A Scottish problem with self-perception

– its miserable pre-occupation with castles*

Charles McKean

The architecture of the Scottish Renaissance figures in English history only because the strangely picturesque qualities of the north-east country houses like Fyvie (1598) or Craigievar (1610–25), both in Aberdeenshire, permitted their entry as a minor aberration in the steadfast evolution of a British architecture.[1] No (or very little) Renaissance architecture appeared otherwise to be identifiable in Scotland according to the judgments of the time, implying that the Scottish nobility continued to reside in medieval castles long after everybody else had ceased doing so. Since their architecture appeared to follow neither contemporary English trends in England, nor a classical approach, it has been assumed for the last 250 odd years that the Renaissance had largely passed Scotland by. This was the view enthusiastically endorsed by Scotland's principal cultural institutions until very recently; and remains the stable understanding of Scotland's heritage and tourist industries and of historians and so many others who do not use their eyes. Until the end of the 20th century, the Renaissance period fell between the remit of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, on the one hand and that of the Industrial Museum of Scotland (later the Royal Museum) on the other; and it was only when a brief was being prepared in 1986 for the proposed Museum of Scotland, that the tradition of the Scottish medieval period extending to 1700 was questioned.[2]

The ubiquitous 'heritage' presentation of Scottish Renaissance country seats as military objects, supported by the endless repetitive publications on 'Scottish castles' that mingle genuine fortresses promiscuously with sometimes very minor country seats, fundamentally perverts an understanding of Scottish history, preventing a real understanding of how these country seats

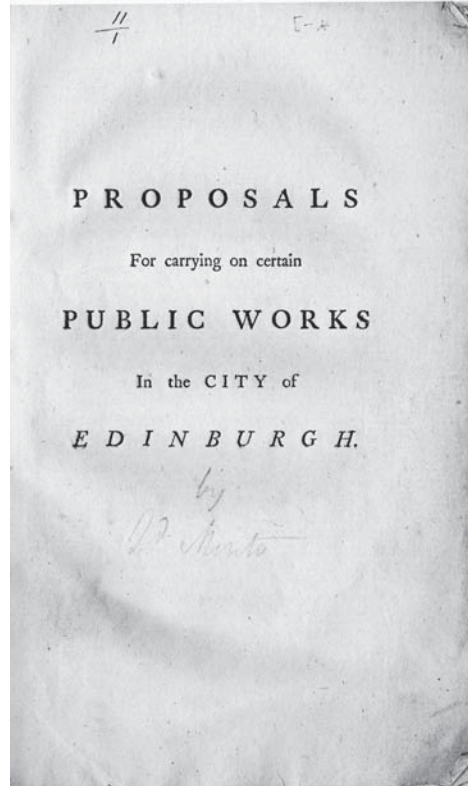
Pitfichie Castle, 16th century in Aberdeenshire

worked as self-sustaining country houses at the centre of their estates,[3] functioning as the centre of the regional economy, power, culture and hospitality. Their classification as castles not only isolates them from the contemporary poetic, musical, artistic and literary cultures of the country which, in many cases, were stimulated by them, but also from the rest of Europe. It is one of the most extreme examples of the pervasive 'Scottish exceptionalism'. [4] Yet when one evaluates their site or the utility of their allegedly defensive panoply of turrets, gunloops, machicolations and crenellations against contemporary European fortifications, it is perfectly clear that these castle-like houses were militarily risible. It was all bombast. Their martial mien was entirely metaphorical in intent, signifying the

* This article is a revised version of a paper first published in Historical Research in 2005. The author is grateful to R. J. Morris, Michael Bath, Alan Macdonald, Charles Wemyss, Matt Davis, Kate Newland and Michael Pearce, who have shared their work with him.

Scots' aristocrats' two most important preoccupations – lineage and rank.

Moreover, architecture was also used to express political allegiance, to judge from the way in which Scottish architecture changed dramatically with each regime in order to signify pro-French, anti-French or franco-neutral leanings. This first became apparent during the regency of Mary of Guise and continued in see-saw form until James vI was firmly in the throne. Thereafter, a national architecture began to emerge which reached its apogee 1670–1700 when the controlling elite proclaimed a political self-confidence through a majestic Scottish baroque, exemplified in an outstanding group of great and lesser houses, rather than succumbing to classical architecture as the prelude to the Union, as we are normally told.[5] To the Scots aristocrats, classical architecture remained firmly *bourgeois* until the arrival of William of Orange made it inescapable. Until then, classical architecture however, was restricted to the 'new men' – the *noblesse de la robe*.



PROPOSALS

For carrying on certain

PUBLIC WORKS

In the CITY of

EDINBURGH.

The customary interpretation of the presumed absence of Scotland from European Renaissance culture has been to assume that it was the Albania of Renaissance Europe – isolated, violent, poverty stricken and primitive. Perversely, that assumption appealed greatly to the Scots themselves, since it dovetailed nicely with the depiction of the Scots in the rewriting of Scottish history by the *illuminati* of the Enlightenment (particularly by members of the Revolution Club). They created it in the synoptic *Proposals for Carrying on Certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh*, published in 1752.[6] This was a committee document, prepared by a group fronted by Gilbert Elliot, jun., of Minto and – to judge by the language and clues left by Sir David Dalrymple – probably included Adam Smith (then in Edinburgh delivering his first lectures), Adam Fergusson, David Hume and Club members John and Robert Adam, and their cousin, Dr. William Robertson.[7] The business was all done over 'a daily dinner',[8] chaired by Revolution Club member and modernizing cleric, Dr. Alexander Webster.[9]

The *Proposals*, possibly the only multi-authored Enlightenment text, justified the case for radical change in the organisation of Scottish society. They glorified the 1688 Revolution and the Union of the parliaments, and the blessings derived therefrom.[10] They did so by vilifying and falsifying the aristocratic and cultural life of Scotland in the preceding centuries Union. Take, for example, the statement:

> Few persons of any rank, in those days, frequented our towns. The manners of our peers, of our barons, and chiefs of families, were not formed to brook that equality which prevails in cities. The solitary grandeur of a country life, at their own seats, and amidst their own vassals, suited better the stateliness and pride of these petty sovereigns.[11]

Arrant nonsense, of course, – as a glance at the countless aristocratic and gentry town houses in all towns of substance throughout Scotland demonstrates. Indeed, one of the ways of evaluating the quality of a Scottish town or city is to identify the number and type of noble or landowner town houses that it contained. Having dismissed the aristocrats, the modernizers then dispatched Scotland's trade and culture: 'No wonder then if, amidst the distractions which constantly prevailed in this country, we had neither leisure nor inclination to improve those arts which are generally the offspring of quiet times and a well-ordered state.'

> We had indeed the honour to send a King to England, but this honour cost us dear. We remained in a strange equivocal situation, little better than that of a conquered province. The nation was dispirited; the little trade we had languished and decayed; every project we formed ENGLAND discouraged; our great men, who had now no wars to wage, and no court to resort to, either retired sullen to the country, or inlisting with foreign princes, vainly lavished their blood in the quarrels of strangers.[12]

The buildings tell you a completely different story. The boom in the construction or reformatting of country houses that had begun in the mid fifteen-fifties reached its peak in the first four decades of the seventeenth, and improvements to the yards and estates were commensurate.[13] The marquess of Huntly, for instance, indulged himself in lavish construction: 'For he was so much taken up with his newe buildings, from four hours in the morning until eight at night, standing by his masons, urging their diligences, and directing and judging their worke, that he had scarce tyme to eate or sleep, much less to wreat.'[14] Nor is there any reason to believe that Sir Christopher Lowther's description of an improving landowner, Sir James Pringle at Gala House in 1629, was untypical: 'He is one of the best husbands in the country, as appeareth by his planting . . . He hath a very pretty park, with many natural walks in it, artificial ponds and arbours now a-making, and all his tenants through his care, he hath abundance of cherry trees.'[15]

This was not a reality that suited the Revolution Club members. In the pursuit of 'quiet times and a well-ordered state', they found the '45 and Scotland's earlier historical past – the reigns of the Stewarts – frankly embarrassing. As Kidd puts it, 'Scotland's literati rendered both heir native country a "historyless" nation'.[16] But all countries need a past, an ancestry, an inheritance, so once the Scots had ditched the Stewarts, they adopted the mythical Dark Age bard Ossian as a safe politically neutral substitute. However, whereas Ossian may have conferred upon Scotland the required sense of antiquity, his baggage required heroics and martial acts – of a kind in short supply in mediaeval and renaissance Scotland. Consequently, antiquarians, many enmeshed within the Enlightenment, now sought out of such prior valour rather than prior cultures. Initially, they concentrated upon genuine fortresses, but since there were so few in Scotland, they extended their coverage to include those country seats that displayed the characteristic militaristic panoply of crenellations, gunloops and machicolations. They then invested the houses with wholly imaginary moats, ditches, barmkins and battlements, without which such castle-like claims would have been challenged. As close to the centre of Scotland as Perthshire, Adam de Cardonnel claimed to have found that 'every mode of fortification then in use was seldom adequate to the defence of the Castle against the storm or blockade of the enraged Chieftain.'[17] Very few such storms and blockades emerge from the records. A number of fatal quarrels, feuds and street brawls, certainly, were played out by trains of noblemen encountering each other in the market places of Stirling, Aberdeen or Edinburgh.

Attacks upon a country house were rare during Renaissance Scotland – so long as one excludes periods of civil war, and the Gaidhealtachd – and the military capability of these houses was negligible. It was nothing more than a martial decoration superimposed upon a modernized habitation. Machicolations were solid and decorative rather than hollow and useable; the turrets (originally called studies) did not allow gunners to command the front entrance; the stone cannons on the parapet were, of course, waterspouts; and the gunloops, around the decoding of which an entire subset of decorative archaeology has grown up, were mostly unusable and dangerous to the user.[19] A large number would have fired directly onto cobbles or into the walls of inner court buildings. The closer the house to the border with England, or where the owner – like Sir James Hamilton of Finnart – who had been to Europe and was something of a gunnery man who knew how to construct a *chambre à tirer*, they become marginally more operational. Yet, most importantly, Scots nobles feared being walled up within their houses, so their habit under threat of attack was either to treat with a predatory troop at the gate to the outer court or meet them in open field. These 'castles', therefore, like so many on the Loire and elsewhere, were metaphorical structures entirely – as the French term them, *châteaux des rêves*.

The Enlightenment's recasting of Scottish history nonetheless, worked, and the primitivism Scotland's of historic psyche was

henceforth taken for granted, and proof soon manufactured. For his *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, Robert Chambers allegedly selected from contemporary documents 'symptoms of advancing civilisation' and anything that illustrated the progress of the arts 'as worthy of notice.'[22] Not quite. His preconception that Renaissance Scotland was a barbaric period – 'the Scots were, at this very time, a fearfully rude and ignorant people . . . ruder than the England of that day,'[20] ('rude' being the Enlightenment *illuminati* characterized pre-Union Scottish society, institutions and even the parliament[21]) led Chambers to ignore all poetry, painting, music, architecture and literature in favour of war, religious turmoil, fanaticism and freaks. To be fair, he was only reiterating the view of the Revolution Club in the *Proposals*: 'Before the union of the Crowns in the Person of James VI, the arts of peace were but little cultivated'. Yet the music, poetry, Renaissance thought, and architecture of Scottish court culture, so carefully overlooked by them, not only formed part of contemporary European culture,[23] but were not being practised in some form of distant, provincial echo. Scotland had followed, as the French put it, a *chantier particulier*.

North façade of the palace of Stirling, designed by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, 1538–40 (B41926, courtesy of Historic Scotland).

So Scottish Renaissance architecture became invariably interpreted in military terms; and where the authentic architectural heritage appeared insufficiently so, it was 'medievalized' accordingly. In 1786, Sir John Dalrymple had joked about how, when he had appointed Robert Adam to refashion his ancient 'tall house' of Oxenfoord, the architect had 'really

Oxenfoord

made it much older than it was'[24] – in other words, Adam had transformed a house into a castle. But the next generation's century medieval was distinctly more primitive and warlike than Adam's, underlined by the innovation of gothic-traceried windows. The interior plasterwork was stripped out from St. Giles's church in Edinburgh leaving just bare stonework where it had once been highly decorated and adorned with tapestries.[26] From its current, largely de-plastered gloom, it is difficult to imagine how vividly painted St. Giles's once was – initially presumably with saints, then with improving religious texts, and then again perhaps with saints once more, and finally plain plaster. Once the Victorians stripped St. Giles's of its decoration and plaster, it was ornamented instead with crumbling regimental standards instead, in keeping with Scotland's new role as a country of valorous soldiers (but little else).

Comparably, the publisher William Nelson payed for the mediaevalising of the 1575 Regent Morton's gateway into Edinburgh castle with bristling crenellations. As R. J. Morris has put it, 'It was part of the recreation of Scottish identity through a sense of violent past, a fractured history of kingship, and of a noble, different and often persecuted religious character'.[29] For a country identifying itself with the military values of the empire, the authentic architecture of the Scottish past often proved far too peaceable.

Earlshall

Primitivism in Scotland required to be ratchetted up. Considering harling, the customary external coating of rubble of Renaissance houses such as Dunderave, Argyll and Earlshall, Fife, to be less noble than bare stonework, the architect Robert Lorimer had it stripped off. Likewise, plaster was hacked off from the vaulted hall at Lennoxlove in conformity to the philosophy that rugged stonework added honour to a 'baronial hall'.[30] A contemporary wrote of work carried out at Blair, Ayrshire, 'it is a pity that the vaulted ceiling has been plastered; the original bare stonework would be so attractive'.[31] It is not therefore entirely surprising that historians and antiquarians came to believe that 'civilized' qualities had only entered the Scotland after James VI had moved down to London.[32] The past that they were thereby discounting (and continued to do so despite the vivid interior painted decoration of the Renaissance country houses) Duncan Macmillan has argued reflected 'the establishment of a new standard of civil life'.[32]

This was the intellectual context for the architects David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross's five sumptuously illustrated volumes codifying Scotland's castellated and domestic architecture.[35] They accepted without question the antiquarian perception that the buildings they were studying were mostly castles in which defensiveness had been the primary consideration.[36] They found castles because they looked for castles,. The language of medieval militaria – keep, barmkin, crenellation, machicolation, bretasche – now entered the language of the Scottish country houses – with the addition of a new one – tower-house (or, even more misleading, 'keep').[37] The majority of the houses they studied were ruinous, and the principal survivor was the ancestral tower – and uon that they focused, often ignoring evidence of the inner or outer courts, the galleries, guest towers, stables and service buildings. MacGibbon's and Ross's approach remained largely unchallenged for over a century, and still dominates both scholarly and popular perception.

If the Scots had got themselves so very badly wrong, it seems hardly fair to blame the English. The *English* misprision of Scottish Renaissance culture began with English travellers who had ventured north during the seventeenth century apparently expecting to find that the two ends of the island were approximately similar. Instead, they found that they had entered a foreign country with strange food, strange dress, displeasingly

informal customs, and country houses bearing no resemblance to their own peaceable manor houses. The curious but neutral reactions of the first visitors – like that of Sir William Brereton in 1636: 'By the way I observed gentlemen's (here called lairds) houses built all castle-wise'[38] – gave way to a more venomous tone in the later seventeenth century, where it suited a broader political agenda to take the martial metaphor at face value. Thomas Kirke, who visited Scotland in 1679 to pour scorn upon the pretensions of the duke of York's court of Holyrood, had not enjoyed his stay. He had found the Scots to be 'perfect English haters' and returned the compliment by excoriating everything. He observed of the country seats that, 'indeed, all the gentlemens [*sic*] houses are strong castles', and then concluded, 'they being so treacherous to one another, that they are forc'd to defend themselves in strong holds'.[39] A good example of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Ten years later, Thomas Morer came to a similar conclusion: 'The houses of their quality are high and strong and appear more like castles than houses made of thick stone walls, with iron bars before their windows, *suited to the necessity of those times they were built in, living then in a state of war and constant animosities between their families*.'[40] Morer was clearly unaware that decorative window grilles were standard throughout Europe, and that England was the exception.

British architectural history, of course, is predominantly English, largely concentrated upon buildings in the southern part of the country, so the dissimilarity between English Renaissance houses and their Scots counterparts was too great to incorporate them within the same thesis. Moreover, where classicism was taken as the primary yardstick, Scotland presented a problem. For all his defence of Europe's dispersed cultures during the Renaissance, Peter Burke nonetheless, when discussing English town halls, accords primacy to classicism: 'It was only after 1660 that they discovered the dignity of classical architecture.'[41] Buildings lacking such dignity, such as the Scottish Renaissance country seat, were cheerfully relegated to a subsection on castles at the end of the medieval section – which entirely suited the broader English perception of the Scots character and history. It was explained as a 'time-lag': Scots were genetically slower to evolve into the paths of peacefulness and culture.

Recent research slowly began to erode this inherited intellectual mindset, beginning when John Dunbar pointed out that what looked like turrets were called 'studies' by contemporaries, and used as such;[42] albeit he attributed the persistence of martial decoration to time-lag or cultural conservatism.[43] In the 1990s, Deborah Howard finally provided a European cultural context for the Scottish Renaissance country seat,[44] but Scots proved extremely reluctant to listen. The notion that Renaissance country seats were 'fortified tower houses', designed primarily for defence, has remained obdurately prominent in subsequent scholarship.[45] Judging by the indefensible sites of most of them, it is doubtful if Scottish country seats had ever been built 'primarily for defence', and the vast rebuilding and modernization programmes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were rarely predicated even marginally upon defence. The metaphor remained mistaken for reality – but it was *useful*. The more primitive the Renaissance Scot could be shown to be, the more remarkable the 18th century Enlightenment thinker or the 19th century inventor. The persistence of this belief in the face of accumulating evidence is nothing less than *nostalgie de la boue*.

Thus Ross Samson, for example, has suggested that Scotland did not follow the classical route because it remained in a state of ignorance for reasons of cultural isolation.[46] That is palpable nonsense. In 1628, William Lithgow observed that 'the nobility and gentry of the kingdom . . . are courteous, discreet, learned scholars well read in the best histories, delicate linguists, the most part of them being brought up in France or Italy'.[47] As Keith Brown has shown, a European education was expected among the upper classes, despite the requirement, by a 1579 act of parliament, to seek the king's permission to receive one.[48] So far as we know, Scotland was never visited by Serlio or da Vinci and no architectural treatises were translated into Scots.[49] But both English translations and Latin originals were circulating – a Serlio volume belonging to Philips Vingboons, city architect in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century, is in the library of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. It is also clear that other works of the Ancients were particularly influential – namely those of Vitruvius, Archimedes and Euclid with which architect John Mylne's portrait was adorned.

Scotland's internationalism has to be understood within the geo-political context which was fundamentally a European and Baltic one. It was used by both France and England as both a pawn

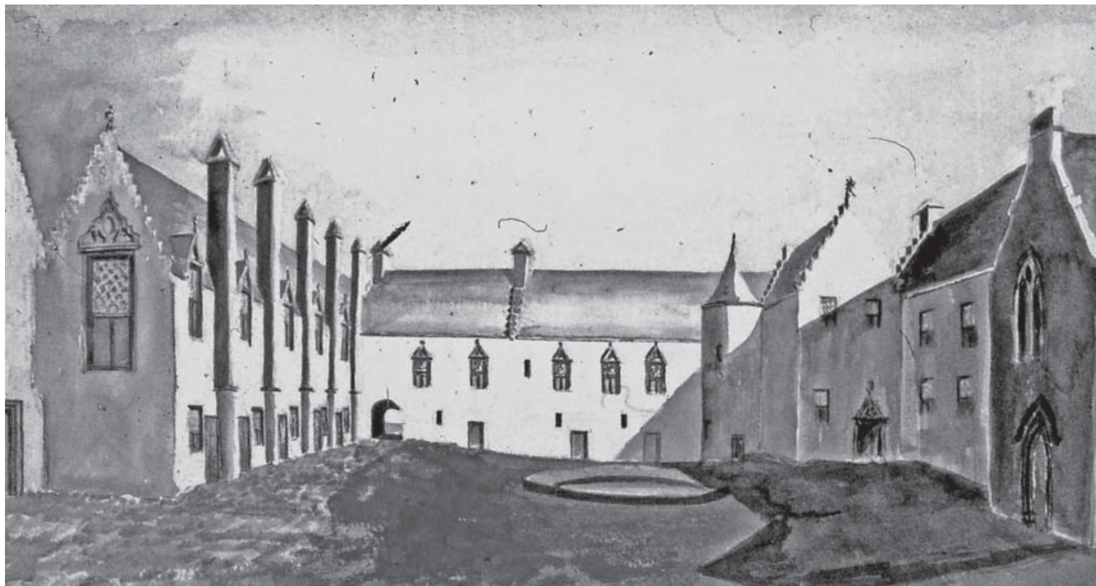
and a potential colony in the perennial wars between them. It brought invasion, quantities of money (in terms of bribes), cultural influence and craftsmen, and large numbers of French were domiciled in Scotland in 1538–67.[50] Far from being remote from the Renaissance cultures of Europe, Scotland was part of them, and remained so even after French influence waned with Mary's exile in England. King James VI , who claimed to have been taught to speak Latin before he could speak his native language, breathed and ate the classics; and when he made his wedding trip to Denmark in 1589/90, he visited Tycho Brahe on the Island of Ven (the only European monarch to do so).It must have come as an unpleasant shock, upon entering Brahe's palace of Uranienborg, for the king to be faced with a portrait of his formidable tutor, George Buchanan, who had exchanged portraits with Brahe. The absence of European experience was something of which to be ashamed in Renaissance Scotland, so the notion that the country was either remote or isolated is vacuous.

So, if isolation cannot explain the architecture of the Scots country seat, were nobles really feuding to the degree that they had to remain in defensible castles, as Kirke and Morer assumed? There had certainly been sufficient aristocratic feuding to justify James VI's 1606 'Decreet Anent Feuding', by which the king sought to end it all, but it very rarely took the form of attacking non-Highland houses during peacetime. Kill the man perhaps, but do not hurt his income, and his income derived from the estates surrounding his self-sustaining country seat.

These buildings were entirely metaphorical castles at the centre of productive estate activities which were organized around them. Long before it was reached, the Scottish country house presented the visitor with an extensive landscape of walled enclosures between three and six metres high creating microclimates within which vegetables and fruit were cultivated.[52]

Even a fourth-rank house[53] – scarcely more than a large farm – would have had an inner court mixing higher-status chambers with service buildings like the brew house, bake house, larder, dairy, stables, barns (in which to receive the rents), a doocot (dovecote) and byres (for beasts).[54] These activities were very rarely located within what they called 'the main house' (equivalent to the French term *corps de logis*) itself but in the court or – in larger establishments – the several courts that comprised the house's immediate environment. Chapels were to be found in the inner court of Scottish country seats far more rarely than in their counterparts in England or Europe.

The inner court, sometimes signified by a fountain or well of welcome, was the most important ceremonial space, containing the ancestral tower (retained for reasons of filial piety, albeit often abandoned to guests or storage), the principal living quarters (the 'main house'), one or more galleries, guest accommodation, offices and household service buildings. Where the gallery had the largest internal volume, it became the principal



Dunnottar

reception chamber.[55] Guest chambers were sometimes located below the gallery, as in the palace of Birsay, Orkney,[56] but more usually in a dedicated guest tower. Sometimes a library ran off the gallery overlooking the privy garden.[57] The inner court might otherwise contain the customary offices – bake house, brew house, gill house, bottle house, coal house, woman house, wine and other cellars – and a porter's lodge.[58]

The outer court of a larger establishment would normally contain the estate's working buildings – several blocks of stables, barns and byres.[59] The privy garden would customarily be set against the southern façade of the house, with the kitchen garden beyond.[60] The Scottish climate was sufficiently equable to grow a surprising variety of fruit trees – even peaches, nectarines and apricots – provided that the wind was tamed by the walls.[61] Further walled enclosures sheltered herbs, fish, vegetables, and fruit bushes like currants and gooseberries. Tobacco was grown in the gardens at Dunrobin. In the walls of the privy garden of his suburban villa of Pinkie, near Edinburgh, the Catholic Stoic Lord Alexander Seton, Lord Fyvie, chancellor of the realm 1605–22, had the following carved inscription inserted *c.*1600:

> D.O.M. For his own pleasure, and that of his noble descendants and all men of cultivation and urbanity, Alexander Seton, who above all loves every kind of culture and urbanity, has planted, raised and decorated a country house, gardens and suburban buildings. There is nothing here to do with warfare; not even a ditch or rampart to repel enemies, but in order to welcome guests with kindness and treat them with benevolence, a fountain of pure water, a grove, pools and other things that may add to the pleasures of the place. He has brought everything together that might afford decent pleasures of heart and mind. But he declares that whoever shall destroy this by theft, sword or fire, or behaves in a hostile manner, is a man devoid of generosity and urbanity, indeed of all culture, and is an enemy to the human race.[62] Not much about defensibility there.

Scattered throughout these walled enclosures were the gardener's house, summer houses properly fitted up with marble tables and cane chairs,[63] hen houses, doocots, and apple houses or garden pavilions. To judge from a court case relating a rare attack upon a house – the invasion of the house of Hamilton Sanquhar in 1558 – a middle-rank seat might extend to several walled orchards, walled fishponds and four service courtyards next to the house itself, besides its walled privy garden. After clambering laboriously over a series of walls more than three metres high, invading soldiery armed with jack and spear would quite likely have become mired in gooseberry bushes.

Furthermore, whereas one can still read in contemporary scholarship that all country houses built during the Renaissance were uniformly tower-houses,[64] the evidence implies that Scottish houses evolved rapidly from the medieval mode of living, in which chambers were stacked vertically above each other in the tower, to a horizontal sequence of chambers known as the state apartment, following the lead of the royal palaces at Stirling, Falkland and Linlithgow early in the sixteenth century. The country house plan thereafter was organized according to the sequence of hall (or antechamber), chamber of dais (chamber) and bedchamber, on the same floor.

This change from vertical to horizontal living, with its hierarchy, privilege and privacy, meant that the tower was either extended horizontally, or relegated to guest or service use, while a more fashionable *corps de logis* was built alongside. Unless later superseded by the gallery, the hall remained the most public room, and the bedchamber the most private. In the chamber between the two, the lord would sit, a canopy above the dais sometimes signifying his place of authority – hence its Scottish name, chamber of dais. In search of greater privacy, the principal floor evolved yet further in the later sixteenth century: public apartments at the centre, the bedchamber becoming a family tower to the rear, and the entrance stair tower expanding into a guest tower in the corner diagonally opposite. It mutated again in the fifteen-nineties when the family tower at the rear was relocated to the entrance façade, thus creating the typical U-plan house so much favoured by the nobles of Queen Anna's court.

One of the arguments supporting the 'defensive castle' argument was the tendency of Scottish landowners to build much higher than their English counterparts. To some extent, Scottish seats appear taller than they were partly as a consequence of the clearing away of the

surrounding courts and walled gardens by eighteenth-century landscapers, and partly because the ground floor of Scottish houses contained cellars and kitchens, with the first floor being the principal. Nonetheless, given that the typical Scottish country seat might normally be up to four storeys in height, latterly capped by a viewing platform or belvedere, the culture was for significantly taller houses than in England. Part of the rationale may be inferred from Sir John Clerk's 1727 poem 'The country seat':

> Above the Attick Floor, a Platform Roof May be extended like a spacious Field From whence the many pleasant Landskips round May be with ease and with Delight survey'd . . .[65]

butt this was probably a *post hoc* rationalization. The real agenda was one of display – not just display for its own sake, but a display of rank. A preoccupation with rank had been a primary cause of feuding, and its significance to architecture was revealed in the minute elevations on the maps prepared by Timothy Pont between 1585 and 1608.[67] In 1656, the English army captain Richard Franck reacted to the marquess of Huntly's principal seat of Bog o' Gight (later Gordon castle) exactly as the owner would have wished:

> Bogagieth, the Marquess of Huntly's palace, all built with stone facing the ocean; whose fair front (set prejudice aside) worthily deserves an English man's applause for her lofty and majestick towers and turrets, that storm the air; . . . It struck me with admiration, to gaze on so gawdy and regular a frontispiece, more especially when to consider it is in the nook of a nation.[68]

The concept that height conveyed nobility persisted into the nineteenth century. When redesigning Taymouth castle for the marquess of Breadalbane, to compete with the principal Campbell seat of Inveraray in 1806, the architect James Elliot argued for a soaring central tower on the grounds that height remained a principal signifier of rank.[69]

A group of early seventeenth-century houses in Aberdeenshire, known as the Bell group after the family that most likely designed them, took the idea to almost an absurd degree.[70] They share so many characteristics as to be from the same hands: and two or three further storeys

Bog a Gight

were normally added to the top of a three- or four-storeyed tower (see Figure 1). These houses, contained mostly within a twenty-eight-mile circle in north-western Aberdeenshire, are exceptional even within their own region, never mind the rest of Aberedeenshire, or elsewhere in Scotland or Europe. Other houses in the region are of normal height for Scotland, showing that there was no regional defensive necessity to retreat on high. The architectural impulse of the Bell group appears to have been entirely cultural. Landowner and architect decided to relocate some of the principal functions of the inner court – such as the gallery and guest lodgings – to the very heights, from which there was ready access to a belvedere on the seventh floor. The intention, as John Macky observed in 1727, was for 'the many turrets and gilded balustrades' to strike the visitor with awe and admiration – as indeed Glamis did for him (see Figure 10).[71]

If Scotland had been stuffed with recognizably Renaissance classical architecture, the 'Albanian' perception would never have arisen: but it is not – and this unusual circumstance is complicated by the lack of known manuscripts or architectural drawings. They have yet to be found, for, as a consequence of centuries of Renaissance denial, research into Scottish Renaissance cultural history remains in its infancy. Architectural drawings – even for interiors – are cutomarily referred to in documents,[73] but most have vanished or remain to be rediscovered.[74] Many records were destroyed or dispersed as a result of the 1715 and 1745 rebellions, and many more once Scottish families married south. More weight has to be placed, therefore, upon a reinterpretation of the buildings themselves, supported by evidence from inventories, and by the drawings on Timothy Pont's maps.[75]

The refusal to adopt classicism, and the lack of any contemporary manuscripts to explain why, led to the assumption used to be that Scotland was in a time-warp waiting, as Sir Howard Colvin put it, for an architect with knowledge of the classical language to emerge in the later seventeenth century to 'design unfortified houses for the first generation of Scottish lairds to realise that the tower house was an anachronism, and to persuade them to abandon corbel and crow-step in favour of cornice and pediment'.[76] Subsequent research has shown that Scotland's *chantier particulier* cannot be explained by cultural anachronism. Moreover, if Scotland shared so much else with France during the mid sixteenth century when one was destined to become a colony of the other, why did it diverge in its attitude to classical architecture? Classics – that is, volumes of Latin, Greek and translated poetry, philosophy and history, as well as volumes on religion from throughout Europe – dominated Scottish libraries, and their influence was pervasive.[77] The celebrations for the baptism of Prince Henry were entirely informed by classical allusion.[78] Moreover, Stoicism was adopted by two such different cultural leaders as the sternly Presbyterian George Buchanan and the staunchly Catholic Chancellor Seton. So the Scots embraced classical ideals and learning – and rejected only its architecture.

Deborah Howard has argued that this cultural choice derived from the Scots' perception of themselves.[79] As a consequence of at least a century of the periodic humiliation of being a plaything between England and France, they were driven to express their sense of national individuality in architecture; and that impulse suited the way in which the Scots elite liked to express its veneration for ancestors. Thus, when reformatting his house of Glamis into the most Scottish 'great house' of them all in the sixteen-seventies, the earl of Strathmore admitted to being 'inflam'd stronglie with a great desyre to continue the memorie of my familie;'[80] and he did this by repairing and embellishing his ancestral tower rather than subordinating or removing it. He thus demonstrated the Scottish predilection to adapt ancient forms and motifs to present use.[81] This intriguing suggestion, however, cannot be the entire explanation, since Scottish architecture also appears to have changed sharply according to regime, suggesting that political allegiance was just as significant.

It is possible that Scotland's attitude to classical architecture might have in reaction to the close identification of classicism with Catholicism and, in particular, with the resurgent Catholicism after the Council of Trent. George Buchanan's exile in Portugal had coincided with the construction of some of its most beautiful early classical churches and abbeys, such as João de Castilho's Christ's Convent at Tomar (1530–54), and, since Buchanan taught in Coimbra, he would surely have known the delightful 1553 Fonte da Manga by João de Ruão in the garden of Coimbra's Convent of Santa Cruz. Mary Queen of Scots had worshipped in Philibert de l'Orme's chapel at Anet, which was 'modernism' at its most refined. Burke observed that Erasmus suspected classicism as being an expression of paganism,[82] and it seems

possible that George Buchanan and John Knox regarded classical architecture as symbolic of a religion best kept out.

Newly constructed buildings, particularly churches, offered the greatest opportunity for classical expression, and the reformers believed that decorative and representational motifs should be abolished to permit the clear light of God to enter the building unimpeded. Yet, although the plan of Scottish reformed kirks in towns achieved that objective,[83] the expression remained either Scottish or astylar until the use of classical architecture for reformed churches had been validated by fellow reformers in Holland. In the shires, Scottish landowners chose a different language for their Episcopalian chapels, opting for a reworking of 15th century Gothic; as indeed did the covert construction and Catholic and counter-reformation chapels. When it came to non-religious architecture, even the greatest of men – the earl (later marquess) of Huntly and the chancellor, Alexander Seton – showed no inclination overtly to structure the rebuilding of their houses according to a classical discipline, even though they made prolific use of both Catholic and Renaissance ideas in their interiors. Although Catholics, both were compelled, of course, to make public proclamation of their adherence to the reformed church: 'many who were solely addicted to the Romish religion, yet being seazed on by fear of losing their estates, did not only swear to the Protestant religion, but also confirmed the same by subscription.'[84] So whatever they did would have to be, as it were, internalized. But rather than using classical architecture, they appeared to go into reverse. The flamboyantly medieval vaulted interiors inserted into a group of houses in north-east Scotland, which are closely associated with the Counter Reformation,[85] imply that the Scottish Catholic response to the post-Trent confidence might have been a striking reassertion of a genuine medievalism, harking back to the time when Catholicism had been the nation's accepted religion. Because this was imperceptible from the outside, the state itself remained unperturbed. It therefore remains improbable that Scots rejected classical architectural expression for their unwelcome religious connotations.

Given the care and discipline with which the interiors were planned, it seems unlikely that Scottish architecture of the Renaissance period was the organic expression of function with the sporadic adornment of eclectic ornament. The question arises, therefore, whether there might have been a different, non-classical, discipline underlying the design of these buildings. There is evidence of houses and churches constructed with strong inherent geometrical proportions dissimulated behind an expressively picturesque façade. Rather than function being constrained by a priori concepts of symmetry, these houses contain sequences of very controlled spaces organized in a loose manner appropriate to their function. The symmetrical geometrical precision of the gallery floor at Crathes, with its projecting rectangular studies, for example, is entirely concealed by a wayward façade. The proportions of 1:3.5 of the interior of King's College chapel, Aberdeen, are (like the chapel at Stirling) those of the Temple of Solomon, and its interior is divided into four equal cubes. None of that is discernible from the exterior.[86]

There are chambers in variations of squares and cubes, and façades designed to Fibunacci proportions or even, like that of Innes, to a mathematical progression,[87] with proportions often very complex and carefully contrived,[88] as though the designers were working with 'remembered spaces' from their knowledge base. That implies that there might have been an underlying geometrical discipline, possibly based upon the Art of Memory, that provided the underlying rigour to the design of these buildings;[89] an idea supported by the portrait of the architect John Mylne (d. 1657). Whereas one might have expected to see the works of Serlio or Palladio on the library shelves behind him, the titles on display are, significantly, the works of Archimedes, Vitruvius and Euclid, as was customary for Renaissance engineer-architects. Mylne himself had designed bridges and fortifications; and James V1's royal architect, Sir James Murray of Kilbaberton, was also the Master Gunner; and the German Master of Artillery in the later 17th century, Captain John Slezer, was also an architect and landscape planner of distinction. As Deborah Howard has pointed out, there were other expressions of classical culture than the use of the classical Orders;[90] and the curious tension between reason (geometry) and romance (the deliberately asymmetrical façade) in Scottish Renaissance architecture has yet to be adequately explained.

If he architectural expression of Renaissance Scotland was, therefore, distinctively and deliberately Scottish, what governed its use? Almost certainly it was lineage, kinship and

rank. Scottish landowners, particularly those of the first rank, would have been perversely delighted that their ancient seats were being taken for castles, for it enhanced their sense of lineage. From the letter that Sir Robert Kerr wrote in 1632 to his son, the earl of Ancram, cautioning against removing the battlements 'for that is the grace of the house, and makes it look like a castle, and hence so noblest',[91] it is obvious that the title 'castle' signalled rank and precedence. The custom had developed of nobles replacing the original Scottish territorial title of their ancient paternal seat with a more imposing family patronym. The house of Strathbogie, seat of the earl, later marquess of Huntly, for example, became Huntly castle; the house of Gloom became Castle Campbell for the earl of Argyle; Drumminor became Castle Forbes; Bog o' Gight became Castle Gordon; Muchall became Castle Fraser; Freuchie became Castle Grant; and Pettie became Castle Stewart. Even when Clanranald refashioned his country seat in South Uist in 1701–3, for his new wife, daughter of the governor of Tangiers (who had said of the original house that her father's hens were better housed), he called his Hebridean mansion Ormiclate Castle – although, to be in keeping with his peers, it should really have been Clanranald castle. The habit persisted even into the early nineteenth century, when Sir Evan Murray Macgregor retitled his house of Lanrick, near Doune, as Gregor or Clan Gregor castle as the seat of the MacGregors, and had it refashioned in an appropriately baronial manner by James Gillespie Graham.

The palace of Huntly Aberdeenshire

Pont's minute elevations imply that hierarchy was expressed architecturally through differences in scale, function and elaboration[93]. The 'ancient paternal seat' of an aristocrat was a world away from the dwelling of a fourth-rank, minor landowner, but the architectural language of finials, chimney stacks, turrets, dormer windows, corbelling and belvederes cascaded down from rank to rank, to be understood like semaphore by all those who surveyed it. Whereas all ranks shared the basic language of turrets and crow-steps, the lower the rank, the fewer the storeys and the plainer the skyline. A seat of the first rank like the earl of Crawford's house of Finaven, Angus, was indicated by full heraldic panoply and a height sometimes rising to seven storeys, whereas a fourth-rank house was barely more than a modest two-storeyed dwelling with 'outshots'.

Country houses also differed in purpose. A landowner of high rank would hold several properties, each with a different function in his life. The most symbolic was the 'ancient paternal seat' (the ancient seat of my fathers, as Lord Strathmore put it),[94] which performed a comparable role to the great circular *donjon* in French châteaux: namely the guardian and representation of lineage. This motivation was so powerful that it explains why the ancestral tower was retained at the heart of many courts of lesser rank decades after it had fallen out of use. However, where the ancient paternal seat might have had the most elaborate embellishment, it might have become outmoded by the time of the Renaissance. The ancient paternal seat of the Maxwells was their great triangular castle of Caerlaverock, to which they added a fine Renaissance wing in the early seventeenth century. But they rarely seem to have lived there, preferring the now vanished courtyard palace of Terregles.[95]

In like manner, the Ogilvies of Airlie retained Airlie castle, but lived in the fashionable mid sixteenth-century house of Cortachy, which they bought from a neighbour. Most striking of all, the earls of Huntly much preferred to reside further north, in their house of Bog o' Gight, whose height and skyline so overawed its visitors to living in Huntly castle which they broadcast as their seat of power. The reasons for this move was that the original site, which might have been genuinely defensive, was no longer desirable – perhaps constrained by rivers, cliffs, moats and remoteness – and could not offer the spacious Renaissance layout, gardens and parks for which the nobles wished.

Rank was also expressed through the number of properties that one owned. The earl of Huntly, for example, had principal seats at Bog (near Fochabers), Strathbogie, Ruthven in Badenoch, a splendid towered house on the castle site in Inverness, and a great mansion in Fortrose. He had town houses in Aberdeen and in Edinburgh, at least one hunting lodge at Blairfindy, and maintained the house of Melgund, in Angus, as a 'travelling house' between Aberdeenshire and Edinburgh. The earl of Strathmore had Castle Huntly as his summer house near the River Tay, and his principal residence was at Glamis, and the earl of Panmure treated Brechin castle in like manner. Other noblemen had seaside villas, fishing pavilions, even a house for the heir before he came into his inheritance.[96] Hunting or fishing lodges can be identified from their plan – characteristically tall and narrow, with an enormous kitchen but few cellars, a large hall but few bedchambers. Cellars were not needed since the food was being caught; the large hall implies wide hospitality, but chambers were not needed since most of the throng would be under canvas.

Even a lesser noble – a third son like Chancellor Seton – had several houses. His first act had been to buy Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, and transform it into an ancient paternal seat for himself and his heirs. He had it decorated in an appropriately bombastic manner (although, to judge from an eighteenth-century sketch by Robert Adam, it was not quite as flamboyant as it is now). He had a major town house in Elgin (now called the Bishop's Palace) , whereas his seat of power was the suburban villa of Pinkie, near Edinburgh. His private family home, however, was at Dalgety, across the Forth. A fourth-rank landowner, however, would probably have had no more than his original house and its estate unless he married into others.

It is nonetheless observable that the architectural expression of the Scottish country seat changed abruptly several times – and that those alterations coincided with change of monarch. Although the Reformation in 1560 has customarily been used as a convenient point of architectural change, it is not discernible in the architecture of the country seat.[97] So far as country houses are concerned, 1560 represents an artificial break during the reign of Mary I. Under the direction of king James V's cousin, Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, Scottish architecture had appeared, rather, to be influenced by Italian examples during the 1530s, both at the palace of Stirling and in his own villa of Craignethan, Lanarkshire. The exceptions were the new royal lodging at Holyrood in 1529, perhaps inspired by Vincennes; and the reformatting of Falkland for the king's two French queens – the short lived Madeleine de Valois, followed by Marie de Guise in 1538.

Marie had brought some of her father's craftsmen to recast the courtyard façade of the south wing, possibly in emulation of the Château du Grand Jardin, the garden pavilion of her family home of Joinville.[98] From the death of James V in 1542 until 1568, the queen dowager, and then her daughter Mary I Queen of Scots – two French-educated women with large, mostly French, households – presided over the culture of the country. Mary I was affianced to the French dauphin, then married to a French king, and Scotland was destined to be a French colony. There was equally extreme Francophilia and Francophobia in the mid fifteen-fifties. The blind poet Sir Richard Maitland observing wryly that:

> Thair gluvis perfumit in thair hand
> Helpis meikil thair contenance, *Et tout est a la mode de France*.[99]

Parliament had to pass penal acts to stem the attacks by Scots on French soldiers in the streets. In architecture, however, there was no contest. Marie de Guise had made an extended trip to France in 1550, accompanied by her most significant nobility, and they visited Joinville, Châteaudun and Nancy as well as Paris. On their return, Bishop Lesley recorded how Scotland set about modernizing itself: 'The haill realme of Scotland being this maner in quyetnes, everye man addrest him selfe to policie, and to big, plant and pleneise those rowmes quhilkis throch the trublis of the warris, be Inglismen or utheris had been wasted brint, spulyeit or distroyit.'[100] The Scots had been much taken by the symbolism of the circular French *donjon*, that powerful expression of French lineal antiquity, and during this period, Scottish country houses began to sport the characteristic pepperpot studies or turrets, and to adopt the plan, of the Loire châteaux. Probably beginning with Huntly in 1553, the motif of the circular tower – as *tour mâitresse* – was added to existing houses as the expression of the final chamber in the state apartment sequence, that is, the bedchamber (see Figure 5). A tower of this kind was added by Robert Reid to his palace at Kirkwall, and by the earl of Atholl to his fortress at Balvenie. Once her

French king husband was dead, and Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland in 1561, this Franco-Scots architecture became *de rigueur* for many smaller houses, particularly in the north-east. What is distinctive, however, is that the Scots were adapting French architectural ideas of the previous generation, that of Francis I, rather than the new classical architecture of Sebastiano Serlio, who had arrived in France eight years before the Scots embassy (although he was not to stay). The indigenous architecture of Jacques Androuet du Cerceau as to prove much more attractive to French aristocrats and, in time, to Scots nobles also.

However, given the embryonic Italianate nature of much of James V's architecture, it is likely that Scottish architecture was diverted from its natural evolution by this French interlude 1538–68, and by the subsequent backlash against it.[101] During the military posturing between Mary of Guise, the queen regent, and the lords of the congregation in 1559, it appears that the latter went out of their way to despoil Falkland palace, upon which the Guise craftsmen had worked so carefully.[102] It seems fair to deduce that they vented their wrath on the most obviously French building within reach.

Once Mary Queen of Scots was exiled to England in 1568, evidently Francophile buildings that proclaimed loyalty to the disgraced regime could be politically dangerous and, even after 1572 when the civil war between what was called the French (queen's) faction and the Scottish (young king's) faction was over, the country remained uneasily divided between the two. Nonetheless, this was a period of extensive construction:

> While domestick dissentions took a little rest, the vice-roy Morton began to caste an eye upon the publicke, fortifying castles . . . the beautifying of the kingdome with inward and outward ornaments of market places, regall structures, palaces, courts, finishing with majesticall magnificence his building at Dalkeith.[103]

Politically astute Scots adapted their houses in a very distinctive manner. The tops of their romantic round towers were decapitated, and a rectangular or square room or study superimposed instead. The regent himself, Morton, may have led the way at his house of Drochil, Peeblesshire, and others followed. Sometimes, the junction between the circular tower and the new square study on top was executed with a crudity that implies that a public recantation was being offered.[104]

Claypotts, Dundee (author). The clumsiness with which the original caps of the towers have been replaced by the rectangular studies c.*1588 implies that a very public point was being made.*

This seems the most appropriate explanation of how the Loirean vertical exuberance and romanticism of the Marian period came, during this time of enormous construction, to be superseded by a much more sedate, horizontally proportioned architecture of James VI's minority. Significantly, the symbolic circular bedroom tower of the Marian era, erected in emulation of the French symbol of medieval lineage, was replaced by a rectangular tower, erected in emulation of the Scottish symbol of medieval lineage – the most extraordinary exemplification of which was Morton's own seat at Dalkeith, to which he added two entire mock-mediaeval towers. These chunky houses are frequently used to characterize Scottish Renaissance architecture, but they represented only its most internalized phase.

James VI assumed power in 1585, and then married Anna of Denmark, sister of the

Wrichtishousis, Edinburgh, villa of the Napier family, demolished 1800 (conjectural reconstruction by the author based upon drawings by Alexander Nasmyth and others). A gallery separates the family wing (left) from the public/ guest wing on the right.

architectural patron Christian IV, in 1589–90. Scottish architecture shifted in response. The queen was a friend and patron of architects – her chamberlain was the architect William Schaw – and she cultivated a new court architecture. The villas of her courtiers were characteristically U-plan and horizontal in proportion, even though they remained quite deliberately asymmetrical and, by English standards, flamboyant. There are distinct similarities between miniature Scottish villas of this period and the great Danish castles such as Frederiksborg or Rosenberg. No ancient paternal seat was created entirely in the form of the later Jacobean villa, although a new wing might sometimes take that for, as at Cowdenknowes and Crathes.[105] Architecture, however, was still used to express politics. Once James VI quit Edinburgh for London, a motto began to appear everywhere: '106 kings have left us this unconquered' carved in stone or plaster, implying that the Scots were as unwilling to permit themselves to be conquered through a reverse political takeover as they had been over the centuries by force of arms.

The largely Catholic north-east Scotland, dominated by the marquess of Huntly as Lieutenant of the North, felt alienated from Edinburgh, never mind London; and the Bell group of houses (see Figure 1) – that very particular group of c. 22 'tall houses' of that region – may be interpreted as expressing a more architectural form of nationally self-conscious dignity. That such construction was a matter of choice is emphasized by those who took a different architectural route. The Protestant humanist Alexander Irvine of Drum, patron of newly founded Marischal College (university) in Aberdeen, had a different perspective, although we can surmise from details that he probably deployed the same architect as his neighbours and peers.[106] Instead of increasing the height of his ancient tower, he opted to add a new, low-slung, U-plan wing to Drum, approximately in the form of a Lowland villa (see Figure 8). It was as strong a means of proclaiming a different sort of politics as building seven storeys into the clouds.

Far less changed in Scottish architecture during the civil wars and Interregnum period than had previously been surmised, and contrary to received wisdom, [107]Scottish architectural history exhibits thereafter far more continuity than disruption. The accepted view that 'the most obvious break with the past was the full establishment in Scotland [after 1660] of a "mainstream" European classicism, stemming ultimately from the Italian Renaissance', is a

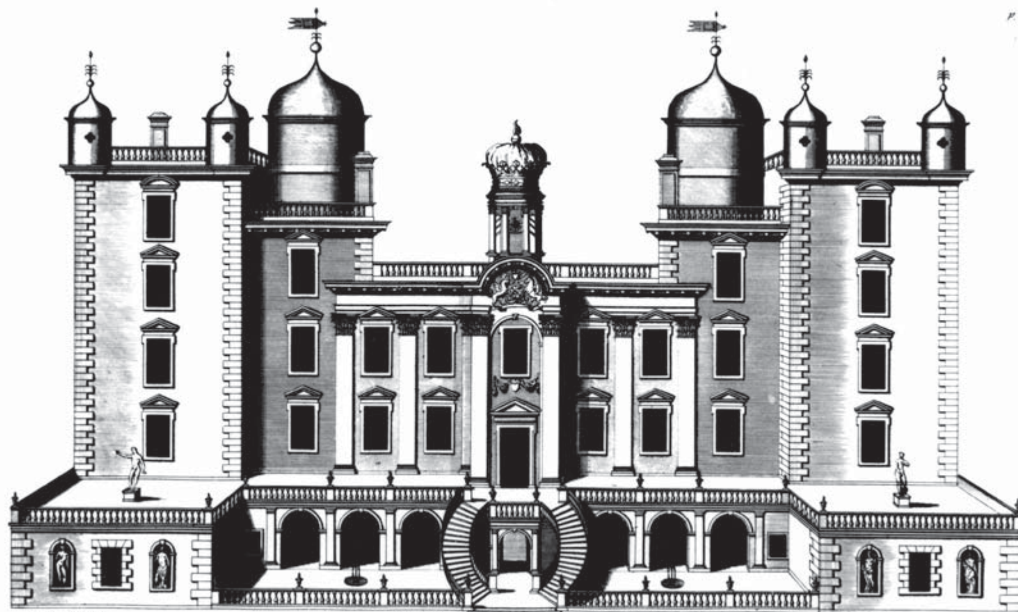
wilful misreading of the evidence.[108] The few classical houses built between 1660 and 1690, when so much other construction was taking place,[109] were restricted to 'new money' (that is, for those without an ancestral seat, as was also the case in France),– pre-eminently Kinross house, built by James Smith and Sir Will Bruce for Bruce himself and based upon Dutch bourgeois models.[110] It was a matter of rank.

apartments, usually on separate floors, and the relegation of the service buildings from the front courts out of sight in a new back court.[111] The axis of entry consequently moved from the rear of the building to what had earlier been the garden front, which was now aggrandized into an entrance façade, customarily framed by circular corner towers (possibly in emulation of Holyrood palace), either inherited, or made to seem so, and

Kinross House

Any analysis founded upon the assumption of the inevitable triumph of classicism in architecture fails to comprehend the nature of the triumphal Scottish baroque, led by the members of the treasury committee, that burst upon the country. The treasury committee, consisting of key members of James, duke of York's 'court' at Holyrood, were a reincarnation of the modernizers of James VI's reign– the Octavians, and their flamboyant seats were composed from the Scottish details and motifs of the previous two centuries used in an entirely new manner – much of whose inspiration can be traced to the 16th century French architect Androuet du Cerceau. The principal country seats erected between 1660 and 1707 (always maintaining relative rank) represent the apogee of an indigenous Scottish architecture. The main functional changes lay in the creation of parallel state and private

significantly called 'bastions'.[112] Rectangular towers, possibly the result of a need to adapt existing ones, framed some of the greatest houses, notably Panmure, Hamilton palace, Kinneil and Drumlanrig. They all presented a perfectly balanced entrance façade capped by the characteristically flamboyant skyline of reinterpreted turrets, finials, heraldic motifs, turrets and belvederes. A house might be given a new orientation, regular fenestration and strong cornice on one façade, as in Gardyne, Angus, while retaining its original entrance façade, complete with towers, crow-steps and studies. The most striking example of this Janus-like attitude to change was Hamilton palace, where James Smith added a stupendous classical portico to the west facçade of the gallery wing as a new entry, leaving unscathed the twin-towered, dormer-windowed, high-chimneyed Renaissance façade on the other



Drumlanrig, Dumfriesshire, possibly the most glorious exemplar of late seventeenth-century Scottish architecture, designed by James Smith

side. It might have been cheaper to rebuild the entire thing; but that was not the point. Hamilton palace was not *classical* per se: Duchess Anne had simply added the classical entrance – just as Duchess Anna Buccleugh had done at Dalkeith – to a modernized but Scottish baroque building to pay sufficient homage to King William of Orange's '*embourgeoisement*' of the nation.

At Glamis, Angus, Patrick, earl of Kinghorn, was bent on recreating the architecture of a particular period of Scottish history. When was reformatting his seat, he did not regularize it like the others, but built most extraordinarily upon the work of his grandfather to create a design that appeared to epitomize the Franco-Scots period. (Even then, practicality required that he depart from balance to create a flat viewing platform on one side that offered 'great service to those of us who live on this side of the house.'[113]). Strathmore intended that nobody should mistake his heraldic house for a castle: 'There is no man more against these old fashion of tours and castles then I am.'[114] To interpret this climax of Scottish architectural history as a withering of the native tradition, or, as Charles Rennie Mackintosh put it, 'a mix up between Scottish Baronial & debased Elezibethan [*sic*] Italian Renaissance',[115] was fundamentally to misunderstand it.

The Scottish problem with castles, therefore, is that we have allowed ourselves to be deceived by appearances, and not done our homework. Scottish landowners sought the nobility that the title and martial appearance of a castle might provide, but could never have imagined the cultural misinterpretations that were to stem from it. Scottish Renaissance architecture was not the consequence of ignorance, poverty or warfare, but a deliberate cultural choice made in the full knowledge of what was being built elsewhere. Expressions of individuality, lineage, rank and political affiliation – tempered by both romance and nostalgia – provided an architecture much more attractive to Scottish aristocrats than the calm (and rather bourgeois) homogenizations of classicism – as was the case in Europe.

Much of the misunderstanding of later generations has arisen from the tendency to interpret Scotland's Renaissance culture within a British rather than a European context. Only when viewed within a European framework,

and against the particular evolution of Scottish history between 1500 and 1700, does it become comprehensible.

Notes

1. *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture*, ed. D. Cruickshank (1996) devotes 35 pages to England 1500–1700, and 32 lines to Scotland. Scotland does not figure at all in D. Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture* (1986). Sir John Summerson, in *Architecture in Britain, 1530–1830* (Harmondsworth, 1977) was more canny; stating that architecture in Scotland up to the date of the Union was as distinct from England 'as the latter is from Danish or Spanish', he relegated it to an appendix.
2. Personal communication from J. Calder to the author. See also C. McKean, *The Making of the Museum of Scotland* (National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 2–9.
3. See particularly C. McKean, 'The Scottish Renaissance country seat in its setting', *Garden Hist.*, xxxi (2005), 141–62.
4. The beautiful Wemyss manuscript of music for a 10-course lute was created by Lady Margaret Wemyss in 1643 at Wemyss castle, Fife (Rob MacKillop, *Flowers of the Forest* (1998), Greentrax Recordings, CDTRAX155, CD booklet).
5. M. Glendinning and A. MacKechnie, *Scottish Architecture* (2004), p. 67.
6. Proposals for Carrying on Certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1752) (hereafter Proposals).
7. These notions are developed in greater detail in C. McKean, 'Twinning cities: improvement versus modernisation in the two towns of Edinburgh', in B. Edwards and P. Jenkins, *Edinburgh – the Making of a Capital City* (Edinburgh, 2005), pp. 42–64. The *Proposals'* attack on 17th-century Scotland uses very similar language to Robertson's own history of that period. For a wider discussion, see also C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689–c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993).
8. *Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle*, ed. J. Hill Burton (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 252.
9. Alexander Carlyle liked to mock Webster as 'Dr Bonum Magnum' for his gastronomic habits, but Webster was to produce Scotland's first parish census in 1755.
10. T. Somerville, *My Own Life and Times, 1741–1830* (Edinburgh, 1861), p. 104.
11. *Proposals*, p. 12. Kidd points out that, in writing something very similar in his essay 'On the refinement of the arts', David Hume was 'delivering a negative verdict on the former Scottish Constitution' (Kidd, pp. 176–80).
12. *Proposals*, p. 14.
13. Based upon an analysis of building dates in M. Salter, *Castles of Scotland* (5 vols., Malvern, 1993–6). See graph in C. McKean, *The Scottish Château* (Stroud, 2001), p. 17.
14. G. Blakhall, *A Brief Narration* (Aberdeen, 1844), p. 170.
15. Our Journall into Scotland anno domini 1629 (Edinburgh, 1894), pp. 17–18.
16. Kidd, p. 209.
17. A. de Cardonnel, *Picturesque Antiquities of Scotland* (1788), pt. ii, p. 11.
18. The scale of Italian urban violence is represented by a design prepared by the architect Sebastiano Serlio for a house for a 'faction leader'; taking as read that the doors of this great *palazzo* would be smashed down by a rival faction, its inner hall was protected by 16 concealed gunloops. Moreover, a nobleman's palace in Rome required both an armoury and a guardroom.
19. For more on this, see McKean, *Scottish Château*, ch. 3.
20. R. Chambers, *The Domestic Annals of Scotland* (3 vols., Edinburgh, [*c.*1842]), i. 5.
21. Kidd, chs. 7–9.
22. Chambers, i. 521, 550.
23. See, e.g., C. Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland* (East Linton, 1995); *The Rose and the Thistle*, ed. S. Mapstone and J. Wood (East Linton, 1998); *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland*, ed. I. B. Cowan and D. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1983); R. A. Mason, *Kingship and Commonweal* (East Linton, 1998); *Stewart Style 1513–42: Essays on the Court of James V*, ed. J. H. Williams (East Linton, 1996); D. J. Ross, *Musick Fyne: Robert Carver and the Art of Music in 16th Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1993); R. A. Mason 'Humanism and political culture', in *People and Power in Scotland*, ed. R. A. Mason and N. Macdougall (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 104– 38; M. Bath, *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2003); and dissertations such as A. Thomas, 'Renaissance culture at the court of James V (unpublished University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, 1997).
24. Quoted in M. Sanderson, *Robert Adam and Scotland: Portrait of an Architect* (repr. Edinburgh, 1993) p. 88.
25. Below William Burn's replacement East Window, an iconic location, the stone is poor, random and keyed for plaster.
26. Fr. A. Baillie, True Information of the Unhallowed Offspring, Progress and Impoisoned Fruits of our Scottish Calvinist Gospel and Gospellers (Wirtsburg, 1628), pp. 24–8. The author is very grateful to Michael Pearce for this.
27. It is not known what murals may have adorned St. Giles's. A similar church interior – the Friary church in Konstanz – is adorned with beautiful paintings on the octagonal columns, with saints rising above them. There is only scant record of the vividness of the interior of Scottish medieval churches, such as the painting of the window embrasure of Turriff church (C. McKean, *Banff and Buchan* (Edinburgh, 1990)).
28. Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, *The History of*

Scotland from 1436 to 1565 (3rd edn., Edinburgh, 1778), p. 325.

[29] The author is greatly indebted to R. J. Morris for an advance view of 'The capitalist, the soldier and the professor: the remaking of Edinburgh castle, 1850–1900' (forthcoming).

[30] *Lennoxlove Guidebook* (Haddington, 1981).

[31] T. Hannan, *Famous Scottish Houses* (1928), pp. 119, 27.

[32] J. Warrack, *Domestic Life in Scotland, 1488–1688* (1920), p. 99: 'But almost with the stroke of the new century there came a change.'

[33] D. Macmillan, *Scottish Art 1460–1990* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 56.

[34] Photographs in the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (R.C.A.H.M.S.) reveal that a number of the seats studied for *The Scottish Château* were still harled in the later 19th century, whereas they are not now.

[35] D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (5 vols., Edinburgh, 1895).

[36] D. Walker, 'The architecture of MacGibbon and Ross – the background to the books', in *Studies in Scottish Antiquity Presented to Stewart Cruden*, ed. D. Breeze (Glasgow, 1984).

[37] It is not found in contemporary documents. The term 'tower' is used in the hearth tax records usually to refer to a very small and unmodernized medieval house.

[38] Sir W Brereton, in P. Hume Brown, *Early Travellers in Scotland* (repr. Edinburgh, 1973), p. 149.

[39] T. Kirke, in Hume Brown, *Early Travellers*, p. 259.

[40] T. Morer, in Hume Brown, *Early Travellers*, p. 275 (author's emphasis).

[41] P. Burke, The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries (Oxford, 1998), p. 118.

[42] J. G. Dunbar, The Historic Architecture of Scotland (1966), p. 76.

[43] Dunbar, pp. 66–81, esp. p. 72.

[44] D. Howard, *Scottish Architecture from the Reformation to the Restoration 1560–1660* (The Architectural History of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1995), ch. 1.

[45] Bath, p. 15. T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation* (1999), p. xxi: 'the tower house, designed mainly for defence.'

[46] R. Samson, 'The rise and fall of tower-houses in post-Reformation Scotland', in *The Social Archaeology of Houses*, ed. R. Samson (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 197–243, at p. 224.

[47] Scotland before 1700 from Contemporary Documents, ed. P. Hume Brown (Edinburgh, 1893), p. 299.

[48] K. M. Brown, Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to the Revolution (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 190–201; R. Johnston, History of Scotland during the Minority of King James, in Scotia Rediviva: a Collection of Tracts Illustrative of the History and Antiquities of Scotland, ed. R. Buchanan (Edinburgh, 1836), p. 441.

[49] For more on Finnart, see C. McKean, 'Sir James Hamilton of Finnart – a Renaissance courtier-architect', *Architectural Hist.*, xlii (1999), 141–72

[50] Both P. E. Ritchie, *Mary of Guise in Scotland 1548–60* (East Linton, 2002) and M. H. Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots 1542–51* (East Linton, 2000) deal with this period, although principally from a political perspective. A cultural history of the reigns of Mary Queen of Scots and Mary of Guise has yet to be written.

[51] Chambers, i. 120.

[52] However, John Reid, The Scots Gard'ner, published for the Climate of Scotland [1683], ed. A. Hope (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 24, states that '4 Ells is low enough, 5 or 6 if you please' (an 'ell' being 37 inches).

[53] The suggestion of ranking in houses was first made apparent in a study of the drawings on the maps by Timothy Pont (1585–*c.*1608), where an obvious hierarchy is displayed (see C. McKean, 'Timothy Pont's architectural drawings', in I. Cunningham, *The Nation Survey'd: Timothy Pont's Maps of Scotland* (East Linton, 2001)).

[54] The 1786 painting by Francis Grose of Friars' Carse, Dumfriesshire in the Riddell Collection (National Museums of Scotland) illustrates this particularly well.

[55] As in Dunnottar, by Stonehaven, Kincardineshire. W. Macfarlane, *Geographical Collections relating to Scotland,* ed. Sir A. Mitchell and J. T. Clark (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1906–8) (hereafter Macfarlane), ii. 341, iii. 233.

[56] Judged by their large windows and fireplaces.

[57] As in Edzell, Saltoun and possibly Pitsligo.

[58] For more on this, see C. McKean, 'The laird and his guests', *Architectural Heritage*, xiii (2002), 1–19

[59] Customarily, there were three sets of stables in a larger house – court or riding stables, hunting stables and estate stables. E.g., Castle Lyon, Perthshire, had a riding stable, a hunting stable and a coach stable; Panmure, Angus, had an old stable, a west stable, a coach stable, a cart horse stable and a hunting mares stable; Kinnaird, Angus, had a hunting horse stable, a pad horse stable, a west stable and a staigs stable; and both Glamis castle, Angus, and Floors, Roxburgh, had coach, riding and hunting stables. (The author is indebted to Charles Wemyss for sharing his inventory hunt.)

[60] See C. McKean, 'Galleries, girnals and the woman house', *Rev. Scottish Culture*, xi (Edinburgh, 2003–4), 19–34.

[61] Four ells high (Reid, p. 24). For more on this, see McKean, 'Renaissance country seat in its setting'.

[62] Two carved panels on the privy garden wall. This translation follows that of Bath, pp. 99–100.

[63] Inventory of Castle Lyon *c.*1684 (Glamis, Glamis Papers, NRAS (S) 885 255/7/2, 16).

[64] D. Walker, 'An historical review', in *Restoring Scotland's Castles*, ed. R. Clow (Glasgow, 2000), p. 1.

[65] Sir J. Clerk, *The Country Seat* (National Archives

of Scotland (hereafter N.A.S.), GD18/ 4404/1, unpublished). The author is grateful to Sir Robert Clerk and James Simpson for this reference.

66 M. Davis, 'Was there an architectural school in north-east Scotland in the early 17th century?' (in progress).

67 Manuscript maps held in the National Library of Scotland (hereafter N.L.S.) (see Cunningham).

68 R. Franck, *Northern Memoirs*, ed. Sir W. Scott (Edinburgh, 1821), pp. 221–2.

69 James Elliot (N.A.S., Breadalbane MSS., GD112/ 20, box 4).

70 Named after a group of 14–22 country houses putatively attributed to mason/architects John, George and David Bel (M. Davis, 'The Bel family and their Renaissance tall houses', *Architectural Heritage*, xvi (2005), 1–13.

71 Quoted in Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Scotland* (2 vols., 1797), ii. 87.

72 Burke, European Renaissance, p. 10.

73 K. Newland, 'The constructions of Panmure house 1666–85' (M.Phil. research, University of Dundee). See, in particular, N.A.S., GD 45/ 18.566 fo. 1.

74 For a closer discussion of this, see McKean, *Scottish Château*, appendix.

75 Manuscript maps held in the N.L.S. (see Cunningham).

76 H. Colvin, 'The beginnings of the architectural profession in Scotland', *Architectural Hist.*, xxix (1986), 168–82, at pp. 173–4.

77 See, e.g., D. Shaw, 'Adam Bothwell, a conservator of the Renaissance in Scotland', in Cowan and Shaw, pp. 141–70.

78 Johnston, pp. 480–91.

79 See Howard, esp. the final chapter.

80 Patrick, 1st earl of Strathmore, The Book of Record: a Diary Written by Patrick, 1st earl of Strathmore, and Other Documents Relating to Glamis Castle, 1684–89 (hereafter Glamis Book of Record), ed. A. H. Millar (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 19.

81 I. Campbell, 'A romanesque revival and the early Renaissance in Scotland *c.*1380–1513', *Jour. Soc. Architectural Historians*, liv (1994), 302–25; and I. Campbell, 'Linlithgow's princely palace and its influence in Europe', *Architectural Heritage*, v (1994), 1–20.

82 Burke, *European Renaissance*, p. 83–4.

83 e.g., Burntisland, and the Tron and the Canongate kirks in Edinburgh.

84 Johnston, p. 372.

85 e.g., Craig, Towie Barclay, Delgatie, Gight, the 'Wine Tower' at Fraserburgh, and perhaps even the 'summer house' in the privy garden at Edzell (see I. B. D. Bryce and A. Roberts, 'Post-Reformation Catholic houses of north-east Scotland', *Proc. Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland*, cxxiii (1993), 363–72).

86 *King's College Chapel, Aberdeen*, ed. J. Geddes (Aberdeen, 2003). For a discussion on proportions, see A. MacKechnie, 'Geometria', *Arca*, v (2002), 10–13.

87 See C. McKean, 'The architectural evolution of the Innes House', *Proc. Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland*, cxxxiii (2004), 315–42.

88 During his restoration of Melgund, Angus, the architect Ben Tindall discovered a most impressive geometric formula governing the proportions of the rooms added by Cardinal Beaton for Margaret Ogilvie *c.*1542 (B. Tindall, 'Proportions matter', *Architectural Heritage Soc. of Scotland (A.H.S.S.) Magazine*, xv (1997), 7).

89 D. Stevenson, The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590–1710 (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 87–96.

90 Howard, p. 2.

91 *Correspondence of Sir Robert Kerr, 1st earl of Ancram and his son William, 3rd earl of Lothian*, ed. D. Laing (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1875), i. 64.

92 The author is indebted to Mary Miers for this information.

93 There were something like 5,000–7,000 country seats of all ranks during the Renaissance, calculated by selecting random parishes from MacFarlane, comparing the seats listed therein to those that survive now, and extrapolating.

94 Strathmore, p. 37.

95 There is a painting of old Terregles in the Robert Riddell Collection in the National Museums of Scotland.

96 Castle Stewart was the seaside pavilion of the earl of Moray at Darnaway, and Muchalls that of the Burnetts of Leys at Crathes. Gylen, on the island of Kerrera, was the fishing pavilion of the MacDougalls of Lorne. Greenknowe, in the Borders, was probably a hunting seat of the Setons of Touch. Pittulie was the house of the heir of Sir Alexander Fraser of Philorth, Sydserf of Sydserf of that ilk (who now lived at Ruchlaw), and Gagie that of the Guthries of that ilk.

97 It is the divide between the two volumes in the *Architectural History of Scotland* series, and is used as a principal division in M. Glendinning, R. MacInnes and A. MacKechnie, *A History of Scottish Architecture from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (Edinburgh, 1996).

98 The author is grateful to Michael Pearce for this observation.

99 *Maitland Quarto Manuscripts*, ed. W. A. C. Craigie (Edinburgh, 1920), p. 229. Author's emphasis.

100 J. Lesley, *The History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 243.

101 The term 'Marian', used to categorize country seats of the period 1538–68, been borrowed from political history where it was used only to refer to Mary Queen of Scots and her adherents, to cover the period when the culture of Scotland was led by two French educated queens, specifically between 1550 and 1568. Mary of Guise came to Scotland in 1538, and her daughter finally lost control of her kingdom in 1568. In the 1550s, Mary of Guise's predilection for French advisers was one of the reasons adduced by the lords of the congregation for their rebellion.

[102] Current research being undertaken by Michael Pearce.
[103] Johnston, p. 396.
[104] See, e.g., Claypotts, Dundee, and Newton, Blairgowrie.
[105] E.g., at Cowdenknowes and at Crathes.
[106] To judge by the characteristic square or 'label' corbel used in his staircases.
[107] Glendinning and Mackechnie, *Scottish Architecture*, p. 217.
[108] Glendinning, MacInnes and MacKechnie, p. 72.
[109] C. Wemyss, 'Some aspects of Scottish country house construction in the post-restoration period: Patrick Smyth and the building of Methven Castle 1678–81' (unpublished University of Dundee M.Phil. thesis, 2002).
[110] See C. Wemyss, 'Merchant and citizen of Rotterdam, tax collector: the early career of Sir William Bruce', *Architectural Heritage*, xvi (2005), 14–30. Kinross house, right down to its use of Scamozzi orders and echoes of Amsterdam town hall, is entirely Dutch in inspiration (K. A. Ottenheym, 'Dutch contributions to the classicist tradition in northern Europe in the 17th century: patrons, architects and books', *Scandinavian Jour. Hist.*, xxviii (2003), 227–42).
[111] McKean, 'Renaissance country seat'.
[112] K. Newland, 'The construction of Panmure house 1666–86' (postgraduate research in progress, University of Dundee). Circular corner towers frame or framed Brechin, Methven, Kinnaird, Dudhope, Tarbat, Tyrie, Boyndlie and many others.
[113] Strathmore, p. 38.
[114] The Glamis Book of Record, quoted in A. H. Millar, The Historical Castles and Mansions of Scotland (Paisley, 1890), p. 227.
[115] C. R. Mackintosh, *The Architectural Papers*, ed. P. Robertson (Wendlebury, 1990), p. 63.