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WHEN WAS THE SCOTTISH NEW YEAR?
SOME UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS WITH THE
'*MOS GALLICANUS*', OR FRENCH STYLE,
IN THE MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY¹

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IN 1600 the 1st of January was ordained as the first day of the New Year in Scotland. By this ordinance the Kingdom of Scotland joined the great majority of Western European kingdoms, states and territories who had, at various times during the sixteenth century, rationalized the reckoning of Time by declaring the 1st January as New Year's Day.² This article will examine, very briefly, the long history of the reckoning of Time as calculated in ancient western civilizations. During the sixteenth century, however, these calculations were rationalised in the culmination of the political and religious upheavals of the Renaissance and Reformations in Western Europe. In Scotland, for a brief period under the influence of the French government from 1554 to 1560 during the Regency of Marie de Guise-Lorraine,³ and from 1561 to 1567 during the personal reign of her daughter Mary Queen of Scots, the *mos Gallicanus*, which recognised Easter Sunday as the first day of the New Year, was used in a great number of French official state documents, dispatches and correspondence. We will also note the failure by some past editors to recognise this change, which leaves the date of some important

¹ I am most grateful to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh for a visiting scholarship in 1995, where this work was first presented. It has been revised for publication in this journal. There has been some modernisation of Scottish and English language and translation of French documents and texts, for which I take full responsibility.

² Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1362); Republic of Venice (1522); Holy Roman Empire (Germany, 1544); Spain (1556); Portugal (1556); Prussia (1559); Sweden (1559); France (1564); Southern Netherlands (1576); Lorraine (1579); Northern Netherlands (1583); Scotland (1600). Others later included: Russia (1700); Tuscany (1721); Great Britain (excluding Scotland): England and Ireland and its colonies (1752).

³ For background see Elizabeth Bonner, 'The Politique of Henri II: De Facto French Rule in Scotland, 1550–1554', *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History* 7 (1999), pp. 1–107.

documents still unresolved. Finally, this paper will also briefly examine the modern celebration of the Scottish New year, or Hogmanay as it has been known since the early seventeenth century.

In the dying days of the sixteenth century the young King of Scots, James VI, and the Lords of the Secret Council issued an Ordinance at Holyrood House, on 17th December 1599, which proclaimed that: ‘the first day of the year begins yearly upon the first day of January commonly called New Year’s day’ ... [and that] ‘upon the first day of January next to come, ... shall be the first day of 1600 year of God’.⁴ This ordinance also brought Scotland into line with France as regards the commencement of the year and adds a further aspect to James VI’s relationship with the French King, Henri IV. At Fontainebleau in March 1599, Henri followed his predecessors, Francis I in 1518 and Henri II in 1554, by confirming privileges for Scottish merchants trading in France. He also granted to all the Scottish subjects of James VI living in France, General Letters of Naturalization (as had Louis XII in 1513 and Henri II in 1558) enabling them ‘to accept all and every the benefices, dignities and ecclesiastical offices that they might legally acquire, and also with permission to dispose of them by testament and etc. to their heirs and successors living in France’.⁵ These letters patent were given legal authority and registered at the *Parlement* of Paris on 31 July 1599, although the *gens du parlement* added the caveat: ‘provided that the testators of those who shall decease intestate, be denizons [*sic*], as is more at large contained in the said letters and conclusions of the king’s solicitor-general’.⁶ Perhaps it was the grant of these privileges

⁴ National Records of Scotland [NRS], Registrum Secreti Concilii; Acta (1598–1601) PC 1/17, ff. 205–6. Published in full in *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPC]* vol. 6 (1599–1604), ed., D. Masson (Edinburgh: Printed under the authority of His Majesty’s Stationery Office, by Morrison & Gibb, 1884), p. 63.

⁵ For a table of all the ‘Auld Alliance’ treaties, grants and privileges between French and Scottish monarchs from 1295 to 1646, see Elizabeth Bonner, ‘French Naturalization of the Scots in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries’, *The Historical Journal* 40, pt 4 (October, 1997), pp. 1102–03.

⁶ Archives Nationales, Paris [AN], Registre du Parlement de Paris, X^{1A} 8644, ff. 47^V–49^r; copies: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris [BN], Fonds français 7996, f. 102; National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (NLS), Adv. MS. 35. 1. 5, ff. 357–8; British Library, London [BL], Harleian Coll. 1244, ff. 404–5; for an exact transcription and full translation of this document see Thomas Moncrieff (ed.

that caused Sir Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's Chief Minister, to pen a memorandum in March 1599 entitled: 'A memorial of the present state of Scotland, how it groweth every day into more affection to Popery'.⁷ James VI's ordinance of 1599, though it brought Scotland in line with many European states, introduced a discrepancy with England in the reckoning of Time which was not resolved until 1752. This situation continued after the union of the crowns when James VI of Scotland also became James I of England in 1603; and was not changed when under Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart monarchs, the parliamentary union of the kingdoms of Scotland and England took place in 1707.

Before examining James VI's rationale for issuing his Ordinance of December 1599 or the historic influences of this act in Scotland, a very brief survey of the long history of the reckoning of Time, as calculated in ancient western civilizations, should be undertaken in order to place this new reckoning within the context of contemporary society of the sixteenth century. 'The use for dating purposes of the Christian year (*annus domini* [AD] Year of the Lord) arose somewhat unexpectedly through the compilation of a table for calculating the date of Easter, made by the monk Dionysius Exiguus in AD 525. This was intended to continue to AD 626 the Easter Table then in use, of which the cycle would end in AD 531. Dionysius, a Scythian⁸ by birth but living in Rome, constructed a list of years calculated not from the prevailing era of Diocletian, the pagan emperor, but from the Incarnation of Our Lord'.⁹ A continuator carried on the table to

and trans.), *Memoirs Concerning the Ancient Alliance between the French and Scots and the Privileges of the Scots in France*, (Edinburgh: W. Cheyne, 1751) repr. in *Miscellanea Scotia* (Glasgow: John Wylie and Co, 1820), vol. IV, pp. 36–42; and for an edited version, J. D. Mackie (ed.), *Calendar State Papers, relating to Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Office, 1969), vol. 13, pt 1, pp. 431–3.

⁷ M. J. Thorpe (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland, of the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth*, 2 vols (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1858), vol. 2, p. 768.

⁸ *Scythian*: 'Pertaining to ancient Scythia, the region north of the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Sea of Aral, or the ancient race inhabiting it', E. A. Baker (ed.), *New English Dictionary* (London: Odhams, 1932).

⁹ C. R. Cheney, *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks no 4 (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1945), p. 1. I am indebted to Cheney's excellent brief

AD 721. Starting from English usage in the eighth century the new era gradually spread to the Continent until in every country of Western Europe, except Spain, Christians reckoned from AD 1. In Spain the era originated in an Easter Table of which the first cycle began, not at the Incarnation, but at 38 BC and it was reckoned from the 1st January 38 BC.¹⁰

The Indiction, unlike the Christian and Spanish eras, was originally a civil reckoning of time. It is a cycle of 15 years, counted as *Indictio Prima, Secunda*, and so on, to 15, reverting then to 1. The cycles were always computed from AD 312, but there were three chief methods of reckoning the opening date:

(i) The Greek or Constantinopolitan Indiction, beginning on 1st September. The Popes seemed to have used this fairly regularly till 1087 after which the practice of the Papal Chancery varied till Alexander III (1159–81).

(ii) The Bedan or Caesarian, or Imperial Indiction, or the Indiction of Constantine, beginning on the 24th September. This was probably introduced by Bede into England, where it became usual, and was adopted by the Papacy under Alexander III.

(iii) The Roman or Pontifical Indiction, beginning on 25th December (or sometimes on the 1st of January) was in fact only occasionally used in the Papal Chancery, but it is found in other places at various periods.

The use of the Indiction year as an element in the dating of documents goes back to Imperial Rome, when it was added to statements of the consular and imperial years. It continued to be used by the Papacy and the Royal Chanceries of the West in the early Middle Ages for the more solemn privileges and legal records. At the Vatican, Papal Bulls issued during the mid-sixteenth century use the Roman Calendar and the Regnal year of the Pope. For example, the

overview for much of this introduction. *Incarnation*: the action of incarnating or fact of being incarnated or ‘made flesh’; becoming incarnate; investiture or embodiment in flesh; assumption of, or existence in, a bodily (esp. human) form ... of Christ, or of God in Christ. ... In early use often in reference to the Christian era.’ J. A. H. Murray (ed.), *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹⁰ Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, pp. 1–2.

Bull promulgated by Pope Paul III in 1548 which conferred the Bishopric of Ross on David Paniter is dated: '*Pridie Idus Octobris nostro anno quarto decimo*' (the day before the Ides of October the 14th year of our reign, viz: 14 October 1548).¹¹ Indeed, George Buchanan's Letters Dimissory, for the grant of an ecclesiastical benefice in Normandy, given by Pope Paul IV in 1557 is dated: '*Rome apud sanctum Petrum nonis februarii anno secundo*' (At St. Peters, Rome on the nones of February the second year of our reign viz: 5th February 1557).¹² It is also found in some private charters. But by the end of the thirteenth century it was generally ignored except in one class of document: the instruments drawn up by public notaries continue to exhibit the Indiction together with other dating elements until the sixteenth century.¹³

An even more important reckoning of New Year's Day with regard to the dating of documents, in England until 1752 and in Scotland until 31st December 1599, is the feast of the Annunciation, or Lady Day on the 25th March. This 'is a more logical starting point for the years reckoned from the Incarnation than the feast of the Nativity [25th December], so long as the feast in question was that of the preceding 25th of March [i.e. Christ's conception]. This way of reckoning started at Arles late in the ninth century, spread to Burgundy and Northern Italy, was used, though with growing infrequency, in the Papal Chancery between 1088 and 1145, but remained a local use. It spread freely in France, though mainly in ecclesiastical circles, and from 1098 the Papal Chancery generally used it in its more solemn documents.¹⁴

Finally, a computation not far removed from 25th March, but the most illogical and inconvenient that could have been devised is that from Easter [i.e. Easter Sunday].¹⁵ The number of the year is

¹¹ Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Rome, Reg. Vat. 1682, Libro 230, Bullar. Paul III, ff. 274r–276v.

¹² Archives de l'Évêché de Coutances et Avranches: Registre des Délibérations du Chapitre, 9 (1554–59) f. 146v.

¹³ Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, pp. 2–3.

¹⁴ Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, pp. 4–5. Cf. R. L. Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), pp. 45–6.

¹⁵ Easter, Pasch, Paice, Easter Day or Easter Sunday, on which day the 'Resurrection of our Lord is commemorated on the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls upon, or next after the 21st March. If the full moon falls on a

reckoned from the Nativity, but its initial day from the Resurrection of Our Lord; and as the time of Easter may vary by more than a month, the length of the year is never uniform, and if Easter falls early in one year and late in the next, the same year includes a good many days of March or April at both ends. This unhappy system came into use in the French Court from the beginning of the thirteenth century; it is known as the *mos Gallicanus* [French Style]. But it never wholly supplanted the reckoning from Lady Day in the local custom of many districts of France, and it never travelled far beyond the limits of the kingdom except to places which were closely connected with it through the ruling houses or through trading relations [for example, Scotland in the mid-sixteenth century]. In Holland, Flanders, and Hainault, the New Year began on Easter Sunday, which style the notaries adopted in their acts; but to avoid mistakes, they were compelled to add ‘before Easter’. In 1575, the Duke of Requesens, governor of the Low Countries, ordered the year to commence on the 1st January. The States of Holland had long before adopted this calculation, and endeavoured, as early as 1532, to bring it into general use.¹⁶ Thus it became officially used in Holland and even Cologne; but it was known as the *stylus curiae* [i.e. the style of the Papal Court at the Vatican], and it did not supersede the popular reckoning from Christmas.¹⁷

‘Throughout the Middle Ages, and in some countries for much longer the calendar in use was known as the Julian, because it was originally introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 BC’, nominating the 1st January as New Year’s Day. It was named for Janus the Roman god of doors and gates, and had two faces, one looking forward and one back; and the month named after this god, January, was considered as the appropriate opening to the year. ‘This way of reckoning is now known as the “Old Style”, in contra-distinction to the “New Style”,

Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday after. The earliest date on which Easter Day can fall is the 22nd March, the latest date is the 25th April; therefore there are 35 different dates on which Easter Day may fall’, A. H. Dunbar, *Scottish Kings. A Revised Chronology of Scottish History 1005–1625*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1906), p. 297.

¹⁶ H. Nicolas, *The Chronology of History* (London: Printed for Longham, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman and John Taylor, 1833), p. 47.

¹⁷ Poole, *Studies in Chronology*, pp. 45–6.

that is to say reckoning by the Gregorian calendar'.¹⁸ On 24th February 1582 Pope Gregory XIII promulgated a bull which ordered the use of a reformed calendar. This excised ten days from 1582, 'so that the 15th October followed immediately upon the 4th October, while future difficulties were to be avoided by making only the fourth of the end-years of successive centuries a leap year. The bull allowed for AD 2000 to be a leap year, and this was adopted in later changes to the Gregorian calendar. The year was to begin on 1st January', which meant those states and kingdoms who had not previously adopted 1st January prior to 1582 adapted their own legislation accordingly, for example, England by an 'Act of Parliament [at Westminster], on the 14th September 1752'.¹⁹ This discrepancy is highlighted by some of the wording of James VI's ordinance of 1599 which could be construed as being somewhat critical of England. 'The first of January', it runs, is used by 'all other well governed commonwealths and countries', and James did not want any 'disconformity between his realm and lieges and other neighbouring countries in this particular'.²⁰

In France, the reform was first promulgated by an Edict of Charles IX in January 1563, and by the Edict dated at Roussillon on the following 4th August by which the 1st January was fixed upon as the commencement of the year. The law, however, was not adopted into French law by the *Parlement* of Paris until 1567.²¹ Indeed, prior to this the practice had already begun under Henri II's administration when certain French Treasury officials used the 1st January as New Year's Day. For example, the Budget Estimate for 1549²² and the list

¹⁸ Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, pp. 1–2; Ugo Boncompagni, Pope Gregory XIII (b. 1502, 1572–1585).

¹⁹ Dunbar, *Scottish Kings*, p. 292,

²⁰ NRS, *Registrum Secreti Concilii; Acta* (1598–1601) PC 1/17, f. 205 and *RPC*, vol. 6 (1599–1604), p. 63.

²¹ Nicolas, *Chronology of History*, p. 45.

²² BN, Fonds Français 3127 ff. 91r–93v, for a full transcription of the Budget Estimate, see Elizabeth Bonner, 'The Scots and the French Army, 1547–1559: French Financial and Military Documents Concerning Scotland During the Reign of Henri II', in preparation for publication by the *Scottish History Society* (Edinburgh).

of royal Pensioners also for 1549²³ are both dated from 1st January to 31st December 1549. Scotland, as we have seen, fell in line with both the French and Papal reforms eighteen years after the promulgation of Pope Gregory XIII's bull. However, the timing of this very desirable and logical mathematical reform in 1582 at the height of the Catholic Counter-Reformation could not have been more unfortunate as religious and political hostilities were so pronounced that even a measure so much to the general benefit was not regarded objectively as a mere matter of chronological accuracy by many states.²⁴ Certainly, in Scotland James VI's Ordinance did not receive universal approval. In 1599 Robert Pont, a self-confessed 'aged Pastour in the Kirk of Scotland', published a lengthy discourse deploring that 'sundrie learned men of our men of our memory and time have earnestly desired, that some Reformation of the *Julian Kalendar* might be made till now lately in our daies, with favour of Pope Gregory 13 [XIII] his Cardinals and Councils, it was permitted in 1582 year of Christ'.²⁵

Another far-flung outpost of Early Medieval Western Europe was that of the Scots/Irish Celts, or Northern British as they were also known, who provided a resistance to Bede's imposition of the Roman reckoning of Easter in 664, according to the tables devised by Dionysius in 525. According to Bede's *History of the English Church and People*, there is the constant complaint that the Celts insist on going their own isolated and wrong way. For example, letters from two Popes: Honorius I (625–638) warns the Scots/Irish Celts 'not to imagine that their little community, isolated at the uttermost ends of the earth, had a wisdom exceeding that of all churches ancient and modern throughout the world'; and John IV (640–642) similarly complains that in 'the dark cloud of their ignorance they refused to observe the Roman Easter'.²⁶ More than a

²³ 'Ordonne de faire en lannee prochaine que commencera le premier jour de janvier prochainement 1549 [It is ordered that it will commence next year on the 1st January 1549]', BN Fonds Français 3132, ff. 31r–46r.

²⁴ Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, p. 10.

²⁵ R. Pont, *A Newe Treatise of the Right Reckoning of Yeares, and Ages of the World ... this 1600 yeare of Christ ...* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1599), pp. 54–55.

²⁶ L. Hayne, 'Early Christianity in North Britain', *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History*, 2 (1994), p. 9. Cf. Leo Sherley-Price (ed. and trans.), *Bede's*

thousand years later the early medieval Celts' descendants were also disinclined to follow *dicta* from England regarding the reckoning of Time. Ronald Black says that the 1751 Act of the British Parliament at Westminster, which adopted the Gregorian Calendar, had little or no effect in parts of Gaelic Scotland. He says that 'from 1752 to 1800 the Gaelic [i.e. Julian or Old Style] calendar lagged eleven days behind the Gregorian' but 1800 was a leap year in the Julian but not in the Gregorian system, therefore the difference widened to twelve days. By the early part of the twentieth century, however, the 'Old Style' was giving way to the 'New' throughout Gaeldom.²⁷ Nevertheless, today there are still some who take a dram or two on the 12th January to celebrate the 'Old New Year', and many others who celebrate both the 'Old' and the 'New' New Years.

In present-day Scotland there has been a ready acceptance by officials and historians that prior to 1st January 1600 the first day of the New Year was 25th March [The Annunciation or Lady Day]. In mid-sixteenth-century Scotland from 1554 until 1559, during the reign of Henri II, French influence extended to ruling Scotland almost as if it were a province of France and this included the reckoning of Time. Therefore, during the Regency of Marie de Guise-Lorraine from April 1554 to June 1560, and during Mary's personal reign from 1561 to 1567, there are numerous examples of the use of the *mos Gallicanus* or Easter Sunday as the first day of the New Year in their correspondence and official documents of state. A prime example of this method of dating is found in the 'Depenses de la Maison Royale' [Expenses of the Royal Household] which are, according to the Exchequer catalogue in the Scottish Record Office, 'a separate series of accounts of expenditure of the household of Mary-Guise-Lorraine and became the principal household record on her appointment to the Regency of Scotland in 1554, and continued as such during the personal reign of her daughter. The accounts are in French and follow the French practice of beginning the year on

History of the English Church and People (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), for the Popes' Letters: pp. 2, 19; Easter references: pp. 2, 2; 3, 4; 3, 25; and pp. 5, 21.

²⁷ R. Black (ed.), *The Gaelic Otherworld: John Gregorson Campbell's 'Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland' and 'Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands'* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), p. 21.

Easter Day'.²⁸ This form of dating was used in all the diplomatic dispatches and correspondence, treaties and other documents of state recorded between France and Scotland during this time. Whilst these particular Exchequer records have been little used by historians thus far, there have been a number of errors in dating recorded by some editors in State Papers, diplomatic correspondence and other official Franco-Scottish documents, who have failed to take account of the French reckoning of Easter Sunday as the first day of the New Year.

It is not within the scope of this paper to make an exhaustive examination of all the existing discrepancies in the dating of these documents, however, the following examples identify a few of the most prominent. In the mid-nineteenth century attention was drawn to the problem of not taking into account the *mos Gallicanus* in dating French documents in Scotland. On 2nd July 1839 Prince de Labanoff, editor of the *Collection of the Letters of Mary Queen of Scots*, wrote to Mr MacDonald, secretary of the Maitland Club, at the time that the latter was preparing some letters of Henri II for publication, to point out the errors in dating letters by Scottish editors and historians, not only in the letters of Henri II but also in those of Mary Queen of Scots. Mr MacDonald noted that 'the Prince's corrections to the dates in question were confirmed and that his supporting evidence was irrefutable'.²⁹ This seemed not to change his calculations, however, as MacDonald then observed that 'in Scotland the matter is more simple than elsewhere, the legal and conventional commencement of the year having continued to be on the 25th of March, the Feast of the Conception, until the 1st January was substituted in 1599 by an Act of the Privy Council'.³⁰

Apparently, some Scottish editors have been seemingly unaware of the use of the *mos Gallicanus* in many French State documents, dispatches and correspondence with Scotland in the mid-sixteenth century. Thus, when a comparison is made between certain manuscript and the edited published documents, then previous interpretations of the historical events of mid-sixteenth century

²⁸ NRS, State Papers, SP.7, French Commissions, Grants and Letters, 1554–1558; NRS, Exchequer, 'Depenses de la Maison Royale', E 34/12/12–25 and E 31–33.

²⁹ 'Note regarding the Letters of Henri II', Appendix, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, vol. 2, pt 2 (Edinburgh, 1840), pp. 545–48.

³⁰ 'Note regarding the Letters of Henri II', p. 547.

Scotland, with regard to these documents, are viewed very differently when correctly dated using the *mos Gallicanus*. Indeed, there are examples of editors' incorrect dating of documents during the period known as the 'Rough Wooing'. This is the term commonly used to describe the Anglo-Scottish wars from 1543 to 1550 whereby Henry VIII and the Protector Somerset attempted to force the Scots to agree to the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to Edward, Henry VIII's only legitimate son and heir and nephew of the Protector. The failure of the English 'Rough Wooing' and the timely arrival of the French is well-known and well-documented in English and Scottish historiography. Less well known and poorly elaborated is the success of the intervention of the French king Henri II who, at the behest of the Scots under the terms of their 'Auld Alliance',³¹ defeated the English and married the young Queen of Scots to his son and heir Francis. Ultimately, this dynastic marriage resulted in the union of the crowns making them both the first and last sovereign king and queen of France and of Scotland in 1559.³²

French influence and power in Scotland during the reign of Henri II (1547–59) can be seen in the French king's response to the Scottish pleas for help following their devastating defeat by the English at the battle of Pinkie on 10th September 1547. In 1548 Henri agreed to send a substantial fully equipped army into Scotland following an Act of the Scottish parliament agreeing to the betrothal of Mary to Francis and her removal to France for her education and upbringing. One of the French king's first military actions was to sign a mandate appointing the Baron Fourqueveaux as the Captain of Hume Castle on the Scottish Borders, dated at Chantilly on the 1st April 1548. There is also a contemporary copy of this document which is dated the '24 April 1548, after Easter'. This shows that the *mos Gallicanus* was the method used in dating these documents as Easter Sunday fell on 1st April 1548.³³ Apparently, Fourqueveaux

³¹ See Elizabeth Bonner, 'Scotland's 'Auld Alliance' with France, 1295–1560, *History* 84 (1999), pp. 5–30.

³² For details see Elizabeth Bonner, 'The French Reactions to the Rough Wooings of Mary Queen of Scots', *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History* 6 (1998), pp. 1–161.

³³ I am grateful to Dr David Caldwell, for drawing my attention to these documents, and to Monsieur Raoul Brunon, conservateur of the Musée de L'Empéri, Salon-de-Provence, the owner of the documents, for his permission to transcribe and publish them. In a letter dated 22 December 1993, M. Brunon

‘provisioned and fortified it [Hume castle] so well that it held out against the English and was never taken, though in previous wars it had fallen more than once into the hands of the old enemy’.³⁴

Another document concerning the French army sent to Scotland to assist the Scots rid the Borders of the English, is Patrick, Lord Gray’s Bond of Manrent³⁵ to Marie de Guise-Lorraine: ‘Right excellent Princess, Mary Queen Dowager of Scotland and [mother of] our sovereign Lady, her dearest daughter ... against our old enemies of England’, for which loyalty Gray was to be paid ‘five hundred [500] merkes usual money of Scotland’ inscribed with my ‘signature and personal seal of arms. At Huntlie the 26 March 1548’.³⁶ In the catalogue of State Papers at the Scottish Record Office this document is dated 26 March 1548. However, there is very good historical evidence to show that Gray’s Bond of Manrent was made using the *mos Gallicanus* as the method in dating this document. As we have seen Easter Sunday fell on the 1st April 1548 which means that Gray’s Bond of Manrent, according to the following evidence, was actually dated 26th March 1549.

informed me that: ‘I am directly descended from the Fourquevaux by my mother and I was actually born at the château de Fourquevaux’. He also said that, ‘the archives of Raymond de, Fourquevaux were, unfortunately, sold by my uncle in the 1930s [and] Scottish archivists bought those documents which were of interest to them [*cf.* National Library of Scotland, MS 2991]. My father conserved the two documents that now belong to me copies of which I have sent to you [and which] you may publish.’ Mandate of Henri II, Chantilly, 1 April 1548, and copy dated 24 April 1548, after Easter’, Musée de L’Empéri, Salon-de Provence, France; for a full transcription of this document see Bonner, *Scots and the French Army* (in preparation for the Scottish History Society, Edinburgh).

³⁴ Gladys Dickinson (ed.), *Fourquevaux’s Instructions sur le Faict de la Guerre*, (University of London: Athlone Press, 1954), p. cxi; see also Gladys Dickinson (ed.), *Mission of Beccarie de Pavie, Baron de Fourquevaux en Écosse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949), pp. 21–6.

³⁵ According to Gordon Donaldson, ‘by a Bond of Manrent a man of a lesser rank undertook to assist a more powerful one, who reciprocated by a Bond of Maintenance promising him protection’, in G. Donaldson and R. S. Morpeth (eds), *A Dictionary of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1977) p. 23.

³⁶ NRS, State Papers 13/56. Jenny Wormald accepts the Scottish Record Office dating of this document in *Lords and Men of Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442–1603* (Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1985) p. 361.

At the time of the Anglo-Scottish wars of the 1540s, Patrick, Lord Gray had always been an English supporter especially after the French, at the behest of the Scots, had entered the wars. On 30 September 1547, the *Acts of the Privy Council of England* records that 3,548 crowns and £1,148 were to be delivered by Anthony Stonehouse ‘to the Lord Grey of Scoteland as given to him in reward by the Kinges Majeste [Edward VI, in reality the Protector Somerset]’.³⁷ This information begs the questions: reward for what and, more importantly, where was Lord Gray at the Battle of Pinkie on 10 September 1547? It would seem that there is no available evidence to show that he was there, as Dr. Caldwell’s detailed analysis of the battle shows.³⁸ Caldwell says that it is clear that the Governor of Scotland, James Hamilton, 2nd earl of Arran, intended as full an army as possible and that the ‘Scottish army at Pinkie is likely to have been one of the largest ever mustered. ... Theoretically’, continues Caldwell, ‘all able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty, including burgesses town dwellers and churchmen, had to serve, if required, for a maximum of forty days in any one year’.³⁹ The conclusion, that Somerset had paid Gray the princely sum of about £2,000 Pounds Sterling a few weeks later for absenting himself from the battle, is irresistible, although how he managed this is unknown. Additionally, about six months later, on 3rd April 1548, the Privy Council of England suggested to Sir Andrew Dudley and Mr. Lutterell that ‘they should make offer of M [1,000] crownes pencion unto the Lord Graye of Scotland ... so as he may take courage in respecte of the premisses to doe some notable service’.⁴⁰ There is no evidence, however, that Gray complied with this request. In July 1548, however, the Scottish parliament agreed to the marriage of Mary and Francis, a large contingent of French troops was deployed in Scotland and the young queen was taken to France. By the spring of 1549 the French had all but defeated the English and were engaged in mopping-up exercises. It was at this point it would seem,

³⁷ J. R. Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Series (London: printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890–1907), vol. 2, p. 132.

³⁸ D. Caldwell, ‘The Battle of Pinkie’, in N. Macdougall (ed.), *Scotland and War AD 79–1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992).

³⁹ Caldwell, ‘The Battle of Pinkie’ pp. 70–4.

⁴⁰ *APC of England*, vol. 2, p. 552.

on 26 March 1549, that Patrick, Lord Gray, accepted the inevitable, changed sides and signed a Bond of Manrent with the French Queen Dowager of Scotland, Marie de Guise-Lorraine.

Patrick Hepburn, 3rd Earl of Bothwell and Admiral of Scotland, was another Scottish noble who played a double game with France and England. Captured after the Battle of Pinkie on 10 September 1547 after the English had inflicted an overwhelming victory over the Scots, Bothwell at first accepted pensions from the English,⁴¹ having been given his freedom the same night as his capture. Following the signing of the Treaty of Boulogne on 24th March 1550,⁴² however, he immediately petitioned firstly the Queen Dowager and later Henri II himself, for a substantial pension. Annie Cameron, editor of *The Scottish Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine*, has accepted the date of this document as the 1st April 1549,⁴³ but Easter Sunday 1549 was the 21st of April, therefore the correct date of this petition is the 1st April 1550. Evidence for this dating can be found in the deliberations of the Privy Council of Scotland whereby ‘the Quenis Grace, my Lord Governor and Lordis of secreit Counsale’, indicted Bothwell on 23rd May 1550 on a ‘charge of treason for having misrepresented the Queen Dowager to the King of France’.⁴⁴

Marguerite Wood, editor of the *Foreign Correspondence with Marie de Lorraine*,⁴⁵ also erred in dating two letters from John Stewart, seigneur d’Aubigny, as being the 18 April and 24 June 1546, regarding his release from imprisonment in the Bastille where he had been languishing by command of Francis I. The king had refused to release him despite the pleas of Marie de Guise and the then Dauphin

⁴¹ *APC of England*, vol. 1, p. 69.

⁴² ‘Following a successful campaign in Boulogne, Henri II signed a peace treaty with England on 24 March 1550 in which he demanded the comprehension of Scotland’, Bonner, *De Facto French Rule in Scotland*, p. 5.

⁴³ A. Cameron (ed.) *Scottish Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine*, Scottish History Society, 3rd Series (Edinburgh: printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable, 1927), pp. 297–8.

⁴⁴ *RPC*, vol. 1, p. 100.

⁴⁵ Marguerite Wood (ed.), *Foreign Correspondence with Marie de Lorraine Queen of Scotland from the Originals in the Balcarres Papers*, 2 vols, Scottish History Society, 3rd Series (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1923 and 1925), vol. 1, pp. 128–143.

Henri⁴⁶ of his innocence, since the defection of his brother, Matthew Stewart, 4th earl of Lennox, to Henry VIII in 1544. In fact these letters should have been dated in 1547 given that Easter Sunday 1547 fell on the 10th April. Therefore, given Francis I's intransigence it was not until after Henri II ascended the throne on 31st March 1547, that Aubigny was released from the Bastille. According to Lord Cobham's report to the Protector Somerset on 18th April 1547: 'M. D'Aubigny, brother of the Earl of Lynes [Lennox], a Scottish Lord, whom his brother has long kept in prison in the Bastilian in Paris, for his brother's offence, has been enlarged'.⁴⁷ Also in April 1547, St. Mauris, Imperial ambassador at the French court, reported that 'M. d'Aubigny had been let out of the Bastille'.⁴⁸

There are probably other examples of errors in dating documents using the *mos Gallicanus* between France and Scotland during this period of French influence in the government of Scotland which have escaped the notice by modern professional historians. Thus, caution should be taken with the editions of State Letters and Papers by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century authorities as modern research into previously unknown manuscripts is beginning to reveal their fallibility. Nevertheless, things were not so simple as Mr MacDonald of the Maitland Club declared in 1839 that in Scotland the 25th March was always considered as New Year's Day until 1599 when 1st January was substituted by an Act of the Privy Council.⁴⁹ What is, perhaps, the most important point to remember is that Scotland, following the Union of the Crowns in 1603, did not automatically follow England in the administration of institutions and bureaucracy as nineteenth-century English writers and editors might have us believe. In fact, the Scots borrowed liberally from many other states, as regards their institutions, law, language, literature, art and architecture and, as it has been argued here, in the reckoning of Time. As Wormald reminds us; 'institutionally

⁴⁶ NLS, Ad. MSS. 29.2.1, f. 72; Published in *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, vol. 1, part 2 (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1833), p. 214.

⁴⁷ Lord Cobham to the Protector, Calais, 18 April 1547, W. B. Turnbull (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Edward VI* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1861), p. 331.

⁴⁸ M. A. S. Hume and R. Tyler (eds), *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Edward VI* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1912) vol. 9, p. 76.

⁴⁹ Cf. notes 29 and 30 above.

Scotland resembled other European states of a comparable size, rather than England'.⁵⁰ Therefore, it is interesting to speculate on James VI's rationale for changing New Year's Day in December 1599 from the long-established and traditional 25th March to the 1st January. This would appear to be one of the reasons why James embarked upon a deliberate pro-French policy during the 1590s and to concern his well-documented anxiety regarding his succession to the English crown. By 1599 James had, with exceptional political and diplomatic skill, to a large extent in terms of friendship and good neighbourliness, resurrected much of Scotland's 'Auld Alliance' with France, named his son and heir Henry, who was born in 1594, after the French king Henri IV⁵¹ the same year that James had initiated the negotiations, 'to have that most ancient league contracted between our former predecessors of good memory their crowns and estates renewed and confirmed in most sure and straightest form in all points and articles',⁵² and capped the decade and the century by re-aligning Scotland's New Year's Day with that of France as of the 1st of January 1600.

What is perhaps more interesting is the development of Hogmanay, as the Scots called the celebration of their New Year in the early seventeenth century, which reflects the French culture at the Scottish court in the 1590s. It was first mentioned in Scotland in 1604 in the church records of Elgin Cathedral in Elgin, Moray, as 'Hagmonay'. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the origin of the word *Hogmanay* is attributed to the early seventeenth century and perhaps comes from *hoguinané*, the Norman French form of Old French

⁵⁰ Jenny Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community. Scotland 1470–1625* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 21.

⁵¹ In May 1599 Henri IV recognised the depth of James's commitment to the 'Auld Alliance' in his 'Instructions' to his envoy to the Scottish court, 'by the many assurances of his friendship given by the ambassadors James had sent to him, and also by the oath and prayer that James had made to give his first son [Henry] his name [qu'il luy fit de donner son nom à son premier fils]', 'Henri IV's Instructions to Philippe Béthune', May 1599, Mackie (ed.), *Calendar State Papers, Relating to Scotland*, vol. 13, pt 1, p. 468.

⁵² 'Instructions to our trusty and weilbeloved James Colvill of Eistervemys, directed be us to our dearest brother and cousing the king of France and Navarre, Edinburgh, Apryl, 1594', Annie Cameron (ed.), *The Warrender Papers*, Scottish History Society, 3rd Series (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1932), vol. 2, pp. 237–38.

aguillanneuf, meaning the ‘last day of the year, new year’s gift’. *The Concise Scots Dictionary* entirely agrees with this definition and also adds that the origins of the word *New-zere* [New Year] in Scotland are attributed from the late-fifteenth to the seventeenth century.⁵³

Christmas in Scotland was traditionally observed very quietly, because the Presbyterian Church of Scotland discouraged the celebration of Christmas for nearly 400 years, although Christmas Day held its normal religious nature in Scotland amongst its Catholic and Episcopalian communities. Christmas Day only became a public holiday in 1958, and Boxing Day in 1974. Conversely, the 1st and 2nd January are public holidays for the New Year’s Eve festivity, Hogmanay, which is by far the largest celebration in Scotland. The gift-giving, public holidays and feasting associated with mid-winter were traditionally held between the 11th of December and 6th January. However, since the 1980s, the fading of the Church’s influence and the increased influences from the rest of the UK and elsewhere, Christmas and its related festivities are now nearly on a par with Hogmanay. Edinburgh, since 2011, has a traditional German Christmas Market held from late November until Christmas Eve.

In modern-day Edinburgh Hogmanay celebrations commence by creating a ‘river of fire’ from Parliament Square along Princes Street to Calton Hill for a fireworks display featuring Scottish thistles and the saltire flag of Scotland, accompanied by the pipes and drums of both traditional and contemporary outfits. Many Scots then follow the tradition of ‘First-footing’ when a friend or neighbour would be the first person to set foot through the front door after midnight of the New Year, bringing symbolic gifts like salt, coal, shortbread, whisky, or black bun. In the Highlands, it is traditional to clean one’s house from top to bottom and perform a *Saining*, which means ‘protection’ or ‘blessing’ in Scots—this involves burning juniper (for the purifying qualities of the smoke) and sprinkling water from a river-ford around all the rooms of the house. In general, however, having family and friends together and partying is one of the main Hogmanay customs. As soon as the clock strikes twelve, bells are rung in every town and village throughout the land. Many places have street parties with the villagers for example all meeting in the village square to bring in the New Year together. Immediately after

⁵³ Mairi Robinson (editor-in-chief), *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press; Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985), pp. 294 and 440.

midnight it is traditional for everyone to stand in a circle, cross over their arms, hold hands with people on either side and sing Robert Burns' 'Auld Lang Syne'.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ For further details, see internet sources like: http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/highlandsandislands/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/newsid_8434000/8434760.stm as well as <http://www.rampantscotland.com/know/blknow12.htm>, both accessed on 16 April 2015.

