

**ENGLISH ACADEMICAL  
COSTUME  
(MEDIÆVAL)**

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## ENGLISH ACADEMICAL COSTUME (MEDIÆVAL).<sup>1</sup>

By Professor E. C. CLARK, LL.D., F.S.A.

*Periods.*—I have found the account of our academical costume to divide itself roughly into three periods. The first extends from the earliest beginnings to about the close of the fifteenth century, when rather a marked change is perceptible, particularly in the head-dress. The second ends about the middle of the sixteenth century, by which time most of our present forms were developed. The third begins with the changes due to alternate waves of religious or political feeling, finally settling down into the costume of to-day. The second and third periods I am obliged, for the present occasion, to postpone, and confine myself to the purely mediæval part of my subject.

<sup>1</sup>The article which was partly read before the meeting of the Archaeological Institute at Cambridge, in August, 1892, originally extended to University dignities other than degrees. The former subject, however, as being mainly illustrated by a picture in the Registry of Cambridge, the date of which fell below the mediæval period, was omitted from a lecture confined to that period. A historical sketch of the origin and development of the University system, with special reference to its outward forms, which I had found essential to any full treatment of my subject, was passed over very briefly. Of this sketch a brief résumé is given above.

The references to historical or archaeological works in general, which will be added on re-publication, in a connected form, of this article and the others to follow, are, for the sake of brevity, omitted from the *Journal*. The authorities most frequently quoted are Savigny's *Geschichte*, Denifle's *Universitäten*, De Viriville's *Histoire* and The Abbé Périès' recent work on the Law Faculty in Paris; for Oxford—Wood, and the publications of the Oxford Historical Society; for Cambridge—Cooper, Mullinger, and Peacock; for

Ecclesiastical costume—Bouanni, de Vert, Marriott, and Lee. References to English documentary evidence are to a considerable extent incorporated in the text. They are quoted: for Oxford—from Anstey's *Munimenta*, from the Statutes and Recommendations printed by the Commission of 1853, and from the Registers of Convocation, printed by the Historical Society; for Cambridge—from the Documents similarly printed by the Commission of 1852, from the old Proctors' books, now in course of publication by the Antiquarian Society, from Cooper's *Annals*, and Peacock on the Statutes of the University of Cambridge—the work above referred to. The contemporary representations cited, mostly monumental, are, with a few exceptions, contained in Haines' *Manual* (1861), and Boutell's *Monumental Brasses*.

The illustrations employed in the reading were, in some cases, enlarged from engravings, but, except where otherwise stated, the representation has always been verified by a rubbing, or a recent inspection of the original. The greater part of these rubbings were exhibited on the same occasion.

*Résumé of Historical Sketch.*—The points which I wish briefly to impress are these:—The copying from earlier foreign models, particularly Paris. The origination of a University in previous Schools, dealing with little but what are called the Arts, and principally Grammar. The Clerical or quasi-Clerical character of these Schools, as of revived education in general. The early use, dating from these Schools, of the term Master for “teacher,” and Regent for “actually engaged in teaching.” The association of Schools into Communities or Corporations (*Universitates*), at first voluntary, being due partly to privileges conferred by local authorities, partly to the employment of new methods, partly to the introduction or revival of additional subjects. Within these Corporations, the association of teachers, in the main subjects respectively, into Faculties, with a received order of dignity,—at least in Paris—*viz.*, Theology, Law, Medicine, Arts. As a minor point, but not without its importance, the two-fold development of Law, as Canon and Civil, the connexion of the former with Theology, and its consequent priority. The development of different *grades* of teachers (degrees) within the Faculties; the admission to these grades, on satisfaction of tests (*examina*), by the Faculties themselves; the early introduction of a certain surveillance over this system of admission, by the Papal authority. With this last must probably be connected the importance of the office of Chancellor, which appears to have arisen in Paris, and the religious character of many of our *formulae* of admission. To the Pope’s express sanction must be traced in many Universities, though not in the earliest (where it arose from custom), the recognised right of their Graduates to teach anywhere in Christendom. The existence of such a right in a particular School or Community of Schools, was originally and properly expressed by the style of *Studium Generale*, but it also came to be connected with the name *Universitas*, as in the Bull of John XXII. (1318), which recognised Cambridge under both terms. The word University does not mean a place where everything is taught, but (1) a Corporation, (2) a Corporation specially of teachers and students, (3) such a Corporation, with the additional advantage that its teachers are generally recognised elsewhere. The bearing

of this last point upon an account of academical costume is of great importance during the earlier period, when Latin was still the vehicle of education, and an international community of teachers was possible.

There is another and a very interesting side of University development. I mean the association, originally peculiar to the students, into Nations, with their representatives, the Proctors or Rectors, and the single Rector. With ourselves in England this official order has partly disappeared and partly been absorbed by, or transferred to, the educational system proper. In any case, it has rather to do with the subject of dignities, whereas I must confine myself, in the few remaining introductory remarks which I have to make, to that of degrees.

Of the order of Faculties I have spoken already. There had also been developed at Paris by the end, if not the middle of the thirteenth century, a system of degrees, from which we undoubtedly, to a great extent, borrowed. The degrees were already distinguished, not merely by different forms and conditions of admission, but also by different outward marks, of costume, or of what are more specially termed *insignia*. And in these outward marks there was, for some time, owing to what Mr. Mullinger happily terms the *catholicity* of the grades indicated, a comparative uniformity, particularly for the higher grades, throughout Christendom. I propose very briefly to enumerate the different grades, taking note of those stages in "Promotion" which we find expressly connected with regulations as to costume, or which bear technical names requiring some explanation. The word just used is technical on the Continent, I believe, for the higher degrees alone: in our old statutes it is used mainly with reference to the attainment of *benefices*: I use it, for convenience, of the attainment of degrees in general.

*Determination.*—I pass over, of course, the disciplinary regulations for the ordinary Scholar or Undergraduate. His academical dress will be considered directly. I pass over, too, the Scholar's previous residence, attendance at lectures and performance of Responsions. The ultimate test of attainments for the first grade in his Promotion consisted of logical Disputations carried on in the Schools,

That *Determination*, of which we shall occasionally hear, was the final and most responsible part played by the Candidate, in judicially *determining* or deciding questions on which he had previously only endeavoured to make good or to demolish a proposition as a pleader.

The Baccalaureat as we moderns call it, (following the ridiculous etymology of Baccalaureus), though not, perhaps, at first a degree, was so soon recognised as one that we need not go into the question of its original condition. The Bachelor was a teacher or lecturer like the higher Graduate: but his right to lecture was not of the same absolute and general character; his lectures were, at least in England, mainly "extraordinary" or supernumerary, not allowed to interfere with the "ordinary" lectures of the Regent Master or Doctor; and it is doubtful if he had *ipso jure* any recognition as a teacher elsewhere than in his own University.

The *status* of the Baccalaureat originally depended upon a license of the Rector or Chancellor. The degree, when it became one, was, like all degrees, originally conferred by the Faculty concerned, or some representative of it. I do not find any record of *insignia* being granted to the Bachelor, but it is clear that he had to wear a special dress in the lectures, which it was his duty to give, *viz.*, the *Tabard*. We also find that he was entitled and required to wear a Hood lined with the less expensive kinds of fur. The Hood *per se* was not originally a distinction of the Baccalaureat, as it became when the Undergraduates ceased to wear it.

I must pass over the different classes of Bachelors at Paris, and also that interesting question, the origin and true derivation of the style *Bachilarius* or *Bacularius*, which was most probably developed in the same place. It seems pretty certain that the idea and term passed from chivalry to learning, not *vice versa*. Anything more I must leave for another occasion.

*Licentiate*.—The *license* from which this *status* takes its name was conferred by the Chancellor (at Bologna originally by the Archdeacon), but on the certificate of members of the Faculty. As to its scope, there is a considerable amount of confusion in our authorities. It would seem that there may have been a very early time in



Paris and Bologna when there was no Licentiate specially so called, but what license to teach was granted, was granted only to the Bachelor. Then an intermediate stage, a step to the higher degree of Master or Doctor, began to be recognised, the license originally required for the Baccalaureat was transferred to this, and the stage itself was known as the Licentiate. A class of Licentiates existed in Paris before the middle of the thirteenth century, and is recognised by the old Statutes of Bologna, confirmed by the Pope in 1253. They were Bachelors who had studied and attended lectures for a certain time, had delivered lectures themselves, and had finally passed an *examen* or private examination by members of their Faculty. Being then *presented* by some representative of the same Faculty, and their competence duly attested, they received the Chancellor's license to proceed to the public performance before a *conventus*, or meeting of their Faculty, which finally conferred the degree. The license also, it would seem, included power to keep School and lecture, between the time of the *examen* and that of the *conventus*, more absolute, or more nearly resembling that of a Regent, than was enjoyed by the simple Bachelor.

This sketch which, I must premise, is rather a *cento* from Bologna and Paris, or in other words, Savigny and Péries, tallies clearly with our own somewhat fragmentary authorities, and helps to explain some of our rather unintelligible terms. We have our provisions, of various dates, or more often no dates, for lectures to be attended by our Bachelors, or to be given by them, for the testimony of the Faculty to their competence, for their Presentation by some member of that Faculty to the Chancellor, in order to receive his license. The forms of Presentation are extremely interesting, and the part played by the Father, or the more intelligible French Godfather (*Parrain*), in early times included the conferring of *insignia*. The last point I shall treat under the subject of Creation: the other parts of the ceremonial do not bear on costume.

Of the Chancellor's license we have an old form preserved in the Oxford Muniments and Registers. It gives power to Incept (*i.e.* to take the ultimate steps necessary for obtaining the degree of Master), to Read (*i.e.* lecture), to Dispute (*i.e.* take all parts in the School exercises), and

to do everything pertaining to the status of Master in the Faculty concerned, when the candidate has completed all things pertaining to such solemnity. On the general use of the word Master I shall speak later on. The grant is, it will be observed, conditional, but possibly only as to the last clause. Whether it gave the Licentiate, in his intermediate condition, a general power of lecturing is not certain. He certainly was *required* to give lectures in the Schools, exactly similar to those of the ordinary Master, in fact acting as his deputy.

The fee for this license was trifling, being one "commons," probably a shilling, which, however, represented a week's maintenance. The public performance, too, whether at the Bolognese "*conventus*," or our own Inception or Commencement, was trivial as a test. But the cost of these latter proceedings, which will be more particularly considered under the head of "Creation," was very great. Hence the sumptuary legislation, to check extravagant entertainments and gifts of dresses by the Inceptors, from which we get a good deal of our information about ancient costume. Hence, on the other hand, the necessity for exacting security from Licentiates that they would actually Incept within a year, and of imposing fines for neglect to do so, the record of which fills our old Registers.

We therefore find people remaining in the Licentiate, during the mediæval period, for years. It must, one would think, have been a *status* of at least occasional permanence, when we find it held by a Cambridge Chancellor, Stephen Le Serope, under whom one of the most interesting of our Ancient Statutes was passed in 1414.

And even within its statutory period the Licentiate seems sometimes to have afforded a "*Wanderjahr*" of not always too reputable adventure. Another of our old Statutes contains an express regulation to meet this "*materia vagandi*."

We are obliged, therefore, to look out for a special costume of the Licentiate, though I am bound to say that, in England, I can discover little, if any, difference from that of the ordinary Bachelor. The *status* itself did not subsist, as a matter of any duration, to modern times. I should infer that it had ceased before Stokys' time (a

Cambridge Bedell who wrote in 1574), or even before his authorities, who were probably much older. The license in his time seems to have been a mere formal affair, given by the Proctors at the Vespers, or exercises on the day before Commencement.

The licenses granted to *practise* in the Faculties, and to teach Grammar, stand on an entirely different footing from these licenses to Incept, and probably approximated rather to the original license which constituted the Baccalaureat before it was a degree. The license to practise in Medicine survived, at Cambridge, to Gunning's time (1828).

*Inception, Commencement and Creation.*—The two former terms, and the generally inchoate character of the *status*—not properly *degrees*, save in exceptional cases—to which our Cambridge Vice-Chancellors now admit, become clear if we consider the theory which was once a matter of practice. The Chancellor did not give the degree: he only admitted the candidates to *begin* the final steps for obtaining it. They were actually Created, as they still are at Cambridge, by their Faculty—by the Proctors as representatives of Arts, or by the respective Fathers, now replaced by the three Regius Professors, in the three higher Faculties. At Oxford it appears that Creation generally has passed, since the Laudian Statutes, into the hands of the Vice-Chancellor.

The highest degree is variably styled that of Master, Professor, or Doctor. The differentiation of these titles, which originally were nearly equivalent, is interesting but too long for an introduction. Of the three, Master is the most general. It covers the person who has ceased to teach—the Non-Regent—as well as the Regent. It is, no doubt, in the end rather specially appropriated to Arts; but we also find it applied to individual teachers of the highest degree in Theology; and it occurs, quite late, in English formulæ as a collective term for all graduates but Bachelors. Doctor, too, is used either for Regent or Non-Regent, but little, if at all with us English, in the Faculty of Arts. Professor also is, I think, generally confined, in England, to the higher Faculties. Unlike the other two styles, this usually implies actual present teaching.

The *insignia*, properly so-called, are peculiar to the highest degree, at least in our accounts. They are old symbols of