The Scottish 'Nation' at the University of Padua

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Source: *The Scottish Historical Review*, Oct., 1905, Vol. 3, No. 9 (Oct., 1905), pp. 53-62

Published by: Edinburgh University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25517689

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AFTER the thirteenth century the University in Italy to which both Scottish and English students were most indebted was the University of Padua. Bologna previously had been Alma Mater to a few of the travelling Scots, who entered the 'Natio Anglica' there, and of these Michael Scot, 'the wizard,' was, it is believed, one. When, however, the University of Padua was founded in 1222, during an eclipse of the older University, it attracted most of the representatives of the northern nations. At first at Padua the 'Natio Anglica' included all inhabitants of Britain, English, Scots, and Irish alike,[1] and in 1228, at the time when there was an abortive attempt to transfer the infant law university from Padua to Vercelli, we find that the 'Natio Anglica' among the Ultramontane 'nations' apparently existed, and that it was governed like the French and Norman 'nations' by a Rector.[2]

The increased knowledge of the English and the Scots students, and probably their mutual dislike, caused their eventual separation into distinct Nations. In the new statutes of 1331 they were still enumerated together, and in 1465 the 'Nation' is called that of the English and Scots, but in 1534 the Scottish and English 'Nations' were definitely separated, nor did they ever again formally unite as long as the 'Nations' lasted—that is, to 1738. We shall see, however, that after the Union of the Crowns complete friendship existed between their respective students. Although the University gained greatly in renown, and drew scholars from all parts of the North after Padua fell under Venetian

[1] See *De Natione Anglica et Scota, Iuristarium Universitatis Patavinae.* Scripsit Io Aloys. Andrich. Prefatus est Dr. Blasius Brugi, Patavii, 1892; on which this article is based.

[2] *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, by Hastings Rashdall, M.A. Oxford, 1895. Vol. ii., p. 14.

domination in 1465, the Scottish Jurist students were not always numerous, and the Germans had from early times the right of supplying vacancies in the Councils of the Ultramontane Nations when their own students were wanting, and we find their Council thus from time to time embraced Germans, Poles, Provençals, Cypriotes, Italians, and Burgundians. This fact and the mis-transcription of the Scots names in the early Paduan records which remain, make the identification of the early Scottish students difficult. In 1534 we find on the rolls the names of Claudius and Andreas Brocardus, Bernardus Giuellus, Urgetus Arnuldus, and Georgius Onis, in 1535-6 Iacobus Diourges [or De Fouerges] and Iacobus Galien, and in 1536-7 Ioannis Paulus Bassinus. In 1542-3 there appear the names Leonardus Waltrinus, and Ioannes Franciscus Waltrinus, another example of the early custom that two of a family made the course of foreign study together. The names of 'Thibouspt,' 'Laurenata,' and 'Schrenzer,' which follow, are even more difficult to identify, though in the last two cases the students are each definitely called 'Scotus.'

In March, 1581, there arrived at Padua that extraordinary Scottish meteor, James Crichton, called 'the Admirable.' Under thirty years of age, he came with a great reputation for the victorious 'disputations' which he had held with Professors and learned doctors both at Paris and in the presence of the Pope. The Professors of Padua, it is said, assembled to do him honour, and on his introduction he declaimed an extemporary poem in praise of the city, the University, and the persons present, then sustained a 'disputation' with them for six hours, winding up with an unpremeditated and unexpected speech 'in praise of ignorance, to the astonishment of all who heard him.' This somewhat uncomfortable guest seems to have palled upon the Professors of Padua, and there was a disposition to regard the brilliant youth as a charlatan, and to obviate this he offered to point out before the University the errors in the Philosophy of Aristotle, the ignorance of his commentators, and the wrong opinions of certain celebrated mathematicians. He did this; held, of course with success, a disputation with a rival philosopher, Archangelus Mercenarius, and then departed for Mantua, where he was made tutor to the Duke's young son, Vincenzo di Gonzaga, at whose hands he met his death in a carnival brawl a few years later.

In 1591 (the year before that in which Galileo began to teach

in Padua) the custom, which obtained coevally in the English 'Nation' also, of describing the scholars on entering the University commenced. It is very instructive, as it shows how turbulent the times were, and how even these youths, students of the laws, had all fought in their turn already, and that there was hardly one student either in the English or Scottish Nation who was not marked for life. Nor would their swords rust at Padua, where the quarrels between the students and the townspeople were incessant and of world-wide fame. In 1591 we find Iacobus Bancasinus 'with a scar in the middle of his brow' on the lists. In 1593-4 Georgius Ester 'with a scar in his left hand.' In 1594-5 Archibald Douglas 'with a scar on the left side of his brow.' During these years Gyberthus Greh (Gray?) was more happily distinguished as 'Scotus cum capillis flavis,' whereas Walser (Walter) Scotus, Iacobus Bonadinus or Bonatin (Buntin?), Georgius Locardus (Lockhart), and Andreas Moravius were more lucky in having no descriptive marks at all.

The year 1596-7 linked Padua more nearly to the history of Scotland on account of the matriculation there of John Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie. He was then about nineteen, and we get the personal note that he had 'a white mark on his chin.' His fellow intrants for the next two years were James Lindsay 'with a scar on his brow,' Andrew Keith with a scar on his right hand, 'Gulielmus Reiche' with a scar on his left leg. Robert Kerr of Neubottle (afterwards second Earl of Lothian) 'cum neo in manu dextera in digito annulari,' Patrick Sandys with a scar on the left of his brow, Thomas Segetus 'cum venecula sub oculo sinistro,' and (in 1598-9) 'Io. Gramus' cum cicatr. ad ocul dext,' as well as his own tutor, Mr William Rynd—the unfortunate man who was afterwards tortured on account of his pupil's conspiracy—who is described as 'Scotus cum ledigine super facie.' All these Scots were protected in the exercise of their Protestant faith by the Signory of Venice, and they owed their protection not to the favour of the Signory to the reformed religion, but to the Venetian desire of independence of the Pope and the consequent fear of the encroachment of the Papal power.

In 1597,[3] the Earl of Gowrie's faith was still declared to be 'Protestant,' and he had about him not only Rynd, the pedagogue, but also a tutor, Sir Wm. Keith, whose name does not appear in the Padua lists. In spite of their influence he

[3] *Information of Robert Ferguson*, Harl. MSS. 588 ; Brit. Mus., *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. i. p. 219.

coquetted, we are told, with the Catholics, and moreover dabbled in Alchemy and the Black Art, so that he too

> 'Learn'd the Art that none may name
> In Padua, far beyond the sea,'

a course of study, for which the University town was rather too celebrated. It was reported indeed that he planned his conspiracy in Padua, and left there on a dancing school, treasonable 'armes parlantes.' When he was killed in 1600, he had on his body 'a little close parchment full of magical characters and words of enchantment,' which his tutor, Rynd, said he had seen at Padua, and which no doubt gave him the reputation chronicled by Queen Elizabeth, that 'he had a thousand spirits his familiars.'

Though it has been stated that Lord Gowrie was elected Rector at Padua, his name does not appear on the lists. Kerr of Neubottle, on the other hand, was in 1599-1600 on the Council of the 'Nation,' and his arms with those of countless other well-known Scottish families still ornament the *loggia* of *Il Bó*.[4]

On August 2, 1603-4, an important decision was given. The Scots were insufficient to fill the vacancy in the Council of their 'Nation,' and the English petitioned to be allowed to supply the place with one of their number, D. Simeon Foschint. This was granted 'by grace not by right, as their kingdom is now united with Scotland under the same King.' This was the beginning of a complete *rapprochement* between the two 'Nations,' and though the inherent right of the Germans to supply the vacancy remained (and was recognised in 1673, and again in 1695), we read in 1661 that it is noted specially that they exercised their right 'citra ullam contra-dictionem,' which probably means without the customary brawl. The Cardinal of Padua 'cui nemo contra dicere audebat' in the presence of the Praetor interfered, however, in 1684 to support an English candidate for a Scottish vacancy during a conflict with the Germans, stating that he was of Scottish descent, and it was

[4] Besides those mentioned here I noted in the *Loggie* and *Aula Grande* of *Il Bó* many other Scottish coats of arms. Among them were those of 'Dom. Arigus Erschen,' Thomas Somervelle, 'Antonius Lentrorshe Scotus,' 'Thomas Segetus Scotus,' 'Pat. Chalmers, Cons. Scotus,' Wm. Cranston, 'Iac. Murray, Scotus,' Henry Leith, Robert Bannerman, David Dickson, Alexander Cranston, Alexander Falconer ('Anglicus'), Thomas Setus (Seton ?) There exists as well a tablet erected in 1662 to Robert Napierus, 'Nob. Ang.'

eventually arranged on the 11th July of that year that the 'right of supply' should only be exercised by the Germans in default of either English or Scots candidates.

In 1607 an incident occurred which must have made the Signory of Venice look somewhat askance at the Scots within its gates. On October 11, Fra Paolo Sarpi, who had so strongly supported the Venetian Government in withstanding Papal aggression, was attacked by three *bravi* in the pay of the Pope. One of these[5] was styled Giovanni di Firenza, son of Paolo, 'a man of medium height, eyes of a different colour, red beard, enrolled in the Company of Bartolamio Nievo of Vicenza, destined to serve in Syria,' and Sir Henry Wotton, the English Ambassador, writes despairingly, during the hue and cry raised on the flight of the assassins to Papal territory, that this Giovanni 'who wounded Master Paul is really a Scot, who passed here under the name of a Florentine, and that he had been in my house several times a day or two before the event.' This circumstance naturally turned the attention of the Venetians to the English and Scottish settlers, and the murder at Padua on January 20, 1608, of Julius Cæsar, an English student, aged 20, and the son of the King's Secretary, by a fencing master, Thomaso Brochetta, as well as the subsequent poisoning of one of the Catholics in the English Ambassador's suite, followed. The papers about this[6] show that animosity was aroused, and that the corpse of the murdered man, as that of a Calvinist, though it lay in the Church of S. Catherine, was refused burial until the Podestà ordered a public funeral. This was given with the proviso 'to secretly exclude him from the Church and put him in a separate place,' and it points to the fact that no place of burial was provided for the Protestants, and therefore, unless the Scots students resembled the 'Allemaigns,' who, irrespective of religion, were buried in the Eremitana of Padua with Catholic rites,[7] their bodies must have been committed to the sea near Malamoco, like those of the Protestant English who died in Venice.

In the year 1610, 4th March, King James I. took a little interest in his subjects in Padua, and Francesco Contarini, the Venetian Ambassador in England, reports his conversation.[8] He began by desiring a special place of burial to be assigned for his

[5] *Cal. of State Papers*, Venetian, 11, pp. 43-44.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86, 174-5.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 437, *note*.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 426-37.

subjects, that they might not be 'thrown into the water,' and finally, he begged that at the University of Padua, students, his subjects, be not forced to take the oath. We answered that, after finishing their course and when proceeding to their degree, by ancient and unbroken custom students took the oath, but no one was forced to take the degree. His Majesty seemed satisfied, for he added—'It is true that unless it be necessary one does not change an ancient practice. That is a rule I invariably follow.' That Padua continued the residence of the students was solely owing to the tolerant Government, we learn from an Italian copy of a letter of (*circa*) 1612, of Sir Dudley Carleton, Ambassador at Venice, to the Doge.[9] The Ambassador wrote that the arrest of his servant by the Inquisition was an injury to the reputation of the city, the liberty of which 'has attracted a congregation made up of all nations, and the resort of English to this city and to Padua (which is the same thing) has become so great that instead of four or five as formerly, there are now more than seventy here, some of them being young men of the principal houses, who cause no scandall in matters of religion, and do not offend against the laws, as the Rectors (*Rettori*) can bear witness. There are not more than ten Englishmen in the rest of Italy.' Here no doubt English and Scots are included under the one title. Let us glance then for a moment at the names of the contemporary young men who in the Scottish Nation caused no scandal in religious matters.

From 1600 to 1612 the Scottish students included John Craig, probably the physician to King James VI. (whom he declared to have been poisoned) and later to King Charles I., and some names more difficult to identify—Robert Clerus, Ludovicus Suanus (Swan?), Thomas Leitus, Nicholas Gar, and Archibald Schineassonus. The rest, Thomas Winstone, Henricus Crofets, Herculis Paulet, Ioannes Fiorius (Flower?), Carolus Busy, George Samuel, Fabritius Suardus, and Thomas Turner, who appear in the Scots list, are all obviously Englishmen, as was Franciscus Willubi in 1613-14. But 'Ioannes Wordorbernius,' who matriculated in 1609-10, was a true Scot. He was John Wedderburn, the elder brother of James, Bishop of Dunblane. He eventually became 'Proto-Medicus' or Chief Doctor in Moravia, and was the man of some taste and wealth who, in the year 1637, presented the 'sang scool' to his native town of Dundee. William Lithgow, the traveller, mentions him

[9] *History MSS. Comm.* Duke of Buccleuch, Montagu House, i. p. 120.

when in Italy.[10] 'In Padua,' he says, 'I staid three months lerning the Italian tongue, and found there a country gentleman of mine, a learned mathematician, but now' (1628) 'dwelling in Moravia, who taught me well the language and (was in) all other respects exceedingly friendly to me.'[11]

But there were other Scots in Padua besides the Jurists who made up the Scots 'Nation,' who do not appear in the Jurists Rolls. Padua had by the sixteenth century become a very celebrated medical school, and, before Leyden and other Universities of the Low Countries took its place, sent out many young doctors to England and Scotland, and among these in 1602 was William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who had studied anatomy there under Fabricius of Aquapendente. In 1610, the Latin poet, Arthur Johnston, graduated M.D. in Padua. In the 'Poetarum Scotorum Musae Sacrae'[12] we find a sympathetic poem by him, which contains a quaint conceit, on his teacher in anatomy, Julius Casserius of Piacenza, and one also on his friend and compatriot, George Sibbald, 'Rankeilaurius,' who was a Jurist and a Doctor as well, receiving the latter degree both in Philosophy and Medicine at Padua on June 9th, 1614. He, it is interesting to note, was uncle to Sir Robert Sibbald, who founded the Botanic Garden in Edinburgh in 1667; and one cannot help connecting this with the mention of John Evelyn, the diarist, of the 'Garden of Simples, rarely furnished with Plants,' which he saw when he too was a medical student at Padua.

It is perhaps not out of place in this context to quote what Evelyn wrote in 1645 about *Il Bó*—for so the University was called from an old *Osteria* ['The sign of the Ox'] no doubt familiar to all the students,—describing the buildings erected in 1552 by Jacopo Sansovino, which exist in much the same condition now as they did in his day. 'Hence to the scholes,' he writes, 'of this flourishing and ancient University, especially for the studie of physic and anatomie. They are partly built in quadrangle, with cloysters beneath, and above with columns. Over the great gate are the armes of the Venetian State, and under the Lion of St. Marc.

'"Sic ingredere et teipso quot-idie Doctior: sic egredere ut

[10] About 1609. Wedderburn was born *circa* 1583, and died between 1647-51. *V.* the Wedderburn Book, by A. Wedderburn, vol. i., pp. 27-28-29. His arms still appear painted on the walls of the University.

[11] *Travels*, 1692, p. 44.

[12] *Edinburgh*, 1739, p. xlvi.

indies Patriae Christianaeq: Republicae utilior evadas; ita demum Gymnasium a te feliciter ornatum existimabit. CIↃ. IX."

'About the walls are carv'd in stone and painted the blazons of the Consuls of all the nations that from time to time have had that charge and honour in the Universitie, which at my being there was my worthy friend Dr. Rogers,[13] who here took that degree.

'The Scholes for the lectures of the severall Sciences are above, but none of them comperable or so much frequented as the theatre of Anatomie, which is excellently contriv'd both for the dissector and spectators. I was this day invited to dinner, and in the afternoone (being 30 July) received my *Matricula* . . . My *Matricula* contained a clause, that I, my goods, servants and messengers, should be free from all toll and reprises, and that we might come, pass, return, buy or sell, without any toll, etc.' He speaks of the constant dangers from the street fights after sunset. 'Nor is it,' he says, 'easy to reform their intolerable usage, when there are so many strangers of several nations.'

Evelyn, however, was a student who, if he knew his privileges and dangers—knew his obligations also; thus we find that on 31st October, 1645, he invited 'all the English and Scotts in towne to a feaste' on Twelfth-day, 'which sunk our excellent wine considerably.'

To hark back, in the Scottish 'Nation' in 1617 we find William Leslie—no doubt the William Leslie, fourth son of the third Popish Laird of Balwhaine, and a Jesuit, who was Professor of Philosophy in Padua (the Macfarlane MS. says 'Perugia,' no doubt by mistake), and was then Rector of the Scots College at Douay. 'D. Jacobus Eschinus (Erskine) comes,' who was Conciliarius in 1622-3, and was perhaps the first Earl of Buchan of that family. Robert Bodius or Boyd has left the familiar fess-chequer on the *loggia* with the statement that he was 'Scotus Aberdonensis.' In 1633-7, the names are fairly representative, including Thomas Halybursonus (Haliburton), Archibald Douglas, Robert Hume, James Drummond, James Hammistan (Hamilton?), Alexander and David Carnegie, James Pedy, Thomas Dalzell, and 'James Betonius'—no doubt a Fifeshire Beatoun. In 1638-9 there is an Andricus Svinton, and in 1645-6 a Henry Swinton, and in the former year the noble 'Henricus Lindisy, latine Lindisaius, italice ut se supscripsit Lindisai,' was admitted, who in 1641 became under that description Prorector and Syndic of the English and Scottish

[13] George Rogers, M.D., died Jany. 22, 1697.

Nations. In 1652, Thomas Forbes, son of William Forbes of Cotton, the boars' heads and crescent on whose shield still decorate the *Aula Grande*, graduated Doctor of Medicine, and later, before returning to Scotland, was Professor of Medicine at Pisa,[14] and that Aberdeen was well represented we find by the names in 1640-50 of 'Iacobus Scadenedes' (Cadenhead), 'Iacobus Cadendus,' and 'Iacobus Cadenellus.' Many of the Scottish students entered Padua very young. In 1639-40 William Gray is mentioned as 'pupillus,' so were William Borthwick and Nathaniel Kennedy in 1665-6, but, on the other hand, in 1636-7 John Neutton is mentioned as being 'Scotus cum barba castanea.'

The Civil Wars in Britain and the constant brawls between citizens and students in Padua made the supply of students fall off towards the end of the seventeenth century; still in 1672 the north sent Charles Ramsay, and next year Robert Bannerman. In 1684-5 'Dominus Henricus Leith' is described both as 'Anglus' and 'Nob: Aberdonensis.' Bishop Burnet writes in 1685 that the University 'sinks extreamly,' and that 'the quarrels among the students have driven away most of the strangers that used to come to study here, for it is not safe to stir abroad here after sunset.' Yet in 1692-3 his kinsman, Thomas Burnet, 'filius quondam D. Thomae,' entered. In 1697-8 the name of 'John Walkinsheun' may be another link between Italy and the fortunes of the exiled Stuarts, being most likely that of John Walkinshaw of Barrowfield, who liberated 'Queen' Clementina Sobieska from Innsbruck for her marriage, and whose daughter, the unlucky Clementina Walkinshaw, followed Prince Charlie 'whither fortune might lead him.' The eighteenth century students' names are interesting as they are the last. They sometimes give the name of the father or the town, and they included from 1700-1709 Ioannes Inglis, Paulus Mayler, James Maneschell, and Edward Smithson, 'a Scottish noble' on the Council, who were from Edinburgh; (A John Marshall 'fil. Georgii Edinburgensis' matriculated in 1716-17 also) and David, son of 'D. Alex: Conningam.' In 1714-15 Henry Leslie, son of Charles—probably the Jacobite polemic writer, came, and in 1717-18, Hugh, son of Charles Baillie, James Kennedy, son of George, 'Eduardus Beancroft fil. Eduardi scotus,' and William, son of George Douglas. Edward Robinson, son of Tancred, entered in 1721-22, William Robertson, son of Archibald Robertson, was on the Council next year, and Patrick Wood, son of Thomas, appears in 1726-7.

[14] Macfarlane Genealogical Collections. *Scot. Hist. Socy.*, ii. p. 480.

At this time one Mingo was Bidellus of the English and Scots, and also librarian of the library, which Tomasinus says they had possessed since 1649. The Consiliarii prayed the Literary Triumvirs in 1727 to transfer the librarianship to Francis Callin, alleging that the former official had not spent the money entrusted to his care on the upkeep of the library, and desired that he should refund the money into the treasury of the Nations. The Literary Triumvirs, however, on the 26th of April confirmed the former librarian, though they at the same time promised to appoint Francis Callin 'quamprimum.'

The last two definitely Scottish names I find upon the list are those of Philippus Cullin, fil. Jacobi, in 1728-9, and Alexander Wemyst [Wemyss] 'fil. Davidis, Scotus-Britannicus,' in 1733-4, and in 1738 the Venetian Republic abrogated the ancient constitution of the University, and the 'Nation' ended. Thus for the northern peoples at least Padua's 'lamp of learning' no longer burned, and the University ceased to be the place of pilgrimage it had been when Coryate in 1608 could write: 'More students of forraine nations doe live in Padua than in any one universitie of Christendome. For hither come, many from France, high Germany, the Netherlands, England, etc., who with great desire flocke together to Padua for good letters sake, as to a fertile nursery and sweet emporium and mart town of learning.'

A. Francis Steuart.