the dress of Brutus was rich, but rather too glaring for so grave a character. The habits of Titus and Tiberius have already tired our eyes in Medea, the Roman Father, the Distressed Mother, and almost every shape-dressed tragedy performed at Drury Lane theatre for this and the last season.[32]

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[32] *Morning Chronicle*, 19 December 1777, p.2.

There are no depictions of Yates in the character of Vitellia, but as she was then the leading tragedy actress of the London stage, it is not unlikely she would have worn a dress that reflected her own status rather than that of the character.[33] Like Mrs Yates's dress, the scenery was 'more splendid than proper' and elicited the following question: 'Was the architectural stile of the scenery of last night known to the Romans when Brutus lived?'[34] The term 'shapes' referred to the stylised historical costumes traditionally used in British theatres. The review from the *Morning Chronicle* shows that new costumes were an attraction for audiences. It signals the shift from interrogations about the propriety of costumes (whether a character's dress is suited to his/her age and social status) to questions of historical accuracy. The article also betrays paradoxical expectations: the spectator demanded new and interesting costumes and decorations, yet required them to be suited to the historical period represented – which in the case of Brutus would have meant less splendour than the audience was used to.

The many prints that portray Kean as a spirited freedom fighter testify to Kean's popularity as Brutus. Such representations of Brutus as a military hero reveal a generic conception of classical military costume. Artists and their engravers did not want to preserve a particular costume, but rather sought to create an image of Kean as an energetic, epic hero, which was reinforced by the actor's pose. In opposition to the solemn Kemble, Kean was perceived as bursting with energy. Samuel Taylor Coleridge is famously said to have declared that 'to see him act, was like reading Shakspere by flashes of lightning.'[35] Payne used a similar image in a letter to his sister, reminiscent of Romantic tours in Italy: 'Kean, by flashes, like Etna, always is emitting the evidence of a hidden fire, one which at times flashes forth to astonish you.'[36]

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[33] Burnim and Highfill note that in the season 1776-77, Yates's income was twice as much as that of her nearest competitor Elizabeth Younge (Kalman A. Burnim and Philip H. Highfill, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), vol.XVI, p.330).

[34] *Morning Chronicle*, 19 December 1777, p.2.

[35] Peter Holland, ed., *Great Shakespeareans, Set II: Garrick, Kemble, Siddons, Kean*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.386.

[36] Letter to Eloise Payne, 19 June 1817, quoted in Harrison (1875), p.47.

Like many of his contemporaries, Kean was interested in history and in costume. The auction catalogue for the sale of his library features the works of the great historians of the eighteenth century: Hume, Gibbon, Robertson and Smollet, as well as earlier accounts such as Froissart's and Holinshed's chronicles. Antiquarian costume books show Kean's interest in dress history: Thomas Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations*, the *Recherches sur les costumes et sur les théâtres de toutes les nations* by Jean-Charles Levacher de Charnois (1790), and two publications on classical costume from the 1810s: *An illustration of the Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman costume* by Thomas Baxter and Thomas Hope's popular *Costume of the Ancients* (in the augmented edition published in 1812).[37] Among the costume books published since the mid-eighteenth century, some set themselves apart from purely ethnographical works by claiming to adopt an aesthetic perspective, such as Thomas Hope's *Costume of the Ancients* (1809).[38] In contrast to earlier antiquarian works, Hope's book was not only an account of our classical forebears' clothes, but was also intended as a source of designs to be reproduced by artists, decorators and stage directors.[39] These works evince the same relationship to sources than many other antiquarian publications: the use of primary sources and the precision of the reproduction guarantee the 'authenticity' and 'authority' of the images presented in the book. It is probable that Kean drew inspiration from works at his disposal to develop his costumes. Payne himself, as we shall see later, was interested in costume, both from a theatrical and ethnographical point of view.[40]

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[37] Works on classical costume had been published in France much earlier than in Britain. Levacher de Charnois's *Recherches sur les costumes et sur les théâtres de toutes les nations*, which was conceived as an aid to artists and historians, was extremely popular. In her study of Talma, Mara Fazio (2011) establishes links between the 1790 production of Voltaire's *Brutus* and Levacher de Charnois's book.

[38] A second edition was published in 1812 to include a section on Egyptian costume.

[39] Hope's interest in classical dress is discussed in Aileen Ribeiro, 'Fashion à l'Antique: Thomas Hope and Regency Dress', in David Watkin, Philip Hewat-Jaboor, Daniella Ben-Arie, Elizabeth Angelicoussis, eds., *Thomas Hope: Regency Designer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp.77-89. On Hope, his work and his influence on interior decoration, see also Sándor Baumgarten, *Le Crépuscule Néo-Classique: Thomas Hope* (Paris: Didier, 1958) and David Watkin, *Thomas Hope 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical Idea* (London: Murray, 1968).

[40] During his travels, Payne wrote detailed descriptions and made sketches of costumes, for instance of Cherokee Indians and Tunisian locals (Harrison (1875), pp.162-170, 187-88 and 194).

In Act V of *Brutus*, the protagonist is elected consul and receives 'the purpled robe, / the curule chair, the lictors' keen edged axe' (Act V, scene 1). Kean wears the consul's toga in Northcote's large portrait, in which Kean as Brutus is painted next to Brutus's son Titus, who is imploring him on his knees (Figure 75). The similarities of the poses with an engraving from 1824 showing 'Mr Cooper as Titus; Mr Kean as Brutus' (Figure 76) suggests that the portrait is inspired from the staging of the tragedy at Covent Garden, one that would have been repeated during later seasons. The portrait was commissioned by a friend of Kean's, the painter and printmaker Samuel William Reynolds, who later engraved it in mezzotint and had it published. James Northcote was then known for his portraits and his history paintings; in the 1780s and 1790s, he had realised eight pictures for John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, an artistic and commercial venture that aimed at establishing a British school of painting through illustrations of scenes from plays by Shakespeare, the national poet.[41] In his depiction of Kean, Northcote offers the viewer a theatrical portrait that takes the proportions of a history painting. Full-length portraits of actors in the role of famous historical figures presented artists like Northcote with a new way to produce history painting, and the emphasis of theatre managers on the historical research involved in the creation of the sets and costumes brought historical performances and paintings even closer.

Northcote's painting represents a passage from Act V. The senators have sentenced the traitors to death, but they let Brutus decide what will happen to his son Titus, who had joined the conspiracy out of his love for Tarquin's daughter.[42] Titus accepts his fate, but begs his father to have him executed as a Roman and not as a traitor (beheading by the sword instead of the axe). Presumably, this intimate moment between father and son was more suitable for a portrait than the final scene of the judgment of Brutus in front of the Roman crowd. Kean, who was famous for his representation of passions, is here depicted in an attitude marked by

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[41] See Dias (2013), p.110.
[42] Act V, scene 3: 'Gives a signal to the lictors to fall back and advances from the judgment-seat to the front of the stage, on a line with his son' (in *Cumberland's British Theatre* (1826), p.49). The 'tribunal, with a consular chair upon it' is on the right hand side of the stage.

gravity and tragic intensity. While Kean's expressive face is at the heart of the picture, Titus is imploring his father in the half-lit foreground. Behind them, senators and soldiers are waiting for Brutus's return with an agitation which probably reflects the main character's thoughts.

In the picture, the evocation of the past is enabled mainly by costume. Kean wears a tunic and the consular toga. The red sandals, which we find in other images of the same character, emphasise the contrast between the white of the toga and the red (or purple to be more accurate) of the *toga praetexta*. Northcote uses the toga's purple border as both a structural and narrative element. It frames the sitter's face and shoulders and thus draws attention to Kean's portrait. Starting from Kean's folded arm, it then guides the viewer's gaze diagonally from the father to the son, whose head and shoulders are illuminated with the same light. There is an almost straight line between Titus's head and Brutus's right hand, a symbol of power, which seems to enclose the extremity of the purple stripe. In the tragedy, Brutus signals the execution with a hand gesture, while the execution itself happens offstage. Titus wears a dark-bordered tunic, covered with a short cloak, possibly. He is mostly in the shadow, as if the painter had not wanted to draw attention to his dress, merely depicting a short garment to signify his youth. The fact that Titus' face is hidden prevents any development of empathy on the part of the viewer. It has the effect of focusing the attention entirely on Kean, an effect that Kean himself ensured was created on the stage as well. In *The Cult of Kean*, Jeffrey Kahan has analysed Kean's relentless strategies to gain control over the productions at Drury Lane, for instance how he had plays rewritten in order to sideline actors who could have vied with him for the audience's attention.[43]

Northcote thus uses Roman costume to draw attention to his sitter, while at the same time alluding to the forthcoming events. In the portrait, architecture and decorations too are given a narrative function. The columns behind Brutus and his son, which symbolise the hero's uprightness, separate the private space of the interview from the public space where the people and the senators are waiting – a

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[43] Jeffrey Kahan, *The Cult of Kean* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp.44-47.

separation of space often found in late eighteenth-century painting, for instance in depictions of Hector taking leave of his wife and son (Figure 77). Behind the columns, we can glimpse a vast open space and the tribunal from which Brutus will give the signal for the execution. The eagles, ensigns and fasces visible in the background prefigure the eventual triumph of the Roman Republic. Brutus is somehow framed by reminders of his republican virtue, as we find the motif of the lictors' fasces incorporated at the foot of the column, at the level of his shoulders. Many of the elements seem to have been taken from the Drury Lane staging, such as the tribunal, which also appears in the caricature *The Judgment of Brutus, or, the Dramatic Censor*. In the caricature, Kean – in his costume of Brutus the fool – is seated in a kind of curule chair on a stone rostrum. The masonry recalls Lethière's painting, and it may be a quotation from the painting, or from the Drury Lane staging, which claimed to have been inspired by Lethière's picture.

Northcote's large format, full-length portrait and attention to historical detail situate the image at the intersection of three genres: portrait, theatrical painting and history painting. Northcote's painting can be compared to the series of portraits of John Philip Kemble made by Thomas Lawrence between 1798 and 1812, in particular *John Philip Kemble as Cato*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812. Lawrence referred to these portraits as 'half-history paintings', asserting the relationship between history painting and the portraits of actors in tragic roles. According to the writer William Hazlitt, Northcote himself underlined the similarities between portraiture and history painting:

> There is not so much difference as you imagine. Portrait often runs into history, and history into portrait, without our knowing it. Expression is common to both, and that is the chief difficulty. The greatest history-painters have always been able portrait-painters. How should a man paint a thing in motion, if he cannot paint it still? But the great point is to catch the prevailing look and character: if you are master of this, you can make almost what use of it you please. If a portrait has force, it will do for history; and if

history is well painted, it will do for portrait. This is what gave dignity to Sir Joshua: his portraits had always that determined air and character that you know what to think of them as if you had seen them engaged in the most decided action. So Fuseli said of Titian's picture of Paul III. and his two nephews, 'That is true history!' Many of the groups in the Vatican, by Raphael, are only collections of fine portraits. That is why West, Barry, and others pretended to despise portrait, because they could not do it, and it would only expose their want of truth and nature. No! if you can give the look, you need not fear painting history.[44]

For Northcote, attention to the expression of character is central to both portraiture and history painting. The passage posits good portrait skills as a requisite for great history painting, and evokes portraiture as an equally elevated and difficult genre. Northcote's emphasis on 'force' and on the picture's effect on the viewer suggests that the real distinction between good and great art lies in the quality of the audience response generated by the work. This was of course a characteristic shared by theatrical performance. Theatrical portraits commit to canvas the 'look and character' of both actor and dramatic character. By depicting sitters 'engaged in the most decided action', they elicit similar responses to those of good portraits and history paintings. Historical subjects taken from the theatre, then, further enabled the connection between two fields traditionally separated in the hierarchy of pictorial genres. By 1818 and the success of *Brutus* at Drury Lane, authentic historical costume had become essential to the characterisation of historical figures on the stage. Through its subject matter and its use of classical dress and setting, Northcote's *Kean as Brutus* is an apt demonstration of the ways in which portraiture 'often runs into history',

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[44] William Hazlitt, *Conversations of James Northcote, Esq., R.A.* (London, 1830), Conversation the second, pp 18-19.

Lethière's *Brutus Condemning his Sons to Death*

The link between painting and the theatre was additionally established through the staging of *Brutus*. Playbills for the first performances list eleven 'scenes' to attract the spectator, such as 'a Street in Ancient Rome', 'the Court Yard and palace of Tarquinus Superbus', the Forum, 'Ruins in Ancient Rome'. The last scene, a view of Rome, is taken from a painting by French artist Guillaume Lethière, *Brutus Condemning his Sons to Death*. Lethière, a neo-classical painter of Guadeloupian origins, was the director of the French Académie de Rome from 1811 to 1819.[45] The painting was begun before the Revolution, and was retouched for the 1812 Salon.[46] It was then sent to London to be exhibited in the gallery owned by John Bullock, the Egyptian Hall. This exhibition space was devoted mostly to natural sciences and antiquities (especially in its 'Roman Gallery of Fine Arts'), but Bullock also ensured increases in the number of visitors by exhibiting objects that attracted a more diverse public, such as Napoleon's carriage, seized at Waterloo, in 1816 and Théodore Géricault's monumental *Raft of the Medusa* in 1820.[47] Lethière's painting must therefore be placed in the wider exhibition culture of the early nineteenth century, a period in which the taste for history and spectacular entertainment meant that London spaces devoted to panoramas, dioramas or historical reconstructions enjoyed great success.[48]

Newspaper advertisements for Lethière's painting reveal that Bullock was primarily addressing a large public and not a group of connoisseurs. Indeed, each advertisement mentioned the large dimensions of the work and indicated that it had been greatly admired in France.[49] The painting was therefore presented as a spectacular exhibit and a technical achievement. The emphasis on its format and its positive reception in France was designed to appeal to sensation-seeking

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[45] Richard-Viktor Sainsily-Cayol, 'Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, la posture Insolite ou l'imposture ?', in Dominique Berthet, ed., *L'insolite dans l'art* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013), pp.149-64, p.149.

[46] Michel Delon, 'Balzac, David, Lethière', *L'Année Balzacienne*, 1 (2004), pp.87-100.

[47] On Géricault's work in the British Isles, see Lee Johnson, 'The 'Raft of the Medusa' in Great Britain', *The Burlington Magazine*, 96 (1954), pp.249-54 and Suzanne Lodge, 'Géricault in England', *The Burlington Magazine*, 107 (1965), pp.616-627.

[48] See Altick (1978).

[49] *Morning Post*, 2 April 1816, p.1; *Morning Chronicle*, 3 April 1816 and 9 December 1818.

Londoners. Bullock even printed a guidebook containing a description of the picture and a reproduction of it. The guidebook insists on the direct link between Roman architecture and the painting, explaining that the view of Rome was painted from Lethière's window.[50] Such insistence on the immediacy of the painting presents the artist as an antiquarian, and the painting as a scientific document. The reference to the Roman cityscape would have appealed to the many Britons with an interest in Antiquity and archaeology, and perhaps to those who had been on the Grand Tour. Bullock was thus turning the pleasure of recognition or identification into a major selling point. When Bullock moved his collection of curiosities and natural history specimens from Liverpool to London in 1809, his museum was described as 'the most fashionable place of amusement in London', and in the next decade the Egyptian Hall was visited by celebrated figures such as Jane Austen, Lord Byron, Walter Scott and Sarah Siddons.[51] Despite its sensationalist nature, the Egyptian Hall had prestige. While it offered curiosities and sensationalist exhibits, such as the 'Living Skeleton' in 1825,[52] it also housed classical antiquities and, after 1819, was used as an exhibition space for watercolours and history paintings (Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Christ's Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem* was exhibited there in 1820).

In 1819, advertisements published by Bullock indicated that Lethière's painting was the inspiration for the last scene of Drury Lane's *Brutus*. The advertisements for the picture and the tragedy invited the spectator to link the two works, and drew attention to the reconstruction of the painting in the theatre. The painting became a documentary source, certifying the authenticity of the stage representation. The authority granted to the picture hid the fact that it was not a scientific document but a visual reconstitution. The painting almost replaced the archaeologist's research as a source of information for another reconstruction of the past. However, the play's authenticity failed to satisfy some of its spectators, as a review in the *Theatrical Inquisitor* demonstrates: 'the last scene is professed to be

[50] [William Bullock], *A Descriptive Synopsis of the Roman Gallery . . . Including the Great and Celebrated Picture of The Judgment of Brutus Upon His Sons; Painted by the President of the Academy at Rome* (London, 1817), p.8.
[51] Altick (1978), pp.246-245; quoting *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 1810.
[52] Edward Walford and George Walter Thornbury, *Old and New London: A Narrative of Its History, Its People and Its Places*, new edn, 6 vols (London: Cassel and Co., 1887), vol.IV, p.257.

painted after Le Thierre's celebrated picture; this picture we have never seen, and therefore cannot judge between Le Thierre and Mr.Greenwood; but there are some turrets and battlements that look very gothic.'[53] It can be supposed that Thomas Greenwood, the Drury Lane painter, had used elements of Lethière's background (which indeed features crenelated buildings), or that he had yielded to the taste for the Picturesque and the Gothic and imagined a fanciful Roman architecture (Figure 78).

The staging of *Brutus* claimed to be authentic, yet the costumes were sometimes criticised. Contrary to the majority of reviews in newspapers, periodicals and memoirs, which generally admire the accuracy of the reconstruction, some spectators noticed a few anachronisms. My purpose here is not to decide who was right, but to study these responses in order to observe what they can tell us about the period's historical imagination. The critic for the *Theatrical Inquisitor* condemned the splendour of the reconstruction, stating that the play combined an episode of the Roman Republic with sets, decorations and costumes that corresponded to the Roman Empire. While acknowledging the mastery of the set painters, the critic castigated the staging's anachronisms, which he ascribes to a desire for grandeur: 'The dresses, too betray the same inconsistency, with the poverty of the Roman state at that period. We would have thought it more creditable to have studied correctness than splendour, on such an occasion.'[54]

The writer Leigh Hunt, in his periodical *The Theatrical Examiner*, criticised the costumes from a different angle, focusing on the issue of the translation of ancient languages. According to him, the errors in the production's costumes were not caused by a poor knowledge of historical events, but by an incorrect interpretation of the Latin language:

> We must not omit, that the royal ladies in this piece mistake the
> Roman colour of purple. Their dresses should not be what is now
> commonly called purple, but red, which was the colour of the

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[53] *Theatrical Inquisitor,* Volume 13 (1818), p.458.
[54] Ibid.

ancient royalty, and the strict meaning of the word *purpureus.* We

are sorry to talk Latin to ladies, but if their dresses will talk bad

Latin to us, what can we do?[55]

Investing the ladies' dresses with a kind of agency, Hunt's comment draws attention to the role of costume in the spreading of knowledge about the past. What we can read here is a remark made by an educated spectator, not an archaeologist, and costume is perceived as a visual language, corresponding to the period represented, which can speak good or bad Latin. Hunt's critique also designates its author as male, and better historically informed than women, who may 'mistake' history. Despite this linguistic error on the part of the actresses, Hunt thought that the interest of the play lay in the stage effects.[56]

Was the management of Drury Lane aware of such anachronisms? It is difficult to know for sure. Yet it is certain that the grandiose representation of Rome and Romans contributed to turn the past into a spectacle creating pleasure and emotion in the audience, as is shown by the affective and aesthetic vocabulary used by critics, who described the spectacle as 'awful' and as eliciting 'a feeling . . . of sublime.' Such terms suggest that the production's success lay in its immediacy and its impact on the audience's imagination. The play was perceived as a visual as well as an intellectual experience, and the managers of the theatre seem to have benefited from the popularity of *tableaux vivants*.[57] The spectators' responses examined here indicate that audiences viewed the classical past as a source of superb spectacle and valued the *feeling* of authenticity elicited by the theatre, even if some among them wished for greater accuracy in the archaeological reconstructions.

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[55] *Theatrical Examiner*, 20 December 1818, p.775.

[56] Ibid., 'Its chief merit is stage-effect'.

[57] On *tableaux* in the eighteenth century, see Pierre Frantz (1998), especially pp.59-71 and 172-75, and Kirsten Gram Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants. Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion 1770-1815* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967). Of interest is also Angelica Goodden, '"Une Peinture Parlante": The Tableau and the Drame', *French Studies*, 38 (1984), pp.397–397, which discusses French eighteenth-century drama and its links with painting, in particular the works of Jacques-Louis David.

Staging and historical distance

In his study *Society and Sentiment : Genres of Historical Writing in Britain 1740-1820*, Mark Salber Phillips uses the notion of historical distance to analyse the evolution of historiographical practices in the long eighteenth century. He defines historical distance as the feeling of temporality created by the positioning of the reader in relation to the past. Such positioning can be close or distant, and results from a combination of formal, affective, ideological and cognitive aspects.[58] Norms of distance vary according to literary genres and historical periods. A given author can also vary historical distance within the same narrative, for instance by bringing the reader closer to the event in order to underline its emotional impact or, on the contrary, by distancing themselves from the event to obtain an effect of irony or objectivity.[59]

A theatre performance is a complex combination of signifiers: the text, the player's acting, the costumes, sets and stage effects. It is the work of several people: the playwright, the actors, the stage manager, the painters and decorators and the costumiers. The playbill for *Brutus* features the names of most of them, which was a relatively recent practice in British theatre, a sign that the play was beginning to position itself as a complex production and a total spectacle – no longer merely the declamation of a text. In the previous century, it was common practice to mention only the title and principal performers, sometimes followed by the name of the main decorator. It is only from the beginning of the nineteenth century that playbills regularly feature the names of the set painters, decorators and tailors.

The insistence on the historical accuracy of the production invited the spectator to scrutinize the various visual elements of the staging. At the same time, the stage, like Northcote's painting, was dominated by the presence of Kean. What is interesting is that the size of the auditorium did not seem to have detracted from the immediacy of the experience. After it burnt down in 1809, Drury Lane had been

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[58] Phillips (2001), especially pp.60-78.
[59] Ibid., p.26.

rebuilt and enlarged, with a new auditorium seating 3,106 spectators, according to the architect's plans.[60] Although there was, as a result, a little more intimacy than in the earlier theatre (built in 1794, with a capacity of 3,611 seats), the new Drury Lane was still huge compared to most eighteenth-century playhouses. [61]

Brutus's staging was first concerned with precision in the representation of the past. A eulogistic biography of Payne explains that the author was given entire responsibility in the staging of the play: 'the production of the tragedy was placed in his hands. He made all the plans for the scenery and stage sets, overlooked the making of the properties, and costumes and placed the piece upon the stage with such historical accuracy as had very seldom been seen upon the English stage.'[62] Payne is even said to have provided Kean with the toga he wore in the last act, and to have shown him how to drape it correctly.[63] According to his biographer, it is Payne who must be credited for the historical accuracy of the costumes. Payne's interest in history and accurate staging is reflected in the care he took in getting up other plays at Drury Lane. When he prepared an adaptation of Voltaire's *Mahomet* for production, he listed the number of Mahomet's swords and shields, 'for the purpose of having the properties of the piece correct.' The manuscript plays that Payne intended to submit to the London theatres during his long stay in London included notes on the staging and 'sketches of the different scenes in water-colours, with stage-sets, etc.'[64]

The President of the Royal Academy himself, Benjamin West, is reported to have praised the costumes of *Brutus* for their accuracy: the *Morning Post* reported the painter's 'complete satisfaction': 'the dresses, ornaments, &c. were so correct, as to call back a lively recollection of what he had [read] in days long past, in the

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[60] Benjamin Dean Wyatt, *Observations on the Design for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane* (London, 1813), p.10. The boxes could seat 1,286 persons, the pit 920 and the galleries a total of 900. The new theatre also had 18 private boxes (in the proscenium and in the basement), which Wyatt did not include in his calculations of the number of spectators using the building (p.40).

[61] Baker (1969), p.184.

[62] Harrison, *The Life and Writings of John Howard Payne*, p.63.

[63] 'The author had previously presented Mr. Kean with the very toga he wore, and showed him how its folds should be adjusted to the true Roman style.' Ibid., p.74

[64] Gabriel Harrison, *John Howard Payne, Dramatist, Poet, Actor*, rev. edn (Philadelphia: Lippincott & Co., 1885), p.250. Many of Payne's plays, together with pictorial material, correspondence and other documents, are at Columbia University.

Roman History. Such a compliment, and from such authority, should, in honour of the Theatre, be recorded.'[65] It seems clear, then, that there was a widespread acknowledgement of the staging of the play as an example of a successful reconstruction of the past: Payne's biographer declared that history had never been represented so accurately on a stage before Brutus, the journalist who reported Benjamin West's comment described the play as an unprecedented historical spectacle, and the long list of scenes and the reference to Lethière in playbills aimed at drawing attention to the quantity and the quality of the visual restitutions of classical architecture.

Oxberry's and Cumberland's 'authentic' plays

In 1818, the comedian, writer and publisher William Oxberry proposed an alternative way to represent the past. The past in question was not only the events evoked by the play, but also the past of the stage performance. Oxberry published a series of plays entitled *Oxberry's New English Drama*. In twenty (sometimes twenty-two) volumes, he offered the public the most popular plays in Britain.[66] The publication of a corpus of plays under the title *British* or *English Theatre* was no novelty – another collection of plays, *Bell's British Theatre*, had met with phenomenal success in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Moreover, *Bell's British Theatre* had played an important role in the development of British theatrical portraiture, for each play was illustrated by a full-length representation of a well-known actor in a role from the play. Other early nineteenth-century serialised editions of plays were *The British Theatre* (edited by Elizabeth Inchbald, 1806-09) and *Dolby's British Drama* (from 1823).

The originality of Oxberry's edition consists in its paratextual apparatus. Each play is preceded by a critical introduction (by Oxberry himself, William Hazlitt and

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[65] *Morning Post*, 15 December 1818, p.3.
[66] John Russell Stephens, 'Oxberry, William (1784–1824)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21045 [accessed 30 August 2016].

other 'Public Writers of acute observation and erudite research') and by a bust portrait of an actor in costume. Oxberry's approach is particularly interesting as the play is presented as a faithful reflection of the performances in the London theatres, as stated on the title pages: each plays is presented as 'the only edition existing which is faithfully marked with the stage business and stage directions, as it is performed at the Theatres Royal'. To the text and directions is added the cast of actors for the opening night or for recent performances if the play was an old one, and each plays ends with a diagram of the 'disposition of the Characters when the curtain falls.' The reader was thus enabled to visualise the actors, their words and their movements. But Oxberry went even further in his desire to provide the reader with an experience that came as close as possible to that of the spectator. The most striking element of the collection is the presence of a list of costumes for each main character. Although information about stage business was already available in editions of plays sold at the theatres' box offices,[67] descriptions of the main characters' costumes was an innovative element in the edition of plays in Britain, and this indicates that by the 1820s costume had acquired a dramatic status of its own in the theatre.

Oxberry's formula for the edition of plays was adopted and taken further by publisher John Cumberland in the late 1820s, and it was in *Cumberland's British Theatre*, in 1826, that Payne's *Brutus* was included. The paratextual information in *Cumberland's British Theatre* laid stronger emphasis on the authenticity of the material and created a feeling of immediacy between the reader and the production which formed the basis of the edition. Cumberland innovated in the style of the illustrations, which included small scenes from the play and full-length portraits of actors. The critical remarks were written by literary critic and Garrick admirer George Daniel, who signed his contributions D.G.[68] The collection of plays, stated Oxberry in an advertisement for his series, 'has been of incalculable service'

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[67] John Philip Kemble published the acting versions of a number of plays he produced, to be sold in the theatre as souvenirs of the performance. These published versions of Kemble's promptbooks contained precise information about the production, such as cast lists and stage directions (Shattuck (1974), vol.I, p.xiv).
[68] In the hope, according to Leo Hughes, that readers would establish an association with David Garrick (Leo Hughes, 'A Flawed Tribute to Garrick', *Modern Philology*, 80 (1983), pp.398-405, p.404).

'to Provincial Managers and Actors, — nor less to Amateurs in general'.[69] Beyond this intended use, the detailed referencing of London productions in Oxberry's and Cumberland's editions retraced the playgoer's experience while giving the reader (who might not have seen the play) all the tools necessary to create the staging of the play in his imagination, with the help of the portraits and illustrations. In *Cumberland's British Theatre*, costume in particular became a central feature of the representation, either real or imagined. It was not only described in the text (a feature borrowed from *Oxberry's New English Drama*) but also depicted in the vignette. Each illustration was engraved in wood 'from a drawing taken in the theatre by Mr. R[obert] Cruikshank,' a precision that was intended to increase the authentic character of the edition.

Brutus was published in volume XI, which includes three plays by Payne, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Henry V*, and two other popular plays.[70] The illustration is not a scene from the plot as in the other plays in the volume, but a full-length portrait of Kean as Brutus, by Thomas Woolnoth after Charles Wageman (Figure 79). This choice of illustration emphasises Kean's pose and costume, recalling Northcote's portrait. By giving a face and a dress to the Brutus of history books, the engraving also contributes to associating, in the mind of the reader, the actor, the theatrical and textual character and the historical figure. The cast appearing in the book is not that of the 1818 première, but since its creation *Brutus* had become part of the regular repertory at Drury Lane. It was also played in provincial theatres.[71] The vocabulary used to describe the costumes is rather generic; yet it is sometimes detailed, as in the description of Brutus' second dress: 'crimson shirt, Roman cuirass, and lambarakins of silver leather, helmet, and red sandals' (Figure 80). These terms would not be precise enough to satisfy an

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[69] Announcement in George Coleman, *Blue Devils; a Farce*, ed. by William Oxberry (London, 1822), p.iii.

[70] *The Two Galley Slaves* (Payne), *Love in humble life* ('petite comedy' by Payne), *The Child of Nature* (Elizabeth Inchbald), *The Sleepwalker* (a farce by W.C.Oulton).

[71] John Waldie, seeing Brutus played in Nottingham on 26 March 1821, wrote in his diary 'the condemnation of the son with which the play ends is very fine.' (John Waldie, 'The Journal of John Waldie. Theatre Commentaries, 1799-1830: No. 35 [Journal 48] March 26, 1821-April 9, 1822', transcript by Frederick Burwick (Charles E. Young Research Library Department of Special Collections. UCLA: UCLA Library Special Collections, 2008) [Retrieved from: Https://Escholarship.org/Uc/Item/3k5102v3, 15 February 2015]).

antiquarian, but the enumeration suggests that most readers were able to visualise items of costume such as Roman helmets and lambarakins.

Cumberland's British Theatre demonstrates the interest in a new form of authenticity in the evocation of the past, an evocation that goes further than the visual and auditory pleasure of the performance. With Cumberland's editions, every reader could reconstitute the staging thanks to information presented as trustworthy. The London production could then be re-enacted in the imagination as it was being read, and could also be emulated by provincial companies and amateur theatricals, as the advertisements for the earlier *Oxberry's New English Drama* implied. Costume became a fundamental element in the representation, real or imaginary, and participated in the transformation of the reader into a spectator. From the point of view of theatre history, the presence of a list of costumes is an innovative feature in the edition of plays in Britain, and reveals that in the 1820s, costume had acquired a status of its own in the theatre. It was at that time that the word 'costume', with the modern meaning of 'stage dress', began to replace the terms 'dresses' or 'cloathes', which were used until then. This prefigures the development of the function of costume designer, which is often situated in 1823 with James Robinson's Planché's costume designs for the revival of *King John* at Covent Garden, as chapter 6 will discuss.

Perceptions of the past in the early nineteenth century were informed by the aesthetic of the Picturesque and the development of sentiment in the second half of the eighteenth century. Painters as well as stage directors put forward a 'truth of effect' that could be distinct from the antiquarian's scientific precision. The notion of authenticity takes on a different meaning for the wider public in so far as it is linked to the effect of the immediacy of the past created by the work of art or the performance. This was expressed by the painter John Opie in his lecture on invention, which he gave at the Royal Academy in 1809:

> . . . though most strictly bound to the observance of truth and
> probability, these are obviously very different from such as is

required in history; his [the painter's] truth is the truth of effect, and his probability the perfect harmony and congruity of all the parts of his story, and their fitness to bring about the intended effect — that of striking the imagination, touching the passions, and developing in the most forcible manner the leading sentiment of the subject.[72]

The 1819 production of *Brutus* at Drury Lane is not a completely isolated example of a theatrical performance based on a painting; according to Stephen Orgel, the costumes of John Philip Kemble's *Coriolanus* of 1805 (Drury Lane) were based on a painting by Nicolas Poussin.[73] However, Payne's *Brutus* was vigorously advertised and the emphasised relationship to Lethière's picture makes it a fascinating example of the relationship between the stage and the nineteenth-century exhibition culture. The analysis of the staging of *Brutus* brings to light important issues about the relationship between art and perceptions of history in the early nineteenth century. It shows that reliance on 'documentary' sources, whether antiquarian publications or reconstructions in paintings, were becoming paramount to the attractiveness of the theatre. Moreover, Northcote's portrait of Kean confirms the new status of non-Shakespearean drama as a source for history painting in Britain. While some elements of the production were aiming at historical accuracy, such as the main characters' tunics, togas and sandals, others could be perceived as authentic even if they were not accurate in an archaeological sense. Unfortunately, there are no depictions of the female characters in the play, which makes it difficult to assess whether the neoclassical fashions of the turn of the century had been adopted as the standard dress for classical female figures. The case of the staging of *Brutus* in 1818 shows that representations of the past in the early nineteenth century, even if they fell short of perfect historical accuracy, were nevertheless satisfying to an audience that relished spectacular reconstructions. They suggest that the perceived authenticity of an historical representation is a

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[72] John Opie, *Lectures on Painting* (London, 1809), p.67.
[73] Orgel (2008), p.102.

combination of reconstitution and emotion. It is precisely this slight but crucial disjuncture with the documentary precision advocated by antiquarians that made the past a visual and affective experience, enjoyed by the spectator and then spread through portraits of actors in character.

Chapter 5

'Anticising' Britain: ancient and modern Highlanders, noble and picturesque savages: Home's *Douglas*, Master Betty and the representation of historical Scottish costume

From the late eighteenth century on, events from British history and scenes from plays in the British canon were established as innovative and legitimate subjects for artistic productions. In the theatre, historical plays had always been popular. Throughout the long eighteenth century, many playwrights attempted to emulate Shakespeare's tragedies, both in style and content.[1] Some of these attempts were very popular, and show how playwrights, theatres and audiences perceived and reconstructed the past in literary and visual form. Among the most celebrated tragedies was *Douglas, or the Noble Shepherd*, which took inspiration from an event in medieval Scottish history.

Norval and its actors

Written by the Scottish clergyman and playwright John Home (1722-1808), *Douglas* was first performed in Edinburgh in 1756. It met with immediate success, but Home was also heavily criticised, as a minister of the Kirk, for his participation in theatrical activities.[2] In London, Garrick turned down the chance to stage the play at

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[1] See Jeffrey Kahan, *Shakespeare Imitations, Parodies and Forgeries, 1710-1820*, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 2004).

[2] Home was a minister of the Church of Scotland, which did not accord well with Presbyterian antitheatrical sentiments. The performance of Home's tragedy led a group of orthodox clergymen to pit themselves against playwright ministers, ministers who had attended performances of *Douglas*, and drama in general (Lisa A. Freeman, 'The Cultural Politics of Antitheatricality: The Case of John Home's Douglas', *The Eighteenth Century*, 43 (2002), pp.210-35, p.211). For a detailed account of the Edinburgh controversies, see Alice Edna Gipson, *John Home, a Study of His Life and Works with Special Reference to His Tragedy of Douglas and the Controversies Which Followed its First Representations,* (Caldwell: The Caxton printers, 1917).

Drury Lane, with the result that it was eventually performed at Covent Garden in March 1757, where it was well received.[3] *Douglas* was 'the *succès fou* of 1750s tragedy',[4] was performed frequently until the mid-nineteenth century and had a particularly long afterlife as a favourite play adapted for toy theatres. The tragedy afforded good roles for female leads and young actors – including child prodigies. Another attraction was its historical value. A biographer of Garrick remarked that, in the theatre, 'a picture of ancient manners, during the time of the feudal system, which nearly corresponded with the days of chivalry, was a novelty that deserved attention.'[5]

The historical and spatial settings of the play brought together two important cultural and aesthetic trends of the period: the taste for the Middle Ages and the passion for things Scottish. From the 1760s, the Middle Ages had been brought into fashion; architecture, literature and drama, in particular, took inspiration from the buildings and romances of the high and late medieval periods. According to Michael Alexander, the Gothic Revival is only the tip of the 'cultural iceberg' of the Medieval Revival, characterised by the recovery of material from the past and the adoption of medieval ideas and forms in art and culture. In particular, Alexander identifies Bishop Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) as the work which 'made the 1760s the decade in which medieval antiquarianism became widely fashionable and then popular.'[6] In 1707, Scotland was united to England. Throughout the period under study, Scots viewed this political integration variously as a trauma or as a progress, and expressed their feelings about the Union in art and literature.[7] As will be explained in greater detail below, the defeat of the Jacobites risings in 1715 and 1746 and its aftermath paradoxically produced a resurgence of interest in Scottish culture in Britain as a

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[3] John Home, *Home's Douglas*, ed. by Hubert James Tunney (Lawrence: The University of Kansas, 1924), pp.19-21.

[4] Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1789* (London: Longman, 1988), p.205. For Bevis, the failure of Home's later tragedies suggests that *Douglas* was 'a timely stroke by a writer with some feel for cultural undercurrents, not a calling for the stage' (p.206).

[5] Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick* (London, 1780), p.212.

[6] Alexander (2007), pp.xxii and 16.

[7] John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

whole. Dealing with an ancient period of Scottish history, Home's tragedy consequently appealed to many spectators.

The fact that the title role of *Douglas* was played by the most famous child actor of the nineteenth century, William Henry West Betty, also makes the play a good mirror of the expansion of celebrity business in the early nineteenth century (Figure 81). Although theatres did not immediately focus on the historical dimension of the play, the period's growing fascination for Scotland, its customs, language and literature makes Scottish dress in the theatre a good prism for the study of the staging of the past. In the eighteenth century, the Celtic peripheries were associated with early Britain and its inhabitants, while the re-discovery of Celtic literature and folklore (including the poetry of Macpherson's imaginary bard Ossian), as well as the taste for the Picturesque and the Sublime, had created a new interest in the history and landscape of the Celtic peripheries as a whole.

In the first decades of the play's stage history, the young protagonist Norval was dressed as a Scottish gentleman or a soldier, in costume that recalled contemporary uniforms and made use of the picturesque qualities of tartan. By the early nineteenth century, and helped with the extraordinary success of the juvenile William Betty, the character became associated with the innocence of the early inhabitants of Scotland and the concept of the noble savage. Representations of the Scottish Highlands in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art and literature suggest that the originally distinct notions of the primitive, the savage and the classical became gradually intertwined in the period's visual and historical culture. John Opie's portrait of Betty as Norval is a case in point, as it offers an interpretation of historical Scottish costume that alludes to the values of classical Antiquity (Figure 82). The first years of the nineteenth century established the kilt as the favoured garment for the character of Norval, prefiguring the success of novels set in Scotland. In the years following Betty's success, Norval's dress developed into full Highland costume, joining representations of Macbeth and heroes from dramatisations of Walter Scott's novels in the evocation of the dignity and timelessness of Scotland, its population and traditions. As this chapter will demonstrate, the vogue of tartan and the fashion of Highland dress as stage

costume allow us to examine contemporary debates about the antiquity of Scotland and the place of the country in British art and identity.

Set in medieval Scotland, the tragedy is loosely inspired by Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, focusing on Douglas rather than his opponent Henry 'Hotspur' Percy.[8] The play also mentions a Danish invasion, Anglo-Scottish warfare and the crusades. Local colour is created through references to features of the Scottish landscape such as the Grampian Mountains, the Bass Rock and the Firth of Forth. The plot itself is taken from a ballad entitled 'Gil Morrice', published in volume II of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. This collection of ballads had captured the British imagination since its publication in 1765, and played a part in the growing taste for the Middle Ages and the development of the public's interest in the oral traditions of Britain.[9] In Home's tragedy, Lady Randolph is forced into marrying Lord Randolph after the death of Douglas, to whom she was secretly married. She had a son by Douglas, but he is believed dead. Many years later, a young stranger called Norval saves Lord Randolph's life and becomes one of his retainers. Soon after, Lady Randolph realises that Norval is her long-lost son. The villain of the play, Glenalvon, persuades Lord Randolph that Norval and his wife are lovers. Randolph kills Norval, only to learn he was Lady Randolph's son. She commits suicide by jumping from a waterfall.

The first Norvals seem to have worn stylised versions of Scottish dress. Representations of this, including tartan and kilts, were available to the eighteenth-century public through portraits, descriptions in accounts such as Edward Burt's

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[8] Kahan (2004), vol.II, p.83.

[9] See Nicholas Hudson, 'Constructing Oral Tradition: The Origins of the Concept in Enlightenment Intellectual Culture', in Adam Fox and D. R Woolf, eds., *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 240-56. The *Gentleman's Magazine* reviewer commented that Percy 'has with great judgement selected such specimens [of ballads] as either shew the gradation of our language, exhibit the progress of popular opinion, display the peculiar manners and customs of former ages, or throw light on our early classical poets', and expressed the view that the work 'well deserves the encouragement of the public' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1st series, 35 (1765), pp.179 and 183, quoted in Roy Palmer, 'Percy, Thomas (1729-1811)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21959 [accessed 5 May 2015]). The various versions of 'Gil Morrice' are collected in William Motherwell's *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern* (Glasgow, 1827), pp.257-86. On ballads in Britain, their collection, publication and influence of Romantic literature, see Albert B. Friedman, *The Ballad Revival; Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London (1754)[10]
and Thomas Pennant's *A Tour of Scotland* (1771), images relating to the Jacobite
rebellions, military uniforms of Scottish regiments, satirical prints and some
costume books. Thomas Jefferys's *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations*
included full-length portraits of the 'Habit of a gentleman in the Highlands of
Scotland in 1745' and his female counterpart, drawn after the description of
Highland dress in Burt's Letters (Figure 83).[11] However, following the Jacobite
risings, tartan and Highland costume were perceived as symbols of rebellion. In the
wake of the Jacobite defeat in 1746, Parliament passed a series of laws aiming at
eradicating the possibility of further uprising. The Disarming Acts of 1716 and 1725
punished the possession of weapons while the Heritable Jurisdiction Act (1747)
abolished hereditary jurisdictions, thus weakening the Highlands' patriarchal
system. The Act of Proscription came into effect in 1746. This was a reiteration of
the Disarming Acts, with a new section, the Dress Act, proscribing Highland dress
(defined as 'the Plaid, Philabeg, or little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any part
whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb').[12] The same Dress Act
also banned the use of 'Tartan, or party-coloured Plaid or Stuff . . . for Great Coats,
or for Upper Coats'. The reason for the interdiction of Highland dress, beyond its
Jacobite associations, was its extreme practicality. It had been described as a
costume ideally adapted to the rough terrain and weather of the Highlands and
suited to rebellious action. Since Highlanders wear and sleep in their plaid,
commented Burt, 'it renders them ready at a Moment's Warning to join in any
Rebellion, as they carry continually their Tents about them.'[13] Furthermore, the
interdiction of Highland dress was also meant as a blow to Highland identity. Major-
General David Stewart, in his important work on the Highlands (1822), wrote of
Highland dress as having 'influenced the military character of the Highlanders'.[14]

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[10] Edward Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to His Friend in London* (London, 1754). The letters, written in the late 1720s, were published anonymously in London and offer a detailed description of Scottish customs.
[11] Jefferys (1757-72), vol.II, pp.73-74, Plates 191 and 192.
[12] Act 19 Geo. 2. c.39. § 17.
[13] Burt (1754), letter XXII, vol.2, p.188.
[14] David Stewart, *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1822), p.72.

Because 'much of the distinctive character of the people was connected with it', Stewart viewed the ban on Highland dress as 'an encroachment on the feelings of a people, whose ancient and manly garb had been worn from a period remote beyond all history or even tradition.'[15] The ban did not apply to Scottish regiments in the Royal army, since tartan and the belted plaid had been part of military uniform since the seventeenth century.

From the late eighteenth century onwards, tartan and Highland dress were evidently popular on the London stage. Macklin's Scottish *Macbeth* of 1773 at Covent Garden is often seen as a landmark in the implementation of accurate costume. The stage tradition was to play Macbeth in a gold-braided scarlet suit and tail wig (giving Shakespeare's hero the appearance of a modern military officer), but Macklin chose to appear in Scottish dress. The Coldstream March was played as the actor made his entrance, wearing a long plaid, a tunic and tartan stockings.[16] Macklin's decision evinces a new attention to the context of the plot and the characters' surroundings. The only depiction of his Scottish Macbeth costume is a caricature, which makes it a rather unreliable source of information about the actual dress (Figure 84). Diana De Marly has remarked that the costume worn by Macbeth is likely to have been that of a contemporary Scottish officer, which was a way of circumventing the Dress Act.[17] However, as the ban applied to every 'Man or Boy, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland', it appears that the proscription did not extend to *representations* of Highlanders on the English stage.[18]

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[15] Ibid., pp.76 and 112. In the footnote on pp.112-113, Stewart gives an account of the debates about the antiquity of the kilt – 150 years before Hugh Trevor-Roper's study of the garment as an example of invented tradition (Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.15-41).

[16] Dennis Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and the Players* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.83-4. Bartholomeusz notes that there was a precedent to Macklin's Scottish Macbeth: in Edinburgh in 1757, West Digges had produced the play 'new dress'd after the manner of Ancient Scots.' Garrick too contemplated Scottish dress for *Macbeth*.

[17] De Marly (1982), p.51.

[18] Actors wearing tartan are depicted, for instance, in portraits of Louisa Fontenelle as Moggy McGilpin in John O'Keefe's comic opera *The Highland Reel* (drawing by an unknown artist, *c.*1790-1817, British Museum) and Alexander Johnston [?] as Gibby in Susanna Centlivre's *The Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret* (mezzotint by Joseph Saunders after Benjamin van de Gucht, 1773, British Museum).

Like many of the actors who played Macbeth after him, Macklin chose to favour accuracy of place over accuracy of time, contemporary Scotland rather than the Middle Ages. Unfortunately for Macklin, his choice of costume and his gait marred the dignity of his entrance. William Cooke, in his *Memoirs of Charles Macklin, Comedian* (1804) remarked that the actor looked 'more like a Scotch Piper, than a General and prince of the Blood' as he entered 'stomping down the stage.'[19] In a striking contrast, Macklin's second costume for this production was that of a modern gentleman. Although Macklin's experiment in Scottish dress was unsuccessful, it anticipated the interest in historicism that developed in the following years.[20] Before Macklin, Aaron Hill and David Garrick had attempted to dress some characters with greater historical accuracy, but Hill's attempts were a failure and Garrick's proved incomplete. Thus, in the first decades of the nineteenth century it was Macklin, followed by John Philip Kemble, who was perceived as the first reformer of stage costume.[21] Following his example, it became customary to play Macbeth in Highland costume from the end of the eighteenth century. The practice of using either tartan or a belted plaid (or a kilt), or both, extended to Norval, as can be ascertained by virtually every print and portrait of actors in the role. The earliest image of an actor in the character of Norval is the full-length portrait of Anthony Webster, after James Roberts, published as a plate to the 1778 edition of the tragedy in *Bell's British Theatre* (Figure 85). In this image, Webster's dress is still inspired by traditional Roman stage costume, with breastplate, short sleeves and plumed headdress. However, tartan stockings and a kilt-like skirt signal the Scottish identity of the character. Burnim and Highfill note that this costume may be authentic, since Webster had performed Norval in 1776, the year he was depicted by James Roberts, according to Burnim and Highfill – but the location of

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[19] Quoted in Bartholomeusz (1969), p.83. It is interesting to note that by the early nineteenth century, the 'Scotch piper' look was not criticised any more. It was then viewed as traditional, and therefore authentic.

[20] Peter Holland, 'David Garrick', in Peter Holland, ed., *Great Shakespeareans, Set II: Garrick, Kemble, Siddons, Kean* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013 [2010]), pp.26-27. Macklin's other notable step towards accurate costuming was his wearing of a red hat as Shylock, as he had read that Jews in Venice wore such headdress.

[21] For instance by William Oxberry, *Oxberry's Dramatic Biography and Histrionic Anecdotes* (London, 1825), vol.I, p.47: 'Macklin has a claim to the merit of effecting the first reformation in theatrical costume; he first dressed *Macbeth* in the Scotch habit.'

Roberts's original drawing, however, is unknown.[22] At any rate, the engraving of Webster as Douglas demonstrates that conceptions of Scottish costume were adapted for representation using the visual idiom employed for classical tragedy heroes. Webster's dress is a combination of tartan garments and traditional theatrical dress for classical characters (Figure 86). In particular, the skirt is rather striking as an artistic rendition of the Highlanders' belted plaid (as depicted on portraits realised prior to the 1746 Dress Act, such as John Michael Wright's 1683 depiction of Lord Mungo, the fifth son of the Marquess of Atholl (Figure 87)).

Although the medieval setting of *Douglas* was clearly perceived to be of interest, no real attempts were made at costuming all the characters accurately. Verisimilitude was focused just on Norval, and probably on other noble characters such as Lord Randolph and Glenalvon. When Thomas Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, commissioned Gainsborough Dupont to paint a series of portraits of the principal performers of the company, the actor James Middleton was depicted as Norval (Figure 88). The portrait was painted in 1794, but there is no evidence of Middleton playing Norval either before or after this date.[23] Yet the choice of character reveals that *Douglas* had obtained pride of place in the repertory of Covent Garden, one of the two legitimate theatres. Middleton wears a red and blue tartan jacket with blue facings, a matching plaid, a black stock and white cravat, a baldric – and a tall black fur hat ornamented with ostrich feathers and a strip of red and green tartan. The red coat and its blue facings, along with the baldric, hat and dark stock, evoke the uniform of late eighteenth-century regiments (Figure 89, Figure 90).[24]

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[22] Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.32.

[23] As Douglas was performed twice in 1794, the portrait might be an indication that Middleton, and not Montague Talbot as indicated by an annotated playbill, played the part of Norval. (Geoffrey Ashton and Iain Mackintosh, *Royal Opera House Retrospective 1732-1982: 250 Years of Actors, Singers, Dancers, Managers and Musicians of Covent Garden Seen through the Eyes of the Artist.* (London: Royal Opera House, 1982), p.77).

[24] The 'Cloathing Book' of 1742 (*A Representation of the Cloathing of His Majesty's Household, and of All the Forces upon the Establishments of Great Britain and Ireland*) shows that many regiments of foot had red uniforms with blue facings, although Middleton's coat does not have regimental lace. The black stock became part of the uniform of regiments of foot after the 1768 warrant, which decreed a number of changes in the uniforms of the British army.

Dupont's portrait is not the only one to draw parallels between Norval's costume and regimental uniform: in the same decade, Jane Powell and Joseph George Holman were both painted by Samuel De Wilde in coats of red tartan with blue facings, worn with a dark stock (Figure 91, Figure 92).[25] Although they are depicted at different points in the play, both actors wear similar red tartan jackets with blue facings, Holman's outfit in particular (save for the breeches) being almost identical to Middleton's. Jane Powell first played Norval at Drury Lane in 1795, at her benefit night. Like Middleton, and probably Holman too, she wears a black stock and a tie-wig with a long tail, a style associated with military men (although soldiers often wore their tails in tight queues, or braids). The cross-dressing was probably Powell's decision – as opposed to a traditional breeches part, in which the assumption of male dress by a female character was part of the narrative of the play.[26] As Celestine Woo notes, 'playing a cross-gendered role is a chosen stance, likely to be critical, theoretical or ideological in nature . . . a cross-gendered role invites reflection on the part of the spectator as to why an actor would portray the opposite gender, to a greater extent than the breeches part'.[27] Powell was renowned as an accomplished tragedian. She was the first actress to perform the role of Hamlet on the London stage,[28] and contemporary commentators remarked

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[25] De Wilde was employed by John Bell to paint the theatrical portraits for his second edition of *Bell's British Theatre* (1791-93). Bell advertised De Wilde as a superior theatrical portrait painter to Zoffany, and provided him with a studio at the British Library, where visitors could view De Wilde's work as well as paintings by the other artists commissioned to illustrate the publication (Ian Mayes, 'John Bell, "the British Theatre" and Samuel de Wilde', *Apollo*, 113 (1981), pp.100-103).

[26] Although breeches parts had been popular since the late seventeenth century, they were less frequent in tragedy than in comedy (Darryll Grantley, *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre: Early Period* (Scarecrow Press, 2013), p.68). On the distinction between breeches parts (female roles involving temporary cross-dressing) and cross-gendered roles (male roles played by female performers), see Celestine Woo, 'Sarah Siddons's Performances as Hamlet: Breaching the Breeches Part', *European Romantic Review*, 18 (2007), pp.573-95. On cross-dressing and women in male roles, see Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and 'The Guilty Pleasures of Female Theatrical Cross-Dressing and the Autobiography of Charlotte Clarke', in Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, eds., *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp.142-66, and Lesley Ferris, ed., *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (London: Routledge, 2005). For an overview of theatrical cross-dressing in various times and cultures, see Laurence Senelick, *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

[27] Woo (2007), p.576.

[28] See Amy Muse, 'Portrait of a Lady Hamlet', *Performing Arts Resources*, 28 (2011), pp.93-100. On Actresses playing Hamlet, see Tony Howard, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

that some aspects of her acting appeared more masculine than feminine.[29] The decision to represent Norval played by a woman is an interesting one. Powell's tight-fitting tartan outfit might have titillated male spectators, yet the moment depicted is Norval's death and his/her facial expression conveys the character's pain efficiently. Furthermore, both the androgyny and the sexualisation of the character are already present in the text and subtext of the play, as will be discussed below. Powell's performance as young Norval, both on stage and on canvas, therefore elicits audience interest thanks to its unexpected and sexually charged nature, while conjointly making explicit key features of Norval's character, such as the possibility of an affair between him and Lady Randolph.

Even if some of the actors had not played the part when the portraits were painted, the common points between the pictures suggest that a stage tradition had been established for the dress of Norval. The character of the young Scot is interpreted, through allusions to military dress, in terms of his participation in the Union as a whole. In the early nineteenth century, the success of Scottish regiments in the British army led to the development of an image of the Highlander as the embodiment of bravery and loyalty.[30] In the play, Norval becomes a soldier in the employ of Lord Randolph. The hero's virtues are here associated with Scottish soldiers, suggesting continuity between medieval and contemporary Scots. The portraits can also be seen as vectors of another political and cultural message, affirming the legitimacy of Scots in the British army, and of Scottish characters on the English stage – where they had been often caricatured.[31]

Powell is the only actor to be dressed from head to toe in the same tartan, a sign that the fabric was becoming the most prominent cultural signifier for Scotland. The Dress Act, which banned the wearing of tartan and kilts in Scotland, was repealed in 1782. Emptied of its rebellious Jacobite significance, tartan came to be

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[29] Heather Anne Wozniak, 'Brilliant Gloom: The Contradictions of British Gothic Drama, 1768-1823' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 2008), pp.217-218.

[30] Morrison (2003), p.47.

[31] For instance in Charles Macklin's *The True-born Scotsman* (licensed for performance in London under the title *The Man of the World*). Linda Colley has analysed the caricaturing of Scottish stock characters on the stage as an attempt from English audiences to 'exorcise their apprehension at Scottish ambition' (Colley (2005), p.123).

associated with the picturesque landscapes of Scotland. When war was declared between Britain and the new French Republic and tourist routes to the continent were cut off, the Celtic peripheries became attractive destinations for British tourists who were looking for a surrogate Grand Tour. New roads and bridges, built in the aftermath of the '45 as a means of preventing a third Jacobite rebellion, had the effect of making remote areas accessible to visitors. Lastly, industrialisation made natural, unspoilt areas attractive and valuable.[32] This change in the perception of Scotland and of tartan was reflected in theatrical portraiture, significantly so in the representation of Norval.

Samuel De Wilde's portrait of Holman illustrates the new attractions of Scotland (Figure 91). Norval is depicted as an elegant officer, or a gentleman in the Lowlands (where kilts were not worn, although tartan was). The earliest print from this portrait is dated 7 April 1791. Since Holman did not play Norval until 1792, Burnim and Highfill conclude that the portrait has to be seen as an ideal representation, with De Wilde acting as the ''costumier manqué'', presenting the character as he would have dressed it.'[33] Besides *Bell's British Theatre* (1791), De Wilde's painting was engraved as plates to William Jones's *British Theatre* (Dublin, 1792) and C. Cooke's *British Drama* (1807).[34] The reproduction history of the portrait suggests that this representation was perceived as an appropriate depiction of the character and of the actor. Contrary to the earlier full-length portrait of Webster, the character is depicted in a landscape. The hilly background has the effect of making the portrait more picturesque and draws the viewer's attention to the relationship between the character represented and the Scottish landscape.

As the century drew to a close, Norval's costume began to include historicising elements, as shown in depictions of actor Henry Erskine Johnston. The costume of Johnston, who played Norval in London between 1797 and 1800, retained the red and green (or red and blue) plaid, according to two portraits by

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[32] Morrison (2003), p.94-95.
[33] Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.32.
[34] Both Bell and Cooke used an engraving made by William Bromley; the engraving published by Jones was made by Ferguson (Burnim and Highfill (1973), vol.7).

Henry Singleton and William Allan (Figure 93, Figure 94). The striking innovation consisted in replacing the coat and breeches by a breastplate and a kilt. The origins of the kilt (or filibeg, as opposed to the large belted plaid) have been debated. It is traditionally said to have been invented in the 1720s by Thomas Rawlinson, the English owner of a furnace near Inverness, who thought the belted plaids of his workers too cumbersome. This, in particular, is the view adopted by Hugh Trevor-Roper, who argued that both the kilt and clan tartan were artificial creations of new traditions.[35] This view has been challenged: Dorothy K. Burnham believes the transformation was brought about by a change in the looms, the new horizontal type having a smaller width, while Murray Pittock, opposing Trevor-Roper's idea of kilts and clan tartan as invented traditions, claims that there is evidence of local and family tartan patterns as early as the sixteenth century.[36] Notwithstanding these debates, Johnston's kilt had the effect of localising the character firmly in the Highlands. Descriptions of kilts and Highland dress were found in many accounts of travels to Scotland, such as the very popular *A Tour of Scotland* by Thomas Pennant (1771):

> The *fillebeg*, i.e. little plaid, also called *kelt*, is a sort of short petticoat reaching only to the knee, and is a modern substitute for the lower part of the plaid, being found to be less cumbersome, especially in time of action, when the highlanders used to tuck their *brechan* into their girdle.[37]

Instead of boots or shoes, the actor wears sandals. Together with the breastplate, they achieve an antiquating effect which distances the character from the evocation of a modern soldier. The degree of detail in the representation of the costume and the fact that both costumes are identical suggest that this was the dress actually worn on stage by Johnston. Both painters precisely delineated the

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[35] Trevor-Roper (2012), pp.21-22.

[36] Dorothy K. Burnham, *Cut My Cote* (Textile Department, Royal Ontario Museum, 1973), p.6; Murray Pittock, 'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland', in Ian Brown, ed., *From Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp.32-47.

[37] Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Chester, 1771), p.163.

parts of the breastplate, and the woollen garment used to prevent chafing around the neck. Geographically and temporally, these representations of Norval show that close attention was given to the time and place of the action. They offer a vision of a picturesque Scotland, through Highland dress and the inclusion of a specific landscape in the background.

Compared to the portraits of Holman and Powell, the landscape in depictions of Johnston as Norval is given a more important narrative function. Singleton's picture was engraved as a full-length portrait by Edward Mitchell and published in 1806 (Figure 95). In the print, Johnston's clothes correspond to those in Allan's portrait, with the addition of a Scots bonnet lying on the ground. For a modern viewer, the bonnet breaks the harmony of the pseudo-medieval costume, but for contemporary viewers it would have made the costume appear even more authentic and complete, as the Scots bonnet was seen as a traditional component of Highland dress. The landscape in the engraving resembles the background of Allan's portrait: it is wild and windswept. The castle in the engraving locates the scene in the Middle Ages, but the mountains are otherwise unpopulated. The presence of a river and its waterfall in both images is significant. In the play, a river forms the boundary between Lord Douglas's and Lord Randolph's kingdoms, while the cascade may be an allusion to the suicide of Lady Randolph, who throws herself down a precipice into a river below. While a tormented nature constitutes a dramatic backdrop for the portrayal of the young Scottish hero, the presence of water in the portraits of Johnston also reflects the symbolic and aesthetic meaning progressively given to the Scottish landscape. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, the lakes, rivers and falls of Scotland had become associated with Scottish history and identity, and with the idea of the Picturesque (Figure 96). Morrison has shown how the linking of land and history was critical in the development of both Highlandism and the Picturesque.[38] The falls of Clyde, for instance, were associated with William Wallace, and after the publication of Walter Scott's *The Lady of The Lake* (1810), Loch Katrine became the epitome of Scottish landscape, to the extent that the Scottish landscape painter Alexander Nasmyth exhibited eight paintings of

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[38] Morrison (2003), pp.36-39 and 78-79.

the Loch at the British Institution between 1812 and 1839.[39] The portraits of Johnston as Douglas, painted at the turn of the century, reflect these visions of Scotland and Scottish identity. Historical costume merged with traditional Highland dress to suggest the antiquity of the Scottish Highlands and their inhabitants.

The remoteness of the Highlands made them appear as an area where the innocence of ancient peoples had been preserved. The eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fascination with the early inhabitants of Britain enhanced this idea and the Highlands became perceived as a region where ancient virtues, manners and poetry had survived untouched by corrupting modernity. As Fiona Stafford notes in her study of James Macpherson, late eighteenth-century anxieties about the corrupting power of civilisation, exemplified by Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88), had 'fuelled the enthusiasm for the Ancient World.'[40] Macpherson's *Ossian* poems had contributed to the diffusion of the idea of Highlanders being the direct descendants of ancient Caledonians. Thanks to their remote situation in the Scottish Highlands, they had never been invaded and their culture, language and literature had survived free of the corrupting influence of civilisation.[41] The appeal of 'the Rousseau-like natural refinement of the Ossianic heroes'[42] and Macpherson's representation of ancient Caledonians as men of sentiment, sociability and sensitivity[43] ensured the work a very favourable reception in the late eighteenth century, despite contemporary concerns about the authenticity of the poems.[44] The Highlander in his Scottish wilderness was seen as a noble savage, a concept that gained increased popularity during the London stay of Omai, the first Polynesian to visit Britain. Omai was brought back from Captain Cook's second expedition and stayed from 1774 to 1776, where his exotic and graceful appearance turned him into a curiosity. His portraits by Reynolds and

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[39] Ibid., p.37.

[40] Fiona J. Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), pp.33-4.

[41] Ibid., chapter 9, 'Macpherson's Vision of Celtic Scotland'.

[42] Uwe Böker, 'The Marketing of Macpherson: The International Book Trade and the First Phase of German Ossian Reception', in Howard Gaskill, ed., *Ossian Revisited* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), pp.73-93, p.74.

[43] John Dwyer, 'The Melancholy Savage: Text and Context in the *Poems of Ossian*', in Gaskill (1991), pp.164-206.

[44] Ibid., p.164.

William Parry (among others) show him wearing traditional Tahitian dress, in genteel, dignified poses (Figure 97).[45] Like Omai, Highlanders in their Scottish wilderness, with their distinctive costume and simple ways of life, were seen as noble savages.[46]

Similarly, the young hero of *Douglas*, raised on the hills by a wise old man, far from the negative influence of society, had become a symbol of the innocence of youth. Because of these associations, the child actor William Betty was seen as the perfect incarnation of Norval. This is shown dramatically in the portrait of Betty by John Opie, painted in 1804, at the very beginning of his London fame (Figure 82). In this portrait, Opie turns the young star into an ancient hero thanks to attention to costume, pictorial parallels and classical references. In doing so, the painting cultivated the period's passion for the primitive, the Middle Ages and the Celtic countries and their literature.

Although most of the best tragedians of the period had played Norval at some point in their careers, no actor had been as successful as Betty in a role from the play, except Sarah Siddons who was celebrated for her Lady Randolph.[47] In December 1804, he played Norval at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane. His performances were a great success and many prints of the actor in character were published. Along with reviews of the plays, they provide information about the kind of costume worn by Betty. Although they sometimes differ greatly, they suggest that both theatres used elements of traditional Scottish dress, as well as medieval weaponry. Most of the depictions of Betty in the role show him wearing a kilt, although he is sometimes portrayed with thigh armour instead.

One of Betty's admirers, Thomas Lister Parker of Browsholme Hall in Lancashire, commissioned from John Opie a full-length portrait of the boy as Norval.

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[45] See Michael Alexander, *Omai, Noble Savage* (London: Collins, 1977). John O'Keefe's successful pantomime *Omai: or, a trip round the world* premiered at Covent Garden in December 1785, with sets and costumes designed by de Loutherbourg (see Rüdiger Joppien, 'Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg's Pantomime Omai, or a Trip Round the World and the Artists of Captain Cook's Voyages', in T. C. Mitchell, ed., *Captain Cook and the South Pacific*, British Museum Yearbook, 3 (London: British Museum Publications, 1979), pp.81-133).

[46] On the concept of the noble savage, see Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928).

[47] Particularly appreciated for their performances of Norval were Robert William Elliston, Charles Kemble, John Howard Payne, Edmund Kean and William Charles Macready (Home (1924), p.19).

Opie was paid a generous 100 guineas for the painting, which was given to Betty as a gift.[48] Another version, commissioned by Thomas Harris for his theatrical collection, is now in the Garrick Club. Parker's fascination for Betty merged with his desire to patronize contemporary British artists, and he also commissioned several portraits of Betty from James Northcote.[49] Opie portrays Betty as a dynamic young man striding over the moors, bare-headed in the wind, clad in green and black tartan, wearing a breastplate and carrying a long spear. Through its treatment of the actor and the character, Opie's portrait demonstrates a real sense of the potentialities of costume in representing historical periods.

The work is best read as an illustration of the play's most famous speech:

> My name is Norval: on the Grampian hills
>
> My father feeds his flock; a frugal swain,
>
> Whose constant cares were to increase his store,
>
> And keep his only son, myself, at home.
>
> For I had heard of battles, and I long'd
>
> To follow to the field some warlike lord;
>
> And Heav'n soon granted what my sire denied.

Norval's speech to Lord Randolph in Act II became popular among teachers and educators as a set piece to teach declamation and was reproduced in elocution manuals.[50] The first lines of the passage were also frequently used in grammar-books to illustrate sections on possessive adjectives. Perhaps the most well-known reference to this speech is found in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, in a passage

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[48] Richard Walker, *Regency Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1985), vol.I, p.44.

[49] Parker's commissions from Northcote are a full-length portrait of Betty as Hamlet (now at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon) and two similar bust portraits of Betty as Norval for his personal collection (now in the collections of the National Trust at Petworth House and Attingham Park).

[50] For instance the popular *The Speaker: Or, Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers, and Disposed under Proper Heads, with a View to Facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking*, by William Enfield (London, 1790).

where Tom Bertram recalls the elocution exercises set by his father.[51] When the picture – probably the National Portrait Gallery version – was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1805, most visitors would have been able to recognise the scene. The painting was exhibited after a long dispute, for both Betty's father and Parker objected to it being displayed, lest it should damage the sales of reproductions. After fellow artist John Hoppner acted as an intermediary, the picture was eventually included in the exhibition.[52]

Betty's clothes can be linked to the costume that was illustrated in a print by John Dadley. Dadley had engraved several books on European costume and Chinese customs as well as images of actors in costume. His *Master Betty, Costume of Young Norval* is particularly interesting as it draws the viewer's attention to the costume itself (Figure 98). Prints of actors in character usually provide quotations from the play, or note that the actor is 'in the character of', and it is rare to see a direct reference to costume in theatrical prints of this period. Here the title, referring to the dress and not the text, invites us to concentrate on the actor and his dress rather than on the action. The tall feathery hat is consistent with accounts of the play as it was staged at Covent Garden. For instance, an early biographer of Betty describes how costume and accessories were used to make him seem slightly older (and taller) – he was thirteen at the time of his London début:

> It was all anxiety until his appearance, which was much
> more manly than could have been expected. – His height was
> assisted by the ostrich feather plumes, and the spear and shield

[51] 'How many a time have we mourned over the dead body of Julius Caesar, and to *be'd* and not *to be'd*, in this very room, for his amusement? And I am sure, *my name was Norval*, every evening of my life through one Christmas holidays' (*Mansfield Park* (1814)*, chapter 13, p.264).

[52] Walker (1985), p.44. The controversy is recounted in Joseph Farington's diary, 2-18 April 1805. Correspondence relating to the dispute can be found in the Royal Academy archive. Mr.Betty and Parker's opposition also extended to the exhibition of Northcote's portrait of Betty as Hamlet, commissioned by Parker at the same time as the Opie portrait. Opie's work was number 6, Northcote's number 26 at the Royal Academy exhibition.

with which he was armed might inspire terror into his enemies and confidence into his friends.[53]

In the wealth of depictions of Master Betty as Norval, Opie's portrait is striking in its sobriety and the absence of elements that could be described as 'picturesque' or even authentic. Since Charles Macklin's performance as Macbeth in 1773, it had become frequent to stage Scottish soldiers in traditional Highland dress complete with stockings, sporran (the pouch worn at the front of the kilt) and dirk (a long dagger). The tartan kilt and plaid are the only distinctively Scottish parts of Norval's outfit. Above all, the Scottish feather bonnet, which figured so prominently in the engraving by Dadley, and indeed in most depictions of Norval throughout the period, is omitted from Opie's painting. This is particularly surprising as we know it was a dramatic feature of Betty's costume at Covent Garden. As a result, attention is drawn to Betty's face and the harmony of his dress.

Betty's Highland costume is made of green and black tartan without any conspicuous demarcation between tunic, kilt and plaid. The vertical pleats of the kilt are there, yet the garment is much shorter than what was then perceived as the traditional kilt and reaches to just above the knee. In the absence of any figures or architectural elements in the background, the costume becomes the sole temporal indicator. However, if the tartan cloth gives local colour to the scene, the components of the dress make it difficult precisely to locate the action in time. Visually, the style and length of the costume and the billowing folds of the plaid at the side and back seem to draw a visual parallel with classical costume as it was frequently depicted in history painting. Opie thus plays on the draping of the fabric to achieve a visual allusion to Antiquity. For instance, the shape and folds of Betty's dress can be read as a kind of Caledonian version of the knee-length skirt and short cloak (or *sagum*) of the Roman soldier, which was also worn by other classical peoples (Figure 99).[54] But beyond Roman costume, the figure of Betty himself

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[53] George Davies Harley, *An Authentic Biographical Sketch of the Life, Education and Personal Character of William Henry West Betty, the Celebrated Young Roscius* (London, 1804), p.38.

[54] The sagum was described as the basic dress of ancient Celts in Western Europe (Gauls, Germans, Britons, Celtiberians, etc.). See for instance James Logan, *The Scottish Gaël; Or, Celtic Manners, as*

seems to be reminiscent of Greek statuary. The sitter's short costume, his body and posture bring to mind the figure of the Amazon, with her raised arm (originally holding a bow or spear), short dress gathered on one shoulder and contrapposto.[55] The plaid secured over Betty's left shoulder, almost merging with the kilt, looks like a tartan version of the Amazon's dress, generally identified as a chiton or as an exomis (Figure 100, Figure 101, Figure 102).[56] Norval is treated as a self-possessed soldier, but the rosy cheeks emphasise the extreme youth of the sitter and his quasi-feminine beauty.

Scholars have observed that 'Bettymania' was in part due to the fascination with Betty's androgynous beauty.[57] As many contemporary commentators observed, Betty was indeed an apt choice for the part of Norval, who is described by Glenalvon has having

> That alluring look,
>
> 'Twixt man and woman, which I have observed
>
> To charm the nicer and fantastic dames,
>
> Who are, like Lady Randolph, full of virtue . . .[58]

As Giles Playfair argued in his study of the life and success of Master Betty, the public's idolisation of the actor was partly caused by some more or less

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Preserved Among the Highlanders: Being an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Inhabitants, Antiquities, and National Peculiarities of Scotland : More Particularly of the Northern, Or Gaëlic Parts of the Country, Where the Singular Habits of the Aboriginal Celts Are Most Tenaciously Retained (London, 1831), pp.240-241. National variations of the sagum are described by Thomas Dudley Fosbroke in his *Encyclopedia of Antiquities, and Elements of Archaeology, Classical and Mediæval* (London, 1825), vol.II, p.865.

[55] By the 1830s, it had become frequent for the actor playing Norval to raise his right arm before delivering the 'My name is Norval' speech, as exemplified in the description of a fictitious performance of Douglas at Bartholomew Fair: ''the youthful Norval,' . . . had modestly donned his Celtic bonnet, elevated his right arm 'according to order'' (*Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (J. Fraser, 1831), p.437).

[56] The chiton was a garment worn by both genders, the exomis was designed for masculine physical activities ('Statue of a wounded Amazon [Roman copy of a Greek bronze statue] (32.11.4)', in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/32.11.4 [accessed 29 April 2015]).

[57] Giles Playfair, *The Prodigy: A Study of the Strange Life of Master Betty* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967) and Paul Elledge, *Lord Byron at Harrow School: Speaking Out, Talking Back, Acting Up, Bowing Out* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

[58] Act III, ll.368-371 in Bell's 1791 edition.

unformulated erotic, voyeuristic desire.[59] Contemporary accounts evoke the youth's feminine features, even describing him as 'a female in male costume', and suggest that the young prodigy held a sexual appeal for both genders. [60] In the play, tragedy unfolds when Norval, who is Lady Randolph's secret son, is suspected of being her lover. The ambiguity between the son and the lover is reflected by the painting's treatment of Betty's flesh. His naked limbs and rosy cheeks stand out against the dark hills and dark kilt. The picture could equally be viewed as the portrait of a beautiful boy or as the sexualised representation of a teenager who was already the object of so much public attention.

Throughout the eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth, kilts and belted plaids were viewed in England with disdain: either ridiculed, or felt to be indecent. Even after Walter Scott's novels and his staging of King George IV's 1822 visit to Scotland constructed Scottish identity in terms of Highland dress and culture, London did not immediately embrace Scott's Highlandism.[61] Yet there is no evidence that London audiences perceived Betty's kilt as indecent, or his tartan as ridiculous. Admittedly, any indecency might have been mitigated by the fact that the greater part of the theatre-going public was doting on this beautiful boy. More practically, many of the theatre actors who wore short garments, such as kilts or Roman tunics, also wore flesh-coloured stockings underneath.[62] This suggests that kilts (and Highland dress in general) were first accepted as stage costume, before they were tolerated, and then embraced, as legitimate dress.

The particular sett (the tartan pattern created by the weave) worn by Betty is not easily identifiable, but its dark colours could have reminded early nineteenth century spectators of the colour scheme of the 42nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot, also known as the Black Watch, whose uniform included a kilt with a dark blue and green sett. A late eighteenth-century drawing by George Walker suggests that this

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[59] Playfair (1967).

[60] Ibid., pp.76-78 ; Elledge (2000), pp.96-97.

[61] Morrison (2003), pp.59-61. On George IV's visit and Scott's staging see also John Prebble, *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August, 1822, 'One and Twenty Daft Days'* (London: Collins, 1988).

[62] When George IV, during his Scotland visit, attended a levee at Holyrood in full Highland costume, he too wore 'flesh-coloured silk leggings', although they are not represented in his famous portrait by David Wilkie (Morrison (2003), p.54).

particular sett, also called Campbell or Government tartan, was associated with Highland herdsmen (Figure 103). Thus Betty's costume created a historical continuity between the medieval shepherd from the Grampian Mountains and contemporary Scottish soldiers. In this way, it created an image of the medieval Scotsman as wearing the same clothes as his descendants. By presenting Scottish dress as unchanged through the centuries, Opie's portrait of Betty demonstrates that theatrical portraiture could play a role in the creation of meanings about the past.

By making tartan visible yet subdued, Betty's portrait stresses the distinctiveness of Highland dress while simultaneously aligning it with other short garments worn by male and female actors so as to evoke an ancient heritage that was not only confined to Scotland. This process has been observed in other cultural productions from the Celtic peripheries. Katie Trumpener remarked that the illustrations in the 1805 Edinburgh edition of *The Poems of Ossian* contained a mixture of Grecian dress and Gothic architecture. According to Trumpener, this highlights 'the fact that the Ossianic aesthetic is built from an amalgam of different heroic, pathetic, and poetic styles.'[63] A similar conflation of styles and periods can be observed in William Hazlitt's association of ideas when he first saw Betty act:

> Master Betty's acting was a singular phenomenon, but it was also as beautiful as it was singular. I saw him in the part of Douglas, and he seemed almost like 'some gay creature of the element,' moving about gracefully, with all the flexibility of youth, and murmuring Aeolian sounds with plaintive tenderness.[64]

Hazlitt's comparison of Betty to the god of wind Aeolus creates a correspondence between Scotland and ancient Greece, and his evocation of his graceful movements may also recall the image of the young Greek huntress Atalanta.

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[63] Trumpener (1997), p.117.

[64] William Hazlitt, *Table Talk: Or, Original Essays on Men and Manners*, 2 vols (London, 1824), vol.II, pp.305-334.

By alluding to the figure of the Amazon or to Atalanta, Opie's painting reflects on the partly erotic nature of the public's obsession with Betty, while the recourse to classical imagery also illustrates the character's young age, energy and heroism. By eluding the picturesque effect of Scottish costume, Opie creates a kind of visual palimpsest that echoes Homer and Ossian, bringing together evocations of Scotland, classical Antiquity and a distant British past. Indeed the breastplate, footwear and spear could also be construed as a-temporal or primitive signifiers, found in Neoclassical art as well as in illustrations of the early stages of British history. Betty embodies a Scottish, almost primitive teenage hero. Here it seems possible to establish links between Opie's portrait and imagery related to the figure of Ossian. For instance, Betty's intent gaze and wind-swept hair evoke Ossian's young attendant in *Ossian and Alpin's Son Hearing the Spirit of Malvina Touching the Harp* (1816) by Danish artist Christian Gottlieb Kratzenstein Stub (1783-1816) (Figure 104).[65] Although the latter was painted much later, the similarities between both youths evince the period's interest in the representation of young romantic heroes from the past (albeit a fictional one). The picture can therefore be interpreted as creating an association between the youth of the character and the medieval or primitive state of Scotland. Just as Ossian appears as both the repository and the source of ancient Celtic literature, so are ancient Scottish youths (like Norval and Alpin's son) presented as heroes and symbols of the future of a nation. Norval strides over the moors, gesturing to somebody as if coming to help or greet them. In the conflation of old and young, the picture conveys a sense of heritage as well as new energy.

Many other artists depicted the climactic scene of the play, when Norval enters the stage after being mortally wounded by Lord Randolph. *Douglas* is ultimately a tragedy, yet Opie's painting is more optimistic and eludes the pathos of the last act, focusing instead on the character's youthful energy. The effect here is the allusion to a visual filiation with other heroic figures, thus participating in the creation of a new mythology for the nation. In the course of tragedy, young Norval

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[65] The painting is in the Statens Museum for Kunst/National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen. For a brief account of the connections between Home's play and Macpherson's Ossian poems, see Kahan (2004), vol.II, pp.85-86.

(named after the shepherd who raised him) becomes Douglas, the heir of Lord Douglas, when his true identity is revealed. The title of the play, in that it refers both to Lady Randolph's first husband and to his son Norval/Douglas, stresses the themes of filiation and the transmission of names. The son of a local, rural man, representing ancient, pastoral Scotland, becomes something akin to a historical figure. Scotland's traditions and its 'noble savagery' are subsumed into history.

Opie thus creates visual parallels between the young Scottish hero and classical art, using Betty's tartan not so much as an indicator of local colour, but also as a temporal marker. Indeed, as if in superimposition, Opie achieves a representation of a medieval character that is both Scottish and classical. Opie's portrait reflects the contemporary interest in the Celtic fringes and their history, creating a dialogue with classical imagery. It evinces how theatrical portraits were blurring the boundaries between portraiture and history painting, through the depiction of characters from plays set in the past, in this case offering a kind of alternative history of the British Isles.

For spectators at the Royal Academy exhibition, Opie's portrait made visible two distinct yet connected aspects of the period's perception of Scotland: on the one hand, the interest in local customs and costumes and the fascination with Highland dress; on the other, the debates about the ancientness of Scottish culture and its meaning for Britain at large. Opie's use of classical references and his deliberate omission of certain elements of the productions (such as Betty's white collar, which connoted childhood), offered viewers a different kind of performance from that of the theatrical productions. At the same time, Betty is instantly recognisable, and the viewer is struck by the painting's display of youth and sensuality. The dispute between Opie and Betty's father about the right to exhibit the work at the Royal Academy had been widely publicised in London and provincial newspapers, in articles that created a sense of anticipation for the exhibition.[66]

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[66] The account of the dispute published in the *Morning Chronicle* (20 April 1805, p.3) appeared a few days later in the *Bury and Norwich Post*, the *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser* and the *Ipswich Journal*. It concluded with an invitation to go and see the work: 'This whole-length Portrait of *Norval*, and another of the boy in *Hamlet*, are hung centrically in the Academy, with only one picture between them.' A shorter account in the *Morning Post* of 20 April, seemed to focus on the legal side

Opie's painting and Northcote's portrait of Betty as Hamlet were hung on the same wall, and viewers were invited to compare both works.[67] Opie's portrait was reviewed as 'very fine' and as 'an admirable painting'.[68] The anonymous author of *The Pursuits of Painting* described 'Opie's inimitable picture of Young Roscius' in terms that stressed the sitter's adolescent youth:

> But who 'mid youth's gay compeers shall be class'd
>
> With him, whose wondrous childhood seems in haste,
>
> To press on perfect manhood high career?
>
> Ardent he grasps the Caledonian spear—
>
> 'How brave—how beautiful' we see him stand!
>
> How nobly eloquent he lifts his hand,
>
> And seems to say, his eye whilst lightning fills,
>
> *'Behold young Norval of the Grampian Hills!'* [69]

The verses evoke the tension between Betty's young age and his promise of manhood as one of the central elements in the painting. Yet the extreme youth of the actor was also used to ridicule the public's infatuation, and this could be expressed visually through costume: some of Betty's detractors too had recourse to classical references in relation to Master Betty and *Douglas*, but this time it was to satirize the craze for Betty and the amount of puffing organised by the managers. In Gillray's caricature *The Theatrical Bubble* (1805), Sheridan, the manager of Drury Lane, is blowing up Master Betty's success (Figure 105). In the biggest bubble, Betty

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of the issue ('The case is expected to afford subject for a very interesting scene of legal contention, in Westminster Hall', p.3).

[67] 'Mr. Northcote has his *Roscius*, and being on the same side of the room with the Portrait by Mr. Opie, they may at once be compared.' *Morning Chronicle*, 27 April 1805, p.3.

[68] *Morning Post*, 29 April 1805, p.2; *Morning Chronicle*, 27 April 1805, p.3.

[69] *The Pursuits of Painting, or Poetical Portraits, from That Distinguished Assemblage of Beauties, The Exhibition of 1805* (London, 1805), quoted in *The British Critic* (London, 1807), vol. xxviii, p.441. *The Pursuits of Painting*, modelled on Thomas James Mathias's popular *The Pursuits of Literature*, was a collection of poems, ranging from praise to satire, on a number of works in the 1805 Exhibition. It was approved by the *British Critic*, while the *Monthly Mirror* damned it as a dull and pointless book (*The Monthly Mirror*, 19, pp.395-6). *The Pursuits of Literature* was a satire of Mathias's contemporary authors in four verse dialogues published between 1794 and 1797. By 1812, it had gone through sixteen editions and generated several imitations (Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.25).

is represented wearing Norval's costume, identified by the tartan breeches, plaid and feathered Scotch bonnet (Figure 106). Here Betty is both Norval and Julius Caesar, trampling underfoot the best actors of the time with the phrase 'Veni vidi vici'. The caricature endows Betty's Scottish costume with childlike features such as the exaggeratedly wide white collar. Betty does not brandish a spear but a coral and bells, which is here used as a sceptre or a commander's baton, turning Betty into a grotesque, immature Romano-Scottish conqueror.

There are many representations of Betty as Norval, in which he is portrayed wearing either a kilt or breeches and armour, but all emphasize his youth. Although Bettymania died out in 1805, the play remained popular. Norval was a favourite role for young actors and would-be child-prodigies. In the late 1820s, the character was played by another prodigy, the young Joseph Burke (known as Master Burke). A tinsel print from 1828 depicts him dressed in a tartan skirt with matching long sleeves and plaid (Figure 107). Such images were bought uncoloured for a halfpenny, by children and adults who would then colour and embellish them with fabric and tinsel at home. Tinsel prints will be discussed in further detail in chapter 7, but what matters here is that they reveal a new interest in the materiality of stage costume: the owners of these prints had to think about the materials and patterns suitable to the tinselling of a particular character. Burke's dress is made of silk and cotton tartan, which suggests that the pattern was easily available on fashionable fabrics, far from the Highlanders' original coarse woollen plaids.[70] His armour and weapons are ornamented with metal foil. The figure was cut out from the original sheet and pasted onto card. The background was coloured and extended beyond the original cut-out, effectively re-staging the character on a new support. Halfpenny plains were sold as theatrical souvenirs. As demonstrated by this print of Master Burke, they offered their owners the possibility of restaging and re-clothing the characters. To this extent, they are fascinating in that they reveal not

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[70] Museum of London,
 http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/Online/object.aspx?objectID=object-463081&start=622&rows=1 [accessed 6 September 2015]. In 1799, Lady Barbara Ashley Cooper, countess of Shaftesbury, wore a 'tartan jacket and philibeg made of silk' at the private theatricals she organised to celebrate Twelfth Night. She was performing the part of Jamie in the ballet *Little Peggy's Love* (*The Times*, 11 January 1799, p.2).

only the theatre's presentation of a story and its characters, but also the way members of the public reinterpreted the costumes and setting of the play.

Highland dress in *Rob Roy* and its dramatisations

By the time Burke was acting, Highland dress had been established as the appropriate costume for Norval. What had happened between Betty's time and Master Burke's performances was the extraordinary success of Walter Scott's poems and novels, in particular those set in Scotland. The first of Scott's novels, *Waverley*, appeared anonymously in 1814. It deals with the Jacobite uprising of 1745 and was so popular that the following novels were referred to as the 'Waverley novels' and their author as 'the author of Waverley', although the writer's identity was known well before the publication of *The Heart of Midlothian* in 1818, the first novel to appear under Scott's name.[71] A recurrent theme in Scott's works is the tension between a traditional, often savage culture and modern, enlightened society.[72] Audiences enjoyed the detailed evocations of the past as well as 'Scott's ability to celebrate the distinctive textures of other times while affirming the present social order, which is also a product of history.'[73]

The 'Scotch novels', as Scott's works were also called, played a major role in the representation of Scotland. They fostered the establishment of Highland dress as the appropriate costume of all Scotland, and of all periods of the country's history. This conception is reflected in the stage costume of heroes in dramatic versions of the novels, in which Scottish characters were increasingly imagined and represented in terms of the Highlands. Scott's novels and poems had a rich afterlife as stage productions.[74] In his calendar of dramatisations of Scott's works, H. Philip

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[71] On Scott and the historical novel, see Harry E. Shaw, *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) and Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

[72] McCalman (2001), p.692.

[73] Phillips (2001), p.33.

[74] On dramatisations of Scott's works, see Henry Adelbert White, *Sir Walter Scott's Novels on the Stage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927); Anastasia Nikolopoulou, 'Historical Disruptions: The

Bolton records upwards of 4,500 productions in England, Scotland, Europe and America. The first stage adaptations, of *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* (poems published in 1808 and 1810 respectively), were performed as early as 1810 at the New Theatre and the Surrey Theatre in London – both non-patent theatres.[75] But the two legitimate theatres caught the trend too, and in 1816 Covent Garden offered the first adaptation of *Guy Mannering*, which was the second most popular dramatisation, behind *Rob Roy*.[76]

Richard J. Hill and Ann Rigney have studied Scott's visual depiction of the past and the effects of topographical and antiquarian references on the reader's imagination.[77] The importance of scenery and music in dramatic versions of his works, in particular *Guy Mannering* and *The Heart of Midlothian*, made the theatre an alternative to tourism.[78] The plays, *tableaux vivants*, paintings, textiles and fashions inspired by Scott's works 'extended the life of the historical imagination to the material world' and 'integrated memory into everyday, embodied life.'[79] *Rob Roy*, published in 1817, is an interesting case in point. On the one hand, the setting of the action in the Scottish Highlands appealed to spectators; on the other, the figure of the Scottish outlaw had already occupied a strong place in the popular imagination, before he was turned into a literary and theatrical character. The cattle raider and trader Robert MacGregor, who was later outlawed on account of his involvement with the Jacobite rebellions of 1715, had become a legendary figure, often compared to Robin Hood, before the publication of Scott's eponymous

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Walter Scott Melodramas', in Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou, eds*., Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp.121-43; Philip Cox, *Reading Adaptations: Novels and Verse Narratives on the Stage, 1790-1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); David Buchanan, 'Popular Reception by Dramatic Adaptation: The Case of Walter Scott's The Heart of Mid-Lothian', *European Romantic Review*, 22 (2011), pp.745-63 and Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[75] H. Philip Bolton, *Scott Dramatized* (London: Mansell, 1992).

[76] Ibid., p.56.

[77] Richard J. Hill, *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels: Walter Scott and the Origins of the Victorian Illustrated Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Rigney (2012), chapter 2.

[78] Rigney (2012), pp.49-50.

[79] Ibid., p.53. On the influence of Scott's works on the visual arts, see Richard Altick, *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1760-1900* (Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 1985) and Richard Hill (2010).

novel.[80] In the provinces, there was already a play based on the figure of Rob Roy before Scott made him the hero of his novel.[81] While *The Lady of the Lake* had created a taste for the Highlands, Bolton remarks, in the case of *Rob Roy*, Scott was 'catering to extant popular tastes.'[82]

Within months of its publication, the novel was dramatised. Isaac Pocock's version, entitled *Rob Roy Macgregor, or Auld Lang Syne* (with music by John Davy and Henry Bishop), enjoyed spectacular success. It premiered at Covent Garden on 12 March 1818 and was, as Bolton puts it, 'one of the most popularly successful and enduring dramas of the nineteenth century.'[83] The play derived part of its popularity from its music, a combination of original material, folk songs, Jacobite songs and sung poems by Robert Burns, Walter Scott and William Wordsworth. The popularity of Burn's 'Auld Lang Syne' can be described as being owed to this production,[84] while Wordsworth's 'Rob Roy's Grave', written during a tour of Scotland in 1803, was the first of his poems to be sung on the London stage.[85] In London, *Rob Roy Macgregor, or Auld Lang Syne* was referred to as an opera, or a 'melo-drama'. In Scotland, it acquired the name of 'national drama' and Scottish spectators were drawn not only by the music, but also by the scenery.[86] As a whole, *Rob Roy* was very popular: dramatisations of the novel total about twenty percent of all productions in Bolton's compilation. At the same time as Rob Roy was enjoying great popularity in book form and on stage, several newspapers published articles that fleshed him out as a historical figure. This was a way to justify interest in the novels and their dramatisations. Melodramas were not only adaptations of a

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[80] David Stevenson, 'MacGregor, Robert [Rob Roy] (*bap.*1671, *d.* 1734)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/17524 [accessed 13 Oct 2015].

[81] Bolton (1992), p.162. The early play was entitled *Red Roy* and performances were recorded in Durham in 1810.

[82] Ibid. Outlaws, highwaymen and robbers were the object of general interest in the eighteenth century. From the end of the century, the repertory of London's minor theatres included a variety of plays whose heroes were outlaws. See Brewer (1997), pp.433-9 and Burwick (2011), chapters 7 and 8.

[83] Bolton (1992), p.162.

[84] Ibid., p.163.

[85] Burwick (2011), p.122.

[86] For instance, an advertisement for the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh featured a long list of scenes (*Caledonian Mercury*, 29 March 1819).

novel; they were also legitimised as staging a part of the nation's history, albeit re-imagined by Scott and the playwrights.

The most famous actors in Pocock's *Rob Roy* were Charles Mackay as Bailie Nicol Jarvie, William Charles Macready as Rob Roy and Sarah Egerton as his wife Helen MacGregor. They were the subject of many theatrical prints and popular characters for tinselling. One of the earliest depictions of Helen MacGregor is a portrait of Sarah Egerton by Samuel De Wilde, reproduced in the print series *British Theatrical Gallery* in 1821 (Figure 108).[87] Save for the plaid, the portrait fits the description of Helen in volume III, chapter 3: 'She wore her plaid, not drawn around her head and shoulders, as is the fashion of the women in Scotland, but disposed around her body as the Highland soldiers wear theirs. She had a man's bonnet, with a feather in it, an unsheathed sword in her hand, and a pair of pistols at her girdle.'[88] While Rob Roy was often compared to Robin Hood, the quotation from John Fletcher's tragedy *Bonduca* at the beginning of the chapter created a correspondence between Helen MacGregor and the historic and legendary figure of Boudica, a famous figure in eighteenth-century art and theatre culture.[89]

Sarah Egerton often portrayed spirited females such as Joan of Arc. In 1830 she was even cast as King Henry V for a performance at the Surrey Theatre.[90] The large number of prints of the actress as Helen MacGregor and Henry V attest to the popularity of these roles. The narrator of the novel, Francis Osbaldistone, describes Helen's features as 'strong, harsh and expressive', and in Pocock's play, Helen appears in act III, 'with Claymore and Target, a Brace of Pistols in her Belt, and wearing a man's Bonnet and Tartan plaid.' Although the action of the novel and the play is set just a few months before the Jacobite rising of 1715, not much is historical about Helen's costume. The high waist is that of the period's fashion, as is the shape of the skirt, widening slightly at the bottom.

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[87] Portrait drawing in pencil and watercolour in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

[88] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1818), vol.III, p.83.

[89] Ibid., p.59. Fletcher's *Bonduca* was first performed between 1610 and 1614 and published in 1647. Richard Glover's tragedy *Boadicea* premiered in 1753 in Dublin. On representations of Boudica in the theatre, see Richard Hingley and Christina Unwin, *Boudica: Iron Age Warrior Queen* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), pp.129-145.

[90] *The Dramatic Magazine*, 2 (1830), p.87.

The pattern and colours of her plaid correspond to the sett identified as the MacGregor tartan, also called 'MacGregor Red and Black' and 'Rob Roy MacGregor' (this last name probably being a Victorian coinage). There are examples of this sett in the collections of the Highland Society of London, who in the 1810s collected specimens of clan tartan.[91] Neither the novel nor Pocock's play refer to a particular sett, but the colours became associated with Rob Roy and his wife in performances, prints of actors and other contexts.[92] They reappear in portraits of Macready, although in a different pattern. The stage directions of Pocock's play do not give precise indications regarding costume. The direction for Rob Roy's entrance in Act II merely states 'Rob Roy, in his Highland dress.' This indicates that audiences and stage managers knew enough about Highland dress and did not need detailed descriptions to help them imagine the character. Dramatisations of the novel made Rob Roy into the archetypical Highlander. The lack of description of costume in reviews of *Rob Roy* adaptations indicates that there may have been a consensus on the representation of Scott's Highland heroes, to the extent that Highland costume was taken for granted when characters from Scott were portrayed on the stage. As the dramatist (and later costume designer) James Robinson Planché expressed it in a letter to the magazine *The Album*, all classes of society were united in their passion for Scott's works, which meant that the public as a whole were informed about the characters' costumes:

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[91] https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails.aspx?ref=3516 [accessed 13 October 2015]. This collection of ancient tartans is now at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. The Highland Society of London was established in 1778 'For preserving the Martial Spirit, language, Dress, Music, and Antiquities of the Ancient Caledonians; For rescuing from Oblivion, the valuable Remains of Celtic Literature; For the Establishment and Support of Gaelic Schools in the Highlands of Scotland, and in other parts of the British Empire; For Relieving Distressed Highlanders, at a distance from their Native Homes; and For promoting the Improvement, and general Welfare, of the Northern Parts of the Kingdom' (Sir John Sinclair, *An Account of the Highland Society of London, from Its Establishment in May 1778, to the Commencement of the Year 1813* (London: B. McMillan, 1813), p.78). The Society brought about the repeal of the Dress Act in 1782. It invited its members to wear Highland dress at meetings, organised major piping competitions and was involved in the debate over the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossian poems. The Highland Society of London is still active, as is its sister society, the Highland Society of Scotland (Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, founded in 1784).

[92] In the 1820s, the colours of the yacht named 'Rob Roy' were 'red and black plaid', and its crew wore 'Scotch dresses' (*Morning Post*, 27 July and 28 September 1827). In the same period, the name 'Rob Roy' was also given to racing horses, dances and several ships, yachts and steam boats.

> . . . every body reads the Scotch novels, and knows how the characters should be dressed. The Shopman at Flint's, who obtains the loan of the last new one at three-pence per volume from the neighbouring 'circulating library,' (whose windows exhibit the double attractions of lollipops and literature, bulls' eyes and belles lettres,) is as well informed on the subject, as the periodical critic, who devours the proof-sheets purloined from the printer, or the lord who lounges over his mail-coach copy, received three days and some odd hours before its publication in London.[93]

This sound knowledge of the text, among members of the audience who had access to books, probably explains why critics did not feel the need to comment upon the costumes, except when they were blatantly inappropriate, as in one of the performances at Drury Lane: 'Madame Vestris (we beg her pardon) was a pretty heroine, and dressed very handsomely – for a London ball-room.'[94]

Rob Roy's dress itself is described in volume III, chapter 9 of Scott's novel: the outlaw is made 'conspicuous by his long gun, waving tartans, and the single plume in his cap, which in those days denoted the Highland gentleman and soldier; although I observe that the present military taste has decorated the Highland bonnet with a quantity of black plumage resembling that which is borne before funerals.'[95] Later depictions of Macready show that this was indeed the favoured headdress, at least by those of the public who bought penny prints as souvenirs or for tinselling: the majority of these prints depict Rob Roy wearing a Scotch bonnet with both plumes and feathers (Figure 109). In the case of the headdress, accuracy was given over to theatricality. Plumes were a staple of theatrical wardrobes, especially for characters of soldiers. As we have seen, both Middleton and Master Betty were portrayed wearing similar plumed bonnets. Another famous eighteenth-

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[93] Planché (1823a), pp.298-304, pp.301-2. The identification of Planché as the author of this letter (which is signed 'P.') was made by Paul Reinhardt ('The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880)', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 20 (1968), pp.524-44, p.525).
[94] Criticism taken from the *Literary Gazette* and reproduced in the *Caledonian Mercury*, July 12, 1821.
[95] Scott (1818), vol.III, p.252.

century example is Hoppner's portrait of Dorothy Jordan as Hippolyta (exhibited in 1791).[96]

What is remarkable about dramatisations of Scott's works is that the accuracy of the costume as it was described in Scott's novels or as it was depicted in prints, and consequently as it appeared on the stage, apparently went unquestioned. In his letter to *The Album*, Planché gave a brief insight into the way costumes for dramatisations of 'the Scotch novels' were designed:

> The dress of each individual is carefully noted down from the description in the work, affixed to their first entrances by the dramatist, and sent into the wardrobe by the manager. Colnaghi's portfolios are rummaged to supply the slightest deficiency; the picture is finished with Flemish fidelity, and Richard the Lion-hearted, Queen Elizabeth, or King James I, walk on the stage with a truth as startling, as though their spirits had been raised in their habits as they lived, by the spell of the mighty northern enchanter.[97]

The mere fact that the plays were taken from the works of an author who was increasingly often compared to Shakespeare, seems to have rendered historical analyses of costume unnecessary. This suggests that the historical imagination of the period, seduced by the visual quality of Scott's works, had established paintings as a frame of reference. Planché's evocation of 'Flemish fidelity' implies a belief in the truth of the visual. Scott's ability to create characters and atmospheres was at the centre of

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[96] Since spectators seem to have been satisfied by the productions' costumes, they focused on other elements of the play – the scenery and, most importantly, the music. The place of music in Pocock's highly successful adaptation was its main point of comment. The interest in music in reviews of the play reflects the rise of the melodrama as a dramatic genre, as well as the ongoing taste for 'original', traditional music and songs (although many were based on poems by Burns and Wordsworth). In some performances, the impression of authenticity was heightened by the fact that one of the actors was actually Scottish: 'the advantage of native accent in giving effect to Scotch melody was clearly evinced in the manner of Mr. Sinclair's singing "The red, red rose"' (*Morning Post*, 6 January 1826, p.3). The same reviewer remarked of Wallack's first acting Rob Roy that 'his performance was manly, picturesque, and strongly marked with feeling.'

[97] Planché (1823a), p.301. In the season 1820-21, Planché himself had adapted *Kenilworth* for representation at the Adelphi Theatre. Colnaghi was a famous print seller and publisher.

many memorial pageants staged after his death in 1832. They often took the form of successions of *tableaux vivants*, and many were entitled 'A Vision of the Bard'.[98] The Drury Lane pageant, 'in commemoration of Scotland's Immortal Bard', started with 'a Pilgrimage of the Principal Dramatic Characters his genius has created . . . In imitation of the honours paid to Shakespeare in the celebrated Jubilee.' There followed a procession of Scott's most famous characters (among them Rob Roy, the Lady of the Lake and Waverley) through the poet's study in his residence of Abbotsford. The performance concluded with a 'Grand Scenic Apotheosis of the Minstrel of the North.'[99] Drury Lane's somewhat ambitious attempt at equating the event with David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee[100] reveals the popularity of Scott's works as well as the facility with which his characters could be transferred from book to stage. Even after the identity of 'the author of Waverley' was revealed, Scott was still described as 'the northern enchanter', and his nickname of 'the Bard of the North' associated him with the worthiness of Shakespeare, and his talent for dramatising history, at the same time as it linked Scott with ancient Celtic artists. During George IV's visit to Scotland in 1822, Scott had presented Highland dress as traditional – historical yet contemporary (Figure 110). Scottish characters in the theatre could therefore be seen as incarnating history, just as Scott was perceived as incarnating northern bardism.

The study of the costume of historical Scottish characters in the theatre suggests that from the end of the eighteenth century, that is to say before the huge success of Scott's novels, Scots and Scotland were imagined in terms of the Highlands through the use of Highland dress. According to Murray Pittock, the use of tartan as a patriotic signifier can be traced back to the late sixteenth century.[101] Representations of Norval and Rob Roy show that tartan was introduced in the theatre and in theatrical portraits not as a symbol of rebellion (as it was used in Hogarth's *The Gate of Calais* of

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[98] Bolton (1992), p.58.

[99] Advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle,* 9 October 1832, p.2.

[100] In September 1769, to celebrate Shakespeare's 200th anniversary, Garrick organised a series of festivities at Stratford-upon-Avon, including a grand procession of the poet's most popular characters. The Jubilee was not as successful as Garrick had planned, on account of the terrible weather on the day of the procession, which had to be cancelled. Garrick was also accused of commercialising Shakespeare for personal gain.

[101] Murray Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), chapters 1 and 2.

1748, for instance) and not merely as an indicator of Scotland's participation in British military campaigns (as in John Singleton Copley's portrait of Hugh Montgomerie, Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire). Tartan had become a sign of the inclusion of Highland heroes in a wider British historical imagination. The narrator of the piece 'Bartholomew Fair' in *Fraser's Magazine* referred to Norval as 'a descendant of Ossian', a phrase indicative of the conflation of fiction and history, expressed here through the idea of lineage.[102]

Portraits of actors and illustrations of plays testify that the popularity of Highland costume, boosted by the success of Scott's novels and his assertion of Highland dress as the ancient dress of Scotland, took over theatre wardrobes for Scottish characters. From the 1820s on, Macbeth, Norval and Rob Roy were virtually indistinguishable. The London stage would have to wait until Charles Kean's antiquarian *Macbeth* of 1853 at the Princess's Theatre to see deliberate strivings toward historical accuracy in the representation of these famous Scotsmen.

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[102] *Fraser's Magazine* (1831), p.437.

Chapter 6

'An iron race in iron clad':

dressing the nation in the time of King John and Edward the Black Prince

In 1820, King George IV's name headed the long list of visitors to Samuel Rush Meyrick's collection of ancient arms and armour at 20 Upper Cadogan Place, London. The success of Meyrick's collection – which was part of a collection of antiques assembled by his father, and expanded by Meyrick in the 1810s – signalled a growing curiosity for historical armour and weapons. Four years later, the antiquarian published his major work, *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour as it existed in Europe, but particularly in England, from the Norman Conquest to the reign of King Charles II* (1821), a chronology of armour in three volumes, ornamented with a large number of colour plates which he drew himself.[1]

New interest in armour had been heralded by several developments. In 1786, the antiquarian Francis Grose had pioneered the archaeological study of armour with two illustrated publications, *Military Antiquities* and *A Treatise on Antient Armour and Weapons*. More recently curiosity about the early inhabitants of Britain had been reflected in a few publications such as Charles Hamilton Smith's *Ancient costume of Great Britain and Ireland* (1814) and *The Costume of the Original Inhabitants of the British Islands, from the earliest periods to the sixth century* (1815), in collaboration with Meyrick. Moreover, efforts towards realism in the theatre and the arts meant that inaccuracies in dress, including military uniforms, were increasingly criticised. In his introduction to the *Critical Inquiry*, Meyrick expressed his satisfaction at the artists' attempts at historical accuracy in costume, and wished they might be further extended to armour and arms.

For Meyrick, the main problem was the lack of sources. It was common practice for artists to draw arms and armour from the collection in the Tower of London: the armoury (and its counterpart the horse armoury) had been one of the

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[1] On Meyrick and his collection, see Rosalind Lowe, *Sir Samuel Meyrick and Goodrich Court* (Almeley: Logaston, 2003).

attractions of the Tower since the seventeenth century and contained hundreds of weapons and pieces of armour. Weapons were arranged into pleasing displays, and some of the armour was installed on cardboards or wooden figures.[2] However, Meyrick lamented, the collection in the Tower did not have anything older than the late fifteenth century.[3] Meyrick therefore set about to fill a gap in the knowledge of historical armour, using a variety of sources, including his own collection and that of his son Llewelyn Meyrick (to whom his own father had bequeathed *his* collection).

Like many authors of books on costume, Meyrick presented his work as a useful source for artists, although the *Critical Inquiry* is essentially an antiquarian publication, focusing on chronology and accuracy:

> But a main effect of this work is to establish that *Chronology of Costume*, with respect to antient arms and armour, which has hitherto been so imperfectly regarded alike by writers, painters and dramatists of modern times. Zeal for the truth of history, requires us to remind modern writers and artists that the barons of King John were not habited, as they are commonly painted, in the knightly accoutrements of Edward I, and that a sepulchral effigy, cloathed in armour of Richard the Second's time cannot represent Rhys, Prince of Wales a cotemporary [*sic*] of Henry II, although it is confidently made to wear his name in the frontispiece of a respectable historical work.[4]

The style of Meyrick's criticism of current practice in dressing characters is very similar to the criticism levelled at theatres from the mid-eighteenth century. Yet it is not only a matter of realism: one of the reasons to seek accuracy, Meyrick

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[2] Altick (1978), p.87.
[3] Samuel Rush Meyrick, *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour*, 3 vols (London, 1824), vol.I, p.18. Meyrick had consistently criticised the arrangement of the armoury, and eventually in 1826, he was consulted by the Tower of London to improve the display of the collection (https://www.royalarmouries.org/collections/collection-stories/early-scholars/samuel-rush-meyrick [accessed 31 August 2015]).
[4] Meyrick (1824), vol.I, p.14.

explained, is that armour provides a kind of prism to study many other historical aspects such as the history of wars, religion, arts, 'jurisprudence and civil polity', and the 'amusements of all ranks' as well.[5] What was previously overlooked should become a new tool with which historians could approach the past.

This enlarged definition of history as the study not only of political events but also of the habits, costume and art of a period became part of the justification for grandiose historical spectacles: the traditional didactic argument of the theatre as a source of moral lessons was extended to history. The visual appeal of lavish theatrical productions and of the larger playhouses of the nineteenth century meant that representations of history were reaching ever wider audiences. Without himself referring to the didactic value of theatre, Meyrick replaced the study and correct representation of armour into a narrative of progress in the pictorial and performing arts:

> The refined taste which, with regard to other matters of costume, has been so happily cultivated in this country, during the present reign, has not only given a general stimulus to the arts, but introduced into paintings and scenic representations of all kinds, an historical correctness with which our ancestors were unacquainted. Good drawing and correct colouring, fine acting with well delivered sentences, are now considered as insufficient without historical accuracy.[6]

To eighteenth-century history painters and philosophical historians, the truth of history was found in the universal message or moral lesson of an event from the past. In the theatre, the appropriateness of 'dresses and decorations' to the historical period of the play was referred to as 'authentic' or 'characteristic' – they were suitable if they managed a successful evocation of the past. Antiquarians like Strutt and Meyrick went further than the requirement of authenticity: the truth of history meant the virtual equivalence between the historical object and its

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[5] Ibid., p.2
[6] Ibid., p.17.

representation in the arts. What Meyrick and others sought to achieve was total imitation, the exact correspondence of past and present through identical objects. It was no longer possible, as had been the case in the arts, simply to evoke the past through a few conventional signifiers, or even through 'authentic' costume. Represented objects had to be *true* mirrors of the past, and this requirement accounted, as we have seen, for the strong condemnation of anachronisms in representations of the past. As a consequence, Meyrick overlooked the fact that stage costume, by its nature, must meet a set of technical imperatives: it must be cheap, practical, picturesque, effective and re-usable.

Yet Meyrick's works and collection were fundamental not only in fostering a widespread 'zeal for the truth of history', but also in providing artists with the sources to achieve such accuracy. Between 1820 and 1830, his armoury was displayed at 20 Upper Cadogan Place, and its visitors' book (now in the Wallace Collection) gives the names of some 1,192 visitors. Among them, we find antiquarians such as Francis Douce, Charles Alfred Stothard and James Robinson Planché, but also many persons who had an artistic interest in medieval arms and armour, such as historical painters Richard Parkes Bonington and Eugène Delacroix, who both drew from the collection, James Ward, Charles Robert Leslie, Théodore Géricault and Paul Delaroche (Figure 111, Figure 112).[7] Actors from Covent Garden Theatre also visited the collection, although it is difficult to determine whether Meyrick's armoury had any influence on their stage costumes.[8] Sir Walter Scott and William Bullock, the owner of the Egyptian Hall, were among the early visitors to Meyrick's collection, which was also visited by John Henderson Grieve, the famous scene painter at Covent Garden. Interest in armour engendered interest in costume in general. However, this seemed to be mostly a masculine interest, judging from the list of names in Meyrick's visitors' book.

Meyrick was, after Joseph Strutt, the British antiquarian whose works had the most significant influence on historical stage costume in the first half of the

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[7] See Stephen Duffy, 'French Artists and the Meyrick Armoury', *The Burlington Magazine*, 151 (2009), pp.284-92.
[8] Charles Taylor (1781-1847) and the comedian John Liston (c. 1776-1846) among others. These actors, who mostly played in comedies, were probably drawn to Meyrick's collection out of sheer curiosity, and not in the view of creating accurate costume.

nineteenth century. Both are referenced by stage managers who strove to achieve historical accuracy in their productions, such as James Robinson Planché, William Charles Macready and Charles Kean. The interest in the Middle Ages found expression in a variety of domains, especially in the visual arts and in the theatre.[9] The case of two particular medieval figures, Edward the Black Prince and King John, demonstrate how antiquarian knowledge was gradually incorporated into art and performance, and how the responses they elicited offer insights into the historical imagination of the period. This chapter will explore the processes through which theatrical costume was used to provide a commentary on national history and helped shape the perception and representation of medieval historical figures. Increasing knowledge about medieval costume and armour combined with a new concern for the stage picture and the visual harmony of stage productions, as well as with the desire to stage the nation's history with appropriate grandeur. On a national and cultural level, the combination of antiquarianism and stage tradition contributed to the construction of national icons.

The Black Prince in eighteenth-century culture

Edward Prince of Wales, known as the Black Prince (1330-1376), was one such iconic figure whose representation was informed by the period's growing interest in armour. The prince, and his victory at the battle of Poitiers (1356), were frequently re-imagined, on canvas, in prints and on the stage. Through the representation of armour from 1750 to 1826, it is possible to delineate changes in the representation of Edward and its significance in contemporary historical imagination. Historical plays based on the figure of the Black Prince were staged regularly throughout the period. The most successful was a tragedy by William Shirley (1739-1780), a merchant by trade, who lived in Lisbon for a long time and who was known for his series of letters on British commercial relations with Portugal. The play is entitled *Edward the Black Prince; or, the Battle of Poictiers* and

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[9] For an exploration of uses of medieval sources in nineteenth-century literature and architecture, see Alexander (2007) in particular.

was, as stated by the author, 'attempted after the Manner of Shakespear'.[10] This statement of emulation served as a strategy for securing a favourable reception[11], especially since Shirley's first two plays, *The Parricide* (Covent Garden, 1739) and *King Pepin's Campaign* (Drury Lane, 1745), had not been successful. By contrast, his *Black Prince* was produced with some regularity throughout the period: *The London Stage* records 18 performances between 1750 and 1796.[12] In the early nineteenth century, it was performed in 1803 and then adapted into pantomimes (1804 and 1805) and melodramas (1822 and 1828). Although it was not part of the regular repertoire of the theatres, it owed its place in theatrical culture to its subject: the heroism of the Black Prince and the opportunity for political parallelisms which the plot afforded.

Edward, Prince of Wales was the epitome of the noble conqueror, fighting for his country and, in France, wielding justice on behalf of his father Edward III. He was seen as a quintessentially English hero for his goodness of heart. In 1771 Wilkes said of the Marquess of Granby that 'he joined to the bravery of Caesar all the mild and gentle qualities of our English hero, Edward the Black Prince.'[13] Prince Edward was the standard to which other Princes of Wales were compared. This type of comparison was particularly rife in 1751 at the time of the death of Prince Frederick, George II's son, and in 1788 to comment upon the behaviour of the Prince of Wales during George III's illness. An article from the *Times* described the King's illness as a crisis not dissimilar to the eve of the battle of Poitiers, and quoted from the play, commended the Prince's behaviour, and reminded Prince George that he was still accountable to the king.[14]

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[10] For instance on the title-page of the second edition, 1750.

[11] Kahan (2004), vol.I, p.278. Kahan talks of 'name-branding'.

[12] *Edward the black Prince* was staged at Drury Lane in 1750 (9 nights) and 1783/84 (7 nights), at Covent Garden in 1778 (one benefit night) and at the Royalty Theatre in 1796 'by a private party of gentlemen' (one night) (Stone et al., *The London Stage, 1660-1800*).

[13] John Wilkes, *The Speeches of John Wilkes* (London, 1777), vol.I, pp.110-111.

[14] 'This conduct is most assuredly the wisest step preparatory to ascending the Throne. . .The following passage from the Historical Tragedy of Edward the Black Prince, preceding the battle of Poictiers, is not unapplicable at this important crisis: "But I have a doubly delegated trust, /And must account to Heaven - and to my Father/For Fame – ignobly lost – or madly thrown away"' (*The Times*, 14 November 1788, p.2).

The Black Prince was part of the English national mythology. Commended in his lifetime for his bravery, Edward had been endowed in the course of the following centuries with the qualities of a good and wise ruler. In 1771, in a masque representing the institution of the Order of the Garter, the character of the Black Prince appeared alongside bards, druids, the Genius of England, St George, and various allegories and celestial beings.[15] One year later, the Royal Academician and Covent Garden scene painter Giovanni Cipriani (1727-1785) realised a transparency for the production of *The Fairy Prince* by George Colman the elder (1772). It represented the Black Prince capturing the standard at the battle of Crécy. The transparency was used again in 1781 as part of the patriotic entertainment *Phusimimesis*, which consisted of a series of various scenes and songs united by their martial topics.[16] Furthermore, the centrality of the group formed by Edward III, his queen Philippa and son Edward the Black Prince in eighteenth-century culture and art make them appear almost like a kind of patriotic trinity, embodying values of courage, honour and compassion. The episode of the Burghers of Calais was particularly iconic. It is the subject, for instance, of one of Sarah Trimmer's educational prints, as an example of compassion and mercy. However, Edward III was a favourite in Tory and court circles as the proponent of expansive conquest and a founding figure of Empire.[17] In the 1760s, however, representations of the scene could be also be used to criticize authoritarian royal power.[18] Yet Edward the Black Prince was often referred to in the context of the wars with France; in particular, in the 1750s, the English victories at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) were frequently invoked to advocate armed intervention on the French coast.

The political connotations of the Black Prince was less controversial than that of his father Edward III: although the Prince was a conqueror, waging war in

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[15] Full description of the action can be found in *Bingley's Journal*, 26 October-2 November 1771.

[16] Covent Garden, 7 May 1781. The 'Phusimimesis : Or, Resemblances of Nature' involved for instance a view of the Fleet at Gibraltar with the song 'Stand to your guns, my hearts of oak'. (*Morning Herald*, 3 May 1781).

[17] Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: reforming masculinities in British art 1750-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p.41.

[18] Such as Robert Edge Pine's painting *The Surrender of Calais to Edward III*, which won the premium for national history painting in the Society of Arts' 1760 competition. See Myrone (2005), pp.40-42 and John Sunderland, 'Mortimer, Pine and Some Political Aspects of English History Painting', *The Burlington Magazine*, 116, No. 855 (June 1974), pp.317-326, pp.317-318 and 320-326.

France on behalf of the king, his legendary valour and humane qualities had endeared him to the British public. He was represented, for instance, alongside King Alfred in William Kent's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe (1734) and in James Northcote's painting *The Worthies of England* (1828). In Shirley's tragedy, Prince Edward is evoked in several instances as 'god-like', good and forgiving (he forgives Arnold for his double betrayal and Mariana for leading the latter to treason).[19] Shirley's tragedy revolves around the battle of Poitiers, between the English army, commanded by Edward of Woodstock (the Prince of Wales, son of Edward III, the legendary 'Black Prince') and the French army led by King John II. Prince Edward is shown as a patriotic, gallant knight. Out of concern for the lives of his soldiers, he initially seeks to establish a truce with the French king and to avoid a doomed battle. But the latter's humiliating conditions force Edward to fight. The battle is fought; the English are victorious and the French king, made a prisoner, is nobly attended to by Prince Edward. To the dramatisation of the battle of Poitiers, the play adds a sentimental subplot involving the love between English soldier Arnold and his French prisoner Mariana. The latter convinces her lover to defect to the French side, but Arnold's remorse at betraying his prince and friend leads him to go back to the English camp to fight on the English side. Arnold is mortally wounded and Edward forgives him and Mariana, who commits suicide on Arnold's body. Another remarkable character is the French nobleman Lord Ribemont, who epitomises the noble foe. He reproaches Arnold for his treasons before he perishes in a duel against Lord Audley, his English counterpart.

The play characterise the Black Prince as a tender friend and charismatic military leader, stressing his sense of honour as well as his concern for the soldiers under his command. It premiered at Drury Lane on 6 January 1750, with David Garrick as Prince Edward and Spranger Barry as the French knight, Lord Ribemont.

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[19] Ribemont to Arnold: 'What bait affords the world, that could induce thee
To wrong so god-like and so good a master ?
Arnold: True, he is all, is god-like, and is good !
Edward, my royal master, is indeed
A prince beyond example!' (III, 1, ll.56-60 in Bell's 1791 edition). Edward is elsewhere described as a 'God-like hero' (Mariana to Edward, Act V, scene 5, l.314) with a 'godlike and forgiving nature' (Act II, scene 3, l.242).

The play was performed in semi-historical costumes. In the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century, only a few theatrical characters were dressed in some kind of historical costume, when it was seen as essential to their characterisation. Diana De Marly posits that Garrick's costumes for his production of *Edward the Black Prince* were likely to have been the traditional sixteenth-century garments, although Garrick innovated in that he seemed to have clothed several characters, and not only the leads, in this generic historical dress.[20] In a context of intense rivalry between the two licensed playhouses, Garrick's costuming choices seem to have been beneficial. In 1750, in a letter to James Lacy (Drury Lane's other manager) discussing the next season, Garrick states that good timing and historical costuming are the means to gain the advantage over Covent Garden: 'if we can get out *King John* before 'em, (as we certainly may) and dress the characters half old English, half modern, as in *Edward the Black Prince*, we shall cut their combs there too.'[21]

As Allardyce Nicoll noted, Garrick's letter disproves contemporary perceptions that 'the English characters, dress'd in the Habit of those Days, made an elegant Figure.'[22] However, it is actually significant that such costumes were perceived as accurate by members of the audience. Without precise descriptions of the costumes for this production, it is impossible to gain a clear idea of what these 'half old English, half modern' dresses were, but prints of Garrick as the Black Prince published in the 1770s depict him wearing a cuirass and short slashed breeches over his cuisses, the piece of armour protecting the thighs (Figure 113). Slashed breeches are a feature of Renaissance and early seventeenth-century dress, while Garrick's helmet recalls the sallet, a type of helmet that became widely used in the fifteenth century. Although they have been coloured black to match the rest of the armour, Garrick's stockings and ribboned shoes look strikingly modern. This portrait is a good instance of Garrick's attempts at historical costume and reflects the current practice of combining modern dress and historical elements – especially

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[20] Ibid., p.52.

[21] Garrick to Lacy, 27 July 1750. Reproduced in *The Morning Chronicle*, 29 August 1786, p.3. The passage is also quoted in Burnim (1973), p.130.

[22] Nicoll (1980), p.169.

slashes – that aimed at historicising the whole figure. If it is indeed difficult precisely to identify the period evoked in Garrick's letter and in his portrait as Edward, what was achieved was a general evocation of the past, which at the time was novel enough to ascertain Drury Lane's success over its rival. Although Garrick only played the part for one season, the fact that this portrait was still being printed twenty years later[23] shows that such representations of historical figures had wide currency in the second half of the eighteenth century, in parallel to seemingly more researched depictions such as engraved portraits of historical figures, for instance in Joseph Strutt's *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1773).

The clothes Garrick and his contemporaries referred to as 'old English' could take a variety of forms. The use of the phrase is similar to that of the term 'ancient', which could be applied to any period between Antiquity and the seventeenth century. As late as 1819, a report describing a 'masked fete' referred to one Mr. Ellis, 'in a superb old English dress of black velvet and gold, i.e. the costume in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.' Other participants included knights in armour and 'a Lady of Ancient Times.'[24] The description betrays a rather vague idea of periodization, while at the same time suggesting that the dresses of some periods were better known than others (the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for instance). The same year, at Almack's Masked and Fancy Dress Ball, one could admire 'Mrs. and Miss Simpson, in Old English dresses of the time of John.'[25] Many works on costume, including Strutt's *Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities* and Planché's *History of British Costume from the Earliest Period to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (1834),[26] have chapters organised by reign. It seems clear that history was perceived as a succession of monarchs rather than centuries, and costumes were accordingly classified in relation to the reigning monarch of their time.

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[23] A print in the Garrick Club was published in 1770, while versions at the British Museum and the Folger Shakespeare Library are dated 1779.

[24] *Morning Chronicle*, May 27, 1819, p.2.

[25] *Morning Chronicle*, 8 July 1819, p.3.

[26] Aileen Ribeiro describes Planché as 'the true inheritor to Strutt in factual information based on immense research' (Ribeiro (1994), pp.68-9). In the introduction of his *History of British Costume*, Planché insisted on the importance of working from original sources and presenting costumes in a strict chronological progression.

When Shirley's play was revived on 15 May 1778 at Covent Garden, Edward was played, for the first time, by Richard Wroughton.[27] Surprisingly enough, the actor had already been depicted in this role by the artist James Roberts for the 1777 edition of *Bell's British Theatre* (Figure 114). Why some actors are shown in roles they did not play remains unexplained. We can only assume that the combined attraction of a renowned actor and a popular play justified the publisher's choices, as can be deduced from the advertisements for plays published in 1777: 'Each Play is embellished with a Dramatic Character, representing the most principal performers in some spirited scene in each play, drawn from life, by permission, and executed in a stile that has made them famous in every nation throughout Europe.'[28] It seems that what was drawn from life was the face of the performer, and that the costume and pose were left to the artist's imagination. Artists working for Bell were thus placed at the boundary between portraiture and history painting: although the faces belong to real performers, a number of the sitters are clothed in costumes that are the artists' re-imaginings of stage dress.

The costume of Wroughton as Edward features elements of Van Dyck dress: a pointed collar and cuffs and a pair of paned breeches. The billowing ends of the sash are reminiscent of earlier depictions of actors, influenced by baroque or opera costume. The breastplate, plumed helmet and poleyns (knee armour) were already part of Edward's costume in the print of Garrick. Yet there are significant differences: in the engraving of Roberts's miniature, Edward is depicted in a passage from Act V, after the battle has already been won (Figure 115). The pose and the quotation represent him as a victorious yet wise leader, as opposed to Garrick's energetic warrior. His armour has become close to a full suit. As a result (despite the breeches), the figure of the soldier looks slightly more authentic, in that it comes closer to depictions of royal or aristocratic soldiers.

Furthermore, the three ostrich feathers crowning his sallet have the appearance of an emblem rather than natural feathers (as in Garrick's portrait). The prince wears the Order of the Garter around his neck. Thanks to these 'authentic'

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[27] Burnim and Highfill (1998), p.252.
[28] *Morning Post*, 6 November 1777, p.1.

elements, Edward is easily recognisable as Edward, the Black Prince. The reader of Bell's edition is therefore presented with a theatrical portrait that doubles up as a serious representation of a historical figure. The depiction of Edward is similar to portraits of medieval kings in illustrated histories like Barnard's *New, impartial and complete history of England*.[29] In this book, Plate 7 represents the 'Portraits and Dresses of the Kings of England (with their Arms) prior to the Norman Conquest' (Figure 116). William Hamilton, in his portrait of Harold, applied the same visual idiom: save for the addition of gauntlets and cuisses and the absence of plumes and medal, Harold (1022/3?-1066) and Edward (1330-1376, as incarnated by Wroughton) wear almost identical costumes. Although the plate's title implies some kind of accuracy, the fanciful costumes and dramatic poses of the kings are influenced by the theatre rather than by antiquarian research. Indeed, most of Hamilton's illustrations of kings for this work seem to be fanciful imaginings of their appearance and dress.

When Wroughton actually played Edward in 1778, at a benefit night for three other actors, it was reported that 'the story of the play drew out the natural character of an English audience, a love of liberty, and a jealousy of having it invaded by foreign enemies.'[30] The patriotic context of the performance is made clear by the evening's programme: before the afterpiece (the popular pantomime *Mother Shipton*), the audience were shown a 'Marine Pantomimical Dance, called *The Sailors Revels at Portsmouth; Or, British Glory. With the Fleet riding at Spithead*.'[31]

In the context of the many wars with France which punctuated the long eighteenth century, the staging of glorious events from the past took on a kind of incantatory value. Addison's *Cato* (1713) and Shirley's *Edward the Black Prince* (1750) were enjoyed by audiences throughout the century. Prologues and epilogues

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[29] Edward Barnard, *The New, Comprehensive and Complete History of England: From the Earliest Period of Authentic Information, to the Middle of the Year, MDCCLXXXIII.* (London, 1783), reprinted in 1789 under the slightly different title *The New, Impartial and Complete History of England: From the Very Earliest Period of Authentic Information, and Most Genuine Records of Historical Evidence, to the End of the Present Year.*
[30] *General Advertiser,* 18 May 1778, p.3.
[31] *General Advertiser*, 15 May 1778, p.1.

were used to reinforce the patriotic message of the plays. The prologue to *Edward the Black Prince* contains the standard flattering of the audience to obtain their good opinion, but also includes remarks on English history and heroes. The epilogue invites the audience to emulate their ancestors and fight a different kind of battle: against the cultural invasion of French fashions and 'false refinement.'[32] Although humorous in tone, the epilogue illustrates the period's fear of cultural imports from the continent, and the debates about the effeminacy of men, which intensified in the 1790s.[33] In view of the common interpretation of the tragedy it is not surprising, as Jeffrey Kahan has noticed, that 'its last major revival coincided with Napoleon's threatened invasion of England in 1803.'[34] When the tragedy was revived in 1803, it was accompanied by 'an appropriate National Address' written by politician and poet Sir James Bland Burges.

But beyond its patriotic subject, the play provided many opportunities for pageantry and heraldic display: costume and props involved armour, weapons and standards, and even ecclesiastical dress (the archbishop of Sens and the Pope's nuncio, Cardinal Perigort). *Edward the Black Prince* is also rife with individual combats, which were popular events on the stage. Ribemont fights with Arnold in Act V, scene 3, but the most dramatic fight must have been the single combat between Ribemont and Audley, two knights of equal valour and mutual respect, in Act V, scene 5. These battle scenes allowed for a picturesque display of armour and weapons and, because they relied on gesture rather than speech, could be enjoyed by the audience even in the large auditoria of the early nineteenth century.

The second series of *Bell's British Theatre*, in ninety volumes, appeared between 1791 and 1793. Although most portraits in this series were painted by Samuel De Wilde, Edward the Black Prince provides an interesting case in point, in so far as both theatrical portrait and vignette title-page were designed by the same artist, history and decorative painter William Hamilton (1751-1801). As an

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[32] On prologues and epilogues, see Ennis and Bailey Slagle (2007) and Betsy Bolton, 'Theorizing Audience and Spectatorial Agency' in Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.31-52, pp.41-46.
[33] Brewer (1997), p.446. On gender anxieties in the 1770s, see Myrone (2005), pp.105-120 and p.136.
[34] Kahan (2004), vol.I, p.275.

illustrator, Hamilton contributed to all the major literary galleries of the period. He painted six pictures for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, and contributed to Bowyer's Historic Gallery and Macklin's Bible Gallery and Poets' Gallery. Hamilton illustrated several histories of England, such as Edward Barnard's *New, comprehensive and complete history of England* (1783), and G. W. Spencer's *New and Complete History of England* (1794). In the 1780s and 1790s he designed several vignettes for *Bell's British Theatre* as well as five portraits (including three of Sarah Siddons).

In the same volume of *Bell's British Theatre*, the tragedy *Boadicea* by Richard Glover is preceded by a portrait of Jane Powell after Samuel De Wilde, and a vignette designed by Hamilton. The Boadicea of the vignette is markedly different from that of the portrait and wears a high-waisted gown, with small slashed and puffed sleeves, and a headdress composed of a kind of cap or turban and a long scarf.[35] By contrast, the fact that both portrait and 'vignette scene subject' for *Edward the Black Prince* were designed by Hamilton endows the illustrations, both showing a man in armour, with a definite harmony.

The study of book illustrations, unrelated though they might appear to theatrical portraiture, is nonetheless useful in that it reveals the historical imagination of the artist. Furthermore, although they are generally works of the imagination, associations could be made between the vignettes and the actual performances or actors. Hamilton famously included Sarah Siddons in some of his vignettes, and Opie, in his frontispiece for *The Gamester,* depicted the main actors and the set of an actual performance (including the inaccurate flats used by the theatre for the prison chamber).[36] Book illustrations show how artists could incorporate elements from the text as well as more ephemeral, visual elements such as a theatre's stage sets. It is not impossible that an artist with a good memory

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[35] A type of costume often found in illustrations by Hamilton and which seems to be his idea of historical feminine costume.

[36] Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *The Artist and the Theatre; the Story of the Paintings Collected and Presented to the National Theatre by W. Somerset Maugham* (London: Heinemann, 1955), p.245; Anthony Amberg, 'Opie's Gamester, Fancy Picture or Performance Painting?', *Apollo*, 142 (1995), pp.46-48. Opie's vignette depicts a standard prison, with railings and bare stone walls, yet the main character is sent to a debtor's prison, which would have looked more comfortable. Amberg argues that Opie based his design on a production of a play that must have used the theatre's generic 'prison chamber set' rather than a specific set depicting the interior of a debtor's prison.

may have incorporated elements of the dresses and decorations as well. Ultimately, these images contribute to creating in the mind of the viewers a particular representation of a certain character. When this character is taken from a historical play, the illustration probably worked in a similar way to the plates in history books.

Hamilton's vignette (Figure 117) represents a scene from the romantic subplot of the play: the love affair between Arnold and Mariana. It focuses the viewer's attention on the sentimental side of the play and is emblematic of a significant development in eighteenth-century drama: the use of a political historical context for the unfolding of a 'private' tragedy. This process was so well established by the last quarter of the century that it was mocked by Sheridan in his play *The Critic* (produced in 1779). Characters rehearse a play-within-the-play entitled *The Spanish Armada*, which is about the love between Tilburina, the daughter of the governor of Tilbury Fort, and Don Ferolo Whiskerandos, the Spanish admiral's son. The historical event of the threatened invasion by the Armada is completely displaced by the love interest. As the playwright Puff explains: 'it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion; in doing which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the private history of the times.'[37] The battle of Poitiers indeed provides 'a good heroic outline' for Shirley's play, as the symbolic significance of the battle in the period's historical imagination would create interest in the play. But contrary to the plays satirised by Sheridan, where some of the most important historical figures never appear,[38] the tragedy dramatises or 'realizes'[39] the battle of Poitiers and stages the Black Prince as the champion of English values. In the printed edition under study, the focus on the love affair in the frontispiece is balanced by the portrait of Kemble as Edward, the Black Prince. Together, the illustrations thereby posit in visual terms two sides of history: political history and 'private', sentimental events. In Shirley's tragedy, the

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[37] Act II, scene 1 (Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal and Other Plays*, ed. by Eric Rump (London: Penguin, 1988), p.155).

[38] In *The Spanish Armada*, Queen Elizabeth 'is to be talked of for ever; so that egad you'll think a hundred times that she is on the point of coming in . . . – it keeps up expectation' (Act II, scene 2).

[39] I.e. to make real. In *The Critic*, Puff asks that cannons be fired, for that 'helps to realize the scene' (Act II, scene 2).

sentimental drama is replaced within a historical narrative frame, and (unlike in Puff's *The Spanish Armada*) the historical and the sentimental plotlines are given equal weight.

Hamilton's image is constructed in a succession of plans alternating from left to right, recalling the flats of a theatre. The composition is framed by an elaborate display of arms, armour and standards. Contrary to many frames printed in Bell editions, the display has both a decorative and a narrative function. It features the banners of England and France along with a pike and a sword and a pair of gauntlets, on either side of a helmet crowned by the three ostrich feathers of the Prince of Wales and bearing his motto 'Ich dien'. The arrangement evokes the opening of Act III, scene 2: 'Drawing, discovers the Prince of Wales seated in state in his tent; at the entrance to which his standard stands displayed; the device, three ostrich feathers, with the motto *Ich Dien*. Warwick, Salisbury, Audley, Chandos, Nobles, Officers, and Guards standing.' In the course of the scene, Lord Chandos points to the Prince's standard and recounts Edward's seizing of the banner of the king of Bohemia.[40] The French court was represented in II,3 in 'a magnificent pavilion.' The frame in the vignette firmly reinforces the political drama unfolding in the background, suggesting that the situation depicted originates in the political choices of monarchs, or conversely, that individual, private decisions can reflect on events in the political sphere. The hangings in the picture seem to merge with the armorial display of the frame, which reinforces the connection between the sentimental and the historical plots.

The gauntlets on either side of the helmet appear to be holding the picture, as if presenting the image to the viewer, or exerting control over the scene. Inside the vignette, Louisa is the only character facing the reader. The artist thus gives a face to a character that is often uncredited on the playbills. She is a witness to the lovers' parting, as if in a mirror-image of the viewer. The general impression is therefore that of Edward's gauntlets holding a mirror to the viewer. The device is particularly powerful as elements from the frame merge into components of the image's background. The dramatic positioning of arms creates a diagonal separating

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[40] Act III, scene 2, ll.407-414.

the sphere of love, represented by the tent and the two women, from the world of war and country, embodied by Arnold, the soldier and the camp in the background, on the left-hand side of the image. The slightly ominous gauntlets, the shadow under the helmet and the agitated clouds (which seem a continuation of the French standard) suggest that war will eventually triumph over the lovers.

The document on the table (a letter? a map?) and the knight riding in the middle ground offer interpretative possibilities for the viewer-reader. No prop such as a written document is mentioned in the play and both knight and paper might suggest alternative readings of the scene. They add a certain tension to the scene represented: is the knight going to discover Arnold's second defection? What is the significance of the document to Arnold and Mariana's behaviour? For the reader who does not know the play, the frontispiece by Hamilton opens a wide range of questions, some of which will not be answered by a reading of the play. Another possibility is that the table and document were actual props for the Covent Garden production, although the play was not staged between the 1783-84 season and the publication of the engravings in 1791. Nevertheless, the presence of such objects may be a device to draw attention to the theatrical quality of the scene. The framing display of arms and the inclusion of extra-textual details also make the image function independently of the text: it is not so much illustrative of the play as evocative of a sentimental story within an Anglo-French conflict. John Brewer has remarked that book illustrations and furniture prints (prints used as room ornaments rather than kept in a portfolio) shared a similar sentimental subject matter: 'moments of pathos and suffering, of unrequited love and anguished grief, focusing on women rather than men, in affective scenes from literature and British history.'[41] The vignette for *Edward the Black Prince* partakes of this trend: while the play claims to be staging historical fact, the illustration turns history into romance. At the same time, it retains a strong connection to the battle and the figure of the Prince of Wales thanks to its background and its highly decorative frame.

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[41] Brewer (1997), p.462.

Moments earlier in the course of Act V, the French knight Ribemont (who embodies courage and honour on the French side), makes the following description of Arnold:

> This man—By Heav'n there's treason in his aspect!
>
> That cheerless gloom, those eyes that pore on earth,
>
> That bended body, and those folded arms,
>
> Are indications of a tortur'd mind,
>
> And blazon equal villainy and shame.
>
> In what a dire condition is the wretch,
>
> Who, in the mirror of reflection, sees
>
> The hideous stains of a polluted soul ! [42]

Arnold wears a specimen of sixteenth-century armour, possibly drawn from the suits in the Tower of London – which, as Meyrick deplored, are too recent to represent medieval armour accurately. Edward incarnates the 'iron race in iron clad', a phrase used to describe the medieval inhabitants of England, and which is made visible by the portrait of Kemble in full armour. Although the term 'iron race' was generally associated with the fourth race – the savage and belligerent race of men – described by Hesiod in *Of Works and Days*, it was gradually linked to the warlike peoples of Northern Europe, as opposed to Greeks and Romans.[43] Gibbon notes that the French and German armies of the second and third crusades were described by Greek authors 'as an iron race, of gigantic stature, who darted fire from their eyes, and spilt blood like water on the ground.'[44] The longer phrase, 'iron race in iron clad', appears in the first half of the nineteenth century in the context of the study of armour and weaponry, applied to English and Saxon warriors. Thus Meyrick believed that the description of battles whose outcome had been decided

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[42] Act III, scene 1, ll.16-23 (Bell's 1791 edition).

[43] See for instance James Boswell, *The Cub, at New-Market: A Tale* (London, 1762), p.16 and Thomas Pennant (1771), p.30. Both authors use the phrase to describe Scots.

[44] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1788), vol.V, p.98. Gibbon does not give the exact source of this description.

by a particular type of weapons would 'exhibit the true spirit and features of that "iron race in iron clad," which Englishmen have been.'[45]

By contrast, Arnold is far from made of iron: his double defection elicits Ribemont's (and perhaps the spectator's) contempt. Although Arnold is elegantly clothed with armour, a medal and a long cloak, he only wears components of a suit of armour: breastplate, pauldrons (shoulder armour) and cuisses, as opposed to full armour. Arnold's half-armour may have protected him from the assaults of some weapons, but he remained vulnerable to love. Arnold's weaker armour thus symbolises his moral indecision. The scene is not about Arnold: he is turning away from both the female characters and the viewer, his facial expression is indecipherable. The figure of the soldier riding in the middle ground reads like a prolepsis of Arnold's second treason: in Act IV, he defects back to the English camp, likely to be the one visible in the background.

In many ways the true protagonist of the sentimental plot is Mariana: she appears as a passionate romantic heroine and the violence of her love, and her distress when Arnold leaves her, is truly striking:

> Shall I not rave, blaspheme, and rend my locks?
>
> Devote the hour that gave me birth? and curse
>
> The sun and time, the world, myself, and thee?
>
> Till phrenzy prompting, 'gainst some dungeon wall
>
> I dash my burning brains to finish torture.[46]

In the vignette, Mariana is clad in pale fabrics, recalling the traditional association of white with maiden purity. The review from the *Morning Herald* reported that Elizabeth Kemble, who played Mariana in the 1783-84 season, was 'stark-staring in white sattin!'[47] This is a borrowing from *The Critic*, in which the character Tilburina 'comes in stark mad in white satin', because 'when a heroine goes mad, she always

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[45] Meyrick (1824), vol.I, p.vi. Although the phrase always appears between inverted commas, I have been unable to find an original source for this quotation.

[46] Act II, scene 2; ll.120-124.

[47] *Morning Herald*, 21 October 1783

goes into white satin.'[48] By the late eighteenth century, it had become traditional to represent mad women in white dresses.[49] Although this usage endured, its conventional nature was mocked by Sheridan in 1779. Yet the convention continued as late as the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1828, melodramatist Frederick Reynolds decided to revisit the theme of *Edward the Black Prince*. In its review, *The Belle Assemblée* remarked that 'Wallack wore armour, and looked chivalrous enough as the Black Prince', but sardonically evoked the heroine of the play as follows: 'Miss Love, as a sentimental operatic lady, wore white satin!'[50] In these instances, it is easy to see that theatrical convention prevailed over historical accuracy or even expression of character. This is perceptible too in other illustrations of the scene, for instance in Elizabeth Inchbald's edition of Shirley's *Black Prince* (1808). The illustration shows Arnold (in a plumed helmet) fleeing from Mariana, while she lies crying on the ground, supported by her attendant (Figure 118). Predictably, Mariana wears a long white gown, of a contemporary style. In Inchbald's edition, the image focuses exclusively on the fictional, sentimental plot.

The costume in Hamilton's scene from Shirley's *Edward the Black Prince* evinces a combination of styles. The high waist of the ladies' dresses corresponds to the fashion of the 1790s, but the slashed sleeves and ruffled collar of Mariana's attendant are historicising details commonly found in theatrical costuming to signify an earlier historical period, ranging from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. Although the practice of slashing did not reach Britain until the early sixteenth century,[51] for Hamilton slashing seems to be a prerequisite for the illustration of the past. Many of his female characters are shown wearing short, slashed and puffed sleeves. The stage practice of outfitting historical or comedy characters with slashed sleeves is systematically reproduced in the way Hamilton

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[48] Act III, scene 1.

[49] Francesca Saggini, *Backstage in the Novel: Frances Burney and the Theater Arts* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), pp.121-22.

[50] *La Belle Assemblée; or, Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine*, 39 (1 March 1828), p.124. The magazine condemned the piece as 'badly conceived and vilely executed.' Emma Sarah Love played Lady Helena, the object of the love of both Ribemont and Lord Audley. James William Wallack was particularly famous for his roles in comedy and melodrama.

[51] James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), pp.74-79.

dresses his female characters. In a preliminary sketch for Hamilton's painting of Henry VI, part III (for Boydell's *Shakespeare Gallery*), very few historical details are drawn, but the slashed sleeves are present from the beginning. The slashes seem to add verticality and dignity to the figure of Elizabeth Gray who is pleading to Edward IV. The structural role of slashes in the characters' dress, and therefore in the picture as a whole, appears clearly in the sketch. They add volume and structure to the garment and also to the scene represented.[52]

In the vignette for *Edward the Black Prince*, the slashed sleeves belong to Louisa's costume, while Mariana's dress has sleeves of a more baroque character. Mariana is the typical love-struck heroine, which might explain the lack of historicising detail in her costume: her dress emphasizes her status as a stock character, while historical dress tends to give more realism and dimension to the character. What the image achieves is an *evocation* of the past as the background for the sentimental drama, rather than an archaeological reconstruction of the Middle Ages. An illustration of the historical tragedy, the image also participated in the construction of the genre of historical romance, balancing theatrical references and antiquarianism in a pathetic farewell scene. While the play claims to be staging historical events, the illustration focuses on romance. At the same time, it retains a strong connection to the battle and the figure of the Prince of Wales thanks to its background and its highly decorative frame. Visually, the scene is reminiscent of other famous farewell scenes, such as Hector parting from Andromache or Regulus returning to Carthage – both subjects that had been regularly depicted by European artists in the second half of the century (Figure 119). Through such associations, the book illustration takes on aspects of history painting. As a consequence, Mariana, Arnold and British history were aligned by Hamilton with ancient Greek and Roman history, just as Shirley was aiming to align his own tragedy with the works of Shakespeare.

The combination of history and theatricality is taken even further in the portrait of John Philip Kemble sold with Bell's edition (Figure 120). Kemble first

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[52] The print was published by Boydell in 1795. On Hamilton's sketches, see Anne Campbell, 'A Scrapbook of Drawings by William Hamilton', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 43 (1980), pp.327-34.

played Edward in 1783 at Drury Lane Theatre. It was his second role on the London stage (after Hamlet), and he soon developed a reputation for his conveyance of elegance and tragic dignity. In the second series of *Bell's British Theatre*, he was portrayed in two such roles: Edward, the Black Prince and Cato, in Addison's tragedy of the same name. His portrait as Edward can be read as both a historical and a theatrical one. Many history books of the period had frontispieces portraying the Black Prince, or strongly advertised the presence of engravings of him in their volumes. Temple Sydney's *New and Complete History of England* (1773) thus included a full-length portrait by Grignion after Wale, a portrait that must have been deemed successful for it was later reissued in Raymond's *New, Universal and Impartial History of England* (1777-90).

Hamilton's illustrations for Bell evince a move from fanciful, 'half old English, half modern' costume to a more consistently authentic armour, albeit from the wrong period. Both Kemble in the portrait and Arnold in the vignette wear versions of armour in use in the seventeenth century (exemplified for instance in Van Dyck's equestrian portraits of Charles I), of which there were examples in the Tower of London and in private collections such as Richard Cosway's.[53] In comparison with Wroughton's Black Prince or Hamilton's portrait of Harold, Kemble wears no breeches but a full suit of armour. The introduction of full armour in theatrical portraiture resonates with the widening of interest in arms and armour in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Francis Grose's seminal work *A Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons*, containing forty-nine engraved illustrations of objects from public and private collections, was published in 1786 (Figure 121).[54]

At the end of the century, anachronisms in the domain of armour and weapons began to be noticed, as a comment about the 1783 staging of *Edward the Black Prince* suggests: 'The Managers have decorated the play with characteristic

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[53] The *Catalogue of the very curious and valuable assemblage of miscellaneous articles of taste and virtu, the property of that distinguished artist and virtuoso, Richard Cosway, esq. R.A.* (London, 1821) lists two suits of steel armour, 'of the period of Cromwell' (p.17). In the nineteenth century, Van Dyck's *Charles I on Horseback* (*c*.1637-38) hung at Blenheim Palace, and his *Charles I with M. de St Antoine* (1633) was on display at Windsor Castle.

[54] Francis Grose, *A Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons: Illustrated by Plates Taken from the Original Armour in the Tower of London, and Other Arsenals, Museums, and Cabinets* (London, 1786). A supplement, illustrating 'ancient and Asiatic armour and weapons', was published in 1789.

dresses and scenery; they have therefore only to obviate the little anachronism of the fencing match between Ribemont and Lord Audley . . . and they will have discharged their duty.'[55] The reviewer suggests that some kind of sword should have been used, not a foil. Indeed, Kemble as Prince Edward is armed with a sword that looks too small and thin for a fourteenth-century warrior. This is an aspect of the performance that was taken up and improved upon in later productions. In 1804, at the Royal Amphitheatre, spectators of the pantomime *Edward the Black Prince; or, the Hero of England* could admire 'an appropriate combat with the Broad Sword.'[56] Here again, historical accuracy was made into a marketing argument. In 1822, a piece of puff for the melodrama *Edward the Black Prince! or, The Glories of England in 1356* (at the Royal Coburg Theatre) publicised the costumes as being 'of an extreme costly description' and 'faithful specimens of those worn at court in ancient times.'[57] Like earlier representations of the battle of Poitiers, the play offered extensive pageantry and combats. The costume of the melodrama was popular: by then, audiences had developed a keener eye for costume, as well as a greater desire for historical accuracy of set and costume.

This is demonstrated in a number of 'penny plains' from the same year, depicting Francis Huntley as Edward. Penny plains were uncoloured engravings of popular actors in their most celebrated roles, printed and sold cheaply (for a penny or a halfpenny), for colouring or tinselling at home. Three representations of the character of Edward were published by William Hodgson, depicting Huntley in the three costumes he wore in the melodrama.[58] Another was part of a series entitled 'West's Theatrical portraits', printed by William West, a publisher of theatrical prints.[59] *Mr Huntley, as Edward the Black Prince, 1*[st] *Dress* (Figure 122) shows that costumes for the melodrama were indeed aiming at accuracy. Edward's mail coif

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[55] *Morning Herald,* 21 October 1783.

[56] *Morning Post,* 3 October 1804, p.1.

[57] *Morning Post,* 20 August 1822, p.3.

[58] The prints are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (museum numbers E.7090-1905, E.7079-1905 and E.7080-1905).

[59] On West and its role in the development of the toy theatre, see David Powell, *William West and the Regency Toy Theatre* (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 2004).

(an armoured hood), the square neckline, the long sword and the presence of a surcoat reveal a clearer knowledge of fourteenth-century costume, even if the figure is not free of Romantic details, such as the flowers on the surcoat and the tassels on the coif. A tinsel engraving of Huntley on horseback, in the same costume, has been watercoloured and tinselled with leather and metal to represent fabric and armour (Figure 123).[60]

Theatrical figures of armoured characters on horseback were a very popular subject for penny plains, as were representations of theatrical combats (a favourite was the single combat between Richard III and Richmond in *Richard III*, act V, scene 4). Some theatrical publishers, such as W. Cole, had whole sections of their catalogue devoted to foot combats, horse combats, battles and various other sorts of combats.[61] Advertisements for the pantomime *Edward the Black Prince; or, The Hero of England* (Royal Amphitheatre, 1804), which was 'founded on that never to be forgotten part of English History, the glorious Battle of Cressy' (1346), announced 'several combats with the Broad Sword' – in addition to the aforementioned 'appropriate combat with the Broad Sword'.[62]

The antiquarian approach: Planché's costumes for King John

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the relationship between theatrical plays and the historical periods they represented – and the necessity of identifying anachronisms – was explored by the antiquarian Francis Douce in his *Illustrations of Shakespeare, and of Ancient Manners* (1807). The work consisted in two volumes of critical commentary of Shakespeare's text (based on the renowned Steevens edition of the plays) as well as 'Dissertations on the clowns and fools of Shakespeare, on the collection of popular tales entitled *Gesta Romanorum*; and on the English Morris Dance.' The choice of subjects suggests that Shakespeare was by

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[60] Victoria and Albert Museum, object S.651-1997.

[61] Advertisement in the *Derby Mercury*, 17 August 1825, p.1.

[62] *Morning Post*, 3 October 1804, p.1. The pantomime was repeated the following year at the Royalty Theatre, where it was introduced as 'a grand historical Spectacle' (*Morning Post,* 11 February 1805, p.1).

then firmly established as the greatest English poet and playwright, and that his works were also seen as the repository of popular culture and information about the past. Passages from Shakespeare's plays were commented upon with historical or antiquarian explanations, often illustrated with wood engravings. In several instances, Douce's explanations concentrated on costume. The phrase 'the altitude of a chopine' in *Hamlet* led him to three pages on the description and history of the 'choppine', a type of high shoe, accompanied with an illustration of the object.

The work also discusses the accuracy of Shakespeare's historical references. Examples of anachronisms include English names given to foreigners, the presence of paper in *Timon of Athens* and the use of silk stockings in *Henry IV*. Douce locates the birth of the desire to reduce anachronisms as being at the beginning of the seventeenth century. But, he remarks, this only applied to playwrights: theatre directors and painters continued to misrepresent the past. Douce credits John Philip Kemble (without naming him) as the reformer of stage costume in Britain, and rejoices in the fact that some painters – in particular Thomas Stothard in his painting *The Pilgrimage to Canterbury* (1806-07) – had begun to show a 'zeal. . . to obtain correct notions of the manners of former times whenever they have occasion to depict them.'[63] As we have seen in chapter 2, only one attitude is left to the reader or spectator of anachronisms: Douce defends his collection of Shakespearean anachronisms 'as an object of amusement'.[64]

Of course, Douce was far from mocking Shakespeare, and the enjoyment he derived is probably of the kind originating in the reader's awareness of his period's cultural and scientific advancement. Douce links the introduction of historical accuracy to a moral imperative: 'the directors of the theatres continued to practise their, perhaps innocent, *impostures on the public*, and every absurdity that could be devised, or distortion of reality in costume, still continued to disgrace the stage'.[65] Later, he equates anachronistic paintings to lies: because of their 'most absurd violations of history', historical paintings 'are not what they profess to be;

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[63] Douce (1807), vol.II, pp.283 and 285.
[64] Ibid., p.284.
[65] Ibid., p.282; my emphasis.

and while they delight the eye, they delude the understanding.'[66] Moral and artistic progress went hand in hand, and it was the artist's duty to seek historical accuracy.

In 1822, the playwright and nascent antiquarian James Robinson Planché took this duty to the stage, in a production of Shakespeare's *King John*. Shakespeare's history play was performed rather infrequently in the eighteenth century, until it was played in 1783 by John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons.[67] The eighteenth-century interest in the Middle Ages, its history, literature and art, encouraged the staging of plays set in that period. Moreover, audiences seemed to have a particular interest in the period which saw the formation of the state. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars a century later, had prompted reflexions on the nature, origins and defence of British liberty. When the play was performed at Drury Lane in 1800, its title was even changed to *King John; or, England Invaded*.[68] Finally, however, according to Anthony Jenkins, *King John*'s 'heraldic opportunities' account for the 'odd popularity' of the play in the nineteenth century.[69] With its large number of aristocratic characters and its many scenes set in court, both in France and in England, the play indeed afforded many occasions to represent banners and coats of arms.

The study of heraldry, which had been an ongoing antiquarian interest since the Renaissance (the herald John Guillim started to write his seminal *The Display of Heraldrie* in 1595), was given a new impetus in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Among the most popular works was *A Short and Easy Introduction to Heraldry*, by heraldic engravers Hugh Clark and Thomas Wormull (1775). One of the first heraldry books written for middle-class readers,[70] by 1788 it had reached its sixth edition and had grown from 57 to 330 pages. In 1795, translator Susannah Dobson attempted to make heraldry more entertaining with her *Historical anecdotes of heraldry and chivalry*. The work was made of short

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[66] Ibid., p.284.

[67] It was performed in 1737 with Dennis Delane as King John, and in 1745, 1755 and 1760 by David Garrick. Colley Cibber's adaptation was also performed in 1745.

[68] Playbill for the night of 20 November 1800 (Garrick Club).

[69] Anthony Jenkins, *The Making of Victorian Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.13.

[70] Colin Lee, 'Clark, Hugh (1745-1822)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/62418 [accessed 26 February 2016].

paragraphs offering anecdotes and thumbnail biographies of English nobles. Shields, explained Dobson, are true records of the past, while history written by medieval ecclesiastics is not to be trusted, since 'solitude and superstition' made them more likely to include legends and 'false miracles' in their works.[71] Several artists of the period incorporated accurate coats of arms to their works, most notably Benjamin West in the series of paintings for the King's State Rooms in Windsor Castle (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1793), which depicted scenes from the reign of Edward III (see chapter 2). In Meyrick's visitors' book, some of the names are accompanied by drawings of coats of arms, although it is not certain how many of them are the work of Meyrick himself (Figure 124).[72]

Planché worked at Covent Garden under Charles Kemble from 1822 to 1828. In 1823, he persuaded Kemble to stage *King John* in historically accurate costume, which he would draw himself from 'indisputable authorities.' The main sources used by Planché are Strutt's *Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* and *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1777), Charles Hamilton Smith's *Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland* and Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour*. He also referred to the research of Charles Alfred Stothard, an antiquarian draughtsman whose main work on costume was *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain*. Issued in twelve parts from 1811 and 1832, this was an overview of English medieval costume, based on funeral effigies. The playbill for *King John* on 24 November 1823, which includes a list of funeral effigies as 'authorities', also acknowledged the work of other famous antiquarians: Camden, Montfaucon, Sandford and Gough. Although actors and managers sometimes had recourse to works on costume, both English and foreign, to create their costumes, this was the first time a playbill stated the sources of the costumes. Kemble and Planché's concern for costume and props as historical objects are

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[71] Susannah Dobson, *Historical Anecdotes of Heraldry and Chivalry, Tending to Shew the Origin of Many English and Foreign Coats of Arms, Circumstances and Customs* (Worcester, 1795), p.2. Dobson's interest in the Middle Ages can be seen in her translations : in 1775, she published an abridged translation of Abbé de Sade's *Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque*, and in 1779 and 1784 she translated the *Literary History of the Troubadours* and *Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry* from the French of Academician Jean-Baptiste de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye.

[72] Stephen Duffy, 'French Artists and the Meyrick Armoury', *The Burlington Magazine*, 151 (2009), pp.284-92, p.284 and p.285, note 6.

reflected not only in the list of authorities, but also in the presence on the playbill of the people who actually created them: the dresses were made by Mr Palmer and Mrs Egan, and 'the banners, shields, and other properties, by Messrs Bradwell and son, etc.'[73]

Before the production of *King John*, Planché had advocated a reform of theatre wardrobes in a letter to the editor of *The Album*. He credited the success of Walter Scott's novels for the new interest in costume:

> The public are become expectant of a change in the wardrobes of our patent theatres. The daily illustrations of every period of history, put forth in the most fascinating shapes, by the first writers, hourly open the eyes of all classes. The reader of Ivanhoe cannot long be an unmurmuring spectator of the preposterous dressing of Shakspeare's 'King John'.[74]

New, accurate costumes also made financial sense. As long as 'the taste of the town [was] still wedded to stage pomp and spectacle'[75], the splendour of historical reconstruction would attract more spectators to the first play in an evening at the theatre.

> The splendour being invariably attached to the first piece, would indubitably occasion a greater first account, and, while it brought more money to the treasury, would add to the satisfaction of the audience, and the exertions of the performers, by filling those benches at the rising of the curtain, which are now generally untenanted till half-price.[76]

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[73] Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D. C.
[74] Planché (1823a), p.302.
[75] Ibid., p.299.
[76] Ibid., p.300. Spectators could be admitted for half the cost of a full-ticket if they entered the theatre at the end of the third act of the main play.

In the same letter, Planché lamented the fact that the individual features of every character in pantomimes or melodramas were carefully studied in order to create appropriate costumes, whereas costumes for Shakespearean characters lacked contextual appropriateness:

> Nearly half the acting plays of Shakspeare are incorrectly dressed at both the patent theatres, and . . . more care is taken in the production of a pantomime for Christmas, or a melo-drama for Easter; more expense lavished to render nonsense palatable, and bombast endurable, than would worthily decorate the immortal monuments of the genius of our first dramatist.[77]

The idea was expressed again in Planché's memoirs, in which he stressed his role in costume reform:

> I complained to Mr. Kemble that a thousand pounds were frequently lavished on a Christmas pantomime or an Easter spectacle, while the plays of Shakespeare were put upon the stage with make-shift scenery, and, at the best, a new dress or two for the principal characters. That although his brother John, whose classical mind revolted from the barbarisms which even a Garrick had tolerated, had abolished the bag wig of Brutus and the gold-laced suit of Macbeth, the alterations made in the costumes of the plays founded upon English history in particular, while they rendered them more picturesque, added but little to their propriety; the whole series, King Lear included, being dressed in habits of the Elizabethan era, the third reign after its termination with Henry VIII., and, strictly speaking, very inaccurately representing the costume even of that period.[78]

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[77] Ibid., p.299.
[78] Planché (1872), pp.52-53.

Planché's complaints about the inaccuracies of costume in performances of Shakespeare's plays reflect the contemporary idea that national pride in Shakespeare as the greatest British poet should be reflected in the style of the staging. His negative evocation of 'lower' forms of entertainment, pantomimes and melodramas, recalls eighteenth-century debates where the taste for pantomimes and imported genres (the Italian opera in particular) was seen as detrimental to Britain's literary heritage. To be worthy of Shakespeare's greatness, theatres had to show appropriate costume. Deference to Shakespeare also meant a return, where possible, to the original text of the plays. Most of Shakespeare's historical plays were performed in adapted versions, many written by the actor and Drury Lane manager Colley Cibber (1671-1757). His version of *King John* was entitled *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John*. Performed in 1745 at the time of the last Jacobite uprising, it proved to be unsuccessful, even if, or perhaps because, its title was so tendentitious – or perhaps because it was perceived as the least Shakespearean of the Bard's plays.[79] At the end of the eighteenth century, John Philip Kemble (Charles's brother) had reinstated some of the original text from Shakespeare's folio in his promptbooks. Yet *King John* was heavily cut to be made more palatable to the public.[80] Many plays were still performed in adaptations at the time Planché became involved at Covent Garden, as he expressed at the end of his letter:

> I cannot conclude these hastily written remarks, without urging, also, attention to the universal demand for the restoration of the text of Shakspeare. The last act of King Lear was lately performed at Drury-Lane, as originally written, but the ridiculous loves of Edgar and Cordelia were still preserved. Half measures will do nothing,— 'Reform it altogether.' If the plays of our immortal Bard be too long for representation, curtail them,—where anachronisms or

[79] M.M. Reese, 'From "The Cease of Majesty"', in Frances A. Shirley, ed., *King John and Henry VIII: Critical Essays* (New York: Garland Pub., 1988), pp.145-174, p.145.

[80] William Shakespeare, *King John*, Online edition by Michael Best at Internet Shakespeare Editions, http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Jn_StageHistory/section/The%20Restoration%20and%20ear ly%20nineteenth%20century/ [accessed 14 September 2015].

indecencies of expression are most offensive, suppress them,—but let what we hear *be* Shakspeare's, and what we *see,* if possible, be worthy of him![81]

With *King John*, Planché and Kemble were establishing the stage as a kind of history book. Not a popular illustrated history of the kind that abounded in the early nineteenth century, but a serious work of scholarly research into the history of costume, at least insofar as this was commercially possible.[82] Theatres were vying with one another with grandiose historical productions. It was not enough that new plays were advertised 'with new dresses and decorations', these dresses and decorations had to be historically accurate.

The success of their 1823 production prompted Planché to publish a collection of his costume designs, and gave him the idea to extend his costume research to other characters from Shakespeare. His *Costume of King John* was published in the same year, 1823, and contained written descriptions of the costumes, with very precise references to the works or antiquarians consulted. The costumes were illustrated in twenty-two lithographic prints by Kenny Meadows, who would be known in the Victorian era for his illustrations of Barry Cornwall's edition of Shakespeare (1843).[83] The publication of *Costume of King John* is revealing of a phenomenon that took off in the first decades of the nineteenth century: the spreading of the knowledge of costume outside the play-house or the antiquarian's library.

Planché's publication stands out from the costume work of other antiquarians because of its twofold outlook – antiquarian as well as theatrical. *Costume of King John* was the first of a series of publications devoted to costume design for the characters of several plays by Shakespeare. Planché's aim was originally to provide costume design for all of Shakespeare's plays. The series,

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[81] Planché (1823a), p.304.
[82] For a discussion of the representation of the early Middle Ages in popular histories of England and their illustrations, see Keynes (1999).
[83] This edition contained more than a thousand plates designed between 1839 and 1843 (Robert L. Patten, 'Meadows, (Joseph) Kenny (*bap.*1790, *d.* 1874)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/18478 [accessed 16 Sept 2015]).

entitled *Costume of Shakespeare*, combined plates depicting the characters' costumes and biographical notes.[84] The only precedent for a work of this kind was, to a certain extent, Thomas Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Antient and Modern. Particularly Old English Dresses. After the designs of Holbein, Vandyke, Hollar, and others. With an account of the authorities, from which the figures are taken; and some short historical remarks on the subject. To which are added the habits of the principal characters on the English stage.* Here again, it is interesting to take Jefferys's full title into account: it suggests that the process of depicting costume is similar to the historian's method, founded on reliable sources ('authorities'). Jefferys's costume book is particularly interesting in so far as he associated the representation of theatrical characters with his description of historical dress. In this way, the coexistence within the same work of two types of characters – historical and theatrical – contributed to place the theatrical character in a temporal continuity which is not only the continuity internal to the play, but that of history.

Jefferys's series of old English dresses begins with a representation of Henry VII (whose reign started in 1490). Yet his predecessor, Richard III, is to be found among the theatrical characters in a plate entitled *The Play-house Habit of King Richard the 3rd* (Figure 125). The title of the image and its placing in the book indicate, on the one hand, the popularity of Shakespeare's play, on the other, the place of the figure of Richard III in national historical consciousness: Richard is presented as a historical figure with a role, and therefore a costume, on the stage. *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations* was the first English work to establish a link between historical costume and stage dress.

The impulse to bring the past alive through antiquarian stagings, however, had to be adjusted to the technical requirements of stage dress. The first, which was also a requirement of painting, was the necessity of achieving a picturesque effect in performance. The origin of the publication being an actual production of *King John*, Planché demonstrates a concern for the picture of the stage when seen

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[84] Despite Planché's ambition to dress all of Shakespeare's plays, he only published his costume designs for five other plays: *King Henry the Fourth*, *As you like it*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, with lithographs by Kenny Meadows and George Scharf.

from the auditorium, and for the general effect of his costumes. On the page facing Plate 2 Planché discusses the two kinds of armour depicted on the seals that constitute his authority for King John's second dress. Planché appears anxious to justify his choices both in terms of historical accuracy and in terms of visual effect: 'Either may be worn with propriety; and the minor details of that in the accompanying plate are purposely left indistinct, as they are unimportant to the general effect of the figure.'[85] Here the costume designer dismissed the details of the suits of armour as of little value in the general effect of the production. In so doing Planché avoided what has been seen as a defect in later managers who, eager to recreate the past in its most minute details, devoted extreme care (and money) to parts of dress that could only have been seen by the first rows of the auditorium.[86] Planché then compares the two types of helmet worn by the king on the seals: 'the conical helmet of the first, and the cylindrical one of the second seal, have been abandoned for the crown and coif des mailles; the latter being equally correct, and far better adapted for representation on the stage or on canvas.'[87] Having to choose between two different headdresses, Planché settles for a third one which is more emblematic of kingship and leaves the face uncovered, therefore allowing the audience to see and hear the actor properly, and enabling potential artists to convey the king's facial expressions.

Such attention to the effect of costume on the audience can be related to the desire of many actors-managers of the period to display elements of picturesque character on the stage. The set painter's quest for picturesque effect finds its correlative in the costume designer's creation of beautiful and surprising costume, as in Planché's dress for Chatillon (Figure 126). The notion of the Picturesque as exemplified in the theatre is mostly used to refer to unusual and interesting characteristics that draw the viewer's attention and are pleasing to the eye. Planché himself used the word in his commentary of the engraving of Chatillon, the French ambassador to King John. 'I could not resist from introducing this

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[85] Planché (1823b), facing Pl.2.
[86] When Charles Kean revived King John in 1852 at the Princess's, he was criticised for the extreme degree of historical reconstruction, such as a detail of gold embroidery on King John's dress that was virtually invisible to the audience.
[87] Planché (1823b), facing Pl.2.

splendid and most Picturesque costume, and an ambassador was the very person to display it with propriety; the style of dress besides, was general towards the close of the twelfth century.'[88] In *Costume of King John* and on playbills, Planché cited Stothard as one of his main 'authorities'. Indeed, Chatillon's costume is very closely modelled on Stothard's depiction of the enamelled plate that covered the (now disappeared) tomb of Geoffrey of Anjou in Le Mans cathedral (Figure 127, Figure 128).

The costume of the ambassador stands out from that of the rest of the *dramatis personae*. The viewer is struck by the style of the dress, in particular the lining of the mantle. The gesture of the arm allows the viewer to catch a glimpse of it. The device is visible in several of Planché's plates, mainly in illustrations of female characters as they all wear long mantles. Lady Falconbridge, for instance, is shown opening her blue mantle for the viewer to see the white lining (Plate 11). The 'English Nobleman of the 13th century' depicted on Plate 6 rests his right hand on his hip, revealing a white lining matching the inner of his robe. Chatillon's mantle is lined with a fabric whose pattern is that of the heraldic tincture vair. This is the name given to the heraldic representation of squirrel furs arranged alternately and sewn together. In its basic form, it consists in an alternating pattern of azure bells and argent cups – such as we can see on Chatillon's mantle.

In his edition of Strutt's *Dress and Habits*, Planché remarked that 'The appearance of vair is handed down to us by the illuminations, in which we perceive garments so lined exactly resembling the charge called vair in Heraldry', but he also noted that written accounts from the same period implied that the furs had a different aspect.[89] The illuminators, and the artist who created Geoffrey's funeral effigy, might have wished to convey a sense of the material worn by the figure by representing it through its heraldic stylization. It is likely Planché was tempted by the sheer visual quality of the medieval source, and reproduced it literally in his costume for the ambassador. In 1823, learned spectators might have been able to identify the pattern and colours as a symbol of squirrel fur. Planché's use of vair

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[88] Ibid., facing Pl. 19.
[89] Joseph Strutt, *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England*, ed. by James Robinson Planché, 2 vols (London, 1842), vol.II, p.16.

contributes to the colour pattern of the ambassador's dress, and at the same time, despite the unlikeliness of finding such a blue and white pattern on a real mantle, gives authenticity to the theatrical character of Chatillon by linking him to visual representations of other medieval figures.

The emphasis on the visual effect of the figures onstage can be seen as an expression of the Picturesque sensibility that was prevalent in the theatre at the time. The idea had already been mentioned by Planché in his explanatory notes on the English herald's costume (Figure 129), which he designed from a plate in Strutt's *Dresses and Habits* (Figure 130):

> I have copied the figure faithfully, as far as regards costume, with the exception of the white coife, which being fastened under the chin, would be any thing but Picturesque upon the stage; and coverings for the head were so seldom worn in those days, except in bad weather, that the absence of it is of little consequence.[90]

The Herald's costume is an example of how historical accuracy had to be balanced with stage effect. In this case, the important was not to ruin the effect by excessive zeal for antiquarianism. Planché may have thought that such an odd item of clothing would have looked ridiculous on a nineteenth-century actor. The white coif would also have disrupted the pattern of red and gold of the herald's dress.

Despite such modifications, men's costumes were generally more historically accurate than women's – in Planché's costume designs for Kemble's productions as well as in the costume of other productions throughout most of the nineteenth century.[91] On Planché's costumes for the female characters in *King John*, Diana De Marly notes that 'Planché was not so accurate with the women, for he gave them simple gowns with high waists which were very fashionable in 1823 but which lacked the heavy folds of the twelfth century they were supposed to represent'

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[90] *Costume of King John*, facing Pl.14.

[91] See Marion Jones, 'Stage Costume: Historical Verisimilitude and Stage Convention', in Richard Foulkes (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.56-73, p.69.

(Figure 131).[92] Elements of nineteenth-century fashion appear in Planché's designs for male characters as well. Philip Falconbridge's first costume is elaborately reconstructed from Strutt and 'King John's silver cup, in the possession of the corporation of King's Lynn, Norfolk' (Figure 132). The Bastard wears a short blue mantle, a light brown robe with blue trimmings, pink stockings and black shoes. One element strikes us by its modern look: the coiffure. Philip Falconbridge is depicted with short curly hair, a clear parting, a kiss curl and sideburns. With the addition of a thin moustache and beard, this makes him look very much like a nineteenth-century man in twelfth-century clothes. The pose this figure strikes conveys Falconbridge's self-confidence but it could also be that of a fashionable dancer. Diana De Marly – among others – has argued that a revival is always a compromise between the period that is reconstructed or 'revived', and that of the people who revive it.[93] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prints of actors in character demonstrate that haircuts and hairstyles are always some of the last elements of costume to be reformed. One effect of the figure of Falconbridge is to remind us that Planché is dressing a company of nineteenth-century actors for the performance of a play set in the thirteenth century. Planché did not seek to transform the stage into a museum, but to give Shakespeare's text an appropriate illustration of the period it evoked. As Planché's 'Letter' and memoirs suggest, the aim of the production was to represent a glorious past which – thanks to Shakespeare – had become part of the national literary heritage.

Costume of King John applied to costume the methods used by John Britton and Auguste Pugin in architecture and topography. *The Beauties of England and Wales* (from 1801), *The Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* (1818) and *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (1821-23), written by Britton and illustrated by Auguste Pugin (the father of the Houses of Parliament's architect, Augustus Welby Pugin), allied popular topography and scholarly research. The illustrations were both picturesque and accurate: *Architectural Antiquities* included ground plans of buildings, while *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* gave measurements to be used by

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[92] De Marly (1982), p.70.
[93] Ibid., p.52.

architects.[94] Planché, who was not a tailor but an antiquarian, does not give sewing patterns for the costume in the books, which would have been the exact equivalent of Britton and Pugin's architectural measurements. But for each costume, Planché indicates the relevant fabrics and details the sources of his reconstructions. *Costume of King John* could thus be read as a guidebook to thirteenth-century costume. Significantly, Planché designed costumes for all characters of the play, and the playbill boasted that 'every character will appear in the precise habit of the period'. The attention to 'every character' is a sign of the increasing importance of the stage picture in nineteenth-century theatre. It also reflects the interest in the social and the 'habits and manners' of all classes of society. This interest developed in the second half of the eighteenth century and is reflected, for instance, in James Granger's best-seller *A Biographical History of England* (1769). It was organised in twelve hierarchical categories, from royalty to 'the lowest Order of the People.' In the ensuing vogue of portrait collecting, images illustrating the last class of people were particularly sought after. The interest in the life of the lowest classes is thus reflected in costume books, from Strutt's 'Rustics of the 13th Century' (Figure 133) to Planché's including of the costume of extras in 'English Soldiers of the 13th Century' (Figure 134). Through its depiction of individual character, *Costume of King John* offered a near microcosm of thirteenth-century society. Aristocratic men are depicted alongside their armorial bearing. The book could be read as a collection of portraits and a study of the costume of the period, as well as an illustration of Shakespeare's play.

The characters of *Costume of King John* are cut from their embodiments on the stage, even if some appear against a background of some sort. Planché's drawings present Shakespeare's characters as historical images, severed from any precise course of action - whether in Shakespeare's play or in history. As they appear in *Costume of King John*, Planché's costume designs contributed to the large number of illustrations of Shakespeare's plays that were available to late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century readerships. Some were published independently from the text of the play. For instance, Boydell's *Collection of Prints*

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[94] Hill (2007), pp.50-53.

was designed as a collection of engravings only, but at the same time the London publisher worked on a different project – the production of an illustrated edition of Shakespeare's plays, which became known as the Boydell-Steevens edition. Planché's *Costume of King John* could be a series of historical prints but for the mention of King John's and Falconbridge's first and second dresses, which imply the unfolding of a theatrical plot. The book illustrates the costume of characters of the play, thereby offering a series of illustrations of the 'List of Characters.' To use Stephen Bann's terms, these images could therefore be described as metonymic illustrations, in that they do not offer an imaginative reconstruction of a particular passage of the play, but rather claim to be accurate representations of the historical figures made into tragic characters by Shakespeare.

Jonathan Bate has argued that the focus on antiquarianism in Kemble and Planché's production effectively put Shakespeare back in the past, which had the additional effect of depoliticizing him.[95] Similarly, Jane Moody views it as a move from political history to 'the historical past'.[96] I believe what happened was a different kind of politicization: the stage was used as a mirror of national history, and had a responsibility in teaching the past in words and visual effects. Dressing *King John* accurately meant that not only dramatisations of popular historical novels, but also 'legitimate drama' could meet the audience's expectations, feed the interest in Britain's past, and provide popular illustrations of the growing knowledge of costume and armour.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers seem to have been puzzled by Shakespeare's choices in the treatment of the political situation in the reign of King John. In the dedication of *Papal Tyranny* (1745), Cibber explained that he rewrote the play to give more weight to the conflict between King John and the Pope, which he interpreted as a conflict between England and Catholicism:

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[95] Bate (1989), p.204.
[96] 'Once the quintessential drama of anti-Gallic propaganda, the genteel, decorous antiquarianism of Planché's *King John* suggests the play's meek return to the historical past, weighed down by effigies, seals and illuminated manuscripts' (Moody (2007), p.118).

In all the historical Plays of Shakespear there is scarce any Fact, that might better have employed his Genius, than the flaming Contest between his insolent *Holiness* and *King John*. This is so remarkable a Passage in our Histories, that it seems surprising our Shakespear should have taken no more Fire at it. . . . It was this Coldness then, my Lord, that first incited me to inspirit his King *John* with a Resentment that justly might become an *English* Monarch, and to paint the intoxicated Tyranny of *Rome* in its proper Colours.[97]

In 1846, in the introduction to an edition published in the wake of a performance by Charles Kean in New York, the editor and playwright Epes Sargent wondered about the absence of references to Magna Carta in the play:

To modern readers it is a subject of surprise, that neither in the old chronicle play nor in Shakspeare is there any allusion to what is now considered the most momentous event of King John's reign, the signing of Magna Charta. We can only account for this omission by the inference, that, in the times of the writers, the importance of that instrument in connexion with the progress of popular liberty, had not yet been felt or appreciated.[98]

In his manifesto for the introduction of accurate historical costume in legitimate drama, Planché evoked correct historical costuming as a financial, cultural and political issue. He expressed the sense that the quality of theatrical productions was a matter of national dignity: appropriate costuming would 'secure the approbation and patronage of every class of visitors, and rescue the patent theatres from the stigma, which, even amongst foreigners, they so woefully labour under.'[99]

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[97] Colley Cibber, *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John* (Dublin, 1745), pp.iii-v.
[98] William Shakespeare, *King John: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, ed. by Epes Sargent (New York, 1846), p.iv.
[99] Planché (1823a), p.300.

Indignant at the state of wardrobes and the double standard in attitudes to costuming, Planché felt justified in drawing a parallel with the calls for electoral reform in the 1820s: 'The English, Scotch, and French, are the nations which, in the radical phrase of the day, may complain of "non-representation."'[100] The phrase stresses the function of the stage as a mirror of the nation. To Planché, the theatre was a space where the whole nation gathered. As readers 'of all classes' became more knowledgeable about costume, it was the theatre's role to display the glorious events in British history accurately:

> The money that purchased the splendid panoply exhibited as the spoils of the Peruvian giant, in the 'Vision of the Sun,' or that which sheathed in gilded mail Mr. Cooper, and his twelve attendants, in the 'Chinese Sorcerer,' would have been much better employed in arming the representatives of our heroic ancestors, and giving 'the very age and body of the time,' in which they flourished, 'its form and pressure.'[101]

This comment is revealing of the contemporary perception of historical characters: the performance of a work of literature became an image of the past, in which the audience's ancestors were 'represented' by actors. It was therefore unfair and unpatriotic for managers to devote vast sums of money to the scenery and costume of pantomimes and melodramas, such as the ones mentioned by Planché, that were unrelated to British history.

Mark Salber Phillips, discussing the implicit tension between the mimetic and the didactic impulses in eighteenth-century historical writings, concludes that writers in the Romantic tradition 'built a newly heroic image of the historian as a genius capable of meeting and transcending a contradiction that was now treated as self-evident.'[102] Planché as a costume designer exemplified this attitude, adding to the moral interpretation of Shakespeare's play a precise (if not totally accurate)

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[100] Ibid., p.304.
[101] Ibid., p.302.
[102] Phillips (2001), p.22.

representation of the period's costumes. Thus antiquarian productions of historical plays could be seen as an attempt to negotiate the tension between the conception of history as instruction by example and that of history as a chronicle of the past. Focusing on Shakespeare's anachronisms was a way to present his plays as works of history, not of fiction. As works of history, what they represented on stage was the spectator's ancestors, and therefore a vision of their national heritage.

From a technical point of view, Planché's work had the effect of bringing to the fore the role of the costume designer. Planché was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1829 and played an influential part in the foundation of the British Archaeological Association (1843), of which he became honorary secretary and eventually, in 1873, vice-president. The most significant of Planché's works on dress in general are his *History of British Costume*, published in 1834, and the large *A Cyclopaedia of Costume Or Dictionary of Dress,* which appeared in two volumes between 1876 and 1879 and proved 'a sourcebook for many a Victorian costume designer.'[103] As Nancy Hazelton and others have remarked, Planché is given to overstatement regarding his responsibility in the process of costume reform, but his *King John* nevertheless had a strong impact. The time was already ripening for what Planché deemed 'a complete reformation of dramatic costume.' Such a reformation came about later, in the early Victorian era, when the theatregoing public had become sufficiently 'sophisticated, educated and demanding.'[104] His antiquarian research on dress earned him the respect of other nineteenth-century antiquarians and scholars, so that Edward William Godwin, during the lecture he gave at the first public meeting of the new Costume Society in 1882, paid homage to Fairholt and Planché as pioneers in the study of costume history, remarking however that the style of their illustrations was not very adapted to artists and antiquarians.[105] The publications of the Costume Society, Godwin further added, should only include faithful copies of certified original sources. The nineteenth century saw an evolution in the role, status and terminology of what is now called the 'costume designer.'

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[103] Foulkes (1986), preface, p.11.
[104] Hazelton (1987), p.37.
[105] Alicia Finkel, *Romantic Stages: Set and Costume Design in Victorian England* (London: McFarland, 1996), p.129.

The function of a person appointed by the manager of a theatre to deal with the setting and costumes of a certain production aiming at historical accuracy was rather imprecise and was variously defined as 'archaeologist', 'historical adviser', 'superintendant of the decorative departments.'[106] The theatregoing public had to wait until the age of Henry Irving to find members of the production team credited as 'costume designers' as such.

Poitiers in 'plastic marble': a panstereomachia

In June 1826, Edward, the Black Prince and the battle of Poitiers were given a new lease of life in the form of a 'panstereomachia': a model of the battle of Poitiers with more than 1,500 figures. The exhibition opened at the Cosmorama Rooms, Regent Street (with the admission price of one shilling), and its proprietor was Charles Bullock, a brother of the Egyptian Hall's William Bullock. The figures of soldiers and knights in armour were executed in 'plastic marble' (marble paste, perhaps, or just clay) and the scene was protected from the public by a glass. Surprisingly enough, the artist is only credited in some of the advertisements as one Charles Buewek, and nowhere else, so that all credit fell on Charles Bullock. It is possible, of course, that the two Charles Buewek and Charles Bullock might have been one and the same.

The panstereomachia was part of the nineteenth-century craze for exhibitions of many kinds, from museums and galleries to waxworks and all sorts of new visual attractions such as panoramas, dioramas, cosmoramas and neoramas.[107] With its medieval subject, the exhibition also capitalized on the earlier vogue of portrait collecting and the taste for illustrated histories, as well as general interest in arms and armour. Although it was only one of the many forms of historical shows that were available to the London public, it stands out because of the place it devoted to accurate costume. While the battle of Poitiers was a well-known event

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[106] The programmes for some of Charles Kean's productions mentioned a few names as 'builders' of the dresses, but precisely what the function entailed is somewhat unclear.

[107] See Altick (1978), chapters 10 to 16 on panoramas and the like, chapters 4 and 24 on waxworks.

in British history, Bullock's panstereomachia achieved novelty thanks to its high standard of research into medieval armour. It was presented as an archaeological document of national history: 'the figures are modelled with the strictest regard to historical truth, and with the most accurate attention to the chivalry, heraldry, and costume of the period to which it relates, forming a singularly novel and brilliant exhibition of British military achievement.'[108] The show was presented in a room decorated in a fourteenth-century Gothic style designed by Bridgens, the engraver who engraved many of the plates in Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour*. The decoration featured the banners of Lord Audley and Lord Chandos (over the entrance), appropriate coats of arms (around the room) and a 'gothic screen' surmounted by the arms of Edward the Black Prince. Thus a visit to the exhibition was meant to be a total experience, a journey into the past, created by the surroundings as well as the exhibit itself. In this, Bullock was following the practice inaugurated by William Bullock in his Egyptian Hall and Meyrick in the Tower of London.[109]

A publication entitled *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Battle of Poictiers* was printed as a guidebook or souvenir of the exhibition. It contained a translation, with scholarly notes, of Froissart's account of the battle, and long excerpts from Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry*. The booklet ended with a description of the panstereomachia itself. On the cover, the word panstereomachia is spelt in Greek characters, giving an air of archaeological authority and antiquity to the publication. The second page therefore dispels the idea that it is an old word, yet the definition and detailed etymology try to create the feeling of scientific discourse. The newly coined word designates 'the representation of a Battle, entirely composed of solid figures in their relative proportions.' The guidebook made Froissart's text available to a large public, for Bullock's show was of the type to attract a miscellaneous

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[108] *The Times,* 14 July 1826

[109] William Bullock was 'the first museum keeper to arrange his specimens in a semblance of what are today called 'habitat groups', with careful attention to postures and physical surroundings.' Altick (1978), p.237. Meyrick 'suggested a gothic style building when the new Horse Armoury was built against the White Tower, and the building work was completed in 1826' (https://www.royalarmouries.org/collections/history-of-the-collection/early-scholars/samuel-rush-meyrick [accessed 8 September 2015]).

audience, many of whom would not have had the opportunity of reading Froissart's or Meyrick's works.

Responses to pseudo-artistic or historical ventures of this sort were mixed. The narrator of the novel *Joe Oxford; Or, The Runaway* thus satirises the fashion of inventing new names for these shows:

> At the panoramas and dioramas, we were also much amused, while we were often made to laugh at the ridiculous names coined almost daily, for the purpose of attracting people to new exhibitions of one sort or another; as every man who desires to live by the public, seems to think he ought to become an innovator, nothing old being likely to prove palatable to that enlightened body, and to this cause, Tom and I fancied we traced many ridiculous words of the new coinage, such for instance, as peristrephic, panstereomachia, and poecilorama.[110]

Yet visitors with a taste for antiquities and heraldry clearly enjoyed the show. An anonymous visitor made watercolours of some of the figures, which he kept in the pages of his copy of the *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Battle of Poictiers* (Figure 135, Figure 136, Figure 137). The images reveal that the figures and horses of the model were dressed with accuracy. The colour notes in pencil on the shield of Ralph Lord Stafford suggest that the figures were drawn in pencil on the spot and coloured at home.[111] To a visitor interested in armour, the show must then have been satisfactory. An article from the *Times* went even further in so far as it focuses on the pictorial qualities of the model:

> In pictorial effect, except in the distance where the landscape is good, it is somewhat defective; particularly in the extreme

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[110] *Joe Oxford; Or, The Runaway, by the author of Ned Clinton,* 3 vols (London, 1830), vol.II, pp.155-156.

[111] The copy and watercolours are in the Cambridge University Library, along with sketches and watercolours of battle scenes and men in armour, and hand-written notes taken from Meyrick's *Critical Inquiry*.

foreground of the scene, where all illusion is destroyed by the proximity to the spectators of the front and most important (because best executed) figures, these being injudiciously placed immediately close to the glass. The general arrangement is picturesque; but the grouping is in many places meagre, and no where sufficiently bold. The leading characters, too, are not in the prominent situations in which we should expect to behold them; for instance, instead of allowing him to remain quietly under a tree in the back ground, our historical imaginations could not for a moment exclude the Black Prince from the very thickest of the fight... Upon the whole, although certainly inferior to a good painting, this picto-mechanical representation (if we may be allowed the same liberty in coining a compound as Mr. Bullock, for it is a combination of mechanism and landscape painting) evinces a considerable ingenuity on the part of the artist, and a still greater degree of antiquarian and heraldic research.[112]

The review reads as if the author wanted to bring the panstereomachia into the field of fine art. Like a painting, it is assessed in terms of background, composition and effect. This response shows that what Pierre Frantz has termed 'l'esthétique du tableau' is a concept that could be applied to many types of visual shows, no longer only in the theatre.[113] As a history painting, the panstereomachia is found lacking: the viewer's historical imagination, far from being stimulated, is confused by the entanglement of the figures. It sounds as if the 'historical imaginations' referred to are used to the showcasing of single historical figures in representations such as portraits or funeral effigies, and much less to the staging of the figure in action, surrounded by its contemporaries. The conclusion of the article is revealing: the panstereomachia is no more than an interesting, ingeniously staged piece of historical research.

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[112] *The Times*, 23 June 1826.
[113] Frantz (1998).

In the introduction to the guidebook, Bullock stresses the exclusivity of the information he received: Meyrick indeed provided him with 'such additional instruction as has enabled him to complete the model . . . with the strictest regard to truth in the costume and arms of the period which it represents'. Later, he thanks the several people who have provided him with unique information. Such claims to exclusivity of information, combined with the commercial enterprise of the exhibition itself, added a market value to the staging of history. With the panstereomachia, the battle of Poitiers could be consumed, gazed at and then brought home in the form of the guidebook. Single figures or groups from the model could even be bought – as the reader of the guidebook is reminded several times. Exhibitions such as Bullock's panstereomachia show that history was taken from the theatre and the gallery and staged in various other locations. In an age in which London offered even more shows and exhibitions, the society-wide success of Bullock's Egyptian Hall, together with the positive responses to Charles Bullock's model of the battle of Poitiers, suggest that exhibition rooms offered an equally respectable, accurate and, above all, entertaining space for the staging of history in a modern world.

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The study of historical plays and their representations reveal that history on the stage assumed three functions: visual, sentimental and political/patriotic. Historical plays afforded opportunities for combats, the display of armoury and heraldic pageantry, and history became the inspiration for striking spectacles. At the same time, it had become a conventional backdrop to sentimental drama. In Shirley's *Edward the Black Prince*, as recently discussed, the romance creates dilemmas where the male lover constantly has to choose between his love and his country. In the winter of 1828, a melodrama of the same title, penned by Frederick Reynolds, was performed at Drury Lane. Allegedly based on Shirley's play, the melodrama put the political situation in the background and became chiefly an affair of cross-dressing and unrequited loves. As one critic put it, King John of France

and the main figures in the battle of Poitiers appeared 'as pegs upon which the author hangs an occasional loose shred of his work.'[114]

The *Examiner* criticised the melodrama's expressions of nationalism as much for their lack of taste as for their lack of topicality:

Conceive, at this time of day, all sorts of mouthing rant about English valour and French cowardice, – trash never at any time correct, but which at present is in execrable taste, and without even the poor excuse of the alleged policy of keeping up national animosities, which was so much the fashion when Mr Reynolds was a young dramatist.'[115]

We can therefore observe an evolution taking place in the 1820s: the focus moved from more or less crude expressions of patriotism to the perception that accurate reconstruction of costume, including armour and weapons, was the appropriate way to glorify Britain's medieval past. History was taken beyond the book and the stage in a variety of productions that were attractive both for the visual qualities of the pageants and the degree of accuracy in the historical reconstruction. Because a performance was now conceived as an ensemble made of text, costumes and sets, the accurate representation of the past became a way of celebrating British national heritage, a heritage that comprised historical figures and great deeds as well as material and cultural productions: literature, architecture, artefacts and costume were seen as so many facets of national history. As a consequence, the insistence on archaeological reconstruction reactivated the didactic justification of drama.

The iconography of *King John* and Edward the Black Prince used costume, and more specifically armour, to inscribe Britain into a patriotic narrative of progress. It was a two-phase process: nationalist interpretations first prevailed over historical accuracy in the representation of the main characters, until the

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[114] *Morning Post,* 29 January 1828, p.3.
[115] *The Examiner,* 3 February 1828, p.3. The anonymous critic damned the play as 'soporific', 'somniferous' and 'forlorn and languid'.

development of a taste for the collecting and classifying of armour. Meyrick contributed to the valorisation of existing collections in the Tower of London, while others in the theatre and exhibition industry reconstituted medieval costume and armour. The attainment of 'historic truth' became a sign of progress in a society that was still trying to emulate European artistic production and collection. At the same time, history in the form of plays, illustrations and exhibitions was made available to a much wider public, spreading representations of national icons such as the Black Prince and reinforcing the sense of history as a shared national inheritance.

Chapter 7

Beyond the stage: costumes in anecdotes, print, fabric and tinsel

What did readers and spectators do with the information about the past they encountered in the theatre, in the books they read, or during visits to exhibitions? Much of the material studied in the previous chapters, whether printed (such as history books, antiquarian works and prints) or part of paying shows and exhibitions (at the Royal Academy, at the Egyptian Hall or in Westminster Abbey) was designed for and consumed by viewers who could afford the leisure of reading or visiting exhibitions.[1] Although people of moderate means could attend theatrical performance from the galleries, other forms of visual history, such as the lavishly illustrated history books discussed in chapter 3, were out of the reach of many. Part of this body of images, however, was accessible to the lower classes. Print shop windows, for instance, provided free entertainment to a wide range of Londoners, and contemporary caricatures depict variegated and socially-diverse crowds outside print shop windows (Figure 138). Theatrical prints were also hung in places like shop windows and the parlours and tap-rooms of pubs.[2] This final chapter examines ways in which information about historical dress and stage costume was conveyed to, and used by, various types of readers and viewers. In doing so, it situates the developments in historical costuming on the stage and its representation in the arts in the larger cultural context of the period. To begin with, in order to appreciate fully the evolution towards greater historical accuracy in the representation of historical events on stage and on canvas, it is useful to consider changes in historiographical practice and their influence on the illustration of history in 'high art' as well as in popular culture.

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[1] Entrance to Westminster Abbey was free, but visitors were strongly incited to recompense the guides.

[2] In the nineteenth century, George Speaight notes, tinsel prints were displayed 'wherever bright popular decoration was required.' Speaight lists among them pubs, the window of a theatrical hair-dresser, and a kidney-pie stand (George Speaight, *The History of the English Toy Theatre, Rev. ed*. (Boston: Plays, Inc., 1969), p.134).

A 'culture of anthology': historical dress in anecdotes

   The first part of this chapter thus focuses on a mode of representing history that was given new impetus in the eighteenth century: the use of anecdote and minor or private historical events as a way to perceive and represent the past. In 1755, Samuel Johnson defined an anecdote as 'something yet unpublished; secret history'.[3] By the last quarter of the century, a second meaning was in use, registered in the fourth edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* (Dublin, 1775 and London, 1777): 'it is now used, after the French, for a biographical incident; a minute passage of private life.' In their 1836 *Book of Table-Talk*, Charles MacFarlane and James Robinson Planché delineated the development of the compilation of anecdotes as a genre, and traced changes in the meaning of the term. On the seventeenth-century French historian Antoine Varillas, they write that

   His general notion seems to be that Anecdote is a sort of History in dishabille; that it sets before us events in their real character, and not disguised or dressed up for show as they are generally beheld by the public; and hence he argues that it is really a much truer thing than what is commonly called history, which he appears to think is of necessity a sort of painting or magnifying of the truth, and in so far, therefore, a falsehood and deception.

In contemporary usage, however, MacFarlane and Planché argued that 'anecdotes' refers to 'facts of any kind whatever, and relating to any subject, if stated in an unconnected or fragmentary manner.'[4] The 'fragmentary' nature of anecdotes, which by the late eighteenth century were no longer necessarily 'secret' or 'unpublished', was therefore perceived as an efficient way to learn about a variety

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[3] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, first edition (1755-56).
[4] Charles MacFarlane and James Robinson Planché, *The Book of Table-Talk* (London, 1836), vol.I, pp.25-6.

of topics, especially history and biography. Reflecting eighteenth-century developments in historical writing, the historical information offered through the medium of anecdotes was increasingly concerned with the evocation of the habits of the past. At the very end of the period under study, the desire to be exhaustive was reflected in *The Book of Table-Talk*, which offered, among other historical, literary and scientific subjects, chapters on 'wooden pillows', 'expenses for marriage-dresses in the time of Henry VIII', 'heraldic anomalies' and a long 'history of stage costume.'[5]

The preference for the format of the anecdote as a repository of knowledge, including that of many aspects of the past, is linked to the period's increased interest in the 'social' and the practice of anthologising works of history, literature or philosophy. Many eighteenth-century works of history could be read as collections of distinct episodes with moral purposes. History books, textbooks and their visual counterparts, such as Sarah Trimmer's prints and Bowyer's Historic Gallery, focused on emblematic scenes of British history. The woodcuts of Trimmer's series of prints of Roman, religious and English history, and Bowyer's quality engravings after paintings he commissioned from famous artists, are indicative of the wide spectrum of styles used by illustrators of history during the period. Although they were designed with different techniques and for different audiences, what they have in common is their relationship to the text of Hume's *History of England* and the focus on private, emblematic or theatrical events.[6] Scholars have referred to the largest body of historiographical works written in the eighteenth century as 'philosophical history,' which Mark Salber Phillips defines as 'the broad thrust of eighteenth-century historiography towards a more systematic

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[5] Ibid., pp.132-34, 124-28, 300-13 and 143-75.

[6] Sarah Trimmer's illustrations are discussed in Mitchell (2000), pp.58-60 and in Joyce Irene Whalley, *Cobwebs to Catch Flies: Illustrated Books for the Nursery and Schoolroom, 1700-1900* (London: Elek, 1974), p.79. On Bowyer's Historic Gallery, see T. S. R. Boase, 'Macklin and Bowyer', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26 (1963), pp.148-77; Richard Wetherill Hutton, 'Robert Bowyer and the Historic Gallery: A Study of the Creation of a Magnificent Work to Promote the Arts in England' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1992) and Cynthia E. Roman (1997) and her chapter 'Robert Bowyer's Historic Gallery and the Feminization of the 'Nation'', in Dana Arnold, ed., *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.15-34.

treatment of the social.'[7] For most of the eighteenth century, history was viewed as a precedent for modern times, a narrative of wise deeds to emulate and bad decisions to avoid replicating. Histories in the eighteenth century reveal a neoclassical view of the past as a source of exempla – in the words of Lord Bolingbroke, history was 'philosophy teaching by example and also by warning.' As a consequence, historical narratives assumed a moral, edifying tone, and historians 'came to be seen as practical philosophers whose views on politics, ethics and economics raised questions of general interest to the common reader.'[8] Eighteenth-century historians-philosophers believed that accounts of the past were necessary and instructive, for they provided edifying examples of good and bad behaviour. Such an approach was popularised in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century through textbooks designed to be read by children in a domestic context.[9]

Hume's *History of England*, published from 1754, was the most influential work of philosophical history and inspired many subsequent illustrations and textbooks. Hume's religious scepticism, and the observation that Revolutions 'disgust us by the uniformity of their appearance', led him to offer his readers 'the first genuinely political history of England'. This work concentrated on the interrelation between, on the one hand, the political and constitutional development of a nation and, on the other, its civilisation – law, language, customs, religion and culture.[10] In many respects Hume's *History of England* corresponds to the eighteenth-century notion of 'civil history', focusing on political behaviour and on relations between the civil power and the church. In a letter to his friend William Mure, Hume refers to his desire to be impartial to the Whig or Tory interpretation of the latest historical events in Britain: 'The first Quality of an Historian is to be true

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[7] Phillips (2001), p.171

[8] Michel Baridon, 'Historiography', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume IV: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. by H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.282-301, p.284. For Baridon, this evolution is linked to the development of the book trade and of popular education.

[9] See Mitchell (2000), especially chapter 3, section '"Things that are true": Philosophical history domesticized' (pp.57-63).

[10] Haydn Mason, 'Optimism, Progress, and Philosophical History', in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler, eds., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.195-217, p.205.

& impartial; the next to be interesting. If you do not say, that I have done both Parties Justice; & if Mrs Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles, I shall burn all my Papers, & return to Philosophy.'[11] The excerpt also betrays the historian's desire to bring his readers close to the emotional experience of the historical actors. Hume used anecdotes in order to present a narrative of history that was both true and 'interesting'. Mark Salber Phillips has shown how Hume sought to appeal to both men and women, and how he used sentimental scenes to allow a 'temporary release of feeling' before resuming the narrative.[12] Hume aimed to elicit the reader's sympathy for historical characters such as Charles I, yet he also wanted to remind his readership of the temporal distance between them and the people whose character and actions were depicted in the book. Engagement with the historical narrative should not distract from the thought that the deeds of our ancestors could provide a philosophical lesson to contemporary Britain. This combination of good historical argument and writing skills appealed to a wide readership and The *History of England* was an instant success, exerting influence on the writing of many histories and history textbooks in the following years.

Phillips has analysed this eighteenth-century historiography in terms of an implicit tension between two impulses, the mimetic and the didactic. The mimetic impulse, because it centred on the concreteness of events and sought to 'represent experience as well as action', led to narrative experiments as well as the dissolution of narrative itself into compilations of individual stories, in genres such as encyclopaedias and biographical dictionaries. Focus on the didactic, privileging argumentation over mimesis, could also lead writers to reorganise narratives, this time into 'a set of dissertations', which for Phillips is a characteristic of eighteenth-century philosophical histories. In short, he concludes, both impulses can break down narrative structures.[13]

This fragmentation of historical narrative was reflected in the development of pictorial means of teaching history, and by the place of the anecdote in

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[11] Letter to William Mure, October 1754. *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. by J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), vol.I, pp.209-10.
[12] Phillips (2001), p.68 and pp.60-61.
[13] Ibid., p.23.

eighteenth-century historical culture. One of the primary functions of the anecdote was to entertain. A good example of the importance of the anecdote as an educational distraction is a collection entitled *Anecdotes, &c. Antient & Modern*. Published in 1790 by historian and antiquarian James Pettit Andrews, it is a compilation of remarks on topics as heterogeneous as Heraldry, Jeux de mots, Inconsistency, Lazy Monks and National Character. The purpose of the anecdotal form is set out in the preface:

> A retirement of some years, with the uninterrupted perusal of a library composed chiefly of such volumes as are not in the way of every student, have supplied the Editor with a very considerable stock of extracts and remarks. It has been suggested to him, that if these were connected by a few observations, and ranged under proper heads, they might afford some amusement to those readers who have neither time nor inclination to labour through scores of uninteresting pages, for the sake of two or three entertaining paragraphs. Encouraged by this idea, and by the favourable reception which his former publications (most of them anonymous) have met with, he has stept forward once more in the literary walk, in hopes of meeting the same candor and good humor which he has before experienced from his countrymen.[14]

Andrews – who, significantly, referred to himself as the 'Editor' not the author of the work – thus created continuity out of individual, disconnected passages from books. The new book is presented as a library in miniature, an anthology of the best excerpts from rare books.

This particular attitude to reading, which became widespread in the eighteenth century and pervaded most literary genres, has led Luisa Calè to write of a 'culture of anthologies', 'which circulated literature as a series of excerpts' and in

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[14] James Pettit Andrews, *Anecdotes, &c. Antient & Modern: With Observations*, new ed., (London, 1790), pp.vii-viii.

which paintings in literary galleries participated.[15] Ventures such as Bowyer's Historic Gallery and 'pictorial histories' such as *English History Delineated* and Sarah Trimmer's *Series of Prints* are instances of anthologising a pictorial representation of history, a process that also relied on the anecdote. *English History Delineated* was a set of engravings after Nicholas Blakey and Francis Hayman, published from 1750 to 1752 by John and Paul Knapton (the publishers of the 1732-33 (second) edition of Rapin-Thoyras's popular *History of England*) and Robert Dodsley. Only six prints out of the fifty projected were published. Five of them were included, in a modified state, in the second edition of Smollett's *Complete History of England* (1758), and the whole set was reissued in 1778.[16] According to Edward Edwards, this was 'the first attempt that was made in England to produce a regular suite of engravings from our national history.'[17]

A few decades later, educationalist Sarah Trimmer recognised the didactic power of images. Between 1788 and 1795, she successfully published a series of sets of prints dealing successively with ancient, Roman, religious and English history (Figure 139). The interpretation of the prints could be supplemented by separate publications providing commentaries on each print, and placing the event depicted within a chronological sequence of events. In the case of English history, the accompanying *Description of a Set of Prints of English History; Contained in a Set of Easy Lessons* (1792) is actually an abridgement of Hume's *History of England*. The anthologising process was here doubly at work: first, in extracting from English history those events such as were fit to interest and instruct children and, secondly, in reducing Hume's *History* to a child-friendly commentary on the prints.

At the end of the century, illustrating Hume's *History* became a commercial, cultural and patriotic enterprise when publisher Robert Bowyer opened his Historic Gallery on Pall Mall in 1792. The paintings exhibited in Bowyer's Gallery were commissioned to illustrate a large folio edition of Hume's *History of England* that was to be published between 1795 and 1806. Like the paintings commissioned by

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[15] Calè (2006), p.58.
[16] Keynes (1999), p.295.
[17] Edward Edwards and Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painters Who Have Resided or Been Born in England: With Critical Remarks on Their Productions* (London, 1808), p.4.

John Boydell for the Shakespeare Gallery, the pictures of the Historic Gallery had a dual existence, both as part of an exhibition and as an early 'repertoire of images for illustrated books.'[18] Bowyer's gallery contained over a hundred paintings. Some were influenced by works in Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery; most evinced Neoclassical or Romantic aesthetics and many were painted by the same artists Boydell had employed.[19] Accuracy of costume and setting was not a priority for the artists of this gallery. On the contrary, Bowyer's aim was 'to raise the passions, to fire the mind with emulation of heroic deeds, or to inspire it with criminal deeds'[20] (Figure 140). According to Mitchell, the effect was to 'reinforce the literary and anecdotal approach' created by the link between English literature, traditional tales and national history.[21] Although Bowyer's pictures were intended to illustrate a narrative, the Historic Gallery and its prints, as Louisa Calè has remarked, was also an 'anthological venture', in so far as the pictures 'are limited to the representation of key points in time at the expense of the continuity between events'[22] – a characteristic also shared by Trimmer's prints, which were designed to be put up on the walls of classrooms. In Trimmer's as well as in Bowyer's images, the construction of a feeling of national belonging and the exemplification of moral lessons taught by history could be achieved without the need for accurate objects, costumes or architecture.

The place given to the anecdote as a piece of information aiming at both entertaining and teaching the reader is symptomatic of two trends: the widening interest in private lives and the clothes and habits of previous eras, and the function of short texts (sometimes no more than one sentence included in the news section of the papers) in the dissemination of knowledge about historical costume. The use of anecdotes to achieve 'interest' is noticeable in various fields of study: Horace Walpole's successful *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, based on manuscript notes

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[18] Bann (1984), p.63.
[19] See Mitchell (2000), p.58, Bann (1984), p.63 and Roy Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?: The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p.21.
[20] Strong (1978), p.21.
[21] Mitchell (2000), p.58.
[22] Calè (2006), p.127.

by engraver George Vertue, was published in 1762 (volumes I and II) and 1764 (volume III and *Catalogue of Engravers*). This was a history of English art told in the form of biographies and anecdotes, containing, as Walpole wrote to George Montagu, 'an infinite quantity of new and curious things.'[23] Walpole's 'presentation of the history of English art as a series of anecdotes highlighted the importance he placed on individual biographies.'[24] The anecdotal format was used in several other domains such as theatre history with *Oxberry's Dramatic Biography and Histrionic Anecdotes* (1825). And of course, it included a variety of topics that could help one shine in 'polite society'. The anecdote was a conversational tool: some collections of anecdotes were published as educational works to help young people develop 'the happy Talent to enliven Conversation.'[25] The popularity of a work such as John Trusler's *Chronology, or, The Historian's Vade-Mecum* (fourteen editions between 1769 and 1792), a compilation of dates and tables 'designed for the pocket, in order to set persons right in conversation,' attests to the continued importance of history as a topic of discussion in the late eighteenth century.[26]

Anecdotes also encompassed the domain of dress, in short texts which drew parallels between historical dress and contemporary fashion. Short remarks about historical costume were regularly inserted in the news section of the *Times*. They aimed at instructing readers and helping them put developments in fashion into perspective. Thus we find in the *Times* of 11 August 1794 a section headed 'Habits

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[23] Letter to George Montagu, 24 November 1760. Horace Walpole, *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford*, ed. by John Wright, 6 vols (London, 1840), vol.IV, p.114.
[24] Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, *Portraits of Painters : Drawings by George Vertue and Horace Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting in England* (Farmington: Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, 2008), p.ii.
[25] *The Tell-Tale, Or, Anecdotes Expressive of the Characters of Persons Eminent for Rank, Learning, Wit, or Humour, Collected from the Best Authors and Best Companions : For the Improvement of Youth in Conversation* (London, 1756), p.vi.
[26] History was one of the topics mentioned by Hume as 'topics of conversation fit for the entertainment of rational creatures' in his 1742 essay 'Of Essay Writing' (*Selected Essays*, ed. by Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.2). Conversation was central to the development of polite society. Even after 'the general abandonment of the vocabulary of politeness' in the 1790s (Stephen Copley, 'Commerce, Conversation and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Periodical', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 18 (1995), pp.63-77, p.65), conversation remained an important social skill, in which knowledge of anecdotes on a range of topics was increasingly valued (see MacFarlane and Planché (1836) pp.1-26).

of the 14th century,' strangely situated between the Ship News and a paragraph on the *Blenheim* man-of-war.

> The absurdity of the Beau of the 14th century even surpassed our modern cravat and trowsered fops.
>
> What could exhibit a more fantastical appearance than an English beau of this period? He wore long pointed shoes fastened to his knees by gold or silver chains; hose of one colour on the one leg, and of another colour on the other . . . This dress was the top of the mode in the reign of Edward III.[27]

This passage was taken almost word for word from Robert Henry's *History of Great Britain, from the First Invasion of it by the Romans under Julius Caesar* (London, 1771-1793). Henry's description of fourteenth-century male fashions was itself borrowed from medieval historian Henry Knyghton and was reproduced (mostly unreferenced) in a large number of publications until well into the nineteenth century. We find it incorporated into discussions of manners and customs in histories of England, used as an example of the fickleness and ridicule of fashion in ladies' magazines, or included in compendiums of anecdotes.[28] Such 'recycling' attests to the importance given to the format of the anecdote as a way to instruct readers about the past or to provide a commentary upon the present. A few years later, appearing in a news column including political news in brief as well as a series of minor news events and bon mots, is the following remark:

> The veils worn by females of the present day are not half so elegant as those of Edward the Second's times, when the decorating them and the hoods [*sic*] employed such a variety of

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[27] *The Times*, 11 August 1794, p.4.

[28] See for instance John Adams, *A New History of Great Britain: From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Present Time* (London, 1803), p.157; *The Lady's Monthly Museum, Or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction*, 6 (June 1801), p.43; J. S. Forsyth, *The Antiquary's Portfolio: Or Cabinet Selection of Historical & Literary Curiosities* (London, 1825), p.30.

hands as actually gave the first rise to incorporating the *Painter Stainer's* [*sic*] Company.[29]

Both anecdotes seem to imply that fashion is not a contemporary concern, and that the exuberance of late eighteenth-century dress is not a French importation, but can be traced back through English history – in the case of beaux, to the age of Edward III, a king whose figure was often associated with English patriotism and conquest. In these anecdotes, we find the sense that the past could shed light on some present circumstances.

The interest in short narratives of minor events taken from the private lives of public figures found its expression in painting too, most famously in the 'anecdotal genre' (*genre anecdotique*) pioneered in France by painters Fleury François Richard and Pierre Révoil in Lyons. Also called 'genre troubadour', its works lay halfway between history painting and genre painting. They were often small format works with meticulous, detailed execution recalling Flemish painting. The genre's focus on scenes of the private lives of historical figures and its often sentimental approach to history (Figure 141, Figure 142) meant that its works were frequently seen as a debased version of history painting.[30] However, although the 'anecdotal genre' was predominantly a French movement, it is of interest in the context of this thesis, in so far as it paved the way for the more widely known 'historical genre', of which Paul Delaroche is one of the best representatives (Figure 143). Here, English history was used by French artists and writers to comment on the recent political events in France. The first French translation of Hume's *History of England* appeared in 1763, and was republished in 1809. Delaroche, who visited London in the 1820s,[31] was the first painter to use English history to shake French historical consciousness.[32] He took inspiration from the prints published by Bowyer,

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[29] *The Times*, 4 January 1799, p.3.

[30] See Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, *Fleury Richard et Pierre Révoil, la peinture troubadour* (Paris: Arthena, 1980).

[31] His signature appears in Meyrick's visitors' book.

[32] Stephen Bann, 'Au fil de l'histoire : généalogie des genres anecdotique" et 'historique"', in Stephen Bann and Stéphane Paccoud, eds., *L'invention du passé, Vol.2: Histoires de cœur et d'épée en Europe, 1802-1850* (Paris: Hazan Editions, 2014), pp.12-25, p.17.

both in their composition and their recourse to emotion, and his works, which were collected and exhibited throughout Europe, show that the diffusion of events from English history was not restricted to the British Isles.[33] While the paintings of the 'genre anecdotique' were small in format, Delaroche participated in the development of a more imposing genre, a process summarised by Stephen Bann: 'the anecdotal genre eventually dissolved into the more ambitious enterprise of the historical genre.'[34] Although Delaroche's career extends beyond the chronological boundaries of this thesis, his success testifies to the appeal of the anecdote as a way to bring the past into the present.[35]

Collections of anecdotes, of course, were a different kind of book from antiquarian publications. They were designed for a much larger public, and their success relied on brevity and the elicitation of interest in the reader, together with the knowledge that they could prove useful in conversation. Anecdotes about historical dress were scattered through newspapers, magazines and collections of anecdotes, yet they collectively brought about an itemisation of historical clothing that contributed to better knowledge of the dress of the past.

From fragmentation to unity: extra-illustration, tinsel prints and the theatricalisation of the past

The remainder of this chapter considers two ways in which readers, spectators and members of the public of various ages could engage with the narratives of history they were offered in books and in performances. The following

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[33] Bann (2014), pp.19-21; Stéphane Paccoud, '''L'Empereur m'a beaucoup parlé de Delaroche, il a toutes ses gravures'': Succès et diffusion du "genre historique" en Europe', in Bann and Paccoud (2014), pp.92-103. In Britain, George Leveson-Gower, Duke of Sutherland, bought several of Delaroche's paintings; two of these works were exhibited at the Royal Institution in 1838. Delaroche also exhibited at the Royal Academy (Paccoud (2014), p.94).

[34] My retroversion ; 'Le "genre anecdotique" s'est finalement dissous dans l'entreprise plus ambitieuse du "genre historique"' (Bann (2014), p.24).

[35] Delaroche has been the object of renewed interest in the last few decades, in particular from Stephen Bann. See especially his *Paul Delaroche: History Painted* (London: Reaktion, 1997) and the exhibition catalogue by Stephen Bann, Linda Whitely, John Guy, Christopher Riopelle and Anne Robbins, *Painting History: Delaroche and Lady Jane Grey* (London : New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

pages argue that the fragmented way in which information about historical dress was presented through anecdotes was paralleled in the extra-illustration of books and the tinselling of theatrical portraits. Significantly, however, extra-illustration and tinselling were two practices that aimed at creating a unity out of discrete elements, transcending the disjointed nature of the material and creating new meanings in the process.

The practice of explaining the allusions and references in Shakespeare's works (such as in Francis Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, 1807) took a visual turn with the development of the practice of extra-illustrating.[36] The term refers to the insertion of additional images and documents into an existing book, which is then re-bound with the incorporated illustrations. This practice developed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and its popularity is generally credited to the publication of *A Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution* by the Reverend James Granger, after whom it derived the name of 'grangerizing'.[37] First issued in 1769, Granger's *Biographical History* was a catalogue of engraved portraits of historical figures, organised by reign and by social class. The work was a success among the print collectors of the period, who began searching for the portraits listed by Granger and inserting them in their copies of the *Biographical History*. The practice then spread to other works of history and geography and to literature, with Shakespeare being the most popular author.[38] Stuart Sillars's analysis of extra-illustrated works of Shakespeare reveals that eighteenth-century readers believed the plays dramatised real people and places, and accordingly sought to extra-illustrate editions of the plays with accurate

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[36] Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare* were a collection of remarks and dissertations designed to explain Shakespeare's texts, not visual illustrations in the modern sense, although Douce had periodically recourse to engravings where a textual description was felt to be insufficient.

[37] The first recorded use of the verb 'grangerise' dates from 1882; the noun 'Grangerite' (a person who grangerises) appears in 1881 ('grangerize, v.' *Oxford English Dictionary* [accessed 15 September 2016]). In the period under study, what we now call extra-illustration seems to have been referred to simply as 'illustration', and grangerisers as 'illustrators' (see William Johnstone White, *An Analysis of the Illustrated Shakspeare of Thomas Wilson, Esq.* (London, 1820)).

[38] For more information on extra-illustration, see Erin C. Blake and Stuart Sillars, *Extending the Book: The Art of Extra-Illustration* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 2010) and Lucy Peltz, 'Engraved Portrait Heads and the Rise of Extra-Illustration: The Eton Correspondence of the Revd James Granger and Richard Bull, 1769-1774', *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, 66 (2004), pp.1-161. See also chapter 7 of Stuart Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare, 1709-1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 'The extra-illustrated edition', pp.214-251.

historical and topographical documents.[39] Indeed, extra-illustrated editions of plays point to the perception of plays, especially Shakespeare's, as sources of information about the past. Historical references, even cursory allusions in footnotes, were seen as windows into the past that could be conjured up by the image. 'Extra-illustration', writes Luisa Calè, 'anchors the words to a world outside and functions as its archival repository and virtual re-enactment once that world has disappeared.'[40] This attitude can be seen, for instance, in the inclusion of a portrait of Charles I and facsimile of his signature next to a reference to the king's trial in a footnote to a speech in *Measure for Measure* (Figure 144).[41] The image was taken from a collection of portraits and signatures of famous historical figures published by John Thane in three volumes, probably between 1788 and 1793.[42] Thane was a dealer in prints, medals and manuscripts. In his *British autography: a collection of fac-similes of the hand writing of royal and illustrious personages, with their authentic portraits*, the desire for authenticity, conspicuous in the title, is exemplified by the mention of the source for each portrait and handwriting sample. That the portraits were designed to be taken out of the work and used as extra-illustrations is suggested by the alphabetical, not chronological, organisation of the collection. The work is wide-ranging, the 1819 edition (supplemented) numbering 229 persons and their autographs.

Another sign of the interest of early 'grangerisers' in historical biographies is the collection of engraved portraits of historical figures drawn by Silvester Harding, designed to be used as extra-illustrations to Shakespeare's history plays. *Shakespeare Illustrated by an Assemblage of Portraits and Views* was issued in thirty numbers between 1789 and 1793.[43] The 150 plates depicted characters from the histories as well as persons connected with Shakespeare (such as actors Richard

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[39] Sillars (2008), p.217.

[40] Luisa Calè, 'Dickens Extra-Illustrated: Heads and Scenes in Monthly Parts (The Case of "Nicholas Nickleby")', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 40 (2010), pp.8-32, p.9.

[41] *Extending the Book: the Art of Extra-Illustration*, Folger Shakespeare Library exhibition (January-May 2010); presentation at http://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Extending_the_Book:_the_Art_of_Extra-Illustration#Supplemental_materials [accessed 3 April 2016].

[42] John Thane, *British Autography: A Collection of Facsimiles of the Hand Writing of Royal and Illustrious Personages, with Their Authentic Portraits* (London, 1793).

[43] M. O'Donoghue, 'Harding, Silvester (1745x51–1809)', rev. J. Desmarais, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/12263 [accessed 10 March 2016].

Burbage and William Kempe and editors and commentators Charlotte Lennox and Edmund Malone) and a series of views of places mentioned in the plays. The 1793 edition included biographical remarks for each person depicted. The collection attests to the popularity of Shakespearean extra-illustration: it is only one example of a number of works published to be broken down and re-bound as extra-illustrations. The two volumes of *Shakespeare Illustrated* were republished in 1811 under the title *The Whole Historical Dramas of William Shakespeare Illustrated: By an Assemblage of Portraits of the Royal, Noble, and Other Persons Mentioned*. The term 'assemblage' used in both titles summarises the anthologising process resulting in the collection of prints: individual portraits were selected from a number of collections of paintings, then were brought together as a series of plates. What is ironic is that this assemblage is designed to be fragmented again into individual prints to be selected and inserted into other books. However, the collection and its title suggest the value of the assemblage as a way to explain and understand a topic. The short preface of the 1793 edition is revealing:

> This work is not presented to the Public as entirely original; the plates having been published a short time back: but it having been suggested to the compiler, that a description of each engraving would render it more complete and interesting to the reader, without having to refer to numerous volumes for information respecting each person and place, he has published it in its present form. The anecdotes have been collected from the best authorities; and, as many characters have been drawn from sources not open to the general reader, it is hoped, with these improvements, it will answer the end proposed – of blending information with amusement.[44]

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[44] Silvester Harding, *The Whole Historical Dramas of William Shakespeare Illustrated: By an Assemblage of Portraits of the Royal, Noble, and Other Persons Mentioned*, 2 vols (London, 1811), Preface (n.pag.).

The preface rehearses the familiar eighteenth-century arguments of interest combined with instruction, while presenting the compilation of anecdotes as exclusive information from reliable sources, gathered in the volume to, so to speak, save the reader's time. Here the text is designed as a clarification of the images, rather than the images as illustrations of the text.

The distribution of prints within the volumes follows a systematic chronological and social organisation. The section devoted to 'the Royal Family of England, with their Alliances with the Nobility, &c.' (vol.I), begins with kings in chronological order, then moves – in this particular order – to princes, dukes, earls and lords. The work could thus be read as an illustrated biographical history of England, and shows that Shakespeare's histories were seen as an accurate dramatisation of the past, hence the need to provide accurate images of the characters. Extra-illustration can be seen as a visual counterpart to the abundant commentaries and footnotes in the scholarly editions of Shakespeare that flourished in the eighteenth century. The illustrations provided a personal commentary on the text, drawing the reader's attention to elements of the play that would not have otherwise been given much attention.

Extra-illustrating a work with individual images from various sources and having the set re-bound resulted in the creation of a unified whole, creating new meanings in the process. Extra-illustration could bring to the fore figures or places of little importance to the dramatic action, as for instance when a person mentioned only cursorily in a footnote is illustrated by a full-page portrait. *Shakespeare Illustrated* contains two portraits of Jane Shore, although she is only mentioned in *Richard III* and is not one of the *dramatis personae*. The figure is referred to a number of times in the play, as 'Mistress Shore', 'Shore's wife' and (in Gloucester's mouth) 'that harlot strumpet Shore'. The presence among the pictures of *Shakespeare Illustrated* of a dressed portrait and a naked one invite viewers to consider the figure of Jane Shore in two different modes. The first (clothed) portrait (Figure 32) features detailed items of sixteenth-century costume, and invites a reading of Jane Shore as a lady of her time, wearing the partlet and French hood of the sixteenth century. However, it is significant that the quotation heading the

biographical remarks should be Richard's unflattering reference to 'that harlot strumpet Shore' (Act III, scene 3). In the second portrait (Figure 145), the absence of costume reinforces the sensuality of the figure, whose nudity is only covered by her jewels. The picture evokes the latent eroticism associated with the royal mistress – and also with the actresses who performed the character of Jane Shore. This is reinforced by the quotation from the play: 'Give gentle mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more'. In two different ways, the portraits testify to Jane Shore's popularity; a popularity which is perhaps more indebted to Nicholas Rowe's tragedy than Shakespeare's allusions, although her connection to Shakespeare undoubtedly endowed the character with the prestige associated with the Bard's works. They reflect curiosity in women from the past, especially from the Tudor era. Harding's portraits could also be used to illustrate other works about Jane Shore, the most famous of them being Rowe's eponymous tragedy. This example shows that extra-illustration could transform the perception of a person mentioned in a text. Through Harding's portraits, Jane Shore became a fully-fledged character in the play.

Although eighteenth-century extra-illustration can correctly be interpreted as a process of exemplification of historical fact, a close look at the use of images used in extra-illustrated works suggests that a further, slightly paradoxical effect is created. A number of characteristics of *Shakespeare Illustrated* indicate that the historical figure sometimes comes very close to being superseded by the theatrical character. The study of eighteenth-century extra-illustrated plays shows instances in which illustrations meant for drama are used in different contexts, notably as illustrations of historical accounts. Thus it will appear that extra-illustration could also effect a kind of theatricalisation of the past. In Jefferys's *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations,* the inclusion of Richard III in the theatrical, not historical, section could be seen as one of the first manifestations of the phenomenon. The duality of the historical-theatrical figure, however, intensified in the last quarter of the century, as demonstrated by practices of extra-illustration. Here again, Harding's series of portraits and their commentaries enable us to map

265

this development. In the collection *Shakespeare Illustrated*, the historical figures become theatrical figures.

To begin with, if the order of the portraits in each section follows, as we have seen, a chronological distribution, it also conforms to the traditional division of genders found in the presentation of the *dramatis personae* of a play. The section about the royal family and nobility of France, for instance, begins with 'Lewis, the Dauphin of France (time of King John.)', followed by other *male* French royals. The portraits of women are found at the end of the series: 'Blanch, niece to King John' and 'Isabel, queen of France': the chronological order that sequences the work is thus broken by the relegation of women, despite their royal status, to the end of the section, as the editor of a play would do when listing the characters.

Furthermore, although the portraits are presented as accurate depictions, the theatrical quality of the figures stands out, because the presence of quotations and other kinds of references to the plays make them very close stylistically to portraits of actors in character and book illustrations, which often featured quotations from the play. *Shakespeare Illustrated* includes a portrait of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Essex, by Bartolozzi after Harding (Figure 146).[45] The portrait is captioned by a quotation from *Henry V*, 'the general of our gracious empress', a phrase footnoted by Alexander Pope as 'The Earl of Essex, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth' in his 1725 edition of Shakespeare.[46] Pope's footnote must have been well-known as it was reproduced in subsequent scholarly editions of the works of Shakespeare[47], which accounts for its presence on the print. The portrait's caption includes both original text and footnote, perhaps as a way of justifying the presence, in a work on Shakespearean drama, of a person who has not been dramatised by Shakespeare. Indeed, the phrase is spoken by the chorus and refers to contemporary events, not the period dramatised. But in this process, the Earl of Essex becomes a stage character, whose mention in *Henry V* can be commented

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[45] Following p.126.

[46] Alexander Pope, *The Works of Shakespear*, 6 vols (London, 1725), vol. III, p.484.

[47] Such as the Johnson-Steevens edition: *The Plays of William Shakspeare. With the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators*, ed. by George Steevens and Samuel Johnson, 10 vols (London, 1773).

upon and illustrated. In this sense, it becomes difficult to say if the image illustrates the text on the print, or if the text explains the image.

The text of Harding's collection of prints evinces a conception of historical figures coloured by Shakespeare's treatment of English history. The biographical information about Richard III thus betrays a historiographical *parti pris* to follow Shakespeare's vision of history:

> This monarch, whose character as represented by Shakespeare, is now doomed to be for ever regarded with detestation, was perhaps less guilty than he is painted by the dramatist, who literally followed the path marked out for him by historians, whose servility and prejudices have rendered their veracity doubtful. But we shall here pursue that line of narrative which coincides particularly with the plot of Shakespeare's tragedy, and the most generally received opinion.[48]

The author stresses that the play is not the only source of information, and not the most accurate, but most importantly he acknowledges that the theatrical construction erected by Shakespeare (and, we may add, by almost two centuries of stage tradition) exerted a powerful influence over the historical imaginations of both readers and spectators. He discerns the skewed representation of Richard by Shakespeare, but does not attempt to redress the balance. Instead, the portrait comes across as that of the dramatic character rather than of the actual king.

Finally, given that many of Harding's portraits were copied from Walpole's collection at Strawberry Hill, it is not surprising to come across them in extra-illustrated editions of *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole*, for instance in the 1784 edition owned by Richard Bull (Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University). What is more unusual, and of great interest to the purpose of this study, is when Harding's portraits appear in works of history unconnected to the theatre. Harding's images were not only used in extra-illustrated editions of Shakespeare – such as the

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[48] Harding (1793), vol.I, n.pag.

Johnson-Steevens 'Heath' edition extra-illustrated by George C. George[49] – but were also included in works of history and topography that did not have any links to the theatre or Shakespeare. The University Library at Cambridge holds an extra-illustrated copy of Daniel and Samuel Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, a historical and topographical survey of a number of English counties.[50] The first part of volume II, which deals with Cambridgeshire, was illustrated with many of Harding's portraits from *Shakespeare Illustrated*. The history of the colleges and the lists of their famous alumni probably made this volume one of the most exciting parts of the book to extra-illustrate. Among the illustrations are the portrait of Elizabeth Woodville (queen to Edward IV and one of the foundresses of Queens' College), bearing the reference 'King Richard III Act I. Scene 3' (Figure 147), and the above-mentioned portrait of the Earl of Essex, who was educated at Trinity College.[51] Extra-illustrating works with theatrical illustrations could bring emotion into the reading of history: events from the past were associated with the experience of a reader or spectator of drama.[52]

The distribution along theatrical lines of the portraits, the adherence to Shakespeare's presentation of historical figures and the use of Harding's Shakespearean portraits in other extra-illustrated works indicates that historical figures were given a certain theatrical quality. In a sense, the fact that Shakespeare had dramatised events in English history reflected back onto the actual persons, imparting them with the characteristics of stage characters: figures in a plot designed by the playwright, wearing interesting costumes, whose actions create emotions and interest in their viewers. Because the portraits in *Shakespeare*

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[49] George C. George's extra-illustrated edition of the Johnson-Steevens edition of Shakespeare, illustrated by James Heath (London: John Stockdale, 1807), Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.: PR2752 1807c copy 4 Sh.Col. Portraits from Harding's set also featured prominently in the nineteen volumes of Thomas Wilson's 'Illustrated Shakespeare' (whereabouts unknown, but each of the 1,525 images was listed in White's *Analysis of the Illustrated Shakspeare of Thomas Wilson, Esq.*.

[50] Daniel and Samuel Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Being a Concise Topographical Account of the Several Counties of Great Britain* (London, 1808), vol.II, part 1, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge: Cam.a.808.2-.

[51] Following pages 116 and 126 respectively. The portraits are both in volume I of *Shakespeare Illustrated*.

[52] This point would receive further validation if prints of actors in character were used to illustrate works of history; however this type of portrait, according to the Folger exhibition, is rarely found in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century extra-illustrated works at all, and further research into extra-illustrated histories would be needed.

Illustrated were drawn after paintings and drawings contemporary with the persons depicted, and because these portraits were used as illustrations of theatrical characters, they contributed to spread the idea that historical stage characters should be dressed in the fashion of the period in which they lived. By furthering the conflation of historical and theatrical characters, they made historical dress more acceptable as stage costume. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the belief that Shakespeare's plays were accurate portrayals of English history had become qualified, as shown by Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare*: although the work relies on the premise that Shakespeare's plays can provide readers with information about the past, it also acknowledges the fact that they are not exempt from anachronisms. Although popular among educated classes, the pastime of extra-illustration was necessarily restricted to people of certain means, and was mostly an adult activity. The development of the toy theatre at the turn of the century gave children and teenagers too opportunities to engage with representations of history, in particular through the tinselling of historical stage costume.

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Tinselling is the practice of ornamenting a printed portrait with pieces of foil or tinsel.[53] A development of the 'patch portrait' introduced in England by French prisoners of war in the late eighteenth century, it involved removing parts of the figure's costume and replacing the paper with pieces of fabric and metal to represent the clothes and accessories of the character.[54] Although the method could be applied to all kinds of portraits, the large majority of tinsel portraits are theatrical.[55] Tinselling became a very popular pastime in the second quarter of the

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[53] A difficulty in the study of this type of theatrical prints is that they are seldom dated, and without access to detailed publishers' catalogues and archives, the date of publication cannot be ascertained. In addition, it is quite possible that some prints were tinselled several years after they were published. It is possible that some of the examples discussed here were produced or tinselled at the end of the period under study, and possibly even in the late 1830s or 1840s.

[54] Speaight (1969), p.129.

[55] The Museum of London, for instance, holds tinselled portraits of King William IV and Queen Adelaide (published by M & M Skelt, 1831-1835, museum no. 99.132/1056 and 1057) and a tinselled print of the two monarchs landing at Greenwich in 1830 (1830, museum number 28.65/1). Speaight

nineteenth century, and most of the surviving tinsel prints date from the 1840s and later. But earlier examples attest to the birth of the practice in the 1820s, a period which saw the development of the toy theatre and the mass production of theatrical prints. These images were produced by publishers of theatrical prints and juvenile drama such as William West, William Hodgson and his successor William Cole and, in the 1830s, brothers Martin and Matthew Skelt. They were sold for one penny, or two pence when they were coloured, which earned them the colloquial name of 'penny plains' and 'tuppence coloured'.[56] In the context of this research on historical stage costume, tinsel prints offer a valuable insight into the theatrical and material culture of the early nineteenth century: tinselling, which seems to have been as much an adult as a juvenile pastime, signals a new relationship to stage costume, including historical dress. 'Penny plain' portraits of actors present more a reflection of the period's celebrity culture than an accurate depiction of a performance, for the features and costumes of the actors, as well as the landscape backgrounds, were generally stylised. One exception are the prints published by William West, who insisted on employing talented artists who would represent characters with documentary precision – as a result, West's prints were used by costumiers in minor theatres.[57] Yet this type of theatrical image (tinselled or not) indicates perceived stage traditions, and the choices made by the tinsellers reflect their attitude to costume. In the following pages, analyses of portraits of Edmund Kean in his most popular role as Richard III will illustrate the desire both to

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(1969, p.135) remarks that tinsel portraits of celebrities and allegorical figures such as Saint George and Britannia 'represent a movement to free the tinsel portrait from its dependence upon the stage, but . . . they were not enough to constitute a sustained source of inspiration.'

[56] The study of 'penny plains' and tinsel prints is generally included in that of the toy theatre, for publishers usually dealt in both prints for colouring and tinselling, and miniature theatres. The authority on the history of the English toy theatre is George Speaight (1969). More recent studies include Powell (2004) and Liz Farr, 'Paper Dreams and Romantic Projections: The Nineteenth-Century Toy Theater, Boyhood and Aesthetic Play', in Dennis Denisoff, ed., *The Nineteenth-Century Child and Consumer Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 43-62.

[57] Powell (2004), p.17, quoting West's 1850 interview with Henry Mayhew (reproduced in George Speaight and Gerald Morice, 'New Light on the Juvenile Drama', *Theatre Notebook*, 26 (1972), pp.115-21): 'The small ones wasn't likenesses - they was merely characters to give the costumes. We didn't make likenesses till very late. The wardrobe people at the minor theatres and masquerade people used to buy a great many to make their dresses from.' In this and the next quotation from Mayhew's interview with West, I have retained the spelling and grammar used by Mayhew to reproduce West's speech.

reconstruct authentic costume and to recreate a complete image reminiscent of the picturesqueness of the stage picture. Very often, the tinselled figures were cut out and pasted onto a new piece of card. In many cases, what little background was present in the original print disappeared when the portrait was cut out (Figure 148). Interestingly, however, on some tinselled prints the background has been retained, extended (Figure 149) or transformed altogether – changing perceptions of the historical figures depicted.

Toy theatres and penny prints are usually unreliable sources of information about the actual costumes because of their extreme stylization. However, Kean's portrayal of Richard III was so popular that the prints often depict him in a costume similar to the one he wore on stage. Kean's costume for Richard III is held at the Museum of London and is one of the rare surviving items of theatrical clothing from this period (Figure 150). It includes a pair of trunk-hose and a matching doublet, an armhole-cloak made of crimson velvet bordered with imitation ermine, a pair of boots, a crown, a baldric and a hump made of silk and horsehair. The costume was worn by Kean during his last performance in 1833 and it is very similar to the outfit represented in theatrical portraits and prints, although the colour of the hose and doublet sometimes vary in coloured engravings. It is the costume that appears, for instance, in John James Halls's portrait (Figure 151). Another pair of boots worn by Kean as Richard, in the style of the boots shown on the penny prints, is kept at Smallhythe Place, near Tenterden in Kent. The surviving garments and accessories used by Kean as Richard III reveal that, in some cases, the iconic costume for a character was used throughout the play and was represented with some degree of faithfulness in theatrical prints. The stage costume of Richard III is one of the earliest to have been historicised, thanks to Garrick's attempts at historical accuracy and to his famous portrait by Hogarth, which greatly contributed to the popularisation of the image of Richard as wearing slashed doublet and breeches and a red fur-lined armhole cloak (Figure 152).

One of the often-tinselled prints represents Richard on the battlefield, holding his general's baton, his left arm extended (Figure 153). The pose enables a full glimpse of his costume and its details. Despite the military context of the scene,

271

Richard wears no other armour but a breastplate and retains his distinctive paned breeches and fur-lined cloak and hat. An interesting tinselled picture based on this portrait (Figure 154) depicts Kean wearing red and green clothes. Kean's breeches, coat and hat are made of silk and cotton velvet; the cloak border was painted to resemble ermine. In the tinselling process the detail of the embroideries on the cloak and the panels of the trunks, as well as the decoration of the breastplate, were replaced by metal studs and flowers. The pointed collar, typical of Van Dyck costume, was widened, bordered with tinsel to represent lace, and adorned with silver tassels. Kean was thus given a new costume, in which shiny metal and red velvet predominate.

Where the original print only featured a flat field with groups of small tents, the tinseller stuck the figure of Richard III onto a hand-coloured printed landscape that is much more varied and colourful. The same shops that sold penny portraits also offered ready-made background sheets on which to paste the tinselled figures. This new setting, alongside the traditional scalloped pavilions, includes bushes and trees, a lake and a castle atop a hill. The theatrical character is thus relocated into a landscape more extensive than that of the original image. The final product resembles a historical picture, complete with foreground, middle ground, background and sky. Of the printed text at the bottom of the original print, only the name of the character was retained. Although contemporaries would have instantly recognised Kean in his most celebrated role, the single name presents Kean's appearance and costume as a valid depiction of the historical character. Kean's face has been cut out of a different penny print of the actor in the same role and pasted in lieu of the original face. The facial expression is noticeably grimmer than the original, giving Richard a crueller look than the artist who designed the portrait originally intended. Compared to the original print, the tinselled Richard, with his new face, looks the other way. Perhaps the original face was damaged when the figure was cut out and tinselled, or perhaps the tinseller wanted to highlight Kean's depiction of Richard's cruelty, a characteristic that was not fully conveyed by the original face. It is however very likely that the print was tinselled by a worker in the bookshop, using remnants of other, unsold prints. This would explain why the

bottom of the image is actually made of a piece from a different print, which was turned over and pasted onto the landscape to create the space on which Richard III stands.

Tinselling began as a home activity, but when it became popular some print shops began to sell ready-tinselled images.[58] William West himself, whose images were at the root of the development of the toy theatre in the 1820s, disliked the practice of tinselling, which he believed compromised the artistic quality of his prints:

> You see the cheap shops makes up the dresses with silk, and tinsel, and foil, but I never did. My customers used to do some; but, to my mind, it spoilt the figures, and took away all the good drawing from em. Formerly they used to cut out the parts of the figures, and stick pieces of silk, and tinsel, and lace behind them. Then the boys used to make all their own dots and ornaments themselves; and I used to sell punches expressly for doing em, and arter that I sold the ornaments themselves. Now the ornaments are sold in large quantities by these halfpenny printsellers. They are punched out by children I think - they make them as low as a halfpenny a packet.[59]

However, the tinselled outfit of Richard III in the print under study shows a fine understanding of the construction of Kean's costume (Figure 155): Richard's trunks are made of a layer of red material showing through panes of green fabric adorned with lengths of gold trimming. While some nineteenth-century stage tailors treated slashes as strips of material sewn on top of the garment (see chapter 1), the print faithfully reproduces the two layers of fabric. Richard's coat similarly features the characteristic gold border as well as the flower embroideries in the corners. The tinsel print evinces a desire for accurate reproduction using a variety of fabrics and

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[58] Powell (2004), p.21. I am indebted to Mrs Beverley Cook, curator at the Museum of London, for the suggestion that these ready-tinselled prints were probably bought to be displayed in public places such as pubs. The main customers and viewers of these objects, then, would have been adults rather than teenage boys.

[59] Speaight and Morice (1972), pp.119-120, quoted in Powell (2004), pp.20-21.

textures, creating layers and giving volume to the image. Whoever the tinseller of this particular print was, the result is a highly unique object that re-casts Richard as a cruel tyrant ruling over a country that is perhaps a representation of England in miniature, with its trees, hills and castles.

New meanings could also be created by modifications in the costume of the character depicted. Tinsel prints could emphasise certain features of the costume, such as the tassels on Kean's 'landscaped' portrait: the small Van Dyck collar of the original print is almost dwarfed by a pair of giant tassels. Such changes were facilitated by the shapes of the die-cut metal pieces sold by the theatrical printsellers, to be glued on prints. These ready-made foil ornaments came in a great range of shapes and colours. Recurrent shapes include elements of costume (shoes, belts, feathers, epaulettes), weapons (swords, pistols, round shields) and a range of emblems such as fleur-de-lis and even orders of the garter (Figure 156). In a later (1840s?), lightly tinselled portrait depicting a now anonymous actor in the character of Richard II (Figure 157), the character's costume has been partially transformed by the tinsel embellishments. Given that the costume in question consists of medieval armour bearing the royal coat of arms, the tinselling choices have consequences for the representation of the historical figure himself. The animals on the royal arms of England are three lions passant guardant; they are shown on the surcoat of the character along with fleur-de-lis. The image was reversed in the print, so that the lions now walk towards the right. The die-cut foil ornaments, however, were not reversed. More interestingly, the owner of the print appears not to have had ready-made fleur-de-lis, so he had to make do with the Prince of Wales's feathers, which were glued over the fleur-de-lis. Through the erasure of the French symbol, replaced by the Prince of Wales's feathers, the tinselled costume of Richard II reinforces the character's Englishness and his connection with his father Edward (the Black Prince), who first adopted the three ostrich feathers as his emblem. It also disconnects the figure from English claims to the French throne. Even if the tinseller might not have had this interpretation in mind and was probably mostly concerned with the effect of the costume, by choosing the feathers as the most appropriate ornament to replace the fleur-de-lis he created a new coat of arms, one

that he perceived as legitimate for the figure of Richard II. This particular tinselled print reveals a deep interest in costume and dress ornamentation, even if it seems that the tinseller was not overly concerned with the accurate representation of the arms of England.

By the 1830s, history had become a spectacle. The fact that heraldic emblems were available as cut-out shapes for tinselling points to the popular taste for historical dramas and their characters, often based on British history, and to the appeal of their costumes to print buyers and potential tinsellers. Tinsel prints suggest a different perception of historical costume to the one indicated, for instance, by costume books or by the first histories of dress. Costumes in tinselled prints might not be very archaeologically accurate, but they were costumes audiences engaged with, either by colouring the prints or by searching for appropriate scraps of fabric before tinselling the portraits. Tinsel prints, although they have rarely been studied in depth, evidence a new engagement with the materiality of stage costume and may also reflect an interest in a unified stage picture (relying on the harmony and coherence of costume, decorations and set).[60] From separate pieces of fabric and metal, tinsellers reconstructed a unified portrait, even, in some cases, re-placing it in a background they chose or designed themselves. As with extra-illustration, the final object offers a personal interpretation of the character or scene. The colour and texture of the fabric and foil bring a kind of authenticity to the costume of the portrait, bringing it visually a little closer to the actual stage dress. Tinselling thus appears as a type of re-enactment of the performance: in the privacy of their homes, tinsellers could become costume designers as well as costume makers for their favourite celebrities.

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[60] In recent decades there seems to have been a renewal of interest in penny theatrical portraits and tinsel prints, as shown by exhibitions at the Sir John Soane's Museum in partnership with Pollock's Toy Museum ('William West and the Regency Toy Theatre', 2004-5), Harvard University ('The Juvenile Drama: Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Toy Theatre and Penny Prints', 2005) and the University of Bristol ('Shine: Contemporary Artists respond to 19th Century Tinsel Prints from the Mander & Mitchenson Collection', 2012-13). The Jonathan King collection of tinsel prints was one of the first collections in the Museum of London to have been digitised in its entirety.

Speaight described juvenile drama as part of the 'theatre craze'. Like attending actual performances, it was encouraged as both recreational and instructive. The audience for the toy theatre mostly comprised middle-class boys. Liz Farr has suggested that the activities related to the toy theatre, such as customising sheets and preparing a performance in a miniature theatre, were seen as a sign of virility. There is less information about precisely who was involved in the making of the tinsel prints; evidence suggests tinselling was enjoyed by boys and adults alike, although toy theatre in general 'quickly became the province of boys in their early teens.'[61] Speaight believes it to have been essentially a working-class activity, enjoyed by both sexes, but especially by boys.[62] As 'paper arts', tinselling and extra-illustration share many characteristics.[63] Both activities were engaged in principally by males, although extra-illustration was exclusively an adult pastime. They involved a degree of analysis of the original material before replacing it (in tinsel prints) or extending it (in extra-illustration) with extraneous matter. The two activities are examples of contemporary engagement with history, drama and the theatre. They were encouraged as rational distractions, one publisher presenting the illustration and exemplification of Shakespeare as 'objects as rational as they are replete with interest and amusement.'[64] Dress was an integral element of two catalogues of prints, Joseph Ames' *Catalogue of English Heads* (1748) and Granger's *Biographical History* (1769). In the preface of his work, Granger declared 'I have not followed the example of Mr. Ames, in describing the dress of each person; but have generally made some remarks on the dresses of the times, at the end of each chapter.'[65] Granger's 'Remarks on Dress' are short comments about clothes and hairstyles, often resorting to anecdotes (such as Queen Elizabeth clipping ruffs and breaking swords) and derision, as in the evocation of Philip II wearing a 'grotesque' hat resembling a 'close-stool pan.'[66]

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[61] Powell (2004), p.10.
[62] Speaight (1969), p.134.
[63] The phrase 'Romantic paper arts' is used by Luisa Calè in relation to extra-illustration and 'a spectrum of practices of cutting and pasting' ('Romantic Paper Arts', *European Romantic Review*, 23 (2012), pp.524-531; quotation from p.526).
[64] White (1820), p.iii.
[65] Granger (1769), vol.I, p.xiii.
[66] Ibid., vol.I, pp.172 and 288.

Tinsellers thus engaged with theatrical portraiture through a multi-medial approach of the actor in character that was centred on the materiality and visual effect of costume. The cheap prints of the toy theatre provide a small window onto the kind of images people of lesser means would be able to see and comment upon. Tinselled or not, toy theatre portraits and 'penny plains' expanded the audience for theatrical portraiture, disseminating depictions of historical costume, and also encouraging a unique way of responding to theatrical portraits through cutting and pasting.

Conclusion

On 1 January 1836, painter Daniel Maclise wrote to Planché, requesting advice on costumes for his painting *An Interview between Charles I and Oliver Cromwell*. Maclise's request, along with two sketches of Charles I and Cromwell (Figure 158), is reproduced in Planché's memoirs:

> Boldly then I would beg of you, if it were in your power, to put me
> in the way of getting a dress of Charles I, by borrowing or begging,
> or even if I knew the address of a stage tailor I would give him an
> order and some black silk. I am about to paint a picture of Charles
> and Cromwell and Ireton, &c., and the dresses must be faithfully
> rendered. The picture being life-size we are forced to have the
> materials to paint from. I would give the world for a pair of large-
> topped buff boots for Noll—a cuirass and a tunic—but I am
> moderate—you will scarcely think so—and any information you
> can give me will greatly oblige. . .[1]

Planché had by then become a well-known expert on historical dress. His *History of British Costume* had been published only two years previously, a work in which Planché praised the progress of archaeological accuracy in history painting and attempted to further enable such accuracy by providing artists with a compact and reliable source of information on historical dress. As a playwright, Planché was also familiar with the world of the theatre, hence the reference to a stage tailor. Maclise's letter sheds light on a number of important issues in the representation of history in painting and the theatre. First of all, it presents historical costume as a requirement for the kind of picture Maclise was painting. Addressed to Planché,

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[1] Planché (1872), p.231. Noll, or more frequently 'Old Noll', was a nickname used by Royalists for Oliver ('Noll') Cromwell.

who had been elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1829, it also highlights the significance of antiquarian research in the knowledge and representation of history, and provides an example of the collaboration between artists and antiquarians in the nineteenth century. Planché wrote of Maclise's sketches that 'it was scarcely possible for him to indicate character more distinctly even in his 'life-size' painting', a comment that reflects the notion that costume was a fundamental ingredient in the evocation of character.[2] Last, but not least, the reference to a stage tailor reveals the central place acquired by historical stage costume in the reconstruction of history, as well as the links between the pictorial and performance arts. The finished painting (Figure 159) was exhibited the same year at the Royal Academy, together with Maclise's picture of *Macbeth and the Weird Sisters*, in which Macbeth is portrayed by actor William Charles Macready – a further example of the strong connection between painting and the theatre, and of the porous boundaries between history painting and theatrical portraiture.

The issues reflected in Maclise's letter have been the focus of this thesis, which has concentrated on historical costume on the stage and in portraiture as a medium for representing and commenting upon the past. This type of costume enabled artists to investigate, on the stage, on canvas, and on paper, various discourses around history and its relevance for contemporary British identity. As such, the thesis has demonstrated that depictions of historical dress, especially in the theatre, deserve to be fully included in studies of the history of art and the history of ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The last decades of the eighteenth century saw renewed interest in antiquities and the manners, customs and dress of ancient peoples. More historically and visually literate audiences began to notice and criticise anachronisms in sets and costumes, except in cases where accuracy was deemed detrimental to scenic illusion. By the early nineteenth century, as architect and antiquarian John Carter pointed out, all the information necessary to stage history plays with archaeological accuracy was available in print, thanks to the labours of

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[2] Ibid., p.232.

antiquarians.[3] The period saw significant advances in historically-informed stage costume. The introduction of civil dress – epitomised by the toga – for Roman characters, the widespread use of Highland dress for Macbeth and in plays set in Scotland and the reconstructions of medieval dress and armour are among the innovations of the period. The portraits of actors in historical roles evince the growing interest in historical costume, even when this costume was influenced by stage conventions or when it was reinvented by the imagination of the portrait painter. Accurate historical costume was a way for theatrical portraiture to approach the characteristics of history painting, blurring the limits between the two genres: the person depicted was both the actor and the historical figure he or she embodied on the stage and on canvas. Conversely, historical costume could also effect a theatricalisation of the past, making events and people more dramatic and more 'present', and eliciting emotions in way a similar to that a performance.

Evolutions of historical dress, depicted accurately in a variety of media, helped viewers develop a sense of historical chronology and continuity, reinforcing the historical awareness created by the political events of the long eighteenth century, in particular the Glorious Revolution, the American and French Revolutions and the rise and fall of Napoleon. Lavish pageants and the increased expenditure on sets and costumes were justified by theatre managers as a way to teach about the past. It should not be forgotten, however, that the novelty of 'authentic' staging was a source of great revenue for the theatres.

The case studies included in this thesis demonstrate that the interest in the dress of certain periods and countries reflects new interests in historical periods and events that were perceived as foundational of British identity. The values of liberty and impartiality associated with Brutus, the resistance to tyranny illustrated by the fall of Tarquin and the opposition to King John, and the military achievements of the fourteenth century drew a picture of Britain as a nation constantly seeking to emulate the past. Depictions and dramatisations of

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[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 69:1 (February 1799), p.114.

Highlanders, both medieval and modern, offered further examples of native bravery, loyalty and warlike spirit that associated Scotland with classical antiquity.

The case studies also illustrate the advent of a unified conception of stage production, in which costumes were perceived as a whole, and sets and costumes conceived in relation to one another and to stage effect. The works studied in this thesis show an increasing reliance on original, historical sources for stage costumes as well as for contemporary painting, emphasising the exchanges between the visual and the performing arts. They also reveal that what was perceived as authentic was more strongly related to effect and dramatic illusion than it was to antiquarian accuracy. Interestingly, the case studies also reflect ambiguities in the period's theatrical portraiture as a genre: in the nineteenth century, it became more historically accurate, like Northcote's portrait of Kean as Brutus, but also more fantasised or standardised, as toy theatre sheets also show.

There was not necessarily a common approach to costume because actors often provided their own dress, and because stage costume was a compromise between, on the one hand, the actors' desire to appear at their best and, on the other, a stage tradition that linked certain conventional outfits and ornaments to specific periods and characters. Until audiences became more historically informed, there was no great need for accurate historical costume. However, from the mid-1770s onwards, the notion that historical characters ought to be given a precise temporal anchoring, and that costume could be instrumental in this process, gained ground.

Further scholarship is needed to fully understand the place of historical dress in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visual and historical culture. While this thesis has focused on one expression of the period's historical imagination, in the form of historical stage costume and its representation in the arts, it would be fruitful, for instance, to study depictions and perceptions of historical dress in history painting in general and in illustrations to novels as well as history books. However, this thesis has shown that stage costume played an integral part in the development of historical culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, characterised by the desire for verbal and visual information based on

282

reliable sources and by the taste for dramatic reconstructions of the past. Historical clothing, as a relic of the past and as stage costume, helped develop notions of historical continuity that inscribed modern Britons into a history perceived as a process, and no longer as a mere juxtaposition of reigns or periods. David Lowenthal has written of the late eighteenth-century historical imagination that it viewed the past as a series of tableaux of periods perceived as 'different realms', with no notion of history as a continuum.[4] Certainly, attitudes toward historical costumes and decorations in the theatre were very similar, from the end of the eighteenth century, to the taste for splendour and for the exotic that prevailed in the performances of plays set in far-removed places, particularly oriental countries. However, despite the increasing importance granted to the stage picture in theatrical productions of the turn of the century and the vogue for *tableaux vivants* and 'attitudes'[5], my research suggests that depictions of historical costume from the beginning of the nineteenth century express, on the contrary, a perception of history as a continuous process of change. Despite the varied nature of the material studied, the examples discussed in this thesis also point to the use of historical costume as a tool to bring theatrical portraiture and book illustration closer to 'high art' – despite Reynolds's statement that the universal value of art relied partly on timeless dress.

Through an interdisciplinary study of historical and visual culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I have tried to show that the investigation of historical stage costume in the period enables a more precise understanding of the processes of history-making in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This thesis has established that the 1776-1834 period set the bases for a theatricalisation of the past that was effected through stage costume. The research into historical dress initiated in the late eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries had an important influence on the Shakespearean

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[4] Lowenthal (1985), pp.xvi and 323.
[5] See the chapter on *tableaux* and Emma Hamilton's 'attitudes' in Sara Stevenson and Helen Bennett, *Van Dyck in Check Trousers: Fancy Dress in Art and Life, 1700-1900*, (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1978), pp.45-57.

revivals of the nineteenth century. The visual culture of the Georgian and Regency eras contain the first developments of strategies purporting to understand and represent the past, strategies that would find their most accomplished – and most extreme – forms in Victorian museums and spectacles (including theatre, opera, pageants and *tableaux vivants*).[6]

There are of course unanswered questions and areas for further investigation. More research is required on the technical aspects of theatrical costume before the nineteenth century. How stage costumes were actually made (both in theatre workshops and in external costume warehouses) and worn, on the stage or in the artist's studio, would doubtless open new perspectives on the period's material culture. A more systematic study of performances of historical plays in minor and provincial theatres would also allow us to decide whether the debates and aesthetic trends initiated in the patent theatres of the capital found echoes elsewhere in London and in the provinces. In the summer, when Drury Lane and Covent Garden were closed, many eminent London actors set on tours of the provinces, or secured long engagements in the companies of Tate Wilkinson in York or Richard Daly in Dublin. Ascertaining the extent of the influence of London actors on provincial staging would be a way to gauge the national dimension of the costume reforms brought about in London. Furthermore, as an entry point into the analysis of a society's historical imagination, historical costume could be studied in a variety of periods and countries, in particular on the other side of the Atlantic. When Fanny Kemble played the part of Juliet in Baltimore in 1833, she mocked the costume of her American Romeo.[7] Was stage costume in the United States less 'enlightened' than in Britain? What perceptions of the past did costume in American theatre and art reflect, or promote?

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[6] See Michael R Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

[7] 'My Romeo had gotten on [*sic*] a pair of trunk breeches, that looked as if he had borrowed them from some worthy Dutchman of a hundred years ago. They were of a most unhappy choice of colours – dull, heavy-looking blue cloth, and offensive crimson satin, all be-puckered, and be-puffed, till the young man looked like a magical figure growing out of a monstrous, strange-looking melon, beneath which descended his unfortunate legs, thrust into a pair of red slippers' (Fanny Kemble, *Fanny Kemble: Journal of a Young Actress*, ed. by Monica Gough (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp.133-34).

Moreover, the picture of perceptions and representations of history that this thesis has delineated would gain further nuance if research was extended to other performing arts: ballet and drama, as well as the several forms of *tableaux vivants*, have characteristics and requirements of their own, but undoubtedly contributed to the production of images of the past in Britain and in Europe. Finally, I believe that further study into toy theatres, juvenile drama and tinsel prints would cast more light on nineteenth-century perceptions of actors in character, of the actor's body in relation to the role he or she acted, and of stage set and costume in general. Such investigation would necessarily include the Victorian period, which saw the boom of these particular forms of theatrical ephemera. Similarly, it would be of great interest to study the place of historical dress and depictions of historical figures in other testimonies of the period's visual culture, such as scrapbooks and common-place books, which acted as textual and visual collections of interests and memories.

Nonetheless, my research has suggested new ways of approaching the study of culture and ideas in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Anchoring characters in a specific period, costume was arguably one the most important historical signifiers on the stage, in illustrated books, and in paintings and exhibitions. Through an interdisciplinary analysis of the ways in which historical costume was reshaped on the stage, page, print and canvas, this thesis has explored the significant interrelationships between dramatic, artistic, literary and historiographical practices in the period 1776-1834. In expanding the archive to explore stage costume, this analysis has delineated some of the ways in which costume helped shape perceptions of the nation in the long eighteenth century. In doing so, it contributes to and expands the recent interdisciplinary scholarship on British visual culture and national identity in that very significant period.

Glossary

Attifet: a heart-shaped wired headdress, made fashionable by Mary of Medicis and Mary Queen of Scots.

Brechan, breacan: a Highland plaid.

Bristol stone: a rock crystal extracted from the Clifton limestone near Bristol; when polished, it is similar to a diamond and can be used as an ornament (also Bristol-gem, Bristol-diamond).

Stock: a stiff close-fitting neckcloth made of a band of fabric that buckled at the back of the neck, covering the shirt collar.

Crakows, crakowes: shoes with a very long pointed toe, worn from the mid-fourteenth century, thought to have originated from Poland (the French term 'poulaines', sometimes used in English too, means 'Polish'). In 1598 the antiquarian John Stow wrote in *A Survey of London* that the toes were sometimes tied to the knee with laces or chains, but there is actually no medieval evidence to suggest that the points were attached to the wearer's knees or girdle.

Coife, coif: a close-fitting cap, worn by men and women.

Cypress: a light transparent fabric originating from Cyprus.

Doublet: a close-fitting male garment covering the torso, often with sleeves and sometimes with skirts, used from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century.

Falling collar, Vandycke: a wide collar of fine fabric, often trimmed with lace, turned down over the shoulders.

Fleshings, flesh arms, flesh legs: tight-fitting flesh-coloured clothing worn by performers to represent naked skin.

Fontange: a head-dress made of a wire framework that formed upstanding tiers covered with silk, lace or gauze, with lappets hanging on either side of the face. It is said to have been created in 1679 by Mlle de Fontanges, a

favourite of King Louis XIV of France (in English, it is also called a frelange or a commode).

French hood: a round female headdress, worn over a coif, with a black veil at the back.

Hauberk: a long tunic of chain mail, with sleeves, used as defensive armour.

Kendal green, Kendal: a type of greyish green woollen cloth, manufactured in Kendal, Cumbria.

Lambarakins, lambriquins, lambrikins: in Roman costumes, strips of fabric with jagged or scalloped outlines attached to the bottom of a breastplate and covering the top of the skirt.

Nelson cap: a female headdress that became very popular after Lord Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile (1798). Fashion reports for November 1800 mentioned 'The Nelson Cap, made of coquelicot velvet, trimmed with silver; two ostrich feathers in front' (*Whitehall Evening Post*, 29 November - 2 December 1800, p.5).

Partlet: a rectangular piece of fabric covering the area of the chest and neck exposed by the bodice. It was open at the front and had a standing collar.

Piked shoes: see **crakows**.

Queue: a long tight plait of hair hanging down the back.

Sagum: a short woollen cloak worn by Roman soldiers and ancient Gauls, Germans and Spanish.

Serge: a type of hard-wearing woollen fabric, often twilled (woven to create diagonal lines or ridges).

Shape: in the theatre, the outfit and accessories associated to a particular part.

Slash: an oblong slit in a garment, revealing the fabric of the lining or undergarment, which can be pulled through the slash to create volume and a contrast of colour.

Slavin, sclaveyn, slaveyn, sclavonian: a pilgrim's mantle made of coarse cloth.

Surcoat: a sleeveless garment worn by armed men over their armour, emblazoned with armorial bearings; also a similar garment worn by both sexes.

Tabard: a short open-sided surcoat, with short or no sleeves, emblazoned with the ruler's armorial bearings. Tabards were usually shorter than surcoats, which had no sleeves.

Tie-wig: a wig whose hair is gathered and knotted at the back of the nape.

Toga praetexta: an off-white toga with a wide red ('purple') border, worn in ancient Rome by certain magistrates and priests, and by boys under 17.

Tonnelet: a rigid bell-shaped skirt that was sometimes part of Roman costume (the English term 'tonlet' seems to have only been used to refer to a skirt of armour, not in a theatrical sense like the French 'tonnelet').

Trunk hose: ample (sometimes padded) breeches covering the hips and upper thighs, worn in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Vandycke: see **falling collar**.

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Index