

Emilio Mazza and Edoardo Piccoli

"Disguised in scarlet". Hume and Turin in 1748¹

What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence
L. Wittgenstein

1. *A philosopher in uniform*

"I received an Invitation from the General to attend him in the same Station [as Secretary] in his military Embassy to the Courts of Vienna and Turin. I there wore the Uniform of an Officer; and was introduced at these courts as Aide-de-camp to the General"². This is *My Own Life*, almost thirty years afterwards. "What added greatly to the natural Awkwardness of Hume – believes Lord Charlemont – was his wearing an Uniform, which He wore like a Grocer of the Trained bands"³. As "a Boy I had a very contemptible Idea

¹ This project has been supported by Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM, Milano. We are grateful to E. Ronchetti for his help. E. Mazza: 1. *A philosopher in uniform*, 3. *Unlucky Generals and abstruse philosophers*, 4. "Qui vidit urbes", 5. *David Hume: Philosopher of plains (of Lombardy)*, 7. *Fortifications (Sympathy at work again)*, 9. *High fever and extreme unction: The Turin malady*, 10. *Many small fevers prevent a great one (They say)*, 12. *Conjectural story (A digression on Hume and Montesquieu)*; E. Piccoli: 2. *Death in Turin: Money for soldiers*, 6. *Turin 1748: Ancient and modern cities*, 8. *Back in Turin: Palaces, "vigne" and popish institutions*, 11. *Where the Englishmen are*.

² D. HUME, *My Own Life*, in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. by J.Y.T. Greig, 2 vols, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932 (hereafter *HL*), vol. 1, p. 2 (see D. Hume to H. Home, 9 February 1748, *HL* 1.62, 111: "in the same station as before"). Hume first says "Embassy to the Courts of Turin", then he corrects himself (Edinburgh, NLS, MS 23159, 23, folio 4). In 1748 he writes: "I got an invitation from General St. Clair, to attend him in his new employment at the Court of Turin" (D. Hume to J. Oswald, 29 January 1748, *HL* 1.61, 109). The *Life* says he has received St. Clair's invitation in "1747"; actually, he first had "an Invitation to go over to Flanders with the General" (D. Hume to H. Home, second half of January 1747, *New Letters of David Hume*, ed. by R. Klibansky, E.C. Mossner, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954, hereafter *NHL*, p. 23). On 30th of December 1747 St. Clair sees the Duke of Newcastle: "His Majesty thinking it for his and the publick Service had made choice of me to be immediately sent to Turin to be his Military Minister at that Court" (J. St. Clair to John St. Clair, London, 31 December 1747, NLS, MS 1461, folio 37r). Even though "they seem in hurry to get me away", as he writes, after two weeks the day of his departure was not "as yet fixed" (ivi, folio 38r). See note 13.

³ J. CAULFEILD, 1ST EARL OF CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy (hereafter *RIA*), Ms 12.R.7, folio 500. The *Anecdotes*, which are probably drawn from a 1748 Italian diary

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of their Courage", says Hume in the *True Account* of Stewart's conduct (printed at the end of 1747):

it was very common for any of them that would give himself Airs before his Wife or Mistress, to fire his Piece in the Street. — But I always observed, that they shut their Eyes, before they ventured on this military Exploit; and I, who had at that time been accustomed to fire at Rooks and Magpyes, was very much diverted with their Timorousness. However, I question not, but there are many very honest substantial Tradesmen amongst them.⁴

General Saint Clair, Charlemont explains, was sent to the Court of Turin as "a military Envoy [...] – It was therefore thought necessary that his Secretary should appear to be an officer, and poor Hume was accordingly disguised in Scarlet, while his broad face was rendered still broader by a smart Wig a la militaire"⁵. Like in the eighteenth-century song "Excuse me": "With a Rat-tail-Wig and a Cockade; / I mean the Bully that never fought, / Yet dresses himself in a Scarlet Coat"⁶.

2. *Death in Turin: money for soldiers*

On December 2nd 1747 (NS), about one o' clock in the morning, General Thomas Wentworth⁷, aged 53 years and seven months, special envoy for Great Britain, dies of an unspecified "disorder"⁸ in his rented apartment in Turin, capital of the kingdom of Sardinia. He will be buried on December 3rd in the nearest non-catholic burial ground, "A reformed Church of the Vaudois about thirty miles from hence in the Valley of Luserne"⁹: the waldensian tem-

and composed into an essay at the end of the 1770s, say that Hume's corpulence "was far better fitted to communicate the Idea of a Turtle-eating Alderman than of a refined Philosopher" (ibid.). Accounting for the "Scarlet Gowns of the Aldermen", Mandeville remarks that, in the army, "as for Cloaths, the very lowest of the Commission Officers have them richer [...] than are generally wore by other People of four or five times their Income": "the coarsest Manufacture that can be made of Wool dy'd of a Brickdust colour, goes down with him [a Soldier], because it is in imitation of [his Officer's] Scarlet or Crimson Cloth". Indeed, he observes, "what a Bustle is there to be made in several Parts of the Worlds, before a Fine Scarlet or Crimson Cloth can be produced" (B. MANDEVILLE, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. by P. Harth, London, Penguin, 1989, *Remark O*, p. 184; *Remark R*, p. 228; *A Search into the Nature of Society*, ivi, p. 358).

⁴ D. HUME, *A True Account of the Behaviour and Conduct of Archibald Stewart*, ed. by M.A. Box et al., "Hume Studies", 29, 2, 2003, p. 239; *A True Account of the Behaviour and Conduct of Archibald Stewart, Esq; Late Lord Provost of Edinburgh. In A Letter to a Friend*, London, M. Cooper, 1748, p. 11.

⁵ CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, folio 500.

⁶ *The Vocal Miscellany. A Collection of above Four Hundred Songs; Many of which were Never before Printed*, The Second Edition, London, J. Hazard et al., 1734, p. 15.

⁷ On Major General Thomas Wentworth (1694-1747) special envoy to the King of Sardinia in 1747, see London, National Archives, (hereafter NA), SP 92/53; NLS, Mss Add 25704-25707; Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Centre Library & Archives (hereafter SCLA), Local archives, Leigh of Stoneleigh, DR 18, DR 671.

⁸ "Nov. 17 [1747]. Confin'd by my disorder", NLS, Ms ADD 25707.

ple of Ciabàs, near "St. Jean" (Luserna San Giovanni), where Wentworth's funerary monument still stands⁹. The incident, unfortunate and "melancholic"¹⁰ as it was, is not surprising: Turin in winter – or indeed in any other season – is not considered a healthy destination, especially, it seems, by Englishmen. As Dr. Clephane pointed out in 1744, the "air of Turin from the neighbourhood of the Po, & a marshy country around, is extremely damp, & I'm afraid cannot be very healthy"¹¹. David Hume, too, after being "perfectly well" for some time, will be, according to Lord Charlemont's *Anecdotes*, very sick in Turin; and as Wentworth's disorder and death is at the origin of the chain of events that brings Hume to the continent in 1748, sickness may be considered a first and appropriate point of departure, if we want to define the reasons for Hume's appointment.

General James St. Clair, to whom the philosopher was aide-de-camp, had been chosen in the last days of 1747¹² precisely to replace Wentworth. His official instructions, issued in February 1748, closely followed those issued 8 months before (July 1747) for the deceased General¹³ and tell us that the

⁹ T. Duckett to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 4 December 1747 New Style (hereafter N.S.), NA SP 92/53.

¹⁰ I am indebted to Gabriella Ballezio for her precious assistance in identifying the monument and retrieving the documents regarding it in Torre Pellice (Archivio storico della Tavola Valdese).

¹¹ "A very melancholy Event", T. Duckett to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 4 December 1747 N.S., NA SP 92/53.

¹² John Clephane (1705-1758) collects statistics and meteorological observations during his four-month permanence in Turin in 1744; concerning Turin's inhabitants he remarks that "there dye off every year above 2000" (J. Clephane to Dr. R. Mead, 3 January 1744, Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, hereafter NAS, GD 125/26/4). See also: T. Wentworth to P. Baker, Turin, 1 July 1747 N.S., SCLA, DR 18/28/6 ("We have in full view the high Alps cover'd with snow, yet the heat in these valleys is so strong as to be scarcely tolerable to a West-Indian"); A. Villettes to T. Robinson, 22 January 1748 N.S., British Library, London (hereafter BL), Ms Add 23827; A. Villettes to T. Robinson, BL, Ms Add 23829, Turin 20 July 1748 N.S. ("Sir Harry and Captain Grant have frequent relapses of their Zealand Ague and dare not flatter themselves to have got the better of it, as this is by no means a proper climate for removing such a Complaint"); and H. Mann to H. Walpole, Florence, 7 May 1748 N.S., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. by W.S. Lewis, Oxford-New Haven, Yale University Press, 1954, p. 477 ("I have talked to Doctor Cocchi about your miliary fever, which he says is common at Turin and very dangerous, but he does not know in what way they treat it there").

¹³ J. St. Clair to J. St. Clair [?], London, 31 December 1747 O.S., NLS, Ms 1461, folio 37r: "Dear John, After being confined to my House for at least five Weeks, and that without seeing the face of a Courtrier, on holding any the smallest correspondance with a Minister I was Yesterday sent for by his Grace the Duke of Newcastle [...] who told me that His Majesty thinking it for his and the publick Service had made choice of me to be immediately sent to Turin to be his Millitary Minister at that Court. Several Generall Officers had, it seems, been solliciting to have this employment and I gave you my word in honour, that I never ask'd it, but as I have always declared both to the King and his Ministers, that I was ready to obey any call of his Majestys, I have most readily accepted of this. As they seem in hurry to get me away".

¹⁴ NLS, Ms 25703, folios 2-6: "Instructions for Our Trusty and Welbeloved James St. Clair Esq.r Lieutenant General of Our Forces, whom We have appointed to attend the Combined Army under the Command of the King of Sardinia. Given at Our Court at St. James's the Eighth Day of February 1747/8". NLS, Ms 25699, folios 77-84: Instructions delivered to Lieutenant General Wentworth, 7 April 1747 (another copy, NLS, Ms 25703, folios 7-12).

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mission's main objectives were two: to ensure there was a British "mediator" between the two quarrelling courts of Vienna and Turin, and to verify the respect of the conditions established in the recent convention of The Hague (26th of January 1748 N.S.)¹⁵, in which the quotas of troops to be provided for the campaign of 1748 had been fixed. Since 1744, England was paying substantial sums in order to build up the land armies of the Kingdom of Savoy and the Empire, and to support joint military campaigns on the southern front: the control of how that money was spent, had already been St.Clair's predecessor's main task¹⁶.

Wentworth had died long before the beginning of the new campaign, that the treaty fixed at the first of May: but as the courts of Turin and Vienna were in constant disagreement upon which actions to take, time was valuable, and was not be wasted.

"They seem in hurry to get me away", says St. Clair, and the *instructions* communicate, indeed, a sense of urgency: "you are, with all convenient speed, to proceed to Vienna" from where "as soon as possible [after a round of talks] [...] you are forthwith to proceed to Turin"¹⁷. The physical evidence of the single, long letter of Hume to his brother, written on different slips of paper,

¹⁵ 26 January 1748, "Convention pour la campagne de 1748 contre la France, conclue entre S. M. le roi de Sardaigne, et ses alliés. [...] VIII. Outre l'armée sous-mentionnée, qui doit se former dans les Pays-Bas, sa Majesté l'Imperatrice s'engage d'avoir en Italie en état d'agir et d'opérer ou en France, ou selon le concert a faire de la part des puissances alliées [...] soixante mille hommes effectifs [...]. IX. Sa Majesté le roi de Sardaigne s'engage de fournir outre les garnisons nécessaires pour la sureté de ses places trente mille hommes effectifs [...]. X. Les susdits contingens bien effectifs devront être prêts à pouvoir former l'armée au plus tard au premier du mois de mai prochain. [...] XII [Sa Majesté Britannique will pay sa Majesté l'impératrice Reine] 400.000 livres sterlings [...], les derniers 100m. livres sterlings en un seul payement aussitôt qu'il sera certifié par les officiers nommés pour faire le dénombrement des troupes de sa Majesté l'impératrice reine que son contingent monte à soixante mille hommes effectifs en Flandre, et à soixante mille hommes effectifs du côté de l'Italie. [...] XIII. Pour mettre le roi de Sardaigne en Etat de supporter et de fournir aux frais des contingens susmentionnées... [sa Majesté Britannique will pay him] un subside de 300m. livres sterlings [...]", F.A. DUBOIN, *Raccolta per ordine di materie delle leggi, editi, manifesti, ecc. pubblicati dal principio dell'anno 1681 sino agli 8 dicembre 1798 sotto il felicissimo dominio della real casa di Savoia*, 29 vols, Torino, Stamperia Reale, 1820-1868, vol. XXIX, pp. 597-601.

¹⁶ "General Wentworth was sent out to Turin and to Vienne to see those Courts provide their quota of men which the Allies had reciprocally complained off, but which neither did comply with", *Augustus Hervey's Journal. The Adventures Afloat and Ashore of a Naval Casanova*, ed. by D. Erskine, London, Chatham Publishing, 2002 (1953), p. 56. Horace Mann considered Wentworth a "mediator" between the Austrian generals and the King of Sardinia; he says Wentworth was "hated" by the Austrians, that thought him to be "too partial" to the Piemontese, who "regret the loss of him much", and have "as well as Mr Villetes, pressed the King to send out a successor immediately" (H. Mann to H. Walpole, Florence, 16 May 1747 N.S. and 19 December 1747 N.S., in *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. XIX, pp. 401, 451). On Anglo-Sardinian relations up to the Seven years' war see F. Venturi, *Il Piemonte dei primi decenni del Settecento nelle relazioni dei diplomatici inglesi*, "Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino", 46, 1956, pp. 227-271, and C. Storrs, *Ormea as Foreign Minister 1732-45: the Savoyard State between England and Spain*, in *Nobiltà e Stato in Piemonte. I Ferrero d'Ormea*, ed. by A. Merlotti, Torino, Zamorani, 2003, pp. 231-28.

¹⁷ NLS, Ms 25703, folio 4v.

always in movement, also seems to reflect – much more than Hume's calm observations – the haste of his passage through Central Europe. The same desire to proceed rapidly emerges again, when St. Clair leaves Hume in Styria (where "as much as the Country is agreeable in its Wildness; as much are the Inhabitants savage & deform'd & monstrous in their Appearance")¹⁸ to attend the sick Harry Erskine, and proceeds to Milan and Turin, "breaking wheels" in the "bad roads"¹⁹ of Northern Italy, reaching the Sardinian capital on May 8th, 1748. There, he is "immediately" received by the King, and hurriedly proceeds to start a round of talks.

When Hume and Erskine reach Turin, just eight days later, the situation has radically changed. On May 13, upon his return from hunting, His Majesty the King had personally informed an astonished St. Clair²⁰ that on April 30th, in Aix-la-Chapelle, preliminaries for peace had been signed. St. Clair might not have been a fine diplomat²¹, but understood immediately that "all plans of Operations are at an end", and with them, the need for any kind of military counselling²²; other consequences became soon apparent: in absence of an army "assembled in the field in one body"²³ for an active campaign, any verification of the quotas of troops through a review in the field was to prove impossible. In the following weeks, with more news on the preliminaries for peace coming in and no new instructions for him from Aix-la-Chapelle or London, the general's mission appears less and less relevant. As summer passes by and the Sardinian armies begin to disband²⁴, the task of St. Clair and his aides-de-camp will ultimately be restricted to certifying the conditions established at The Hague, not on the field, but through office-

¹⁸ D. Hume to H. Home, *HL* 1.64, 130 ("Knittelfeldt in Stiria. 28th April").

¹⁹ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, Turin 11 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 24v: "by breaking of Wheels and bad Roads, I only reach'd Milan, May 6th, where I stopt one day to get Information from Count Harrach".

²⁰ St. Clair had spent his afternoon in private talks with the imperial representative sent to Turin by general Brown: "[Count Serbelloni] told me, that as time was precious to the King of Sardinia, he ought not to lose it" (St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, 16 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 27v); an attack on Genova and a more defensive campaign of the Ligurian *ponente*, were at that moment the main issues being discussed. See also: A. Villetes to the Duke of Bedford, 16 May 1748 N.S., BL SP 92/56.

²¹ He admitted not being experienced enough: "If by Zeal and Industry I can supply what I want of Experience in Negotiation, so as to merit the Indulgence of my Royal Master, I shall regard it as my greatest Felicity & Honour" (St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Vienna, 10 April 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 5r).

²² St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, May 16 1748 N.S.: "Now, my Lord, considering what has happened at Aix, there is, in all probability an end to the war on the part of Great Britain", NLS, Ms 25708 folio 28rv. And again, on August 16th, "The Peace [...] left no Room for any Concert about military Plans or Operations", *ivi*, folio 45v.

²³ *Ivi*, folio 28v.

²⁴ Torino, Archivio di Stato, Sezioni Riunite (hereafter ASTR), Ufficio generale del soldo, Ordini generali e misti n. 48, 49 (1747-1748).

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work, using the books of the *Ufficio generale del soldo* (the Paymasters' General office) to verify *a posteriori* that the effective strength of the Sardinian army at the 31st of April of 1748 N.S., had amounted to no less than 30,000 men²⁵. As the certification would have authorised the payment of the last 100.000 Sterling of subsidies, time was again "precious to the King of Sardinia": but this time, the British authorities felt there was no need to hasten. And while the Sardinian diplomacy solicits the money, both at Aix and Turin, the transfer of the funds is carefully slowed down by the English ministers. The General, who had considered "not a little dishonourable" even the perspective of a "defensive campaign"²⁶, seems ill-prepared for this task: more than once he asks to return to London or to be set free to travel in Italy. He is not allowed to do so, and Turin becomes something of a forced residence, to the point that only in one circumstance we can be certain that St. Clair leaves the city for a few days. Near the end of August (24th to the 30th) possibly as a sign of benevolence, St. Clair is invited by the King of Sardinia to participate in an official review of the system of mountain fortifications that had proved decisive during the war, and were to be maintained and enlarged in the following years. At least here, the General is treated with special regards, and at La Brunetta, the King's household pays for porters to take him uphill, *in cadrega*²⁷. But if this is an effort to affirm the trust between the two courts, so to accelerate the payments, it has no effect: the documentation regarding the Sardinian army will be sent for approval in England only on October 12th, accompanied by a letter whose first draft, in Hume's handwriting, artfully justifies every step of the certification process:

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle signify'd to me, in his of the 15th of Sept. 1748 NS, that it was His Majestys Pleasure, I shoud take the necessary informations & report to His Majesty the proofs I shoud be able to procure of the numbers of effective men actually provided this year by the King of Sardinia in consequence of the convention of the Hague. I was sensible, that tabelles sign'd by Count Bogino the

²⁵ NLS, Ms 25708; faint traces of the delegation's activity are in ASTR, Regia segreteria di guerra, Lettere all'ufficio generale del soldo, Registro 8, vol. 254, March to October 1748: on 15th September (folios 221v-222r), the preparation of "tabelles" of the effectives is mentioned. On the administrative structure of the Sardinian army under Carlo Emanuele III, see P. BIANCHI, *Onore e mestiere. Le riforme militari nel Piemonte del Settecento*, Torino, Zamorani, 2002.

²⁶ J. St. Clair to Vice-Admiral J. Byng, 29 April 1748 O.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 24r.

²⁷ Torino, Biblioteca Reale, Storia Patria 932: "24 [agosto 1748]. Partirono 32 Guardie del Corpo per Fenestrelle, e li 26 con 4 sedie in posta partì S.M. e S.A.R., Principe di Carignano, e M.r di Sein Claire separatamente, li 28 visitarono l'Assietta e dormirono in Exilles, li 29 a Susa, e li 30 si resero a Torino"; see also ASTR, Libro mastro Real casa 1748, folio 43, expenses for "S. M., e suo seguito nel giro che la med.ma ha fatto in fine del mese d'Agosto 1748 delle Fortificazioni di Fenestrelle Trincieramt. dell'Assietta, et Exilles". Among them, "8 [Lire] numerate a Giuseppe Alassio per ripartir tra esso, et altri 3 suoi Compagni, quali hanno portato in Cadrega il S.r Gen.le Inglese St. Clair in tempo della visita fatta da S.M. al Forte della Brunetta".

Sardinian Secretary at War would not be alone sufficient to that Purpose; & therefore I made it my business to enquire out more solid grounds, on which I could fix my Judgment. Happily, the constitution & orders of the several offices at Turin furnish'd me with satisfactory proofs of the King of Sardinia's fidelity in that particular; and these I transmitted to the Duke of Newcastle. I shall here explain to your satisfaction. The payment of the troops &c. We may justly, therefore, conclude, that the K. of S. is no way deceiv'd with regard to the real numbers of His forces, by his ministers or officers. I carefully compar'd on the one hand the books in the commissary's office, and the orders issued from thence on the treasury for the payment of each company intended for the campaign, and on the other hand the returns made to their office & the inspecting generals by the commanding officers of the regiments in the month of April last. And I am certain it was impossible for them to falsify &c. The result of these enquiries is contain'd in the following papers, which I have the Honour to transmit to you for your judgment & examination.²⁸

Not even the detailed documentation sent in October will be enough, and the General will be literally stuck in Turin until winter: the King of Sardinia, writes St. Clair on November 9th, "express a very strong desire, that I shou'd stay some few days longer, in expectation of a letter arriving from Mons.^r Ossorio"²⁹. The King's worries were not out of place: the General will be allowed to leave, with Hume, twenty days later, but the last 75000 Sterling will be released only in March 1749³⁰.

Money for soldiers, payments and interests: if a biographical accident (the death of Wentworth) may be seen as the starting point of the mission, the European "fiscal-military state", with its economy directed by ministers, with its growing bureaucracy, diplomats, and bankers, is the political structure behind Hume's travels of 1748³¹. Recent studies have shown at what point, throughout the first half of the Eighteenth century, Sardinian economy was heavily conditioned by war, and depended on international subsidies³². The documents produced during Hume's mission confirm this; and tell us of the level of understanding, among the actors involved in the negocia-

²⁸ Minute (in Hume's handwriting) of St. Clair's letter, written before 12 October 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25696, folio 114rv.

²⁹ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, NLS, Ms 25708, folio 48. Giuseppe Ossorio (1697-1763), Sardinian ambassador to England since 1745, had moved in 1748 to Hannover and then to Aix-la-Chapelle to follow the negotiations; see Archivio di Stato di Torino, Corte (hereafter ASTC), Inghilterra, "Lettere Ministri", mazzo 54, cartella 1, "Lettere del Cav. Ossorio a S.M. e al Ministro, 1748".

³⁰ The money will never leave London: the sterling are transferred to the bank of Van Neck, who had loaned large sums to the Sardinian state in 1744 (see ASTR, II Archiviazione, capo 54, Lettere segrete-ria affari esteri, 1730 in 1749, letter from Ossorio, 31 March 1749).

³¹ *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe. Essays in honour of P.G.M. Dickson*, ed. by C. Storrs, London, Ashgate, 2009.

³² G. CALIGARIS, *Crisi bancaria a Torino: il fallimento della casa Monier, Moris & C. (metà XVIII secolo)*, "Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino", 86, 2, 1988, pp. 523-592. "In all, England paid Carlo Emanuele [...] nearly one-third of the total extraordinary cost of the war" (C. Storrs, *Ormea*, p. 246).

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tion, of the political and economical priorities that arise, replacing the military ones, upon the ending of a war³³.

Even more than "courts" and "battlefields", Hume in Turin has the opportunity to see diplomacy at work, and bureaucrats and ministers that face problems of budgets, and loans. Besides his experience of Turin as a city and a seat of a court, he must have seen also the reality of an urban economy burdened by the costs of a war, not so heavy on human lives, but more so on property and finances. "The Taxes are here exhorbitant beyond all Bounds" Hume had observed in Cremona, on May 12th³⁴. Just a few days before, in Turin an "editto di Sua Maestà" had confirmed all the extraordinary wartime taxations established since 1743: "la fedelissima città di Torino" was subject to an "imposto straordinario" of 200.000 Lire, for the sixth consecutive year³⁵.

3. *Unlucky generals and abstruse philosophers*

"*That a Man of Genius is unfit for Business*", remembers Hume in 1742, is an "antient Prejudice industriously propagated by the Dunces in all Countries"³⁶. In the *Philosophical Essays* Hume "reasonably" pleads in behalf of abstruse philosophy: by its accuracy "the General will acquire more Regularity in his Discipline, and more caution in his Plans and Operations"³⁷. In Turin the General is Lieutenant General James Saint Clair, Commander of the First Battalion of the Royal Scots. In January 1748 Walpole makes a portrait of him: "General Sinclair is presently to succeed Wentworth: he is Scotchissime, in all the latitude of the word; and not very able; he made a poor business of it at Port Lorient"³⁸. St. Clair himself acknowledges his want of "experience in Negotiation", to which he is "an utter Stranger"³⁹.

A few days afterwards, the Chevalier Giuseppe Ossorio, Minister from the King of Sardinia in London, informs: "on dit beaucoup de bien de lui, on

³³ The shifting priorities between war and peacetime in Anglo-Sardinian Eighteenth-century diplomatic relations were clearly discussed in F. Venturi, "Il Piemonte".

³⁴ *HL* 1.64, 132 ("Cremona 12th of May").

³⁵ *Editto di S. M. per l'Imposizione straordinaria sullo Stato, altra su i Censi, Prestiti, e Redditi, la Cavalcata, Contributo d'alcune Comunità, e Feudatari, e per l'imposto di Lire 200m. sulla Città di Torino. In data delli 3. Maggio 1748*, Torino, Stamperia Reale, 1748, p. 3.

³⁶ D. HUME, *Of Eloquence*, in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. by E.F. Miller, Indianapolis, Liberty Classics, 1987, hereafter *ES*, 1.13.17, p. 621n.

³⁷ D. Hume, *Essay I. Of the different Species of Philosophy*, in *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*, London, A. Millar, 1748, 1.7, p. 7; 1.9, p. 9.

³⁸ H. Walpole to H. Mann, 12 January 1748 O.S., in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann. III*, ed. by W.S. Lewis et al., London, Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 456.

³⁹ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 April 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708 ("St. Clair Mss. Bound Volume n. X"), folio 5r; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Cumberland, 10 April 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 7r.

le croit capable de s'acquitter de la Commission avec autant de prudence, et d'habilité que son Predecesseur"⁴⁰. Yet, "en descendant l'escalier de la Cour", the prudent General "doit avoir fait quelque chute [...] qui le rend un peu boiteux"⁴¹. In March Ossorio adds some new (negative) strokes, altering his former character:

il n'a veritablement ni la mine, ni les manieres d'un homme elevé à la Cour, ou fait pour y briller, ma cela n'empêche pas qu'il ne puisse estre, comme bien des personnes de rang, et de credit soutiennent qu'il l'est reellement, un homme de probité, de bon sens, laborieux, zélé, et bien intentionné pour le service de la cause commune, il est Ecossois, et d'un famille noble, il semble qu'il n'ait pas la comprehension la plus prompte, mais au reste je n'ai pu qu'etre edifié de l'equité de ses sentimens quand une fois il avoit bien compris une affaire.⁴²

And he finally admonishes: "Quelqu'un de ses amis qui le connoit parfaitement m'a averti qu'il est bon de veiller auprès de lui, parce qu'il se laisse quelque fois surprendre par les discours artificieux de gens à qui il tourne à compte de lui cacher la verité"⁴³. One week afterwards the cunning Sardinian Court replies from experience: "Il nous a paru un homme fort sage et plein de droiture, et par consequent fort propre pour la commission dont il est chargé"⁴⁴. A Scotchman is not so different from a *Piemontese*.

In October the General is "employ'd together with his aides de camps" in examining the documents and comparing the books in the "Commissary's office", a work that requires "both time and trouble"⁴⁵. Possibly busy in ciphering and deciphering, Hume writes many of the General's letters and transcribes almost all of them into a ninety-page book. Some of these letters recall his turn of thought and topics: the alternation of hope and despair, the importance of trifles, the combat of passion and reflection, the King's sincerity and resolution⁴⁶. Hume was probably suggesting passages as well as receiv-

⁴⁰ G. Ossorio, London, 16 January 1748, ASTC, mazzo 54, cartella 1, n. 3, [folio 2r].

⁴¹ Ibid.; ivi, 19 January 1748, n. 4, [folio 1r].

⁴² G. Ossorio, 5 March 1748, ASTC, mazzo 54, cartella 1, n. 17, [folio 2r].

⁴³ Ivi, [folio 2rv].

⁴⁴ The King of Sardinia to G. Ossorio, 16 May 748, ASTC, "Lettere Ministri. L'Inghilterra. Lettere di S.M. e del Ministro al Cavalier Ossorio", mazzo 55, folio 4r.

⁴⁵ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 October 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 46rv (see J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 25 August 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 46v; J. St. Clair to H. Pelham, London, 9 January 1749, ivi, folio 50v; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 October 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25703 ("Italian Negotiations"), folio 241v.

⁴⁶ For example: "When I consider the narrow Compass, to which the Disputes betwixt these Courts are now reduc'd, and the small Importance of those Points, about which they differ, I cannot but entertain some Hopes, that they will not, for the sake of Trifles, ruin Undertakings of such infinite Consequence to their own Interest as well as to the common Cause. But when I consider, on the other hand, that the Tenaciousness about Trifles is a Mark of Humour & Passion, which is often more difficult to overcome than any other Obstacle, I again lose those Hopes, with which I had flatter'd myself"

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ing suggestions for his future writings. As "the Events of War had been [...] so favourable to the Enemy", writes the Humean St. Clair, "to find that, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle replaces every thing almost in the Condition left by the Peace of Utrecht is so unexpected and so happy an Event, that it must surprize and please every Lover of his Country". Then he remarks: "Tis an unlucky Observation of Historians, that Britain has commonly lost by Treaties what she gain'd by Arms: [...] I hope we shall now be able to transfer that Observation to our Enemies"⁴⁷. The common unlucky observation is reported in Comines' *Mémoires*, Rapin's *History* and D'Avenant's *Discourses on the Publick Revenues*. All three of them later quoted in Hume's *History*⁴⁸.

Britain, says the "Balance of Power" in 1752, has been "more possest with the antient Greek spirit of jealous emulation, than actuated with the prudent views of modern politics". "Above half of our wars with France – it adds – [...] are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence, than to the ambition of our neighbours" and "have always been too far push'd, from obstinacy and passion". Britain could have concluded the same treaties, on the same conditions, some years before she actually did it: "we might have given at *Frankfort*, in 1743, the same terms, which we were glad to accept of at *Aix-la-Chapelle* in the forty eight"⁴⁹. Two months before dying, tells us John Home, Hume remembers that in Turin "he could not conceive why France granted such good terms to Britain", considering "the superiority which the French arms had gained". He therefore asked St. Clair "to touch upon that subject with the King of Sardinia", but even the King "was at a loss to give any account of that matter". In the 1760s, when he was Secretary to the Embassy in Paris, Hume finally obtained the answer from the Marquis de Puisieux, who had negotiated the peace: it was the French King's "aversion to war"⁵⁰.

(J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Vienna, 10 April 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 5r; see also J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Vienna, 24 April 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 19rv; J. St. Clair to T. Robinson, Turin, 1 June 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 36r; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 June 1748, N.S., ivi, folio 39r; J. St. Clair to the Earl of Sandwich, 29 May 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 33v; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 June 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 39r; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 November 1748 N.S., ivi, folio 48r).

⁴⁷ J. St. Clair to the Earl of Sandwich, 29 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 33r.

⁴⁸ P. DE COMINES, *Mémoires*, Londres, Rollin, 1747, t. I, III, VIII, 1471, p. 169; P. DE RAPIN THOYRAS, *Histoire d'Angleterre*, La Haye, A. de Rogissart, 1724, t. III, X, "Richard II", 1396, p. 310 (see ID., *The History of England*, London, J. and J. Knapton, 1727, vol. IV, IX, pp. 426-427); C. D'AVENANT, *On the Protection and Care of Trade*, in *Discourses on the Publick Revenues, and on the Trade of England*, London, J. Knapton, 1698, II, II, p. 173. See J. BODIN, *De Republica Libri Sex*, Paris, J. Du Puys, 1586, V, I, p. 501.

⁴⁹ D. HUME, *Of the Balance of Power*, in *Political Discourses*, Edinburgh, A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, 1752, pp. 109-III (*ES* 2.7.15, p. 339).

⁵⁰ J. Home, *Diary of a Journey with Hume to Bath*, in *Early Responses to Hume's Life and Reputation*, Second Edition, Revised, ed. by J. Fieser, 2 vols, Bristol, Thoemmes Continuum, 2005, vol. I, p. 284.

4. "Qui vidit urbes"

"We set out to morrow: – Hume writes from Vienna – [...] But go not by the way of Venice. This is some Mortification to us. We shall go however by Milan"⁵¹. At the beginning of June, St. Clair writes to Newcastle: "as I am now in a Country, which is so much the Object of the Curiosity of Travellers, & which I never expect again to visit, His Majesty would be pleas'd to allow me to make a short Tour thro' some of the chief Cities of Italy, before I return home"⁵². And Hume to his brother: "I believe we shall make the Tour of Italy & France before we come home. [...] so that we shall have seen a great Variety of Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, & French Courts in this Jaunt". Then, with Horace and Addison (Polybius and Bayle), he speaks of himself: "*Qui mores hominum multorum vidit & urbes*"⁵³. Apparently the request was rejected.

According to the "Guardian" (Horace's line on *mores & urbes* is the motto of the piece) a "true Fine Gentleman" should be "no Stranger to Courts and to Camps" and must "Travel [...] to get clear of National Prejudices; of which every Country has its Share"⁵⁴. Hume, who suggests his remedies against national prejudices in the *Treatise* (to follow the reflective general rules) and in "Of National Characters" (to condemn the undistinguishing judgments)⁵⁵, in his journal reveals himself a "Guardian" follower: "There are great Advantages, in travelling, & nothing serves more to remove Prejudices: For I confess I had entertain'd no such advantageous Idea of Germany: And it gives a Man of Humanity Pleasure to see that so considerable a Part of Mankind as the Germans are in so tolerable a Condition"⁵⁶. He even turns the "Guardian" rule against Addison's *Campaign*, which calls the Germans "Nations of Slaves, by Tyranny debas'd": "If any Foot Soldier cou'd have more ridiculous national Prejudices than the Poet, I should be much surpriz'd. Be assur'd, there is not a finer Country in the World; nor are there any Signs of Poverty among the People. But John Bull's Prejudices are ridiculous; as his Insolence is intolerable"⁵⁷.

Hume also wants to see "a real campaign" and pick up that "military knowledge", which is useful for his "historical projects". Attending St. Clair,

⁵¹ HL 1.64, 128, "Vienna. 25 of April".

⁵² J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 June 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 40v.

⁵³ HL 1.64, 132, "Turin. June. 16th. 1748". See note 59.

⁵⁴ "The Guardian", Monday, 20 April 1713, in *The Guardian. Vol. 1*, London, J. Tonson, 1714, p. 135.

⁵⁵ D. HUME, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L.A. Selby-Bigge, rev. by P.H. Nidditch, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978², hereafter *T*, 1.3.13.7, pp. 146-147; *T* 1.3.13.12, p. 150; D. HUME, *Of National Characters*, in *Three Essays, Moral and Political*, London, A. Millar, 1748, pp. 2-3 (*ES* 1.21.1, 197-198).

⁵⁶ HL 1.64, 126, "The Danube. 7th of April".

⁵⁷ J. ADDISON, *The Campaign*, in *Miscellaneous Works*, 3 vols, London, J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1746, vol. 1, p. 70, vv. 80-84; HL 1.64, 121, "Coblentz. 26 March".

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he allows, is "an opportunity of seeing Courts & Camps": "some greater experience of the Operations of the Field, & the Intrigues of the Cabinet, will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgement upon these subjects"⁵⁸. Hume speaks like Addison's "good historian" (he should have "a thorough Knowledge of Men and Things" and be "conversant in the Art of War"), but also like Bayle: Brutus "had seen most of the other Courts of Europe quietly, and thereby had acquired Experience enough to write the History of it", since "the Knowledge which is acquired by travelling is very useful to those who compose a History". He speaks like Lucian ("my historian must be one who has at some time been in a camp") and especially like Polybius, which in those years he was keeping in his hand: "It is impossible to write well on the operations in a war, if a man has had no experience of actual service"; as "Theopompus says: 'the best military historian is he who has been present at the greatest number of battles'"⁵⁹. At Dettingen Hume compares General Mordaunt's "Description" with the "Field", which he surveys together with the postmaster who "saw the Battle from his Windows". Given his own account of such an unexpected victory, he displays his relief: "Good God, what an Escape we made there!"⁶⁰.

5. *David Hume: philosopher of the plain (of Lombardy)*

"The ocean, an extended plain, a vast chain of mountains, a wide forest" excite in the mind a "sensible emotion", says *Of the Passions* following Malebranche's *Recherche* and Addison's essay on the "Pleasures of the Imagination"⁶¹. On the appearance of such "very bulky" objects an "always agreeable" admiration arises, and this is "one of the most lively pleasures, which human nature is capable of enjoying"⁶². The "mere view and contemplation of any greatness [...] enlarges the soul, and gives it a sensible delight and pleasure". Again: "A wide plain, the ocean" are "entertaining objects" that

⁵⁸ D. Hume to H. Home, second half of January 1747, *NHL*, 23; D. Hume to J. Oswald, 29 January 1748, *HL* 1.61, 109.

⁵⁹ *The Free-Holder*, n. 35, Friday, 20 April 20 1716, Dublin, G. Grierson, 1716, p. 210; P. BAYLE, *Brutus (John Michael)*, in *The Dictionary Historical and Critical*, London, J.J. Knapton et al., 1734, vol. II, p. 168ab; LUCIAN, *How to write history*, in *Lucian*, ed. by K. Kilburn, 8 vols, London, William Heinemann, 1959, vol. VI, § 37, p. 51; POLIBIO, *Storie. Volume Quinto (libri XII-XVIII)*, ed. by D. Musti, Milano, Rizzoli, 2009, XII, 25g, 1-3, pp. 84-87; 27, 6-II, pp. 104-107; D. Hume to H. Home, second half of January 1747, *NHL*, 23.

⁶⁰ *HL* 1.64, 122, "Frankfort. 28th March"; *HL* 1.64, 123, "Wurtzburg. 30th March".

⁶¹ *T* 2.2.8.4, 373; N. MALEBRANCHE, *De la Recherche de la vérité*, ed. by G. Rodis-Lewis, 3 vols, Paris, Vrin, 1991, vol. II, 5.7, p. 189 (see *ivi*, 5.7, pp. 198-200); ID., *Eclaircissements sur la recherche de la vérité*, in *Recherche*, vol. III, Ecl. IX, p. 125; *The Spectator*, ed. by D.F. Bond, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965, vol. III, 23th June 1712, pp. 540-541.

⁶² *T* 2.2.8.4, 373.

"excel every thing, however beautiful, which accompanies not its beauty with a suitable greatness"⁶³. In the *Inquiry* Hutcheson had claimed that we are "more pleased" with "a fine Landskip, a regular Building" than with "a smooth Sea, or a large open Plain, not diversify'd by Woods, Hills, Waters, Buildings"⁶⁴.

Most kinds of beauty are "deriv'd" from sympathy, claims *Of the Passions*. The "chief" beauty of a house consists in the "convenience" and "advantages" of the apartments: "the observation of convenience gives pleasure, since convenience is a beauty". It is "a beauty of interest". As our interest is not "in the least concern'd", beauty gives us pleasure "merely by communication, and by our sympathizing with the proprietor of the lodging"⁶⁵. Likewise, "nothing renders a field more agreeable than its fertility" and "scarce any advantages of ornament or situation will be able to equal this beauty". Fertility and value have "a plain reference to use", and use to "riches, joy, and plenty"; even though "we have no hope of partaking, yet we enter into them by the vivacity of the fancy, and share them, in some measure, with the proprietor"⁶⁶.

Hume repeats himself in *Of Morals*. "The conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field" form their "principal beauty". Where any object "has a tendency to produce pleasure in its possessor, it is always regarded as beautiful". This object is esteemed "beautiful" in proportion to its "fitness for the use". It pleases only by its tendency to produce "the pleasure or advantage of some other person", and the "pleasure of a stranger, for whom we have no friendship, pleases us only by sympathy". Like a "house, that is contriv'd with great judgment for all the commodities of life", a "fertile soil [...] delight[s] us by a reflection on the happiness which [it] wou'd afford the inhabitants, tho' at present the country be desert and uninhabited"⁶⁷.

Hutcheson had thought that our "Admiration and Love toward a *fruitful Field* or *commodious Habitation*" can not be "much the same" with "what

⁶³ T 2.3.8.2, 432.

⁶⁴ F. HUTCHESON, *An Enquiry concerning Beauty, Order, &c.*, in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, The Second Edition, London, J. Darby & al., 1726, I.8, p. 7 (see *The Spectator*, pp. 541-542, 550). The "very bulky" objects Hume enumerates are: "[1] the ocean, [2] an extended plain, [3] a vast chain of mountains, [4] a wide forest"; or, as an "extended" greatness, "[1] a wide plain, [2] the ocean" (T 2.2.8.4, 373; T 2.3.8.2, 432). Addison "By *Greatness*" means both "the Bulk of any single Object" and "the Largeness of a whole View, considered as one entire Piece": "such are the Prospects of [1] an open Champian Country, [2] a vast uncultivated Desert, of [3] huge Heaps of Mountains, high Rocks and Precipices, or [4] a wide Expanse of Waters [...] Such wide and undetermined Prospects are pleasing to the Fancy" ("The Spectator", vol. III, Monday, 23 June 1712, pp. 540-541). Hutcheson speaks of "[1] a clear blue Sky, [2] a smooth Sea, or [3] a large open Plain, not diversify'd by Woods, Hills, Waters, Buildings" (HUTCHESON, *An Enquiry concerning Beauty*, I.8, p. 7).

⁶⁵ T 2.2.5.16, 363-364.

⁶⁶ T 2.2.5.18, 364.

⁶⁷ T 3.3.1. 8, 576-577; T 3.3.1.20, 584-585.

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we have toward a *generous Friend*, or any *noble Character*", since our "*Sense of Good*" is distinct from "*Advantage or Interest*", "*Beauty and Harmony*"⁶⁸. Hume has no doubt: even though "a convenient house, and a virtuous character, cause not the same feeling of approbation", the "source of our approbation [is] the same, and flow[s] from sympathy and an idea of their utility"⁶⁹.

Consistently with the *Treatise*, in his 1748 "sort of Journal of our Travels" or "Account of the Appearances of things", as he calls his "long Epistle" to his brother⁷⁰, Hume agreeably admires both the beautiful extended wide plains, and the beautiful fertile or well cultivated plains. He enjoys the "fine Plains of the Danube" that "continue down, thro Austria, Hungary, &c till it falls into the black Sea"⁷¹ (as well as he enjoys the Alps that "join with the Pyrenees, these with the Alps; and run all along the North of Turkey in Europe to the Black Sea, and form the longest Chain of Mountains in the Universe"⁷²; he admires the "open, beautiful, well cultivated Plains", along the banks of the Rhine⁷³, and "one of the finest Plains in the World" ("I never saw such rich Soil, nor better cultivated; all in corn & sown Grass"), along the Banks of the Maine⁷⁴. And in Mantova he declares: "We are now in Classic Ground; & I have kist the Earth, that produc'd Virgil, & have admir'd those fertile Plains, that he has so finely celebrated. *Perdidit aut quales felices Mantua campos*. You are tir'd, & so am I, with the Descriptions of Countries: And therefore shall only say, that nothing can be more singularly beautiful than the Plains of Lombardy"⁷⁵. Hume is travelling in the name of sympathy (with the inhabitants), and still got his eyes full of the *Treatise*.

⁶⁸ F. HUTCHESON, *An Inquiry concerning the Original of our Ideas of "Virtue" or "Moral Good"*, in *Inquiry*, I.1, p. 117.

⁶⁹ *T* 3.3.6.6, 617. Both Hutcheson and Hume recall and discuss Addison's essay. Unlike Hutcheson, Hume thinks that an extended or wide plain, by admiration and opposition, always gives us delight; a fertile or well cultivated plain, by sympathy and utility, always gives us pleasure and is deemed beautiful. On Hume's "Journal", see my *David Hume, filosofo della pianura (lombarda)* (forthcoming).

⁷⁰ *HL* 1.64, 114 ("Hague 3^d March 1748. N.S."); *HL* 1.64, 133 ("Turin. June. 16th. 1748"). On the back of page 12 ("Frankfort 28th March") is written "Extrait des Instructions de Mon.r Stclair Lieutenant General des" (NLS, Ms 23151, folio 12; see NLS, Mss 25708 and 25703).

⁷¹ *HL* 1.64, 125 ("The Danube. 7th of April").

⁷² *HL* 1.64, 131 ("Clagenfurt in Carinthia. May 4th").

⁷³ *HL* 1.64, 120 ("Coblentz. 26 March").

⁷⁴ *HL* 1.64, 122 ("Frankfort. 28th March").

⁷⁵ *HL* 1.64, 132 ("Mantua 11th of May"). Hume wrongly quotes from Virgil: "Perdidit aut quales felices Mantua campos" (he is probably thinking at "Et qualem infelix amisit Mantua campum", *Georgics*, II, 198); the day after he correctly quotes him: "Alas poor Italy! *Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit; Barbarus has segetes?*" (*HL* 1.64, 132, "Cremona 12th of May"; see "Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit, / barbarus has segetes", *Bucolics*, I, 70-71). In 1749 he criticizes Montesquieu's final quotation from Virgil, and declares himself "embarrassé [...] à deviner le sens du dernier paragraphe de votre ouvrage: *Italiam, Italiam...*, faite sans doute de savoir quelque chose à quoi vous faites allusion" (D. Hume to Montesquieu, Londres, 10 Avril 1749, *HL* 1.65, 138; see "Italiam primus conclamat Achates, / Italiam laeto socii clamore salutant", *Aeneid*, III, 523-524).

6. *Turin 1748: ancient and modern cities*

"I am now arriv'd at Rheims, which is to be the place of my Abode for some considerable time [...]. It is a large Town, containing about 40.000 Inhabitants, & has in it about 30 families that keep Coaches; tho by the Appearance of the Houses you would not think there was one" (D. Hume to Michael Ramsay, 1734).⁷⁶

"[in Vienna] The Streets very narrow & crooked: So that the many handsome Buildings that are here make not any figure. The Suburbs are spacious and open: But on the whole, I can never believe what they tell us, that there are 200,000 Inhabitants in it. It is compos'd entirely of Nobility, and of Lackeys, of Soldiers & of Priests" (D. Hume to J. Home, 1748).⁷⁷

"We know not exactly the numbers of any *European* kingdom, or even city, at present: How can we pretend to calculate those of ancient cities and states, where historians have left us such imperfect traces? [...] *Italy*, 'tis probable, however, has decay'd: But how many great cities does it still contain; *Venice, Genoa, Pavia, Turin, Milan, Naples, Florence, Leghorn*, which either subsisted not in antient times, or were then very inconsiderable? If we reflect on this, we shall not be apt to carry matters to so great an extreme as is usual, with regard to this subject" (D. Hume, "Of the Populousness of Antient Nations", 1752).⁷⁸

If in 1748, there were no precise estimates of its ancient population, the "numbers" of modern Turin were exactly calculated, every year, by the state administration⁷⁹: the results, expressed in tabelles, or "stati delle anime", were somehow available even outside of the public offices, if a foreigner with no particular distinction, such as doctor John Clephane, later to be a friend of Hume, who had passed four months in Turin in 1744, had brought back to London with him a complete "stato delle anime" for that year⁸⁰. This means, at least, that Hume could be well aware that in 1748 Turin had just over 65,000 inhabitants: more than Reims, and also than Edinburgh, whose population (Leith included) will add up to 57,195 in 1755; of which only 22,512 were to be counted in the Old Town, that was, therefore much smaller than Turin's walled city. So the Sardinian capital was a significantly "large", if not truly "great", town, not so far in size and population from Marseilles or Lyon (more than 100,000), and "small" only if compared – as invariably the French

⁷⁶ D. Hume to M. Ramsay, 12 September 1734, *HL* 1.4, 19.

⁷⁷ *HL* 1.64, 128 ("Vienna. 25 of April").

⁷⁸ D. HUME, *Of the Populousness of Antient Nations*, in *Political Discourses*, pp. 158, 253 (*ES* 2.II.3, 381; *ES* 2.II.175, 457).

⁷⁹ On Turin's population in the XVIII century, see D. Balani, *Sviluppo demografico e trasformazioni sociali*, in *Storia di Torino V. Dalla città razionale alla crisi dello stato d'antico regime (1730-1798)*, ed. by G. Ricuperati, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, pp. 627-688.

⁸⁰ NAS, GD 125/23/8 (15), *Stato delle Anime Della Città, Borghi, e Territorio di Torino 1743*; see also a *Stato de' Nati e Morti in Torino* ("Bill of mortality") for the same year: GD 125/23/8 (10).

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travellers did⁸¹ – to the great European capitals such as Paris (1750, 565,000) or London (1750, 700,000).

The mention of Turin in Hume's discussion of modern and ancient Italian cities is also appropriate, as Turin's ancient origins were well known and were readable in the grid-like layout, in the remains of two of the city gates, and in the local antiquities exposed at the University; all of these could be also considered signs of the relative "inconsistency" of the roman town as compared to the modern one⁸²: in scarcely two centuries Turin had become a state capital, a populous city (increasing its population fivefold), and a modern fortress, whose resistance had been put to test during two sieges in the past century, and that had been preparing for the third, when the French troops were, surprisingly, stopped at L'Assietta in 1747. The pentagonal citadel and the 15 bastions, each christened with a saint protector, were famous in Europe⁸³.

7. *Fortifications (sympathy at work again)*

In 1748 Turin is famous for its fortifications. It is a military town; and Hume is the one who had claimed that "Camps are the true mothers of cities"⁸⁴. "Walls and Fortifications", according to Bacon, are "Things to be seen and observ'd"⁸⁵.

"Suppose a man, – says *Of the Passions* – who takes a survey of the fortifications of any city; considers their strength and advantages, natural or

⁸¹ Diderot classified cities in the Netherlands as "du premier / second / troisième ordre", and his terms of comparison were Paris and other French cities (M. Van Strein-Chardonneau, *La Hollande vue par les voyageurs*, "Dix-huitième siècle", 1990, p. 287). For Montesquieu, Turin was "une ville riante, petite [...], le plus beau village du monde" (*Voyage en Italie*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris 1956, I, pp. 603-617; see C. GAUNA, *La scoperta dell'architettura moderna a Torino*, in *Sperimentare l'Architettura*. Guarini, Juvarra, Alfieri, Borra e Vittone, ed. by G. Dardanello, Torino, Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, 2001, pp. 299-324).

⁸² In discussing its ancient "ruins", and the city's "antica Magnificenza", Emanuele Tesauo was embarrassed by the small perimeter of the roman walls, and ascribed the walls to the period *after* the barbarian invasions (E. TESAURO, *Historia dell'Augusta città di Torino*, Torino, Bartolomeo Zappata, 1679, t. I, pp. 104-105); Dr. Clephane, also a competent antiquarian, observed that Turin "anciently the capital of the country of the ancient Taurini, & now of Piedmont has always been a considerable town" (NAS, GD 125/26/4, J. Clephane to Dr. R. Mead, Turin, 3rd January 1744).

⁸³ After the "vigorous siege" that the city sustained in 1706, Europe was literally flooded with views and plans of the "battle of Turin". All of them showed the strength and modernity of the urban fortifications, a feature in which English visitors were especially interested, as they usually had free access to the works: "the Fortifications are regular and strong, the Bastions faced with bricks, defended with half moons, ditch and covered way, the mines I was told were of considerable length [...] It held out a vigorous siege agt. The French; the French cannot see the works but by an express order from the King, other strangers are easily introduced" (A. Mitchell, Turin, 1732, BL, Ms Add 58316, quoted in J. BLACK, *The Grand Tour and Savoy-Piedmont in the Eighteenth Century*, "Studi Piemontesi", 13, 1, 1984, pp. 161-163).

⁸⁴ T 3.2.8.2, 540-541.

⁸⁵ F. BACON, *Of Travel*, in *The Essays*, ed. by J. Pitcher, London, Penguin, 1985, pp. 113-114.

acquir'd; observes the disposition and contrivance of the bastions, ramparts, mines, and other military works; 'tis plain, that in proportion as all these are fitted to attain their ends, he will receive a suitable pleasure and satisfaction". As this pleasure arises from the "utility" of the objects, it "can be no other than a sympathy with the inhabitants, for whose security all this art is employ'd", even though the man, "as a stranger or an enemy", "may in his heart have no kindness for [the inhabitants], or may even entertain a hatred against them"⁸⁶. *Of morals* repeats that "the fortifications of a city belonging to an enemy are esteem'd beautiful upon account of their strength, tho' we cou'd wish that they were entirely destroy'd"⁸⁷. The *True Account* shows Hume as an observer of fortifications: "A weak or no Garrison, in a Place weakly fortified, or no fortified at all, must be the Consummation of all Weakness"⁸⁸.

Perhaps the "stranger" Hume, when he first arrived at Turin was "indifferent about knowing the history and adventures of the inhabitants", but as he became "farther acquainted with them, and has liv'd any considerable time among them" (are three months to be considered a "considerable time"?), he acquired "the same curiosity as the natives"⁸⁹. In August 1748, St. Clair has been attending the King of Sardinia "in a Tour he made to visit the Fortifications of Finistrelle, Exilles, la Brunette, and the Entrenchments at la Sutta"⁹⁰. Certainly Hume would have celebrated Turin as the true daughter of a camp and enjoyed the pleasure arising from its fortifications; yet, we do not know if he really attended the General attending the King.

8. *Back to Turin: palaces, "vigne" and popish institutions*

Besides defending the city, the bastions and military esplanades furnished it with *promenades* and plantations: "the Ramparts in an evening serve by way of spectacle & indeed it is a fine one", wrote one Englishman in 1758⁹¹. Hume appreciated "large open spaces" and "gardens" in cities⁹², but the view

⁸⁶ T 2.3.10.5, 450.

⁸⁷ T 3.3.1.23, 586-587.

⁸⁸ HUME, *True Account*, ed. by M.A. Box, p. 240; ID., *True Account*, p. 14.

⁸⁹ T 2.3.10.12, 453-454. "It often happens, that after we have liv'd a considerable time in any city; however at first it might be disagreeable to us; yet as we become familiar with the objects, and contract an acquaintance, tho' merely with the streets and buildings, the aversion diminishes by degrees, and at last changes into the opposite passion. The mind finds a satisfaction and ease in the view of objects, to which it is accusom'd, and naturally prefers them to others, which, tho', perhaps, in themselves more valuable, are less known to it" (T 2.2.4.8, 354-355).

⁹⁰ J. St. Clair to J. Forbes, Turin, 25 August 1748 O.S. [N.S.?], NLS, Ms 25708, folios 45v-46r.

⁹¹ RIA, 12.R.9, n. 68, J. Lypyeat to Lord Charlemont, Turin, 22 August 1758.

⁹² E. MAZZA, E. PICCOLI, *La grande variété de goût. David Hume à Paris*, in *Le Public et la politique des arts au Siècle des Lumières*, ed. by C. Henry and D. Rabreau, Bordeaux, William Blake & Co., 2011.

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of the *promenade* in front of Turin's citadel, duly recorded in a *veduta* by Giovanni Battista Borra in 1749⁹³, might have also reminded him the risks of absolute monarchy. In a prison cell inside the fortress had died, on march 17th, 1748, the Neapolitan historian Giannone, prisoner of the King of Sardinia since 1736, when he was arrested "to please the Pope" ("yet all that did not serve to make him his Friend")⁹⁴.

The citadel and the walls, measuring just under two miles of perimeter, encompassed the old town, with its square plan and its narrow grid of streets, and the more regular and airy new town, formed from a combination of three different additions to the fortifications. In all, about 140 compact blocks, each defined by a protecting Saint, and several open squares. The singular exception was a sort of "superblock" that developed around the royal palace, and connected without interruption two royal residences, the Cathedral, the royal theatre, the offices of the principal ministries (*Segreterie di Stato*), the state archives, the Academy with its *manège*, the mint, two churches, all physically linked together in an uninterrupted chain of facades, rooms, courts, staircases⁹⁵.

This peculiar building complex must have been well known to Hume and St. Clair, as to any other person who had access to the Court, to the Academy, and had business to do with the state offices. Some of its buildings were in 1748 unfinished; being the aftermath of a war, most building sites were still closed (in 1748, the only major investment is directed towards repairing the roof of the Royal palace, where a gallery was being painted with the *Triumph of Peace* by Claudio Beaumont)⁹⁶. Hume, who was interested in architecture as a sign of prosperity or "decay"⁹⁷ of cities, could have understood that the still unachieved structures were signs of a growth only accidentally interrupted by a successful war. Also the size and number of aristocratic "houses", just as the number of coaches, were a typical measure of social pres-

⁹³ *Vedute principali di Torino disegnate in prospettiva, ed intagliate in rame dall'architetto Giambattista Borra l'anno 1749*, Turin, Archivio Storico del Comune, pl. 3, *Passeggio pubblico della Citadella*.

⁹⁴ P. GIANNONE, *The civil history of the Kingdom of Naples. In Two Volumes*, London, for W. Innys, G. Strahan *et al.*, 1729, vol. 1, p. 669; G. RICUPERATI, *L'esperienza civile e religiosa di Pietro Giannone*, Milano, Napoli, Ricciardi, 1970, ch. VIII.

⁹⁵ P. CORNAGLIA *et al.*, *Architettura e governo in una capitale barocca. La "zona di Comando" di Torino ed il piano di Filippo Juvarra del 1730*, Torino, Celid, 2000.

⁹⁶ ASTR, Camerale Piemonte, Art.183. Conti fabbriche e fortificazioni, 1748, registro 15; C. BEAUMONT, *Breve sposizione delle dipinture fatte nella nuova Galleria del Regio Palazzo dal Cavaliere D: Claudio Beaumont dedicata a S. S. R. M.*, Torino, Stamperia Reale, 1748.

⁹⁷ He had observed in Cologne that "The Houses are all high: And there is no Interval of Gardens or Fields. So that you would expect it must be very populous. But it is not so. It is extremely decay'd, & is even falling to ruin. Nothing can strike one with more melancholy than its Appearance where there are Marks of past Opulence & Grandeur, but such present Waste & Decay" (*HL* 1.64, 119-120, "Cologne 23^d of March").

tige and economic prosperity: Turin had in 1748 many more than the 30 coaches Hume had estimated at Reims, and several dozens of *palazzi* worthy of that name⁹⁸. Much more than just "houses" to live in, these palaces were also the principal centers of sociability of the capital. Moreover, as was the case for all the European élites that followed to some extent the models of behaviour established in the French court in the preceding century, both the royal administration and the aristocracy practiced a seasonal migration to and from an outer ring of residences: the court to its castles and hunting lodges, the wealthy families to their *vigne* (name used in Turin for the hillside residences) and country villas. The diplomatic community was heavily conditioned by, if not directly involved with this particular kind of mobility. Even if St. Clair and Hume probably did not rent a *vigna* in 1748 (as Wentworth and Arthur Villetes, the English resident, seem to have done in the summer of 1747)⁹⁹, they certainly were involved in ceremonies, audiences and social events that took place outside the city, at Moncalieri, or at Venaria Reale, where the "foreign residents and ambassadors" were invited, on the 4th of November 1748, for a celebration of the King's name-day¹⁰⁰.

During his stay, Thomas Wentworth had spent two *Lire* for a fee to visit Superga, the Royal Church and "magnificent convent" in the hills overlooking Turin¹⁰¹. If Hume went there too, it is not essential to know: but certainly, he was aware of the political issues (and even open conflicts, as the British ambassadors and envoys played an explicit role of protectors of the Waldensian community in the Alps as well as of the protestant Republic of Geneva) that could arise in a catholic city because of the presence of a small and privileged protestant community¹⁰². Turin, with its cathedral, its 16 parish

⁹⁸ Istituto di architettura tecnica del Politecnico di Torino, *Forma urbana e architettura nella Torino barocca*, ed. by A. Cavallari Murat, Torino, Utet, 1968, 3 vols; C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Torino. Dal palazzo aristocratico alla casa da reddito nel Settecento*, in *L'uso dello spazio privato nell'età dell'Illuminismo*, ed. by G. Simoncini, Firenze, Olschki, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 67-92.

⁹⁹ For the English diplomatic representatives, the habit of housing *extra muros* is intermittently documented all throughout the XVIII century (M. WYNNE, *Some British Diplomats, some Grand Tourists and some students from Great Britain and Ireland in Turin in the eighteenth century*, "Studi piemontesi", 1, 1996, p. 147; R. Liston to Lord Minto, 18 September 1782, NLS, Ms 5527, folio 3v).

¹⁰⁰ A full-blown celebration, with fireworks, was given at Venaria (ASTR, Camerale Piemonte, Art.183. Conti fabbriche e fortificazioni, 1748, registro 15, p. 76, 16 novembre 1748: "Minusiere Gio Batt.a Ugliengo per giornate impiegate da Mastri, e boscamì provvisti per formar una prospettiva, e modello d'essa per fuochi di gioia fatti alla Veneria", L.507.2.4"; ivi, p. 88, "Bartolomeo Monticelli per aver dato il color d'oglio in diversi posti delle Fabriche R.e et ad una machina di fuochi di gioja, 30 novembre 1748, L.115.10").

¹⁰¹ SCLA, DR 18/28/6, 26 July 1747, "A fee at Superga for seeing the Convent".

¹⁰² P. BIANCHI, *Militari, banchieri, mercanti. Presenze protestanti nella Torino del Settecento*, in *Valdesi e protestanti a Torino. XVIII-XX secolo* (atti del convegno di Torino 12-13 dicembre 2003), ed. by A. Merlotti et al., Torino, Zamorani, 2005, pp. 39-63; D. CARPANETTO, *Divisi dalla fede. Frontiere religiose, modelli politici, identità storiche nelle relazioni tra Torino e Ginevra (XVII-XVIII secolo)*, Torino, Utet, 2009.

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churches, various chapels, seminars, and 28 of those "bad" and "popish" institutions, "nurseries of superstition" that were, in Hume's words, "modern convents"¹⁰³, not to mention the 2200-unit strong population of clerics, priests, nuns, was the capital of a catholic kingdom. A city whose daily life revolved around practices of devotion as well as many different kinds of official religious rites: the almanacs and journals of Turin marked the dates of the exposition of relics and gave detailed accounts of the most "solemn" processions¹⁰⁴; a city whose age was measured *ab urbe condita*, and also from the donation of the Holy Shroud: "dal preziosissimo donativo della Santiss. Sindone di Cristo, 296 [anni]"¹⁰⁵.

9. *High fever and extreme unction: the Turin malady*

Two months before Hume's arrival, in the Citadel of Turin Pietro Giannone, the imprisoned historian, dies of a "forte costipazione"; someone says after having received "in uno di que' giorni estremi della sua vita i Sacramenti della Chiesa Cattolica"¹⁰⁶. In 1748 Hume already knows "those harsh Winds of Calumny and Persecution" and that "Degree of Rancour, which is the most furious and implacable" and is called *Odium Theologicum*¹⁰⁷. In general, observes the *Natural History*, it is not unusual that men, "as soon as they became old and infirm", begin "to entertain apprehension" of a future state. Men, not Hume, who – says Boswell – "persisted in disbelieving a future state even when he had death before his eyes"¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰³ HUME, *Of the Populousness of Antient Nations*, p. 179 (ES 2.II.39, 398).

¹⁰⁴ *Gazzetta di Torino*, Num. XXXVI, *Seguito del Giornale / Del mercoledì 12. Giugno 1748*, p. 4 (n.n.), "Torino, Addì 12 giugno. L'ultimo giorno dell'ora scorse Feste di Pentecoste si è fatta dalla veneranda Confraternita dello Spirito Santo una solenne Processione per il Battesimo di due Neofiti Padre, e Figliuolo nati Ebrei della Città di Saluzzo, ove sono intervenuti per Padrini il Signor D. Emanuel di Valguarnera, e la Signora Marchesa di Lanzo Contessa della Rocca per uno, e per l'altro il Signor Marchese di Barolo, e la Signora Contessa Pron"; BRT, Ms St. Patria 932 - *Memorie del Cavaliere Orioles*, "25 [July 1748] Solenne Processione da S. Filippo alla Basilica Magistrale per S. Teodoro", "8. [September] S. M. e S. A. R. assistono alla Processione della B.V. a Superga"; The *Palmaverde* almanac (see following note) gives more dates: 6 June, *festa del Miracolo del SS. Sacramento*; 13 June, general procession in the morning; 16, 20, 23 June, 21 July, 8 September, other processions. Exposition of relics were held on 3 June, relics of St. Bonifacio in S. Maria di Piazza; 4 June, the body of S. Martiniano exhibited at the Metropolitan Church; 16 June, relics in St. Rocco; 14 July, the same, at SS. Sudario; 22 September, relics of S. Maurizio at the Royal Chapel.

¹⁰⁵ *Il corso delle stelle osservato dal pronostico moderno Palmaverde Almanacco Piemontese per l'anno bisestile 1748*, Torino, Stamperia Fontana, 1748, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ [L. PANZINI], *Vita di Pietro Giannone*, in *Opere Postume di Pietro Giannone*, Napoli, G. Gravier, 1777, t. II, p. 162.

¹⁰⁷ D. HUME, *Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Religion*, in *Philosophical Essays*, II.1-2, pp. 206-207; ID., *Of National Characters*, p. 7n (ES 1.21.6n.3, 201).

¹⁰⁸ D. HUME, *The Natural History of Religion*, in *A Dissertation on the Passions / The Natural History of Religion. A Critical Edition*, ed. by T. Beauchamp, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007, 12.24n.,

Everybody's got the fever in Turin. On arrival, Erskine's "illness" "detaind [...] some days" the mission in Styria¹⁰⁹; the General left his nephew "on the road", with "Mr Hume and two servants to take care of him"¹¹⁰. On departure, St. Clair "postponed his journey for a few days", his nephew "having lately been very much out of order and but just got over a violent fever"¹¹¹. Erskine and Grant, says Admiral John Forbes, "cannot get the better of their Agues"¹¹². Especially Grant is "almost in as bad a situation" as when he left England, even though he has done "every thing that it is possible to think to get rid of that cursed disorder" and "ride[s] out eight or ten miles every morning", and begins to "dispair [sic] of even enjoying the same state of health [he] did formerly". The air of Italy, he says, has not had better effect upon him than that of Ballindalloch¹¹³. At the end of July Villettes sums up: "The General and Mr. Hume have hitherto enjoyed their health perfectly well and find means to spend their time tolerably; But Sir Harry and Captain Grant have frequent relapses of their Zealand Ague and dare not flatter themselves to have got the better of it, As this is by no means a proper climate for removing such a Complaint"¹¹⁴.

Yet, according to Forbes, in May Hume is "troubled" with an "Indisposition": he is the "sleeping Philosopher" and even the Turin pretty women can not "keep his eyes open" (according to Charlemont they were "vacant and spiritless")¹¹⁵. Forbes doesn't know "how to account for it", and advises Hume "to get acquainted with a Jesuit and convince him that faith is superstition Religion Priestcraft" ("The jesuits – Wentworth observes in 1747 –

p. 75 n.81; J. BOSWELL, *An Account of My Last Interview with David Hume, Esq.*, in D. HUME, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. by N. Kemp Smith, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1981, p. 76. "Hume's persisting in his infidelity, when he was dying, – Boswell confesses – shocked me much": he had "reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain" (Actat.68, A.D. 1777). Johnson replies that Hume had "a vanity in being thought easy" and it is "more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease" (ibid.).

¹⁰⁹ HL 1.64, 131 ("Knittelfeldt in Stiria. 28th April"). Hume next lines are dated "Clagenfurt in Carinthia. May 4th".

¹¹⁰ J. St. Clair to T. Robinson, 29 April 1748 O.S. (i.e. 10 May 1748), London, BL, Ms Add 23828, folios 145-146, folio 1r (see T. Robinson to J. St. Clair, Vienna, 25 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25703, folio 181r).

¹¹¹ A. Villettes to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 23 November 1748 N.S., London, NA, SP 92 56. Unlike Villettes, St. Clair writes to Newcastle that he "set out from Turin on the 29th of Novr. N.S. having been detain'd there a lirtle longer than [he] intended at the Desire of the King of Sardinia, as I informd his Grace the Duke of Newcastle" (J. St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, Paris, 17 December 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 48v). Actually, he wrote: "[the King of Sardinia] express a very strong Desire, that I shou'd stay some few days longer, in expectation of a Letter arriving from Mons.r Ossorio [...] As I knew nothing was more agreeable to the King's Intentions than to please his Sardinian Majesty, even in Affairs of the smallest Consequence, I have consented to remain here the few days desir'd of me" (J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 November 1748 N.S., *ivi*, folio 48r).

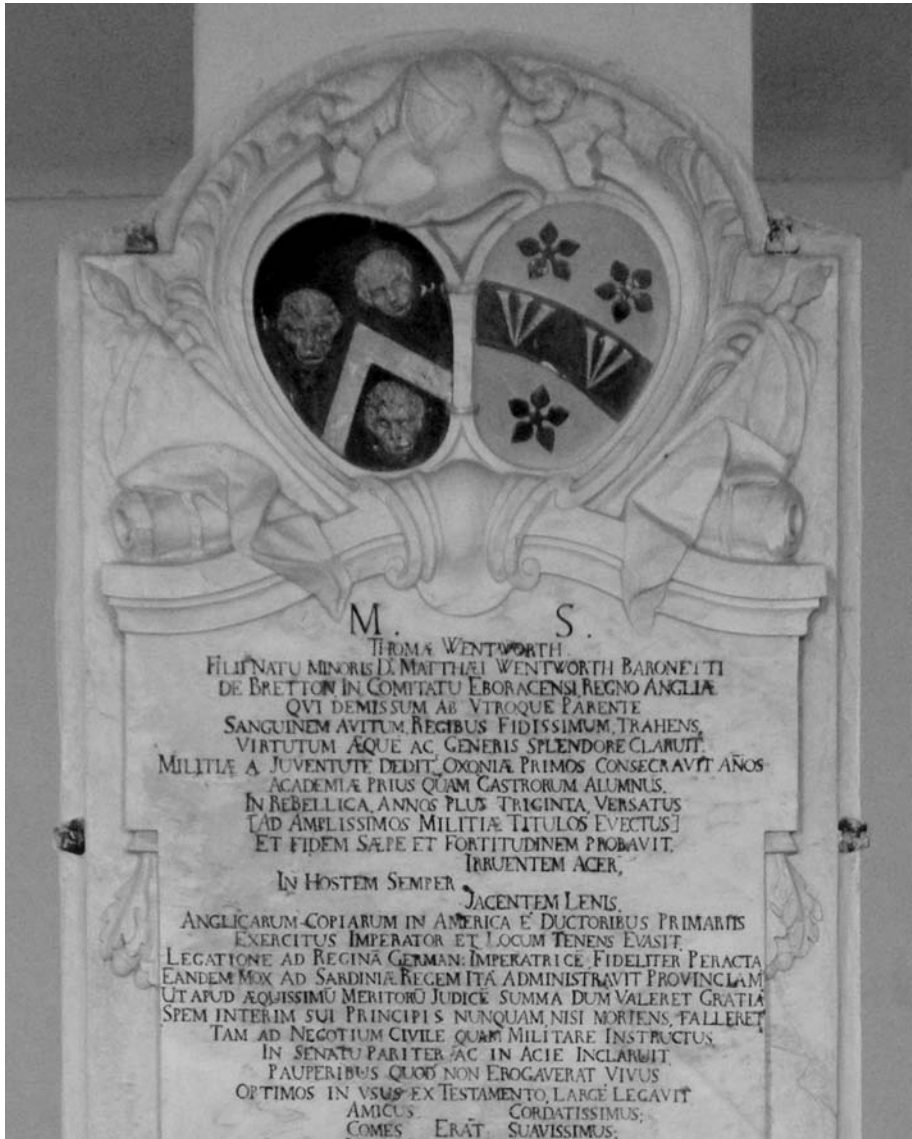
¹¹² J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 212v.

¹¹³ J. Grant to R. Grant of Tommore, Turin, 10 August 1748 N.S., BL, Ms Add 25409, 323rv.

¹¹⁴ A. Villettes a T. Robinson, Turin, 20 July 1748 N.S., BL, Ms Add 23827, 174-175, folio 2rv.

¹¹⁵ CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, folio 500.

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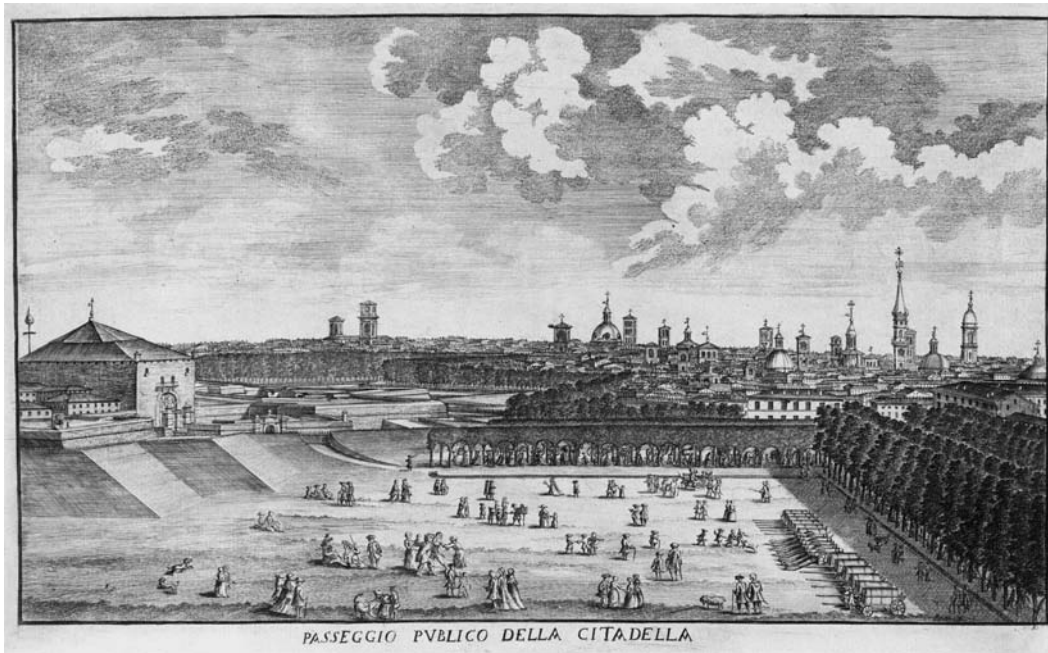


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1. Piedmontese sculptor, Funerary monument for Thomas Wentworth, circa 1748, detail, white *Foresto* marble, about cm 100 × 200; Torre Pellice, Waldensian Temple of Ciabas.
2. Pompeo Batoni, *Portrait of James Caulfeild*, 4th Viscount Charlemont, between 1753 and 1756, detail, Oil on canvas, cm 97.8 × 73.7; Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

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3. Giovanni Battista Borra, *Passeggio pubblico della Citadella*, etching, cm 33×47, from *Vedute principali di Torino. Parte prima*, 1749; Torino, Archivio Storico del Comune.

4. B. A. R[amelleiti]. (engraver), *Nuova pianta della Reale città di Torino*, etching, 1751, cm 36×37; Torino, Archivio Storico del Comune.

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TAVOLA ALFABETICA
DE' LUOGHI PRINCIPALI

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B Palazzo Reale
C Palazzo Reale
D Palazzo Reale
E Palazzo Reale
F Palazzo Reale
G Palazzo Reale
H Palazzo Reale
I Palazzo Reale
L Palazzo Reale
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N Palazzo Reale
O Palazzo Reale
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S Palazzo Reale
T Palazzo Reale
U Palazzo Reale
V Palazzo Reale
X Palazzo Reale
Y Palazzo Reale
Z Palazzo Reale



SERIE DE' VESCOVI, ED ARCIVESCOVI DELLA CITTA' DI TORINO,
Cogni Anno dal 1685 fino ad oggi.

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Questo Città è stata non per la sua bellezza, e nobiltà de' suoi Reali, e Cardinali, e Nobili, e non per la grandezza del suo Regno, e Impero, ma per la sua utilità, e commodità del suo Regno, e Impero, e per la sua grandezza, e nobiltà de' suoi Reali, e Cardinali, e Nobili, e per la sua utilità, e commodità del suo Regno, e Impero.

DE' REALI, Per Carlo Emanuele I. e II. da nome di Gio. B. A. A.

Emilio Mazza and Edoardo Piccoli "Disguised in scarlet". Hume and Turin in 1748

have little or no credit in the K. of Sardinias territories")¹¹⁶. In 1788 Norvell recalls that Hume "received Extreme Unction in a dangerous illness in Italy". Some years afterwards he changes his mind: "all this had happened at Nice", where Hume "professed [himself] a sincere Roman Catholic, confessed [himself] to the priests, declared [himself] a sincere penitent, got absolution, and even extreme unction". Hume was "much offended" by the story, "as he believed none knew" it, and answered in a huff: "I was in a high fever then and did not know what I said, or they did with me"¹¹⁷.

"There are few Instances – says Charlemont – where Strength of Mind has been Proof against Sickness, or triumphed over the lingering Fear of impending death, and its alarming Consequences"¹¹⁸. Yet, Hume's "Constancy" with regard to "his future Lot" was "liable to Suspicion" in only one instance in Italy:

While at Turin He was affected by a most violent Fever attended with its natural Symptoms, Delirium and Ravings. In the paroxisms of his Disorder He often talked, with much seeming Perturbation, of the Devil, of Hell and of Damnation, and one night, while his Nursetender happened to be asleep, He rose from his Bed, and made towards a deep well, which was in the Courtyard, with a Design, as was supposed, to drown himself.¹¹⁹

After his recovery the "Philosopher's Fears and Desperation" were the "Subject of Merriment among his Friends": they all "agreed in laughing" at them. Hume would have replied: "You Boobies [...] what would you have of a Madman? Do you suppose Philosophy to be proof against Madness? The Organization of my Brain was impaired, and I was mad as any Man in Bedlam". Following the *Treatise* and its "several moralists" ("Our character [...] appears best where artifice, fear, and policy have no place, and men can neither be hypocrites with themselves nor others") Charlemont answers: "Madness, like Drunkenness, will sometimes disclose latent Thoughts, which Reason has kept concealed". The "Derangement of his Understanding" forced Hume to reveal those "perturbation" and "Fears" that were caused by the "violent Fever" and the "Weakness of his Nerves"¹²⁰.

In Turin the sceptic Philosopher had "distinguished" the twenty years old Viscount "from among a Number of young Men who were then at the

¹¹⁶ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Princesa, Vado Bay, 26 May 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 188r; Wentworth, "Wentwo priivate memoirs" [sic], 8 October 1747, NLS, Ms 25707, folio 113r.

¹¹⁷ G. Norvell to A. Stenhouse, 1 March 1788, in *Early Responses to Hume's Life and Reputation*, vol. II, p. 203; G. N[ORVELL]., *Anecdotes of David Hume, Esq. By one who personally knew him*, "The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany", 19, June, 1802, pp. 430b-431b; see *Early Responses*, p. 207.

¹¹⁸ CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, folio 517.

¹¹⁹ Ivi, folio 518v.

¹²⁰ Ibid.; see *T* I.4.3.1, 219.

Emilio Mazza and Edoardo Piccoli "Disguised in scarlet". Hume and Turin in 1748

Academy": "He not only intended – says Charlemont – to honour me with his Friendship, but to bestow on me what was in his opinion the first of all Favours and Benefits by making me his Convert and Disciple". Yet Charlemont was "by no means an implicate follower of his Opinions" and in 1795 he proudly declares: "With David Hume for my early Friend, I have preserved my Religion unperverted"¹²¹.

10. *Many small fevers prevent a great one (they say)*

Before setting out for Turin, Hume accounts for "the most extraordinary adventure in the world". Lord Marchmont, "entirely employed in the severer studies", opened his eyes and saw a "fair nymph" of about sixteen. In a few days she was the Countess of Marchmont. And Hume optimistically remarks: "They say many small fevers prevent a great one. Heaven be praised, that I have always liked the persons & company of the fair sex: For by that means, I hope to escape such ridiculous passions"¹²².

Admiral Forbes, allows Hume, is "the most agreeable, sensible Sea-Officer", also because during the crossing the Admiral was "as sick as" the Philosopher¹²³. In July Forbes writes St. Clair that fever deprives Erskine and Grant of "the disposition and abilitys that are requisite for the service of the Ladys" and therefore throws "all their duty on the shoulders of the sleeping Philosopher"¹²⁴. In the first days in Turin, not even women could "keep his eyes open". – And Forbes knows "how pretty the woemen are at Turin" (according to Hervey in 1747 "all the pretty women of Turin" were collected at "Madame Cavalleri's assembly")¹²⁵. Yet, after one month, Forbes is able to congratulate Hume on the "attachement for the Countess", and offers his military advice: "it is not words alone please her, nor can he, with all the strength of his vast parts, solve problems half so fast as her immense capacity can receive them and her insatiable thirst of knowledge disposes her to lay down to him"¹²⁶. He also delivers a short mannish essay on sexual national characters:

if he can produce the glorious instrument for satisfying such unbounded desires, experienced Widows shall no longer have recourse to thick legged Irishmen, nor will we sacrifice more to the God Priapus, but with one accord the three Nations, forget-

¹²¹ CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, folio 500r; RIA, Ms 12.R.18, n. 82.

¹²² D. Hume to J. Oswald, London, 29 January 1748, *HL* 1.61, 110.

¹²³ *HL* 1.64, 114 ("Hague 3^d March 1748. N.S.").

¹²⁴ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 212v.

¹²⁵ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Princesa, Vado Bay, 26 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25703, folio 188r;

Augustus Hervey's Journal, p. 58 (the remark can be dated 10 October 1747).

¹²⁶ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 213r.

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ting all their jealousies, shall unite to raise him a statue on the altars of that forsaken Deity, for what less is due to the man who has triumphed over her who before had subdued the three Kingdoms and having tried them found them insufficient.¹²⁷

St. Clair's and friends are a family, "our Family", as Hume says, where he passes two years "agreeably, and in good company"; even though, it is said, Hume and Erskine "quarrelled, and would not exchange words" and Grant "had the difficult task of keeping up the conversation, while all four travelled in the same carriage, so as to conceal from General St. Clair the terms on which the other two stood"¹²⁸. St. Clair's and friends are not like priests, where "the gaiety, much less the Excesses of Pleasure, is not permitted"¹²⁹; they are not even like Hutcheson and Leechman that surprisingly supported the "accusation of Heresy, Deism, Scepticism, Atheism &c &c &c." against Hume and incredibly agreed that he was "a very unfit Person" for the chair of moral philosophy in Edinburgh¹³⁰. With his military "friends or confidants" Hume could be "free [...] *in seriis et in jocis, – amici omnium horarum*", as he declares with Vincent de Voiture, mixing up Quintilian and Svetonius¹³¹. Like in Paris in the 1760s, when he is Secretary to the Hertford's Embassy, Hume begin "to be at home" when they begin "to banter" and "tell droll Stories" of him¹³². And Hume's friend, the Reverend Jardine, writes him: "an inordinate Love of the fair Sex, as I have often told you with Tears, is one of those Sins, that always, even from your earliest Years, did most easily beset you. This is your weak Side, Satan has at last discovered it, & on this unguarded Quarter, he is now making his assault"¹³³.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ D. Hume to J. Home, 17 October 1746, *HL* 1.53, 97; *HL* 1.64, 132 ("Turin. June. 16th. 1748"); ID., *My Own Life*, *HL* 1, 3; J. Kay, "No. VIII. General James Grant of Ballindaloch", in ID., *A series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings*, Edinburgh, H. Paton, Carver and Gilder, 1838, vol. II., part II, p. 22.

¹²⁹ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 8n (*ES* 1.21.6n.3, 201).

¹³⁰ D. Hume to W. Mure, 4 August 1744, *HL* 1.24, 58.

¹³¹ D. Hume to J. Clephane, 18 June 1747, *HL* 1.56, 102; *Lettres & autres Oeuvres de Monsieur de Voiture*, Amsterdam, A. de Hoogenhuysen, 1697, letter 125, to Monsieur Costart, p. 218: "que la fortune nous donnera moyen quelque jour de passer le reste de nôtre vie l'un avec l'autre, & de vous avoir *in seriis jocisque amicium omnium horarum*"; Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*, 6.3.110: "Seriis iocisque pariter accommodato dictum est esse eum omnium horarum"); Svetonius (*De Caesaribus*, III Tiberius Nero Caesar, 42, "codicillis quoque *jucundissimos & omnium horarum amicos* professus"). Hume seems to have possessed Voiture's *Lettres* (2 vols, Ninevege, 1660) and *Oeuvres* (2 vols, Paris, 1729) (D.F. NORTON, M.J. NORTON, *The David Hume Library*, Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1996, p. 135). In the *History* Hume says that, like Balzac and Corneille, Voiture has "too much affected those ambitious ornaments, of which the Italians in general, and the least pure of the antients, supplied [him] with so many models" (D. HUME, *History of Great Britain. Vol. 1. Containing the Reigns of James I and Charles I*, Edinburgh, Hamilton, Balfour, and Neil, 1754, James I, Chap. VI, 1625, p. 137).

¹³² D. Hume to W. Roberston, Paris, 1 December 1763, *NHL*, 76.

¹³³ Rev. J. Jardine to D. Hume, Edinburgh, August [?] 1764, *HL* 2.V, 353. In April Hume tells Blair a story about Parisian women and allows him to communicate it to Jardine: "I hope it will refute

Back in Turin: Hume's "attachment" for the Countess and her recourse to "thick legged Irishmen" recall the Irish Charlemont and the Lady he was paying his court. St. Clair and Hume were always and impatiently begging for orders. They did not know how to regulate their conduct and dispose of themselves. In June St. Clair thinks he "may, every day, expect to be recall'd by his Majesty"¹³⁴ and "cannot foresee, after what manner, in the ensuing Peace, [he] can any way contribute to His Majesty's Service by a more quick and expeditious Journey from Turin to London"¹³⁵. In July he thinks that his "Stay any longer at Turin seems altogether useless for His Majesty's Service"¹³⁶. St. Clair's and Hume's "Trunks" were still on board of Forbes's ship in Vado Bay¹³⁷. The *Treatise* claims that "a traveller is always admitted into company, and meets with civility, in proportion as his train and equipage speak him a man of great or moderate fortune"¹³⁸. And Forbes seems to know it, when he writes:

your Trunks are welcome to remain on board my ship as long as you please, and my servants shall take the same care of them as of my own, but I must observe to you, and more especially [sic], to the new Created Beew Mr. Hume, that if they contain Lace Locks the air on the ship, and particularly that of the Bread room, where they are kept for want of room anywhere else, will infallibly tarnish them.¹³⁹

In those days Charlemont and Hume – say Charlemont's *Anecdotes* – were conversing on "the little Amusement which Turin afforded to a Man of Sense and Literature", and Hume, who did say the same thing about the courts of The Hague ("a Place of little or no Amusement [...] No Balls, no Comedy, no Opera") and Vienna ("no very great Amusement in this Place. No Italian Opera: No French Comedy: No Dancing")¹⁴⁰, laments that "from

all his idle Notions, that I have no turn for Gallantry & Gaiety, that I am on a bad footing with the Ladies, that my turn of Conversation can never be agreeable to them, that I never can have any Pretensions to their Favours &c &c &c. A Man in Vogue will always have something to pretend to with the fair Sex" (D. Hume to H. Blair *et al.*, Paris, 26 April 1764, *HL* 1.237, 438).

¹³⁴ J. St. Clair to T. Robinson, Turin, 9 June 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 36v.

¹³⁵ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 9 June 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 40v.

¹³⁶ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Newcastle, Turin, 18 July 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 44v.

¹³⁷ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, NLS, Ms 25703 "Italian Negotiations 1747", folio 212r. On the 16th of June N.S. (one month after his arrival) Hume has not yet got his "Baggage" (*HL* 1.64, 133, "Turin. June. 16th. 1748"). On the 29th of June N.S. St. Clair's "Baggage is at length arrived by the Crown" in Vado Bay, and Forbes "has taken it on board" his ship till the General gives his orders for "the manner by which" he will have it conveyed to him (J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado, 29 June 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 210r). On the 8th of July Forbes says that St. Clair's and Hume's "Trunks are welcome to remain on board" his ship as long as they please, and desire their instructions "in relation to them in case I should not return to England with the first ships" and their stay at Turin should be longer than they expect (J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, *ivi*, folio 212r).

¹³⁸ *T* 2.2.5.11, 361-362.

¹³⁹ J. Forbes to J. St. Clair, Vado Bay, 8 July 1748, NLS, Ms 25703, folio 212r.

¹⁴⁰ *HL* 1.64, 115 ("Hague. 10 March"); *HL* 1.64, 129-130 ("Vienna. 25 of April").

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the Want of Education among the Men, and from his small Acquaintance with the Women, his Time passed heavily and disagreeably"¹⁴¹. Charlemont was "intimately connected" with a Lady of "Good Sense, Wit, Beauty" and "comprehensive Reading". She was "about four and twenty" almost certainly an Italian "Countess" and probably named "Madam Duvernay". She was childless and nearly a widow, and "her complexion was that of the most lovely Brunette"¹⁴².

Charlemont brought Hume to her house and she made "a compleat Conquest" of him. Hume's repeated visits became "troublesome" and "nauseous". Hidden "behind the Curtain" Charlemont is the spectator of a "Comedy": the "ridiculous Farce" of the "Italian Greyhound" and the fat "Bear" in his "old, ugly, blubbering, fat, ungainly passion"¹⁴³. He accounts for Hume's "ridiculous" pants, sighs and groans in a "laughable" inarticulate French: "Ah, Madame. – Madame – J'etouffe avec l'Amour! [...] Chere Chere Dame – Je suis desolè – Abimè – aneanti!"¹⁴⁴. He observes Hume "quitting the Room in a Burst of blubbering Affliction, Tears trickling down his flabby cheeks"¹⁴⁵. As usual Hume is "the first to join in the laugh" against himself; and he makes a short observation, "in French also", which, he allows, "is not my Talent": "Cueillez, Milord, les Fleurs. – Cueillez les Fleurs. – Mais ne vous faites pas Jardinier"¹⁴⁶.

Was Charlemont one of those "young and careless" to whom, Hume says at the end of *My Own Life*, his company "was not unacceptable"? And the Countess one of those "modest women", in the company of whom he "took a particular pleasure" and by whose reception he "had no reason to be displeased"¹⁴⁷? Even Mandeville allows that the perfect sociable and benevolent man "should be very early used to company of modest women"¹⁴⁸.

II. *Where the Englishmen are*

All throughout the reign of Carlo Emanuele III (1730-1773), the British nationals in the Sardinian capital form a small and highly mobile community¹⁴⁹; mostly diplomats, travellers, or academists, generally rich (except for

¹⁴¹ CHARLEMONT, *Anecdotes of Hume*, folio 503r.

¹⁴² Ivi, folios 500r, 501r.

¹⁴³ Ivi, folios 503r-507r.

¹⁴⁴ Ivi, folio 507r.

¹⁴⁵ Ivi, folio 509r.

¹⁴⁶ Ivi, folio 511r.

¹⁴⁷ HUME, *My Own Life*, HL I, 7.

¹⁴⁸ MANDEVILLE, *Search into the Nature of Society*, p. 341.

¹⁴⁹ BIANCHI, *Militari, banchieri*; ID., *In cerca del moderno. Studenti e viaggiatori inglesi a Torino nel Settecento*, "Rivista storica italiana", 115, 3, 2003, pp. 1021-1051; recent studies – like D. ROCHE,

their servants, of course, that sometimes follow them from Britain), they scatter throughout the city in hotels, rented apartments, and exceptionally, whole palaces; if their passage is not too brief, they hire local personnel for their daily needs, they rent, or buy, horses and coaches, they go to see their (generally Genevan, and protestant) bankers¹⁵⁰, who sometimes rent houses for them. The abundant paper trail of notes and payments left by Wentworth at his untimely death can be seen as a typical example of what a foreign diplomat had to do, and buy, upon his settling in Turin. Wentworth's secretary, Duckett – who wrote his official letters, as Hume will do for St. Clair – also kept his account books. Should we see Hume doing the same for his general?

The Baconian principle of sequestering oneself "from the company of his countrymen"¹⁵¹ while travelling wasn't followed by the average Englishman in Turin. Correspondences and diaries tell us of very close relationships between Forbes' "three nations", that is, British, Irish and Scottish nationals, revolving around a few addresses: the ambassador's – or the resident's – lodgings (the resident rented an apartment, only ambassadors were expected to occupy entire buildings)¹⁵², one or two *conversazioni* in piedmontese palaces, and the Royal

La ville promise. Mobilité et accueil à Paris (fin XVII^{ème} - Début XIX^{ème} Siècle), Paris, Fayard, 2000 – try to compensate for the fact that most documents regarding foreigners entering Turin, such as hotel books, *registri* have been lost ("Registro de Forestieri, che giogliono in questa Città, e de loro alberghi" 1746, mentioned in ASTC, Archivio Alfieri, Mazzo 94).

¹⁵⁰ G.P. ROMAGNANI, *I mestieri del denaro fra norma e trasgressione. Negozianti, banchieri e ginevrinù nella Torino del Settecento*, in *Le regole dei mestieri e delle professioni. Secoli XV-XIX*, ed. by M. Meriggi, A. Pastore, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2000, pp. 152-175. One can mention the role of the Torras brothers, from Geneva, who acted as money-lenders both to piedmontese and foreign nationals (ASTR, Archivio notarile, notaio Mastrella, years 1742-1749): they rent a house for the Duke of Hamilton in august 1750 (National Register of Archives of Scotland, Douglas-Hamilton Family, Dukes of Hamilton and Brandon Archives, 332/C3/60), and another one for the English ambassador Stuart Mackenzie in 1758 (ASTC, Famiglia San Martino di Parella, m. 150. 7 december 1758; M. Cassetti, *Vicende storiche e architettoniche di Palazzo San Martino Provana di Parella già de Rossillon di Bernezzo in Torino*, Vercelli, Gallo Arti Grafiche, 2005). Wentworth, whose bankers were also Genevan (Dassier and De Lachaux), seems to take care personally for his rent on Marquise Pallavicini's palace and stables in 1747 (SCLA, DR 18/5/ 2943 "Recu des mains de Mons.r Leigh cinq cens Livres de Piémont pour le loyer de l'Apartment de feu Mons.r le General Wentworth pour un année jusqu'a la St. Jean prochaine, et trente neuf livres pour le loyer d'une Ecurie pour deux mois jusqu'au dernier de Decembre passé. A Turin ce 28. de Janv.r 1748. Louise Pallavicin Procuratrice").

¹⁵¹ "Let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places were there is good company of the nation where he travelleth", BACON, *Of Travel*, p. 113.

¹⁵² Villette's address in Turin in 1748 is unknown. A resident's pay was a fraction of that of an ambassador's (BL, Ms Add 32737 Newcastle papers. corrisp. 1754, folios 550-551), and not sufficient to cover the costs of a palace, such as the ones rented in Turin by the French ambassadors and by the English, when they had one, such as James Stuart Mackenzie in 1758 (see note 149) or as Lord Montstuart, who employed in the 1770s a staff of about 40 (BL, Ms Add 37083, folio 119). "Lord Bristol gives £500 a year for his house [in Turin], and has everything in it equal to that expense. What could anyone do who has only his appointments to live upon!", H. Mann to H. Walpole, 11 february 1758, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. XXI, ed. by W.S. Lewis, Oxford-New Haven, Yale University Press, 1960, p. 175.

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Academy, one of the most important European institutions for the education of the aristocracy, particularly favoured by the British¹⁵³. This is especially true in the years of the war of the Austrian succession: Englishmen "can never expect a more favourable reception [in Turin] than [...] in the present juncture", had observed in 1743 the English resident, Villette¹⁵⁴. And indeed – after a brief closure because of the war – the very expensive First Apartment of the Academy overflowed of young noble Englishmen and their tutors¹⁵⁵. Charlemont, accompanied by the eccentric classical scholar and tutor Richard Murphy, was among them; with the philosopher, he might have shared a passion for a Countess; certainly, he met Hume at the academy, and in private apartments, while planning, at court, for his "Constantinople project"¹⁵⁶: aside from the questions that arise upon its usefulness as a biographical source for Hume's life, we can consider the *Anecdotes of Hume* as one of the most interesting by-products of this contingency. "In travel, – says Bacon – that which is most of all profitable is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors"¹⁵⁷.

12. *Conjectural story (A digression on Hume and Montesquieu)*

Let us conjecture¹⁵⁸. In summer 1748 (as it actually happened in winter 1747) "un secrétaire de M. de Villette" passed through Geneva, "vit une feuille dans le comptoir du libraire", "le dit a quelq'un" in Turin, and accounted for the first volume of Montesquieu's *Esprit*, which was accomplished in mid March, especially Book XIV "Des lois, dans le rapport qu'elles ont avec la nature du climat"¹⁵⁹. Having to replace "Of Protestant Succession", Hume

¹⁵³ BIANCHI, *In cerca del moderno*; A. MERLOTTI, *Salotti in una città cosmopolita. Gentildonne e conversazioni nella Torino del secondo Settecento*, in *Salotti e ruolo femminile in Italia tra fine Seicento e primo Novecento*, ed. by M.L. Betri, E. Brambilla, Venezia, Marsilio, 2004, pp. 125-152. For 1744-1748, English sources mention the conversations at M.me de S.t Gilles and M.me Cavallari, and the habit, at least for academists, of having "coffee" at Count Salmour's, the director of the Academy.

¹⁵⁴ A. Villette to J. Clephane, Turin, 28 January 1743 N.S., NLS, GD 125/26/3, where Villette adds: "If there being at present none of your Countrymen at this Academy, neither English, Scotch, Irish, could be an inducement to determine you, I can assure you, it is now entirely clear of them" – a perfect Baconian experience.

¹⁵⁵ ASTR, Camerale, art. 216, Conti dell'Accademia Reale 1731-1798, m. 1, "Vol. Conti de Tesorieri della Reale Accademia delli anni 1748-1749-1750"; BIANCHI, "In cerca del moderno", p. 1032.

¹⁵⁶ C. Douglas to Lord Charlemont, Turin, 5 march 1749, RIA, Ms 12.R.9, n. 7; J.M. KELLY, *The Society of Dilettanti. Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2009, chap. 3.

¹⁵⁷ BACON, *Of Travel*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁸ See P.E. CHAMLEY, *The Conflict between Montesquieu and Hume. A Study of the Origins of Adam Smith's Universalism*, in *Essays on Adam Smith*, ed. by A.S. Skinner, T. Wilson, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 274-305; L. TURCO, *Hume e Montesquieu*, in *Montesquieu e i suoi interpreti*, ed. by D. Felice, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2005, pp. 45-65; S. SEBASTIANI, *I limiti del progresso. Razza e genere nell'Illuminismo scozzese*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008.

¹⁵⁹ Vernet à Montesquieu, 13 November 1747, MONTESQUIEU, *Correspondance*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Montesquieu*, ed. by M.A. Masson, tome III, Paris, Les éditions Nagel, 1955, p. 1099 (see CHAMLEY,

writes "Of National Characters" as an answer to Montesquieu's Book XIV (but also to Bodin, Arbuthnot and Dubos), and sends it to London (perhaps he receives, reads and corrects the proofs, and sends them back to the printer). If Hume composed "Of National Characters" after knowing of Montesquieu's volume, the letter to his brother must be antecedent to the essay. Hume's hesitations concerning the influence of moral causes (religion and government), which are contained in the letter, were suddenly solved in the essay (perhaps for strategic reasons); they were not, as we could imagine, Hume's second-thoughts from observation and experience¹⁶⁰.

Keep on conjecturing. In "Of National Characters" Hume constantly refers to Montesquieu without naming him: there is "only" one observation concerning the "Differences of Men in different Climates, on which we can

The Conflict between Montesquieu and Hume, p. 288 n.31); J. Vernet to Montesquieu, Genève, 16 March 1748, ivi, p. 1109 ("Enfin pourtant le premier tome est fini"); Montesquieu to Cerati, Paris, 28 March 1748, ivi, p. 1116 ("il aura deux volumes in-4°, dont il y en a un d'imprimé"); MONTESQUIEU, *De l'esprit des lois*, 2 vols, ed. by V. Goldschmidt, Paris, Garnier-Flammariion, 1979, vol. 1, pp. 373-388.

¹⁶⁰ According to *Of National Characters* the "genius" of a particular religion is "apt to mould the Manners of a People" and where the difference of religion "keeps two Nations, inhabiting the same Country, from mixing with each other", they will preserve "a distinct and even opposite Set of Manners for several Centuries" (HUME, *Of National Characters*, pp. 12, 16; *ES* 1.21.15, 205; *ES* 1.21.19, 207); according to the letter "Tis pretended, that the Difference is *always* sensible betwixt a Protestant & Catholic Country, thro'out all Germany". Yet, Hume observes, "perhaps there may be *something* in this Observation, tho it is not *every where* sensible": (*HL* 1.64, 125, "Ratisbon 2^d April", italics mine): the protestant Frankfort has "great Riches & Commerce" and people in the protestant Nuremberg are "handsome, well cloath'd & well fed", while in the catholic Ratisbon their aspect, as well as houses and buildings, are "well enough, tho not comparable to those of Nuremberg" (*HL* 1.64, 122, "Frankfort. 28th March"; *HL* 1.64, 124-125, "Ratisbon 2^d April"). According to *Of National Characters*, "where a very extensive Government has been establish'd for many Centuries, it spreads a national Character over the whole Empire, and communicates to every Part a Similitude of Manners": "The same national Character commonly follows the Authority of Government to a precise Limit or Boundary" (HUME, *Of National Characters*, pp. 11-12; *ES* 1.21.11, 204); according to the letter Styria is wild country and the Styrians are savage ("savage & deform'd & monstrous in their Appearance [...] the general Aspect of the People is the most shocking I ever saw [...] Their Dress is scarce European as their Figure is scarce human"); Carinthia is equally wild and the Carinthians are equally savage ("The Figure of the Carinthians is not much better than that of the Stirians"); Tyrol is wilder than Styria and Carinthia, but Tyroleans are humane ("the Aspect of the People is wonderfully chang'd [...] [they] are there as remarkably beautiful as the Stirians are ugly. An Air of Humanity, & Spirit & Health & Plenty is seen in every Face" (*HL* 1.64, 130-131, "Knittelfeldt in Stiria. 28th April"; *HL* 1.64, 131, "Clagenfurt in Carinthia. May 4th"; *HL* 1.64, 131-132, "Trent. 8th of May"). Yet, Hume remarks, savage Stirians and humane Tyroleans "are both Germans subject to the House of Austria": "it wou'd puzzle a Naturalist or Politician to find the Reason of so great and remarkable a Difference" (*HL* 1.64, 131-132, "Trent. 8th of May"). The "naturalist" would appeal to physical causes (but where the country is very wild, the inhabitants should be equally wild, and the Tyroleans should be wilder than the Stirians) and the "politician" to moral causes (but where the inhabitants are subject to the same government they should have the same character, and the Tyroleans should be as savage or humane as the Stirians). The same physical (wild country) and moral (Austrian government) causes take place in both countries, without having the same effect. For the Stirians Hume suggests: "One wou'd think, that as this was the great Road, thro which all the barbarous Nations made their Irruptions into the Roman Empire, they always left here the Refuse of their Armies before they enterd into the Enemies Country; and that from thence the present Inhabitants are descended" (*HL* 1.64, 130-131, "Knittelfeldt in Stiria. 28th April").

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repose any Weight", says Hume. It is the "vulgar" observation that "People in the northern Regions have a greater Inclination to strong Liquors, and those in the southern to Love and Women". We can explain the difference, he allows, by "a very probable *physical Cause*": the northern frozen and the southern inflamed blood¹⁶¹. Liquors and women refer to Montesquieu's chapters "Combien les hommes sont différents dans les divers climats" and "Des lois qui ont rapport à la sobriété des peuples", where he observes the same difference and explains it from physical causes¹⁶². Hume first acknowledges the fact ("The only observation [...]") and allows its explanation from physical causes ("One can assign a very probable *physical Cause* [...]")¹⁶³. Then he first offers his own alternative explanation ("Perhaps too, the Matter may be accounted for by *moral causes*"): rarity of liquors in the north, nakedness of bodies in the south¹⁶⁴. He denies the fact ("Perhaps too, the Fact is false, that Nature has [...] distributed these different Inclinations to the different Climates"): the ancient Greeks used to drink and the modern Muscovites were jealous – "if Jealousy be regarded as a Proof of an amorous Disposition"¹⁶⁵. Finally, allowing the fact ("But supposing the Fact true, that

¹⁶¹ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 24 (ES 1.21.30, 213).

¹⁶² MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIV, II, pp. 373-376; X, pp. 381-383. Love in the south (ivi, XIV, II, p. 376) and its physical cause (ivi, XIV, II, pp. 373-376); strong liquors in the north (ivi, II, p. 376; X, pp. 381-382) and their physical cause (ivi, X, p. 381). Montesquieu speaks of "fibres", "cœur" and "sang", "partie aqueuse du sang" and "transpiration des liquides" (ivi, XIV, II, pp. 372-376; X, p. 381); Hume's "very probable *physical Cause*" is blood: in the southern warm regions blood is inflamed and people have an inclination to love; in the northern cold regions it is frozen and people have an inclination to liquors (HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 24; ES 1.21.30, 213).

¹⁶³ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 24 (ES 1.21.30, 212). Hume follows the same strategy with regard to conquests and courage: "Most Conquests have gone from North to South". Some explain it from physical causes ("thence it has been infer'd, that the northern Nations possess a superior Degree of Courage and Ferocity"). Hume first displays his explanation from moral causes ("But it would have been juster to have said, that most Conquests are made by Poverty and Want upon Plenty and Riches"), finally he seems to deny the fact: "In general, we may observe, that Courage, of all national Qualities, is the most precarious; because it is exerted only at Intervals, and by a few in every Nation" (ivi, pp. 22-23; ES 1.21.26-28, 211-212). Montesquieu had claimed that in the northern cold countries people have strength and courage, as the greater force of blood and heart causes "plus de courage" (MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIV, II, p. 374).

¹⁶⁴ HUME, *Of National Characters*, pp. 24-25; ES 1.21.31, 213. With regard to genius and Bacon's and Berkeley's explanations (the inhabitants of the south are "more ingenious" than those of the north; yet, where the inhabitant of the cold northern climate is ingenious, he "rises to a higher Pitch than can be reached by the southern Wits"), Hume says: "I believe this Remark may be allow'd just, when confin'd to the *European Nations*, and to the present Age, or rather to the preceding one: But then I think it may be accounted for by moral Causes" (ivi, p. 20; ES 1.21.24, 209-210).

¹⁶⁵ Ivi, pp. 25-27; ES 1.21.32-33, 214-15. As a proof that people drink in the warm south Hume says that "in *France* and *Italy* no Body ever drinks pure wine, except in the greatest Heats of Summer; and indeed, it is then almost as necessary, in order to recruit the Spirits, evaporated by Heat, as it is in *Sweden*, during the Winter, in order to warm the Bodies congeal'd by the Rigour of the Season" (ivi, p. 26; ES 1.21.32, 214). Is this an Italian remark? While Montesquieu says that the Muscovite, as a northern man, is almost insensible to pain ("il faut écorcher un Moscovite, pour lui donner du sentiment", MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIV, II, p. 375), Hume says that "no People were more jealous than the

Nature [...]”), Hume limits the conclusion that can be drawn: “we can only infer, that the Climate may affect the grosser and more bodily Organs of our frame”¹⁶⁶. Here he seems to join Montesquieu’s conclusion in Book XIX: “Plusieurs choses gouvernent les hommes [...] La nature et le climat dominent presque seuls sur les sauvages”¹⁶⁷. Hume replaces Montesquieu’s “sauvages” with the more savage “Organs” of man. At the end of the essay Hume shows that he can (with a little irony) “subtilize and refine upon the point”: “Nations, in very temperate Climates, stand the fairest Chance for all Sorts of Improvement; their Blood not being so inflam’d as to render them jealous, and yet being warm enough to make them set a due Value on the Charms and Endowments of the Fair Sex”¹⁶⁸.

On 10th of April 1749 Hume writes a long letter to Montesquieu, where he says he had “lu” the *Esprit* “l’automne passé en Italie avec tant de plaisir et de profit”, and delivers him “quelques réflexions” he made “en lisant” the work¹⁶⁹. The essay “Of National Characters” would be the first of Hume’s 1749 reflections on the *Esprit* (none of them refer to book XIV and XIX)¹⁷⁰;

Muscovites, before their Communication with *Europe* had somewhat alter’d their Manners in this Particular” (HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 27; *ES* 1.21.33, 214-215).

¹⁶⁶ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 27; *ES* 1.21.34, 215. With regard to “Candour and Sincerity” and Bentivoglio’s explanation (the Flemish and Germans are “a candid sincere People”, the Spaniards and Italians are not such), Hume says: “I am to think, that this has happened by Accident”, since the ancient Roman, as well as the modern Turks, are “a candid sincere People”: “But if we will needs suppose, that this Event has arisen from fixt Causes, we may only conclude from it, that all Extremes are apt to concur, and are commonly attended with the same Consequences” (ivi, p. 22; *ES* 1.21.25, 211). According to Montesquieu in the “climats du nord” people have “beaucoup de sincérité et de franchise”, as the greater force of blood and heart causes “plus de franchise” (MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIV, II, pp. 374, 376).

¹⁶⁷ MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIX, IV, p. 461: “Plusieurs choses gouvernent les hommes, le climat, la religion, les lois, les maximes du gouvernement, les exemples des choses passées, les moeurs, les manières, d’où il se forme un esprit général qui en résulte. A mesure que, dans chaque nation, une de ces causes agit avec plus de force, les autres lui cèdent d’autant” (ibid.). We do not know if Hume knew this chapter in August 1748. He does not mention it in his 1749 reflections on the *Esprit*, but he possibly recalls it in the moral *Enquiry*: “The Laws have, or ought to have, a constant Reference to the Constitution of Government, the Manners, the Climate, the Religion, the Commerce, the Situation of each Society. A late Author of great Genius, as well as extensive Learning, has prosecuted this Subject at large, and has establish’d, from these Principles, the best System of political Knowledge, that, perhaps, has ever yet been communicated to the World” (D. HUME, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, London, A. Millar, 1751, 3.2.34, pp. 54-55).

¹⁶⁸ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 28 (*ES* 1.21.35, 215). Here Hume seems to dialogue with Montesquieu’s remark on love and “climats tempérés” (MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit*, vol. I, XIV, II, p. 376).

¹⁶⁹ D. Hume to Montesquieu, London, 10 Avril 1749, *HL* 1.65, 133 (Montesquieu, *Correspondance*, p. 1217). Hume says that Montesquieu had sent him (a 1749?) “exemplaire de l’*Esprit des lois*”, which he has not yet received, and that in his “citations” he will use “l’édition in-quarto de Genève” (ibid.). The first quarto edition of the *Esprit* appears at Genève at the beginning of November 1748. Hume’s *Three Essays*, and the third edition of the *Essays*, are advertised on the “Daily Advertiser” (“this day is published”) the 18th of November 1748 Old Style, namely 29th of November New Style.

¹⁷⁰ Hume does not say when he has done and written his reflections. Since he writes “l’*Esprit des lois*, que j’avois lu l’automne passé en Italie” and “quelques réflexions que j’ai faites en lisant votre ouvrage”, we may conjecture that he first reads the 1748 edition and makes his reflections (for the early

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it would be Hume's reflection on Book XIV. And the "Vulgar" Observation, the only one "in which we can repose any Weight", would be Montesquieu's. And Montesquieu would have understood all this. When he answers to Hume's "belle lettre", instead of talking of his "réflexions si judicieuses & si sincères", Montesquieu would rather talk about Hume's "belle dissertation" that ascribes "une beaucoup plus grande influence aux causes morales qu'aux causes physiques". So he ironically remarks: "il m'a paru – autant que je suis capable d'en juger – que ce sujet est traité à fond, quelque difficile qu'il soit à traiter, & écrit de main de maître & rempli d'idées & de réflexions très-neuves"¹⁷¹. Then he moves to "un autre ouvrage", the *Philosophical Essays*: "vous maltraitez un peu l'ordre eclesiastique [...] [nous] n'avons pas pu entièrement vous aprouver; nous nous sommes contentés de vous admirer. Nous ne crûmes pas que ces MM. furent tels, mais nous trouvâmes fort bonnes les raisons pour qu'ils dussent être tels"¹⁷².

Is Hume referring (also) to Montesquieu's *Esprit* when he says that some ("others") account for the national characters from physical causes, namely "those qualities of the Air and Climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the Temper"? When he declares that "if we run over the Globe, or revolve the Annals of History, we shall discover every-where signs of a Sympathy or Contagion of Manners, none of the influence of Air or Climate", also because "physical Causes have no discernible Operation on the human Mind"? And when he finally adds in 1770: "it is a maxim in all philosophy, that causes, which do not appear, are to be considered as not existing"¹⁷³? We can (only) conjecture all this.

The difference between northern liquors and southern love is really quite a "vulgar" one, like its explanation from physical causes. Hume says he has read the *Esprit* in autumn; on 31st of October 1748 Charles Delon was bringing the volume from Geneva to Turin ("il est porteur du livre intitulé *L'esprit des Loix*"): the Genevan banker Joseph Bouer was offering it to his Excellence the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, Gorzegno¹⁷⁴. In 1749 Montesquieu

edition "en grand papier en feuilles", see J. Vernet to Montesquieu, 4 November 1748, *Correspondance*, 422, pp. 1141, 1143) and that, in 1749, he writes down his 1748 reflexions making use in his "citations [...] de l'édition in-quarto de Genève", which correspond to *De l'Esprit des Loix*, Genève, Barillot, & Fils, 2 vols, in-4, without date (1748).

¹⁷¹ Montesquieu to D. Hume, Bordeaux, 19 May 1749, in Montesquieu, *Correspondance*, p. 1230.

¹⁷² Ivi, pp. 1230-1231.

¹⁷³ HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 2 (ES I.21.2, 198); ivi, p. 11 (ES I.21.9-10, 203-204); D. HUME, *Of National Characters, in Essays and Treatises on several Subjects. A New Edition*, 4 vols, London, T. Cadell, Edinburgh, A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, 1770, vol. 1, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, p. 253 (ES I.21.9, 203). For "Sympathy or Contagion" see Hutcheson's *Inquiry*, I.6.12, p. 85.

¹⁷⁴ J. Boeur to Gorzegno, Geneva, 30 October 1748, ASTC, 260407, "Lettere Ministri", Ginevra, mazzo 3, "Lettere Orig.li dell'Agente Bover al Ministro", 1748-1753.

has some "nouvelles d'Italie sur l'Esprit": "dès qu'il parut à Turin, le roi de Sardaigne le lut; il ne m'est pas non plus permis de répéter ce qu'il en dit; je vous dirai seulement le fait: c'est qu'il le donna pour le lire à son fils, le prince de Savoie, qui l'a lu deux fois"¹⁷⁵.

Hume's essay was probably published about the 29th of November 1748. Yet, Hume had already discussed national characters in the *Treatise*, where he explains "the great uniformity we may observe in the humours and turn of thinking of those of the same nation". Like "Of National Characters", the *Treatise* appeals to sympathy rather than to physical causes: "'tis much more probable, that this resemblance arises from sympathy, than from any influence of the soil and climate, which, tho' they continue invariably the same, are not able to preserve the character of a nation the same for a century together"¹⁷⁶. As Hume says in 1745: "What I have said above consists of Facts, which I know: The rest is only my own Conjecture"¹⁷⁷.

13. *Mere matters of fact*

So, what about Hume in Turin? According to Greig's often neglected biography "we hear no more of him from any source till April 1749"¹⁷⁸. A few things we know for certain, besides the changeable aim of the mission. Hume arrived in Turin "about eight days after" St. Clair, about 15th of May (St. Clair reaches Milan on 6th of May, Hume 13th)¹⁷⁹. He wrote St. Clair's letters and copied them into the letter book. He was employed in examining the Sardinian documents. He met Charlemont and his tutor Murphy, who will send him a cipher in the late 1760s¹⁸⁰. His relationship with the ladies, his health and religious views were the object of mirth. He read Montesquieu. He sets out from Turin on 29th of November. On 15th of December he arrives

¹⁷⁵ Montesquieu to the abbé Venuti, Paris, 22 July 1749, in *Correspondance*, p. 1248.

¹⁷⁶ *T* 2.1.11.2, 316-317 (see *T* 2.1.11.5, 318; *T* 2.3.1.10, 403); see HUME, *Of National Characters*, p. 9 (*ES* 1.21.9, pp. 202-203; *ivi*, p. 11 (*ES* 1.21.10, p. 204). The "contagion" image ("makes us enter deeply into each other's Sentiments, and cause like Passions and Inclinations to run, as it were by Contagion, thro' the whole Club or Knot of Companions" (*ivi*, p. 9; *ES* 1.21.9, p. 202) was already in the *Treatise*: "the passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts" (*T* 3.3.3.5, 605).

¹⁷⁷ D. Hume to J. Johnston, 27 November 1745, *HL* 1.33, 78.

¹⁷⁸ J.Y.T. GREIG, *David Hume*, New York, Oxford, University Press, 1931, p. 159; see E.C. MOSSNER, *A Military Embassy*, in *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 207-220.

¹⁷⁹ J. St. Clair to T. Robinson, Turin, 8 June 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 36v; J. St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, Turin, 11 May 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folio 24v; *HL* 1.64, 132 ("Cremona 12th of May": "We lye to morrow at Milan").

¹⁸⁰ E. Murphy to D. Hume, Dublin, 2 June 1767, *Letters of Eminent Persons addressed to David Hume*, ed. by J.H. Burton, Edinburgh, William Blackwood and Sons, 1849, XXVII, pp. 171-173.

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in Fontainebleau, where he probably "spent an hour or two in visiting the Palace" and certainly stayed "in the same Inn" with the Pretender's son ("by his rash Attempt in Britain many of his Friends & Followers lost their Lives & Fortunes, and those who had been so lucky as to escape to France [...] he has now ruin'd their Fortunes by his unaccountable Behaviour, which seems equally void of Temper & of common Sense"). On 17th of December he was in Paris, where he stays at least "a few days" and possibly lodged "in the same *hotel* with an ambassador from Tunis"¹⁸¹.

Since the last item in the letter book is dated "London – of January 1748/9", while the dispatched letter (not in Hume's handwriting) is dated "London the 9th day of January", we do not even know when Hume did arrive in London and whether he remained there until April 1749¹⁸². As he puts it at the end of his "sort of Journal": "I say nothing of Milan or Turin or Piemont: Because I shall have time enough to entertain you with Accounts of all these¹⁸³. Tho you may be little diverted with this long Epistle, you ought at least to thank me for the Pains I have taken in composing it. I have not yet got my Baggage"¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸¹ J. St. Clair to the Duke of Bedford, Paris, 17 December 1748 N.S., NLS, Ms 25708, folios 48v-49r (the original is dated "Paris 18th of December 1748 N.S.", NA, SP 92/58); HUME, *The Natural History of Religion*, 12.6, p. 67 (see also *ivi*, 12.4, pp. 66-67).

¹⁸² J. St. Clair to H. Pelham, "London the – of January 1748/9", NLS, Ms 25708, folios 49v-51v (the letter does not occur in the "List of Letters Turin 1748", *ivi*, folio 3); J. St. Clair to H. Pelham, "London the 9th [inserted] day of January 1748/9", London, NA, T 1 334, folio 22r-23v. The letter, which has the mark "Treasury Chambers", does not seem to be in St. Clair's handwriting, the last sentence excepted. Like the inserted date at the end ("9th"), this sentence is written in black ink and is in St. Clair's handwriting.

¹⁸³ These pictures of Hume and Turin, delivered in a rambling way, belong to a longer list of longer pictures, delivered in the same way, which will compose a brief book on Hume and Turin (soon).

¹⁸⁴ HL 1.64, 132-133 ("Turin. June. 16th. 1748").