

## Castles, Concepts and Contexts: Castle Studies in Scotland in Retrospect and Prospect

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The academic study of Scottish castles was born out of the flourishing of the Romantic tradition in the early 19th century. This academic study had its origins have a century earlier, when some sections of British elite society began to develop an interest in their medieval past. Most discussion of the movement point to Horace Walpole's house at Strawberry Hill, an eclectic assembly of forms and motifs culled from English late medieval examples built and enlarged over the half century after 1749. Walpole's passion for the medieval extended into other sections of the arts and he is seen to have had a major role in popularising what would nowadays be referred to as a 'lifestyle choice' in an influential and wealthy segment of British society. Their tastes were moulded by and reflected in literature, beginning in 1764 with Walpole's own medieval fantasy, *The Castle of Otranto*, and climaxing in 1794 with Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, which in turn influenced pictorial art and spread a revival of interest in medieval architecture. While the high culture of late Georgian Britain is nowadays broadly represented in popular tradition as stridently Classical, it is important to recognise that alongside the Vitruvian and Palladian images of this public face marched a counter-culture that looked enthusiastically to the pre-Renaissance period for its artistic inspiration. This counter-culture in England found its greatest expression in the 'Gothick' fantasy of Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire, built between 1796 and 1822, designed for William Beckford by James Wyatt, an architect whose style has been described as 'midway between the rococo fantasy of the early part of the century and the archaeological exactitude of the Victorian age'<sup>1</sup>. In Scotland, taste for the neo-Gothic style had also emerged in the 1740s at Inverary, where Roger Morris and Robert Mylne replaced the Duke of Argyll's 16<sup>th</sup>-century house with a symmetrically-planned square mansion with cylindrical corner towers and Gothick details. It was from the 1780s, however, when Robert Adam created a series of striking houses in a distinctly hybrid Classical and Italianate Gothic style, best represented by Culzean in Ayrshire (1777-92), Oxenfoord in Midlothian (1780-85) and Seton in East Lothian (1790), that the castellated tradition fixed itself as the dominant strand in the country-house architecture of the landed nobility.

Adam's mock castellation was just one facet of the emergence of a particular view of Scotland's medieval and renaissance past which has exerted a debilitating hold over castellology in Scotland down to the present. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Scottish historiography began a remarkable period of evolution that lasted into the 1860s, commencing with the publication of David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*<sup>2</sup>, then given added impetus with the publication in 1828 of Patrick Fraser Tytler's monumental *History of Scotland*<sup>3</sup>. Of these books, although Hailes's was perhaps the more balanced and historically critical, it was Tytler's which had the lasting impact in forming a view of the past which characterised Scotland as a violent land dominated by over-mighty magnates and riven with feud and factionalism in which castles were fortresses from which robber barons terrorised the peasantry, strongholds from which foreign oppressors sought to dominate the kingdom, and miserable bolt-holes in which a poverty-stricken minor nobility shut themselves away from the unwelcome attention of thieving neighbours and raiding parties of Highlanders or Border brigands. Tytler's history was effectively a narrative of a conflict between a centralising monarchy and a regionalist nobility, and of an unsteady climb from barbarity into civilisation. The decisive transition was presented as King James VI's inheritance of the English throne in 1603 and the resultant exposure of the Scottish nobles to the supposedly more advanced culture of the southern kingdom. This so-called 'Whiggish' historical tradition was part and parcel of a political culture of Unionism which sought to present the regal union of 1603 and the parliamentary union of 1707 as purely positive developments which brought a culturally-retarded Scotland into enlightened modernity. Scotland's independent past was dark and miserable, like the castles which littered its landscape.

Rather than rejecting the supposed grimness of their past, the Scottish social and intellectual elites celebrated it, for it seemed to provide historical validation for a series of perceptions of their contemporary Scotland. The turbulent past, for example, had supposedly bred a hardy, warrior people who were the ancestors of the men serving in the regiments which had carved Britain its overseas empire in North America and India in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and who were currently serving in the wars against Napoleonic France. The proprietor-colonels who raised these regiments on their estates saw themselves as the direct descendants of the warrior-nobility of the medieval past, while their officers were often close kinsmen or members of cadet lines of the family. Command of such regiments was a valuable source of income to the landed nobility and it was in their interest to stress the warrior ancestry of their men, to present them as the finest soldiers available anywhere in Britain and thereby secure the commissions to raise regiments. This was the special contribution of the Scots to the armies of post-Union Britain. Thus was born the romantic myth of the Scottish – and particularly the Highland – soldier as the descendent of generations of Celtic warriors <sup>4</sup>.

The cult of the Scottish soldier emerging from the mists of the country's blood-soaked past found its greatest propagandist in Sir Walter Scott, Tory Unionist, politician, lawyer and author. From 1814 onwards, Scott's novels like *Waverley*, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot* or *Redgauntlet*, which celebrated Scotland's past military culture, fixed the image of a society inured to warfare firmly in the perceptions of the educated classes who read his work. It was an image further reinforced by the foundation of several societies dedicated to publishing editions of surviving medieval and early modern primary sources, in which Scott himself was a founding figure. From the 1820s until the 1860s, these clubs published a stream of such work, most of it sponsored by aristocrats <sup>5</sup>. Scott was also influential in shaping tastes in architecture and art, his house at Abbotsford in Roxburghshire, built between 1818 and 1824, being highly influential in the development of the new castellated style that became known as Scots Baronial, while his pivotal role in the organisation of King George IV's visit to Scotland in 1822 helped to cement the Romantic image of the Scottish past firmly in the cultural consciousness of the British monarchy and aristocracy. The ultimate product of his popularisation of Scottish history was the demolition of a genuinely medieval house and its replacement in 1853-55 for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert by the white granite Scots Baronial confection that is Balmoral Castle.

Popular enthusiasm for the new Scots Baronial style saw an increased demand from clients in the middle and upper classes for architects to incorporate castellated elements into their designs or to re-castellate older buildings that had been classicised in the earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-century, such as Blair Castle in Perthshire. A drive for greater accuracy in detailing saw the production of pattern and source books upon which to draw, a trend which climaxed with the magnificent *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*, (fig.1) produced by the London-born Robert Billings in four volumes between 1845 and 1852 <sup>6</sup>. It was not Billings' intention to undertake an analysis of Scotland's pre-18<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, and his work offers only a few summary comments on the dating of individual structures and on the stylistic trends within the surviving buildings <sup>7</sup>, but his work heightened awareness of the richness of Scotland's architectural heritage and can be regarded as marking the beginning of architectural history generally and castle studies particularly as a field of credible scholarly – as opposed to antiquarian - endeavour in Scotland.

Billings' approach was fairly random and driven primarily by identification of the best examples he could find to illustrate particular architectural features, styles and development. A more systematic approach which attempted to present the entirety of the surviving data and to classify and date the structures was the logical progression. The Victorian propensity towards cataloguing, typologising and sequencing, best-known from the museum-cases full of rows of artefacts which demonstrated their morphological development over time, resulted in the most influential study of castle architecture, the truly monumental five-volume *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, produced between 1887 and 1892 by the Edinburgh-based architects David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross <sup>8</sup>. The scale of their undertaking was phenomenal – almost every pre-1700 castle, country house and related building in Scotland was recorded - and architectural historians stood very much in awe of

their achievement for the best part of a century, regarding the classification and chronology which they proposed as effectively unchallengeable<sup>9</sup>. Their scheme, and more tellingly the timespan of their study which cut off effectively at the Parliamentary Union with England, was adopted in the early 1900s by the chief archaeological and architectural recording agency in Scotland, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and followed by them into the 1970s, and still shapes the interpretations offered to the visiting public by Scotland's primary heritage agency, Historic Scotland<sup>10</sup>.

MacGibbon and Ross proposed a chronologically ordered scheme which divided Scottish castle construction into four principal periods (Period 1 1200-1300; Period 2 1300-1400; Period 3 1400-1542; Period 4 1542-1700) with various sub-sections within each period organised in terms of basic building-plan. Their effort to establish a chronology was driven by wider historical questions: 'nothing', they wrote in 1882, 'can be more interesting and instructive than to follow the records of our national history contained in these old castles, and to note the manners and customs of our ancestors at different epochs as reflected in them'<sup>11</sup>. This was an important recognition of the documentary value of buildings, but their interpretation of what they saw in the castles was prejudiced by prevailing views on the social and political state of pre-Union Scotland, which led them to interpret almost everything that they saw in terms of fortification and defence. Any building which bore even the slightest suggestion of castellation was labelled as a castle. At the root of their classification was comparison of Period 1 buildings to 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century castles in England and France and recognition of the central place of the donjon in their planning. Seeing an obvious similarity between great donjons like Conisbrough or Loches and the towers of late 14<sup>th</sup>- to 17<sup>th</sup>-century Scotland, such as Threave or Craigievar, (fig.2) they proposed that these buildings represented a retention in Scotland of defence as the primary consideration in castle design and continued adherence to earlier medieval emphasis on verticality of defence over the later medieval and renaissance focus on depth. While at pains to stress the obvious sophistication of what they were recording and the wealth which it reflected, they unconsciously presented the apparent old-fashionedness of the buildings as a sign of cultural backwardness and the proliferation of apparently fortified residences until late in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a sign of the violence and instability inherent in Scottish society. As Charles McKean has recently observed, 'MacGibbon and Ross and their successors found castles because they were looking for them, and interpreted their plans and details accordingly'<sup>12</sup>.

The tenaciousness of the Victorian image of the social and cultural character of pre-1700 Scotland was founded in the failure of the academic community to question any of the basic assumptions within the construct. After c.1900, Scottish history as a field of academic research stagnated and it was not until the emergence of a new generation of scholars led by Barrow, Duncan and Simpson in the 1960s that a revisionist historiography founded on primary documentary research emerged<sup>13</sup>. Unfortunately, the archaeologists and architectural historians who had come to dominate castle studies in Scotland, led primarily by John Richardson and Stewart Cruden, largely failed to engage with that new research. This failure marked the beginning of a major dichotomy within the subject which subsequently held back its development. The contrast between historical research which emphasised the rise of renaissance monarchy in Scotland from the late 1470s, (fig.3) literary research which exposed a flourishing renaissance culture in poetry and prose, and the architectural historians' perception of the period, is underscored by Stewart Cruden's claim that

although sharing distantly in the intellectual activity of the European Renaissance Scotland did not take that movement to heart. The spirit of the Renaissance was feeble in a prolonged mediaeval environment<sup>14</sup>.

Cruden's comments also reflected the beginnings of a major divergence within Scottish castle studies produced in large part by the increasing professionalisation of archaeology and architectural history. Cruden himself was caught between a rejection of what he saw as 'the shortcomings in the historical record', which was 'so sadly defective' in comparison to the detailed accounts from medieval England, and reliance instead on archaeological evidence, and concern that 'inferences drawn from [excavated evidence] should not be overstrained' and that 'the written record is the last word'<sup>15</sup>. His caveat, sadly, was widely ignored and

increasing reliance on archaeological dating resulted in a tendency in the 1970s and 1980s for archaeologists in Scotland to pay at best lip-service to the value of the historical record in analysis of castle excavations, except where major episodes of building or destruction were evident in the archaeological record, for which documentary confirmation was sought<sup>16</sup>. For architectural historians, C14 dating and dendrochronology appeared to offer the prospect of a tighter chronology for constructional phases and stylistic changes than the documentary record could ever provide, at least for the pre-16<sup>th</sup> century period. At the same time, most historians were pursuing their own furrow in which the primacy of the documentary record was absolute. Perhaps more important in terms of historiography, however, was a shift from the historical study of castles as artefacts *per se* towards closer examination of the culture which produced them, the social organisation which they represented and the symbolism which they incorporated.

This historiographical development had to a degree stood alongside the plan-and-chronology-based school of castellology in Scotland since the 1920s. It was manifest in a separate tradition which focussed on the social, economic and political function of castles and on the symbolism and psychology in their construction. This divergent tradition originated in part in the work of Mackay Mackenzie who, although guided by the same historical perceptions as influenced MacGibbon and Ross and following their basic chronological scheme, employed a novel approach which examined the families and political relationships of patrons and builders, placing as much emphasis on socio-cultural forces which may have influenced them as on structural analysis. The chief exponent of this methodology was W Douglas Simpson, whose prodigious output of research spanned half a century<sup>17</sup>. Simpson's main focus was on individual buildings, in the analysis of which he adopted a synthetic approach that placed the building in a broad context: the castle was no longer viewed as an artefact in isolation and interpreted solely from an architectural standpoint. Instead, Simpson presented the buildings as the economic, social and jurisdictional hubs of complexes of landed property and seignorial rights. As such, however, he saw them as both the residences of noble families and also physical projections of their social and political aspirations. In effect, the buildings were the physical embodiment of a nobleman's mental concept of his lordship and status.

When focussed on individual buildings, Simpson's broader analysis was obscured by detailed structural interpretation<sup>18</sup>. Where his approach emerged clearest, however, was when his focus lifted to the regional level. This can be seen clearly in his 1941 Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Rhind Lectures, published in 1943 as *The Province of Mar*<sup>19</sup>, where he presented the cultural development of this region of north-eastern Scotland from the Neolithic to Early Modern periods as a sequential narrative which traced linguistic, religious, social, economic, political, artistic and architectural continuities. In terms of castle studies, his fully evolved methodology appeared in *The Earldom of Mar*, a development of the discussion of the medieval and renaissance period first articulated in the *Province*<sup>20</sup>. This 1949 publication offered a synthesis of landscape studies, family and parish history, archaeology and architectural interpretations which used the buildings discussed as illustrations of wider and longer-term social developments. Castles and houses like Kildrummy or Midmar, while still discussed in terms of the morphological and chronological sequence devised in the 1880s, were removed from the one-dimensional fortress-fixated interpretations of MacGibbon and Ross's successors and presented as dynamic organisms around which revolved the life of wider political and economic communities and which effectively constituted documentary records of social and economic successes and failures, kinship connections and shifting cultural horizons.

Douglas Simpson was very much *sui generis*, and few scholars followed his lead. Where his approach did win followers, however, was in genuinely collaborative studies, where documentary and architectural historians or archaeologists focussed on a single castle or related groups. Such collaborations are not simply that style of 'monograph' excavation report which comprises a series of free-standing papers on the history, architectural history, excavated evidence and specialist scientific reports, loosely linked by an introduction and conclusion, which became fashionable from the 1980s<sup>21</sup>, but are best represented by fully

integrated studies of which John Dunbar and Archie Duncan's 1971 discussion of Tarbert Castle in Argyllshire is an exemplar<sup>22</sup>. This style of approach, however, is rare and for much of the period down into the 1980s it was archaeology and the linked issues of plan and chronology which drove the research agenda.

Focus on these questions produced refinement in the argument rather than any spectacular breakthroughs or revisions. John Dunbar, for example, returned to the issue of simplicity of plan equating with antiquity of construction, focussing in particular on the remarkable group of West Coast castles which had traditionally been identified as of the 1200s or earlier<sup>23</sup>. While not discounting the possibility that some which possessed more clearly diagnostic architectural details – like Castle Sween (fig.4) – were indeed of possibly 12<sup>th</sup>-century date, he argued that others which shared the basic curtain wall format that MacGibbon and Ross and their successors had labelled as of the First Period could be demonstrated to be new builds of as late as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Conversely, Nick Bogdan was proposing at the same time that structures which had been identified conservatively as late displayed architectural features that were arguably very early<sup>24</sup>. In both, however, the arguments revolved around the linkage between plan and chronology first postulated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. While this tradition was still to produce some detailed typologising which elucidated the later evolution of castle planning in Scotland<sup>25</sup>, some archaeologists were moving towards a more sociological or social anthropological methodology which focussed on function within the planning of buildings and away from an obsession with dating. The primary manifestation of this trend is in theoretical spatial analysis, a technique which examines issues such as zoning into public and private space, internal and external communication, and the social structures which these features reflect. It is a valuable technique, but given its foundation upon non-Scottish social models it is one which requires careful application and refinement based upon examples where structural evidence and the documentary record allows it to be tested.

While most Scottish archaeologists continued in the 1980s and 1990s to move down these paths directed ever more closely towards chronology, form and function, historians were again beginning to explore some key issues in castellology that revolved around questions of lordship, culture and economy. Fiona Watson, for example, questioned the historical and archaeological conventions which identified the apparent dearth of 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century stone castles in Scotland as the twin product of the supposed poverty of the medieval kingdom and the destruction of most pre-1300 structures in the course of the Wars of Independence<sup>26</sup>. Given the strong evidence for the strength of the Scottish economy in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the expanding wealth of the kingdom, her argument was that most Scottish nobles did not lack the means or ability to build castles but perhaps lacked the inclination<sup>27</sup>. Castle-building, in her view, certainly in the pre-Wars of Independence era, may have been more a question of cultural preferences than economics. This returns the debate once more to a question of form and function, not of castles, however, but of the alternative seats of power which may have been employed by native Scottish nobles who chose not to adopt the architectural vocabulary of their colleagues of colonist ancestry. It is not a question to which archaeologists have yet risen.

Watson's hypothesis poses difficult questions with regard to the internal dynamics of Scottish society pre-1300 but raises far more problems with regard to historiography and the tendency of castles specialists in Scotland to look elsewhere for analogies upon which to draw for their theoretical models. Most often the analogies are drawn from England, with which Scotland enjoyed a close relationship before the traumas of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but the apparent cultural similarities between the noble classes of the two kingdoms and the tendency of social and economic historians to project the conditions and experience of south-east England over the rest of the British medieval states has hugely distorted archaeologists understanding of the structures and mechanisms of medieval Scotland's elite society. It is no longer possible to state confidently, as Cruden did, that mottes and castles 'mark the spread of the feudal system'<sup>28</sup>, whatever that was, or conversely that where these structures do not exist an anti-feudal mentality or regime persisted: the rise of primogeniture in Gaelic inheritance processes may have been more important here (fig.5). Historians and archaeologists need to engage more closely in the still developing debate over the nature and forms of Scotland's complex

medieval cultures and societies, perhaps nowhere more so than with regard to the issue of lordship and the structures which may – or may not – have given it a physical presence.

The most significant development in this regard has been a trend towards the examination of the castle as one component in a more complex organism. This goes beyond the concept of ‘castles in the landscape’ and the construction of the managed estate in which they stood. Mentality – the psychology of lordship – and the idea of the castle as perceived by medieval nobles, both Gaelic and Lowland Scottish, are being combined with socio-economic and political studies to cast fresh light on function and symbolism in buildings. It is an approach that owes much to Charles Coulson’s analysis of the medieval castle in England, France and Ireland <sup>29</sup>, and Matthew Johnson’s reassessment of the role of the castle and its social evolution <sup>30</sup>, but it does not represent simply another grafting of a methodology based principally on the Anglo-French experience onto quite different Scottish circumstances. In this evolving methodology, the emphasis is moving away from chronological typology towards consideration of broader social, cultural, economic and political contexts alongside the structural analysis and an examination of the other physical manifestations of lordship in the surrounding landscape, principally church buildings and monumental sculpture. It is forcing historians to undertake rigorous re-examination of primary documents and requires archaeologists to engage with the revised models rather than simply repeating the tired old mantras and employing out-dated historiography. Such a methodology first appeared in the work of the Baronial Research Group and its fruits have appeared in Geoff Stell’s radical reappraisal of Castle Tioram and its place, symbolic and physical, in the lordship of the Clanranald MacDonalDs (fig.6) <sup>31</sup>. This trend, however, is coming to a point of divergence from the traditional structural analyst approach, with castles being interpreted as components of a broader cultural landscape or landscapes of lordship, to be viewed in a wider context. In common with Charles McKean’s broadside against the lingering legacy of Victorian historiography and the negative image of lordly architecture in the post-1500 period, this synthetic methodology takes the best of conventional castle studies and fuses it with an alternative perspective which lifts the focus from the artefact that is the castle to the society of which it is but one dimension. The future study of castles in Scotland appears to be moving towards a socio-economic or sociological approach, ending its 150-year fixation with form over function.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> STRONG, 1990, 190.
- <sup>2</sup> DALRYMPLE, 1819.
- <sup>3</sup> TYTLER, 1828.
- <sup>4</sup> For discussion of this theme see MCKILLOP, 2000.
- <sup>5</sup> ASH, 1980. Abbotsford Club, 1833-1866; Bannatyne Club, 1823-1861; Maitland Club, 1828-1859.
- <sup>6</sup> BILLINGS, 1845-52.
- <sup>7</sup> BILLINGS, 1845, Introduction.
- <sup>8</sup> MACGIBBON and ROSS, 1887-1892.
- <sup>9</sup> CRUDEN, 1981, v.
- <sup>10</sup> MacGibbon and Ross's chronological framework provides the structure, for example, of TABRAHAM, 1997.
- <sup>11</sup> MACGIBBON and ROSS, 1887, i, 1.
- <sup>12</sup> MCKEAN, 2001, 5.
- <sup>13</sup> ORAM, 2000, 32-43.
- <sup>14</sup> CRUDEN, 1960, iv. The causes and consequences of this view are explored in detail in MCKEAN, 2006, 166-198.
- <sup>15</sup> CRUDEN, 1981, 12. This tension is expressed in a single paragraph.
- <sup>16</sup> See, for example, the minimal attention given to the historical record in YEOMAN and others, 1984, where Grant Simpson's historical notes form only a brief summary of a few paragraphs. The links between excavated evidence for destruction by fire and 'a subsequent period of dereliction' at Mote of Urr led the excavator, Brian Hope-Taylor, to fix the dating of the event on the chronicle accounts of Roger of Howden which record the violent overthrow of castles in Galloway in 1174 and the expulsion of foreign settlers from the region for the next decade: HOPE-TAYLOR, 1950-51. For a critique of this interpretation and the events of 1174-1185, see ORAM, 2000, chapter 8, especially at 219.
- <sup>17</sup> For a list of Simpson's publications see, HALL, 1991, 1-27.
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, SIMPSON, 1922.
- <sup>19</sup> SIMPSON, 1943.
- <sup>20</sup> SIMPSON, 1949.
- <sup>21</sup> Examples include EWART, 1985; DRISCOLL and YEOMAN, 1997 or LEWIS and PRINGLE, 2002, or the numerous shorter reports published in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, e.g. EWART and BAKER, 1998.
- <sup>22</sup> DUNBAR and DUNCAN, 1971.
- <sup>23</sup> DUNBAR, 1981) The discussion of these buildings had been informed by Cruden's analysis of them as intrinsically early, with Sween having 'a reasonable claim to be the earliest existing castle in Scotland' (CRUDEN, 1981, 22) and explored in detail by him in CRUDEN, 1981, chapter 2, especially 38-49.
- <sup>24</sup> BOGDAN, 1979.
- <sup>25</sup> The tradition appears to have culminated in Joachim Zeune's systematic recording and plan-analysis of 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century houses in Scotland for his doctoral research, published as ZEUNE, 1992.
- <sup>26</sup> WATSON, 1998.
- <sup>27</sup> WATSON, 2005, 27. For the economy of 13<sup>th</sup>-century Scotland, see DITCHBURN, 2005, and MAYHEW, 1990.
- <sup>28</sup> CRUDEN, 1981, 10.
- <sup>29</sup> COULSON, 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> JOHNSON, 2002.
- <sup>31</sup> STELL, 2006.

#### Figure Captions

1. Great Hall of Borthwick Castle, Midlothian, from BILLINGS, 1845.
2. The donjon of Loches (left) was regarded by MacGibbon and Ross as a progenitor of later Scottish towers like Threave (right).
3. Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire. Castle or Chateau? Charles McKean's controversial denunciation of the traditional historiography, which has seen the great renaissance houses of Scotland labelled as 'castles' and analysed principally from the perspective of defence, has forced a reappraisal of the culture and society which produced such buildings as Fyvie and

requires archaeologists to come to terms with the new historical orthodoxy which has emerged since the late 1980s.

4. Chronology and plan were central to the work of MacGibbon and Ross and their successors – Castle Sween’s simple rectangular enclosure and clasping buttresses were used by Stewart Cruden to argue that it was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, surviving stone castle in Scotland on the basis that lack of elaboration pointed to greater antiquity.
5. Kildrummy Castle, Aberdeenshire. The 13th-century *caput* of the Earldom of Mar is one of the few stone castles of this period whose building can be attributed to one of the Gaelic magnates in Scotland.
6. Castle Tioram, Moidart, Highland, the seat of the Clanranald MacDonalds and symbol of their pretensions as heirs to the MacDonald Lords of the Isles in the 16th and 17th centuries.