Scottish Catholic Material Culture in the Early-Modern Period

Some important distinctions have to be made as a prologue to any study of Scottish Roman Catholic culture after Scotland's comparatively late Protestant Reformation in 1560. Scottish law and governance was wholly separate from that of England until the accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England in 1603. The classic (and perhaps still widely accepted) narrative of the Scottish Reformation is of a Calvinist movement far more popular and universal than in England. To some extent this view, as expressed by the magisterial twentieth century *Edinburgh History of Scotland,* and particularly in Professor Gordon Donaldson's sixteenth and seventeenth century third volume[1], has been less questioned subsequently than might have been expected in the light of parallel developments in English historiography.[2] Unlike England and Wales, where pockets of Roman Catholic resistance and recusancy were comparatively broadly spread across the more remote areas, however many reservations about the Calvinist revolution may have been held in private, especially by the court elite of the Scottish lowlands[3] (which is to say broadly the area north of the English border and south of the highland geological fault, encompassing the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, the royal towns of Stirling, Dunfermline and Linlithgow, and the university city of St Andrews) the Calvinist church was publicly triumphant there. Matters were very different in the territory defined by the former Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen (the shires of Aberdeen, Banff, and much of Moray) where the power of Catholic magnates and a local determination to keep the peace within the community seem to have joined with a lukewarm enthusiasm for reform to enable a discreet but consistent maintenance of Catholic worship and culture.[4] This was not just a matter of the power of the Catholic Earls of Huntly, or of the considerable financial support available to a Catholic mission from Catholic families of mercenary soldiers on the continent, especially

[1] Gordon Donaldson, *The Edinburgh History of Scotland,* 3*,Scotland: James V to James VII* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965). A detailed description of the religious position of late sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland is found in Jane Stevenson's essay in this volume, xx-xx.

[2] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars, Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) has prompted a considerable revision of ecclesiastical and cultural history for England; it would be fair and accurate to say that no parallel development has been visible in Scotland, despite individual articles and studies.

[3] Peter Davidson, 'Alexander Seton, First Earl of Dunfermline: his Library, his House, his World', *British Catholic History*, 32:3 May 2015) 315-342.

[4] Margaret H. B. Sanderson, "Catholic recusancy in Scotland in the sixteenth century," *The Innes Review*, 21.2 (1970), 87-107, 88-9. Given that oaths were only locally and sporadically enforced, the term 'recusancy' is intensely problematic for Scotland.

the Leslies[5], it also reflected the lasting success of the reform-from-within carried through by the Bishop of Aberdeen at the turn of the sixteenth century, William Elphinstone (1431-1514). [6] It is therefore with the north-eastern counties that almost all of this account of Scottish Catholic material culture will concern itself, bearing in mind that in this region the town councils, kirk sessions, and rural magnates were often unable or reluctant to enforce Protestant conformity, and as a result a more lasting and visible Catholic material culture can be traced after the Reformation than has hitherto been attempted.

It is of particular interest to look at material culture in the context of Scotland, in that it is still widely believed that almost nothing survived Presbyterian iconoclasm, and that the post-Reformation climate would have been so hostile to any attempts at Catholic revival that nothing would have been created by or for the Catholic community. This was demonstrably not the case, particularly in the northern counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Moray.

Accordingly, this chapter proceeds by considering representative specimens of Catholic material culture which have survived: architecture; painted decoration; descriptions of lost decoration; books and manuscripts; objects, salvaged and created. So little has been written about this topic, that no apology is offered for a descriptive and documentary approach. A tentative conclusion is offered that the aesthetic choices of this Catholic community under penalty seem to reflect an acute awareness of the past of the region, especially a retrospectively-perceived golden age of revitalised Catholicism at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The survival of so much is remarkable, given the ferocity of Scottish Reformation rhetoric: to some degree, the policy of the authorities seemed to have been to ignore those regions where they failed to enforce conformity. To some degree Scottish historiography, despite notable recent exceptions, has followed suit in ignoring the dissident and conservative north-east of the country. The refusal of Walter Scott to engage with the north-eastern counties in his vastly influential Scottish historical novels, except for the appearance of a melodramatic caricature of a Catholic landowner

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[5] David Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618-1648* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Alexia Grosjean and Steve Murdoch, *Alexander Leslie and the Scottish generals of the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

[6] Leslie Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland, 1431-1514* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985).

in *The Antiquary* (itself a fiction obsessed with mis-readings of the material remains of the past) is both symptomatic and fascinating[7].

1. Conn-type tower houses in North-East Scotland.

In the north-east of Scotland there survives a stylistically-unified group of gentry houses, all documented as having been built for Catholic families by one family of masons and designers. The families which owned these houses were also at the centre of a lively and international nexus of Catholic writers, intellectuals and soldiers. This chapter therefore begins with a detailed study of these buildings, since they have never before been documented in detail, and in that they constitute perhaps the most substantial survival of the sixteenth-century Catholic built environment anywhere in Britain.

The Conn group of tower-houses are a product of distinctive local circumstances. In Scotland the gradual progression of the Reformation which had begun long before the official break with Rome in 1560 resulted in the dispersal of church lands to the laity. Throughout the country, however, Presbyterian worship was received with varying degrees of acceptance, many land-owners only paying lip-service and continuing to adhere to their Catholic faith in private, while others felt strong enough to reject it openly. Such a desperately unsettled situation encouraged both Catholic and Protestant landowners to engage in a major programme of building defensive houses – the characteristic Scottish tower-houses – not just to stamp their authority on their lands but in many cases to protect themselves, their families and their chief followers from their neighbours.

. In 1929 Dr Douglas Simpson identified four Aberdeenshire tower-houses – Craig, Gight, Delgatie and Towie Barclay – all of which had been built for Catholic families *c.* 1550-80 and which, through close similarities of plan and detail, he could confidently attribute to a single master-mason.[8]

In the first volume of *Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, published in 1875, the antiquarian Andrew Jervise recorded a local tradition that Delgatie had been built by the first of the Conns of Auchry

[7] Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (Edinburgh: Archibald Contable, 1816).
[8] W. Douglas Simpson, "Craig Castle and the Kirk of Auchindoir" in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 6,4 (Edinburgh: The Society of Antiquaries, 1929-30), 48-96. More recently, Joachim Zeune in *The Last Scottish Castles* (Rahden/Westfalen: V.M.L. Verlag Marie Leidorf, 1992) has questioned Simpson's dating of these tower-houses, dismissing their armorials as later décor. As will be shown here, however, their Catholic builders had compelling reasons to adhere to earlier and more defensible tower-house plan-types.

who was himself a minor Catholic land-owner, part of his lands having apparently been acquired from the Hays of Delgatie in payment for its building.[9] Information on the early Conns of Auchry (a sept, or sub-division, of the Clan MacDonald) is very sketchy, and Jervise does not even give the first Conn's forename. Professor Charles MacKean conjectured two generations of Alexanders, but William Conn – who also seems to have been a master-mason – is first mentioned in a bond of 1552, and held the lands of Auchry, in the intensely Catholic territory around Turriff in Aberdeenshire, by 1564. He died in or shortly before 1580 and was succeeded by his son Patrick who may or may not have been a master-mason; Patrick was amongst those who fought with the Catholic Earls of Erroll and Huntly in their famous victory over the Protestant Earl of Argyll at Glenlivet in 1594. He married Isabella Cheyne of Esslemont and was the father of George Conn (d. 1640) the scholar-priest who was an important figure at the court of Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, during the years 1636-39 but who spent most of his life in Italy. There must, however, have been other Conns over several generations who either worked in the family firm or perhaps set up in business on their own.

Of Simpson's four tower-houses, ***Craig Castle*** built by a branch of the Gordons is much the best preserved, having survived virtually unaltered. It is a very tall L-plan, its harled rubble walls rising with a slight taper for 40 feet above the ground. Its windows are so small that it is practically impossible to discern the three main storeys of accommodation which are inside. Above the severely plain wallhead parapets is an attic "cap-house," but either during construction or very shortly afterwards its roof has been swept over the wall-walks on each side to rest on the parapets, the openings or "crenels" of which have been subsequently glazed. This was a French rather than a Scottish arrangement, designed to shelter the tower's defenders and to keep the wallheads dry.

From every aspect Craig does indeed present itself as a massively strong defensive shell. Its doorway within the angle of the L-plan is well protected by shot-holes at ground floor and first floor. Above the doorway are three heraldic panels, that in the centre which bears the Royal

[9] Jervise provided no references, and without documentary support Simpson seems to have been doubtful of his attribution of Delgatie to the Conns. But there is corroborative evidence: the very distinctive form of the dovecot at Delgatie is exactly paralleled by that at Auchry. The Conns' Red Castle at Auchry is long gone. Alexander Conn himself was supposedly shot dead, from a considerable distance across the Burn of Monquhitter, by his neighbour Mowat of Balquholly while standing within his own front doorway. The attribution of Craigston Castle to Conn, also recorded by Jervise, appears much less likely, but it may refer to a predecessor house. The present house seems never to have corresponded to those which we shall be discussing here.

Arms probably both a declaration of loyalty to Queen Mary and to signify that the Gordons held their land from the crown directly, without any feudal superior between them.

Craig's walls are a massive 7 feet thick, and like most tower-houses of its time all its ground-floor rooms have been vaulted to limit the risk of its being set on fire. Immediately within the doorway, a single-bay rib-vault forms a vestibule. Its central boss displays the Royal Arms, and of the four corbels supporting the ribs that on the north-west is carved with the Gordon arms and the initials V.G. for William Gordon, while that on the south-west is carved with the *Arma Christi*, seemingly an invocation of Divine protection against attackers, as well as a signifier of Catholic loyalties.[10]

Access to the upper floors is by a turnpike staircase 9 feet in diameter. Unlike most other North-East towers of this vintage, the turnpike does not rise solely to the first (or principal) floor, with a separate smaller turnpike rising to the upper storeys; instead, the main turnpike continues without any interruption through the whole height of the house. Before the first-floor hall was horizontally divided by the insertion of an additional storey during the eighteenth century it was of substantial height. Originally there was a mezzanine level within the thickness of the wall at its north end with an arched opening which looked out over the hall. This is now enclosed within the later refitting, but during the Reformation it served as an oratory. With its curtains closed it could discreetly serve the needs of the immediate Gordon family, or with them open, a priest could celebrate the Mass before a much larger congregation standing in the hall beneath.

Towie Barclay Castle was built for the Barclay family.[11] Like Craig it is an L-plan, but during the 1790s its height was reduced to just two storeys, and the short wing or "jamb" of the L was truncated. The fundamentals of its plan are, however, the same as Craig's. Its splendid first-floor hall is the only one of Simpson's group which has survived substantially intact and unaltered. This hall is double-height and vaulted in two compartments: the boss of the north compartment at the "high" end displays the Royal Arms, and that of the south compartment at the "low" end displays the Barclay Arms. The gallery running across the south window has clearly been used as an oratory, the four corbels which support the ribs of its vault having been decorated with emblems of the Evangelists while the central boss displays the *Arma Christi*,

[10] See Penelope Dransart, "*Arma Christi* in the Tower Households of North-Eastern Scotland" in Richard Oram (ed.), *A House that Thieves May Knock at* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2015).
[11] The ancestors of Field Marshall Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly (1761-1818), Czar Alexander I's Minister of War during the Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812 and the War of the Sixth Coalition, 1812-14.

the Five Wounds of Christ. The altar *mensa* still survives and faces east. Patrick Barclay suffered for his longstanding adherence to Queen Mary, and the much-eroded inscription over the castle's entrance once read "In tim of valth al men sim friendly – an frind is not knawin but in adversity."

Gight Castle is ruinous, only its ground floor and parts of its first and second floors surviving, but it was once much the largest of Simpson's group. The entrance, in the same position as those at Craig and Towie, again opens into a single-bay rib-vaulted vestibule. The central boss behind the doorway is carved with Symbols of the Passion – the Five Wounds, the Crown of Thorns, the Ladder, Hammer, Nails, Reed and Spear. Although the first-floor hall is now very incomplete, it had a simple vault and – it would seem – an oratory gallery like those at Craig and Towie running across its west window. In 1564 Gordon of Schivas and Gight was charged with "hurting and wounding" Master William Conn of Auchry, perhaps in relation to a dispute over contracts or delays.[12]

The fate of ***Delgatie Castle***, much reconstructed and now the massively tall centrepiece of a rather larger house, demonstrates that the fears of its Catholic builders were entirely justified. Delgatie was built by George Hay, 7th Earl of Erroll, probably between 1570 and 1579. Here again the L-plan followed the familiar pattern, but with a longer wing or jamb and a more architectural treatment as befitted a nobleman. As in the other houses the original entrance (which has here been concealed by later additions) opens into a rib-vaulted vestibule and a corridor with an exceptionally broad turnpike stair at its far end rising undiminished through the full height of the tower. A more detailed examination of the L-plan structure, however, reveals some very striking anomalies. Although the walls of both the main block and the wing or jamb are consistently 7 feet thick at ground floor, and within the jamb remain so all the way up to the corbelled wallhead parapet, the west flank of the main block at first floor and above is only 3 feet thick and rises into a simple roof without any parapet whatsoever: it is thus not nearly so defensible. Furthermore, the walls of the jamb are slightly intaken above the first-floor vaulting, whereas those of the main block rise absolutely sheer.

From this it is evident that the main block has been substantially rebuilt, and that the later construction was inferior. Its fabric thus appears to confirm the Hay family tradition that after

[12] M.R. Apted and Susan Hannabuss, *Painters in Scotland, 1301-1700: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1978), 64-65: John Melvil summoned by the Presbytery of Aberdeen for making "ane Crucifix at the burial of the Lady of Gicht," suggesting that there were painters operating in the region and circles defined by this group of Conn tower-houses.

his defeat by the Earls of Erroll and Huntly at Glenlivet in 1594, the Earl of Argyll laid siege to Delgatie for six weeks, eventually bombarding it with cannon which he was obliged to ship north from Leith and then transport for a considerable distance inland. Tradition further relates that the Earl of Erroll being absent when the siege began, the castle garrison was commanded by his nineteen-year old daughter (or perhaps his mistress?) Rohaise; Rohaise and her followers are said to have escaped when the castle collapsed by means of a secret passage which may still survive, there being a heavy flagstone with a ring-pull at the foot of the stairs. After Mary's son King James VI made his peace with the rebels in 1597 the Earl of Erroll was allowed to rebuild Delgatie, but not so strong that it might resist another siege. Whether the upper levels of the turnpike stair date from the 1570s or from the reconstruction in the late 1590s is uncertain, but its remarkable 12 feet diameter makes it one of the largest in Scotland and places it almost on a par with the much more famous stair at Fyvie Castle built *c.* 1599-1603. The solar within the jamb retains its rib-vault and the hall was probably vaulted like those of Gight and Towie; although vaults strengthen a solid structure particularly against the threat of being set on fire, the effects of Delgatie's being shaken down during the bombardment must have been absolutely devastating.

At Delgatie the rib-vaulted oratory gallery still survives, but both its opening into the hall and its window have long since been blocked up. Unlike those at Craig, Towie and probably at Gight, however, it is not in one of the hall's end-gables but rather at the centre of the hall's east flank and within the angle of the L-plan, a position from which it was equally accessible from the main stair. It is the only surviving oratory to be correctly orientated east-west; and the arrangement of the congregation sitting or standing longitudinally (*i.e.*, lengthwise rather than depthwise) within the hall would have ensured that no-one was too far back from the Celebration of the Mass to see clearly, even if their view were an oblique one. The oratory's sacrament house, a small pointed-arch recess finely carved with stone curtains draped back, has been reset as a cupboard or aumbry within "Queen Mary's Room."

Although not discussed by Simpson in the context of these four houses, the similarity of the hall at ***Balbegno*** in Kincardineshire, built for John Wood and Elizabeth Irvine sometime before 1569, to the hall at Towie Barclay has long been recognized. It is of almost exactly the same dimensions, and more particularly its vaulting is constructed in the same French rather than English manner, the masonry webs or infill being laid consistently parallel to the central and transverse ribs. The oratory at Balbegno is no longer visible but it retains a relocated sacrament house with carved stone curtains similar to that at Delgatie. While the involvement of the

Conns thus seems certain, Balbegno, although an L-plan, is fundamentally different from the Simpson group in that its stair has always been within the angle formed between the main block and the jamb. It is not at the back wall in the junction of the main block and the jamb as in other houses of the Conn plan-type.[13]

Fedderate, however, while not exactly corresponding to the Simpson group, does seems to have been very closely related. Built for the Crawfords in 1557 it survives only in fragmentary condition now, but it was well recorded in the nineteenth century by the artist James Giles and by David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross.[14] Within the L-plan the turnpike stair was in the same position as those of the Simpson group, and rose through the full height of the structure. The oratory appears to have been in the hall's south-west gable next to the stair but by 1887 the gable had fallen. The key difference at Fedderate was that the entrance was not within the angle, but instead within the long wall formed by the main block and the jamb, opening onto the stair directly. There must have been some reason for this since it was not such a secure arrangement in defensive terms, the access to the upper floors being much more vulnerable.

Craigievar Castle is one of the most celebrated of all Scottish tower-houses. Its present picturesque appearance dates from 1626 when it was remodelled with the distinctive upper-works characteristic of the Bell family of master-masons for the Baltic merchant William Forbes, the son of a noted Protestant family. However the house as first built in the later sixteenth century has been identified by Ian Bryce as a smaller example of a Conn-type L-plan tower-house built for the Catholic Mortimers who were obliged to sell their estate in 1610.[15] Craigievar's main block is smaller than those of Simpson's group, and as such it is particularly interesting since it illustrates a developing expertise in the tighter planning of smaller tower-houses. The short wing or jamb is offset to give more wall-space for windows and to encompass the projection of the stair which has been in the usual Conn position, a further outshot on the north front accommodating the hearth of the kitchen. The vault of the first-floor great hall is – uniquely – a groin rather than a barrel vault, its masonry now concealed by magnificent Forbes Renaissance plasterwork. As in the larger Conn houses the hall at

[13] The building history of Balbegno is a complex subject which falls outside the scope of this chapter. It should be noted, however, that the walls are not intaken above the first-floor vaulting and only the jamb has a parapet. As Balbegno has a remarkable resemblance to Monymusk as first built (Monymusk was recorded by the early eighteenth-century architect Alexander Jaffray) its design would appear to have been changed during the course of construction. Whilst not specifically Catholic its external sculpture is of extraordinary interest, as is the painted armorial of its vault commemorating those who engineered the downfall of the Regent Morton in 1581.

[14] As authors of *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1887-92): see 1, 357.

[15] Ian B.D. Bryce, "Craigievar: A Fresh Look at Scotland's Premier Tower House" in *Architectural Heritage XI* (Edinburgh: E.U.P., 2000), 1-11.

Craigievar originally had an oratory gallery. This was correctly orientated, extending across the hall's east-end window and accessed from the turnpike stair rising between the main block and the jamb. It was destroyed when the window was deepened in 1826, but clear evidence of it has been preserved within the fabric.

As first built, all of the Conn-type tower-houses of the mid-to-later sixteenth century were remarkable in still being fifteenth-century in their concept and appearance. They had parapet walks and cap-houses at a time when simple roofs with dormer-headed windows and angle-turrets were beginning to become the norm. Their very conservative and robust construction reflects the continuing need for defensive structures for even the most powerful Catholic land-owners. Delgatie seems to have been the finest of them, as befitted an Earl, in having corbelled parapets executed in polished ashlar masonry and open turrets (or "bartizans") at the angles. Its jamb survives intact and gives the best impression of what Gight and Towie Barclay must once have looked like when they were first completed.

But where did the Conns learn the business of building? Their plan-types are unique in the North-East of Scotland and comparisons are not easily found beyond it; and nowhere else except at Schivas[16] do we find their elevated oratory galleries, all the other surviving examples being at floor-level. These oratories were clearly designed for more than family use, positioned so that servants and tenants could attend the Mass, an important consideration if their parish church were by then in reformed hands. In the words of Stewart Cruden, "Nowhere else does the Gothic spirit communicate itself so unambiguously as at Towie Barclay."[17] The origins of the Conns' plan-type with the turnpike stair against the long wall at the junction of the main block and the jamb can be traced back to Neidpath in Peebles-shire where the entrance for good defensive reasons adjoins the stair, as at Fedderate. The *Inventory* of Peebles-shire compiled by the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland ascribes Neidpath to the late fourteenth century, more than a century earlier than the Conn houses.[18] Rather closer to the usual Conn arrangement is the late fifteenth-century tower-house nucleus of Craigmillar where, however, there are three separate turnpike stairs which between them rise from storey to storey through the full height of the house, probably to confuse and disorientate intruders. Almond Castle, Stirlingshire, which was built at the same date as Craigmillar or perhaps slightly earlier, is also similar but there the entrance is at first floor, an

[16] Also in Aberdeenshire; almost certainly the work of Thomas Leiper, *c.* 1585.
[17] Stewart Cruden, *The Scottish Castle: Studies in History and Archaeology* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1960), 166.
[18] R.C.A.H.M.S., *Peeblesshire: An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments* (H.M.S.O., 1967), 2, 243-61.

arrangement which the Conns consistently avoided. None of these has the rib-vaulted vestibules linked by corridors to broad turnpike stairs which are so characteristic of the Conns. Whether the Conns had seen or worked on any southern house of this type can only be a matter of speculation, but what is beyond all doubt is that they learned the craft of rib-vaulting from a French or French-trained master, perhaps in the Royal Works. What is perhaps most interesting about this group of houses is that it seems to express a unified aesthetic shared by a lively and confident Catholic community around the time of the Scottish Reformation.

2. The carved panel over the entrance to the palace-block at Huntly Castle

If the Conn-type tower-houses seem to represent a distinctly Catholic, Counter-Reformation trend in North-East Scotland, its most potent architectural expression took quite another form. The Gordon Earls of Huntly had served as adjutants to the Scottish Kings since the mid-fifteenth century but their great power, and their adherence to their Catholic beliefs, resulted in Huntly Castle being sacked three times within the space of eighty years.

The potential threat which the Gordons posed to the crown, and particularly to the crown's relationship with its prickly Protestant nobles, was recognized even before the Reformation by Marie de Guise, as Regent for her daughter Queen Mary, and her fellow countryman the French ambassador, who after a particularly lavish reception dubbed the 4th Earl '*the Cock o' the North*' and urged her to clip his wings. Within a year of Mary's accession to the throne she was obliged – although herself a devout Catholic – to confront the Earl in battle at Corrichie in 1562. The Earl himself fortunately died of apoplexy immediately afterwards, but his son and six others were executed, their lands were forfeited and Huntly Castle was looted of its treasures and burned. In 1565 the titles were restored and Huntly Castle was rebuilt, but in 1594 the 6th Earl was implicated in the "Spanish Blanks" Plot[19] and with the Earl of Erroll led a rebellion which resulted in the defeat of the Protestants under the Earl of Argyll.

In the face of this challenge to his authority, King James VI himself came north, shattering Erroll's tower-house at Slains before he arrived at Huntly. The great tower-house which stood in the centre of Huntly Castle's courtyard was likewise shattered with explosives lent by Protestant burgesses in Aberdeen, but the palace-block as a separate and much less defensible structure was only partially demolished, losing its north-east entrance tower which faced inwards towards the castle court. The palace's main block and the big south-west drum-tower

[19] Francis Shearman, 'The Spanish Blanks', *Innes Review,*.3 (1952), 81-103.

attached to it which together presented the principal front survived structurally unscathed. After the King forgave the Earl in 1597 and two years later advanced him as a Marquess, Huntly Palace was resurrected in the most splendid fashion, the main block's second floor and attic being rebuilt as an elegant sequence of oriels by the English master-mason Ralph Raleyn or Rawlinson with an inscription carved in raised Roman capitals proclaiming the Gordons' elevation to ever-greater status. Surprisingly for an English mason, the architecture was earlier sixteenth-century French in character rather than Elizabethan, leaving one to wonder whether the Marquess had obtained a design from France or whether Raleyn himself had worked there.

Within the castle courtyard, the palace's entrance tower was rebuilt. Over the doorway was a remarkable heraldic panel, rising up the tower's circular shaft. This displayed the arms of the Marquess and his wife, Henrietta Stewart, with above, those of King James VI and his Queen, Anne of Denmark, flanked by supporters and the Scottish crest – a front-facing lion – all-in-all a clear expression of loyalty to the nation and the sovereign. But above these again two further panels represented a still higher allegiance which in Protestant eyes was wholly unacceptable: first, a very complete set of Symbols of the Passion – the Cross, Christ's pierced heart, hands and feet, the Crown of Thorns, the clothes for which the Roman soldiers drew lots and the instruments of the Crucifixion, with the motto *Absit Nobis Gloriari Nisi in Cruce Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (from Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"); then above again, the head of Christ in Glory with – for the Marquess – the singularly appropriate motto *Divina Virtute Resurgo* ("I rise again with Divine Power").[20] The composition was surmounted by a figure of either St George slaying the dragon, or (more probably) St Michael in combat with the devil, in reference not just to the defeat of heresy but to the elevation of both the 4th Earl and the Marquess himself to the French Order of St Michel in 1548 and 1594 respectively. King James VI's own father, Henry Stewart Lord Darnley, and his grandfather King James V who had died after the disastrous defeat by the English at Solway Moss in 1542, had also been members of the Order, and the unmistakeable inference was that the interests of the sovereign and those of the Counter-Reformation in Scotland were inextricably entwined.[21]

[20] Although very much more directly expressed, the message conveyed by the carved panel at Huntly is similar to that encoded in the latest of the Recusant Sir Thomas Tresham's emblematic buildings in Northamptonshire, Lyveden New Bield (1602-04), positioning the patron in relation to both religious and political allegiances. Tresham also quotes *Absit Nobis Gloriari* on the inscription frieze at Lyveden, and amongst its hieroglyphics is a complex roundel of the Instruments of the Passion.

[21] The Aberdeenshire Leslies, who enjoyed considerable success on the European mainland as mercenary soldiers throughout the seventeenth century, being ennobled in the Holy Roman Empire, sent a representative,

In 1640 a garrison of Covenanters was billeted in the castle against the 2nd Marquess's wishes, and the palace's religious iconography was chiselled off by Captain James Wallace. The castle was seized back for the Royalists by the Marquess of Montrose in 1644 but three years later James Gordon of Newton was starved into surrender. He and his "Irish" (*i.e.* Gaelic-speaking) retainers were summarily executed and the Marquess himself beheaded in 1649. Huntly Palace survives as a magnificent shell and for its future preservation perhaps there remains some hope that it might yet be re-roofed, John Claude Nattes having recorded its appearance when it was still almost complete.

[David W. Walker]

The tower houses associated with the Conn family are grouped in a relatively small geographical area and it is an area notable also for the production of Christian Humanist writers, who remained Roman Catholic after the Reformation – four of them were all born in the area of the Conn castles, near to the Aberdeenshire town of Turriff, in the second half of the c16. John Hay of Delgaty SJ (1547-1607) controversialist, scholar and miscellaneous writer, was in fact born just before work began on the present castle at Delgaty.[22] His writings, and his spheres of continental activity, were very varied: as well as the vernacular controversy of his 1580 *Certaine Demandes concerning the Christian Religion*, he published recensions of Jesuit reports from the foreign missions to China and Japan, and ended his career as Rector of the Jesuit University of Pont-a Musson. William Barclay (c.1570 -1627) , medical doctor and Latin Poet,[23] was son of Walter Barclay of Towie and his wife Elspeth Hay (not to be confused with the celebrated civil lawyer William Barclay (1546-1608) who was descended from Barclay of Gartly, near Huntly in Aberdeenshire, and was father of the author of the Argenis).[24] Barclay

Count Patrick Leslie, back to their chief seat of Fetternear near Inverurie at the end of the century. He rebuilt the Palace of Fetternear in the years 1691-93, placing two carved panels over the entrance to the central block – the lower, larger panel some 6 feet high represents Patrick Leslie's arms impaled with those of his wife, the coronet seemingly that of a Count of the Empire; but above is a much smaller panel with the initials I.H.S., *Iesus Hominum Salvator* and M.R.A., *Maria Regina Angelorum*, together with Patrick and Mary's own initials, expressing not only their Catholic faith but the Counter-Reformation cult of Holy Names. That was a bold statement even in the conservative climate of North-East Scotland during the late seventeenth century, particularly after the crisis of 1688-89 and the purges of Aberdonian non-jurors during the early 1690s. Cf. David Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618-1648* (Leiden: Brill, 2003)

[22] Alastair Roberts, 'John Hay, Jesuit', ODNB http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12724?docPos=2 accessed 28/12/2016
[23] Matthew Steggle, 'William Barclay, medical writer and Latin Poet' ODNB, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1353?docPos=2 accessed 28/12/2016
[24] Marie-Claude Tucker, 'Barclay William (Guillaume),Civil Lawyer', ODNB

of Towie studied at Pont-à-Musson, when his namesake was also there, and then went on in the 1590s to be a favourite student of Justus Lipsius at Louvain. He would appear to have spent his later life in Scotland and England and to have written on medical topics and to have composed Latin verse.[25] The controversialist, antiquarian and poet Thomas Dempster of Muiresk (1579-1625) was also born within a few miles of Turriff, [26]and, despite a pugnacity of temper which caused him to live an unusually nomadic life even for an early modern scholar, he taught at the university of Paris and eventually secured the chair of Humanities at the University of Bologna and a papal knighthood. His edition of Rosinus's *Antiquitatum Romanorum corpus*, initially published at Paris in 1613, was widely reprinted, and his controversial *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Scotorum,* was first published in Bologna in 1627, two years after his death. The family of Conn the architect itself produced a scholar and Papal diplomat, George Conn of Auchry (d.1640), nuncio to the court of Queen Henrietta Maria, [27] and author of a hagiographic biography of Mary Queen of Scots published at Rome in 1624. He also wrote a work of controversy, claiming Celtic saints for Scotland rather than Ireland, which was published at Bologna in 1621. Considered together, these scholars and controversialists demonstrate the extraordinary internationalism and energy of the Catholic community in Aberdeenshire around the time of the Reformation, suggesting anything but a backwater fading into insignificance, and indeed raising the question whether Catholic education of real quality might not have been available somewhere near Turriff, perhaps at Delgaty Castle.

3. Two Painted Rooms

The early modern interiors of Huntly Castle and Delgaty Castle have disappeared, only fireplaces having survived in the roofless Palace block at Huntly. One of these is emblematic, with the garlanded obelisk wreathed in ivy, implying the motto *Te stante virebo*, expressing loyalty to sovereign (an interesting assertion in context) from Claude Paradin's *Devices Heroïques.*[28] It is not unreasonable to conjecture that the walls of at least some rooms were

http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1352?docPos=1 accessed 28/12/2016

[25] His verse is gathered in W. K. Leask, ed., *Musa Latina Aberdonensis*, 3: *Poetae minores* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1910), 3–20.

[26] Alexander du Toit, 'Thomas Dempster of Muiresk, writer' ODNB http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7473 accessed 28/12/2016

[27] R. Malcolm Smuts, 'George Conn, diplomat' in ODNB http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6082 accessed 28/12/2016

[28] Claude Paradin, *Devices Heroïques* (Lyons, 1557), 73. The verse epigram or commentary offers the explanation that the monarch is the obelisk and the plant climbing up it is the faithful subject depending on the monarch for support.

covered with the vigorously painted emblematic schemes which are found in gentry houses throughout renaissance Scotland.[29] This was most likely also the case at another major Aberdeenshire castle, Fyvie, which belonged to a Catholic magnate, Alexander Seton, first Earl of Dunfermline (1555-1622), whose painted gallery in his lowland house is discussed below, but any trace of early-modern work at Fyvie has been obliterated by subsequent alterations.

Only one significant painted interior survives in north-east Scotland which can be identified with certainty as an early-modern Catholic chapel: the painted gallery in the town house in the Guestrow in Aberdeen, known as Provost Skene's house. This has been discussed in commendable detail by Dr Fern Insh, in her 2012 *Recusant History* article,[30] so I will offer only a summary account here. Dating from the mid-1630s, and commissioned by Matthew Lumsden (d.1644) whose arms, and those of his wife appear in the painting, the room's coved ceiling is painted with scriptural scenes, strapwork, angels, and symbolic objects and devices. The standard of design overall is high, the execution of the figurative scenes modest imitations of contemporary continental prints, including one, now very damaged, imitation of Dürer. Overall the scheme – allowing for much damage over the centuries – would appear to represent the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, despite the apparent discrepancies of numbers of panels:

> There only appeared to be eleven possible scenes in the scheme. The combined scene [Assumption and Coronation] in the central roundel, however, takes the count up to twelve. Three other missing events from the Mysteries, the Visitation, the Crowning with Thorns and the Scourging at the Pillar, are not represented by figurative scenes in the panels based on continental prints, but are instead provided emblematically in cartouches embedded within the strapwork frame surrounding the other scenes. The Crowning with Thorns and the Scourging at the Pillar are, for example, represented together by a literal crown of thorns encircling the Arma Christi.[31]

The 'IHS' is also present in a roundel, Dr Insh suggests that it recalls the Visitation as well as the Presentation, and also brings the badge of the Society of Jesus to mind, raising the possibility that this was a confraternity chapel:

> The likelihood of this function is further reinforced when one notes that Rosary beads were originally entwined throughout the strapwork frame of the ceiling and are traceable in a couple of photographs depicting remnants of the original form.[32]

[29] For the definitive account of these see Michael Bath, *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2003).
[30] Fern Insh, 'Recusants and the Rosary: a seventeenth-century chapel in Aberdeen,' *Recusant History* 31:2, (October 2012) 195-218.
[31] Fern Insh, *Ibid.* 210.
[32] *Ibid.,* 211.

Her conclusion, that to commission such a painted room and to 'sign' it heraldically in the Aberdeen of the 1630s represented no unreasonable risk to the patron, is certainly correct. Many instances of the moderation of the Aberdonian Reformation could be cited, and toleration between religious communities seems to have been practised to an unusual degree. There is at least antiquarian assertion that there was no serious disturbance of the image of the Virgin in the Cathedral until the threat of the arrival of the English armies in 1642 prompted its removal, but not destruction[33].

In one of the comparatively few Catholic houses in the Lowlands, Alexander Seton's Pinkie House, at Musselburgh near Edinburgh, is the most extensive painted room to survive from early modern Scotland. Certainly his painted gallery's emblems and inscriptions convey a message of stoicism, self-control and wariness as well as praising the merits of friendship, hospitality and retirement. It also seems wholly possible that Seton fostered an explicitly counter-Reformation educational culture there, while on his lands in Moray he seems to have gone to some lengths to preserve his control over what remained of the Priory of Pluscarden, possibly even repairing the Priory Church after the first incursion of iconoclast reformers.[34]

The painted gallery at Pinkie has been so extensively described by Michael Bath,[35] that it is necessary here only to observe that it is a scholar's room, which is also to some extent a statesman's palace of memory, reflecting Seton's Christian Humanist education at the Collegium Germanicum in Rome. It is in part an evocation or re-creation of the classical past, an evocation of the painted gallery of antiquity, but, in its series of emblem paintings and related inscriptions, it is also redolent of contemporary Jesuit College cultures of emblemata and the *affixiones.* Indeed, the ranks of emblems on the unified theme of the wise conduct of a life recalls vividly the visual culture of festal days in a Jesuit College.[36]. The chief work on which Seton draws is the *Emblemata Horatiana* by Otto van Veen, published at Antwerp in 1607, but it is possible that the trompe l'oeil architecture of the whole ceiling, with its principal

[33] William Orem, *A Description of the Chanonry in Old Aberdeen* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1782), 102-4. The image, venerated as 'Our Lady of Good Success' is now in the Church of Notre Dame du Finistère in Brussels.
[34] Cf. Peter Davidson, 'Alexander Seton, First Earl of Dunfermline: his Library, his House, his World', *British Catholic History*, 32:3 (May 2015) 315-342.
[35] Michael Bath, 'Literature, Art and Architecture' in Ian Brown (ed.) *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) I, 248-49; Michael Bath, *Decorative Painting in Renaissance Scotland*, (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2003), 79-94; Michael Bath, 'Alexander Seton's Painted Gallery' in Lucy Gent (ed.) *Albion's Classicism, the visual arts in Britain, 1550-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 79-109. .
[36] For Jesuit festal *affixiones* cf. Karel Poorteman, *Emblematic Exhibitions at the Brussels Jesuit College (1630-1685)* (Brussels: Royal Library, Brepols, 1996).

and subsidiary domes, is derived from the frontispiece engraving of Blaise de Vigenère's *Images ou Tableaux de Platte Peinture des Deux Philostrates Sophistes*, which was published at Paris in 1614 with illustrations by Jaspar Isaac.[37]

The ceiling functions in a complex way: as allusion to Philostratus and Horace, as a subtle and systained exercise in applied emblematics, as a recollection of Jesuit festal *affixiones,* as treatise on restraint, stoicism and governance, even as self-portrait (there is indeed a portrait of Seton in an emblem of temperance on the ceiling). It is perhaps most urgently, in the context of Seton's Christian humanist education, a place of privacy, retreat, consolation. The oriel window at the end of the gallery which faces towards Edinburgh, is guarded by the emblematic figure of the crane, the bird belived by the ancients never to sleep, a reflection of the importance of vigilance to a discreet Catholic statesman in a militantly-Protestant Lowland society.

4. James Fraser's description of the Scottish Benedictine House at Regensburg (1659)

These survivors in Scotland itself are complimented by the survival of an unpublished account in some detail of the decoration and iconography of the exiled Scottish house of Benedictines at Regensburg in Germany. This account is particularly interesting in the way that it shows the perpetuation of a distinctly Scottish Catholic version of the Scottish past. The manuscript *Triennial Travels* of James Fraser of Phopachy, a young graduate of Aberdeen University, connected to both Catholic and moderate-Protestant branches of the extended Fraser Clan, records his travels throughout Europe in the years 1657-60, and particularly his use of an astonishing network of exiled Catholic clerics, Scottish mercenary soldiers, merchants and academics, to assist him in his travels. The most significant passage for the study of Scottish Catholic material culture comes in his description of the Scottish Benedictine monastery in Regensburg. This house had been transferred from Irish to Scottish hands only in 1577 and had had the scholar and polemicist Ninian Winzet (1518-92) as its Abbot. It can therefore be assumed that, while most of the fabric and some of the fitting of the church, might pre-date the year of transfer, everything with specifically Scottish reference must date from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries.

Fraser's description gets off to a bad start with a fictitious claim to a Scottish King (from the fictitious King-Lists of Hector Boece's *Historia Gentis Scotorum* of 1527) as founder of the monastery, with further fictitious subventions from historical figures:

[37] Michael Bath, 'Philostratus comes to Scotland' http://www.northernrenaissance.org/philostratus-comes-to-scotland-a-new-source-for-the-pictures-at-pinkie/. Accessed 30 November, 2016

> It was founded in the yeare 820 by Achaius K. of Scotland, and was at first but a Cell for 3 Monks. King David and King William gave it revenues being its onely benefactors.[38]

But then describes the fabric as he saw it, suggesting that quite considerable adaptation had taken place since the Scots took control in the 1570s.

> The Church is a noble fabrick and well lighted with a high stone 4-cornered steeple upon the east end of it towards the City and a peece of the top covered with Lead . . . ye best prospect in the City and 4 Choice bells, James, Andrew, John and Tom, their Christian names. The High Alter is a statly curious Carving in Stone. It hath 4 Chappells two at each side of the Church. S Andrewes & St Giles to the South and St Bridget & St Katherine north, with their statues over the entry, exactly done in whit marble, with their names and dates of Canonization, in each of those Chappells there is masse, successively on ordinary holy dayes, Matins & Vespers Dayly and a Case of Organs above the west entry the sweetest though not the greatest in Ratisbone, which brings a great Concourse here very often.

It can be reasonably conjectured, despite the presence of St Brigid of Kildare (also culted extensively in Scotland) that this scheme, with SS. Andrew and Giles, dates from the late sixteenth century. A retrospective Scottish history has been written over the centuries of Irish history which preceded the change of ownership.

> The pavement of this Church is a checker worke, yellow and dark stone, a rich work, and at ye west end near the great door St Felix Scotus his tomb, of black marble, as smooth as glas, curiously [worked], wt his name Martyrdom and Miracles in Gothick Letters round about; this Saints day is solemnly keept. S. Felix Fest: March 31. Over the Porch to the weste is the Statue of Christ uppon the Cross: most lively done in curous bright stone, the [rayes] about his head done with great art, with this verse or dis[tych] litle under
>
> *Solus Amor Fecit transfigere vulnere Christum;*
> *Solus Amor mihi, Stigmata Sacra figit.*[39]
>
> There is a handsome stone wall round about the Church, and many Burialls especially of Strangers Scots and English, and one statly Tomb of an [*sic.*] Maior Alexander

[38] Aberdeen University Library, MS 2538, III, ff. 9v-12r.
[39] This must refer to sculpture inside the church, outside the Romanesque tympanum is still *in situ*; there appears to be no record of the shrine or cult of S. Felix

> [Lessly] who died in the Emperor Ferd. 2 his service, Anno 1620. To the Southward of the Church stands the Monastery, a great house, the Stately entry built by Abbot Michell 1530. The Hall of the ground well paved & great lights; to the westward yow pass to the [Dining] roome a pleasant [light] lodging and a lamp of light, above ye 3 windowes the pictures of K. Achius, K. David and King William of Scotland [and] and the pictures of the 5 greater Prophets & 17 lesser on the north side with the history of their lives and martyrdome, in Choice Latin, this parlor is paved after the same maner that the Church is of Checker work, a door to lead yow out into the garden, a delight full pleasant walke the tower to the South or Starecase built by 3 Abbots q[uhar] the Abbots Chamber is, and also the Priors and also the Liberary on the Top from ye old work to the new, a long and large Roome, is well furnished with varieties of Bookes especially Manuscripts of all sises in qu[hilk] they Glorie.[40]

The likenesses in Regensburg of fictitious Scottish founders may relate to a painting of unknown provenance in the collections of the University of Aberdeen, apparently of seventeenth century date, showing a fair-bearded, crowned King in fantastical armour, with the scalloped armholes and collar which often indicate a remote historical period in baroque painting, and with a breastplate ornamented with two roundels of the Pelican in its Piety. This object, although its provenance is unknown, might be conjectured to be close in purpose to the King pictures which Fraser records in Regensburg, as a simulacrum of an ancestor or founder, comparable to the sequences of pictures of Saxon Royal saints exhibited in the seventeenth century in the English College at Valladolid and the English convent at Lisbon.[41]

5. The survival and preservation of objects of veneration and memory

As has been suggested hitherto, the rate of survival of post-Reformation Catholic material culture is considerably better than is generally believed. One indication of the mentality of the Catholic community in its heartlands of Aberdeenshire and Moray is given by the pattern of post-Reformation preservation of Scotland's first printed book, the ambitious *Breviarium Aberdonense* of 1510. This is a crucial demonstration of who that community believed themselves to be, in that this book, represents a concerted

[40] The likenesses of the Kings of Scotland represent part of the impulse to over-write the actual Irish history with a fictional Scottish history, even going so far as to supply a first millennium legendary Scottish founder for the monastery. Some of the Regensburg manuscripts, having being brought to Fochabers in Scotland in the nineteenth century by the last of the monks, were at Fort Augustus for most of the twentieth century, and are now in the National Library of Scotland.

[41] Catalogue number ABDUA 39116

attempt by Bishop William Elphinstone of Aberdeen (1431-1514) and his circle to collect a comprehensive calendar of Scottish saints with their legends, and with readings and prayers for their feast days, combined with newly composed hymns (some in Classical metre) for the major Marian feasts as celebrated in Aberdeen. It is of importance as the first surviving book printed in Scotland (and indeed a copy was presented to Edinburgh University Library as early as the 1630s, presumably as an object of historical or bibliographical interest) but it is also the chief source which preserves Scottish liturgical material and records a wide conspectus of pre-Reformation local and national cults. In short, despite its many shortcomings of layout, printing, and organisation, it is perhaps the most comprehensive single printed record of what Elphinstone's reformed-from-within *Ecclesiae Scotticanae* had believed and celebrated in the age of Scottish *devotio moderna*, and what Elphinstone's church had recorded and preserved from the ages which had gone before.

After the Reformation, of five surviving copies, two were in the possession of Catholic gentry in Aberdeenshire: the 'Strathmore' copy (now National Library of Scotland) belonged to Francis Hay of Delgaty (fl. 1676). He would appear to have been a pupil at Regensburg and then a soldier on the continent, like so many Scottish Catholics, and to have died at the Leslie castle at Ptui in Slovenia[42]; the 'Ker' copy (also in NLS) belonged to a George Arbuthnot. The *Compassio Beatae Mariae* pamphlet now bound with the Strathmore copy, belonged to John Lesley of Lesley in Aberdeenshire, and it is tempting to speculate that it may have been united with what is now the Strathmore copy of the Breviary either at Ptui or on the Leslies' return to the Palace of Fetternear in the late seventeenth century. Copies now lost belonged to the Scots College in Paris and to the controversialist Thomas Dempster of Muiresk in Bologna.[43] While the interest of Dempster can be assumed to be primarily rooted in the study of history as a weapon of religious controversy, and while the use later made of the Paris copy by the Abbé Thomas Innes was historical and scholarly, the value of a pre-Tridentine prayer book to Catholic laymen, in Aberdeenshire or in exile, in the seventeenth century poses interesting questions.

[42] Recorded as having died at "Pettavia in Styria" 1676, in William Forbes-Leith SJ (ed.) *Records of the Scots Colleges at Douai, Rome, Madrid, Valladolid and Ratisbon* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1906) 277.
[43]For a census of all surviving copies of the *Breviarium* cf. Iain Beavan, Peter Davidson and Jane Stevenson, 'The Breviary of Aberdeen', *Transactions of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* 6 (2011): 11-41.

It cannot have been of direct contemporary devotional use, as it would have been supplanted by the Tridentine breviary, and by the counter-Reformation devotions introduced by what was predominantly a Jesuit mission, so its preservation of necessity implies a degree of awareness of the present and the past states of Scottish Catholicism (even if it was as simple a desire as to preserve the commemorations of local saints contained in the text) and thus some consciousness of a community and its history, as recorded by the *Breviarium*, must have constituted an element of personal and communal identity.[44]

The rate of survival of material from Aberdeen Cathedral is on the whole poor, although this may well be the result of accident rather than of deliberate destruction[45]. Elsewhere in Aberdeen attempts seem to have been made to preserve at least some ecclesiastical possessions: King's College Chapel preserved its woodwork intact, and the *mensa* of its high altar has been returned to its pre-Reformation position after centuries of re-use as a tombstone. Several objects, including possibly the 'Joachim and Anna' vestment, discussed below, were salvaged from St Nicholas, the town church of 'New' Aberdeen. As with the *Breviarium*, local piety may have influenced the preservation of the Antwerp-made *Epistolar* presented to St Machar's Cathedral in 1527 by Bishop Gavin Dunbar.[46] This sub-deacon's book of Epistle readings is the sole survivor of the furniture of the pre-Reformation High Altar. It is a finely written volume of the New Testament Epistle readings for the year, following the use of Sarum or Salisbury, modestly illuminated with flowers and Bishop Dunbar's arms on the first page. It also includes a calendar of the saints to be commemorated on each day of the liturgical year, and this follows the Scottish use of Elphinstone's *Breviarium Aberdonense* thus demonstrating that his introduction of a distinctively Scottish ecclesiastical use had become the practise of at least the Cathedral Church of his own diocese. Again, an element of local identity is preserved with the preservation of Dunbar's *Epistolar*.

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[44] Apart from an Irish mission to the Irish (Gaelic) speaking Western Isles, and the activities of a few secular priests, the mission to Scotland was overwhelmingly a Jesuit initiative. T.M. McCoog SJ, '"Pray to the Lord of the Harvest," Jesuit Missions to Scotland in the Sixteenth Century,' *The Innes Review*, Vol.53/2 (Autumn, 2002) 127-188.

[45] Orem offers at least anecdotal evidence that certain images were not removed from Aberdeen cathedral until the 1640s, with the threatened approach of the English army. William Orem, *A Description of the Chanonry in Old Aberdeen* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1782), 100-104

[46] Iain Beavan, Peter Davidson and Jane Stevenson, *The Library and Archive Collections of the University of Aberdeen, an Introduction and Description* (Manchester: Manchester University Press/University of Aberdeen: 2011), 126-27. The manuscript is Aberdeen University Library, MS 21.

Similarly, the book of Hours of James Brown has its origin in Aberdeen Cathedral, where Brown was Dean during the episcopate of William Elphinstone.[47] The manuscript vanished from sight between its first owner in the Chanonry of Aberdeen in the 1490s and its appearance in the collection of Duns Castle in the second half of the nineteenth century.[48] The manuscript bears every appearance of having been made specifically for a northern Scottish cleric, with connections to in Angus or the Mearns, and was most likely written and illuminated in Flanders around 1498, presumably having been ordered in the autumn of 1497 when Dean Brown was travelling home from Rome.[49] We can only conjecture that its calendar, including many of the specifically Scottish feasts which would shortly appear in the *Breviarium*, contributed to its preservation, possibly in the post-Reformation Catholic community at home or abroad, as much as did its fine illuminations and the beauty of its appearance.

Scottish saints are inserted in the Litany on ff.101r -110v, the Calendar contains many of the Scottish saints culted in the Breviarium[50], leading Mgr. McRoberts to suggest that Brown was indeed one of Elphinstone's colleagues in the task of compiling that work. Although the first of the full-page illustrations shows Dean Brown kneeling in prayer, attended by a bishop saint, presumably St Machar the founder of the see of Aberdeen, the statue of Our Lady before whom they kneel, while corresponding to what we might call the general Scoto-Flemish appearance of ecclesiastical art associated with pre-Reformation Aberdeen, does not correspond to any known surviving image.

Also with a provenance in north-eastern Scotland at the turn of the sixteenth century, is a much humbler primer, now fragmentary, of native manufacture and probably preserved from the early sixteenth century in the Catholic community of the north. It is now one of the Blairs manucripts on deposit in the Library of the University of Aberdeen[51]. Internal evidence dates the volume to around 1500, and its first owner names himself in the frequently-found formula on f.4r:

> Andrew Lundy with my hand
> In my defens God me defend.

The combination of Saints culted in the brief calendar (although there are in fact comparatively few Scots amongst them) would suggest a location of Fintray north of

[47] It is now NLS, MS. Acc.4118.
[48] Rt. Rev. Mgr. David McRoberts,'Dean Brown's Book of Hours', *The Innes Review*, 19/2, 144-167.
[49] 'Dean Brown's Book of Hours', 162.
[50] 'Dean Brown's Book of Hours,' 158.
[51] William James Anderson, 'Andrew Lundy's Primer,' *The Innes Review*, 11/1, 39-51.

Aberdeen, particularly the decisive presence of the name of S. Modan combined with the rubrication of the name of St Giles.[52] A series of devotions to the Virgin, both as the Woman in the Sun and in her Nativity and Childhood, accord with known northern Scottish devotions, to the *Mulier in Sole* in a chapel of the Abbey of Kinloss, and to the infancy in the dedication of King's College Chapel in old Aberdeen, and in the Marian hymns of the *Breviarium*.[53] The history of the Lundy Primer is unknown until it appears, after the nineteenth century restoration of the Catholic hierarchy, in the library of the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

Exceptionally, in the British Isles, the Colleges of early-modern Aberdeen seem to have been happy to preserve, or receive as gifts, earlier codices, including mediaeval illuminated manuscripts, perhaps because there was enough of a Catholic presence in the region to assert that these were no longer current devotions, however much the Catholic community would appear to have valued them as objects of memory for themselves.

The library of King's College was undisturbed at the Reformation, a direct index of the slow progress of Reformation in 1560s Aberdeen, as well as of the conservatism of Elphinstone's University foundation, thus being the only university library in the English-speaking world not to have been purged at this time. The library of Aberdeen's second College, the post-Reformation Marischal College, happily accepted the Royal secretary Thomas Read's donation, including illuminated manuscripts, as early as 1624. [54]

Local piety and tradition also preserved portraits of founders: the University has exhibited the fine 1500s portrait of the founder William Elphinstone, continuously until recent decades.[55] The question of copies of, and substitutes for, lost pre-Reformation portraits will be considered below.

A certain amount was salvaged from the Aberdeen town churches, possibly through the intervention of local Catholic families, most notably the Leslies. Writing in 1899, F.C. Eeles noted the survival in the Blairs Library Collection of a Missal, printed at Rouen

[52] 'Andrew Lundy's Primer,' 40.
[53] 'Andrew Lundy's Primer,' 45-46.
[54] By the time of the Thomas Read bequest to Marischal College, Aberdeen in 1624, there seems to have been little anxiety about accepting illuminated Mediaeval manuscripts, even quite probably the magnificent Franco-Flemish book of Hours, known erroneously as 'The Burnet Psalter,' *The Library and Archive Collections*, 12-18, 73-77.
[55] Its museum number is ABDUA 30005.

in 1506[56] which had been given in 1711 to the Scots College in Paris by Dominus Patrick Leith, probably a member of the family of Leith of Leith Hall. What is interesting, in the light of earlier speculations about liturgical material which survived the Reformation, is that this Missal is also rich in manuscript additions particularly to the Calendar, thus constituting another memorial of the "Scottis use" of Elphinstone's Aberdeen.

A set of *opus anglicanum* orphreys, probably dating from the later fifteenth century, now made up into a chasuble and in the collection of the Blairs Museum, depict events related to the nativity and infancy of the Virgin, most notably the meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate.[57] It is not certain whence this was rescued by the Leslies, but it was kept at their palace of Fetternear, escaping destruction in the early twentieth century fire there, being one of a group of vestments lent to the contemporary Bishop of Aberdeen. There would appear, on the evidence of the commemorations in the *Breviary of Aberdeen* to have been a considerable devotional focus on the birth and childhood of the Virgin: there are hymns for her Conception and Nativity, both local compositions, and both in classical metres[58]

Sidus hoc primum rutilare cepit
Ut careremus tenebris opacis
Ut procellosos via per timores
Tuta pateret

Anne conceptus reticendus ille
Tantus ac talis canit ecce terra
Pontus exsultat recinuntque coelo
Phoebus et astra.

The original dedication of the Chapel of Elphinstone's university, subsequently known as King's College, was to the Virgin in her Nativity, as the dedication of the Parish Church of

[56] F.C. Eeles, 'Notes on a Missal formerly used in S. Nicholas, Aberdeen,' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 33 (1899), 440-60.

[57] Penelope Dransart and N.Q. Bogdon, 'The Material Culture of Recusancy at Fetternear, ' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 134 (2004), 466. This article also mentions, without giving its current location, a Spanish statue of the Immaculate Conception believed to have been at Fetternear.

[58] [This star first begins to shine/ So that we may be freed from deep darkness/ So that the way through storming terrors/ May lie safe.// Should so great and wonderful a conception of Anna's/ Be greeted with silence? Behold, the earth sings,/ The sea rejoices, the sun and the stars re-echo/ From the heavens.]

the Cathedral district of Old Aberdeen was to the Virgin of the Snows, from which the burial ground in its ruined shell is still known as 'The Snow Kirk.' In the light of this devotional focus, it would seem overwhelmingly likely that the orphreys had been ordered, probably from the prestigious embroidery workshops of England, specifically for one of the Aberdonian foundations with a dedication or a particular devotion to the infant Mary, whose figure can be seen on Elphinstone's own episcopal seal.[59]

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Leslies also gave to the Catholic parish church which they had founded on their lands at Fetternear, an early sixteenth century banner, now in the Museum of Scotland. This banner, professionally embroidered in silk on linen, and abandoned incomplete, shows the 'Image of Pity' – the bleeding Christ surrounded by the instruments of the Passion in an aedicule, the whole surrounded by a stylised representation of a rosary. The banner bears the arms of Gavin Douglas, poet, translator, and Bishop of Dunkeld from 1515 until 1522, but appears to relate rather to his previous position as Provost of the collegiate church of St Giles in Edinburgh, where there was a strong confraternity of the Holy Blood,[60] and where various members of the family of Graham of Fintry (whose arms also appear on the banner) were attached to the church and confraternity. The fate of the banner between the work on it being abandoned around 1521 and its appearance at Fetternear in the mid nineteenth century, is unknown and probably unknowable, but it is more than likely that the Leslies maintained, over the centuries, a tradition (it might be too strong to call it a policy) of collecting and securing the few material remains of pre-Reformation Catholicism.

6. Preservation and creation of Memorials of a Post-Reformation Martyr

There remains the question of objects created after the Reformation, as substitutes for unavailable relics, which form part of the emerging cult of the Catholic Queen thought of as a martyr, Mary Queen of Scots. There are a two authentic objects associated with Mary Queen of Scots, which passed after her death to Antwerp in the Spanish Netherlands: her re-velvet Prayer Book, and a version of the 'Sheffield' miniature of her which subsequently became the centrepiece of the composite reliquary now in the Blairs Museum, Aberdeen, and known as the Blairs Jewel.

[59] Walter de Grey Birch, *A History of Scottish Seals*, (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1907) 2, 29-30.
[60] David McRoberts, 'The Fetternear Banner', *Innes Review*, 7/2 (1956) 69-86.

These objects inevitably generated others: the most significant being the *Memorial Portrait* of Mary painted in Antwerp, probably by Frans Pourbus the Younger.[61] This group of objects, either preserved or newly-created, are all associated with Curle family, Catholic refugees closely connected to Mary Stuart, living in Antwerp from the beginning of the last decade of the sixteenth century. This is confirmed by the copy of the testament in which Hippolytus (or Hugh) Curle SJ (c.1590-1638), disposed his family property before he joined the Society of Jesus in 1618, which is preserved in the Scottish Catholic Archives, currently on deposit at the University of Aberdeen.[62] This document has been studied and partially transcribed in an article by Fr. Jos Vercruysse, S.J.[63] and offers considerable evidence as to the origin of these objects in the household of Hugh's mother Barbara Curle née Moubray (1559-1616) and her sister in law Elizabeth Curle (1560-1620), both of whom had been Mary's attendants in her English captivity.

In this group of objects, almost the whole repertory of baroque art and ceremonial is represented – all intended to advance the posthumous reputation of Mary Stuart which had beyond doubt become a crucial preoccupation of the Curle family. The final shaping of the whole narrative was in the hands of the next generation of the family, particularly those of Hippolytus or Hugh Curle, whose education at Douai and membership of the Society of Jesus is crucial especially to the form in which the reliquary known as the *Blairs Jewel* expresses its narrative, and it is from his testament, made before entering the Society and signed on 1 September 1618, that we can date the transfer of ownership of what has come to be known as the Memorial Portrait of Mary Stuart, into the hands of the Jesuits.

To consider these objects roughly in chronological order of their creation – the mid-sixteenth century red-velvet covered prayer book which belonged to Mary Stuart (having been originally made in France as a diplomatic gift for Mary Tudor, whose arms as well as her badges of the rose of England and pomegranate of Aragon, appear on the sumptuous binding) was almost certainly brought from England by the Curle family, and eventually given to the Jesuits, and thence to the Jesuit English College of St Omers, whose successor school, Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, preserves it to this day.

The next object, considered chronologically, is the first version of the *Memorial Portrait* now at the Blairs Museum, Aberdeen, most probably painted in Antwerp in the 1590s. This object

[61] This is now in the collections of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Trust at the Blairs Museum, Aberdeen.
[62] [SCA], PL/8/24, 'Testament of Hippolytus Curle, 'this is an authenticated copy transcribed in Douai on 21 March 1772, now on deposit in Special Collections Centre, University of Aberdeen.
[63] Jos E. Vercruysse, S.J.'A Scottish Jesuit from Antwerp: Hippolytus Curle,' *The Innes Review* 61/2 (2010): 137–149

is fascinating as the focus of a cult, a deliberately created substitute for the corporeal remains which had been stringently retained by the Elizabethan authorities explicitly to prevent their being culted as relics. The scene of execution in the background is imitated from the engraving used by Richard Verstegan (c.1550-1640) who closed his *Theatrum Crudelitatem Haereticorum Nostri Temporis* with an account of the execution of Mary as the culminating atrocity in a series of atrocities[64].

Closely related to this portrait is the monument to Barbara Mowbray Curle and Elizabeth Curle erected in 1618-1620 by Hippolytus in the church of Sint Andries, Antwerp, with its painted inset portrait of Mary on a copper panel,[65]which painting is clearly a version of the *Memorial Portrait*.

The superb composite reliquary now known as the *Blairs Jewel*, whose centre is a miniature of Mary, almost certainly brought from England by the Curles, would appear to date also from around 1620 and was most plausibly assembled under the direction of Hippolytus Curle, with assistance from the British Jesuits in the Low Countries. We know from Curle's 1618 Testament that he also gave to the Jesuits a white and black encaustic Agnus Dei hanging on a golden chain, with an image of St Ignatius of Loyola painted on a crystal on one side, and various relics on the other side.[66] This work is lost, but its nature as a Jesuit composite reliquary, double sided and under glass, relates it closely both to the Jewel at Blairs and to the 'Sichem' composite reliquary now at Stonyhurst[67]. Both of these reliquaries to draw on holdings of relics whose range matches precisely with the relic collections documented as in the ownership of the exiled British Jesuits at St Omer and Watten.

The primary narrative of the Blairs jewel is about martyrdom and the continuities of the Latin church. The miniature of Mary Stuart (taking the place of the corporeal relics which the Elizabethan authorities controlled stringently after her execution) is set in the context of women saints through the ages, but also firmly associated with the Jesuits whose IHS badge is set immediately above her likeness. The relics of women saints associate Mary Stuart with martyrs back to the persecutions of the Roman Empire, but also with royal saints and a recent *beata* admired throughout Catholic Europe, Theresa of Avila, beatified in 1614 and soon thereafter adopted as patroness of Spain.

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[64] [Theatre of the Cruelties of the Heretics of our time] (Antwerp: Adrian Hubert, 1587), 85.

[65] https://inventaris.onroerenderfgoed.be/erfgoedobjecten/6299 accessed 27 July, 2016

[66] Vercruysse, 139.

[67] Cf the article by Janet Graffius in this volume, xx-xx.

The other side of the reliquary is an exposition of the continuities of the Saints of the Roman church, it is also a bold assertion of the status of the Queen of Scots as a contemporary martyr, and, crucially, one associated with the Jesuit mission to England. The names in the crown, which is surmounted by two splinters 'ex ligno S. Crucis' contains relics of St. Quirinus and St. Victor, both first-millennium martyrs and of St Bernard of Clairvaux. In the letters MRA is one more first millennium martyr, St. Florian[68], but all the other relics are of Jesuits, either formally beatified or else martyrs on the English mission: B. Aloysius; B. Stanislas; B. Pater Xavier; B. Pater Ignatius. There are English Jesuits who died on the mission – 'B. Garneti', 'B.Walpoli' and 'B. Campiani M'—St Henry Walpole, St Edmund Campion and Henry Garnet SJ. The description of Ignatius and Francis Xavier as 'Beatus', together with the presence of St Teresa, then Beata, indicate a date range: St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier were canonised in March 1622, St Teresa beatified in 1614, so the Jewel must have been made between 1614 and 1622.

At some later time, most likely in the 1640s, a second version of the Memorial Portrait (now Royal Collection, Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh) was made, clearly deriving from the Blairs archetype, which was then in the Scots College at Douai, with altered inscriptions and much coarser handling of particularly the background elements. One possible interpretation of this later version is that it was made with the propagandist intention of rallying support to the Royalist cause of Charles I in Catholic Europe by reviving the memory of an earlier Stuart monarch illegally executed by an English Parliament

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7. Works of Art for Catholic Families in Exile.

Much work remains to be done on the holdings of the Scottish colleges on the continent, especially the colleges at Douai and Valladolid (now Salamanca), although there is a full published account of Scots College in Paris, which discusses papers and objects preserved there, and mostly destroyed by the French Revolution.[69] Also lost at that time were Stuart memorials, including the brain of James II and VII, preserved as a potential relic against his possible eventual canonisation. The material culture of the Aberdeenshire Catholic families, the Gordons of Wardhouse and Beldorney in the wine trade at Cadiz, the Gordons of Letterfourie in the Madeira trade, is yet to be studied in depth, but the Catholic Church of St

[68] The English Jesuits of St-Omer had a relic of St Florian which they had obtained from Italy, further evidence that the relics gathered in the Blairs Jewel beyond doubt came from a Jesuit source and almost certainly from St-Omer and Douai.

[69] Brian M. Halloran, *The Scots College Paris 1603-1792,* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1997).

Mary, Huntly, still known as 'The Chapel of the Spanish Gordons,' with its imported paintings, gives some idea of the kinds of visual art which were patronised by the Catholics in the wine trade around the time of Emancipation.

The visual culture of the Leslie family in the Holy Roman Empire developed over several generations from the initial success of Count Walter Leslie (1606-67) in the assassination of Albrecht von Wallenstein at Cheb (Eger) on 25 February, 1634, and his subsequent collections at the castles of Nové Městu nad Metuji (Neustadt an der Mettau) in East Bohemia (now Czech republic) and Ptuj (Oberpettau) in Slovenia, the latter of which survive intact to a remarkable degree to the present day, including a Kaisersaal with portraits of real and imagined benefactors of the family, and a room of *turqueries*.[70] The scheme of mural decoration at Nové Městu, briefly mentioned by the pioneering architectural historian of Central Europe, Brian Knox, is a generalised mythological and emblematic glorification of a military family, which avoids all inconvenient specifics of recent family history.[71] Little of what James Leslie, second Count Leslie, sent to Scotland in the 1690s to furnish the Castle or Palace of Fetternear in Aberdeenshire (either sacred or secular) has survived two Jacobite risings, various lawsuits, and a fire, but one superb set of High Mass vestments survives at the Blairs museum. What is particularly fascinating about these is their combination of central European embroidered flowers with elements of re-used gold work from Turkish banners captured at the Siege of Vienna.[72]

There are a few other items now without context which probably also owe their origins to the Scottish Catholic Diaspora, as the ostrich egg shallow-carved with Jacobite emblems, dated 1766, now in the Marischal Museum in Aberdeen, a hybrid artefact of the late baroque which offers a closing point to this survey, at the moment when what had been exclusively religious iconography has begun to cross a shadowy line into the territories of Jacobite ideas of the sacrality of Kingship, and the causes of minority Catholicism and Jacobitism have become inextricably linked.

8. Conclusion

[70] David Worthington, Eduard Damisch, Igor Weigl and Marieke Ciglenecki in *The Legacy of the Leslie Family at the Castle of Ptuj*, exhibition catalogue, Narodna Galerija, Ljubljana, 22nd January – 24th February, 2002.
[71] Brian Knox, *The Architecture of Prague and Bohemia* London: Faber, 1962) 75; a baroque fantasy of Leslie family history is offered in the late seventeenth century by an illustrated folio: William Aloysius Leslie SJ, *Laurus Leslaeana explicata* (Graz, 1692).
[72] These works are discussed at length in Peter Davidson and Prue King, 'The Fetternear Vestments at the Blairs Museum,' *British Catholic History*, 33/2, (October, 2016) 259-277.

Apart from the as-yet not fully investigated material culture of the Scottish Catholic diaspora, both in the Scots Colleges on the continent, and in the villas and castles of exiled magnates and merchants, the objects discussed here, are broadly of the same kinds as those which survive from the English Catholic community after the Reformation. There are objects and books salvaged from the reformers, a process of salvage certainly rendered easier by the comparative moderation and slow pace of the Reformation in Aberdeen and the northern counties, and there are a few objects created for the exiled colleges, especially the group of objects commemorating Mary Queen of Scots associated with the Curle family in exile in the Spanish Netherlands.

The rest of the objects, books and manuscripts preserved and cherished by the northern Catholic families, are of a piece with the aesthetic of the remarkable group of Aberdeenshire tower houses built for Catholic landowners by the family of Conn of Auchry. There is some sense of shared nostalgia for a perceived golden age, in visual terms the Scoto-French aesthetics of twenty years either side the turn of the sixteenth century, the years of Scoto-French cooperation leading up to the building of the Palace at Stirling Castle, with its unequivocal continental influences. In religious terms these years are more or less coincident with the Catholic reform during the Episcopate of William Elphinstone (1431-1514), clearly perceived by the northern Catholic community as crucial to the formation of the identity which they wished to preserve. This clear identification of a local golden age also aided the preservation of Scottish liturgical and devotional texts of the period of Aberdonian *devotio moderna*, particularly the 'Scottis use' of the marked-up St Nicholas Missal, of the *Epistolar* of Aberdeen Cathedral, and of copies of the *Breviarium Aberdonense*. Indeed the conclusion might be advanced that the survival of Roman Catholicism (and of Catholicising doctrine and aesthetics in the Episcopal Church) in the north was rooted in the very success of Elphinstone's reform from within, as much as in the early adoption of Tridentine and Counter-Reformation devotions and ideas by the cosmopolitan northern elite.

[Peter Davidson]