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# **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

Postscript to my Historic Doubts, written in February 1793

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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Convinced of my unworthiness to fill a seat in so solid an assembly, I resigned my place: and though I shall no more disturb the repose of their *erudite* and *recondite* volumes, I shall wait with impatience for the moment when the venerable academy shall oblige the public with their lucubrations on the history of Whittington and his cat\*.

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POSTSCRIPT TO MY HISTORIC DOUBTS,

Written in FEBRUARY 1793.

**I**T is afflictive to have lived to find in an age called not only civilized but enlightened, in this eighteenth century, that such horrors, such unparalleled crimes have been displayed on the most conspicuous theatre in Europe, in Paris the rival of Athens and Rome, that I am forced to allow that a multiplicity of crimes, which I had weakly supposed were too manifold and too absurd to have been perpetrated even in a very dark age, and in a northern island not only not commencing to be polished, but enured to barbarous manners, and hardened by long and barbarous civil wars amongst princes and nobility strictly related—Yes, I must *now* believe that any atrocity may have been attempted or practised by an ambitious prince of the blood aiming at the crown in the fifteenth century. I *can* believe (I do not say I do) that Richard duke of Gloucester dipped his hand in the blood of the saint-like Henry the sixth, though so revolting and injudicious an act as to excite the indignation of mankind against him. I can now believe that he contrived the death of his own brother Clarence—and I can think it possible, inconceivable as it was, that he aspersed the chastity of his own mother, in order to bastardize the offspring of his eldest brother; for all these extravagant excesses have been exhibited in the compass of five years by a monster, by a

\* Though the author pays the society the compliment of having left them on a sense of his own unworthiness, he did not really withdraw his name from their register, till their consultation on the story of Whittington and his cat had been brought on the stage by Foote, and had made them ridiculous; as the author of these pages intimated in a letter to their secretary; not thinking he was obliged to share in the ridicule of follies, in which he had no part. H. W.

\* 252 POSTSCRIPT TO MY HISTORIC DOUBTS.

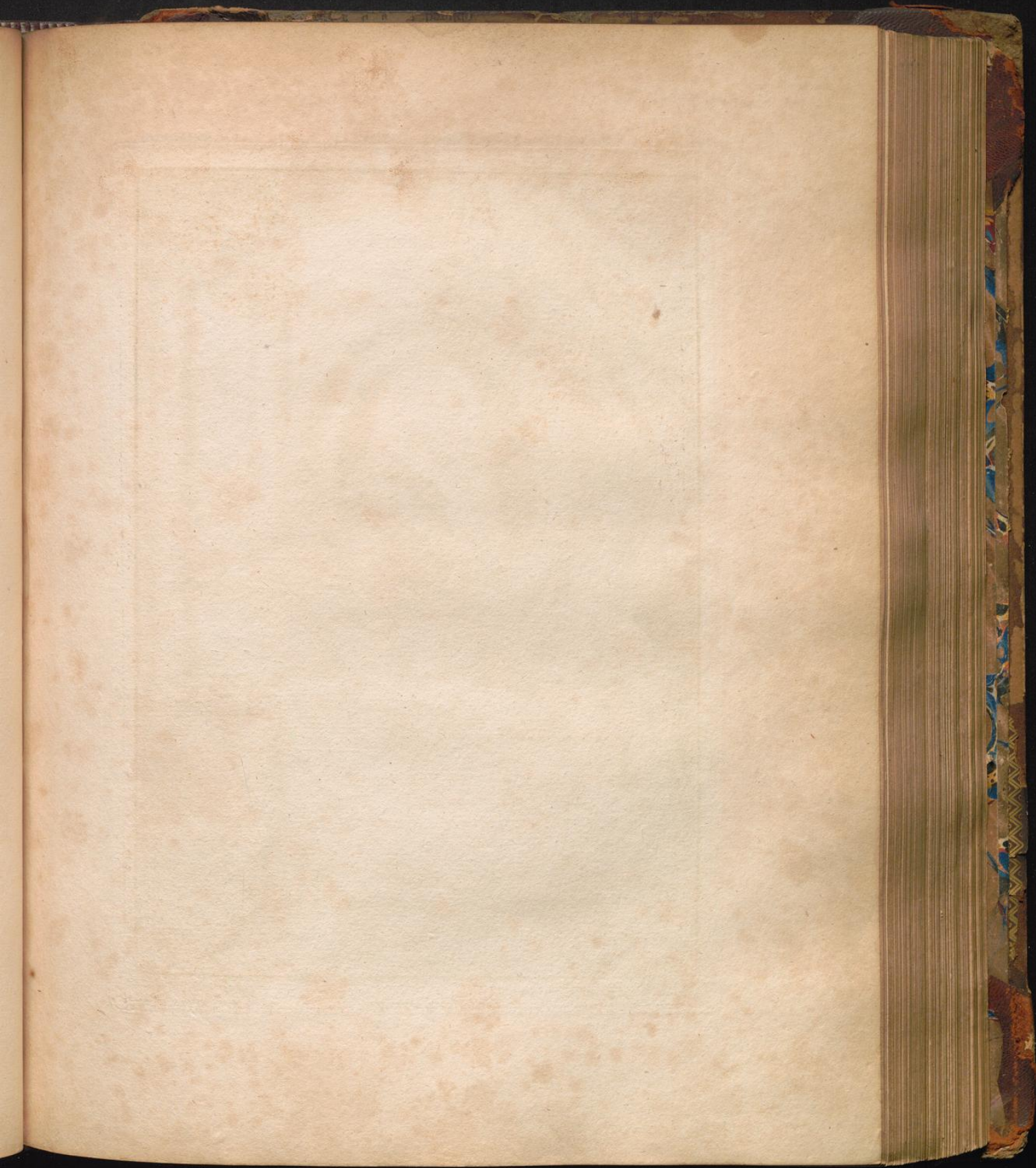
royal duke, who has actually surpassed all the guilt imputed to Richard the third, and who, devoid of Richard's courage, has acted his enormities openly, and will leave it impossible to any future writer, however disposed to candour, to entertain one *historic doubt* on the abominable actions of Philip duke of Orleans.

After long plotting the death of his sovereign, a victim as holy as, and infinitely superior in sense and many virtues to, Henry VI. Orleans has dragged that sovereign to the block, and purchased his execution in public, as in public he voted for it.

If to the assassination of a brother (like the supposed complicity of Gloucester to that of Clarence) Orleans has not yet concurred; still, when early in the revolution he was plotting the murder of the king, being warned by an associate that he would be detected, he said, "No; for I will have my (natural) brother the abbé de St. Far stabbed too, and then nobody will suspect *me* of being concerned in the murder of my own brother."—So ably can the assassins of an enlightened age refine on and surpass the atrocious deeds of Goths and Barbarians!

Shade of Richard of Gloucester! if my weak pen has been able to wash one bloody speck, one incredible charge from *your* character, can I but acknowledge that Philip of Orleans has sullied my varnish, and at least has weakened all the arguments that I drew from the improbability of *your* having waded so deeply into wickedness and impudence that recoiled on yourself, as to calumniate your own mother with adultery. If *you* did, it was to injure the children of your brother—still *you* had not the senseless, shameless effrontery to shake your own legitimacy.—Philip of Orleans mocks your pitiful self-partiality—He in person, and not by proxy, has declared his own mother a strumpet, has bastardized himself, and for ever degraded his children as progeny descended from a coachman!—For what glory, for what object, far be it from me to conjecture!—Who would have a mind congenial enough to that of such a monster, as to be able to guess at his motives?

F I N I S.





F. Linke sculp. p. 1744

G. Verue del. & sculp. 1741



E. Zinke offig. p. 1735

G. Veruc del. & sculp. 1748.

