



Fig. 1
Detail from the silk-
brocade fabric of the
Maltese dress showing a
pastoral scene.
(Private Collection, Malta)

In the Style of a *Robe Volante* A treasured dress

Caroline Tonna unpacks and investigates a rare and exquisite overdress, handed down the line of a Maltese noble family

In the early stages of my research on dress history in Malta, I had the privilege to meet Marquis de Piro who provided me with invaluable advice on the eighteenth and nineteenth-century fashion of Maltese gentry and nobility. He also invited me to look after the lace and costume collection of Casa Rocca Piccola, in Valletta—a project I have been working on for the past eight years. My research on period costume is an ongoing project, reaching further into private collections which hold promising and exciting discoveries of more period costumes.

The focus of this article is an exceptional overdress, cut in the style of what is known as the *robe volante* (Fig. 5). It belongs to a Maltese noble family and was discovered by Nicholas de Piro who had published a photograph of it in *Quality of Malta*, in 2003. The elaborate dress was mistakenly mounted back to front when photographed, probably because nothing like it had ever been seen before. Nicholas de Piro described it as ‘The Andrienne, a unique period costume from the first half of the 18th century’.¹

This style of dress was inspired from clothes worn at home as a dressing gown or *robe de chambre* made from fine fabrics.

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Fig. 2
Charles-Antoine Coypel (1694–1752), engraving from *Les Modes du Mercure de France – Modes janvier*, 1726.
(Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département Arsenal, EST-368)

opposite: Fig. 3
Jean François de Troy, *La Déclaration d'Amour* or *Assemblée dans un Parc* (detail), oil on canvas, 710x910mm, 1731.
(Courtesy of the Château Sans Souci, Potsdam)

The gown had an unbelted long open skirt, loose from the shoulder down to the floor with pleats at the back and at the shoulders; normally it closed with a row of buttons in front. According to the French art historian and founder of the costume museum of Louvre, Musée de la Mode et du Textile, François Leon Louis Boucher (1885–1966), female costume in eighteenth-century France shifted from the formality of the court dress with small waistlines and whalebone-stiff tight bodices that were obligatory during King Louis XIV reign (1715–1723) to more comfortable and free-flowing clothing after his death, which was preferred by the rising society of the *nouveaux riches*.²

Boucher claimed that it was the male and female actors of the theatre that set the trend to create new fashions. Mademoiselle Marie Carton Dancourt, the French lead actress, had worn a loose-flowing gown with pleats gathered at the back neckband when she was playing the character of Andria in the 1703 version of the play *Andrienne* by Terrance.³ It was this actress that had set the fashion trend to the style of dress named the *Andrienne*.

Over the years, the style evolved and the folds at the neckband were formalised and drawn into one or more flat pleats. The undergarment skirt, or *panier*, provided additional width at the hips and gave the skirt a voluminous dome-



shaped look and extended the expansive material of the dress.⁴ The *panier* made movement easier since air was trapped under the hoops as the wearer moved, who seemed rather to be floating; the name of the dress was changed to *robe volante* or flying dress. The style of floating dresses continued for a long time. In 1729, the French gazette *Mercure de France*, which informed elegant society on social life and fashion, reported that the *robes volantes* were *universellement en règne, on ne voit presque plus d'autres habits* ('universally in vogue, one hardly ever sees any other kind of dress').⁵

There are also important links between art and clothing.⁶ The French artist Jean François de Troy (1679–1752) was one of the artists who had documented *robe volante* gowns in the 1730s and they faithfully compare to the fashion prints published in *Les Modes du Mercure de France*, in 1726 (Fig. 2).⁷ De Troy's depictions of French ladies wearing the *robe volante* provide an important source of information for dress historians. Whereas fashion plates provide detail in cut and construction of the gown, De Troy's paintings give us visual document on how dresses were worn.

De Troy was a successful history painter, but he developed *tableaux de modes*—paintings of fashion—in response to the artistic preferences of his new clientele: rich bankers and merchant businessmen representing the new bourgeois class. He represented his upper-class clientele in contemporary scenes reflecting their economic and social

status, often emphasising their luxurious clothing, opulent home interiors, and enjoyment of leisure and pleasure. Among his finest *tableaux de modes* is *The Garter* (Fig. 4),⁸ which is a good example of the fashionable *robe volante* and two masquerade scenes, exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1737, titled *Before the Ball* and its companion piece, *After the Ball*.

De Troy celebrated other women in his paintings wearing the *robe volante*, executed between the 1720s and 1730s.⁹ In *Dame à sa toilette recevant un cavalier*, de Troy centres the attention on the clothing of the lady who, having just stepped into a private interior, she is helped by her lady servant to remove the *robe volante*. This painting helps us to 'read' information of how the *robe volante* was worn, sometimes as an overdress.

Robe volante dresses had a deep-front opening reaching down below the waistline and worn over a bodice, the front of which was meant to be seen. The bodice often had a stomacher—a triangular shaped garment—generally elaborately decorated, pinned in place and used from one bodice to another. In some of de Troy's paintings, the *robe volante* is worn as a free-flowing dress in its own right, with a closed, high neckline and not as an overdress (Fig. 3). It was customary to wear a silk bow or ruffled lace around the neck, or simply having a long, thin lace scarf gracing the neck.

The fashion plates of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, de Troy's paintings, and the few

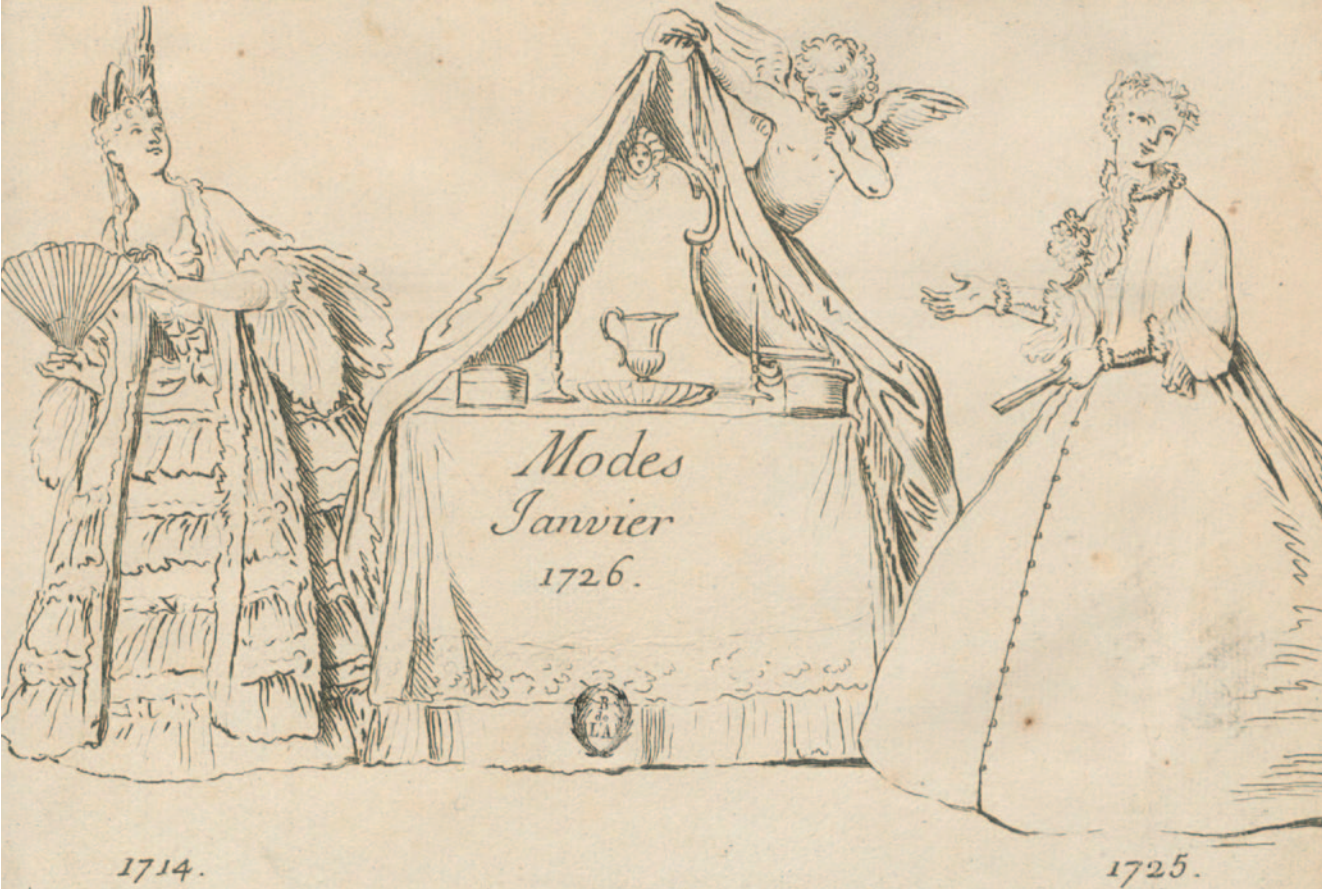




Fig. 4
Jean François de Troy, *The Garter*, oil on canvas, 648×537mm, 1724.
(Courtesy of The Met, New York)

pages 68-69: Fig. 5
Exhibition view of the 'Entertainment Room' from the *Music in Malta – From Prehistory to Vinyl*, held at the Cathedral Museum, Mdina, 14 April–16 June 2019.
(Photo: Lisa Attard)

pages 70-71: Fig. 6
Detail of the mounted *robe volante*.
(Photo: Maria Muscat)

surviving *robes volantes* found in international fashion museum collections,¹⁰ helped me recognise key elements of similarities in style in the surviving dress that we have in Malta. I cannot quite put in words the feverish excitement that took hold of me when I saw this capricious dress for the first time; I was overjoyed that the owners generously allowed me to study and document such an exquisite gown, the likes of which I had never come across before. It is a miracle that this rare dress has survived for around 280 years, and yet it is in mint condition and has retained its original vibrancy and sheen. The Maltese dress is constructed in the style of the *robe volante*, made from a precious silk brocade with a green ground and an unusual, highly decorative and harmonious design.

I first examined the cut and construction of the dress to understand better how the eighteenth-century gown would have been worn with the support of undergarments. I observed the inside of the dress, the weave of the silk brocade, the seams and the selvedge of the fabric, the width of the fabric, and marks of refitting. The floating dress is characterised by an unstructured silhouette which falls freely from the shoulders and is only half closed in front to allow part of the bodice worn beneath to show. At the back, it is loosely fitted, giving it more fullness with an arrangement of pleats at the neckline. It is neatly hand-stitched and finished to fine detail, showing mastery and delicacy in the handling of the silk brocade by the seamstress. The hem of the skirt is also neatly lined with a wide, pink silk lining all around.

The next step was to take measurements of the dress. With the help of Simona Mamo, a skilful seamstress, the pattern of the *robe volante* was made as accurate as possible with respect to the original dress, and it was replicated in calico material known as *toile*. The test garment served to experiment its mounting on a mannequin, allowing us to avoid handling the original dress. To understand how a dress was worn, it is important to look into the nature of the supporting undergarment and how this helped to mould

the shape of the dress. Skirt supports for eighteenth-century dresses usually constituted of a large hooped skirt or *panier* in the form of a kidney-shape. Sometimes, pocket hoops or small, bustle-like hip cages were mounted on each side of the hip to provide more space and give volume to the skirt.

Dr Susan North, curator of fashion (1550–1800) at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, directed me on how to build the specific mount as a base for the *robe volante*. In her experience as a dress curator, Dr North admitted that loosely fitted garments are harder to display than fitted ones.¹¹ We also discussed at length the peculiar shape of the sleeve of the Maltese *robe volante*, as it seemed shorter in comparison to other examples in international museum collections. The sleeve was also atypical in that it had a winged shape at the shoulder. Undoubtedly, the dress was tampered with over the years and probably used by different wearers. Assisted by Dr North, I looked up existing examples of eighteenth-century sleeve styles from the V&A collection and it became more evident that the winged shape was in fact a fashionable eighteenth-century cuff, known as a racket sleeve.¹² The cuff had been removed from the edge of the sleeve and wrongly tacked at the upper part by the shoulder. The large tacking stitches indicated that someone had been experimenting with the racket sleeve and I was advised that it was safe to untack it from the wrong place and stitch it back to the edge of the sleeve where it originally belonged.

Before altering the sleeve to its correct style, I sought permission from the owners of the dress and they kindly agreed that I carry out the necessary alterations. I then engaged Claire Bonavia, Heritage Malta textile conservator, to execute the alteration. Once the cuff was correctly tacked to the edge of the sleeve, the reconstruction matched the period style of the dress.

The pleats falling from the back neckline of the dress also showed signs of past interventions, but it was decided that these should be left untouched, fearing that the silk brocade would get damaged. On closer inspection, there were other





signs of alteration that could be traced from pin holes in the silk brocade, possibly to widen the dress to fit someone with wider shoulders. A different fabric, closely matched to the colour of the original silk brocade, was used to reinforce the neckline piping and shoulder slopes of the dress. These noticeable alterations made it difficult to pin down the dress to a definite *robe volante*, in spite of the many similarities outlined.

The patterned silk brocade of this dress is unique and, till the time of writing of this article, no other match was found to its particular design, even after consulting with international dress curators and textile experts. It is worth noting that in the eighteenth century, the production of silk brocade was already a professional trade and most textiles, such as silks, satins, brocades and velvets, were produced in Europe.¹³ France was the leading country with respect to the highly skilful art of pattern design and weaving, but there were foreign efforts to emulate the French style; domestic productions of silk textiles sprouted in Europe, however, due to lack of documentation, provenance is extremely difficult to ascertain. Besides France, patterned silk fabrics were produced in England, Holland, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Spain, mainland Italy, and Sicily.¹⁴

The Maltese dress has an extraordinary fabric design. Although not my area of expertise, research and consultation has allowed me to identify the style of the fabric, known as ‘naturalistic design.’ This style was first developed, naturally, in France, in the 1730s. Naturalist designers borrowed motifs and forms from nature, reorganising and adapting them for the execution of specific silk fabric in intense colours. The design of the silk brocade is not only extraordinary in the range of colours it displays, but also in the way they are combined. The naturalistic composition shows a refined method of different elements, cleverly connected to build one harmonious design.

I sought the advice of Dr Ana Jolly, curator at Abegg-Stiftung, Switzerland, and an authority in eighteenth-century silk fabrics, on the silk brocade of the Maltese dress; she confirmed that the selvedge-to-selvedge width of fifty-three

centimetres indicates that it was produced on a single loom, as was the practice in the eighteenth century:

The floating wefts of the brocading on the inside of the fabric also seem typical of the weaving techniques used in the eighteenth century. The slits, for reaching into the pockets worn underneath the dress and the string to pull it up into a Polonaise style, are familiar from other examples.¹⁵

Dr Jolly added that probably the unusual pattern of the silk brocade of this dress could have been produced in ‘some place far away from the centres of fashion. A different origin from the usual Lyon, Venice or London production centres might also serve to explain a different style and design technique.’¹⁶ This hypothesis was further strengthened by Dr Silvija Banic, curator of pre-1800 textiles at the V&A Museum, London. She too agreed that the pattern of the fabric did not look English, French or German.¹⁷ She described the fabric as having a good quality with an architectural element to it,

However, the shading quality in the design had not achieved the high quality of the three-dimensional effect one finds in Lyon silks. Furthermore, the motif of the pears in the tree are naïve and have no detail. Dr Banic noticed that the selvedge was not typical of Lyon silks either and that the fabric was possibly produced in Spain or Sicily.¹⁸

Clare Browne, independent textile expert and former curator of European pre-1800 textiles at the V&A Museum, also examined the fabric and claimed that ‘the fabric has a distinctive design and I cannot remember seeing anything quite like it before...Occasionally fabrics of this period had figures though usually in a minor or incidental way rather than the focus being on the scene as in the Maltese dress.’¹⁹

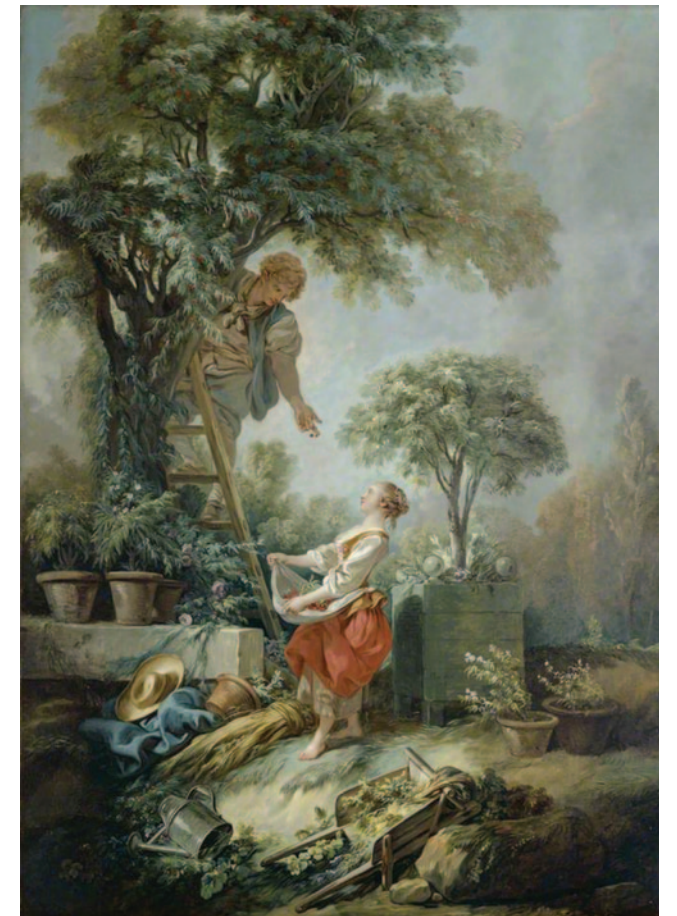
Dr Ana Cabrera Lafuente, curator of Museo del Traje, in Madrid, also agrees that the fabric is unique and the pattern is made of a complex composition of three different motifs:

Fig. 7
François Boucher, *The Cherry Gatherers*, oil on canvas, 1768, Kenwood House, London.
(Courtesy of the The York Project / Source: Wikimedia Commons)

a romantic scene with landscape, a naturalistic floral design, and a military paraphernalia. In her opinion ‘this type of combination could be from a Mediterranean workshop, Spain or Italy.’²⁰

The splendid and original design of the romantic scene dominates the aesthetic design of the dress and immediately catches the eye of the viewer (Fig. 1, 6, 8). The inspiration of the idealised garden scene in the foreground comes from the natural world of fruit trees and flowers. The idealised representation of pastoral life and refuge from urban life was a recurrent theme in literature and the visual arts since antiquity, and the idea of living in harmony was certainly appealing to the bourgeoisie of the period in question. The designer of the fabric, like a virtuoso painter, used saturated colours and textures to conjure the rich imagery of a romantic scene. The design of the fabric shows a finely-dressed lady wearing fashionable clothes standing beneath a fully-grown pear tree, delicately holding out her apron. The fruit picker, balancing on the branches of the bountiful pear tree, holds a wicker fruit basket while stretching out to offer the lady a fresh pear from the tree, ready to be eaten; she prepares to catch the gift in her apron. The two figures are engaged in a creative play, enjoying the activity of leisure rather than toiling the agricultural land. In a way, they represent certain aspects of elite social life. The scene also suggests that the couple are romantically engaged, communicating through the symbolic fruit, coined as a ‘gift of the gods’ by the Greek poet laureate, Homer, in *The Odyssey*.

The pear, one of the oldest cultivated fruits in China, was a prized fruit for its delicate sweet flavour, its smooth buttery texture, and its beneficial nutritional value. Pears grew well in warm climates like France and Italy, and were primarily grown in castles and monastery gardens—a luxury fruit, since they were not available for the common people.²¹ In the seventeenth century, Jean-Baptiste de la Quintine, lawyer and botanist, who was responsible for the King’s gardens at Versailles, was particularly passionate about the cultivation of



pears, claiming that ‘it must be confessed that among all fruits in this place, nature does not show anything so beautiful nor so noble as this pear.’²²

The fabric design of the tall tree is covered with mature elongated and bulbous red pears which contrast against an array of leaves in different shades of green. Between the two figures, in the distance, an architectural scene unfolds: an ancient castle or palace with a gabled roof is perched on a hill surrounded by water from a lake, river, or sea. Interestingly, the colours used for the clothes of the figures are inversed; in the instances that the lady is wearing a pink dress, the fruit picker’s outfit is in gold-gilt thread, and in others where she is shown wearing a gold-coloured dress, the fruit picker is wearing pink. The creative play, thus, seems to extend to them and their dress, in the colour-switching of their garments and through which the pattern is made more visually dynamic.

The figure motif further resonates with a similar depiction of a lady and a fruit picker in *The Cherry Gatherers* (Fig. 7), painted by Francoise Boucher (1701–1770). Although the painting was executed in 1768, Boucher had reinvented the pastoral setting in his paintings in the early 1730s.²³ Moreover, in 1734, he began to supply designs for tapestry manufacture at Beauvais.²⁴ Boucher left an indelible mark on the decorative arts of the Rococo period, in France and throughout Europe, although it is still not possible to ascertain whether the motif of the romantic scene of the



Maltese *robe volante* was inspired by Boucher’s design or not.

The second motif in the design is the floral decoration, primarily the rose—a symbol of love, chastity, purity, martyrdom, and heavenly joy (Fig. 8). Although the rose bunch is a representation of nature, the roses—here in full bloom—deviate from the realistic scale of the flowers. Meanwhile, the colours of the silk threads used for the roses are also derived from nature, woven to place the vermillion red, apricot and ivory hues next to each other. Accompanying them are different-sized budding roses which are juxtaposed over a spray of green and silver-grey leaves with veins of leaves outlined with black silk threads. The gold and silver threads emphasise the coloured naturalism of the motif.

The patterned design incorporates a third motif which is subtler but, nonetheless, detailed. At the bottom of the tree trunk, set against a clad of earth, using silver-grey-gilt silk thread with a touch of pink and brown, stems out from a compact composition of triumphal military paraphernalia consisting of two banners, two drums, a canon, and pole arms (Fig. 1). The elements of this motif seem to convey a rhetorical image of victory and power.

The style of the *robe volante*, made from unbroken expanses of fabric, is ideal for the large-scale composition of the three intricate designs. Yet, it is the dominating rose-bunch motif that connects all elements together. The repeated pattern extending over the whole of the width of the fabric generates the idea of continuity between the three motifs. The combination of cool and warm colours and the contrast of light and dark tones imbue the design with a painterly quality

and enhances a three-dimensional relief effect. The light and dark colour tones are also fundamental characteristics of Baroque art, still very popular in the eighteenth century.

Two archival documents provide evidence that the *robe* was fashionable in Malta in the eighteenth century, even though no paintings of this style of dress have yet been found. In the de Piro Archives, a dowry deed drawn in 1729, lists a *robe volante* that belonged to the daughter of Baron Gio Pio de Piro, Eugenia, who was about to marry Baron Ferdinando Ribera of Modena. The dress is listed as *un andré fiammetta di Persia*, among many luxurious dresses that were made of *drappo alla Persiana ricco di argento, taffeta di Francia à color di cerasa, broccato di seta torchini di Francia, braccato d’oro turchino di Venezia, broccato di seta di Genova*. The dowry also included furniture, precious objects and money that amount to a total of 10,000 *scudi*.²⁵

Another reference to a *robe volante* was unearthed in an inventory at the Notarial Archives in Valletta, which documents *un volante di stamina d’Inghilterra vecchio*—a *robe volante* made from pure silk, that belonged to Baroness Deodata Cuschieri Monpalao.²⁶ Although this document was registered in 1759, it is highly probable that the baroness had this dress in her wardrobe for a good number of years. Luxury clothing was passed on from generation to generation and refitted to the latest mode of fashion of the day.

The Maltese dress in the style of the *robe volante* is, indeed, a rare example from the few surviving dresses of its kind. It is part of our precious heritage of the decorative arts, a relic of the past that testifies to the good taste and

Fig. 8
Detail of the decorative motifs on the Maltese *robe volante*.

cultural awareness of wealthy ladies in Malta, attuned to the contemporary fashion preferences of the early eighteenth century. The elite of Malta acquired luxury fabrics from abroad to participate in social activities and display such fashionable outfits. I daresay that the Maltese *robe volante* was given its duly merit after having had the opportunity to mount it and display it as part of the *Music in Malta – From Prehistory to Vinyl* exhibition, organised last year by Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti and held at the Cathedral Museum in Mdina (Fig. 5).²⁷ This extraordinary dress is now resting safely in the family home of the private collector.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Lesley Miller, Professor of Dress and Textile History at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and Senior Curator at the V&A, London.

Notes

- 1 Nicholas de Piro, *The Quality of Malta: Fashion and Taste in Private Collections* (Malta: AVC Publisher, 2003), 213.
- 2 François Leon Louis Boucher, *Histoire du Costume en Occident* (France: Flammarion, 1965), with several subsequent editions till 2008.
- 3 William D. Howarth (ed.), *French Theatre in the Neo-Classical Era, 1550–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 518. Luigi Riccoboni describes theatre costume in the early years of the century in *Reflexions Historique et Critiques sur les differens theatres de l’Europe* (Paris: Jacques Guerin, 1738), 128-141.
- 4 French Dress in silk, 1700–1735, gift of Estate of Annie-May Hegeman, 1950, catalogue accession No. C.I.50.40.9, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Retrieved from <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/84414>, accessed on 3 June 2019.
- 5 Boucher, op. cit., 263.
- 6 Aileen Ribeiro, *Clothing Art, the Visual Culture of Fashion, 1600–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 210.
- 7 Alden Cavanaugh (ed.), *Performing the “Everyday”, the Culture of Genre in Eighteenth Century* (Studies in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture; Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), 37.
- 8 Jean François de Troy (1679–1752), *The Garter*, oil on canvas, c.1724, catalogue accession No. 2019.141.21, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 9 Jean François de Troy, *Le Rendez-vous à la Fontaine*, also known as *L’Alarme* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1723), *La Déclaration d’Amour* (Jane Wrightsman Collection, New York, 1724), *Assemblée dans un parc* (Potsdam Château de Sanssouci, 1731), *Dame à sa toilette recevant*

- un cavalier* (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, 1734).
- 10 Examples of the *robe volante* dress are scarce and only a handful of international fashion museums have them in their collections, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Kyoto Costume Institute in Japan, and the Parisian Palais Galliera, Musée de la Mode de Ville de Paris.
- 11 On 28 September 2018, I visited Blythe House, the Clothworkers’ Centre for the Study and Conservation of Textiles and Fashion, in London, and consulted Dr Susan North, curator of 1550–1800 fashion at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, on the undergarment support for the *robe volante*.
- 12 A sleeve that has shaped folds and layers in graduating falls from the elbow is referred to as a ‘racket sleeve’.
- 13 *Fashion Museum Treasures*, exhibition catalogue, Bath Museum, UK.
- 14 Anna Jolly, *Seidengewebe des 18. Jahrhunderts II: Naturalismus* (Switzerland: Abegg-Stiftung, 2002), 379.
- 15 Personal communication with Dr Anna Jolly on 16 January 2019.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Personal communication with Dr Susan North on 19 February 2019.
- 18 Personal communication with Dr Silvija Banic on 20 October 2019.
- 19 Personal communication with Clare Browne, previously a textile conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and author of *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), on 11 January 2018.
- 20 Personal communication with Dr Ana Cabrera Lafuente, curator at the Museo del Traje, in Madrid, on 26 March 2019.
- 21 Tom La Dell, ‘History of Fruit Growing’, *Wiltshire Gardens Trust*, retrieved from <wiltshiregt.org.uk/thejournal/history-of-fruit-growing>.
- 22 G.J. Silva, Tatiane Medeiros Souza, Rosa Lia Barbieri, and Antonio Costa de Oliveira, ‘Origin, Domestication, and Dispersing of Pear (Pyrus spp.)’ in *Advances in Agriculture* (June 2014), retrieved from <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/aag/2014/541097/>.
- 23 Melissa Lee Hyde, and Mark Ledbury (eds.), *Rethinking Boucher* (Issues & Debates; Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006).
- 24 Perrin Stein, ‘Francois Boucher (1703–1770)’, in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). In 1755, Francois Boucher was appointed Head of the Royal Tapestry Manufactory at Gobelins, where he continued to collaborate on the design of successful series of tapestries.
- 25 ‘A Persian-style fabric, rich in silver, stiff lustrous cherry-coloured French cloth, deep blue silk brocade from France, turquoise-gold brocade from Venice, and silk brocade from Genova.’ De Piro Archives, Valletta, MS72, 9 June 1729, Notary Corrado Antonino Tiralongo d’Avola. I am indebted to Dr Claudia Garradas who has helped me carry out research at the de Piro Archives, at Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta, in relation to dress and textile of the de Piro female family members.
- 26 N[otarial] A[rchives] V[alletta], R342, Vol. 22, ff. 1356v-1359, Notary Agostino Marchese, 1759. I am indebted to Ms Isabelle Camilleri who has been of great help in my research by providing me with references of documents that listed clothing in inventories or dowries she had come across during the documentation of notarial volumes.
- 27 *Music in Malta – From Prehistory to Vinyl*, exhibition curated by Dr Anna Borg Cardona, organised by Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, and held at the Cathedral Museum, Mdina, between 14 April – 16 June 2019.