

I.

DOUNE CASTLE. BY W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON,
M.A., D.LITT., F.S.A. SCOT.

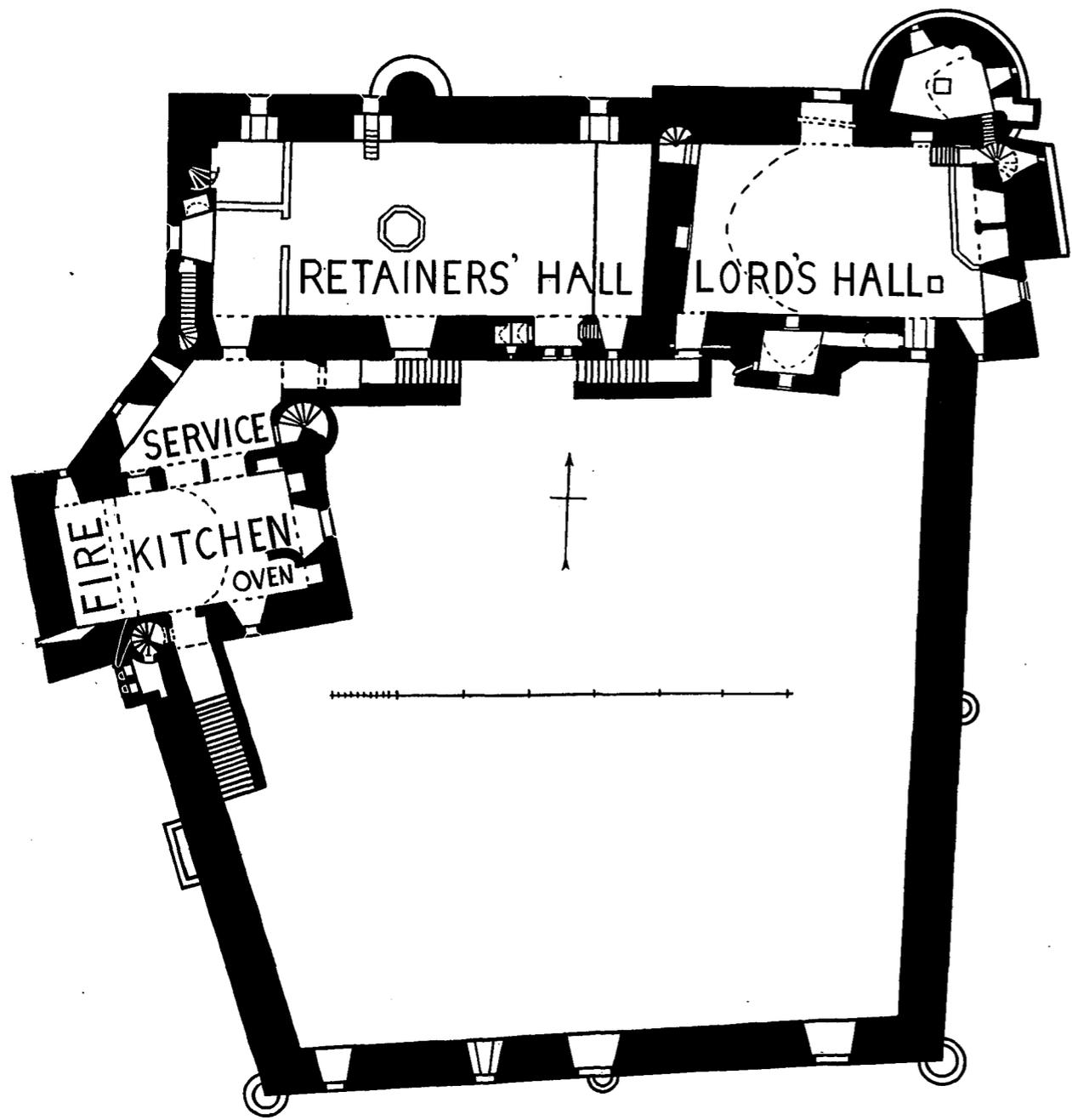
Doone Castle, built within the earthworks of the earlier *dun* or fort which gave the site its name,¹ occupies a lofty and commanding position, overlooking the River Teith, and in the sharp angle which that "arrowy" stream makes with its brisk tributary, the Ardoch Water. The castle was built, towards the end of the fourteenth century, by Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland in the reign of Robert III and James I.²

In all save minor alterations and additions a work of one uniform building effort, the castle (see plans, Plate III) forms an irregular pentagon in plan, the habitable buildings being on the north and north-west sides, while the remainder of the enclosure is screened by a high and massive curtain wall (figs. 1, 2). These domestic buildings divide themselves into three great blocks: the donjon or tower-house at the north-west corner; the hall block extending westward from the donjon; and the kitchen wing, or tower, which occupies the south-west corner. The donjon—called "the grait tour" in 1581³—contains the entrance, covered by a powerful round tower, and forms a complete and segregated residence for the lord, his family and their personal staff. The long vaulted trance is strongly defended by a portcullis, worked from a window-bay in the hall above, by wooden folding doors, and by a massive two-leaved iron "yett." On either side are vaulted guardrooms, cellars, and a prison. From the guardrooms the trance is commanded by loopholes suitably disposed. On the first floor is a spacious and well-lit, vaulted hall; there is a solar above, with a neatly fitted up little oratory in a window bay; and over all were garret bedrooms. At the north-east corner of the donjon is the stout round tower which (as already stated) flanks the entrance. It is vaulted from bottom to top, containing a

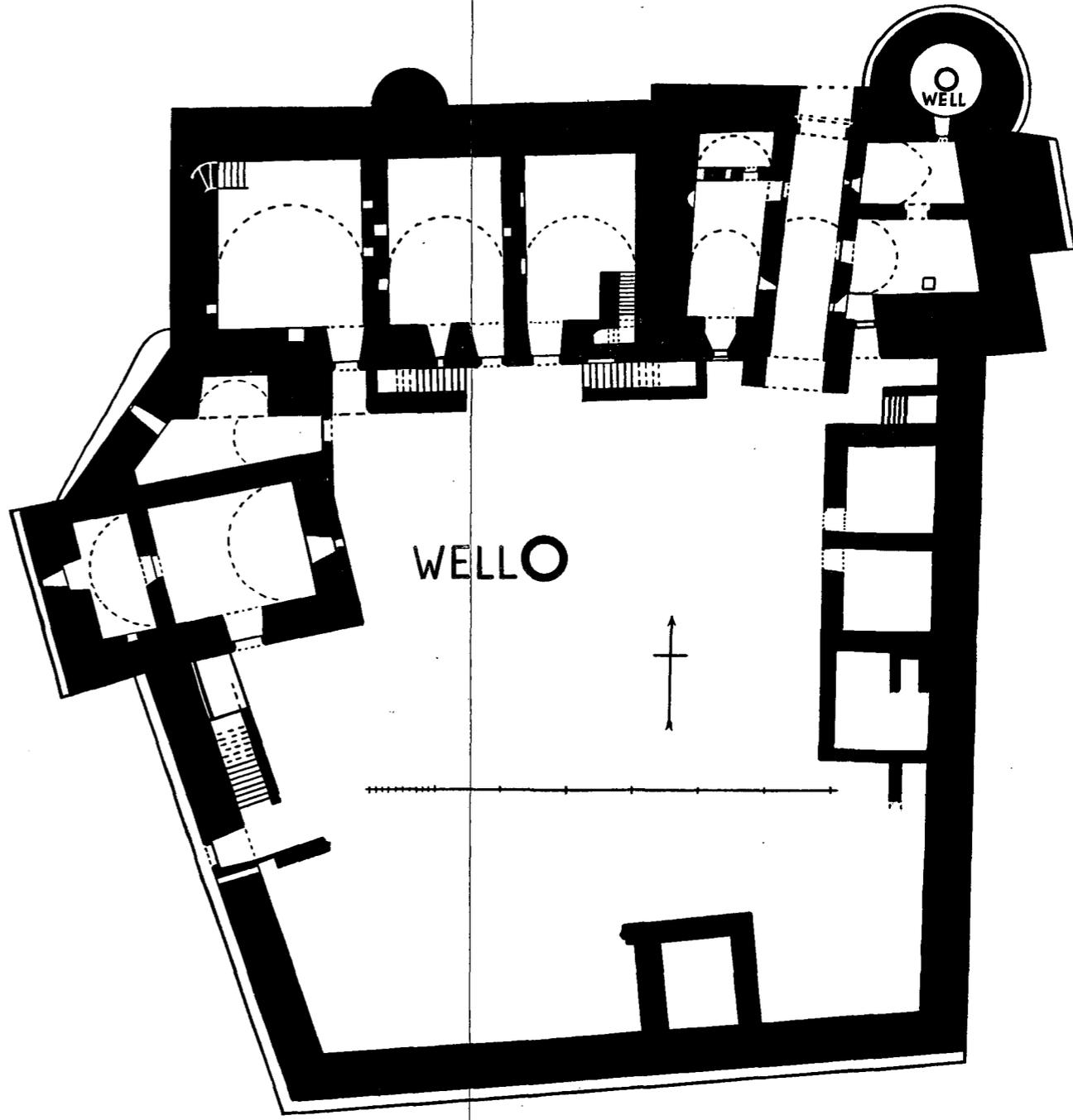
¹ Most probably prehistoric, though we cannot exclude the possibility that they may be the remains of an early Norman castle. At Invernochty in Aberdeenshire the Celtic word "Doone" is applied to such an earthwork.

² The history of Doone Castle is fully set forth in Sir William Fraser, *The Red Book of Menteith*, vol. i. pp. 471-96. It is architecturally described, with a full series of measured drawings, by D. Macgibbon and T. Ross, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 418-29. The plans accompanying the present paper are based on those of Macgibbon and Ross, with certain additions and corrections.

³ R. S. Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*, p. 60.



First Floor.



Basement.

Doune Castle: Plans.

W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON.

PLATE III.
[To face page 73.]

well-room in the basement and a succession of private chambers above. On the inner side of the donjon is a shallow square projecting tower (fig. 2) affording a look-out over the court.

The donjon hall is entered from the court by an exterior stone stair, which was defended by an iron gate at the foot, while the door above was secured with a drawbar. There is no communication, other than



Fig. 1. Doune Castle: View from north-east before Restoration.
[From photo in the Macbean Jacobite Collection, Aberdeen University Library.]

by a trap-door, with the storage in the basement, but two good spiral stairs lead to the floors above. The great double-arched fireplace in the hall is a notable feature. Originally there was no direct access of any kind from the tower-house to the hall block adjoining—the one door which now leads through, on the first floor, being a modern insertion.

The hall block contains the great or common hall of the castle, as distinct from the lord's hall in the tower-house. It is entered by an external stair, like that which serves the lord's hall; but it is significant that this common hall stair is not secured in any way, either below or above. The hall had a central hearth, with a louvre overhead. Under the hall are vaulted cellars, with the usual service stairs—again in contrast to the absence of such communication in the tower-house.

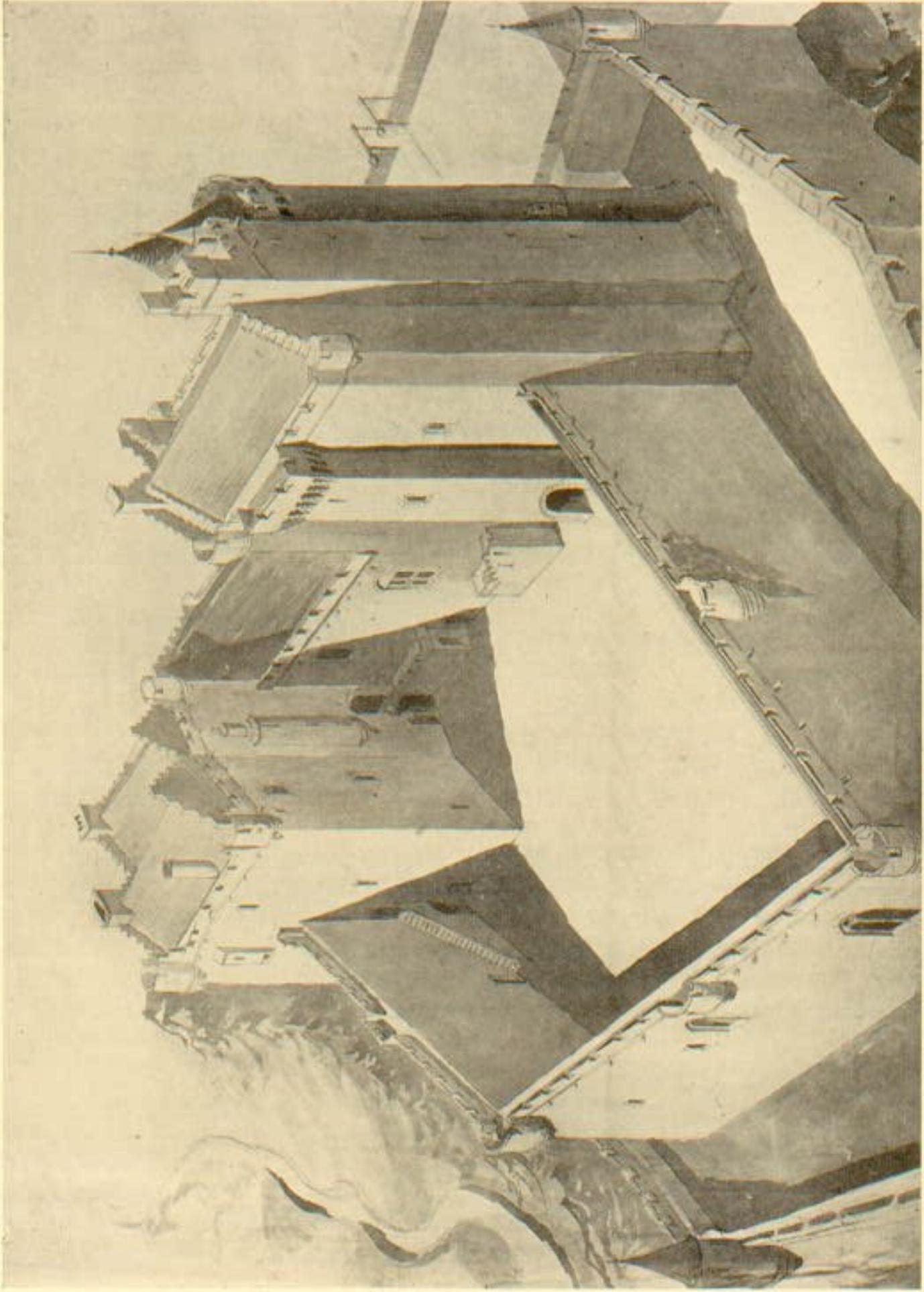


Fig. 2. Doune Castle: Bird's-eye View from south-east, restored.
[Drawn by Thomas Ross, LL.D.]

Above the hall there is nothing to correspond with the solar in the tower-house, as the hall block was only two storeys in height. It had an open-timber roof whose enriched corbels still remain. At its west end were the screens, with a minstrel's gallery above.

The kitchen tower is connected with the hall by a cleverly managed service room. It has cellars in the basement; the kitchen itself, lofty and vaulted, with two enormous service-hatches, adjoins the hall on the same level; and above is accommodation for guests—namely, one large and well-equipped room over the kitchen, and two storeys of smaller chambers over the service room. These are reached by a sixteenth-century turret stair which must replace a predecessor, perhaps of timber. A notable feature is the complete severance of these guest rooms from the tower-house, which was evidently strictly reserved for the lord's own use. The kitchen communicates by an outside stair with a postern, covered by a bold machicolation. With the exception of the main entrance and this postern, there is no opening of any sort, not even a loophole, in the lower part of the outer walls.

Tusks in the south wall of the kitchen tower show that it was intended to carry further buildings round the courtyard. The foundations which still remain, on the south and east sides, are paltry and seem to be late; but the large windows in the south wall—the eastmost being pointed—show that an important building was to have stood here. Very likely this was the chapel, which in this position would be oriented. In 1587 there is a record of two chapels of St Fillan, one within and the other without the castle. As the former can hardly be the tiny oratory in a window arch of the donjon solar, it seems probable that a chapel had actually been built against the south curtain. In the centre of the courtyard is a second draw-well.

An allure walk between front and rear parapets goes all round the curtain, and along the wall-heads of the residential buildings. On the tower-house and the hall block it is carried over the high-pitched roofs by steps. The curtains have open turrets at the angles and in the centre of each face. These seem to be additions of the sixteenth century, and were probably put on in 1581, when the "allering" of the castle was renewed.¹ Midway in the north front (fig. 2) is a small, solid, half-round bastion tower, carrying an open turret at the wall-walk level. In general, the castle exhibits the rugged and unadorned, gloomy grandeur that characterises most Scottish secular architecture during this period. The masonry is coursed rubble, with dressed stonework at the quoins and voids, and the moulded detail is of the heavy

¹ Mylne, *Master Masons*, p. 60.

kind usual in Scotland about 1400. Around the whole castle was an outer breastwork, scraps of which still remain.

It has long been recognised that Doune Castle exhibits close affinities with the great French Château de Pierrefonds, erected by the Duc d'Orleans about 1390-1400. At Pierrefonds, as at Doune, we find (figs. 3, 4) that what is called the donjon forms a great composite mass of building, containing in itself all the accommodation required in a seignorial residence of the first rank. As Viollet le Duc says: ¹

“Le donjon du château peut être complètement isolé des autres défenses. . . . Le donjon était l'habitation spécialement réservée au seigneur et comprenant tous les services nécessaires : caves, cuisines, offices, chambres, garderobes, salons, et salles du réception.”

As at Doune, the donjon contains the entrance, covered by a special drum tower. Around the courtyard, in the same way as at Doune, are ample halls and other accommodation for the general household and for guests, but kept wholly apart from the lord's establishment in the donjon. The separate outside stairs, affording access to these different apartments, which we have seen at Doune, are a distinctive feature of Pierrefonds. At Pierrefonds also we note the lateral postern and the absence, or almost absence, of openings in the basement of the thick outer walls.

In Scotland a close parallel to Doune, in thesis if not in elaboration or in scale, may be studied at Sanquhar Castle in Nithsdale.² As we see it now, Sanquhar Castle is a piecemeal structure, but the great fifteenth-century frontal consolidation is a work of one design and building effort, and obviously aims to meet the same requirements provided for in the donjon of Doune. At Sanquhar the tower-house contains on the ground floor the main gate, vaulted pend and guardroom, with a large hall, kitchen, and private accommodation for the lord above; at Sanquhar, also, a bold round frontal tower serves the double purpose of enclosing the well and flanking the outer portal. As at Doune, the pend is commanded by an observation loop from the guardroom, and there is no direct communication between the basement and the main floor, which is entered by an outside stair from the courtyard. The side gate at Pierrefonds and Doune is again repeated at Sanquhar.

Obviously these three castles belong to a specialised type, which must owe its development to a specific cause. That cause was inherent

¹ *Description du Château de Pierrefonds*, 4th ed., p. 15; *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture*, vol. iii. p. 153.

² See my paper in *Trans. Dumfries and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Antiquarian Society* (forthcoming).

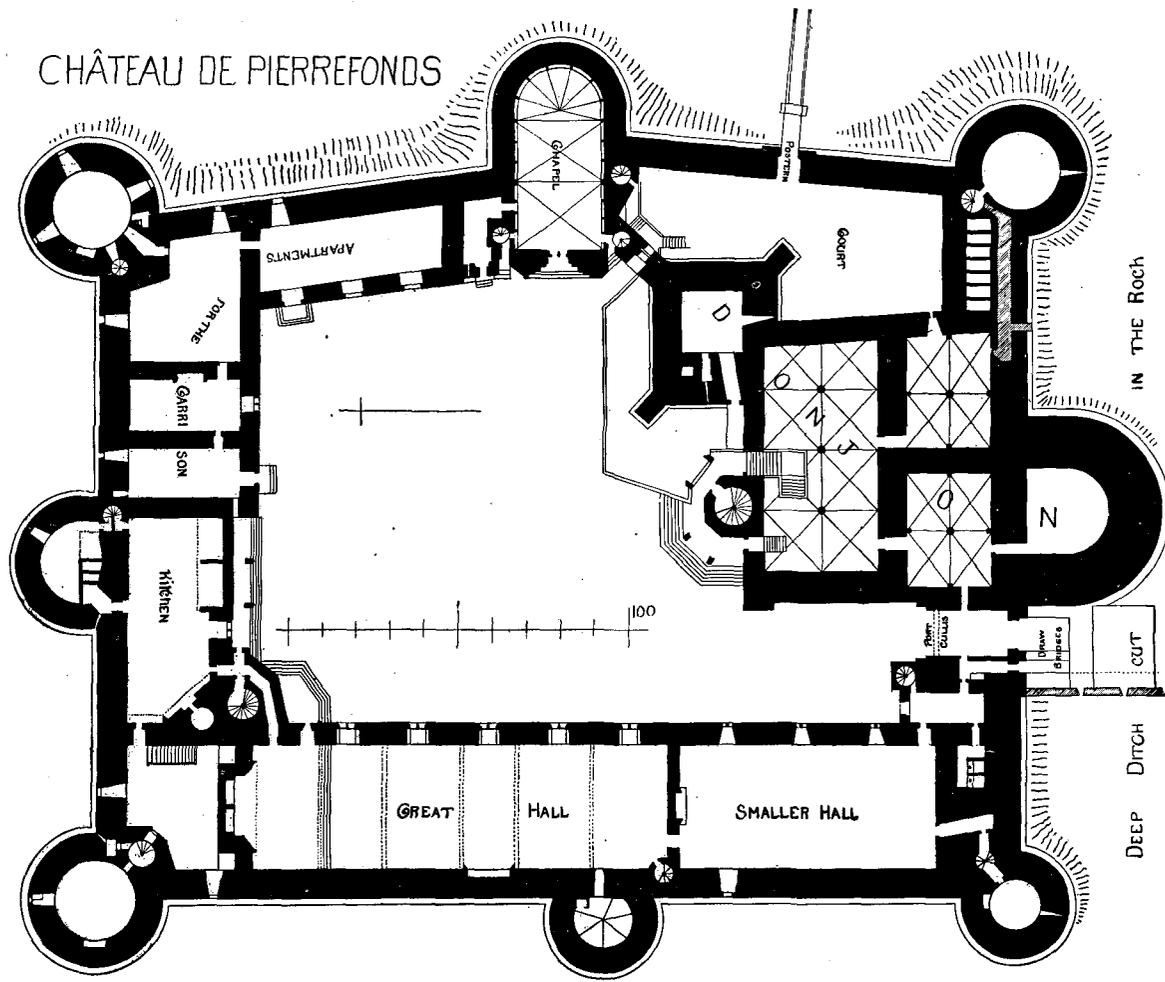


Fig. 3. Château de Pierrefonds: Plan, after Viollet le Duc.

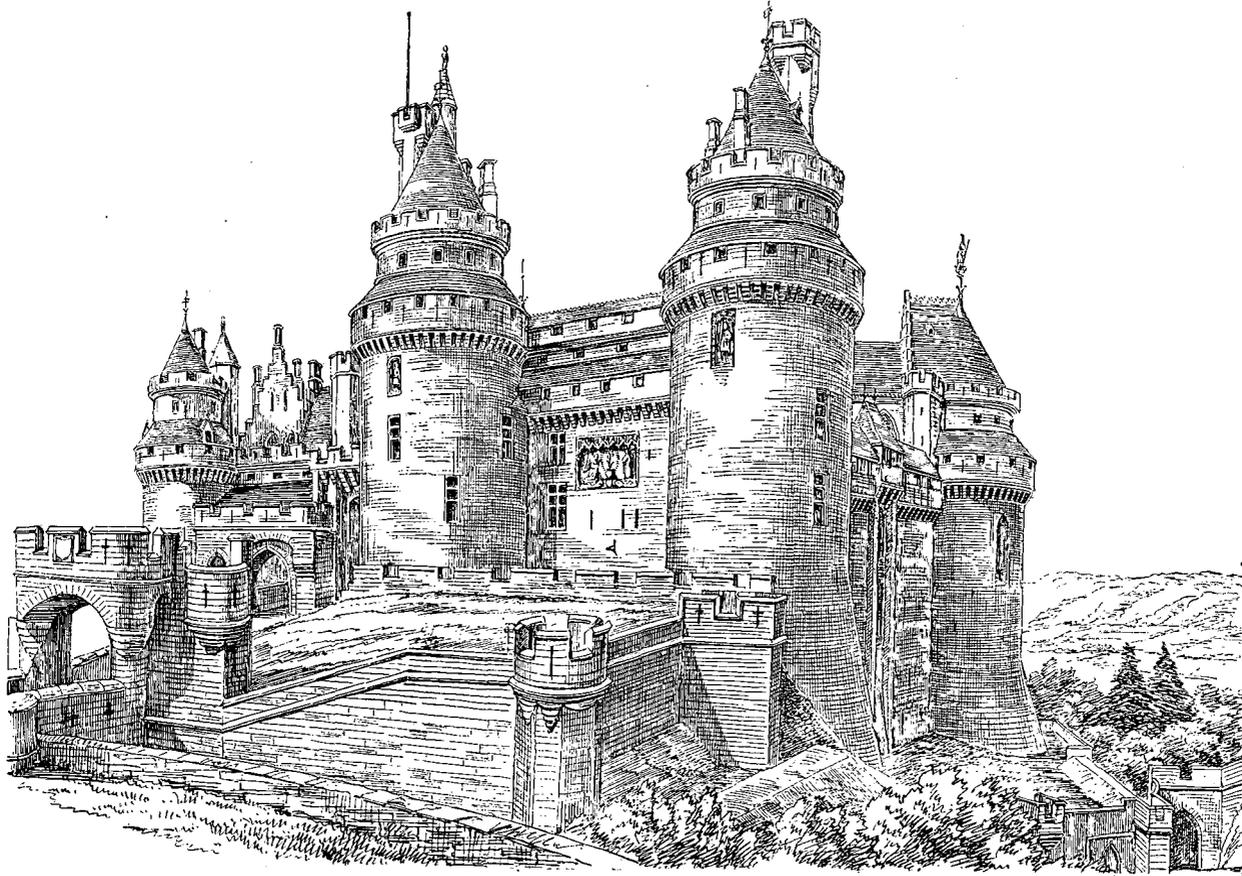


Fig. 4. Château de Pierrefonds: View from south-east.
[Drawn by David Macgibbon, LL.D.]

in the great change that came over feudal warfare in the later Middle Ages. In olden times a baron would pursue his quarrels and defend his castle with his own vassals, dwelling around him. All that he required, therefore, was a towered curtain wall to fence his house. In time of siege, the tenants whom he called up for garrison purposes would be lodged in the towers. Often, under the system of tenure by castle-guard, each important vassal might have a special tower to look after, and in some cases these towers still bear the vassals' names. But in the later Middle Ages the attack and defence of fortified places had become a high art, for which the tumultuary feudal levies, untrained and ill-equipped, were little fitted. Field warfare also had grown into a specialised science, and campaigns were now pushed through ruthlessly until one side or another was broken. *Der totale Krieg*, to borrow Ludendorff's expressive phrase, had now superseded the chivalric contests, with all their polite conventions, which are so familiar to us in the picturesque pages of Froissart. For warfare of this new type the feudal levies, bound only to serve for short periods at a time, were no longer suitable. More and more therefore—particularly in France during the social breakdown that accompanied the Hundred Years' War—the great barons in their incessant private quarrels with each other came to rely upon mercenary soldiers whom they held in their pay. Quarters for these professionals had to be available; and this meant, for the first time, standing garrisons in each castle. Whereas in former days the castle, in time of peace, would contain only the lord's *familia* or household, it must now provide accommodation for a compact body of mercenary troops. The neighbours of these hard-boiled *lanzknechts* would always be inconvenient and often dangerous, for they did not owe the natural allegiance of vassals, and were at all times liable to be tampered with by their employer's enemies. Hence, for reasons both of privacy and safety, the great French lords of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries took care to provide their castles with self-contained residences for their families and their personal retinue.

In England a similar development came about in the closing stage of feudalism, before the Wars of the Roses put an end, once for all, to the enlisting of private armies by the baronage. Every student of this period knows how serious an evil the armed retainers of the powerful lords had become, and how energetically the Tudor monarchs grappled with it in their statutes against "livery and maintenance." The mischief had already begun in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the first Act passed against livery and maintenance dates from 1390. In the overseas wars the English barons had only too aptly learned their

lesson from their French antagonists. Instead of vassals they now surrounded themselves with armed retainers, each wearing his lord's livery and bound to fight for him in all his quarrels; while on his part the lord pledged himself to "maintain" them against all legal consequences of their actions, either by suborning or intimidating juries, or by still more violent measures. Matters drifted from bad to worse after the English were turned out of France, and large numbers of unemployed ex-service men, habituated to violence, were only too glad to accept the livery of a powerful lord:—

"Great landowners, who had crowds of armed retainers in their service, bribed and bullied juries till the administration of the law became a farce, and on the rare occasions when this course failed, they knew how to vindicate their claims by maiming or assassinating their opponents, or by laying siege to houses the possession of which they coveted."¹

All over Western Europe, and as far east as the lands which the Teutonic Order had conquered beyond the Vistula, this new development led to a profound change in the art of castle planning. The mercenaries could not be trusted, and so for their own safety, as well as to ensure their privacy, the lords began to segregate themselves in quarters separate and jealously isolated from the main castle fabric. Sometimes they added a self-contained tower-house so as to provide solar accommodation to an older domestic lay-out within the *enceinte*. This is what happened in England at Tattershall and Buckden; at Holyrood in Scotland; and, on a very great scale, at Marienburg in East Prussia.² In other cases the lords withdrew into a tower-house or donjon wholly separate from the domestic range—often for that purpose reverting to the long abandoned *motte* of an earlier scheme. That was what led to the building of the great donjons at Dudley and Warkworth,³ crowning disused *mottes*, and to those of Nunney and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where no *motte* was available. But in France, at Pierrefonds, where the whole castle was built on one plan and at one period, we see the new thesis developed *ab initio*, completely and with Gallic logic. That the builder of Doune should so closely have followed a French model is no more than what we should expect from the intimate association of the two countries at this very time. And already in Scotland itself, at the time when Doune was a-building, there was a precedent, equally French in inspiration, for the new conception.

¹ S. R. Gardiner, *Introduction to English History*, p. 98.

² See my paper on these castles in *Journal Brit. Archaeol. Association*, new ser., vol. xl. pp. 177-92; and, for Buckden, *ibid.*, 3rd ser., vol. ii. pp. 121-32.

³ See my paper in *Archæologia Eliana*, 4th ser., vol. xv. pp. 115-136.

Tantallon Castle, which was certainly in existence by 1374, shows in its tall central tower, containing a complete suite of apartments for the lord or castellan, pierced at ground level by the main entrance, the same idea, worked out in a simpler way. Caerlaverock, in its original form, illustrates the like thesis, more fully developed.¹ Tantallon, Caerlaverock, Doune, and Sanquhar, all alike are a product of identical conditions, of the time when a lord's power came to rest no longer on his vassals but on his armed retainers and mercenaries. This characteristic development of the later Middle Ages was as rampant an evil in Scotland as elsewhere, as the legislation of the Stewart kings, from James I onwards, amply shows.

The influence exerted upon the late mediæval castle plan by the advent of specialised mercenary warfare, and all the complicated evils summed up in England under the comprehensive term "livery and maintenance"—this "revival of anarchy in a civilised society"²—has hitherto not been recognised. Rightly appreciated, it affords the explanation of much that has seemed puzzling in the secular architecture of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For example, the group of late tower-houses in England, already mentioned, which hitherto have been regarded as a kind of conscious architectural atavism—"a deliberate return to the donjon of earlier days,"³ now fall into their natural place, not as the product of a meaningless antiquarianism quite foreign to the spirit of their age, but as the most practical embodiment of urgent current requirements. The atavistic theory of these late tower-houses has reached its climax in the language of a recent writer, who describes that at Warkworth as "the finest tribute paid to the memory of the ancient keeps."⁴ Nothing is more certain than that the "stout Earl of Northumberland" would have kicked his master mason downstairs had he presented himself before his lordship with any such pious proposal. There is naught whatever of piety about the late tower-houses of England. Quite on the contrary, for the special needs of their time they are the most up to date and apposite thing that their builders could have devised.

It is extremely instructive to note the effect which the new problems of mercenary warfare exercised even on the most rigidly conventionalised castles in the world, those of the Teutonic Order to which I have already

¹ See my paper in *Trans. Dumfries and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Antiquarian Soc.*, 3rd ser., vol. xx. Cf. *Proceedings*, vol. lvii. pp. 29-40.

² G. M. Trevelyan, *Hist. England*, p. 259.

³ A. Hamilton Thompson, *Tattershall, The Manor, The Castle, The Church*, pp. 11-12; also in *Tattershall Castle*, by the Marquess Curzon and H. Avray Tipping, p. 182.

⁴ H. Braun, *The English Castle*, p. 56.

alluded.¹ Here the combination of the cross and sword, in the hands of the military monks, entailed a corresponding combination of the fortress and the cloister in their dwellings. Each castle was built to house a commandery of twelve religious knights, and so their design is rigidly claustral and their arrangements as highly standardised as those of any western monastery. But from the latter part of the fourteenth century onwards, the crusading fervour of the Knights of the Sable Cross began to wane, and they grew more and more to rely, for the maintenance of their power, upon mercenaries and upon the swarms of knightly adventurers whom the prestige of the Order, combined with the love of excitement and the hope of booty, induced to take service in the long series of campaigns against Poland and Lithuania. The result is strikingly seen in such a castle as Neidenburg, erected shortly before 1400. Here the concentration of the mass and weight of the building over the entry, and the provision in this part of a separate quarter for the commandant, who instead of being the provost of a fraternity of his fellow-knights, is now the chief of a gang of hirelings, is in all essentials the same as what we have seen at Pierrefonds and at Doune or at Caerlaverock. In these four contemporary castles, so widely separated in space, and so different in their political antecedents, we observe how the same results were produced by the same powerful cause.

I have to acknowledge that this paper has been prepared under a scheme of research supported by a travelling grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. The illustration at fig. 2 is from a hitherto unpublished drawing by the late Dr Thomas Ross, F.S.A.Scot.

¹ The standard work on these castles is Conrad Steinbrecht, *Die Baukunst des Deutschen Ritterordens in Preussen*, specially vol. ii. See also Karl-Heinz Clasen, *Die Mittelalterliche Kunst im Gebiete des Deutschordensstaates Preussen*, vol. i.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 73, line 14. *For* "north-west" *read* "north-east."

Page 80, line 26. *For* "neighbours" *read* "neighbourhood."

Page 82, note 1. *For* "xx" *read* "xxi."