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WILLIAM ROBERTSON AND DAVID HUME: THREE LETTERS

The relationship between David Hume and his fellow Scottish historian William Robertson has always seemed one-sided. Despite the existence of fifteen letters to Robertson in the standard volumes of Hume's correspondence,¹ Hume scholars have long had reason to regret the lack of **a** single extant letter from Robertson to Hume. None are to be found, for example, where one would most expect them to be -- in the Royal Society of Edinburgh, alongside the letters to Hume from various other Moderate clergymen and literati in Robertson's circle, such as Hugh Blair and Adam Ferguson. Fortunately, however, two of Robertson's letters to Hume (numbered II and III below) have now turned **up** where one would **not** expect them to be -- among Robertson's own correspondence in the Robertson-Macdonald Papers, National Library of Scotland.² **They** are not mere drafts, such as one is accustomed to find among an author's private papers; rather, they are autograph signed letters that appear to have actually been posted.³ How and when they found their way back to Robertson's personal papers, and what became of the rest of Robertson's letters to Hume, are questions open to speculation.⁴ For the moment we are grateful for the letters we now have, neither of which is known to have been published before in whole or in part. Nor **has** Hume been identified before as the recipient of either of these letters, though internal evidence makes **it** clear that he was.

Both letters date from the late 1760s, when Hume was living in London and Robertson was at the peak of his multi-faceted career in Edinburgh as university Principal, parish minister, ecclesiastical leader, and man of letters. The first of **them**, dated 27 March 1767, was sent to Hume in his capacity as under-

secretary of state in the Northern Department (an office he held from February 1767 to January 1768). It is plainly a reply to a letter of 19 March, in which Hume had discussed three topics to which Robertson was responding:⁵ Robertson's efforts to secure a military chaplaincy for a certain Scottish minister (evidently named Brodie); Conway's role in the famous dispute between Hume and Rousseau; and the public response to Adam Ferguson's newly published Essay on the History of Civil Society. In addition Robertson addresses a matter that Hume had apparently broached with him at some earlier time: the attempt to find a suitable Scottish church to which Hume might obtain a crown presentation for his nephews' tutor, the Rev. Christopher Tait. The letter concludes on a note of admiration that is characteristic not only of Robertson but of most of Hume's other "Protestant Pastors" in Scotland.⁶

The second letter to Hume, dated 31 January 1769, is chiefly concerned with the forthcoming publication of Robertson's History of Charles V and the French translation of it by J.-B.-A. Suard -- subjects that had been treated in two letters from Hume to Robertson of autumn 1768.⁷ It also contains a strong recommendation for a bright young Scottish writer (in both the legal and literary senses of that term) who would one day become Robertson's most vitriolic critic: Gilbert Stuart. On the personal side, there is encouragement for the now unemployed Hume to return to Edinburgh, as he was then threatening to do, after his "great glut of society" at Paris and London, and there are allusions in the closing paragraph to Hume's part in introducing his friend to polite society when Robertson had visited London to arrange the publication of Charles V in the spring of 1768.

To these two letters from Robertson we have prefixed a third from earlier in the same decade, one not actually addressed to Hume but largely about him.⁸ Robertson wrote it to their common friend Gilbert Elliot (later Sir Gilbert Elliot) on 8 March 1762, two days before the Town Council elected Robertson principal of Edinburgh University. The first paragraph deals with the principalship and relates to Hume only indirectly, as we point out in a footnote. The second paragraph, however, contains interesting reflections on Hume's shortcomings as a historian and his sense of frustration at being passed over for preferment while his fellow Scottish literati prospered during the Bute era. In our notes we draw attention to other contemporary comments on Hume the historian.

The three letters are reproduced here just as Robertson wrote them, by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland. All manuscript sources cited in the notes below are in the possession of the National Library unless otherwise stated. We wish to thank the Keeper of Manuscripts, Dr. T.I. Rae, for his interest and assistance.

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I. ROBERTSON TO [ELLIOT]

Dear Sir

After having teased you so often of late with sollicitations & recommendations I am happy in writing in a letter to you which will give you no other trouble but that of reading it. I have had so many convincing proofs of your friendship & attention to my welfare, that were I to express all I feel, I should write in a strain very different from that which I am sure **you** expect. **As you** can judge how agreeable my present situation, & the employment destined for me, are to my wishes & taste of life, I leave you to form some notion of the sentiments of gratitude & respect I bear to those who have placed me in such agreeable circumstances. And now that the affair of the Principality is fixed (for my election will take place on **wednesday**)⁹ I am happy not on my account alone, for if the recommendation had come in favour of our friend Ferguson I can now say with more peremptory confidence than I thought proper in my **last**,¹⁰ the measure could not have been executed, & must have given all the Clergy an impression of the present administration which I should have been sorry for many reasons to see them entertain. As matters now stand, every thing will go quietly,¹¹ & I have the satisfaction to find that what has been determined by my Superiors, is not condemned by my countrymen.

As to the work which I am to **undertake**,¹² I have an awfull idea of its immensity. But I am accustomed to labour, & can submit to it. The object is a great one to me, both as to reputation, & gain. I shall be in a situation more respectable than any man of our Church ever was,¹³ & I know that nothing so considerable can be acquired without much industry. The subject is interesting, & our friend David is the

only man whom one can consider as a Rival. You know the high opinion I have of his genius, & of the manner in which he executed his first volumes. But the last volumes are both negligent in the composition, & he hath bestowed no great degree of labour in researches of any **kind**.¹⁴ His manner of writing & mine are very different in many circumstances[.] Our Systems with regard to several points will be **so** likewise, **so** that **two** year hence (when Charles V will have received the finishing hand) I shall enter the field non ita certandi cupidus,¹⁵ as in hopes that both of us may write the same story, & both possess merit of different kinds, & have our separate admirers, without any cause of disgust between ourselves.¹⁶ I have observed David of late somewhat peevish at being altogether overlooked under a Monarch who is known to countenance letters, & though by the nature of his writings, he has made it impossible, (I am afraid) to bestow on him such marks of approbation **as** his talents deserve, he himself you know is not sensible of the impropriety of his own conduct, & I can easily perceive, though he never says so directly, that he reckons himself one of those Authors who have not received their fame. It was this made me mention, in some letter to you, my apprehension that what I was to undertake might give him pain. I shall take care when the intended establishment is executed in my favour, & the design of it comes to be **known**,¹⁷ to make our common friends talk to him in a strain which may make him easy, & as he is perfectly good-natured I hope it will be succesfull. I beg Pardon for the length of this letter. I am with great respect

Dear Sir
Edinb^r 8th March

1762

Your most obliged &
affectionate Servant
William Robertson

As to the recommendation I troubled you with in favour of M Lindsay,¹⁸ I hear M^r Stuart of Ashkirk grows better, & I am glad of it, for I am told he is a good sort of man.¹⁹

11. ROBERTSON TO [HUME]

My Dear Sir

I am truly much obliged to you for your attention to my solicitation in favour of M^r Brodie.²⁰ I have it much at heart to serve him, & I wish it may be in your power to be of any use to him. I have not been unmindful of the small affair you gave in charge to me with respect to Tait the Preacher.²¹ I have got notice of two Churches which are likely to be soon vacant, & in the gift of the Crown. The first is Ednam in the Presbytery of Kelso. The present incumbent is dying of a confirmed consumption²² Sir Alex^r Donne has a considerable interest in that parish, but I believe does not reside in it.²³ But as you are acquainted with the geography of that part of the country,²⁴ you will possibly know this, & likewise whether there be any other Heritor of note in the parish.²⁵ Lord Marchmont has settled many of the kirks in that part of the country, but as Ednam is not situated in the Merse perhaps his power or pretensions do not reach so far.²⁶ The other kirk is Robertson in the presbytery of Selkirk.²⁷ There is no Gentleman of note in that parish. M^r Elliot of Borthwick-brae, one of Sir Gilb. Elliots voters does indeed reside there;²⁸ but if you can procure the presentation, my recommendation of M^r Tait will have considerable weight with M^r Elliot, I think you may have as good a chance of securing one of these kirks as most that can fall

vacant, for I see no body who has any interest or title to interfere with you.

I am much delighted with the success of Fergusson's book. Dont you acknowledge, now, that your panic with respect to it was excessive?²⁹ It takes very well here, but many people complain of its being obscure. M^r Conway's conduct with respect to Rousseau was very proper, & gives me an high idea of him.³⁰ I hope Rousseau himself will know both M^r Conway's part & yours in the matter. It will humble his proud heart. How much must he feel, after what he has done! Pray write Blair or me as often as you are at leisure. You know how much we Provincials love to hear from the capital, nor do you doubt, I know, of our being happy at all times to hear from you. I ever am

My Dear Sir

Yours most affectionately

College of Ed^t

William Robertson

March 27th 1767

I shall take care to inform you when any of the two kirks actually fall vacant.

Xi. ROBERTSON TO [HUME]

My Dear Sir

It is now a long time since I had the pleasure of writing to you. Besides my constant labour in preparing for the press & correcting it,³¹ I have had bad health to plead as an excuse. The truth is this place affords no materials for correspondence, & you &

I are rather too old to discuss any point in the way of familiar epistle, & too wise to sit down to write witty letters. I am now happy in having got to the end of my task, & expect the publication with some impatience, but more sollicitude. Several circumstances have concurred in raising such expectations of my book, that I can not help being afraid that it will not come up to what the Publick has prepared itself to receive.³² But I have done my best, & must abide my chance.

Have you heard what progress M. Suard has made?³³ He may be a good writer, but he is rather deficient in politeness. I have written to him twice, & in as civil terms as I could employ, but he has never made me any return, which as I am an Original & he but a translator, is a great neglect of my superior dignity.³⁴

The report of your intention to return hither grows stronger every day.³⁵ I hope it is not groundless. I do think that a retreat here for a year or two will be agreeable after that great glut of society which you have had.

When the time of Charles V{'s} appearance is fixed I shall direct Strahan to send you a copy, which I beg of you to accept as a testimony of my friendship & respect.

You have just now with you M^r Gilbert Stuart the Author of the Essay on the English Constitution.³⁶ He is a modest, ingenious & high-spirited young man. He has been regularly educated here as a Writer (not an Author) with Jo. Mackenzie,³⁷ but he has no great relish for that business. He wishes to fix in London, & both his education & integrity fit him for any station where something must be done, Sir Gilbert Elliot is his natural patron, & disposed to serve him. I wish you could likewise give him your aid. Converse with Sir Gilbert on the subject.³⁸ I have **known** the

young man long, & think there are few people who have gone from this place, who will do so much credit to those who patronize them.³⁹

I am very proud of being remembered by my Lord & Lady Holderness. ⁴⁰ I often recollect their goodness to me with gratitude & respect. I beg you would remember me to all the people with whom you accustomed me to live. I ever am

My Dear Sir

Yours most affectionately

College of Ed^r

William Robertson.

Jan^{ry} 31st 1769

1. There are fourteen letters from Hume to Robertson in The Letters of David Hume, 2 vols., ed. J.Y.T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932) and another one (along with fuller versions of three of the letters published by Greig) in New Letters of David Hume, ed. Raymond Klibansky and Ernest C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954). Robertson is also among the five people to whom Hume sent his "common Letter" of 6 April 1765, in Letters, 1: 495-99.
2. MS 3942, fols. 56-57 and 75-76.
3. Both letters show signs of having been folded to the size of eighteenth-century envelopes (now lost) and of having been corrected in several places with a bleaching fluid that surely would not have been wasted on a rough draft or author's copy.
4. The only clue is that someone other than Hume has written "Dr. Robertson" on the back of both letters.

5. Letters, 2: 130-32.
6. Hume referred to Blair, Ferguson, Robertson, Alexander Carlyle, and John Jardine as "my Protestant Pastors" in the amusing letter of 6 April 1765 cited in note 1 above.
7. Hume to Robertson, [October or early November 1768], Letters, 2: 193-95, and 27 November 1768, New Letters, 185-87. Our dating of the first of these letters differs slightly from Greig's estimate of "[November or December 1768]." In that letter Hume says he is just about to begin sending the first printed sheets of Charles V to Suard in Paris, while in his letter to Robertson of 27 November (which Greig never saw) he indicates that Suard had received much of Charles V and had given his judgement (in a letter now lost) on at least a portion of it. The first of these letters to Robertson of autumn 1768 must therefore have been written several weeks before the second, in October or early November.
8. MS 11009, fols. 113-114.
9. For a fuller account of the manner in which the earl of Bute "fixed" Robertson's election as principal, see Richard B. Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh (Princeton: Princeton University Press and Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), chap. 3.
10. In his letter to Elliot of [20] February 1762 (MS 11009, fols. 109-110), Robertson had noted that if Adam Ferguson were selected for the principalship the Edinburgh clergy would probably turn him down because he was no longer a practising clergyman, **as** all previous occupants of that office had been. The basis for his belief that the clergy had the power to block academic appointments in this manner, by virtue of their right of avisamentum, was the precedent of Hume's case in 1745: "What the true import of avisamentum may be has never been legally tried, but it was by the authority of it that D. Hume was cut out of the Professorship of Morals when he was proposed as a Candidate." On the latter incident see M.A. Stewart, David Hume and the Edinburgh Chair, forthcoming in the Journal of the History of Philosophy, monograph series.
11. Robertson received the avisamentum of the Edinburgh clergy the day after he wrote this letter.

12. The work in question was a history of England that Robertson never completed. Shortly after the publication of his History of Scotland in 1759 Robertson had declined offers to undertake such a work chiefly because of his unwillingness to infringe on Hume's domain. At least one well-placed correspondent, Robertson's college friend John Blair, found this reasoning unsatisfactory because "Mr Hume with all his Merit is liable to many Exceptions & as long as he lives will never be in possession of the general Approbation of the Publick, which is a Situation you have all the reason in the World to expect." Blair was still more emphatic a few months later: "Your reputation here continues here in full vigour while Davids History is rather in a little languor which I am sorry for as he begins to feel it & will no doubt feel it more & more. Col Irwin told me yesterday that Lord Chesterfield spoke so highly of your Abilitys tother day upon comparing the Merits of the two Historys that he said he would not scruple to move in the House of Peers that you should have a publick Encouragement for undertaking a Complete History of England." (Blair to Robertson, 27 February and 30 June 1759: MS 3942, fols. 21-22, 38-39).

Robertson nevertheless stuck to his position at this time and began work on the history of Charles V -- despite discouragement on other grounds from Hume himself (New Letters, 48). In July 1761, however, he was approached by Lord Cathcart, acting as intermediary for Lord Bute and the king, about the possibility of writing a history of England (MS 3942, fols. 40-41); this time he accepted on the grounds that Hume's history was now complete and quite different from what he would write on the subject, so that "I can now justify my undertaking the English History to myself, to the world, and to M Hume" (Robertson to Cathcart, 27 July 1761, Eute Manuscripts, Mount Stuart, uncatalogued). After further negotiations with Cathcart and Bute's agent William Mure, it was agreed that Robertson should receive a principalship and an additional office -- later identified as historiographer royal for Scotland -- that would allow him to resign his parish charge (which he never did, incidentally) and concentrate on writing the history of England once Charles V was finished. Most of the details of this affair are related in James L. McKelvey, "William Robertson and Lord Bute," Studies in Scottish Literature 6 (1968-69): 238-47, where it is pointed out that Charles V took longer to complete than expected and led logically to a history of America that appeared in 1777. But

McKelvey's conclusion that "Robertson never began work on a history of England" (*ibid.*, 246) is not quite correct, for a letter (critical of Robertson) from Horace Walpole to William Mason of April 1778 in the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence 28 (New Haven: Yale University press, 1955): 386-90, shows that Robertson was then gathering materials for a projected continuation of Hume's history covering the reigns of William and Anne.

13. The combined income of Robertson's principalship (£111), Edinburgh church (£139), and royal chaplaincy (£49) was about £300 a year, besides a free house at the university, and this sum was raised to £500 upon his appointment as historiographer royal in the summer of 1763. It has been said that he was the first Scottish minister ever to maintain his own carriage.
14. Robertson was not alone in believing that the pre-Tudor volumes of Hume's History of England (first published in 1762) were the weakest part of the work.
15. "... not so much desirous of a contest."
16. Robertson had used similar language in his letter to Cathcart cited in note 12 above: "Our manner of viewing and relating the same transactions is so different, that (as happened with regard to our last books) [i.e. Robertson's History of Scotland and Hume's volumes on the Tudors, both published in 1759] each may maintain its own rank, have its own partizans, and possess its own merit without hurting the other." Nor was this much different from the generous tone of Hume's own letter to Robertson of 8 February 1759 in New Letters, 44.
17. Robertson is presumably referring to the complete package of offices that he was to receive in exchange for his commission to write the history of England, including the sinecure office of historiographer royal for which he had been scheming since 1759. Alexander Carlyle neatly summarized the state of affairs just after Robertson had received the latter office, in a letter to the Rev. Thomas Hepburn of Birsay dated 5 September 1763 (MS 10782, fols. 69-70):

Robertson has manag'd w^t great address.
He is Principal, Chaplain, Minister,
Historiographer And Historian; That is
to say he has £508 a year & a house

certain, besides what he can make by his books. It was taken for granted, that he was to resign his charge on being appointed Historiographer w^t £200 Salary. Rut that he will do at his leisure. It is also Suppos'd by his Patrons, that he is to write the History of Brittain in ten Vols. quarto, That also I presume (dreadfull task) he will execute at his leisure. Honest David Home with the heart of all others that rejoices most at the Prosperity of his Friends, was certainly a little hurt w^t this last honour conferr'd on Robertson. A lucky Accident has given him relief. The Earl of Hertford is appointed Ambassador to France. Not very Capable himself they have loaded him w^t an insignificant Secretary One Charles Bunbury, Who for the sake of pleasure more than the thousand a year, Sollicited for the Office. Hertford knew David; & Some good genius prompted to Ask him to go along & Manage the Business: It is an honourable Character. He will See his Friends in France: If he tires he can return when he pleases. Bunbury will probably tire first, & then David will become Secretary.

18. Rev. James Lindsay (1712-96), minister of Lochmaben 1750-65 and briefly a supporter of the Moderate party in the Kirk. See The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805, ed. John Hill Burton, new ed. (London and Edinburgh: Foulis, 1910), 264-265. Robertson had written on his behalf to Elliot on 14 January 1762 (MS 3942, fols. 97-98).
19. Rev. Walter Stewart, minister of Ashkirk, presbytery of Selkirk, from 1730 to 1762, died on 15 April. He was not succeeded by Lindsay.
20. It is clear that this is the person discussed in the first paragraph of Hume's letter to Robertson of 19 March 1767 in connection with a request for a military chaplaincy (Letters, 2: 130). Circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that the clergyman in question was Daniel Brodie (1724-1771), minister of Cawdor in Nairnshire, and the chaplaincy that of the garrison at nearby Fort George. This would explain why Hume stated his intention to refer Robertson's request to "Pryce Campbell, tho not of my acquaintance," for Pryce

(or Pryse) Campbell was not only M.P. for Nairnshire but the principal landowner and ecclesiastical patron both of Cawdor and of the adjacent parish, Ardersier, that included Fort George (indeed, Fort George had been built on land given or sold to the government by Campbell's family). Brodie had been minister at Ardersier before his translation to Cawdor in 1752, and he may well have been disappointed that his successors at Ardersier -- Henry Gordon (minister, 1757-64) and Walter Morrison (1764-80) -- were appointed to the Fort George chaplaincy instead of him. While we have been unable to establish a direct connection between Daniel Brodie and Robertson, it is known that in 1765 Brodie had impressed the latter's friend Carlyle with his hospitality, and that a few years later he composed a brief sketch of the Church of Scotland expressing the point of view of the Moderate party which Robertson led. See Alexander Carlyle, Journal of a Tour to the North of Scotland, ed. Richard B. Sher (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen Centre for Scottish Studies, 1981), 1, 4, 21-23.

21. Christopher Tait (1744-1812) was at this time tutor to Hume's nephews, Hume had evidently asked Robertson to look for a vacant church in the gift of the crown that he might be able to secure for Tait, but neither Robertson's information nor Hume's influence proved to be effective, and Tait would have to wait another five years before being presented by the crown to the parish of Kincardine-in-Menteith in Perthshire, where Lord Kames's wife Agatha Drummond had recently inherited the principal estates. We can only wonder if Tait was one of the men whom Carlyle had in mind when he remarked, to illustrate Hume's poor judgement of "characters," that "The only two clergymen whose interests he espoused, and for one of whom he provided, were the two silliest fellows in the Church" (The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle, 292). Carlyle was presumably in a position to know Tait's character, since in 1782 Tait married Carlyle's wife's first cousin. But Tait possessed enough talent to publish a paper on Perthshire peat moss in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1794).
22. Robertson was misinformed. Rev. David Dickson (1721-95) had been settled at Ednam in Roxburghshire just two years before (1765) and would remain there for another thirty years. This is not the same David Dickson mentioned in Letters, 2: 141.

23. Sir Alexander Don of Newtoun Don, Berwickshire, near Ednam (4th baronet, succeeded 1749, died 1776).
24. The Hume family seat, Ninewells, was located in Berwickshire, though not all that close to Ednam.
25. Although the crown could legally present any minister it wished to parishes in its gift, it was common eighteenth-century practice to defer to local "heritors" or landowners. See Richard Sher and Alexander Murdoch, "Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800," in Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929, ed. Norman Macdougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), 197-220.
26. Hugh Hume, Lord Polwarth, 3rd earl of Marchmont (1708-94) was at this time keeper of the great seal of Scotland. His family seat lay close to Ninewells in the fertile Berwickshire plain known as the Marse.
27. Roberton sits five miles west of Hawick in Roxburghshire, near the boundary with Selkirkshire. In 1767 the minister of Roberton, Henry Erskine, was in his mid-seventies, but he did not in fact die until the end of 1773, by which time Tait was already placed elsewhere. After leaving office in 1768, Hume continued to keep an eye on Roberton, and on 5 February 1770 he wrote Sir Gilbert Elliot to report the death of Erskine and solicit the church for Tait -- only to have to write again on 21 February to retract his solicitation after learning that Erskine was actually still alive! (Letters, 2: 213-17).
28. Borthwickbrae lies just a mile and a half south-west of Roberton kirk. As a freeholder of that region, Elliot of Borthwickbrae would have been among those responsible for returning Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto as M.P. for Roxburghshire (Minto is about five miles north-east of Hawick). On 13 August 1767 Hume wrote Sir Gilbert Elliot to solicit another Selkirk parish, Kirkton, in the presbytery of Jedburgh, for Tait (Letters, 2: 160), but once again he seems to have been misinformed: Kirkton had gained a new minister just three years earlier and would not require another until 1775.
29. Hume's efforts to discourage the publication of Adam Ferguson's Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767) are well known (see especially his letter to Hugh Blair of 11 February 1766 in Letters, 2: 11-13). Since Robertson had sided with Ferguson against Hume on that question (see Blair's

letter to Hume of 24 February 1766, Royal Society of Edinburgh, 111, 56), it is understandable that he could not resist gloating a bit in response to Hume's admission, in his last letter from London, that "Ferguson's book goes on here with great success" (Letters, 2: 131). Hume characteristically took pleasure in Ferguson's triumph, but there is no evidence that he ever changed his original opinion of the Essay.

30. Henry Seymour Conway (1719-95), secretary of state for the Northern Department, whom Hume served as under-secretary. He had been active not only in negotiating a pension for Rousseau from the crown, but in the delicate task of keeping the offer alive while Rousseau raged and prevaricated.
31. Robertson's History of Charles V was published in March 1769 by the London firm of Strahan and Cadell.
32. Among the circumstances to which Robertson was referring are probably these: (1) the great success of Robertson's first book, The History of Scotland (1759); (2) the unprecedented amount of copy money that Robertson received for Charles V (£3500 outright and a promise of £500 more in the event of a second edition -- see William Strahan's letter to Robertson of 2 May 1768: MS 3942, fol. 63); (3) Hume's suggestion in his last letter (27 November 1768: New Letters, 185) that the public might "meet with a Dissappointment in your Work" because they seemed to expect it "to be more a History of the Age than of the Reign of Charles V."
33. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard (1733-1817) was engaged in translating Charles V into French. Robertson had struck the deal with Suard through one intermediary, Baron d'Holbach, and was having the printed sheets sent to Suard from London by another intermediary -- Hume, who had originally proposed a different translating scheme as far back as 1763. See New Letters 74, 185 and Letters 2: 193-95. It is now possible to understand the background of Hume's remark to Suard, 10 March 1769: "The author [of Charles V] complains to me that he never hears from you" (Letters, 2: 195). Though Hume used his position as intermediary between the London publisher and the Paris translator as an opportunity to read the freshly printed sheets and offer their author some stylistic criticisms (Letters, 2: 194-95), this evidence is too slim to support Klibansky and Mossner's contention that Hume "was seeing Robertson's History of Charles V

through the press" (New Letters, 185, n. 4). In 1758 Hume had read The sheets also of Robertson's History of Scotland (Letters 1: 287), but certainly without "seeing it through the press."

34. Robertson's haughtiness on this occasion, if not ironic, is surprising, and may perhaps be attributed to the enormous pressure he was experiencing at this time. As it turned out, both Charles V and Suard's translation of it (which appeared in 1771) earned the highest accolades from critics, and several letters from Suard among Robertson's surviving manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland testify to the friendship that later developed between the "Original" and his translator. One of these letters, dated 19 January 1769 (MS 3942, fols. 71-72), must have reached Robertson very soon after he sent his letter to Hume. Another, dated 15 September 1776 (MS 3942, fols. 273-74), notes the news of Hume's death, pays warm tribute to him, and asks Robertson and his friends to supply materials for an account of Hume's life.
35. In his letter to Robertson of 27 November 1768 Hume had written: "At present, I think every day more seriously of retiring to Edinburgh for life" (New Letters, 186), and the same message was being sent by him to other Scottish correspondents. Hume did return to Edinburgh, of course, in August 1769.
36. Gilbert Stuart (1742-86), LL.D. Edinburgh 1769, was the author of An Historical Dissertation on the Antiquity of the English Constitution (1768). He subsequently published other historical works.
37. John Mackenzie of Delvine, W.S. (1709-1778). A writer was the equivalent of an English solicitor.
38. Elliot had already written to Hume about this matter. See Hume's reply of 22 July 1768 in Letters, 2: 184-85,
39. Ironically, a decade after writing these words Robertson would use his influence to block Stuart's attempt to purchase the sinecure chair of public law at the University of Edinburgh because of his "occasional sallies of vastly too great latitude and licentiousness" (quoted in the 7th edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 20: 783). Among the incidents that probably contributed to Robertson's change of heart about Stuart were the latter's diatribes against the principal's fellow-historian and ecclesiastical colleague Robert Henry and his

unscrupulous tampering with Hume's review of the second volume of Henry's: History of Great Britain (including altering a passage praising Robertson himself) in 1773. On the latter incident see New Letters, 202, and Ernest Campbell Mossner, "Hume as Literary Patron: A Suppressed Review of Robert Henry's History of Great Britain, 1773," Modern Philology **39** (1942): 361-82.

40. Robert Darcy, 4th earl of Holderness (1718-78) and his wife, the former Marie Doublet of Holland (d. 1801). Hume had sent special regards from Lord and Lady Holderness in his letter to Robertson of 27 November 1768 (New Letters, 187), and on 21 February 1769 the earl wrote directly to Robertson to congratulate him on the publication of Charles V (MS 3942, fols. 81-82), apparently after receiving a complimentary copy of that book. Two years later Holderness wrote to the earl of Ancram soliciting financial reward for Robertson's services to government and church (MS 3942, fols. 106-7).