

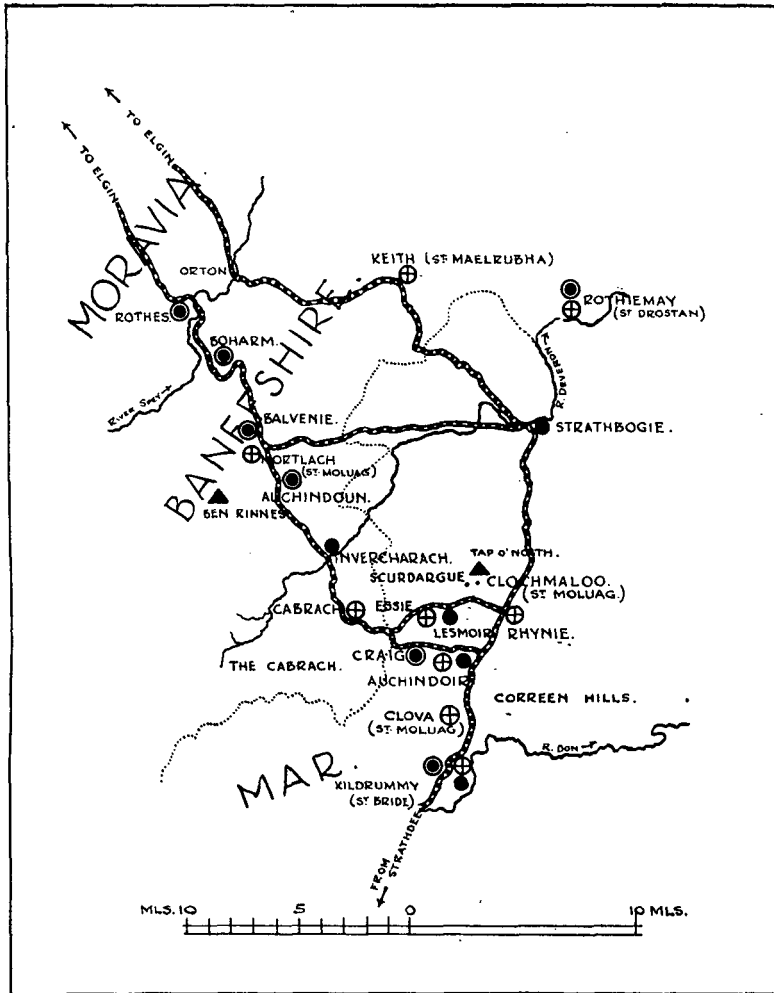
III.

CRAIG CASTLE AND THE KIRK OF AUCHINDOIR, ABERDEENSHIRE. By W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON, M.A., D.LITT., F.S.A.Scot.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

In early medieval times, from the western half of the Province of Mar, and from the group of important passes across the Mounth out of Strathmore and the Braes of Angus, the main access northward into the Province of Moravia or Moray lay through the open strath, about a mile and a half in average width, that intervenes between the Correen Hills on the east and the Cabrach on the west (see map, fig. 1). This gap in the watershed provides an easy means of communication between Strathdon and the middle reaches of the Deveron. It was natural, therefore, that a strong hand should have been laid upon so important an arterial route, in the days of the Anglo-Norman penetration of Mar, and during the protracted and bitter wars waged by the Canmore dynasty against Moray in the twelfth and the early thirteenth century. We find significant proof of this in the fact that, in the period under discussion, at either end of the strath there was planted a castle of the first rank. At its southern inlet, Bishop Gilbert of Caithness, on behalf of Alexander II., founded the great stronghold of Kildrummy, the capital messuage of Mar, a powerful stone castle of the *enceinte* type introduced in the early part of the thirteenth century. The location of this "noblest of northern castles" is intelligible only in view of the strategic

situation, as above described.¹ At the northern outlet of the strath the Normanised Celtic Earls of Fife, transplanted thither by William



[J. F. Wyness, del.]

Fig. 1. Map of the Early Routes from Mar into Moray.

(NOTE.—Mottes are indicated by a dot; stone castles by a circled dot; churches by a circled cross.)

the Lion (1165–1214), threw up a strong castle, not of stone but in earth-work—one of the best preserved examples in the north of a Norman

¹ For a full discussion of this question see my paper on “The Early Castles of Mar” in last year’s *Proceedings*, vol. lxiii. pp. 125–6.

mount-and-bailey fortress.¹ Next to Kildrummy, Strathbogie Castle became the most important baronial seat in western Aberdeenshire; and in the later Middle Ages, owing to political and other causes which I have set forth elsewhere,² the Donside castle came to be quite overshadowed by its neighbour on the Deveron, now the headquarters of the powerful and widely ramified Gordon family.

From Strathbogie Castle the high road into Moray led either by Glen Fiddich and Balvenie Castle to the ford of Spey between the castles of Boharm and Rothes; or, more to the northward, by Keith of St Maelrubha (Keth-malruve) and Orton, where in 1228 there was a bridge over the Spey, with a chapel of St Nicholas founded by Muriel de Polloc, lady of Rothes, prior to 1242.³ Although Queen Mary chose the Balvenie-Boharm route on her northward march against the Gordons in September 1562,⁴ yet for ordinary traffic the bridge at Orton seems to have been the most favoured crossing, as the approach to it lay through more level and fertile, and therefore no doubt more settled and safer, country.

But for travellers who did not mind risk, or for armies to whom roving bands of Highland caterans had no terrors, two other modes of access into Moray offered themselves, more direct even than the Strathbogie-Balvenie road. The two modes of access to which I now refer both traversed the Cabrach: or, to speak more accurately, from the Cabrach westward they are really one cross-country road, with two alternative methods of reaching the Cabrach from the upper part of Strathbogie. One of these alternatives branches off from the high road at Rhyndie, and holds directly westward by Scurdargue and Essie: the second leaves the high road at Auchindoir, nearer the headwaters of the Bogie, and runs north-westward to join the other above the Kirk of Cabrach. The early, and perhaps the greater, importance of the Scurdargue-Essie road is shown in the fact that it was used by the rival armies of Malcolm Canmore and Lulach the Fatuous in the campaign of 1058;⁵ and it need not therefore surprise us to meet on this route with characteristic evidence of the Norman penetration in the ancient castle-site of Lesmoir and the associated church of Essie, the scene of Lulach's death.⁶ But that the Auchindoir-Cabrach road was also of importance in early medieval times is proved, in no less unmistakable fashion, by the fact that, just at the point where it parts company with the strath, we find the *motte* of Auchindoir, and close beside it the thirteenth-century parish

¹ See my description of these earthworks in *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. pp. 147-8.

² *The Castle of Kildrummy*, pp. 202-4.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴ *Proceedings*, vol. lx. p. 134; vol. lxiii. p. 126, note 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. lxiii. p. 127.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. lx. p. 274.

church, which is one of the finest specimens of Transitional or early First Pointed architecture that has survived in northern Scotland.

Which of these two routes was used by the army of Edward I., on his march from Invercharach in the Cabrach to Kildrummy, on 1st August 1296, it is impossible now to say. We know that another column under Anthony Beck, the warlike Bishop of Durham, came by a different road; and it may possibly be that the King used one and the Bishop the other of the two roads under discussion: though I am inclined, on the whole, to think that the language of the old chronicler must imply a more serious divergence on Bishop Anthony's part, and that the troops under his command most probably came down on Donside and Kildrummy *via* Strathbogie Castle.¹

Although we only begin, very naturally, to get definite information as to the use of roads with the beginning of the strictly medieval period in the eleventh century, it is self-evident that these natural cross-country tracks must have come into prominence from the very beginnings of human occupation. It can hardly, therefore, be a coincidence that we find early church sites planted by St Moluag of Lismore in the sixth century, one at Mortlach and another at Clova in Kildrummy. A map of the Moluag sites in Pictland seems to me to show, in quite an unmistakable way, how this notable missionary must have come from his starting-point at Lismore up the Great Glen by Ballagan on Loch Ness into Moravia (Rosemarkie) and thence made his way *via* Mortlach and Clova, along the road which we have been discussing, into Mar and the western Garioch, where he has left foundations at Tarland and Clatt. On Tap-o'-Noth, overlooking Scurdargue, is *Clochmaloo*, Moluag's stone or seat—a hint, perhaps one may venture to suggest, that he used the Essie road on his journey from Mortlach to Clova. Very remarkable indications of such early lines of penetration—indications which often, as in the present case, are confirmed by medieval archæological and documentary evidence—can be obtained by constructing track-charts of the Celtic missionary saints.

It is a curious result of the great development of motor traffic in recent times that our ancient cross-country routes are everywhere regaining an importance which they had lost in railroad days. Stirling Bridge, in past ages the strategic centre of Scotland, is a case in point. The building of the Forth Bridge drew much of the northward traffic away from the older crossing; but now that motor transport has assumed such huge proportions, Stirling Bridge is again, as of yore, one of the busiest nodal points in Scotland.² So it is with the ancient road from Auchindoir to the Cabrach: in the eyes of the motorist to-day this is coming

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lxiii. p. 127.

² See my *Stirlingshire* (Cambridge County Geographies), pp. 1-2.

into ever-growing favour as the most direct access from Aberdeen to Elgin and the North; and its renewed importance is seen in the costly improvements now being made upon it by the county road authority.

In the neighbourhood of a primitive cross-country route we should always expect to find evidence of early population: and the prehistoric inhabitants of the locality have left important traces behind them, in the Neolithic urn found at Craig, in the fine cup-marked rock surface at Cuttieburn, and in the earthwork on Cnoc Cailliche of Wheedlemont.¹ The urn has been described by Mr Callander in last year's volume of our *Proceedings*:² of the cup-markings and the earthwork brief accounts may here be offered.

CUTTIEBURN CUP-MARKED ROCK SURFACE.

In the field immediately to the west of the farmhouse of Cuttieburn, north-west of Craig Castle, is a boulder or rock surface bearing

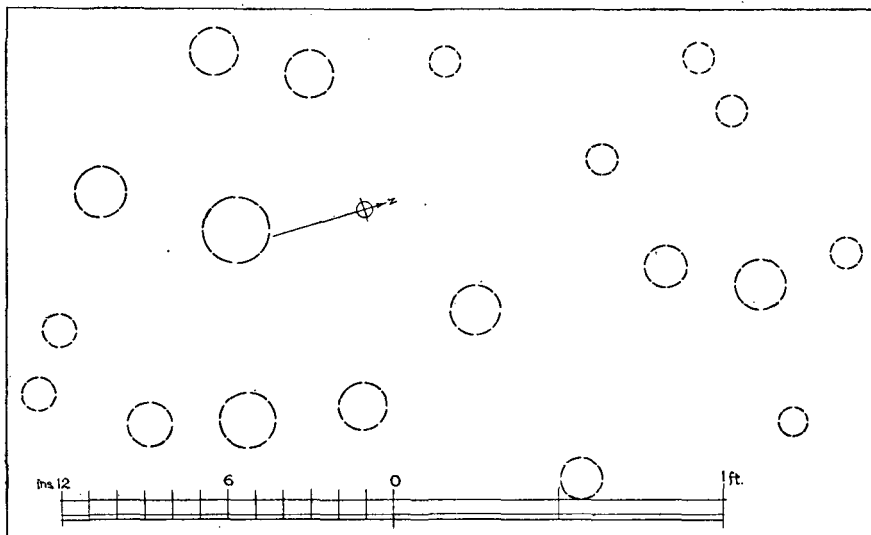


Fig. 2. Cup-marks at Cuttieburn.

[J. F. Wyness, del.]

cup-marks, as shown on plan, fig. 2. The plan represents the cup-marks visible on 2nd November 1929: others probably occur on the

¹ Immediately north of our area the group of short cists at Brawland and Upper Ord, and the remains of stone circles at Nether Wheedlemont and Upper Ord—all marked on the 6-inch O.S. Map, Aberdeenshire, Sheet xlii.—form a very remarkable Bronze Age locality.

² Vol. lxiii. p. 59, fig. 40.

buried portions of the stone, as Mr Alec Anderson, farmer at Cuttieburn, tells me that he has counted 25 cup-marks in all. Mr Anderson also informs me that in his opinion the stone is a boulder and not an exposure of living rock.

CNOC CAILLICHE EARTHWORK.

The hill of Cnoc Cailliche of Wheedlemont (1152 feet) is a sow-backed heathery eminence, formerly wooded. Round its summit is drawn an oval enclosure, measuring about 60 yards north and south by 31 yards transversely: this enclosure is bounded by a ditch about 13 feet broad and 3 feet deep, with some traces of a rampart inside the ditch and a slight counterscarp mound on its outer lip. The area within this enclosure is stony, and exhibits no traces of hut circles or any such like foundations.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE PARISH.

As I pointed out in last year's *Proceedings*, it was always a matter of doubt whether Auchindoir, politically speaking, belonged to Mar or Strathbogie; and in fact one old topographer states that it belonged to neither.¹ A similar difficulty was felt in regard to ecclesiastical jurisdiction: in 1236 the patronage of Auchindoir Church was disputed between the Bishops of Moray and Aberdeen,² but ultimately it was included in the Deanery of Mar. In Bagimont's Roll, *circa* 1275, the church is so entered, being assessed at 12 marks.³ On 28th May 1361, Thomas, Earl of Mar, by a writ issued from Kildrummy Castle, presented his clerk, Sir John of Mar, Canon of Aberdeen, to the Church of Auchindoir, then vacant by the decease of the late rector—Sir Thomas of Meldrum. In the same instrument the Earl gave his consent, subject to the approval of the Bishop of Aberdeen, to the uniting of Auchindoir and Invernochty, the reason assigned for this project being impoverishment of the former church.⁴ The scheme, however, seems to have failed of effect, or at all events was of short duration; and on 24th March 1514, at the instance of Thomas Myrton, Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Aberdeen and Rector of Auchindoir, and with the consent of King James V., the church was erected into a prebend of King's

¹ "Aberdeenshire properly so called contains these two parishes which, though in this shire, yet belong to no one peculiar district of it in particular (such as Mar, Buchan, etc.), namely, the parishes of Auchindore and Cabrach."—"View of the Diocese of Aberdeen," by A. Keith, 1732, in *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 108.

² *Registrum Episcopatus Moraviensis*, p. 101.

³ *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, vol. ii. pp. 52, 55.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 89-90.

College, Aberdeen. The prebendary was held bound to provide a vicar at a yearly stipend of 12 marks Scots, with manse and toft, and to maintain in the College Chapel a "stallar" skilled in singing, at a salary of 4 marks Scots, with a decent habit and surplice.¹

The Reformation again threw the status of Auchindoir Church into the melting-pot. In the *Registre of Ministers and Thair Stipendis sen the Yeir of God 1567*, Auchindoir is assigned to the Synod of Mar, being then served by Gilbert Brown, reader, with a yearly stipend of £20 Scots;² but by the General Assembly of 1586 it is once more handed over to Moray.³ In 1644 and again in 1677 it is included in the Presbytery of Alford, the benefice being valued in each year at £1316 and £1420 Scots respectively.⁴ In 1811 the parish of Kearn was united with that of Auchindoir, both the old parochial churches being then unroofed, and the present church erected to serve the united parish.⁵ It should be recorded to the everlasting credit of the then laird of Craig, Mr James Gordon, an Advocate at the Scottish Bar, that when at that time the barbarous proposal was made to pull down the old kirk of Auchindoir in order to provide materials for its successor, Mr Gordon supplied the required stones at his own expense rather than allow the ancient edifice to be destroyed.

MANORIAL HISTORY.

Who the early Norman or Normanised lords of the Craig of Auchindoir may have been there exists, so far as I am aware, no evidence to show. The fact that the *motte* was anciently known as Cummin's Craig (see fig. 3) makes it not impossible that its founders may have been members of the great family of Comyn, whose territorial ramifications were so widespread and whose influence was paramount in Aberdeenshire throughout the thirteenth century. Certainly the Comyns had laid their hand on the Great North Road from Mar into Moray at one important point, for they owned the strong Castle of Balvenie.⁶ But of course the name Cummin's Craig applied to the *motte* may have been of quite recent origin. The first laird of Craig of whom we have any record appears to be John of the Craig, whose dramatic intervention played a decisive part in the battle of Culblean on 30th November 1335.⁷

¹ *Fasti Aberdonenses*, pp. 74-5, 94.

² *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁵ Advertisement inviting contracts for the new church appears in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 20th September 1809.

⁶ *Proceedings*, vol. lxiii. p. 126, note 4.

⁷ See my paper on "The Campaign and Battle of Culblean," in the present volume, *infra*.

On 5th May 1414, Robert, Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland, confirmed a charter of Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, gifting the lands of Auchindoir and Wheellemont to Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum;¹ and in the beautifully lettered little brass tablet of Bruges workmanship (fig. 4) above the stately tomb of Sir Alexander and his wife in Drum's

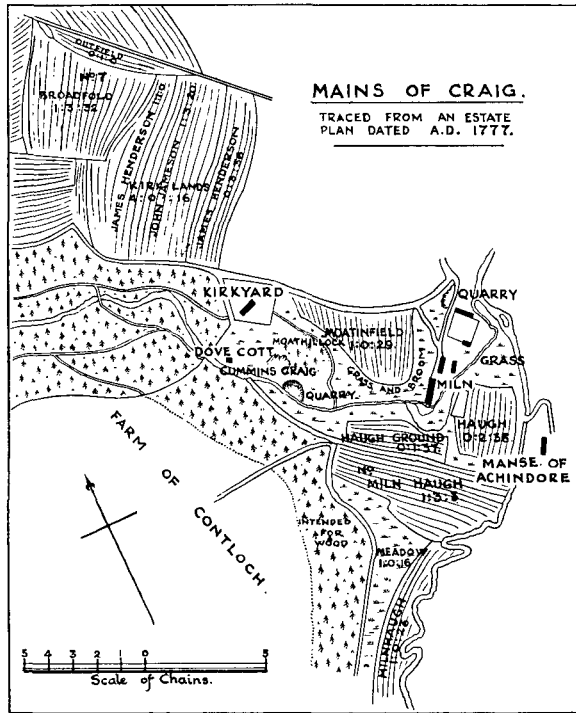


Fig. 3. The Early Manorial Centre of Auchindoir.

Aisle at St Nicholas' Church in Aberdeen, he is described as lord of Drum, Auchindoir, and Forglen.² The lordship of Auchindoir remained

¹ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iv. pp. 451-2; *ibid.*, p. 453.

² The following note on this most interesting brass has been kindly furnished by Mr William Kelly, LL.D., A.R.S.A., Aberdeen:—

“The fifteenth-century brass in Drum's Aisle of St Nicholas' Church, Aberdeen, must have been placed on the canopied tomb over the effigies of Sir 'Alexander de Irvyn' of Drum and his wife, the Lady 'Elisabeth de Keth,' daughter of Sir Robert de Keth, Marischal of Scotland, in the lifetime of both spouses: spaces for the insertion of the days of the month, the months, and the years in the century 'M^oCCCC^{mo}' are blank. In 1456 this Sir Alexander Irvine founded, in St Nicholas' Church, the chantry of St Ninian, the patron saint of the Irvines of Drum: he died soon thereafter, his grandson having been served heir on 3rd November 1457.

“The Drum brass, clipped on one side, measures about 11½ inches by 17 inches; it bears

(1) the Irvine coat-of-arms and four lines of lettering referring to Sir Alexander Irvine, (2) a line of running floral ornament $\frac{3}{4}$ inch high and 17 inches long, and (3) the Keith coat-of-arms and four lines of lettering referring to the Lady Elizabeth. The style of every part of the brass—shields, floral ornament, and Gothic lettering—shows the hand of a master.

"From a comparison of the Drum brass with a rubbing from the brass of Joris de Munter and his wife in Bruges Cathedral, it would appear that both brasses must have come from the same workshop, if not from the same hand. The Munter brass is shown to a large scale in *A Book of Facsimiles of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe*, by the Rev. W. F. Greeny, M.A., 1884. Along the four sides of this great monumental brass, measuring 98 inches by 56 inches,

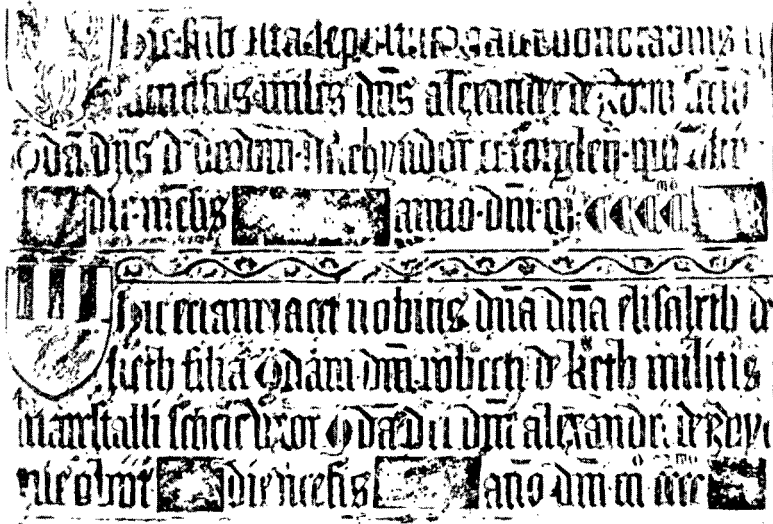


Fig. 4. The Irvine Brass in Drum's Aisle, St Nicholas' Church, Aberdeen.

"*Hic sub ista sepultura jacet honorabilis et famosus miles dñs alexander de irvyn secl'd qdã dñs de droum dachyndor et forglen qui obiit . . . die m̄sis . . . anno dñi m̄cccc^{mo} . . .*

"*Hic etiam jacet nobilis dña dña elisabeth de keth filia qdam dñi roberti de keth militis mairstalli [sic] scochie uxor qdã dñi alexandri de irvi[n] que obiit . . . die m̄sis . . . año dñi m̄cccc^{mo} . . .*"

runs a continuous border, rather more than one inch wide, of exactly the same very individual pattern that occurs in the central strip on the Drum brass. Again, the forms of the letters and their ornamental finishing strokes and curls on both brasses are so alike that they must have been drawn by the same craftsmen, or by men intimately associated in the same workshop. The running ornament and the forms of the lettering are of extreme refinement and beauty: the use of a half-square dot on some of the thick vertical strokes is characteristic.

"The Bruges brass is in memory of Joris de Munter, who died in 1439, and of his wife, who died in 1423. Judging from the setting out of the inscription, the brass was not begun until after Joris' death. If the Bruges brass is of the 'forties,' it is probable that the Drum brass was made at the same Bruges *atelier* in the 'fifties.' If Munter may be translated 'minter,' and if Joris was the master of the mint, may we not look upon both brasses as coming from the mint? The Liddell brass (1613) in the West Church of St Nicholas was certainly the work of Gaspar Brudegoms, Master of the Mint in Antwerp."

in the hands of the Drum family until the Gordons acquired it from them in 1511.¹ For the history of the Gordons of Craig the reader is referred to Dr Bulloch's paper, which follows in the present volume. They remained in possession until 1892, when the property was sold to the present owner, Mr William Penny Craik.

It is to be presumed that during the Irvine period the *motte* castle would seldom be occupied, and that its timber buildings probably fell into decay, for the main seat of the Irvines was at Drum, and their interests centred always on Deeside. At all events, with the arrival of the Gordons as resident lairds, the *motte* was definitely abandoned and a new castle was built about a mile farther up the Den of Craig (see Map, fig. 5). Thus by lay action the early association of church and castle, dating from Norman times, was severed, and the disruption of the old parochial centre was completed from the ecclesiastical side by the erection of the new church in 1811.² It is noteworthy that the baronial dovecot, although a late sixteenth-century structure, and clearly erected after the present castle had been built, is yet placed at the old nucleus of the manor: a *columbarium*, however, was also provided in the roof of the new castle.

THE OLD HALL OF TOLOPHIN.

On the maps of an old estate survey of 1777 is shown the "Hall of Tolophin"; it is also marked as "Site of the Hall of Tolophin" on the Ordnance Survey. The site is on a rocky knoll north-east of the farm of Tolophin, more than two miles above Craig Castle. No trace of the building now remains: the survey of 1777 indicates an oblong structure, lying north-west and south-east, and measuring about 60 feet by 45 feet exteriorly, as far as can be judged from the very reduced plan. I have been able to find no information about this old Hall of Tolophin: but a deed in the Craig Charter Chest reveals that in 1630 Tolophin formed a separate property in the hands of Margaret Gordon, sister of John Gordon the fourth laird, who on 10th July in that year obtained a grant of it from her. On 29th October 1633 he made over Tolophin to his relative George Gordon of Tollochoudie (Tilphoudie).³

THE MOTTE OF AUCHINDOIR.

The *motte*, styled "Moathillock" on the survey of 1777 (see fig. 3), is a scarped rocky knoll, situated about 143 feet to the east of the ancient

¹ J. F. Leslie, *The Irvines of Drum*, pp. 62, 156; *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iv, pp. 455-6.

² *Proceedings*, vol. lxiii, p. 111.

³ Craig Charter Chest, Nos. 21 and 26.

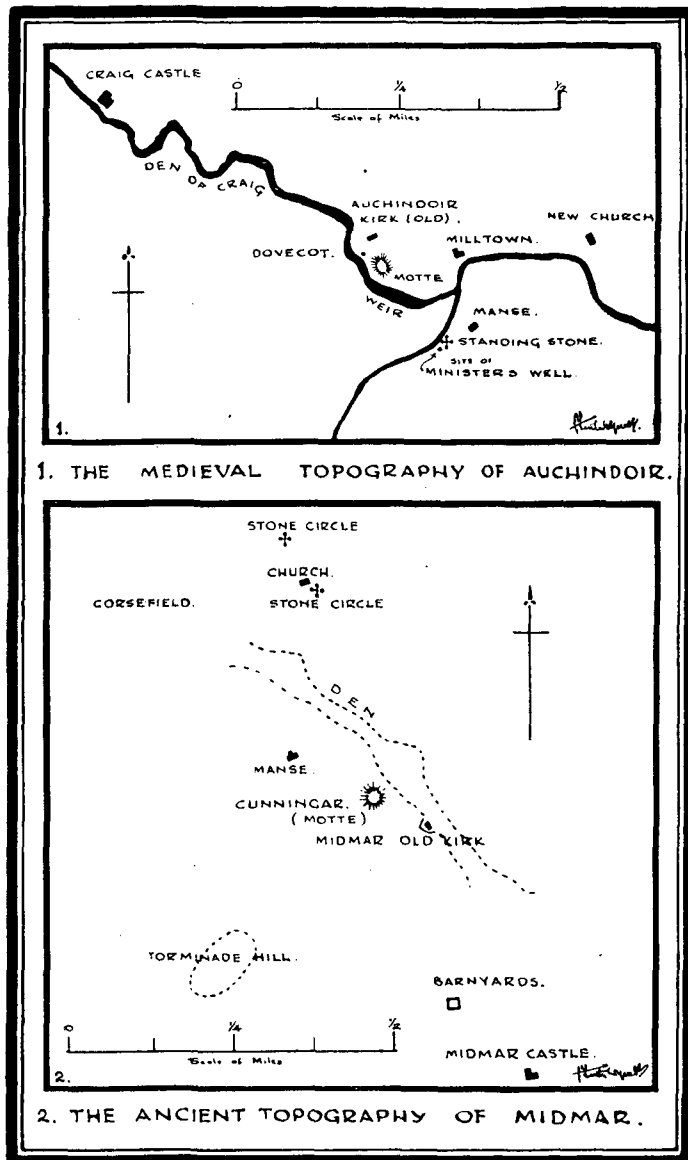


Fig. 5. Map illustrating the Early Topography of Auchindoir and Midmar.
(For Midmar see *Proceedings*, vol. lxiii, p. 111.)

and now disused parish church. On the south side its scraggy slopes descend steeply and continuously into the Den; and on this quarter it has been twice quarried into, both quarries being shown on the maps of 1777. The surface of the *motte* is oval, but tapers towards the west, so as to give a somewhat egg-shaped outline; it measures about 90 feet in length and 72 feet in greatest breadth. Between the *motte* and the churchyard a ditch has been drawn, and the height to the summit of the *motte*, reckoned from the present mean basal level of this ditch, is about 25 feet. No traces of structure are visible on the summit of the *motte*, which is planted with trees.

Francis Douglas, who visited Craig in 1780, alludes to the *motte* in the following terms: "At the kirk of Auchindoir, a little below Craig, stood the *Castrum Auchindoriæ*, mentioned by Buchanan, under the reign of James II., the remains of which are still visible."¹ I have been unable to trace any such reference in Buchanan's *History*. Later writers speak of a reference in Boece, which also I cannot find. Following on a renewed Crown Charter of the estates of Craig, granted to John Gordon, the tenth laird, on 10th December 1759, a precept of sasine was given on the 29th of the same month, by token of earth and stone from the demesne lands called the Mains of Auchindoir. The ceremony took place on the soil of the said lands, between the hours of eleven and one.² It is very interesting to note that, two centuries after the baronial residence had been shifted, the formality of taking sasine was still performed at the old manorial centre—in all probability on the summit of the *motte*.

THE OLD CHURCH OF ST MARY OF AUCHINDOIR.

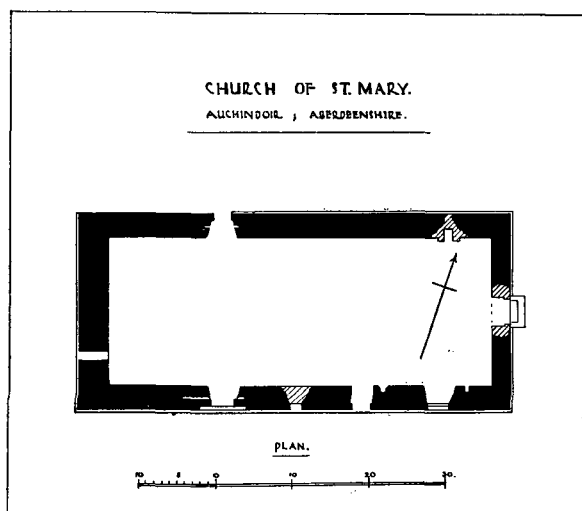
This ruined building is most romantically situated on the very brink of the Den, and stands in the old churchyard, embosomed by dark trees amid an atmosphere of ancient peace. It is oriented 80° east of true north.

The church (see plan, fig. 6) measures 56 feet 4 inches by 25 feet over the walls, which are 3 feet 2 inches thick, built of good partly coursed red freestone rubble, with quoins carefully wrought in the same material. As usual in the rural churches of medieval Scotland—and in sharp contrast with English and most Continental practice—there has been no structural division between nave and chancel. Internally the dimensions are about 50 feet by 18 feet 8 inches. A width of between 18 and 21 feet is very usual in our smaller thirteenth-century churches, but in regard to its length the Kirk of Auchindoir must be accounted

¹ *A General Description of the East Coast of Scotland*, 1782, p. 244.

² Craig Charter Chest, Nos. 92 and 93.

rather short, a usual proportion of length to breadth in such churches being 3 or $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. The walls have been much pulled about at different periods. A pedimented belfry, now almost concealed by ivy, but dated 1664 in large handsome numerals cut in relief on the south face, is erected on the west gable,¹ in which also is a small rectangular window, heavily chamfered; two seventeenth-century rectangular chamfered windows, the eastern one of large size, are inserted in the south wall; and a plain door, with a square window above, has been slapped through the east gable—the eastern end of the church being now



[Geo. Anderson, del.]

Fig. 6. Auchindoir Church: plan.

enclosed to form the burial-ground of the Gordons of Craig. The tall, high-pitched gables are much obscured with ivy, but they are finished with flat, slightly projected skewes built on level beds, and the two western skewstones have on their curved under-surfaces a bold, quirked roll of early thirteenth-century type. The skewstone at the north-east angle has an ogee roll-and-hollow moulding of late profile. The walls rise from a plain sloped plinth in two ashlar courses, and along the west wall, where the plinth is lacking, there is a doubly splayed offset in ashlar, at a height of about 4 feet 6 inches above the present ground level; it closely resembles the plinths found on the towers of Kil-

¹ The belfry is minutely described by T. S. Muir, *Descriptive Notes of some of the Ancient Parochial and Collegiate Churches of Scotland*, p. 146.

drummy Castle. The wall heads, which are about 12 feet above the ground, have a plain projecting cope with hollow moulding underneath. Internally the west gable shows the joist-holes for a gallery.

Its fine door in the south wall, about 16 feet from the west end, is the most interesting feature of this church. The door (fig. 7), which



Fig. 7. Auchindoir Church : main door.

has been secured by a sliding bar, consists of two orders, of which the inner one, or actual opening, is round-arched, 3 feet wide and 6 feet 8 inches in height above the stone threshold. It has broadly chamfered jambs which carry a massive three-quarter bowtell moulding, continued round the arch. The exterior order, also a round arch, consists of a rich suite of bold First Pointed mouldings—deep hollows and heavy rounds, the inmost one pointed in profile; the whole producing a most beautiful interplay of light and shade, with an exceedingly vigorous dog-tooth ornament, highly undercut, forming the

outmost member. This archivolt rested on large, disengaged monolithic nook shafts which are now gone, though their bell-capitals remain. These capitals are excellent examples of early First Pointed work—the square abacus, of two rolls separated by a deep hollow, being upheld by well-cut stiff-leaf foliage, springing from a plain rolled necking. The bases are buried, but the east one being exposed by digging showed a bell-shaped profile with a bold neck-roll, all quite Romanesque in character. Within, the door has a lofty well-wrought ashlar rear-arch. Pleasing in design and vigorous in execution, this doorway, though on a

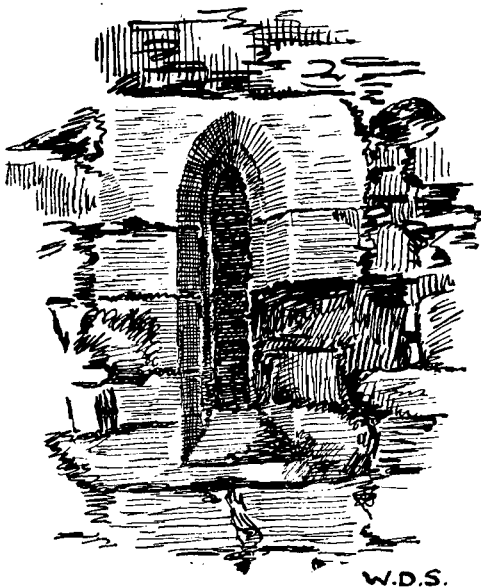


Fig. 8. Window in north wall, Auchindoir Church.

small scale, is one of the most effective among its kind in Scotland. Muir described it as “late Transition work, belonging apparently to that precise period of the progress of the art when the already softened features in the Norman were beginning to merge altogether into the still more flexible and varied forms of the First Pointed style.”¹ But the mouldings are all fully developed, if very early Gothic; and the retention of the round arch, which persisted throughout the Middle Ages in Scotland, could not in itself be regarded as evidence of a specially early period in the First Pointed style. On the other hand, the square abacus is undoubtedly a Transitional survival, and a certain Romanesque feeling may also be recognised in the shallowness and squareness in section

of the doorway. Clearly, if we agree to class this door in the First Pointed rather than in the Transitional style, it must belong to quite the earliest stage in the full development of Gothic architecture. Generally, the style is precisely what we should expect in an ecclesiastical building distinctly earlier than the oldest work at Kildrummy Castle. Auchindoir Church, as we saw, is first mentioned under the year 1236, and I have no doubt whatever that this door was in existence ere that time.

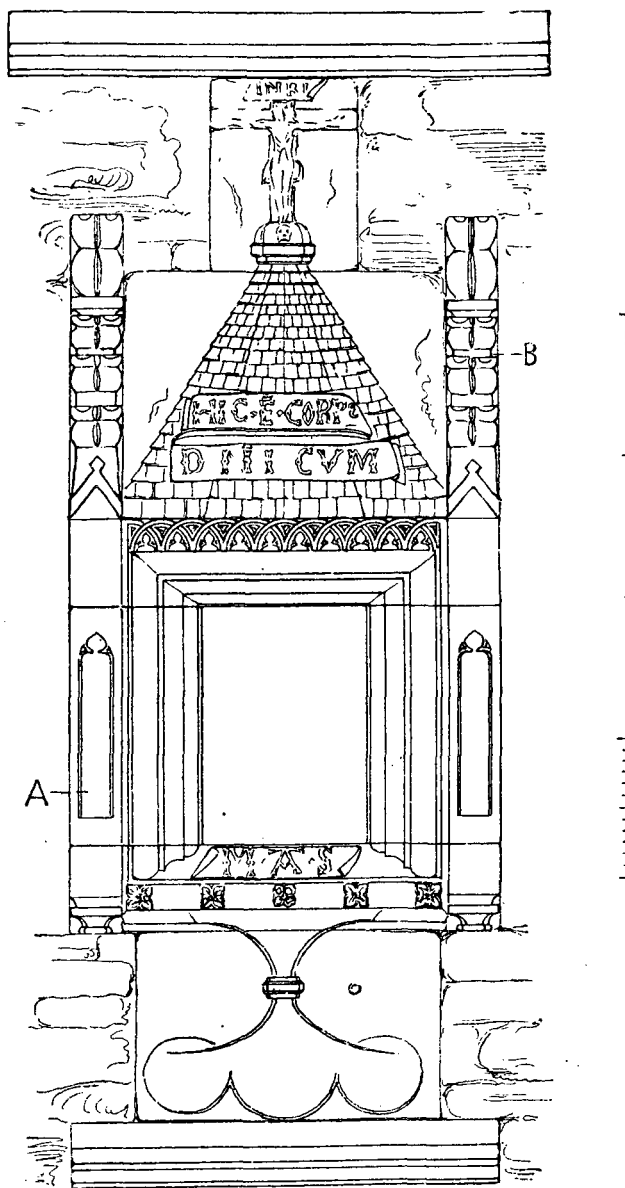
In the north wall near the east end is a small and exquisitely proportioned lancet window (fig. 8), now blocked by the inserted sacrament house behind. It measures 2 feet 9 inches in daylight height by 7 inches

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 144.

in width, and has a heavy double external chamfer, wrought single on the sole. The head is bored for a central bar. Though of course on a much smaller scale, this window closely resembles the great lancets in the chapel of Kildrummy Castle; it is decidedly later in style than the doorway, and dates probably from near the middle of the thirteenth century. Otherwise there are no windows in the north wall—in accordance with the usual Scottish practice; the small lancet, of course, would have been useful for lighting the altar, particularly in view of the orientation of the church, whereby such a window would be well adapted to catch the evening light. In the same wall, and opposite the south door, is another and evidently original door, 6 feet 3 inches high and 2 feet 6 inches wide, round-arched, and with a plain chamfer; it has been secured by a sliding bar. This door has a lofty rear arch well wrought in ashlar; it appears externally as a relieving arch. The south wall has a secondary door leading into the chancel; this would no doubt be for the use of the priest. It is square-headed, about 4 feet 9 inches high and 2 feet 5 inches wide, with a heavy filleted roll-moulding and a rectangular overhead light, above which is a sunk ogee-pointed panel bearing the initials M.A.S. in raised Gothic letters, over the incised motto NEC TIBI NEC MIHI, and date 1658. The motto and date are clearly secondary, and doubtless replace something erased. The sole of the window is formed out of the lintel of the door below, and bears initials now partly cut away, but apparently M.A.S., in raised Gothic letters.

The interior of the church presents some very interesting features. In the south wall, close east of the eastmost doorway, is a simple octagonal stoup, with a pointed and chamfered arch. Eastward from this is the piscina, a plain bowl with central drain: it is half sunk in an unadorned square niche; and, as usual, the projecting part of the bowl has been clouded away. Opposite the piscina in the north wall there is still, in almost perfect preservation, a singularly beautiful sacrament house (see measured drawing, fig. 9, and view, fig. 10). The aumbry is 1 foot 9 inches tall, 1 foot 5 inches wide, and 1 foot 6 inches deep, with an inner locker on the left side, now blocked. It has been protected by a door, the sockets for whose hinge-crooks remain—their burst condition indicating that the ironwork has at some time been violently despoiled. The aumbry is framed by a suite of shallow roll and casement mouldings, and on the plain sloping sill is a scroll with the raised Gothic letters, M.A.S.¹ On the breast below this are five pateræ or rosettes, delicately

¹ As to these initials, which occur twice elsewhere in the church, I much regret I can offer no identification. Dr William Kelly and I agree in possessing a very distinct recollection of having somewhere noted a mention of one Master Alexander Strathachin or Strachan as a



[F. W. Troup, del.]

Fig. 9. Auchindoir Church: measured drawing of Sacrament House.

carved, and the whole springs from a subject carved in low relief, which seems to resemble the slender shaft and spreading crinkled base of a

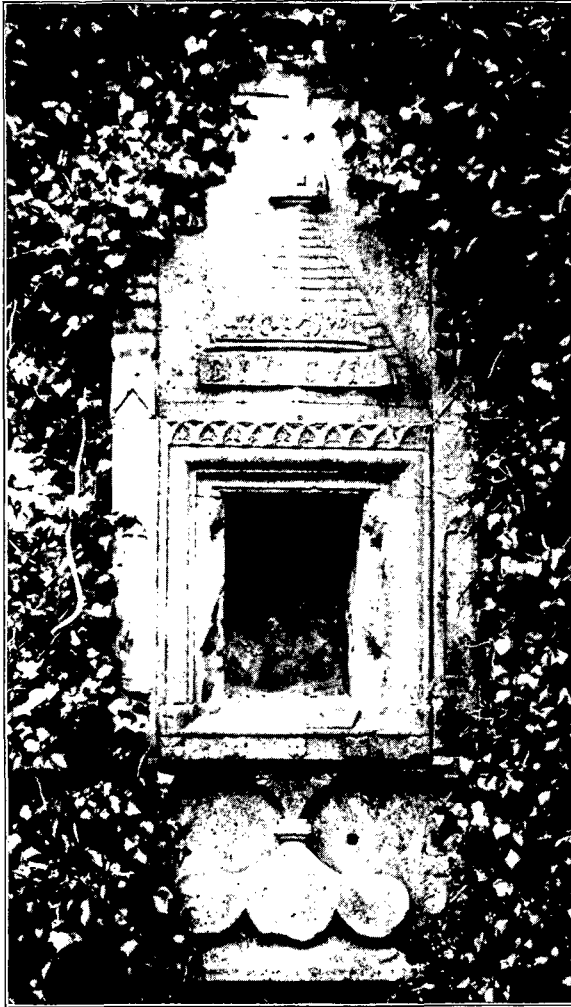


Fig. 10. Sacrament House, Auchindoir Church.

sixteenth-century rector of the church, but unfortunately the reference has escaped us both. Judging by such analogies as Kinkell or Deskford, "a loveable wark of sacrament house" like this at Auchindoir would be the gift either of a rector or of a manorial patron.

"On the lower edge of the niche, but now concealed by one of the seats, are these words: *Hoc est servatum Corpus de Virgine natum.*"—*Old Statistical Account*, vol. xii. p. 499. Nothing of the sort is now apparent.

pyx. Above the lintel of the aumbry is a band of intersecting round arches, with trefoils in the pointed interstices. Over all is a pointed tegulated canopy; on this are two scrolls, containing the inscriptions, in raised Gothic lettering, HIC · E · CORP' DÑICVM, which may be expanded thus: *Hic est Corpus Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Virginis Marice*. On the apex of the canopy is placed, in the position of a finial, a Crucifixion, with a skull to represent Golgotha at the base, and over the Saviour's head the I.N.R.I. scroll. At either side of the sacrament house flat quasi-buttresses spring from ornate corbels: in the face of each buttress is sunk a tall, shallow niche with a pointed and trifoliated arch; and they terminate in gablets with finials, over which rise slender crocketed pinnacles extending as high as the base of the Crucifixion. Above the sacrament house and below it are short strings of a section quite First Pointed in character, though it seems scarcely possible that they are not contemporaneous with the sacrament house which they frame. The total over-all height, including these two string courses, is 8 feet 3 inches.

If the ornament at the base of the sacrament house be intended to represent the stem and foot of a pyx, then the canopy above may equally well be a conventional representation of its tall lid, and the whole thing may perhaps thus be thought of as a kind of symbolical representation, architecturally treated, of a monstrance such as is pictorially carved on the sacrament houses at Kintore, Cullen, and Pluscarden.¹ Certainly its form exactly accords with the *locus pro sacramento, figure pyramidalis*, which Alexander Galloway before 1542 had gifted to King's College Chapel,² and the resemblance between the basal ornament of the sacrament house at Auchindoir and the stem and foot of the monstrance depicted on the Kintore sacrament house is too close to be merely a coincidence; while the lid of the Kintore monstrance is treated in the same tegulated fashion as is found in the canopy at Auchindoir. This sacrament house is clearly an insertion of the early sixteenth century, and shows a strong general resemblance to other sacrament houses of the same date in the north-east.³ The work appears to be Flemish in inspiration, though the execution is vernacular enough; and, like the other northern sacrament houses, it is doubtless to be associated with the school of architecture established as a result

¹ The lunular type of monstrance does not appear to have been known in Scotland, to judge by the sculptures on these sacrament houses. The monstrance carved on the sacrament house at Pluscarden, which we know was brought from Flanders in 1508 (see S. R. Macphail, *The Religious House of Pluscarden*, p. 118), is of the same form.

² *Fasti Aberdonenses*, p. 565.

³ See the valuable paper on "Scottish Sacrament Houses" by Archibald Macpherson in *Proceedings*, vol. xxv. pp. 89-116.

of Bishop Elphinstone's great building operations in Aberdeen. We are not likely to be far wrong in the assumption that this Auchindoir sacrament house was inserted not many years after the church was appropriated to King's College in 1514.

The levels at the east end of the church have been much altered inside. The height of the stoup above the present ground level is 2 feet 4 inches, that of the piscina only 1 foot 4 inches. On the other hand, the sole level of the aumbry in the sacrament house opposite is at the quite reasonable height of 3 feet 9 inches above ground—a fact which indicates that the heightening of the floor level at the east end must have taken place before or perhaps concurrently with the insertion of the sacrament house. In this connection it should be noted that at the corresponding level opposite, a roughly formed niche seems to have been made in the wall, as if with the unfulfilled intention of providing a new piscina at the higher level.

Two interesting coats-of-arms are now built into the east wall of the church. One exhibits the arms of Gordon of Craig, three boar's heads coupéd, with the legend HOIP IN GOD, and the date 1557; on either side are floriated classical ornaments with a lozenge-shaped panel, the sinister of which bears the letter G; the dexter is totally weathered. The other shield has the arms of Gordon impaled with those of Cheyne, a bend between six cross-crosslets fitchée, and the initials V. G., C. C., intertwined with a love knot, for William Gordon, third laird of Craig, and his wife Clara Cheyne. On either side are classical balusters, and above has been, in two lines of well-formed raised Gothic lettering, the motto GRACE ME GVID,¹ but only the last word, occupying the lower line, is now preserved.

These stones are set in sunk panels, hollow-chamfered except on the soles, which are carved with scrolls left blank. The workmanship is exceedingly good and the design highly artistic.

Below these mural monuments near the ground level is a small built square recess, but at present this is so concealed with ivy as to be incapable of more precise description.

In the Gordon burial enclosure at the east end of the church there is now preserved a large freestone slab, 6 feet long by 2 feet 2 inches broad. It is carved with a panel containing the following: (1) A foliaceous border; (2) the letters O.L.H.M.; (3) a defaced letter followed by A.S.; (4) a shield bearing on the upper half three boar's heads² coupéd, with the initials I.G. on either side outside the shield, and on

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 328.

² They are more like *bear's* heads, but the initials seem to indicate the arms are meant to represent Gordon, not Forbes.

the lower half a cross-crosslet between three fusils (or perhaps cushions) and resting on a buckle flanked by the letters C.L.; (5) the date 1580.

The upper arms are those of Forbes; those in the lower half appear to be some variety of the arms of Leith; the buckle may indicate a Leslie connection.¹

The architectural history of the church, as above described, is tolerably clear. It is in substance an early thirteenth-century building which underwent extensive alterations in the first half of the sixteenth century, no doubt after it had been impropriated to King's College; and was again reconstructed in accordance with Protestant ideas at some period in the seventeenth century. As Auchindoir was one of the seven parishes to which the Chapter of Aberdeen on 5th January 1558 addresses a grave warning against "all thame that ar art, part, reid, or counsale of the byrning of the kirk of Echt, or casting down of ymages in ony kirkis within the Diosie of Aberdene,"² it may be conjectured that the church had suffered some outrage at the hands of the reforming party; and possibly the recent reconstruction of the fabric, including the insertion of a rich sacrament house for the Reservation of the Host, may have aroused ill-feeling locally. On 2nd March 1664 it was reported to the Exercise of Alford that the "fabrick of the church of Auchindoir was ruined," and a commission was accordingly sent to Mr William Davidson, the parish minister, who seems to have been negligent in the matter, in order "seriously to recommend to him that he wold diligently go about the repairing of the fabrick of the church."³ It must have been as a result of this intervention of the Presbytery that the belfry, dated 1664, was built, and the large rectangular windows assignable to the same period were slapped out in the south wall.

In accordance with the usual seventeenth-century practice, the pulpit was placed midway in the south wall. Six carved panels which belonged to it are preserved at Clova House. They are now fitted together so as to make up a door. The top and bottom pairs have conventional beaded ornaments in relief. The dexter middle panel is inscribed:

¹ The other ancient heraldic stone, noticed by A. Jervise (*Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, vol. ii. p. 208) as preserved in the Gordon enclosure, is no longer apparent.

² *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, vol. i., Preface, p. lxiv.

³ *Records of the Meeting of the Exercise of Alford*, ed. T. Bell, pp. 39-40. Mr Davidson pleaded "age and inabilitie" as a reason for his negligence. He had been minister since 1621 (*Fasti Ecclesie Scoticane*, new ed., vol. vi. p. 120). On 31st March 1629 he was charged before the Privy Council with complicity in a most brutal assault, committed on 5th July previous, upon an expectant mother in Aberdeen.—*Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, second series, vol. iii. p. 124.

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The sinister middle panel has a round-arched plaque, in the arch of which are the initials (formerly gilded)

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 W D

while below is a shield having a stag couchant between two spear points reversed in chief and one reversed in base. These are the initials and arms of the minister, Mr William Davidson. Round the border is the

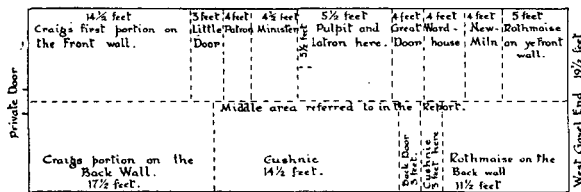


Fig. 11. Auchindoir Church : plan of internal arrangements in 1778.

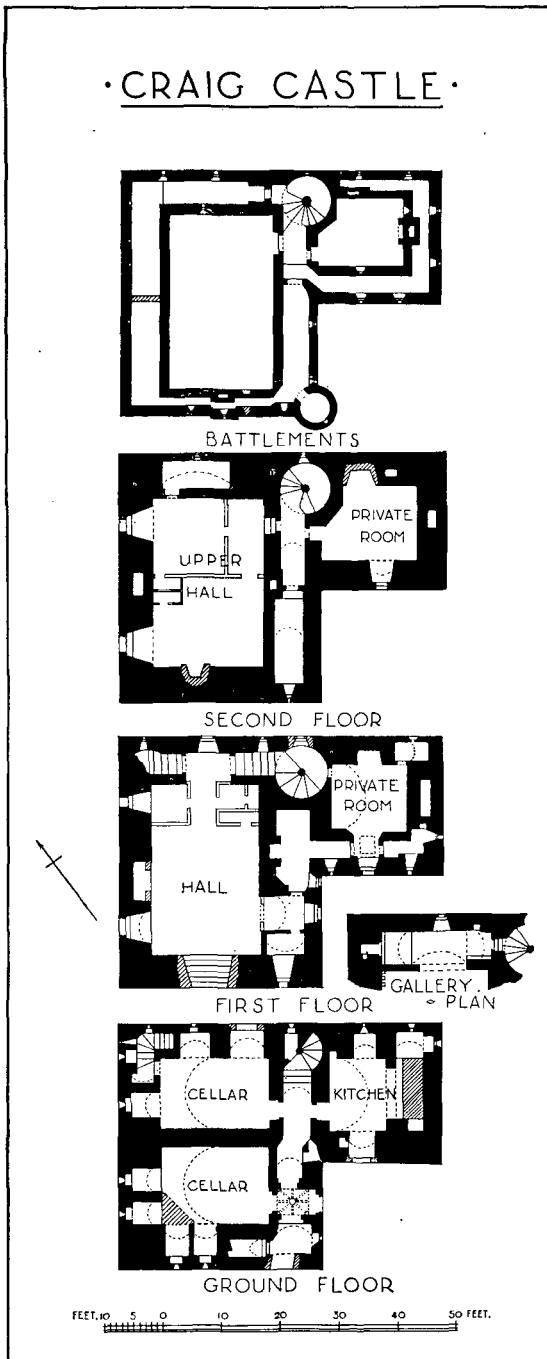
text: HOLINES · TO · THE · LORD · CHAP. 28 of EXOD · VERS · 36. The panels measure 1 foot 9 inches by 1 foot. At the sale of the furnishings when the old church was dismantled, these were purchased by the farmer of Newton of Auchindoir, who used them for a byre door, and about 1870 they were rescued by the then laird of Clova, who bought them from the farmer's son in exchange for a cartload of wood!²

Among the old papers at Craig Castle is preserved a copy of a "Decreet of Division and Allocation anent the Kirk of Auchindoir," dated at Aberdeen, 21st January 1778,³ which gives full particulars as to the seating arrangements of the church, and also a plan, of which a copy is annexed herewith (fig. 11). It shows that the door in the east gable is older than the formation of the Gordon burial-ground, to which it now gives access in the ruined building. From the same document we also learn that the "Lofts and Galleries" were allocated to the

¹ See Exodus xxviii. 30 ; Leviticus viii. 8.

² I am indebted to Captain Hugh P. Lumsden of Clova for permission to describe these panels, and for access to the relative entry in the Museum Catalogue at Clova House.

³ Craig Charter Chest, No. 100.



Minister and Kirk Session “for behooff of the poor’s funds,” the Session being bound to keep them in repair.

In the summer of 1785 the church underwent repairs, as appears from accounts for the laird of Craig’s share presented in the Charter Chest, which also contains an extract from a minute of the Presbytery of Alford, held at Auchindoir, 1st November 1809, in which sanction is given for a new church, the old one being in a “ruinous state” and insufficient for the united parishes of Kearn and Auchindoir.¹

CRAIG CASTLE: THE TOWER.

The ancient tower of Craig (see plans, fig. 12) is a tall, massive, well-proportioned, and imposing structure on the L-plan, measuring 55 feet by 43 feet over the two long sides. The walls in the basement are mostly about 7 feet thick. To the main wall-heads the height of the building is 40 feet, and the gables and chimney-stalks within rise to a height of 16 feet 6 inches more, excluding the modern chimney-cans. On all fronts the walls exhibit the usual beautifully battered profile found in old Scottish domestic architecture.

The main portion of the tower lies approximately north

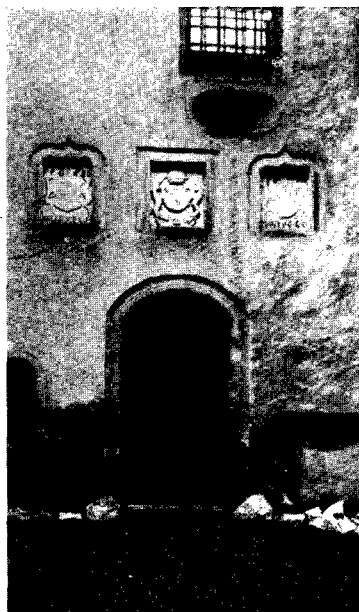
¹ Craig Charter Chest, No. 127.

[J. F. Wyness, del.]

Fig. 12. Craig Castle: plans of tower.

and south, and the wing is appended at right angles to the north end of the east front. The door (fig. 13) occupies the usual position in the re-entrant angle, looking east, but is removed a distance of 5 feet 4 inches from the actual corner. It measures 3 feet 6½ inches broad and 7 feet 2½ inches high, with a drop arch. The moulding, which is continuous on arch and jambs, consists of a large half-engaged filleted edge-roll within a broad shallow cavetto, the whole stopped on a sloping table at a height of 7 inches above the sole. On the right side the roll is much worn away by sharpening knives. A broad-mouthed gunloop flanks the door on the left side, and a loophole with a divided inner splay is set in the re-entrant angle on the right. The tower has a plain plinth of 5 inches projection and 3 feet in height, weathered back on top; it is interrupted by the door.

Above the door are three sunk panels enclosed by frames moulded in the same way as the door: the central panel has a flat top, the lateral ones have depressed ogee-pointed arches. The central panel bears the royal arms of Scotland, with crown and supporters; on the sole is a scroll upon which no legend has been carved. The dexter panel bears the coat-of-arms of Patrick Gordon, the first laird (died *post* 1519), and his wife, Rachel Barclay of Towie, along with those of his son William Gordon, the second laird (*post* 1519—*circa* 1559), and his wife, Elizabeth Stewart of Laithers, thus: quarterly, 1st and 2nd, three boar's heads coupé, for Gordon; 3rd, a chevron humetty bezantée between three crosses pattée, for Barclay; 4th, a fess chequy between a garb in chief and a lymphad in base, for Stewart of Lorn. Above are the initials P. G. and R. Ba., joined by a cord; below are IOÏSLEIS¹ with V. G. and E. S. Two allounds rampant act as supporters. The sinister panel contains a shield bearing: quarterly, 1st and 2nd, three boar's heads coupé, for Gordon; 3rd, illegible through weathering, but apparently Stewart of Lorn; 4th, a bend between six cross-crosslets fitchée, for Cheyne. Above are the initials P. G. (Patrick



[Photo W. Penny Craik.]

Fig. 13. Craig Castle: door to tower.

¹ Johnsleys, the property held by this branch of the Gordon family, near Insch, before they acquired Auchindoir.

Gordon) and B. B. (recut in modern incised letters, no doubt in mistake for R. B., Rachel Barclay); below, the date 1548 in mixed Roman and Arabic numerals (thus: M. D X 8), with the initials W. G. for William Gordon, the third laird (*circa* 1559-1608), and C. C., Clara Cheyne, his wife. The supporters are again two allounds rampant, the dexter one with his head reversed.

Above this heraldic group is a broad-mouthed gunloop beneath a large window which preserves its handsome grille of intersecting iron



Fig. 14. Craig Castle, from a photo *circa* 1897.

bars, the mode of intersection being reversed in opposite quarters according to the usual Scottish fashion. To the right is a smaller window, or rather a large loophole. Above this the wall is featureless, until it terminates in the corbelled bartisan and angle turret to be described hereafter. The whole of this ancient entrance front is most interesting and impressive.

For the rest, the tower (fig. 14) is very plain in all its external features, and is trimly harled throughout. On the basement and first floor are a profusion of large gunloops, like the ports in an old man-of-war's hull; these have a horizontal outer splay measuring 2 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 6 inches. In the north front at the basement level near the east end is a blocked crosslet loop (seen in fig. 14) with an

oilette below, the whole measuring 2 feet 6½ inches in daylight height. This is the only loop of its kind visible in the tower. Except in the re-entrant faces few ancient window openings of any size remain in the walls; various later ones have been slapped out, and several of the gunloops are now blocked. All the ancient openings, large and small, are carefully wrought in dressed red freestone ashlar; a 4½-inch chamfer is the prevailing moulding.

The tower has apparently been designed to finish with an open bartisan running all round the wall-head, within which rise between corbie-stepped gables the pack-saddle roofs of the main house and the wing. On the gable of the latter the corbie steps are themselves gabled, and the north skew-putt here displays the initials V. G. linked by a twisted cord. The roof-ridge of the main house is at a slightly higher level than that of the wing. Later, the open bartisan has been covered in by roofing continuous with the slope of the main roofs. This alteration was made during the completion of the tower, as seems clear from weather tables wrought on the chimney-stalks, together with certain internal evidences which will be set forth later. The gallery thus formed is lit by a series of openings which probably represent the embrasures first intended. The chimney-stalks are tall, built of fine ashlar, and finished with handsome moulded copes.

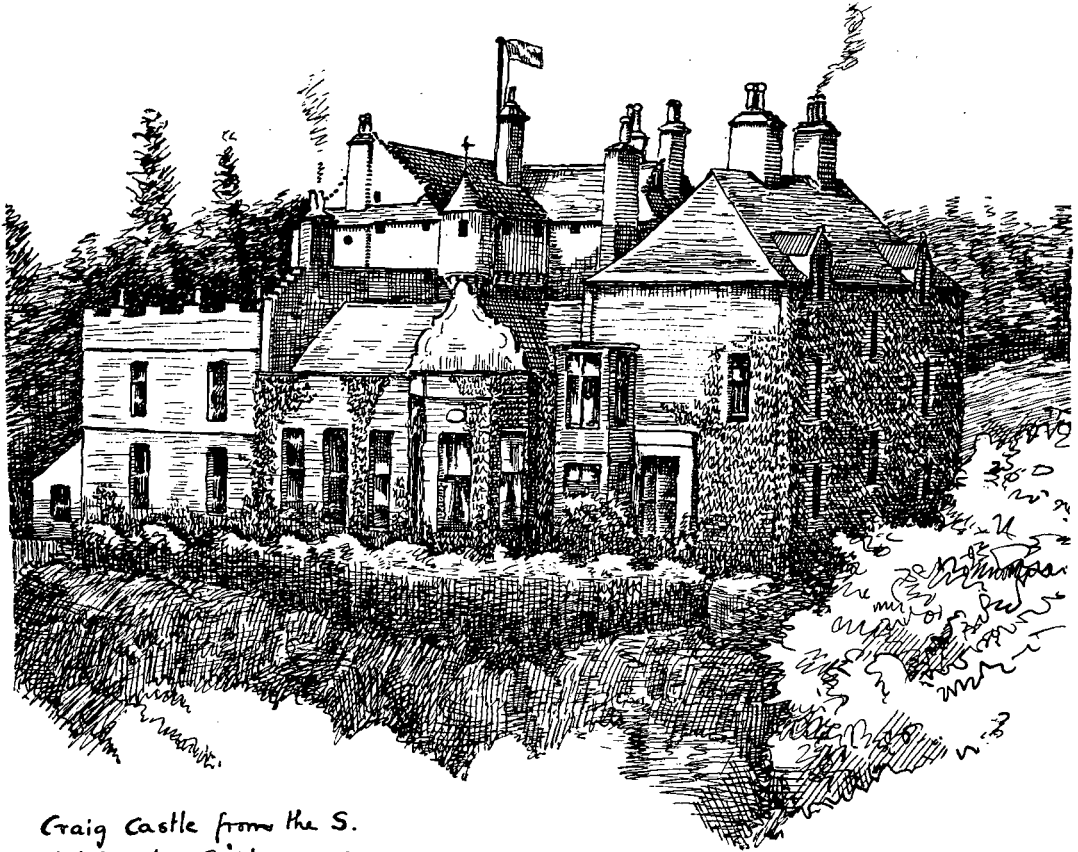
The bartisan rises flush from the wall-head, except along the front over the door, where, as already stated, it is carried forward (fig. 15) on an enriched freestone corbel table of three filleted courses, with a continuous filleted member below and a heavy cable moulding over all. At the south-east corner this terminates in a circular turret, 7 feet 6 inches in diameter, supported on similar corbelling, set back well into the angle, and finished with a graceful pointed roof and brass "stang."

Midway in the south front of the tower (see fig. 15) the bartisan wall is carried out on two courses of continuous corbelling as a square projection in order to clear the chimney-stalk which is applied to the gable inside. In the centre of this projection a small round hole affords access for the doves to a *columbarium* formed on the gable-face within.

The entrance is at present closed by an outer oaken door 2 inches thick, of considerable antiquity, and perhaps original (see fig. 13). It is made in two thicknesses, the front of vertical and the back of horizontal boards, fastened together by large hammered iron nails. The handle and knocker are good specimens of old Scottish smith's work: on the latter are two crossed tapes or scrolls with a cross pattée—perhaps for Barclay—forming the stud at their intersection. The plate of the handle also forms a cross pattée.

Behind this door still swings in good preservation the ancient heavy

iron yett. There are five vertical and nine cross bars, the mode of intersection being reversed as usual in diagonally opposite compartments, and the whole enclosed within a circle-headed frame, the lower bar of which has perished. The yett is hung on two hinges,



Craig Castle from the S.
W. Douglas Simpson, 1930.

Fig. 15. Craig Castle: general view looking across the Den.

and is secured by a couple of bolts, the upper hasp being of an elbowed or zigzag form, as at Inverquharity and Crathes.¹ The yett measures 6 feet 10 inches in height and 4 feet 2 inches in breadth.

Within these defences is a groin-vaulted vestibule, measuring 5 feet 8 inches by 4 feet 9 inches, from which three doors lead off: that in

¹ Dr D. Christison in *Proceedings*, vol. xxii. pp. 291, 303. A. Jervise's paper on Craig Castle in *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 324, has a drawing purporting to be the yett at Craig, but it is really that at Invermark Castle in Angus.

front into a cellar; that on the left into a small closet from which opens the "pit" or prison; and that on the right into the main corridor, which is carried through the centre of the tower to the newel stair in the middle of its northern front. At the re-entrant angle the passage is slightly deflected to the right. The groining pattern of the vestibule is formed by two cross and two diagonal ribs, each consisting of a filleted roll flanked by shallow hollows—the moulding thus being similar to those of the outer door. These ribs meet centrally in a large foliated boss, bearing a shield charged with the Scottish royal arms, with crown and supporters. The diagonal ribs spring from large corbel-caps of good design, reminiscent of First Pointed work, with conventional sprigs of foliage in the hollows on either side of the springers of the ribs. The north-east cap is carved with similar foliage on its bell; the south-east cap is plain, but springs from a demi-angel with outspread wings. Across the other two caps shields are placed diagonally. The north-west one is charged with three boar's heads erased and the initials — G (the lower dexter corner, with the first initial, which is stated to have been V, being now broken away).¹ On the south-west shield are carved the Five Wounds of Christ. The height of the vestibule to the shield on the central boss is 8 feet 7 inches. It is a singularly graceful, well-designed, and finely executed architectural feature of the tower.

The basement of the building is vaulted throughout, and is divided into two large cellars in the main house, with the kitchen in the wing. The northern cellar contains the usual service stair, 2 feet 9 inches wide, mounting round the north-west corner to the hall. It is covered in with a raking vault. From the vault of this cellar depend two double iron cleeks. In the east wall of the kitchen is the large arched fireplace, 8 feet 6 inches wide, with an aumbry inside on the south, and on the north side a small vaulted closet, 6 feet 8 inches high, from which open two blocked gunloops. The fireplace arch is depressed, and shows a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chamfer, continued down the jambs and terminated in broach stops. On the south side the voussoirs are much worn with sharpening blades; on the north side one stone shows a well-cut mason's mark. In the centre of the kitchen vault is a massive, plain, roughly formed oval keystone, having an iron swivel-ring fixed into its under surface.

All these basement apartments were well enough lit by slits and gunloops, several of which have been enlarged in more modern times. The basement is paved throughout, but the present flags are not original, and are at a somewhat higher level than the ancient flooring.

¹ A. Jervise in *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 323.

At present the vaults are about 8 feet high. The north cellar measures 19 feet 6 inches by 13 feet 8 inches; the south cellar 19 feet 1 inch by 13 feet 4 inches; the kitchen, as often in these old towers, is relatively on a small scale, measuring 11 feet 8 inches by 10 feet 11 inches. The doors are straight lintelled, and show a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chamfer. The "pit" opening off the small closet at the south-east corner measures 6 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 3 inches, and is about 6 feet high, being covered in by a roughly formed pointed vault: the door closes inward against it.

The main stair is reached by three steps up from the corridor. It measures 4 feet 3 inches wide, and is easily graded; circles up the summit of the tower; and contains 63 steps, with a rise of 7 inches. The upper three steps are above the bartisan gallery level, a fact which points to the intention of constructing a cap-house turret over the stairhead at the time when an open wall-walk was contemplated. The stair is lit by a series of loopholes in the north wall.

On the first or principal floor of the tower we have the great hall in the main portion and a private room in the wing. A small bed-closet is contrived in the space between hall and private room which is necessitated by the position of the newel stair. At present the hall measures 21 feet 3 inches by 17 feet 10 inches, but originally its length was 29 feet, as a number of closets or cupboards have been formed by wooden partitions at its north end. As originally designed, the hall had a large window at its north end, into the bay of which open on either hand straight flights of steps leading up from the main stair and the service stair respectively. In the west wall are two windows, with the fireplace between them: in the south wall was also a window, now enlarged into a door, leading to the addition built in 1908. Under this window was a gunloop, which now lies in two pieces at the foot of the tower in the west side. At the south-west corner of the hall is another large window recess, having in its south side a door leading into a mural closet, vaulted, and lit by a small window which retains its grille but is now blocked by the 1908 addition, and on its north side another door leading into the bed-closet already alluded to as placed between the hall and the private room in the wing.

The hall has been very considerably altered, probably in the eighteenth century, at which period the wooden partitions curtailing it at the north end appear to have been inserted. The shortened hall was then ceiled at a height of 14 feet 7 inches, in plaster with a coved frieze of good homely design. The ancient fireplace, which was about 7 feet broad, has been contracted, a new "bress" and jambs being inserted, with the bolection moulding characteristic of the latter part of the seventeenth century. On either side of it small presses or "salt-cellars" are formed

within the ancient fireplace; and on opening these the old massive free-stone jambs, rounded on the angle, may be seen. Through the plaster above the old relieving arch may still be traced. The window to the south of the fireplace is finely formed, with a lofty arched ingo. The opposite window, in the east wall, has been of similar design but greater in depth owing to the thickness of wall necessitated by the arrangement of the plan here. The arched ingo of this window is now boarded up, with a door of access. This is the window over the entrance already referred to as retaining its fine iron grille.

A tinctured coat-of-arms, in a panel with quasi-classical mouldings, is placed high in the south wall of the hall near its south-east corner. At the time when the new ceiling was made this coat-of-arms was lowered to suit it, with the result that what was the corbelled base of the panel has now become an entablature. The panel bears a shield quartered in tinctures thus: 1st and 4th gules, 2nd and 3rd azure. As regards bearings, the shield is impaled, the dexter half bearing three crosses pattée or between three boar's heads erased of the same, for Barclay and Gordon, while the sinister half bears a lion passant gardant or, for Ogilvie of Banff, between three papingoes of the same, for Hume.¹ The supporters are two allounds, and above is an esquire's helmet, plumed and crested with a stag's head; and over all the motto BYDAND. On either side of the helmet are the initials F. G. and A. O., for Francis Gordon, the seventh laird (1686-1716), and his wife, Agnes Ogilvie, a daughter of Lord Banff. The design and sculpturing of this stone are exceedingly spirited. Its presence points to some alterations having been made in the hall about the end of the seventeenth century, but before the plaster ceiling was inserted, as this involved the lowering of the shield. The nature and extent of these alterations it is no longer possible to discover, but probably they included the contraction of the old fireplace.

Over the door leading from the window recess into the small bed-closet between the hall and the private room is inserted another stone carved with armorial bearings, but in a greatly inferior style. The shield, which is curiously ornamented with fleur-de-lis and scroll-like projections, bears the Gordon arms, three boar's heads coupé, impaled with those of Barclay, a chevron bezantée (but in this case not humetty) between three crosses pattée. Below on either side is an eight-rayed star inscribed within a circle. At the lower apex of the shield is a heart, and on either side the initials J. G. and L. B., for John Gordon,

¹ According to Nisbet (*Heraldry*, 2nd ed., vol. ii., part third, p. 53), the arms of Ogilvie of Banff are: quarterly 1st and 4th argent, a lion passant gardant gules crowned or, for Ogilvie; 2nd and 3rd argent, three papingoes vert, beaked and membered gules, for Hume.

the fourth laird (1607-34), and his wife, Lillias Barclay. Round the whole is an ornamental bordure consisting of a chevronny pattern with foliaceous sproutings; and on either top corner, external to this, is a five-rayed star.

The only feature of interest in the bed-closet, which measures 13 feet by 7 feet 3 inches, is the fireplace, set in a chamfered breast on the west wall. It measures 3 feet 1 inch broad and 3 feet 8½ inches high above the old stone kerb. The lintel and jambs are wrought with an unusual but rather good moulding, consisting of two recessed orders rounded on the arris, and stopped on a plain square splayed base. The type of moulding suggests a date soon after the year 1600, to which period also belongs the coat-of-arms over the entrance to the bed-closet. The room, of course, is part and parcel of the original design of the tower, but the coat-of-arms and the fireplace indicate that it has been remodelled about the beginning of the seventeenth century. At present the room is now ceiled over, at a height of 8 feet, but I suspect that above this ceiling it is vaulted.¹

From this chamber a passage and a well-secured door lead through to the private apartment in the wing. As now panelled, this measures 11 feet by 11 feet 9 inches, and is one of the most attractive little rooms in the castle, being entirely covered with plain good vernacular moulded and painted wooden panelling, apparently of the eighteenth or late in the seventeenth century. The fireplace, which has been modernised, is in the north wall, and the room is lit by a single large window to the south. In the north-east corner is a closet containing a gunloop (now blocked, but visible externally) on the north side, and in the south-east corner is a dog-legged garderobe with two loopholes and the usual nook for a lamp. The private room is vaulted, but when it was panelled a wooden ceiling was inserted at the haunch level, forming a loft reached by a trap in the ceiling.

At what had been the original upper level of the hall is formed in the north wall a mural gallery, reached by steps and a vaulted vestibule from the newel stair. The gallery measures 16 feet 7 inches by 4 feet 2 inches, and is vaulted in two sections, the eastern across its length, the western transversely. In the north wall are a window and an aumbry near the east end; in the west wall is a large, well-formed gible-checked locker, with an aumbry in the south cheek. Below the locker is a narrow bench. The gallery is open to the hall by an elliptic arch, 7 feet 7 inches wide, at the east end of the south wall. Towards the gallery this arch is plain, but on the side of the hall it is turned

¹ Boarding is at present laid on the floor above, which is that of the passage to the strong-room; but it seems likely that the boards rest on stone.

off with a 3-inch chamfer terminated by a tall, slender broach stop on the jambs just below the springing. It seems probable that this gallery was a chapel, and that the arched opening was designed to give those in the hall a view of the priest while celebrating. The gallery arch now opens into the space above the secondary wooden closets at the north end of the hall; and in this space the large triple filleted corbels of the original hall ceiling are exposed on the west side.

The second floor has been similarly arranged to the hall floor, but is now much modernised and cut up by partitions. What had been the upper hall measures 28 feet 6 inches by 18 feet 9 inches. It has a modernised fireplace in the south wall, two windows in the west wall, and a large vaulted mural closet in the north wall. The ceiling is borne on massive filleted corbels of one course.

From the main stair a vaulted passage leads through between the upper hall and the private room to a narrow mural chamber, also vaulted, at the south-east corner of the former apartment. This chamber measures 14 feet 10 inches long by 5 feet 5 inches broad by 7 feet 10 inches in height, and is lit merely by a narrow loop at the south end. Probably it was intended as a strong room.

The private room has a modernised fireplace in the north wall, and a single window with an arched ingo on the opposite side. The ceiling is supported on filleted corbels of one course.

The topmost or garret floor, which is partly in the roof, contains in the main house a large loft, 29 feet 3 inches long by 18 feet 6 inches broad, lit only by one small window set high in each of the two gables. The bedroom in the wing is lit by a single high window of the same type. In its gable end the fireplace forms a breast with a simply moulded architrave. On the right jamb of the door into this room are roughly incised the letters and date F. G. 1722; these must be the initials of Francis, second son of Francis, the eighth laird (1716-27), as we can scarcely believe that the laird himself would have carved his initials here in this way! Probably the boy used this room as his bedchamber.

The gallery or roofed-in bartisan, already described so far as its external features are concerned, is carried all round the building, and also across between the main house and the wing. On the east side the access is stopped against the newel stair, and it is also at present interrupted by a secondary partition inserted in the west walk. There are two doors, one opening from the newel stair westward, and one at the re-entrant angle, giving access to the southern half of the middle section. The floor level is irregular, being stepped both up and down at intervals. The present roof level seems to be secondary, an older

roof having been built, or at all events designed, at a lower level—as indicated by corbels and a wall-plate still extant under the present timbers. On the other hand, the present roof level is that provided for by the wall-plates on the chimney-stalks—another proof of reconstruction having taken place at a date very early in the architectural history of the tower. Except on the south side and in the east section of the north walk, where it is very narrow, the breadth of the gallery is mostly 4 feet 3 inches; its height to the external wall-head is 5 feet 6½ inches, and its height to the internal roof ridge about 9 feet. The external window openings, which may represent the old embrasures, are spaced on the average about 7 feet apart; they measure about 1 foot 6 inches across and 2 feet in height, with a 4½-inch chamfer, and have for the most part been grooved for glass in their whole height. The turret at the south-east angle measures 3 feet 11 inches in internal diameter, and has a small window. Along the narrow south gallery the inner wall is nested as a dovecot. Further evidence that the gallery was originally designed as an open bartisan may be found in the fact that at some places in its inner walls there are well-formed windows, some carefully grooved for glass. One of these windows, on the south side of the wing, shows a fine mason's mark.

The foregoing paragraphs may serve as a sufficiently detailed description of one of the most interesting specimens of ancient domestic architecture to be found even in a county so rich as Aberdeenshire is in such structures. The tower of Craig has been specially fortunate in passing through some three and a half centuries of more or less continuous occupation with so little obliteration of its original character. Mainly this pleasing circumstance is due to the fact that when the need for enlarged accommodation made itself felt early in the eighteenth century, a completely new structure was built, containing all the extra living-rooms required. With few exceptions, the alterations which have taken place in the old tower have left its original features unimpaired: both in its external appearance and in its inward arrangements it remains very much in the state in which it left the builder's hands. Its individuality is not lost amid the later buildings joined to it, and it still frowns in sombre medieval grandeur over the romantic Den of Craig—in its quaint combination of domestic and quasi-military aspects reflecting the fluid social conditions of the sixteenth century.

Highly interesting as it is in itself, the tower of Craig gains a much enhanced importance from the fact that it forms one of a group of four contemporary Aberdeenshire castles—the others being Delgaty, Gight, and Towie Barclay—which resemble each other so very closely, and at the same time differ so greatly from all other buildings of the

period, as to make it almost certain that they are the work of the same master-mason. Of this group of castles, the largest and the most important—though now, alas! it is but a sorry ruin—has been Gight, which may therefore be described in brief outline, as it seems to represent the master-mason's conception realised to the fullest extent. As at Craig, the tower (see plans, fig. 16) is designed on the L-plan, but on a considerably larger scale, measuring 68 feet by 53 feet over the long sides: the basal thickness of the walls is much the same as at Craig. As at Craig, the doorway is removed a little from the re-entrant angle;

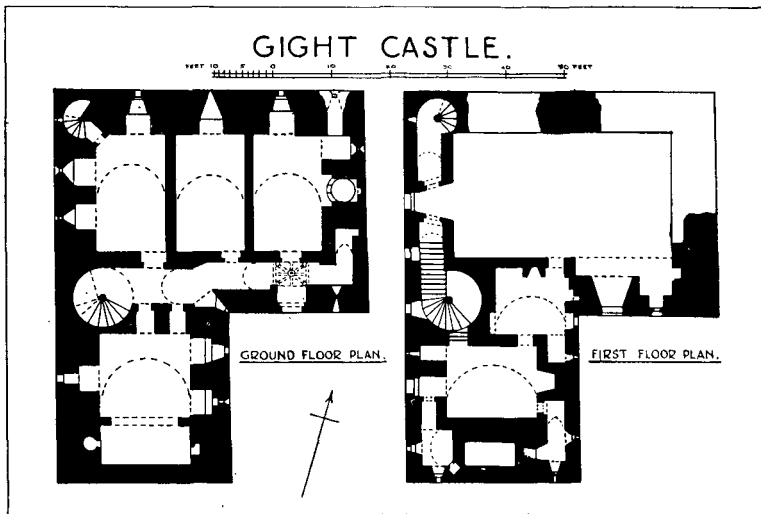


Fig. 16. Gight Castle: plans.

[J. F. Wyness, del.]

and, just as at Craig, it gives access to a ribbed groin-vaulted vestibule, with shields bearing armorial achievements at the springing and intersection of the ribs. At Gight, however, it is the central boss which displays the symbols of the Passion, and these are worked out to an elaborate extent; including, besides the Five Wounds, the Crown of Thorns, the Ladder, Hammer, Nails, Reed, and Spear. The dispositions of the ground-floor plan are almost identical with those at Craig. There is the same dog-legged chamber on one side of the vestibule, and on the other side the same long passage leading through to the main newel stair in the middle of the opposite face of the tower: as at Craig, the passage is slightly deflected at the re-entrant angle, which is occupied by a loop like that at Craig. In the same way as at Craig, the kitchen occupies the whole of the wing, and in the main building

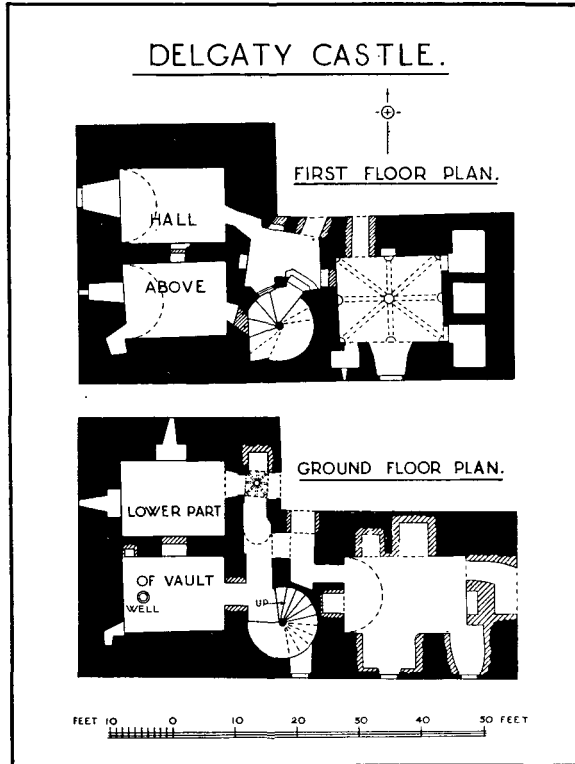
are two cellars, one with a private stair—in this case a newel—ascending to the hall above. The larger size of the tower at Gight, however, affords room, in addition to these two cellars, for a bakehouse, to which no parallel exists at Craig. On the first floor the similarity of plan between the two castles is equally striking; the hall at Gight occupying the main house, with a vaulted private room in the wing, and a bed-closet with a fireplace between them—all precisely as at Craig. The main stair and service stair enter the hall on either side of a window bay in its end wall in just the same way. The arrangement of the mural closets adjoining the private room is practically identical in the two castles. At Gight, the bed-closet between the hall and the private room is vaulted: as already stated, I think this is the case also at Craig. It must, of course, always be kept in mind that at Gight everything is on a decidedly larger scale: the hall, for example, measures 37 feet by 21 feet, as against 29 feet by 18 feet at Craig. But if the dimensions differ, the proportions of length to breadth are very nearly the same. The upper portions of Gight Castle are completely ruined, so that it is impossible to say how far the correspondence in arrangement with Craig was preserved above the main-floor level. It only remains to add that Gight, like Craig, displays considerable richness of architectural detail, and in the mouldings, etc., the closest possible resemblance is maintained between the two towers. The crosslet loop with an oilette below is employed as at Craig. A different type of gunloop, however, is used at Gight, having an oblong instead of an oval outward splay. This type of gunloop is found at various other castles of the sixteenth century in the north parts—for example, at Balfluig (1556) and Tillycairn in Aberdeenshire,¹ at Castle Stalker in Appin, at Balone Castle and at Fairburn Tower, both in Ross. There appears to be no documentary evidence as to the date of Gight Castle, but it is said to have been erected by George Gordon, the second laird, who succeeded his father in 1513 and died *post* 1570. The “tower and fortalice” of Gight are specified in a charter of 1577.²

Delgaty Castle (see plans, fig. 17) is also an L-tower of considerable size, measuring about 69 feet by 41 feet over its two long sides. The basal thickness of the walls, as at the other two castles of the group, is 7 feet. The conception of plan is in all essentials similar to that of Gight and Craig, but is somewhat simpler and more irregularly executed. The door is set close into the re-entrant angle: there is the same groined and ribbed vestibule with a recess on one side, and on the other the long passage carried through to the main newel

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. iv. pp. 139-46.

² J. M. Bulloch, *The House of Gordon*, vol. i. (“Gight”) p. 26.

stair in the back of the building. On the central boss of the vestibule are carved the Hay arms. The kitchen occupies the wing, and in the main house are two cellars; but in place of the service stair is a well-shaft, carried up to the hall on the main floor. The hall and the small bed-closet adjoining are now greatly altered, but the private



[J. F. Wyness, del.]

Fig. 17. Delgaty Castle: plans.

room in the wing has been less tampered with. As at Craig and Gight, it has mural closets on either side of the kitchen chimney-flue. The fireplace is in a side wall, with a window opposite it, just as at Craig. As in the other two castles, the private room is vaulted, but here at Delgaty the vaulting is groined, with diagonal and ridge ribs meeting in a central boss bearing the family arms. Over the fireplace is the date 1570, with the inscription IHS MY · HOYP · IS · IN · YE · LORD, and the initials V. H. and B. H. twined in a knot. The

fine painted ceiling in one of the upper rooms does not concern our present purpose.¹ The main house now finishes with secondary crow-stepped gables, but the wing is capped with the original open bartisan with angle rounds, all resting on a corbel table identical in design with that on the entrance front at Craig. A dial on the east side of the wing bears the Hay arms and motto, with the initials V. H. and the date 1579.

In Towie Barclay, the fourth castle of our group, the correspondence

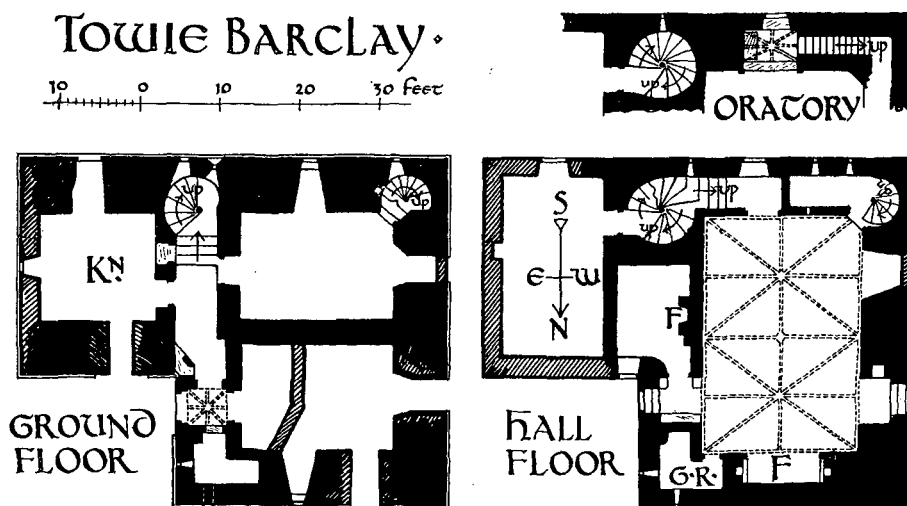


Fig. 18. Towie Barclay Castle: plans.

[W. Kelly, del.]

in plan to Craig is almost as close as it could be, as will be seen from the plans of the basement and first floor (fig. 18), which alone now remain. The main house measures 44 feet by 34 feet; the wing is 27 feet broad, but its original length is uncertain. The walls again display the standard thickness of 7 feet. The door in the re-entrant angle, the groined vestibule, the dog-legged recess on one side, and the long passage leading through to the newel stair at the back, all reappear just as at Craig and Gight: there is the same deflection of the passage at the re-entrant, and at this point is placed a loop-hole with divided bay similar in all respects to the one which occupies the same position at Craig. As at Craig also, the newel stair is reached from the passage by three steps up. In the vestibule

¹ It is described in *Proceedings*, vol. xlv. pp. 247-59.

the angle corbels are defaced, but do not seem to have borne shields; the central boss has the Barclay coat-of-arms with the initials P. B. The loopholes of these cellars differ from those at Gight and Craig in that they open inwardly with long continuous splays, instead of having a square reveal and a wide bay. The crosslet loop with oilette is again in evidence, and the gunloops are of the Gight pattern. The first floor contains the hall, which is reached through a window bay by a flight of steps up from the main newel, just as at Craig and Gight. But at Towie Barclay the service stair does not enter the window bay on the opposite side, having its own direct door into the hall, while on the opposite side opens a mural stair to the gallery. The hall has a large fireplace, which contains an enriched aumbry in either ingo. This is a very impressive room, measuring 30 feet by 20 feet, or very nearly the same dimensions as at Craig. It is vaulted in two groined compartments, each with diagonal and ridge ribs, all springing from ornate corbels carved with foliage and having large octagonal bosses at the diagonal intersections, heraldically enriched. At the end of the hall opposite to the fireplace a mural chapel-gallery is formed at a high level, similar in principle to that at Craig, but far richer in design. The opening towards the hall is spanned by a moulded arch, and is flanked by corbelled-out and crocketed obelisks, each niched for a statuette; while the gallery itself has ribbed vaulting, the corbels of which have shields displaying the symbols of the Four Evangelists, and the central boss shows the Five Wounds. On a corbel sconce on the left side is displayed a "mort's head"; below this is a projecting stone table.¹

A dog-legged mural closet in the hall recalls those found in the private rooms at Gight and Craig; and from the east window access is gained to a small vaulted bed-closet with fireplace, corresponding in all respects to that inserted between the hall and the private room in the other three castles of our group.

The upper storeys of Towie Barclay Castle have been removed. On the wall over the door are now inserted stones which record the death of the founder of the family in 1136, and also the date 1593, presumably that of the erection, or at all events the completion of the castle.² Though richer, all the moulded detail at Towie corresponds very closely to that in the other buildings of the group.

If we consider these four castles together as a group, we shall

¹ The two engravings of Billings, *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iv., give a very accurate idea of the hall and the chapel, except that the size of the former appears exaggerated.

² J. B. Pratt's *Buchan*, in the 4th edition, 1901, p. 389, gives the most reliable account of these inscriptions, which are now greatly wasted. A castle at Towie Barclay is mentioned in 1558

be the better able to reach a sound conclusion as to the probable date of Craig, concerning which very misleading statements have been made. It has been widely asserted that the tower of Craig was built, or at all events completed, in the year 1518; but this statement is based on a misreading of the mixed Roman and Arabic numerals of the date 1548, which is carved on the sinister panel over the entrance. But can we thereby take it that this date, 1548, must represent the year of erection of the tower? The matter admits of inquiry. Let it be remembered first of all that the coat-of-arms in question forms one of three inset over the main doorway of the tower. Now all three coats-of-arms are precisely uniform, alike in style and execution; the niches in which they are inserted are of identical pattern and are moulded in the same fashion, the mouldings being also identical with those of the door below. Even to the most casual eye it is clear that the whole composition—door, niches, and coats-of-arms—forms a unity and was designed at one time. But it should be noted that of the two family shields the dexter one shows the coat-of-arms of the first two lairds, and the sinister those of the second laird and the third. Thus we have here an heraldic record of the first three lairds, extending through four generations of the family; and the last of these, William Gordon, held the lordship from about 1559-1607. As his coat-of-arms appears on the stone which is dated 1548, it is perfectly clear that this date cannot be that of the insertion of the stone, which would not have been put in until after he had become laird. It is much more probable that the date represents the year of his marriage with Clara Cheyne; or perhaps of his first accession to landed ownership when he succeeded to Drimmies after his father fell at Pinkie in 1547. But obviously the date, between 1559 and 1607, which we have thus established for the dexter coat-of-arms must represent the date of the whole series, as their uniform style and execution very clearly shows. The natural inference will therefore be that this is also the date of the niches which the stones are designed to fit; and therefore of the tower itself, in which these niches, with the door below, form a unity of architectural composition. From this argument it would appear that the tower was the work not of the first nor of the second, but of the third laird of Craig, and that its date must therefore be subsequent to the accession of this laird about 1559. The initials carved on the corbel shield in the vestibule,

(*Exchequer Rolls*, vol. xix. p. 438), and again in 1587 (*The Barclays of Barclay*, by Captain Douglas Wimberley, p. 39). Other dates on the building are 1662, on a shield now built into the south wall, and 1694, over the door slapped out in the re-entrant angle of the wing.

and on the north skew-putt of the east gable, do not help us, as they are common to both the second and the third lairds.

It is of course quite possible to argue that although the entrance front with its three niches clearly represents an original design, the coats-of-arms may have been inserted later, and that therefore the date 1548 may really represent that of the erection or commencement of the tower. But such a forced explanation is *a priori* unlikely; and we may add that if 1548 was intended to indicate the year of inception of the tower, it would have been carved on some neutral or more general position—*e.g.* on the royal arms or over the archway of the door—instead of being associated with the particular shield which bears the initials of the third laird and his wife. It seems to me perfectly clear from all the evidence that it is this laird to whom we must look as the founder of the tower. And such a view is in full accord with the dates, so far as ascertainable, of the other buildings in the group to which Craig belongs. Towie Barclay, we saw, is dated 1593; Delgaty bears the dates 1570 and 1579; Gight is undated, but is first mentioned, apparently, under the year 1577.

From the foregoing considerations I am inclined to the view that the tower of Craig is a structure dating most probably from the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Of the group of castles to which it belongs, I believe Gight is the archetype; its gunloops are of a slightly earlier pattern than those of Craig. Craig seems to follow next in the series, being a fairly close copy of Gight, but on a reduced scale and less ornate, as befitted a minor branch of the family. Delgaty (1570-79) and Towie Barclay (1593) follow on as dated. It is interesting to remember that all the members of this deeply interesting group of castles are closely linked by dynastic connections existing at the period of their erection. Gight and Craig were both Gordon houses: the first laird of Craig married a Barclay of Towie; and Walter Barclay, second of Towie (1551-87), married a daughter of Alexander Hay of Delgaty; their daughter, again, was the Liliast Barclay who married John Gordon, the fourth laird of Craig,¹ as recorded on the heraldic stone over the closet opening off the hall. Finally it may be added, with reference to the use of sacred imagery or inscriptions at all these castles, that the proprietors of all four were staunch adherents of the ancient faith.

THE GATEWAY.

The outer gateway (figs. 14 and 19), erected by the eighth laird in 1726, is a good piece of quasi-classical design, all carried out in excellent

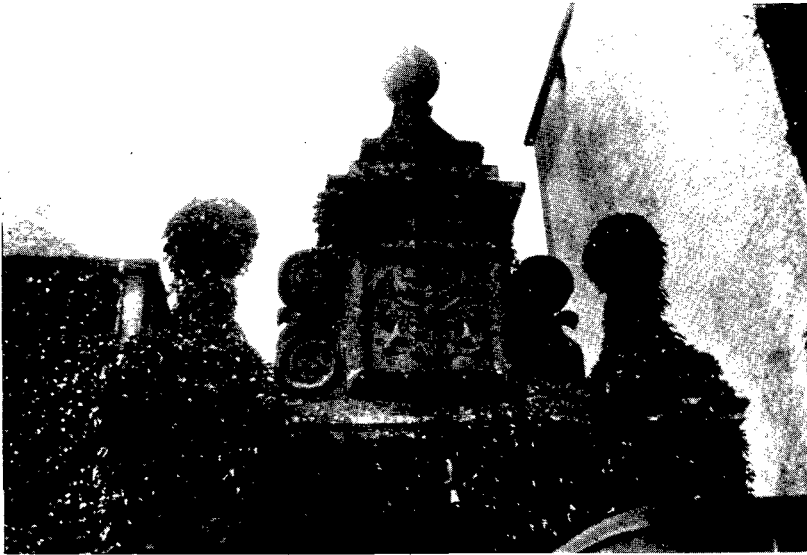
¹ Douglas Wimberley, *The Barclays of Barclay*, pp. 44-6; *cf.* his *Gordons of Craig*, p. 18.



[Photo Emily Fraser.]

Fig. 19. Craig Castle: general view from north-east.

rusticated ashlar masonry of the warm red local freestone. The full-centred archway measures 8 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch high and is 5 feet $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth. It is recessed between two buttresses 5 feet $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches in projection and 2 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth. Buttresses and arch have a moulded base of good, simple profile, not returned on the jambs. Above, the buttresses terminate in a moulded cornice over which rise obelisks supporting large stone balls. Between these over the archway is a moulded panel flanked by heavy floriated scrolls and crowned



[Photo Emily Fraser.]

Fig. 20. Craig Castle: coat-of-arms on 1726 gateway.

by a central obelisk with ball. In the panel is set a coat-of-arms (fig. 20), thus: quarterly, 1st, three boar's heads erased, for Gordon; 2nd, a chevron humetty (but not bezantée) between three crosses pattée, for Barclay; 3rd, three bear's heads muzzled coupéd, for Forbes; 4th, the lymphad of Lorn, for Campbell. Below are inscribed 17 F.G.E.B.A.F.KC. 26, commemorating the eighth laird, Francis Gordon, and his three successive wives, whose arms he has proudly quartered with his own, namely, Elizabeth Barclay, Anne Forbes, and Katherine Campbell. The supporters are two allounds, and over the shield is an esquire's helmet, plumed, and crested with the stag's head of the Gordons, and the family motto BYDAND on a boldly raised, free-cut scroll. The carving is in high relief, but the letters are incised.

The inner face of the gateway is plain, and over it is set a coat-of-arms evidently taken from an older entrance. This stone is badly weathered, but the first three quarterings are Gordon—three boar's heads erased; while the fourth seems to have been Menzies—ermine, a chief gules. Below are the letters, now much weathered, F. G. and E. M., and the date 1667. These are the initials of the sixth laird, Francis Gordon, and his first wife, Elizabeth Menzies of Pitfodels; her initials are in the centre of the stone, and no doubt the space to the sinister, now totally weathered away, would have borne those of his second wife, Jean Gordon, of the Corrachree family, whose coat-of-arms occupies the third quarter of the shield. There are the usual supporters, helmet, and motto.

The archway is now closed by a handsome old arched door in single oak boards 2 inches thick, with a wicket. The door has a good iron knocker and handle, and is ornamented with four-leaved iron studs. Perhaps there is here again a reminiscence of the cross pattée of Barclay. Near the crown of the arch is seen slight splintered damage caused by a fragment from one of the Zeppelin bombs unloaded upon Craig Castle on 2nd May 1916.¹

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HOUSE.

The new house (figs. 14, 15, 19), built probably about the same time as the gateway, is a tall and dignified oblong block, showing the usual finely battered profile. It measures 57 feet 5 inches long, north and south, by 25 feet 2 inches broad, and is 33 feet 6 inches high to the moulded cornice, and another 17 feet to the top of the chimney-stacks. The walls are about 2 feet 9 inches thick, and rise from a plain plinth, 4 feet 3 inches in height, and of 7 inches projection, weathered back on top; it was evidently inspired by the plinth on the old tower. The roof is hipped, and on the central ridge are set the two tall chimney-stacks. The building is constructed of ashlar, in blocks averaging 1 foot 10 inches by 11 inches; the joints are open, and in places are cherry-cocked. Shallow pilaster buttresses enclose the angles, and the chimney-stacks are similarly treated, finishing with handsome copes. The windows have projecting lintels, soles, and jambs. The dormers on the east front date from 1906. Internally, the only original features now to be noted in the building are a good plaster fireplace of an Adam design in what had been the old drawing-room, and the fine wide stone stair with its handsome hand-wrought iron rail (fig. 21), which looks like a good vernacular copy of a current design. The accommodation provided by the eighteenth-century house comprises three storeys of bedrooms, the stair being

¹ For an account of the raid made by Kapitänleutnant Stabbert in the L20, see Joseph Morris, *The German Air Raids on Great Britain*, pp. 99-100.

arranged in the centre of the plan. Originally there was no communication between the ancient tower and this building, and the outer door of the latter, by which it is still entered from the addition of 1832, is near the south end of the west side.

There is no date on this building, nor have I met with any record of

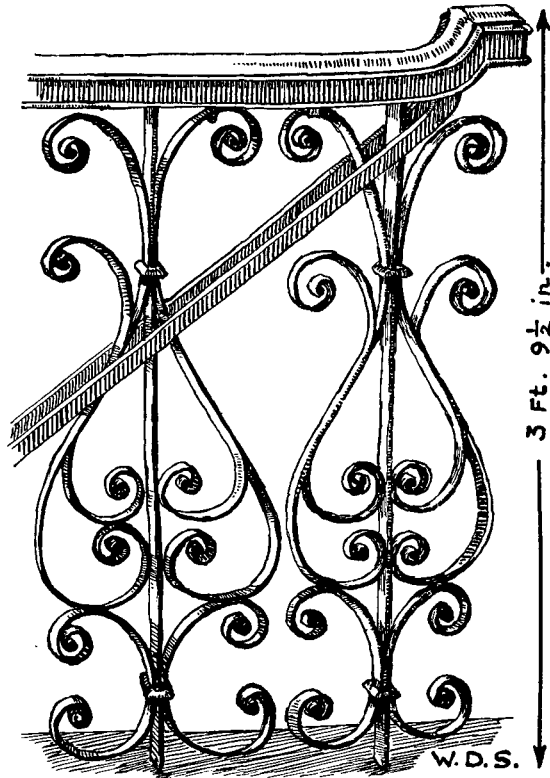


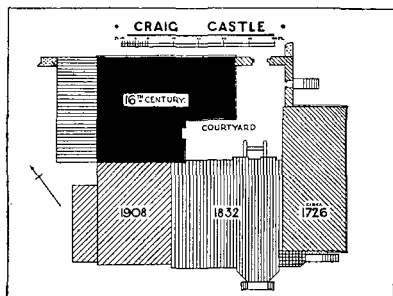
Fig. 21. Craig Castle: detail of iron stair-rail in eighteenth-century wing.

its erection. But it was certainly in existence by 1777, as it is shown on the estate plan of that year. The whole character suggests the early part of the eighteenth century: it has features recalling Haddo House, built in 1732; and also, in a more marked degree, the original St Paul's Episcopal Church in Aberdeen, erected in 1736. On the whole, I am disposed to think that this building was erected about the same time as the gateway of 1726: the stone used is the same, and the two seem parts of one scheme, the gateway giving access to a small court formed

between the old tower and this new house. The 1777 plan shows another building on the south side, at right angles to the first addition, and linking it up with the old tower; this building, of course, was swept away when the addition of 1832 was made. What the nature and date of this southern building were it is now impossible to say; it was certainly posterior to the eastward block, for the latter, as already pointed out, is clearly designed with an outer door at the south end of the west side, which the southern addition must have masked. In the old plan is also indicated a small annexe, probably a secondary lean-to structure, at the east end of the north front of the old tower.

LATER ADDITIONS.

It seems unnecessary to give a particular description of the large block erected in 1832, or of the additions made in and subsequently to 1908 by the present owner (see block plan, fig. 22). The 1832 building contains an entrance hall, dining-room, and drawing-room.



[J. F. Wyness, *del.*

Fig. 22. Craig Castle: block plan.

On the outer door are the arms of the builder, James Gordon, eleventh laird of Craig, and his wife, Anne Elizabeth Johnstone, of the family of Alva in Stirlingshire. Their initials, with the date 1832, are carved within a wreath over the bow window on the south front; overhead is the Gordon crest. No record appears to exist of the architect who designed this addition, but many of the architectural details, and in particular much of the interior plaster work, show an exceedingly close resemblance to similar features in the modern part of Castle Newe, built in 1831, and in recent years barbarously pulled down. Castle Newe was one of Archibald Simpson's houses; and having regard to the close similarity in style and to the correspondence in date, it seems practically certain that in the 1832 addition at Craig we must recognise another specimen of the work of this distinguished Aberdeen architect.

THE GARDEN.

To the north and east of the castle, on ground sloping gently towards the Den, and along the west and north sides partly excavated, stretches the fine old, well-kept garden, which is one of the many beauties of Craig.

On the west and north sides it is enclosed by a massive old wall, 2 feet 8 inches thick, 8 feet in interior and 6 feet in exterior height, and measuring 179 feet along the west front by 250 feet along the north. From the castle northward the first 54 feet are composed of partly coursed rubble with numerous pinnings. This masonry has a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century aspect, and probably represents part of the older garden or courtyard enclosure, to which access was gained by the gate of 1667, a coat-of-arms from which is reinserted in the present gate. The remainder of the wall is carefully built in wide-jointed ashlar, the blocks averaging about 1 foot 7 inches long by 10½ inches in the height. This masonry resembles that of the eighteenth-century addition to the castle, and is probably of about the same date; the garden wall is shown, just as it is to-day, in the plan of 1777. On the exterior side the wall is finished with a massive weathered cope formed of very large freestone blocks, averaging 2 feet 6 inches by 3 feet.

CARVED FRAGMENTS.

Near the 1726 gate are kept three carved fragments of late sixteenth-century date. One is the half-length figure of a gentleman putting the weight. He is clad in a tight-fitting skull cap, ruff, and close doublet, and wears the moustaches and full beard of the day. The other pieces are a skew-putt carved with a corbel mask, and a very large corbel-cap bearing a grotesque face having open mouth and protruding tongue. This fragment is quasi-Romanesque in character, and illustrates the tendency to revert to early forms which made itself apparent during the latter part of the sixteenth century, particularly in the northern districts of Scotland. It will be recalled that the corbel-caps in the vestibule of the old tower afford another instance of this tendency. The isolated fragments just described, however, do not belong to Craig, but were brought here from the old Castle of Lesmoir.¹ Outside the 1726 gate on the east side two low, rough stones with flat tops are set into the ground; these may be louping-on stones. Here also is preserved a fragment of an unfinished sundial in freestone recently found built into a dyke in the policies. In the garden is a sundial of good design with freestone pedestal and octagonal gun-metal dial: on a plate of the same metal set in the pedestal is the inscription, "This Dial|was cut in 1821|by| JOHN MONTGOMERY|Mason at Craig." The dial itself has the Gordon crest and motto, and is signed "Peter Hill, Edin^r."

¹ A. Jervise in *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 325.

THE DEN OF CRAIG AND THE SURVEY OF 1777.

As already stated, the deep, rocky, and wooded ravine, overhung by the beetling castle (fig. 15) and traversed by the brisk and sparkling water with its many rapids and cascades, forms the outstanding element among the natural attractions of Craig. The whole Den is laid out with paths and rustic bridges, and is thickly wooded, many of the trees being of considerable age. Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Den of Craig had acquired a certain notoriety in regard to its scenic qualities, though to the Italianate scholar of those days natural features which we consider to be full of romantic beauty appeared only savage and repellent. It is in this way that the Latin poet, Arthur Johnstone of Caskieben, who evidently had visited Craig, refers to the Den in the elegant poem which he addressed to his learned and accomplished friend, John Gordon, the fifth laird :¹

AD GORDONIUM CRAIGACHINDORIUM.

*Siccine, Gordoni, Cabriis affixus ericis,
 Urbe procul, rupes inter et antra lates?
 Quid iuvat ingenio genium vicisse Minervae,
 Ingenii dotes si sinis usque premi?
 Quid iuvat Aoniae fontes siccasse cohortis,
 Si fruitur studiis Cabria sola tuis?
 Quid prodest, mores hominum vidisse vel urbes,
 Nulla tuam si res publica sentit opem?
 Hic ubi tu latitas, nil, praeter lustra ferarum,
 Et caeli volucres, saxaque surda, vides.
 Nullum hic, qui doctas haurire aut reddere voces,
 Aut a te quidquam discere possit, habes.
 Barbara gens tota est, et inhospita terra, pruinis
 Semper et aestivo sub Cane, mersa nive.
 Ah fuge, nec populis nec amicas frugibus oras,
 Et procul hinc, Musis et tibi quaere larem.*

* * * * *
*Rumpe moras, et te, Gordoni, transfer in urbem,
 Huc te fata vocant, huc trahit alma Themis, etc.*

In the survey of 1777 the lay-out of paths, etc., in the Den is shown much as it is to-day: an interesting point, because the credit for these improvements is generally ascribed to James Gordon, the eleventh laird (1800-52). The testimony of the old map is confirmed by Francis Douglas in 1780,² and also by Dr John Leyden, who visited Craig on 16th September 1800, and in his *Journal* states that "the father of the

¹ *Musa Latina Aberdonensis*, vol. i. pp. 305-6.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 246-7.

present proprietor exhibited much taste in humouring nature. His sister, Miss A. Gordon, conducted me through the windings of the labyrinth, and pointed out the various beauties of the scene. One side of the rivulet is planted with firs, and the other with oak, mountain ash, birch, etc. The various shades of the trees, the windings and projections of the banks, and the different falls of water—which are more picturesque from the surrounding scenery than from their own height—form a spot equally beautiful and romantic.”¹ It is, however, certain that the eleventh laird also did much to beautify the policies. The writer of the *New Statistical Account* of the parish, which is dated 1840,² speaks with enthusiasm about his extensive plantations, and his testimony is echoed by Sir Andrew Leith Hay.³ Before quitting this subject of the policies it may be added that on the lawn in front of the castle are several ash trees of very great age; the *New Statistical Account* mentions one supposed to have been planted in 1688.

In the Den immediately to the east of the castle is the “Wishing Well,” the water of which in former days was believed to cure toothache. Jervise⁴ speaks of “St Mary’s Well” about a hundred yards west of the church, but this is not now in evidence. Mary Fair was formerly held at Newton of Auchindoir.

THE DOVECOT.

As already stated, this is placed, significantly enough, at the old centre of the barony, in the Den below the *motte* and the ancient church (see map, fig. 5); the later castle, it will be remembered, has its own *columbarium* provided under the roof. Unfortunately the dovecot is now in a most deplorable state of ruin. An exceedingly poor and unstable red freestone has been used in its construction, and in the damp air of the Den this stone has perished so extensively that it is doubtful if even the most thorough grouting and re-pointing would avail to avert the progressive decay of the structure. The dovecot lies about east and west, and is oblong in plan, measuring 21 feet by 12 feet over walls 2 feet 3 inches thick. On the east side is the door, giblet checked, and 2 feet 6½ inches broad; its height is uncertain owing to the choked-up condition of the site. A plain block-string cornice has run round the building, stepped down to the southward on the east and west sides. On each of these sides is an aperture for the birds. A few corbie steps of the lean-to roof, which sloped to the south, still remain

¹ *Tour in the Highlands and Western Islands*, ed. J. Sinton, pp. 229–30.

² *New Statistical Account*, vol. xii. (Aberdeenshire) p. 410.

³ *Castellated Architecture of Aberdeenshire*, p. 16.

⁴ *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 329.

on the south gable; on the north one only the curved skew-putt has survived. The stone-built nests within are in a state of great ruin and decay. The dovecot is niched into the slope of the stream. Its oblong plan and its remaining details indicate a date towards the end of the sixteenth century.

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