

IV.

DROCHIL CASTLE AND THE PLAN *TOUT VNE MASSE*.

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The massive ruin of Drochil Castle overlooks the right bank of the Water of Lyne, in the angle where it is joined by the Tarth, about three miles above the Roman fort and the old parish church of Lyne, and double that distance, as the crow flies, WNW. of Peebles. The situation is a remote one, entangled among barren and impassable hills; but the Roman fort shows that the armies of Agricola had used the passage afforded by the Lyne Valley to link up the great fort at Newstead, their main base on Tweedside, with their road system and stations on the lower Clyde, *via* the Biggar gap and Castledykes. There was a manor of Drochil in the thirteenth century, as we learn from the fact that its owner, Alexander de Droghkil, gave in his allegiance to Edward I in 1296.¹ Perhaps this early manor-place of Drochil was the "hous on the wattir of Lyne" in which Sir Thomas Randolph was captured in 1308 by the good Sir James Douglas.² The present castle was built by the Regent Morton, and is stated to have been left uncompleted by him at his execution in 1581. It was, however, certainly inhabited thereafter. The history of the castle has been set forth in an early volume of our *Proceedings*³ by Mr David Marshall. It now belongs to the Earl of Wemyss. Architecturally, the castle is a building of quite exceptional interest, and it is a thousand pities that it has been allowed to fall into a condition of utter neglect.

The castle⁴ (Pl. XIV) consists of a rectangular main structure, measuring about 85 by 68 ft. over the walls, having a round tower, 25 ft. in diameter, attached to each of two diagonally opposite corners. Each tower with its gunloops commands two sides of the main building, so that it is impossible for an enemy to approach the castle from any quarter without coming under fire. This is the familiar "three-stepped" or Z plan, so common in Scottish castles of the latter part of the sixteenth century.⁵ But what makes Drochil unique is the fact that it is designed as a double tenement, with a wide central corridor running through the main building, from end to end, on every storey, having suites of apartments opening off it on either side

¹ *Ragman Rolls*, p. 192.

² See Barbour's *Bruce*, bk, ix, 683 (ed. W. M. Mackenzie, p. 166).

³ *P.S.A.S.*, xxii (1887-88), 124-30. See also Buchan's *History of Peeblesshire*, I, 234; III, 81.

⁴ M. and R., *Cast. Arch.* II, 221-6.

⁵ See distribution map in my *Earldom of Mar*, fig. 48.

(fig. 1). The castle contains four storeys and a garret. The basement, including the central corridor, is all vaulted. In the north division are two cellars, and a kitchen with the usual cavernous fireplace. From the kitchen a door leads directly into the basement of the north-eastern round tower, which doubtless was the larder. The corresponding room in the SW. tower is reached along a narrow and well-secured passage, and probably was the prison. The main door into the castle was at the west end of the long corridor. At this end a spiral stair ascended to the summit of the building, giving access to the central corridor on each of the upper storeys. At the opposite end of the corridor there was a postern, or service entrance.

On the first floor the state rooms or principal apartments were in the south tenement. These comprised the great hall, 50 by 22 ft., with the solar or withdrawing-room at its east end. The hall has been well lit, and its fireplace was midway in the N. wall, with a dresser or buffet opposite. The northern tenement contained three bedrooms, well provided with garderobes. On this side the upper floors were similarly arranged, but above the hall the southern tenement seems never to have been completed; neither apparently was the SW. tower carried up beyond this level. In the north re-entrant of this tower is the corbelled base of a turret stair. The NE. tower still stands to its full height, and is corbelled out to form a square cap-house. This tower has its turret stair in the south re-entrant.

The architectural details of the castle are of considerable refinement and interest. Its masonry is coarse rubble of dark Silurian greywacke, apparently from a quarry still visible to the north. The dressed work is in a deep red freestone, obtained from the Ord Quarry on Mackie Hill. The gunloops have a wide external splay, which in a number of cases is redented, so as to stop an incoming bullet. This seems to be a continental device, common enough in France and Germany, for example in the tower on the gateway and the Vielle Tour at Ammerschwihir in Alsace, or at the Ronneburg, where gunloops of this type are dated 1549.¹ In Scotland I have noted, besides these at Drochil, redented gunloops at the castles of Burleigh, Edzell, Invermark, Leslie, Castle Fraser, Pitsligo and Castle Stewart. The Drochil gunloops are sited with much tactical skill: for example, one on the second floor-level in the NE. tower, looking west, is plunged so as to command the exposed NW. corner of the main structure. Most of the voids have bull-nosed margins, but two windows in the west wall have quirked edge-rolls. Another window on this side, on the first floor over the main entrance, is a charming piece of Renaissance design. It has shafts with bell-caps of quasi-Gothic character, upon which is displayed the Douglas mullet. These caps carry a triangular pediment with finials and disc-croquets. The finials bear the Douglas heart. On the discs are carved the initials I. D. for James Douglas,

¹ Peter Niess, *Die Ronneburg*, p. 101, fig. 48. The German word for redented gunloops is *Stufenschiesscharte*.

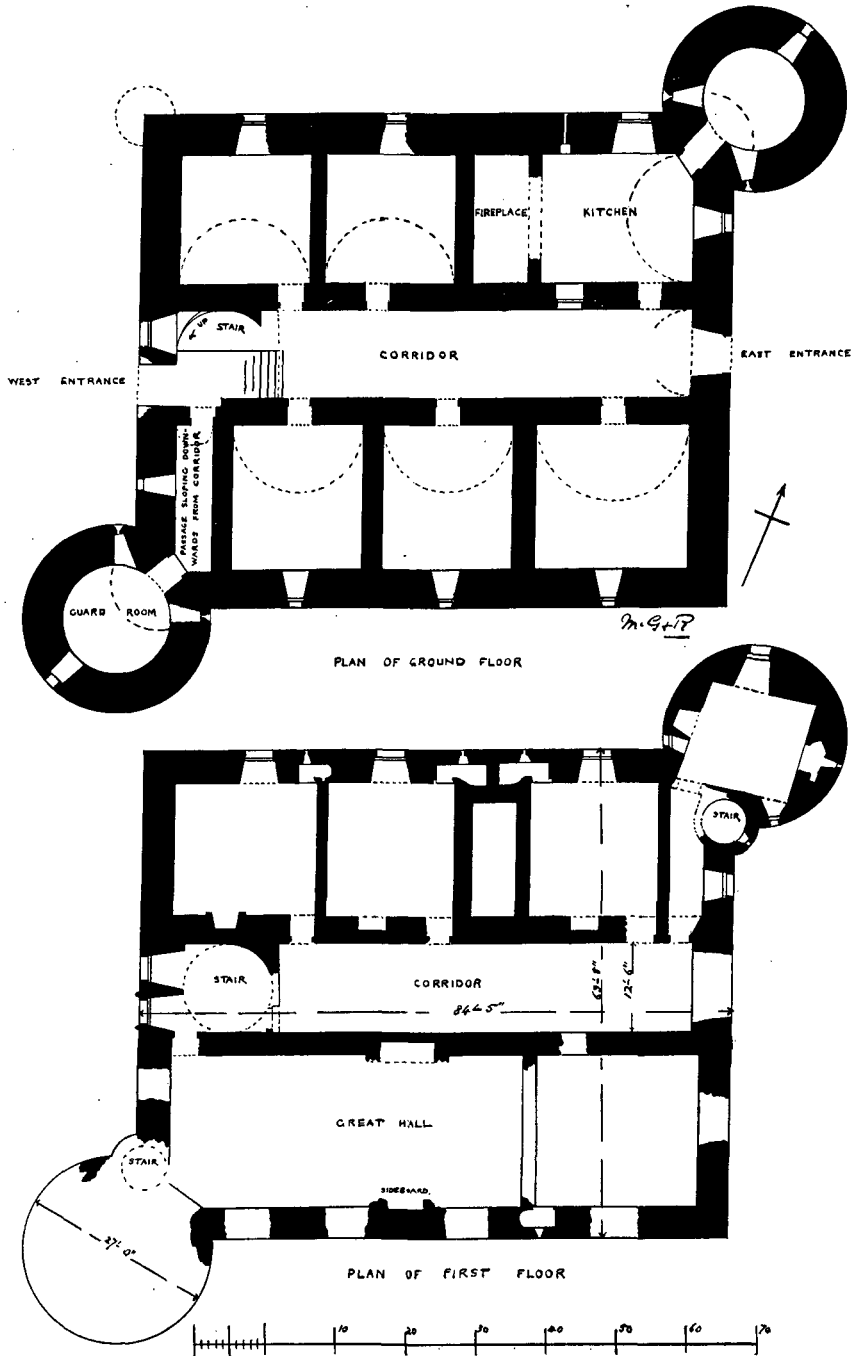


Fig. 1. Drochil Castle: plans, by Dr David MacGibbon.

and the tympanum displays the Morton fetterlock. All the windows have been strongly barred. The corbelling of the W. stair turret is rich, having an upper band of chequer-pattern ornament, below which is a kind of dentil. On the NE. tower, the cap-house is corbelled out in such a way that the curve of the tower projects strongly below. This is a mannerism of the time, seen at Waterton's Lodging, Dunnottar Castle, dated 1574, at Tolquhon Castle, 1584-9, and at Kilcoy Castle. On the NW. corner of the main building is the base of an angle turret of unusually bold projection, consisting of no less than eight corbel courses, of which only the lowest is mitred into the quoin. The hall fireplace has almost perished, but enough remains to show that it had jambs moulded with two quirked half-rolls, between which was a spirally twisted baluster shaft.

Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, the famous 16th-cent. French architect, in his book *Les Plus Excellens Bastiments de France*, published in two volumes in 1576 and 1579, distinguishes two main kinds of plan which were in vogue among the French châteaux of his time. One is the four-square or rectangular castle enclosing a courtyard, with towers or pavilions at the angles. Ancy-le-France may serve as an example, and is described by du Cerceau in the following terms:—¹

“En ce Chateau y a quatre corps de logis, autant bien symmetriez, que l'architecture gardee. Aux quatre coings sont aussi quatre pavillons quarrez, & la court au milieu, de quatorze toises en son quarré. Chacun corps a deux estages, le galletas dessus, & chacun pavillon trois, avec le galletas dessus: & les offices au dessous.”

This consolidated four-square symmetrical plan, centred on a courtyard, was in fact the type towards which the later medieval castle was approximating throughout western Europe. In England it is fully realised, in an early example, at Bodiam Castle, 1385. In Scotland we have it maturely developed at Linlithgow Palace, as completed by James V. North of the Tweed, however, the national preference for the tower-house makes courtyard castles exceptional, unless where they have grown up piecemeal through the absorption of the barmekin wall by buildings erected against it. But at Boyne Castle and Tolquhon Castle we have courtyard castles *d'un seul jet*. Boyne² resembles very closely a French castle of its time, with round towers at each corner and a gatehouse in front, the whole being designed for show rather than effect. Making allowances for the vastly different scale, it is the Scotch counterpart of Verger or Bury in France. At Tolquhon,³ the lay-out is complicated by the presence of an ancient tower-house, which does not project externally; but here the courtyard building shows the characteristic “three-stepped” or Z-arrangement of towers echeloned at

¹ Vol. I, fol. 3v. In the copy of this work belonging to Edinburgh University Library, which I have used, the first volume is the edition of 1607.

² *Trans. Banff Field Club* (1938-9), 11-28.

³ *P.S.A.S.*, LXXII, 248-72; LXXX, 117-26.

each of two diagonally opposite corners. If the courtyard could be conceived as shrinking into a central corridor, we should have the scheme of Drochil.

The rectangular courtyard plan, with round angle towers and gatehouse with two round towers, seen at Boyne and Tolquhon, the forecourt with its offices found at the latter castle, and the formal garden along one side of the main structure and forecourt, all constitute a remarkably close approximation to the scheme of Bury, and the French inspiration of the two Scottish houses seems undoubted. Du Cerceau's description of Bury might serve, in essentials, for Tolquhon or Boyne:

*“En ce lieu y a deux courts, celle du Sieur, & la basse. Celle du Sieur a vingtcinq toises en carré, entour laquelle, & aux quatre costez, sont quatre corps de logis. Aux quatre angles diceux par le dehors sont quatre tours d'assez belle monstre. Dicelle court du Sieur on passé outre le bastiment de la face, pour descendre par vn escallier au iardin, lequel n'est pas fort grand toutesfois fort beau & bien entretènu, & descouvre le val cy dessus dict, au millieu duquel est vne fontaine esleuée. Ioignant ce iardin & à costé d'iceluy, y a vn second iardin, qui pareillement a son regard sur le val, & respond derriere la basse court. Les quatre corps de logis fermans la court du sieur sont accommodez, à sçauoir le corps faisant separation d'entre la court du sieur & le iardin, de salles, chambres, garderobes, ayant leur regard l'un sur le iardin, l'autre sur la court. Des deux autres corps à dextre & senestre, celui à dextre en entrant au premier & second estage sont galleries à croisées, de la longueur de la court: le corps à senestre au premier estage est dédié à offices: au dessus chambres, garderobes. L'autre corps qui faict la face de l'entrée, n'a qu'un estage, & est par dedans la court vne gallerie à arcs, & voultée: & dessus vne terrasse ayant veuë sur la court & sur la plaine. La basse court est fermée la plusgrande partie d'estables, granges, pressouers, & autres lieux necessaires pour vne basse court.”*¹

Obviously this is the general picture which Forbes of Tolquhon and Ogilvie of Boyne, according to their much humbler resources, were striving to reproduce in their northern mansions. It is also the type of structure which the Earl of Atholl erected in timber for James V during his celebrated hunting in Atholl in 1531, so quaintly described by Pitscottie:²

“This nobill Earle of Atholl gart mak ane curieous palice to the king and to his mother and to the ambassadour quhair they war honourabill ludgit as they had ben in England France Itallie and Spaine ffor thair huntingt and pastyme quhilk was buildit in the midis of ane fair medow ane faire palice of greine tymmer wond witht birkis that war grein batht wnder and abone, quhilk was fesnitt in foure quarteris and everie quarter and nuike thair of are greit round as it had bene ane blokhuse quhilk was loftit and iestit [joisted] the space of thrie house hight; the fluir laid witht greine cherittis [sods] witht sprattis [rushes] medwartis [meadow-sweet] and flouris. Then no man knew quhairon he zeid bot as he had bene in ane gardin. Farder thair was tua great

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, fol. 7.

² *Historie and Cronicles of Scolland*, ed. A. J. G. Mackay, I, 335-6.

roundis in ilk syde of the zeit and ane greit porteculis of trie falland doune the maner of ane barrace witht ane greit draw brege, and ane great fowsie [fosse] and strak [stretch] of watter of sextene foot deipe and xxx futte braid of watter and also this palice withtin was weill syllit [ceiled] and hung witht fyne tapistrie and arrasis of silk, and sett and lightit witht fyne glassin wondowis in all airttis so that this palice was allis pleisantlie decoirit witht all necessaris pertenant to ane prince as it had bene his awin palice royall at hame."

The other type of plan recognised by du Cerceau is called by him the plan "*tout vne masse*." It is illustrated by La Murette, the famous hunting-box erected by François I in the Bois de Boulogne (Pl. XV). This remarkable structure was begun in 1541. Du Cerceau gives its plan, and describes it¹ as "*n'estant qu'vne masse, accompagnée de quatre quadres, autrement pavillons, és coings*." He thus divides the structure into a *corps de milieu* and *les quatre quadres*. There is here no central corridor to take the place of the courtyard in the other scheme: but the *grande salle*, occupying one-half of the *corps de logis*, serves this purpose, linking up the chambers in the rest of the *corps de milieu* and the *quadres*.

At Maune in Burgundy²—"le tout n'est qu'vne masse"—the plan is irregularly pentagonal, but the lodgings are arranged round a central *salle* or corridor in the middle of which is the great stair. The basic resemblance here to our Drochil plan is quite distinct.

The Château de Chaluau, another hunting-box of François I, near Fontainebleau, shows an even closer approximation.³ "*Ce bastiment n'est qu'vn corps, ayant quatre pavillons aux quatre coings*." A central corridor divides the hall and solar from the bedrooms, just as at Drochil: "*vne allée, qui a iour des deux bouts, laquelle faict separation entre la salle & la chambre*." Only here the entrance is at right angles, not at one end of the corridor: though the latter has in fact a postern or side-gate at either end, so that in this respect the plan (Pl. XVI) closely resembles Drochil.

Thus we come to Chenonceaux, a far more famous building than those we have been discussing. Du Cerceau describes it in the following terms:—⁴

"*Ce bastiment . . . n'est qu'vne masse, sans court, couvert toutesfois de diverses separations de pavillons. . . . On entre dans le logis à vne allée, faisant separation du corps du bastiment en deux dont chacun costé est bien et suffisamment jouny de membres necessaires pour vn tel lieu*."

This is the plan of Drochil, save that Chenonceaux has a tower at all four corners (fig. 2). Also at Chenonceaux the stair is at right angles to the central corridor, as at Chaluau, instead of at one end of it, as at Drochil. Chenonceaux dates from before 1521, and as to the historical significance of its plan, Sir Reginald Blomfield has written in the following terms:—⁵

¹ *Op. cit.*, I, fol. 6r.

² *Op. cit.*, I, fol. 7v.

³ *Op. cit.*, II, fol. 6v.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, II, fol. 5r.

⁵ *A History of French Architecture* (1494-1661), I, 70.

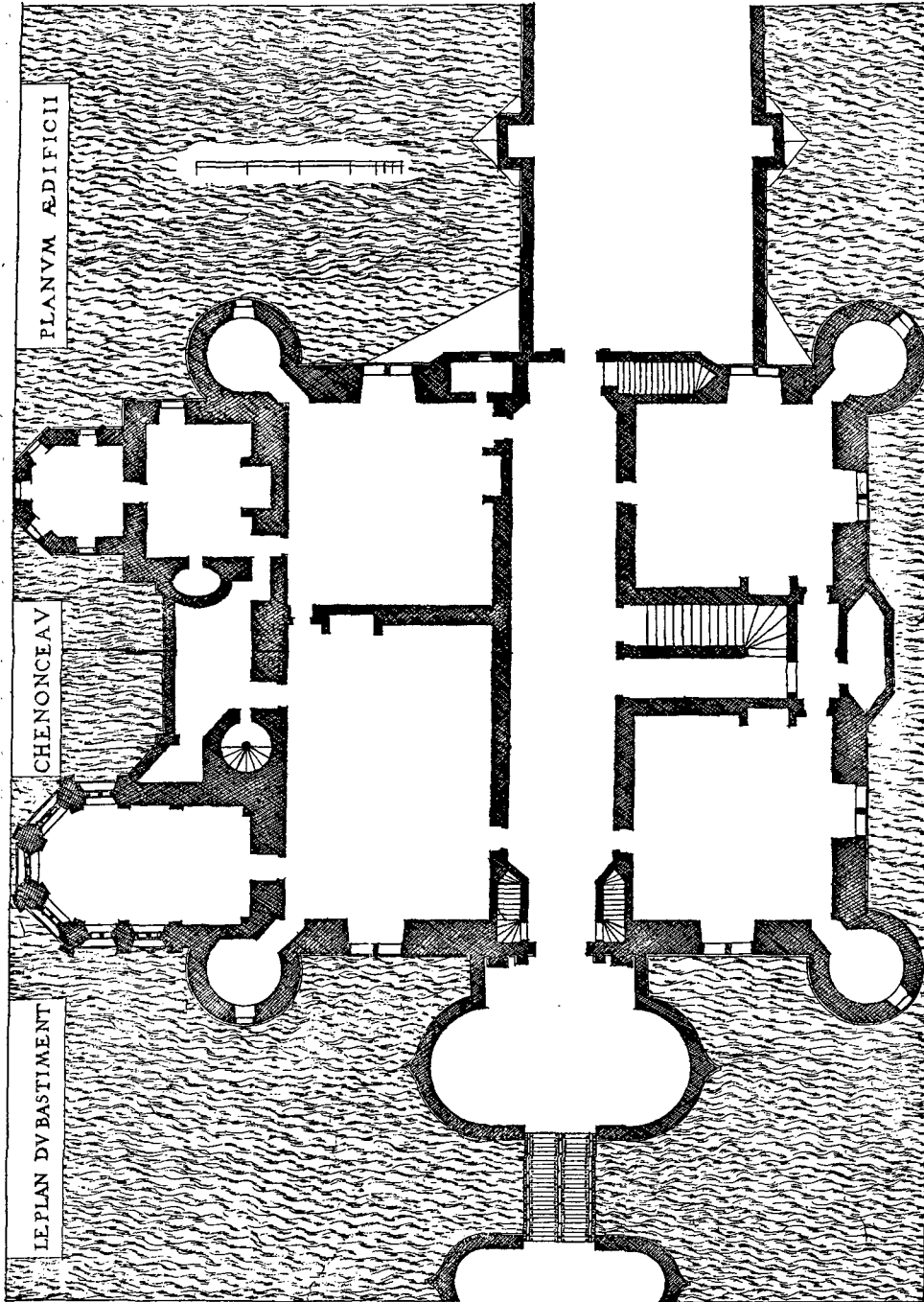


Fig. 2. Du Cerceau's plan of Chenonceaux.

"A careful examination of the buildings erected in France in the first half of the sixteenth century leads to the conclusion that the positive contribution of that age to architecture was small. No tradition of Neo-Classicism has as yet established itself, and the direct interposition of the amateur had the usual result of withdrawing attention from the essential qualities of architecture, and concentrating all the skill and craftsmanship available on detail of a peculiarly meaningless kind. The only advance, so far, was made in house-planning. The fortified house was abandoned, and the usual arrangement in large houses was the courtyard plan, with sides of single thickness, access from room to room on the upper floors, and an open cloister or arcade on the ground floor. An attempt was made to obviate the inconvenience of going from room to room by means of newel staircases in several parts of the building, but servants must have spent most of their time on the stairs, and a real advance was made with the development of the plan *tout vne masse*, as Du Cerceau calls it, that is, a plan which grouped rooms on either side of corridors, as at Chenonceaux and Chambord. Bohier's building at Chenonceaux is, in the main lines of its plan, viz. a central corridor with rooms on either side, very similar to that of Martainville, built some forty years before, and the latter house is, in spite of its Gothic detail, the real starting-point of modern domestic planning in France. Indeed, the fact that no very notable advance was made on this plan for the next three generations, and that Du Cerceau, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, should have considered a plan *tout vne masse* as remarkable, shows how exclusively the attention of builders and their patrons was concentrated on ornament."

So we get back to Martainville as the original of our Drochil plan. This fine brick château, near Rouen, was begun in 1485 by Le Pellatier, a merchant of that city. Its plan¹ is in all essentials that of Drochil. A central corridor, with the main newel stair at its far end, divides the house into two tenements, one of which contains the great hall. At Martainville, however, the normal French arrangement of a round gunlooped tower at all four corners is found. The Scottish architect, with his canny scheme of setting two towers *en échelon*, so that they can do the work of four in enfilading all four quarters of the main building, has improved upon his French prototype.

The plan *tout vne masse* reaches its climax in the donjon of Chambord. Here there are two central corridors, intersecting at right angles, with the great stair at the point of junction. We have thus four suites of apartments, each with a round tower. Du Cerceau's description shows how clearly he had apprehended the *rationale* of the plan:²

"*La commodité du dedans a esté ordonnée avec raison & sçavoir. Car au milieu & centre est vn escallier à deux montees, percé à iour, & entour iceluy quatre salles, dèsquelles l'on va de l'une à l'autre, en le circuissant. Aux quatre encoigneures d'entre chaque salle y a vn pavillon, garny de chambre, garderobbe, cabinet & montee. Plus és quatre coings de la masse de tout le bastiment se voyent quatre grosses tours, garnies à chascun estage de toutes commoditez, comme chambre, garderobbe, priuee, cabinets, & montee.*"

¹ See Arch. J., xcv, 394, and pl. x, B; also Claude Sauvage, *Palais, Châteaux, Hôtels et Maisons de France, du XV^e au XVIII^e Siècle*, iv, 85-93.

² *Op. cit.*, i, fol. 7r.

There can be little doubt that the plan of Chambord is derived, by a further stage of development, from that of Chenonceaux. A leading modern French authority puts the case thus:¹

“ Construit sur les piles d’un moulin, le château de Thomas Bohier ne pouvait être que ce qu’il est: une masse de maçonnerie sans cour intérieure. Ses bâtisseurs ont distribué les appartements, le plus simplement du monde, de part et d’autre d’un couloir central, et comme, par une innovation chez nous sans précédent, ils adoptaient pour l’escalier le type italien à rampes droites, ils ont très naturellement disposé cet escalier perpendiculairement au couloir central et en son milieu. Chenonceaux s’est donc trouvé présenter un plan en T, qui a été repris dans le projet initial de Chambord en le modifiant à peine: un vestibule d’entrée fut ajouté devant l’escalier droit et dans son axe. Il a suffi par la suite de substituer à cet escalier droit une vis centrale pour obtenir, sans l’avoir cherché, la fameuse disposition cruciforme qui fait une des originalités de Chambord.”

Our inquiry has thus shown that the plan of Drochil Castle is of French origin. In Scotland it seems to be unique. Castle Lachlan, which appears to resemble Drochil when its plan is looked at on paper, is not a parallel, since the central alley is not a corridor, but a narrow close open to the sky.² In the upper two floors of Spedlin’s Tower, however, as reconstructed in 17th cent., the scheme of a central corridor between the tenements, and a stair at one end, much as at Drochil, was adopted.

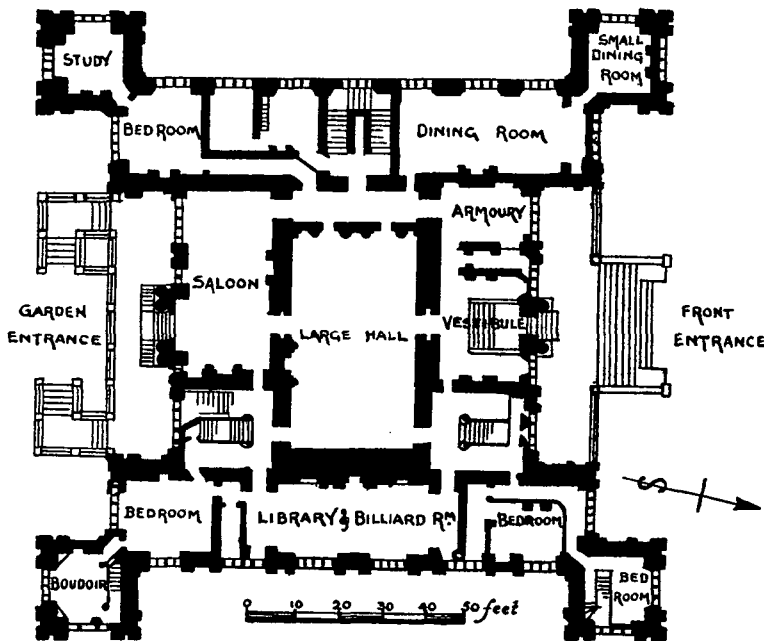
England possesses a remarkable example of the plan *tout une masse* in Wollaton Hall, near Nottingham, the magnificent mansion erected by Sir Francis Welloughby between 1580 and 1588. A ground plan and part elevation appears among John Thorpe’s drawings, and there is every reason to acclaim him as the architect (fig. 3).³ Even at this late date the scheme of the house betrays a curious, and evidently a deliberate, harking back to medieval ideas. It consists, as it were, of a central square “keep,” surrounded by four “corps de logis” with square angle towers. But there is no internal courtyard: the whole building is solid, and the “keep” is raised above a large central hall, round which the living apartments are grouped. This hall is carried up to a height of 53 ft., and its windows are kept high (35 ft. above the floor!), with plunged soles, like the windows of a clearstorey, in order to overlook the two-storeyed rooms by which the hall is enclosed. In fact, the hall is well on the way to becoming nothing more than a magnificent vestibule; and although in Thorpe’s design it was still intended for banquetting or as a ballroom, and was entered at the lower end, through a screen under a music gallery in the traditional way, yet the vestibular conception, so strongly suggested by the lay-out, received full acknowledgment in Sir Jeffrey Wyatville’s alterations, whereby the hall has been provided with doors set centrally, one in the middle of each side. From the hall, in the original scheme, doors admitted to the apartments all round, and also to

¹ F. Gebelin, *Les Châteaux de la Renaissance*, p. 17.

² M. & R., *op. cit.*, III, 357-63.

³ See discussion of the question by Mr J. A. Gotch in *Memorials of Old Nottinghamshire*.

a stately stair by which the upper storeys of the mansion were reached. The hammer-beam construction of the hall roof is another medieval survival, though it is here tricked out in the garb of the Renaissance. Medievalism also is subtly apparent in the external features of the house: for whereas the "corps de logis" or lower portions are carried out in the aggressive, over-decorated quasi-classical style in vogue at the time, the upper portions of the "keep" are pierced with large bastard Gothic windows, and at its four



S.G.W.

Fig. 3. Ground plan of Wollaton Hall.

corners are corbelled angle turrets quite in the Gothic fashion. Medievalism also rears its head, even more surprisingly, in a well-secured prison in the basement, and the rock-hewn subterranean cellarage reminds one perfectly of the gloomy vaulted fastnesses of a feudal castle.

Mr Gotch remarks of Wollaton Hall that "its plan places it in a category almost by itself."¹ Mr Avray Tipping labours to explain it as an elaboration of "the complete and typical H-shaped Elizabethan house plan."² To Mr Nathaniel Lloyd it is just "a freak house."³ All this puzzlement is simply due to the fact that the plan has not been recognised for what it is—

¹ *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*, p. 92.

² *English Homes*, Period III, i, 184.

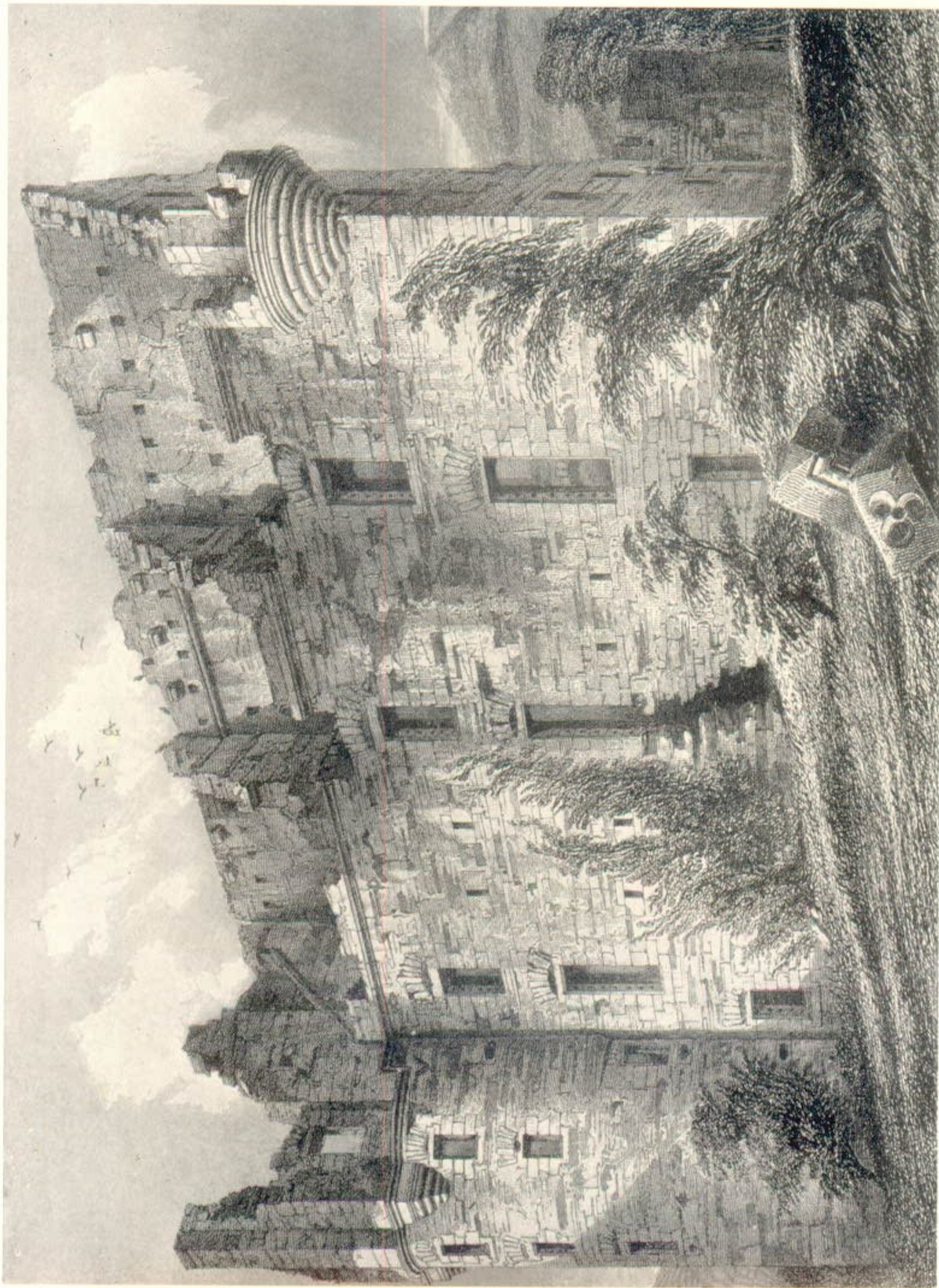
³ *A History of the English House*, p. 67.

an example, perhaps unique in England, of the French plan *tout vne masse*. Thorpe unquestionably got the idea from du Cerceau's book, of which his album betrays close study.

Who was the architect of Drochil Castle? I think it is possible to offer at least a guess.

Messrs MacGibbon and Ross have pointed out the resemblance that exists between architectural details of Renaissance style at Drochil Castle and at Aberdour Castle, both built by the Regent Morton, and in the port-cullised gateway, likewise Morton's work, at Edinburgh Castle. Morton's operations at Edinburgh Castle also included the Half Moon Battery. The stylistic resemblances warrant the inference that the Regent employed the same architect on all three buildings, and it is obvious that he must have been a "deviser" of the first calibre. Drochil Castle has always given me the impression of a young man's work. The design, it seems to me, kicks up its heels with all the *élan* and abandon of youth. From 1583 until his death in 1602, James the Sixth's Master of Works in Scotland was William Schaw, an architect and man of affairs of the highest distinction, much trusted by the King and Queen in many confidential transactions, and the promulgator in 1598 of the Schaw Statutes, so celebrated in the history of Scottish freemasonry. He was Master of Work at Stirling Castle in 1585 and at Dunfermline in 1590, where he rebuilt the Queen's jointure house and restored the Abbey, in which his stately tomb remains. Thereon he is described as *architecturæ peritissimus principibus* and elsewhere his style is *regius architectus*. Obviously he was a practising architect in the modern sense, and not a master of works of the medieval pattern. Appointed royal master of works in 1583, at the age of thirty-three, he must already have reached a leading position in his profession, and it is therefore very probable that he may have been employed in a similar capacity by the Regent Morton. He was certainly attached to the Court as early as 1580, when he signed the national covenant as a member of the royal household. His epitaph tells us that "he had travelled in France and many other Kingdoms for the improvement of his mind." The Renaissance details at Drochil, Aberdour and Edinburgh Castles are such as might well have been copied from French models. And we have seen that the Drochil plan, *tout vne masse*, is undoubtedly French. While proof is entirely lacking, I am inclined to suspect, for the foregoing reasons, that in William Schaw we may salute the architect of Drochil Castle.

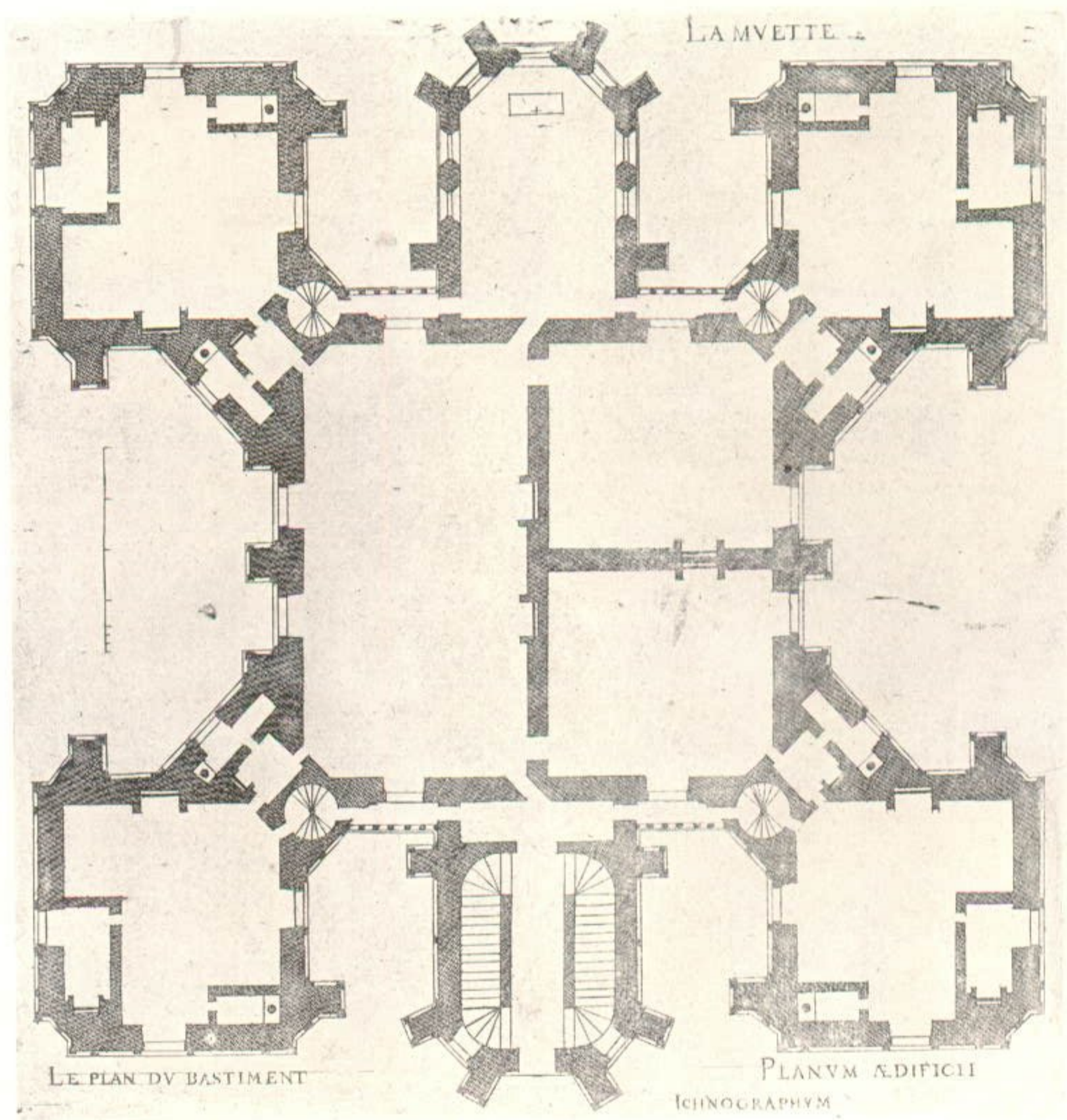
It is a pleasure to acknowledge my obligation to Mr William Johnston, Drochil Castle Farm, who kindly provided facilities for examining the ruins.



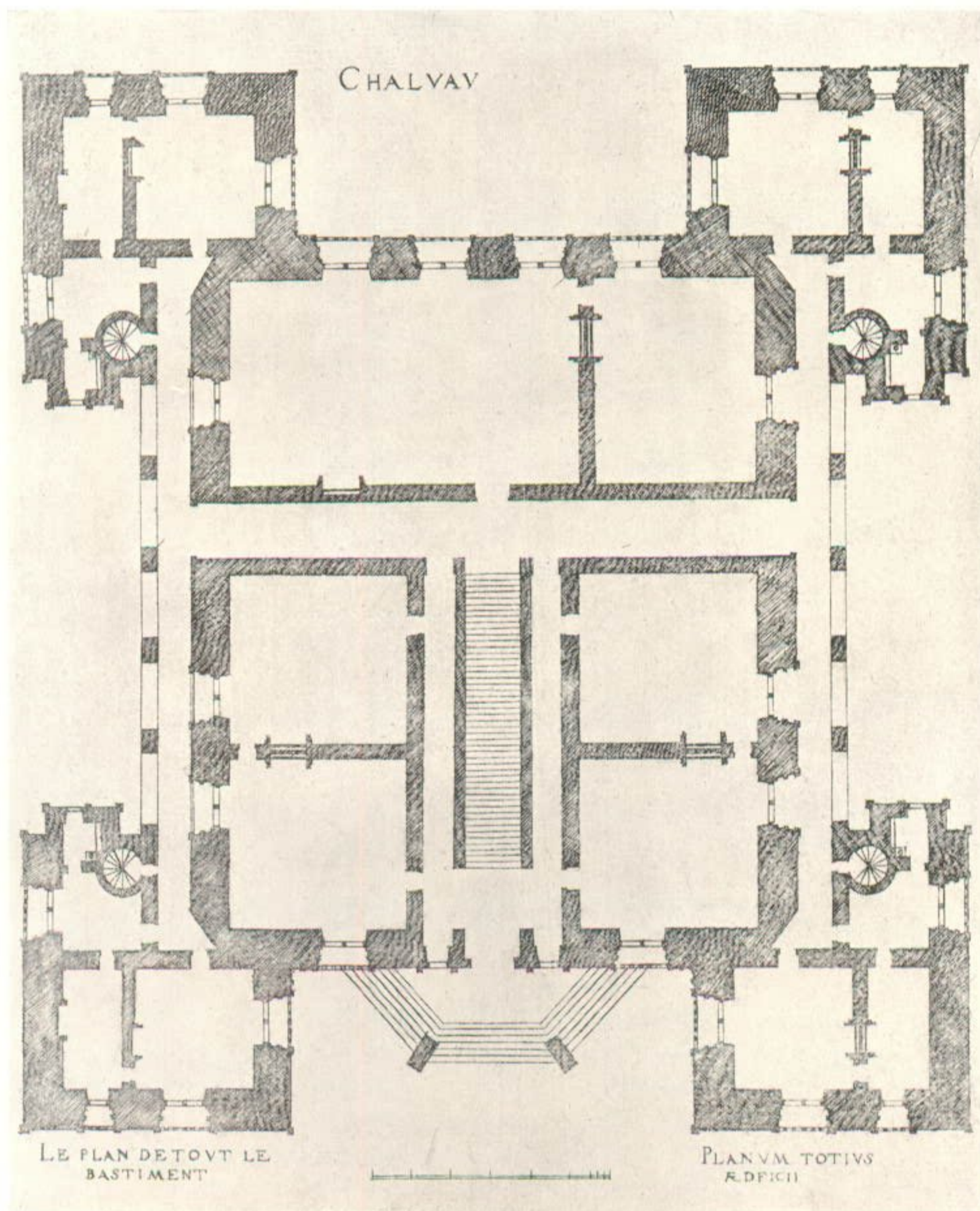
Drochil Castle: view from S. E. (after R. W. Billings).

W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON.

[To face p. 80.



Du Cerceau's plan of La Muette.



Du Cerceau's plan of Chaluau.