

The state of research

Cultural realities and reappraisals in English castle-study*

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Abstract

Surveying a selection of publications on English castles, particularly since the writer's 'Structural symbolism in medieval castle architecture' (1979),¹ the problem of military determinism is reviewed. Historical experience, differing from the French and the German, has made English castellology heavily technological until recently. The cultural method of architectural and art history, and of archaeology, has rarely extended to castles and been too learned to modify perceptions. Neglect of the aristocratic ethos manifested in the castellated fortified style of a wide range of 'domestic', so-called 'military' and 'religious' buildings, prior to the early modern classical revival, has been damaging. Expecting 'true castles' (compare *château-fort*) to be 'seriously defended' has forced them into the anachronistic mould of 'military architecture', imposing post-medieval stereotypes, in Britain most grievously. Narrow specialism has impeded appreciation of the castellated fusion of state, style and security. As socio-political study develops so will the risk of making 'display' and 'prestige' the new bandwagon, especially in the simplistic literature so far starved of scholarly infrastructure. By drawing together here some of the strands of the interplay of elements material and metaphysical essential to 'fortification', progress may, it is hoped, be stimulated.

Castles have a colourful, violent and romantic image compounded of atavistic brutality, militarism and Disney. They are the favourite of the self-taught discoverer and compiler, of the instinctual war-gamer and of the soldierly antiquarian. The new format of English

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* I owe Plates 1, 2, 3 and 6 to the ready generosity of Dr Arnold Taylor whose work anticipated so much and whose term as Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments was a golden age. To Beric Morley who carried on that tradition I owe Plates 9, 10 and 12; Dr Richard Muir provided Plate 5 and Anthony Emery Plate 13. Dr Philip Dixon gave permission for Plate 7, as did Dr Martin Millett for the Royal Archaeological Institute for Plates 4 and 9. Plates 8 and 11 are my own. All have benefited from the expertise of Spencer Scott of the Kent University Photographic Department. For most expert typing of a difficult manuscript, Mrs Elizabeth Dorling of Keynes College and Mrs Jean Gil have my thanks, as has Dr David Abulafia for most affirmative editorial support.

¹ C. Coulson, 'Structural symbolism', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 132 (1979), 73–90. The following notes are severely selective.

Heritage guidebook is doing much to fill the lack in Britain of the excellent, succinctly informative, French and German works of popular erudition.² English books began narrowly and, with few exceptions, have remained so. Despite the definition 'defensible lordly residences', introduced by and for the Norman Conquest, castles figure as drill-halls rather than stately homes from J.H. Round's time onwards.³ John Beeler imagined the imposition of new masters upon Anglo-Saxon lordships as a military operation of Roman type, using a strategic network of castles (1966).⁴ R. Allen Brown saw them as monuments to a new noble life-style (1954, 1976) but essentially as barracks.⁵ Stuart Rigold's caution, reviewing Brown's *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (1969), that the Norman origin of castles in England 'is still a matter of definition', remains valid;⁶ although the Royal Archaeological Institute's programme of excavations proved inconclusive.⁷ Orthodoxy was undented. Back in 1907, E.B. d'Auvergne had put it with the enthusiasm of conversion that 'the castles of England are the seals set by the Normans upon their conquest. The Anglo-Saxons ... knew not how to build forts and strongholds. The *burhs* ... it has now been ascertained were the towns themselves. No citadels were needed when Englishmen ruled Englishmen'.⁸ This dogma has persisted.

Ann Williams (1992) has firmly re-emphasised that *burhs* were also the 'private' estate-capitals of thegns, prestigiously displaying 'bellhouse' and 'burhgeat', and not only the ancient, mostly Alfredian, fortified boroughs and refuge-castles skilfully organised to resist the Danes. In calling these private *burhs* 'defensible manor houses' Williams restores balance. Their 'gate-house' was 'the most prominent feature of the defences' (only equivocally substantiated at Goltho, Lincs, and Rounds and Sulgrave, Northants). Cockfield (Bury St Edmunds) in the twelfth century had 'a wooden belfry 140 feet high'.⁹ Numerous survivals of the fashion out-dated by the motte-and-bailey or ringwork *castellum* are likely, comparable in functions to the great majority of manorial 'castles'. Orderic Vitalis' famous ascription of the English collapse to the 'extreme fewness of the works which the Gauls call castles' may be specific to the Conqueror's 1068 campaign in Northumbria; and there must be some suspicion of finding excuses by Orderic, monk of Saint Evroul but born and brought up in Shrewsbury.¹⁰ Local

² J.-F. Finó, *Forteresses de la France médiévale* (Paris, 1970); W. Hotz, *Kleine Kunstgeschichte der deutschen Burg* (Darmstadt, 1965).

³ Anonymously in *The Quarterly Review*, 179 (1894), 27–57, on G.T. Clark, *Medieval military architecture* (London, 1884); 'The castles of the Conquest', *Archaeologia*, 58 (1902), 313–40. Sidney Toy, *The castles of Great Britain* (London, 1953), and *A history of fortification from 3000 B.C. to 1700 A.D.* (London, 1955). Hugh Braun, *The English castle* (London, 1936) is more cultural.

⁴ J. Beeler, *Warfare in England 1066–1189* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966).

⁵ R.A. Brown, *English medieval castles* (London, 1954); and *English castles* (London, 1976).

⁶ *Medieval Archaeology*, 13 (1969), 292–4.

⁷ Jonathan Coad, 'Medieval fortifications ... developments in ... research', (with bibliography), in: *Building on the past*, ed. B. Vyner (Royal Archaeological Institute, 1994), 215–27 (217–8).

⁸ Edmund d'Auvergne, *The English castles* (London, 1907), p. 1. C.W. Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon military institutions on the eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1962), 140–4.

⁹ A. Williams, 'A bell-house and a burh-geat: lordly residences in England before the Norman Conquest', *Medieval Knighthood*, 4 (1992), 221–40. Paul Everson, 'What's in a name? "Goltho"', *Goltho and Bullington*, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 23 (1988), 93–9.

¹⁰ Marjorie Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis on castles', in: *Studies in medieval history presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C. Holdsworth and J. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), 47; C.W. Hollister, *The military organization of Norman England* (Oxford, 1965), 138 n.i.

leadership after Hastings, and resistance by the walled towns (not just from Exeter), were ineffectual.¹¹ The lordly mansion put out the same message of power, but it was more emphatically military after 1066; fortification always was dual-purpose. Structurally the thousand or so post-Conquest castles were no more distinct than the culture-gap. Taking 'the castle' as represented by the hundred or so which are physically impressive, ignoring the great majority, was never sound but David King's survey has made it impossible.¹² How lowly a castle could be, and how 'unscientific' its defences, he has again stressed (1988).¹³ The pioneering Ella Armitage (1912) worked on a list of only eighty-four castles by 1100, less than one-tenth of what there had been in all probability.¹⁴ Much of the vast numerical disparity with known *burhs*, like the relative rarity of Saxon masonry in churches, must be explained by the wholesale Norman, and later, rebuilding. Military fixations have suppressed the area where continuity was assuredly greatest: as Williams says 'aristocratic *burhs*, no less than Norman castles, functioned as centres of lordship to which dues and services were rendered'.¹⁵ This, not some image of a commonwealth of egalitarian 'Englishmen' pinned down by garrison-forts everywhere,¹⁶ points the way forward. Pre-Conquest work-services of *burh-bot* were latinised after it as *operatio castellorum*. Attempts to show Norman fortresses as 'private' not 'communal' and as 'seriously fortified' distort the archaeology.¹⁷ Ignoring the walled towns is a still-persistent side-effect of this somewhat misguided controversy.

Diagnosing the military syndrome at the start of the conventional British history of 'the castle' naturally re-opens the 'continuity' question. Architecture is not at all neutral. Very suggestive links between the Anglo-Saxon architectural insignia of rank and features of early Norman 'secular' towers (West Malling, Kent; and Richmond, Exeter, Ludlow, Bramber, Sherborne, Newark and Lincoln castles) made by Dr Derek Renn (1994), give substance to mere probability.¹⁸ Regarding 'castles' as new in function as well as in form has shut them off from the stylistic continuity of the Romanesque, demonstrated so clearly by churches. The Saxo-Norman period of workmanship is particularly conspicuous.¹⁹ Just how successfully the Round-Armitage-Brown school has insisted that ('true') castles were feudal, Norman and military the comparison shows: Victorian expectations of Anglo-Saxon churches were upheld in countless church-guides, but quickly and lastingly quashed in 'military architecture'. Very many 'castles'

¹¹ M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1986), 16–9.

¹² D.J.C. King, *Castellarium Anglicanum* (New York, 1983).

¹³ D. J. C. King, *The castle in medieval England and Wales*... (London, 1988), 3, 42, 47, 63.

¹⁴ E.S. Armitage, *The early Norman castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), also exaggerated the degree of 'military transformation'. Estimates surveyed by Richard Eales, 'Royal power and castles in Norman England', *Medieval Knighthood*, 3 (1990), 55, 57. Compare R.A. Brown, 'The Norman Conquest and the genesis of English castles', *Château-Gaillard*, 3 (1969), 1–14.

¹⁵ Williams, 'Burh-geat', 237. Both Sulgrave and Goltho were re-used.

¹⁶ Despite the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's epitaph on William I, D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), 372–3; compare Peterborough E for 1137, E. King, 'Introduction' to *The anarchy of King Stephen's reign* (Oxford, 1994), 1; also Chap. 2, C. Coulson, 'The castles of the anarchy' 66–92.

¹⁷ R.A. Brown, 'An historian's approach to the origins of castles in England', *Archaeological Journal*, 126 (1969), 131–46, 146–8 (reply by B.K. Davison); also 134 (1977), 1–156 (A.D. Saunders' full summary).

¹⁸ D.F. Renn, 'Burgheat and gonfanon: two sidelights from the Bayeux Tapestry', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 16 (1994), 177–98.

¹⁹ A.W. Clapham, *Romanesque architecture in western Europe* (Oxford, 1936). H.M. and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon architecture* (Cambridge, 1965).

by local repute were rejected²⁰ and the term was appropriated to mean 'a private fortress, of king or noble, ... a product of the feudal system', according to Brian O'Neil, ex-Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments (1954). He stands for many: 'the word "Castle" may be seen on English maps against all manner of different sites and buildings, some fortified, some purely (*sic*) residential, from long-abandoned prehistoric camps to pseudo-Gothic shams. The practice of the country, on which the makers of the maps relied, is no sure guide in this respect'. Centuries of popular practice were set aside. Learned topographers from Leland (1530s) and Camden onwards were wrong too; and not they alone: 'even the early chroniclers, who were the contemporaries of the first true castles, were quite indiscriminate in their use of sundry terms of description'.²¹ Sir Charles Oman (1926)²² with learned reference had said the same as O'Neil, who declared (1954) that 'it is now clear that the term "castle" should not properly be applied to any structure in the British Isles, whether of earth or stone, erected before the Conquest', five built by the Confessor's Norman *protégés* excepted. This was linguistic burglary. Deprived of stone Saxon towers (like Conisborough, c. 1190 but 'Saxon' in *Ivanhoe*) as well as of heroic native resistance (Charles Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* tried to compensate) late Victorian nationalists consoled themselves that 'our gallant Norman foes' were admirable soldiers and military engineers in the imperialist mould. French antiquarians corrected the doctrinally deviant *château* for the *époque féodale* with *château-fort*,²³ but Germany unimpressably retained medieval pluralism with the (almost interchangeable) *Burg*, *Palast*, *Festung* and *Schloss*.

Derek Renn breaks with this attitudinising. Taking the stylised masonry towers of the Bayeux Tapestry, all in English scenes, corroborated from surviving buildings and distinct from the timber motte-towers, he shows that eight early 'Norman' towers not only copied the late Anglo-Saxon fashion for 'display-towers' having large upper-storey 'doorways' opening, as Renn puts, 'into space', but did so in *castles*. Renn (heretically) associates them with the *burhgeat*. It may be noted, in passing that the very many suitable churches, towers especially, very seldom were more than symbolically 'fortified' despite the care taken over the security of shrines and valuables.²⁴ Opening up the whole question of military appurtenances in noble building down to the early Stuart period can be illuminating. Professor Anthony Quiney remarks: 'it is surely axiomatic that warfare has always been a breeding-ground for keeping up appearances, just as the lifestyle of aristocrats has been. Put the two together and appearance may become far more important than military efficiency'.²⁵ It was in castellated architecture that the two

²⁰ King, *Castellarium*, 'rejects' under counties. F. Wilkinson, *The castles of England* (London, 1973), defies the conventional scholarly definition.

²¹ B. St J. O'Neil, *Castles* (London, 1954), 1–2.

²² C. Oman, *Castles* (London, 1926), 1–5 with much cavalier citation.

²³ F. Gebelin, *The châteaux of France* (London, 1964), 15 (translator's note); it covers the eleventh century to Versailles. C. Coulson, 'Castellation in the county of Champagne in the thirteenth century', *Château-Gaillard*, 9–10 (1982), 347–64 covers original 'terminology' (353–6). J.D. Mackenzie, *The castles of England their story and structure* (London, 1897) was ambivalent, expecting castles to be of masonry.

²⁴ C. Oman, 'Security in English churches . . .', *Archaeological Journal*, 136 (1979), 90–8; also S.E. Rigold, 'The distribution of early romanesque towers to minor churches', 109–17.

²⁵ Personal communication, 14 February 1995. David Crouch, *The image of aristocracy in Britain, 1000 to 1300* (London, 1992), esp. 252–80.

were combined. Architectural history similarly gave Harry Gordon Slade grave doubts about 'the great edifice of castle studies which we have erected', questioning whether it 'would be appreciated, or even understood, by the original builders'. Much, he concluded 'may be founded in our imagination'.²⁶ Most tellingly, by a different route, Renn sees his 'towers of display', most minutely examined, as having upper apertures 'not for defence' but for some ceremony of lordly durbar, the lord of the manor elevated above his dependants assembled outside, enthroned or standing in full view. At Richmond, the former gateway converted to a keep has 'three tall openings (the central one with a plain tympanum) ... looking over the town ... straight through the wall'. They 'cannot have been meant for defence', although by tradition essential and seemingly nowhere more so than in Yorkshire. The tower-gate at Bramber (Sussex) also had 'at least two openings one metre wide and two to three metres high above the wide arch of the passageway' (this at the lordship-centre of the 'military district' or Rape). Demonstrative gateways are exceedingly ancient and persistent, of course. Here 'such galleries weakened the passive defensive capability of a gatehouse' (Plate 1). Newark and Sherborne had them too, likened by Renn to 'a box at the theatre' or 'the balcony at Buckingham Palace'. This is radical revisionism, but not so strange, in view of large exposed windows over castle gateways, niches with statues, heraldic displays and shields of arms placed where the war-gamer would expect to find an arrow loop or two. After the twelfth century, magnates may have 'preferred not to demonstrate their *dominatio* by displaying themselves from a staged setting over the castle gate'.²⁷ But they continued to do so other than *in propria persona*.

This sort of cultural permeation has long been anathema. David King's deeply reflective *The Castle in England and Wales: an interpretative history* (1988) allows that an 'Edwardian style' existed, taking as model either de Clare's Caerphilly (1268-) or some Savoyard model of James of St George's homeland, as Dr Arnold Taylor persuasively argued.²⁸ In the fourteenth century King distinguishes the (curiously less 'scientifically defensive') 'northern quadrangular style' from the round-towered southern and central version, but his concessions are reluctant.²⁹ Excluding aesthetics in the later castles is very odd. This habit of supposing a sort of arms-race driven by fear (when, most probably, emulation in fashion in technological guise was the actual incentive) is attractively mechanistic. The enigmatic mainly earthwork period passed, hypothetical advances in siegecraft are matched with putative architectural responses (square towers changing to rounded; simple entries to complex; wooden hours to stone machicolation—and all the rest). The imponderables of 'domestic' and 'religious' architecture (which have stimulated, not repressed, serious thought) are conveniently obviated. How there could be so little interaction between the politics and architecture is barely asked³⁰ and the sense of aristocratic culture, alive in J.H. Parker's *Some account of domestic*

²⁶ H.G. Slade, review of D. King's *The castle ... Fortress*, 4 (February 1990), 61–2.

²⁷ Renn, 'Burhgeat', 182–3. C. Coulson, 'Some analysis of the castle of Bodiam', *Medieval Knighthood*, 4 (1992), 79–83 and Plate 11.

²⁸ R.A. Brown, H.M. Colvin and A.J. Taylor, *The history of the king's works*, 1 (London, 1963), 203–5.

²⁹ Especially, D. King, *The castle*, Chap. 9.

³⁰ Compare Michael Prestwich, 'English castles in the reign of Edward II', *Journal of Medieval History*, 8 (1982), 159–78.

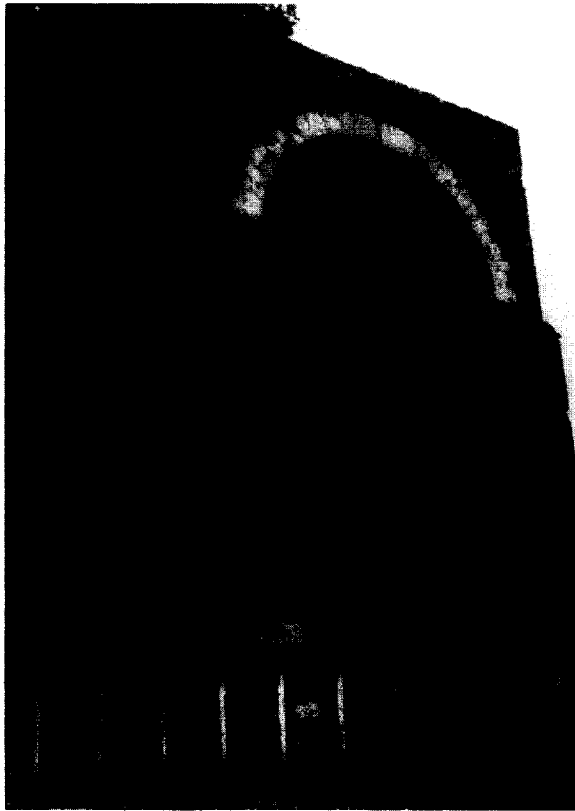


Plate 1. Exeter Castle, Devon (Arnold Taylor), gate-tower (entry now blocked) dating from the foundation of the castle within the Rougemont (1068). Only the form of the triangular heads of Anglo-Saxon type to the pair of display openings (RHS one visible—for a frontal view see Brown, *English Castles*, pl. 24) has been noted previously.

architecture . . . (1851–9), in D. MacGibbon and T. Ross's *The castellated and domestic architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (1887–92), and pre-eminently in E.E. Viollet-le-Duc's great *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française* . . . (1854–68), has been conspicuously absent, especially in books. French perspective valuably corrects insularity. To suppose castles were uniquely insulated from aesthetic ambition is nonsense. It is occasions of defensive precaution which require proof.³¹ In France especially, emblems of nobility (as arrow-slits, towers, ditches, battlements) were crucial. The castellated homes of the nobility of Champagne, abundantly documented, make the same point (1982).³² By showing (1994) that fortifications (and the largely fictitious 'adulterine castles') were at most symptom not

³¹ Coulson, 'Structural symbolism', 77–8, 81–2, 84.

³² Note 23 above; also C. Coulson, 'Hierarchism in conventual crenellation. An essay in the sociology and metaphysics of medieval fortification', *Medieval Archaeology*, 26 (1982), 69–100.

cause of the 'anarchy' of Stephen's reign, and that style still mattered most in the castles built then, the long-lasting aspersions of ecclesiastics and of Victorian teutons and monarchists can be appreciated.³³ Misrepresentation was inevitable. Drawing on preconceptions, a system of licensing of 'private fortification' was (in Richard Eales' words) 'conjured up almost from thin air' (1990).³⁴ When licences actually begin (1199) their evidently honorific and permissive character (now shown by the writer's review of the literature since 1855)³⁵ could make no headway against prejudice at all levels of comment. This is but one of many signs of the refusal to accept castles as medieval stately homes, prestigious, military in aura and some potentiality, but as harmless to the state as the *château* or the *schloss*.

When the 'Gothick' phase of Romanticism was over, contempt for all but 'real castles' set in, helped by A.W. Pugin. It inspired designs by Anthony Salvin.³⁶ English puritan taste reinforced the 'functional' view of fortification, preparing the way for Round (died 1928). Separating (medieval) 'shams' and 'follies' from 'seriously fortified military castles' still dominates the popular recreation of castle-visiting. Ironically, rebuilt Arundel, Alnwick, Belvoir, Castell Coch and company have more of the spirit of great dynastic fortress-seats like Fotheringhay, Kenilworth and Pontefract, than Walter Scott's 'Torquilstone' or Conan Doyle's 'La Brohinière' or even Viollet-le-Duc's 'Rocheport'.³⁷ Surviving castle-palaces can be more veracious than bare ruins stripped of humane associations. Positive images of castles, as patriotic instruments of national greatness (*ces forteresses autour desquelles s'est bâtie la France* was Ph. Truttmann's title, in 1967, to a soldierly survey down to Vauban³⁸), or visions of 'impregnable fortresses' furnished with all medieval conveniences, may equally mislead. The less benign image is more usual. The *château féodal*, partner in the overthrow by *l'anarchie féodale* of Carolingian unity, French historians derived from Revolution ethos plus resentful monastic chroniclers.³⁹ Pillage and destructive irreligious 'frenzy' prevail. The Peterborough E text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, nominally on 1137, is the most notorious (and influential).⁴⁰ John of Colmieu on the nobles' fashion in the Pas-de-Calais about 1130 for putting up motte-and-bailey earthworks (*castella, municipia*) and spending their time in private war is much quoted. Lambert of Ardres' still more familiar description (about 1117) of a famous timber *donjon* at his name-place emphasises rather its many rooms and majestic appearance.⁴¹ Colmieu's version has won. In Germany the 'robber baron', complete with crag-castle, filled the ideological niche. Romance of a

³⁵ C. Coulson, 'Freedom to crenellate by licence. An historiographical revision', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 86–137.

³³ Note 16 above; also C. Coulson, 'The French matrix of the castle-provisions of the Chester–Leicester conventio', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 17 (1995), 65–86.

³⁴ Note 14 above, 74. Eales' whole paper is unillusioned and wide-ranging.

³⁶ M. Girouard, *Life in the English country house* (New Haven, 1978) 244, has an example of Pugin's polemic; Chap. 2, on 'The medieval household' is important; also *The Victorian country house* (new edn, London 1979), 154–63 (on Peckforton Castle).

³⁷ E.E. Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'une forteresse* (Paris, 1874).

³⁸ Philippe Truttmann, *Archéologia*, 16, 17, 18 (1967), 64–72, 75–81, 70–7.

³⁹ R. Aubenas, 'Les châteaux-forts des x^e et xi^e siècles', *Revue Historique de Droit Français et Etranger*, 4^e ser. (1938), 548–86.

⁴⁰ Notes 16, 33 above.

⁴¹ Brown, *English medieval castles*, 28–9, 31–2 (translations).

morbid kind wants 'dungeons' and torture-chambers⁴² while masculinity demands battering-rams and boiling oil, or at least permanently 'garrisoned' and 'scientifically' murderous castles.⁴³ Very few castellologists have been women.

The English impression of the Wars of the Roses, of defeat by patriotic Tudor monarchy of 'the over-mighty subject' (including the victimised Edward Stafford with his castellated but licensed palace of Thornbury⁴⁴), has illuminating French resonances. In their larger perspective, the ancient *castra* of Gallo-Roman provinces (*ceaster* to the English, *caer* to the Welsh) made castles almost immemorial in France. The French books do not start by explaining after the Latin derivation how completely irrelevant it is. 'Castles' became Carolingian episcopal and comital cities, some walled monasteries and a slowly-increasing number of *neufs-châteaux*, legitimate and official for the most part.⁴⁵ Pressured ecclesiastical first-comers left with declining royal protection, like Abbot Suger of St Denis, influential biographer of Louis VI, together with most modern historians, denounced this 'new plague of castle-building'.⁴⁶ Since 'privilege' is imagined to have ended in 1789 and the castellated mansion outlasted the Ancien Régime (the first in England modified mildly by the Civil War, and the latter more drastically by 'slighting' in 1642–60 and by Palladian classicism), the two diverged. The late medieval fortified fashion in France absorbed the Renaissance so that militant lordly architecture (muted in England but quite ebullient in Scotland⁴⁷) blossomed into Blois, Chambord, Azay-le-Rideau and company. Castles in England, despite persistent revivalism⁴⁸ (in the north by Lady Anne Clifford until she died in 1676) degenerated mostly into 'old ruins which Cromwell knocked about a bit'. Until the barbaric image was redeemed by Gothick nostalgia (e.g. Inverary Castle, Argyll) 'polite architecture' was Grecian pastiche with perhaps only a sunken ha-ha to defend the park with decent invisibility. Despite 'unpatriotic' nobles during the Wars of Religion (1562–98) and punitive demolitions by Henri IV and Richelieu (1598–1643)—at Rohan's Josselin, four towers and the donjon went down (1629), as the Cardinal remarked, 'like skittles'⁴⁹—fortification remained. The mansions of the *noblesse* put on some veneer of classicism but did not repudiate the panoply of towers, high-pitched roofs, battlements, machicolation, gun-loops, bartizans and seignorial *panache*. *Seigneur*, *Herr* and Scottish laird

⁴² Robustly denounced by Brown, 'Some observations on the Tower of London', *Archaeological Journal*, 136 (1979), 99–108 (106–8).

⁴³ I.V. Hogg, *Fortress. A history of military defence* (London, 1975); M. Brice, *Forts and fortresses* (Oxford, 1990)—'never forget that this architecture is designed to kill people—or at least to keep certain people alive long enough for them to kill other people' etc. (p. 4).

⁴⁴ A.D.K. Hawkyard, 'Thornbury Castle', *Bristol and Glos. Archaeological Society Transactions*, 95 (1978), 51–8.

⁴⁵ Aubenas, 'Les châteaux-forts'. C. Coulson, 'Fortresses and social responsibility in late-Carolingian France', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 4 (1976), 29–36.

⁴⁶ 1148, Council of Reims; C. Coulson, 'Fortress-policy in Capetian tradition and Angevin practice...', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 6 (1984), 17 and generally 13–38.

⁴⁷ D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *The castellated and domestic architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Edinburgh, 1887–92). Stewart Cruden, *The Scottish castle* (London, 1960), Chap. 4–7; similarly, H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 1951).

⁴⁸ Maurice Howard, *The early Tudor country house. Architecture and politics 1490–1550* (London, 1987), 22–3, 43–50. Matthew Johnson, 'Meanings of polite architecture in sixteenth century England', *Historical Archaeology*, 26 (1992), 45–56.

⁴⁹ François Enaud, *Les châteaux forts* (Paris, 1958), 84.

never ceased to live in castles of some kind. In Europe at large castles kept the reputation of the stately home.

Recent reappraisals have sensed that English castellology has been isolated, introverted, narrowly technological and aberrant. Motivational building-analysis has been the central theme, not confronting but disregarding monocausal 'fields of fire', 'enfilading', 'killing grounds', 'dead ground', 'vertical defence', 'passive strength' and *id genus omne*. Political studies are still lamentably few. What can be done was shown by Michael Prestwich, in this Journal, on castles and their (very marginal) role in Edward II's reign (1982); and by Richard Eales on 'Castles and politics in England 1215–1224' (1988), and especially his 'Royal power and castles in Norman England' (1990).⁵⁰ As yet no general reconsideration has appeared despite such sensitive appreciations as H. Gordon Slade's on Broughton Castle (Oxford, 1978) of the synthesis of stylistic ambience, domestic state and defensive allure.⁵¹ If a new simplicism is not to replace the old, popularisation must be at the high level exemplified in later socio-architectural interpretation by Dr Mark Girouard.⁵²

Patrick Faulkner's important contribution in the 1960s was to work from the domestic kernel outwards, showing the dominant autonomy of residential design based on hall, chamber and 'offices'. His level of architectural proof far exceeds that which sustains David King's ascription of the later-twelfth and thirteenth-century towered 'trace' to 'enfilading fire' (by the crossbow). Faulkner, although deferential to the 'scientific fortification' hypothesis, had no need of it. His replicated standard lodgings fill the interiors of keeps (Hedingham, Middleham), later gatehouses (Harlech, Kidwelly) and enceintes (Chepstow, Corfe, Bolton, Bodiam) exactly as with the courtyard house.⁵³ Towered curtilage and apartments, combined in the 'keep' and in the later tower-house, took time to be integrated so that David King can note that 'thirteenth-century castles, even the best' (*sic*) were (seemingly) 'designed as defences in the first place and ... their houses put inside as an afterthought'⁵⁴—but interior timber structures required, and modifications falsely suggest, this priority. Conway's site dictated its rare and famous bent great hall. Early thirteenth-century multangular plans (Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bolingbroke) gave way to the defensively inferior quadrangle. The licences to crenellate show the castle was 'a house fortified'. What 'fortification' meant at fourteenth and fifteenth-century Haddon Hall (Derbs) Faulkner shows still influenced the early Stuart rebuilding of nearby Bolsover. Only the hall and chamber plan (whether of upper or twin-hall type, or the more enduring ground-floor hall and chamber-block) was earlier and outlasted (but not in France) the castellated noble house, which knew nothing of our categories

⁵⁰ Notes 14, 30 above. Eales, 'Castles and politics . . .', *Thirteenth Century England*, 3 (1988), 23–43. Also, D. Aldred, *Castles and cathedrals: the architecture of power 1066–1550* (Cambridge, 1993); compare A. Châtelain, *Châteaux forts; images de pierre des guerres médiévales* (Paris, 1991).

⁵¹ H.G. Slade, 'Broughton Castle', *Archaeological Journal*, 135 (1978), 138–94; also, 'Glamis Castle 1371–1626', *Château-Gaillard*, 16 (1994), 233–9.

⁵² Note 36 above. Also Marcus Binney, 'Bolton Castle, Yorks.', *Country Life*, 185 (1992), 60–3, among other articles.

⁵³ P.A. Faulkner, 'Domestic planning from the twelfth to the fourteenth century', *Archaeological Journal*, 115 (1958), 150–83; also 'Haddon Hall and Bolsover Castle', 118 (1961), 188–205; and 'Castle planning in the fourteenth century', 120 (1963), 215–35.

⁵⁴ D. King, *The castle*, 149.

'military' and 'domestic', nor separation of 'castles', 'fortified manor-houses', 'palaces' and 'manor-houses', but recognised only gradations in status, responsibilities and in wealth.⁵⁵

Studying Corfe and Chepstow (1963) Faulkner puts aside 'the form taken by the defences as such, ... enlarged as a result of the increasing domestic demands of the 13th century rather than to achieve any improvement in military fortification'.⁵⁶ This almost cracks the mould. His system is autonomous: examining communicating doors, provision of fireplaces, latrines and lighting, to distinguish lodgings 'for a number of households all of noble rank dominated by one of even superior station'. Resident administrators, visits by the lord or deputy, and guest accommodation are all discerned, but not 'garrisons'. Except for the *Ordensburgen* in Prussia, Spain and the Holy Land, castles lacked barracks as obviously as parade-grounds. Tower-rooms might be ambiguous. Faulkner considers the site at Caerphilly allowed the inner ward 'to assume a geometrical form dictated by the latest military techniques', as also at Beaumaris (1295–). Goodrich (Herefs.) extensively rebuilt early next century, although 'equipped to serve as the headquarters of a civil (*sic*) lordship', still had 'an essentially military form, skilfully combined in a single building clearly seen as a whole'.⁵⁷ As an Ancient Monuments architect, ideology was as insidious as always. Just why at Bolton-in-Wensleydale (licensed 1379) the political environment should have changed to allow domestic planning to predominate, he does not ask; nor regarding Bodiam (1385) is any political input suggested.⁵⁸ Both freely and without constraint cultivate regional versions of the castle-manner, both on a hill-side and without defensive loops; Bolton with no moat or flanking, and Bodiam with a shallow pond and much more display but no secondary security (Coulson, 1992). It has a fragile earthen bank not the superbly engineered dam, with hemicycle buttresses and spurred towers, which retains the north and south lakes at Caerphilly.⁵⁹ Only by such exceptional standards can the muted castellation at the archiepiscopal palaces Faulkner analyses at Southwell, Sherburn (licensed for 'a fortalice' as Rest Park, 1383), Gainsborough and Knole be termed 'domestic'.⁶⁰ That the courtyard house coexisted with 'the castle' tends to be overlooked, but it was not so much 'a rival' as Dr Michael Thompson suggests (1987) as a subtly-differentiated companion.⁶¹ They were different expressions of the same 'martial face'.

Reappraisal has particularly focused on the 'keep'. Whole castles have lagged behind. Few, if any 'fortifications' have been more residential or lasted longer than the 'great tower', *donjon* or tower house,⁶² yet it was a dominant early form of castle and evolved

⁵⁵ Pierre Héliot, 'Le château de Boulogne-sur-mer et les châteaux gothiques de plan polygonal', *Revue Archéologique*, 6^e ser., 27 (1947), 41–59.

⁵⁶ *Archaeological Journal*, 120 (1963), 218–20, 222–5, 235.

⁵⁷ Page references in previous note.

⁵⁸ Notes 27, 101; also Nigel Saul, 'Bodiam Castle', *History Today*, 45 (January 1995), 16–21.

⁵⁹ C.N. Johns, *Caerphilly Castle* (Cardiff, 1978), perhaps the finest of the old 'blue' HMSO guides; compare J.G. Coad, *Castle Acre* (London 1984).

⁶⁰ P.A. Faulkner, 'Some medieval archiepiscopal palaces', *Archaeological Journal*, 127 (1970), 130–146.

⁶¹ M.W. Thompson, *The decline of the castle* (Cambridge, 1987), Chap. 4.

⁶² The term 'keep' is early modern, despite use at Guines 1375–6, see J.R. Kenyon and M.W. Thompson in: *Medieval Archaeology*, 38 (1994), 175–6.

exactly when, in the post-Conquest era, castles are expected to have been most military. It is odd that the airy vastness of a Blenheim Palace or a Castle Howard is accepted as homely while the not much less splendid (or draughty) and quite as well-appointed apartments, both public and intimate, of the keep are taken to be a sort of bunker or last refuge. King (1988) blames 'the great G.T. Clark' (1884) for 'propagating this mistake', admitting that 'the more primitive Norman keep was merely a lofty and massively-built dwelling-house', but he retains the term for separately-defensible later units (towers and gatehouses) while hard-put to gloss over their rarity.⁶³ Romanticism may be more to blame than Clark. To Viollet-le-Duc (1854), *Les donjons Normands* were 'lodgings, more or less well-defended, put up by cunning and mistrust: small devices are piled up to put off (*dérouter*) the assaillant; they are wild beasts' lairs (*tanières*) rather than buildings'.⁶⁴ He (exaggeratedly, alas) contrasts their 'crafty savage' element with such astonishingly sophisticated towers as Coucy. In Britain, Pembroke (c. 1200) would serve. Thick walls are always cited, but great height without cathedral dynamics, external batter (for stability) and internal offsets (for floors), as well as sometimes a honeycomb of mural chambers, stairs and windows, not 'passive defence', required thickness. It may be that 'putting everything under one roof ... implies some degree of defence' (Thompson 1991⁶⁵), but it also reduced costs, heating and inconvenience. Kitchens are often hard to identify and horses could not be brought inside, while Thompson's classification of keeps measuring internally less than 33 feet (10 m) as 'solar keeps', on the assumption that they were ancillary to a great hall and comprised the lord's chamber-block,⁶⁶ accepts that these were not self-contained. Wells inside show only concern to alleviate a diet of dried stockfish, legumes and meat, if ale or wine ran out. Basement pits (as at Rochester) were a by-product of deep foundations. Some rough comfort, even luxury, with fireplaces or braziers, windows shuttered, tapestries hung and partitions to reduce draughts, with 'garderobes' and mural cubicles (and a chapel) near at hand, must be preferred to Viollet-le-Duc's rude lair of the noble savage (whether *Normand* or not).⁶⁷

The image has been left behind by the archaeology. It is now agreed that the (Gallic) first-floor hall with external staircase and porch (such as the Bayeux Tapestry depicts as Harold's at Bosham⁶⁸) was the progenitor of the keep, but war not fashion is credited. The upper-hall house continued until after 1200 (Christchurch, Boothby Pagnell) as, for much longer, did the hall and chamber residence.⁶⁹ One such, as early perhaps as the mid-tenth-century at Doué-la-Fontaine, took on a more militant form: 'a princely, stone-built but unfortified (*sic*) ground-floor hall of c. 900, having been burnt out in war,

⁶³ D. King, *The castle*, 4, 188–92; Clark, see note 3 above.

⁶⁴ *Dictionnaire ... de l'architecture*, Vol. 5, 80, art. *donjon*; compare Viollet's *Essai sur l'architecture militaire au moyen âge* (Paris, 1854), 84–90.

⁶⁵ *Fortress*, 12 (1991), 16.

⁶⁶ M.W. Thompson, *The rise of the castle* (Cambridge, 1991), 64–5.

⁶⁷ Tom McNeill, *English Heritage book of castles* (London, 1992), Chap. 3, 'The inner household', is better; John Burke, *Life in the castle in medieval England* (London, 1978), is less good. E.E. Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français ...* (Paris, 1858–75), is still valuable for aristocratic *mœurs* and accoutrements.

⁶⁸ Frank Stenton, and others, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (2nd edn, London, 1965), Plate 4.

⁶⁹ Margaret Wood, *The English mediaeval house* (London, 1965), 18–9, Chap. 2.

was converted into a defensive but residential strong-tower or donjon by the addition of an upper storey; its entrance now at first-floor level (and covered by a timber forebuilding) . . .⁷⁰ Langeais, whether an altered first-floor hall or an early (about 1017) 'thin-walled' or 'proto-' keep (to use Thompson's terms), is another ambivalent structure so far discovered. Two elements may be coalescing: as Thompson puts it—'the castle might be regarded as either a temporary aberration or as the culmination of ... the aristocratic culture ... of the hall'—a striking departure from military orthodoxy.⁷¹ The stairway itself, both its elaboration and prominence deserve attention.⁷² In his *The Image of Aristocracy*, Professor Crouch comments on the 'stately staircase' entirely within the richly adorned forebuilding of the squat 'hall-keep' at Castle Rising (after 1138, Plate 2). The stairway 'appears designed to allow the sorts of procession which might be marshalled by ushers with their wands'. It rises gently, broad spacious and dignified (half-way, through an enriched archway, with doors and spy-slot to the floor above) to an antechamber. 'From this an impressive, tall door leads into the hall. There one would turn to face the earl; the place for his chair is framed by a tall alcove in the wall behind'.⁷³ Very different this from the idea of elevation and right-angle turn frustrating battering-rams. At Archbishop Corbeil's 'egregious tower' of Rochester (1127–) the stepped ramp turns twice, once by an outer archway with porter's niche, then after rising open to the sky crosses a bridge-pit to enter a well-lit vestibule before turning again

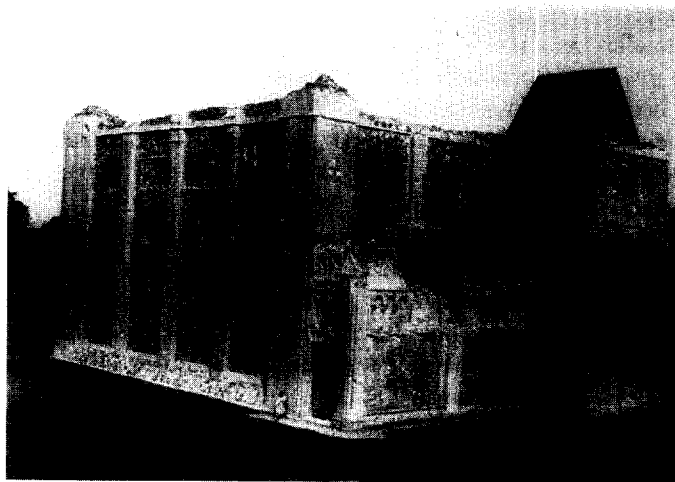


Plate 2. Keep, Castle Rising, Norfolk (Arnold Taylor). The ornately screened ceremonial stairway of the palace of William de Albini, probably celebrating his marrying Henry I's widowed queen (1138) and his elevation to earldom (1139), rising to the *piano nobile* of state apartments via a well-lit antechamber in the originally two-storey forebuilding (an elaborated porch).

⁷⁰ Brown, *English castles*, 24, citing Michel de Bouard, 'De l'aula au donjon. Les fouilles de la motte de la Chapelle à Doué la Fontaine . . .', *Archéologie Médiévale*, 3–4 (1973–4).

⁷¹ *Rise of the castle*, 12; his new work on Halls is eagerly awaited.

⁷² For the ceremonies of the *perron* see Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire . . . de l'architecture*, Vol. 7, 115–21.

⁷³ Crouch, *Image of aristocracy*, 262.

(under a rare early portcullis) into the lower hall (Plate 3). What necessity might reduce at a late 'pele tower' to an unceremonious ladder,⁷⁴ at Newcastle (1172–7) and at Dover (1180–90) was truly regal, grandiloquently going up to the second floor. Dover's grand *perron*, interrupted by bridge-pit, chapel, well-place and 'guard-room' at the landings, has an inconspicuous (well-barred but 'weak') service doorway at its foot opening directly into the ground floor. It is now accepted as original.⁷⁵

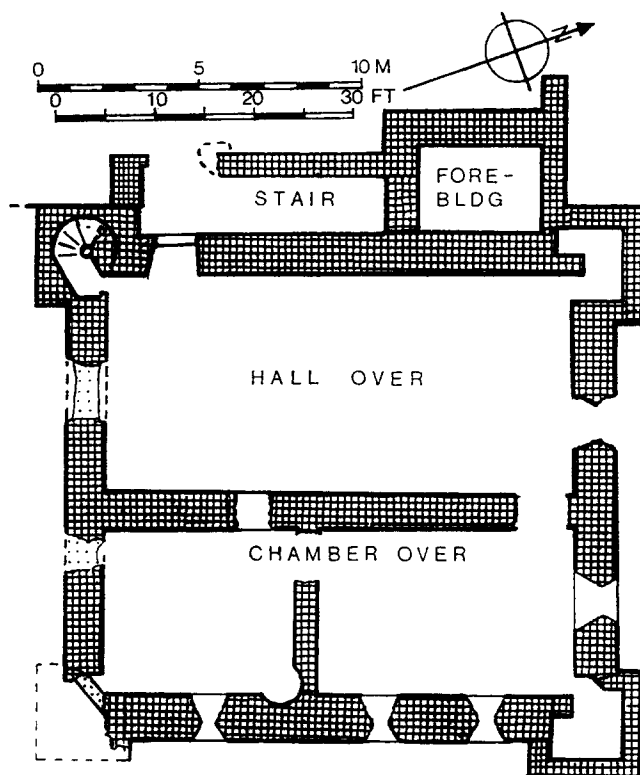
Some crucial early keeps, before the type and its lordly impact became established, turn out to be most eclectic—turriform halls of audience (Chepstow, Norham); a 'country-house' (Castle Acre); manor-house-like (Bletchingley, Eynsford—to which must be added Walmer, with stair rebuilt as a forebuilding quite early; Plate 4); and several certainly or probably modified so drastically later as equally to defy conventional



Plate 3. Keep, Rochester Castle, Kent (Arnold Taylor), visually dominating both cathedral and Medway crossing. The original ramped entry has now been reinstated, supplanting the hacked-through doorway (lower LHS). The forebuilding contains the vestibule with chapel above. Original parapets have joist holes for bratticing, 113 feet from the ground. The turrets rise to 125 feet.

⁷⁴ W.D. Simpson, 'The tower-houses of Scotland', in: *Studies in building history*, ed. E.M. Jope (London, 1961), 229–42, as in his other work (see Coulson, 'Bodiam' 1992, 64–6) emphasises 'defence' but does not ignore cultural factors.

⁷⁵ Brown, Colvin, Taylor, *King's Works*, Vol. 1, 74; R.A. Brown, *Dover Castle guide* (London, 1966), 20; formerly believed to be one of the alterations by Henry V.



Walmer Old Manor House

Plate 4. Plan by S.E. Rigold (*Archaeological Journal*, 126, 1969, 217) of what the author and M.W. Thompson identify as another early twelfth-century 'proto-keep'. The exterior southern opening from the Chamber undercroft (with double-splay windows) was a doorway (drawbar-hole and socket). The forebuilding is shown as though bonded to the N. turret because a large beech tree covers the angle precluding investigation, see note 76. (Reproduced by permission of the Royal Archaeological Institute.)

classification (Norham, Portchester, Pevensey, London, Colchester).⁷⁶ Even Chilham (1170–5) has an early and enigmatic hall partly beneath it.⁷⁷ The entire summit of Hedingham (about 1142) Dr Philip Dixon and Pamela Marshall have interpreted as a dummy, the upper walls (among oddities, no window-glazing or shutters) screening the pyramidal roof to the sumptuous hall of audience below, so that the whole splendid tower, with a 'perhaps defended entrance', provided 'a pair of grand reception rooms'

⁷⁶ M.W. Thompson, 'Keep or country house...', and 'A suggested dual origin for keeps', *Fortress*, 12 (February 1992) and 15 (November 1992). Walmer had a (second) ground floor door (not clear in S.E. Rigold, *Archaeological Journal*, 126 (1969), 215–7 Fig. 10: see plate 4) towards the coeval church. Fonmon (Glam.) and Athenry (Co. Galway) have later oblong 'keeps' (Clark, *Military architecture*, Vol. 2, 49–50; Leask, *Irish castles*, 36–9).

⁷⁷ Renn, 'Burhgeat', 179 notes 15, 18.

for the newly-created earl of Oxford.⁷⁸ Even if there was an inhabitable garret, the view that here, and at Norham, visitors were ushered by way of the public hall to the lord's presence above (or, at Hedingham to view him sitting in state from the mezzanine gallery; Plate 5) rings true despite the 'considerable eccentricity to the modern mind that so costly a work should be constructed for show alone'. If the stupendous gigantism and verticality of the Norman rebuilds of the great churches (e.g. Durham, Winchester, Peterborough, Norwich) are remembered there can be no surprise, nor that so 'unmilitary' a building should be due to the notorious Anarchy.

Of all the features of the later twelfth-century *donjon* the most strenuously attributed to defence has been the change from the rectangular to the multangular and then circular plan. It began earlier in France, but hostile sappers not fashion are held responsible. In *The History of the King's Works* (1963), Dover (typically and nonsensically) is 'like a conventional battleship in the atomic age ... obsolete almost as soon as built'.⁷⁹ In reality, the 'blind area' has been ours (none at Rochester thanks to the provision for hounds), but Richard I receives due credit for 'scientific' enlightenment at Château Gaillard, where

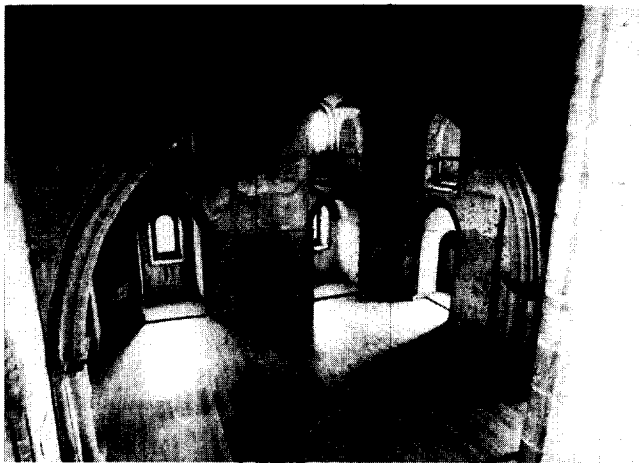


Plate 5. Keep of Hedingham Castle, Essex (Richard Muir). Hall of audience on the second floor, seen as a less-favoured visitor would have from the viewing- and lighting-gallery, which resembles the triforium passages of many contemporary (and later) great churches. The tower was probably built by Aubrey de Vere III after his elevation (after July 1141) to the earldom of Oxford.

⁷⁸ P.W. Dixon and P. Marshall, 'The great tower at Hedingham castle: a reassessment', *Fortress* 18 (August 1993), 16–23; also 'The great tower in the twelfth century: the case of Norham castle', *Archaeological Journal*, 150 (1993), 410–32. Dr Marshall's thesis on early towers will be most valuable. On Hedingham compare D.F. Renn, *Norman castles in Britain* (London, 1968), 202–4. Renn further comments (letter 25 February 1995) that Dixon and Marshall are 'carrying symbolism too far' in view of the cost of the upper works. He prefers 'to explain it as a change of plan... so that the top floor was abandoned'. The photogrammetric survey in progress may help.

⁷⁹ Brown, Colvin, Taylor, *King's Works*, Vol. 1, 75, 77. Fougères keep, though circular, was destroyed by Henry II in 1166 (*King's Works*, 77 note 2).

political circumstances prove the almost defensive single-mindedness of the ruins.⁸⁰ 'Display' was no less 'functional'. Modern analogies of ostentation, like the Porsche behind wrought-iron gates on the deeply-gravelled drive, are apt only as 'conspicuous consumption'. To the new Norman ruling-class, slipping into the shoes of Anglo-Saxon thegns, earls, abbots and bishops (much as they did in Sicily, Antioch and Jerusalem) grandiose rebuilding compelled obedience and respect—and proclaimed how unworthy those shoes were. Stupendous churches exerted no physical coercion and the force of castles, at all levels, impressing dependants so as to enlarge local influence, serving the machinery of lord-tenant relations ('court' occasions, major ceremonial feasts—not 'banqueting'), was primarily moral suasion, comparable to that of the classical 'power house'.⁸¹ Separating 'castles' from the ubiquitous array of turiform and castellated building appeals to the soldier in us all, but is like a keen aviator insisting that ostriches, kiwis and penguins are not really birds.

A catholic expertise in art history has made a very different approach obvious to T.A. Heslop. Analysing the supposedly 'transitional' multangular keep at Orford (1166–73; Plate 6), he noted (1991) the lack of any 'strong tradition ... for discussing the planning, iconography and aesthetics of ... secular architecture'.⁸² Castles and houses have been 'segregated ... as tools or vehicles of policy', making the 'high culture' of ecclesiastical art seem remote from 'the uncongenial surroundings of a rough, even brutal, environment'. This 'caricature has had a serious effect on our understanding of the Middle Ages as a whole'. He roundly asserts that 'any notion that castles constitute a homogeneous building type is erroneous'. The conjoined 'communal hall and ... private chamber' of the 'country house' (keep) at Castle Acre, no less than FitzStephen's style *arx palatinum* for the White Tower (London; apt also for Norwich and Castle Rising) agree with Orford. Militarism nevertheless persists. While aware that thick walls were meant to impress contemporaries (as they do us) and here contained chambers ancillary to the two principal halls and contrived at intermediate levels; and recognising that the three turrets' 'flanking loops' are mere windows, Heslop still accepts Allen Brown's motive (1950) of confrontation with Bigod's castles of Bungay and Framlingham, restored to the earl in 1165;⁸³ but he does emphasise the commercial value of the port and haven for new development. Whatever defensive emphasis may have lain in the now-vanished square-towered enclosure (resembling Dover's *cingulum*), Heslop rejects the doctrine that the keep was designed to resist 'attackers wielding pick and bore' (Brown). Dover's Avranches Tower shows that sophisticated arrow-loops could be thought necessary occasionally, to supplement wall-top defence;⁸⁴ but, as David King concedes, 'the castle-builders of the eleventh and early (*sic*) twelfth centuries knew, or could very easily have found out, a lot more about military science than they cared for or needed to use'.⁸⁵ Abstention goes very much further: rare use of the classical portcullis. King cites

⁸⁰ F.M. Powicke, *The loss of Normandy* (Manchester, 1960), esp. Chap. 7.

⁸¹ M. Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, Chap. 1.

⁸² T.A. Heslop, 'Orford Castle, nostalgia and sophisticated living', *Architectural History*, 34 (1991), 36–58.

⁸³ R.A. Brown, 'Framlingham castle and Bigod 1154–1216', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 25 (1950), 127–48.

⁸⁴ D.F. Renn, 'The Avranches traverse at Dover castle', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 84 (1969), 79–92.

⁸⁵ King, *The castle*, 90; also 5, 10–11, 43, 71, 103, 150.



Plate 6. Keep of Orford Castle, Suffolk (A.J. Taylor) built for Henry II before those of Newcastle and Dover. Not an abortive experimental 'military' design but a lesser capital-seat with compact but copious accommodation of supreme architectural elegance. The composite canted lintel to the entry, and rectilinear door-case, may be studiously non-ecclesiastical. Windows are proportioned to the rooms they light, narrow ones sufficing for 'garderobes', bed-chambers and stairways.

but not the really effective and rounded flanking towers familiar from the late Roman forts of the Saxon Shore, two of which made outer enclosures to castles. Exaggerated versions of these bastions were added to the keep at Pevensey, but Norman work at Portchester (and elsewhere) ignored their 'military' advantages. The problem is crucial: general nonchalance prior to 1126 (or, perhaps, 1154) when defence *should* have mattered; and later, either a paranoia beyond all reasonable precaution, or the taste for martial exercises shown in jousting and tournaments spilling over into militant architecture, must be proposed.⁸⁶ That occasional fighting imbued with this adventurous spirit should have slanted a universally propagandist architecture in this way (and to a

⁸⁶ Coulson, 'Structural symbolism', 73–8; also 'Bodiam' (1992), 89–94, 99–102, 'Castles of chivalry' were not solely late-medieval, despite Colin Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982), Chap. 7, 8.

quite steadily increasing degree) would be entirely unsurprising. What cannot be accepted is the traditional mechanistic hypothesis.

Heslop has absolutely no need of it for his analysis of the princely accommodation of Orford, designed for 'sophisticated living' and some nostalgia; 'very cleverly thought through' and fully equipped with latrines (as usual), kitchen (perhaps two), fireplaces, many private rooms, a rainwater cistern with probably gravity-fed piped supply, in addition to a well, and an ingenious built-in 'night-storage heater' in the screen wall to the main flue 'running up the block'. Amenities of chapel and small basement prison cell were quite routine. If Orford competed with Bigod's coeval rectangular keep at Bungay it was in the elegance of its solution of complex problems of solid geometry, set off by the relatively 'rustic' trio of rectangular turrets. Conventional fantasies about newel stairways Heslop alludes to quite robustly: 'there is clearly no concern here with the narrowness that might inhibit the circulation of invading forces'. Windows are liberally shuttered and retiring rooms given doors against draughts and smells from the 'garderobes'. The diagnostic absence of any 'heavy bolting device ... except at the main entrance and (notably) of the entrance to the second-floor hall' calls for some reflections on 'public management' rather than waverings about defence-potential, even if admitted not to be 'the main aim'. The unusually satisfying geometric and mathematical proportional analysis, the discussion (perhaps excessively ecclesiological) of the iconography of the sculptured details, and the consideration of possible Arthurian, Byzantine and Hohenstaufen allusions (especially the dome-effect of the reconstructed conical timber roof visible above the main battlements) do rare and belated justice to this most refined seignorial dwelling-tower, undoubtedly 'as "iconographically" resonant as any contemporary ecclesiastical structure'.⁸⁷ To provide his sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk with so exalted a working-base, and himself and a small court with such well-appointed castle-form lodgings, entirely agrees with the tastes of Henry II. Spur-buttressed Conisborough (about 1190) was his bastard son Hamelin's version in the new fashion exemplified by Pembroke (c. 1200) and numerous, especially Welsh, round *donjons*. Newcastle-on-Tyne was somewhat, and Dover much less economical, both more conventionally regal than Orford, but all three defensive as a by-product only of Henry's imperial design.⁸⁸ That Dover was to be the citadel of the castle attacked twice in 1216 by the French and the rebel barons was beyond even royal nightmares when the keep was built.

What can be inferred from French fortress-customs (especially 'rendability' and licensing) is amply confirmed by the English 'licences to crenellate': castles were seldom a danger to royal power and the king's attitude to them was *laissez faire*.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Heslop, 'Orford castle', 36, 38, 42, 54; compare reconstruction of roof (Fig. 7, p. 53) with similar interpretation by Terry Ball (McNeill, *Castles*, plate 6—whole tower).

⁸⁸ Brown *et al.*, *King's Works*, Vol. 2, 745–8, 769–71; R.A. Brown, 'Royal castle-building in England 1154–1216', *English Historical Review*, 276 (1955), 353–98; also, Brown, 'A list of castles 1154–1216', 291 (1959), 249–80. For political context compare Eales, 'Royal power and castles'; also Coulson, 'Fortress-policy', 13–5, 22–3, 32–6.

⁸⁹ Coulson, 'Freedom to crenellate' (1994); also 'Fortress-policy' (1984); 'Castles of the anarchy' (1994); 'Castellation in Champagne' (1982); 'Castle-provisions' (1995). C. Coulson, *Seignorial fortresses in France in relation to public policy c. 864 to c. 1483*, Ph.D. thesis, London University (February 1972); summary in 'Rendability and castellation in medieval France', *Château-Gaillard*, 6 (1973), 59–67; see also R.W. Kaeuper, *War, justice and public order ...* (Oxford, 1988), 211–25, drawing on *Seignorial fortresses*.

Militarily they are exaggerated. Ecclesiastical precinct castellation, ignored by almost all writers since Hamilton Thompson (1912) because of its supposedly 'non-military' character, was explored in 1982 and the urban aspects very recently.⁹⁰ Many towns continually obtained 'murage' grants allowing them to tax market-goods. Over twenty, often opportunistically or in pursuit of legal advantage, also obtained 'licences to crenellate', both, in almost all cases, without any defensive imperative (most notably Coventry). Since potentially protective works resulted from a variety of prestige motives, including aesthetic ambition, status-emulation and lifestyle, most usually neither reacting to nor anticipating any attack, accurate and searching architectural examination must be combined with political and personal information in any proper investigation of motives.⁹¹ Manning levels are crucial, 'garrisons' (not caretakers) were costly and rare. Rejection of the 'red in tooth and claw' caricature must not lead to accepting the other extreme: the *Ideengeschichte* exemplified by Armin Tuulse's *Castles of the Western World* (1958).⁹² If fortifications were not summoned out of the ground by 'military science' activated by fear, nor were they materialised by pure symbolism. While aware of the delusions of conceptualism and tackling the psychology of walls and boundaries of all kinds and periods with great intellectual vigour, the outline by Ross Samson (1992) of an autonomous metaphysical sociology of enclosures is unduly schematic.⁹³

The fruitful alternative to military fundamentalism is the sort of politico-architectural interpretation applied by Dr Philip Dixon to the special case of Knaresborough keep.⁹⁴ Far too early to be explained away by the scenario of 'decline', this ornate and hitherto enigmatic pentagonal tower, seventeen miles west of York, incorporates 'a deliberate element of theatrical propaganda which explains otherwise perplexing details in its design'. Its predecessor was extravagantly cleared away in 1307–8. Despite partial demolition after the Civil War ('slighting' and the Civil War 'sieges' have reinforced the military myth⁹⁵) enough remains to refute the impossible explanations of the enormous first-floor window (Plate 7). This feature, and the four virtually undefended entries from the bailey to the almost separate vaulted basement and ground-floor service rooms, rule out the notion that the keep has 'the great strength . . . of a strong towerhouse'. By contrast Dixon very convincingly ascribes the ceremonial stairway to the throne room to

⁹⁰ A.H. Thompson, *Military architecture in England during the middle ages* (Oxford, 1912), 301–8; Coulson, 'Conventual crenellation' (1982); C. Coulson, 'Battlements and the bourgeoisie. Municipal status and the apparatus of urban defence in later medieval England', *Medieval Knighthood*, 5 (1995).

⁹¹ P. W. Dixon, 'From hall to tower. The change in seigneurial houses on the Anglo-Scottish border after c. 1250', *Thirteenth Century England*, 4 (1992), 85–107; sensitive, but misled on licences to crenellate.

⁹² Not well served by the translator: A. Tuulse, *Castles of the Western World* (London, 1958), but with a wide bibliography and well illustrated.

⁹³ Ross Samson, 'Knowledge, constraint, and power in inaction: the defenseless medieval wall', *Historical Archaeology*, 26 (1992), 26–44.

⁹⁴ P.W. Dixon, 'The donjon of Knaresborough: the castle as theatre', *Château-Gaillard*, 14 (1990), 121–39. Brown, *et al.*, *King's Works*, Vol. 2, 689–90, call it 'evidently . . . a strongly fortified self-contained residence of a kind not uncommon in the fifteenth century, but most unusual in the early fourteenth'. This vicarious ego-trip cost Edward II £2,174; compare the stupendous *tour d'orgueil* of Largoët, Enaud, *Châteaux forts*, 87.

⁹⁵ Thompson, *Decline*, App. 3 (179–185), listing 150 places (including 38 towns), for 'Parliamentary demolition, proposed or executed, 1642–60'.

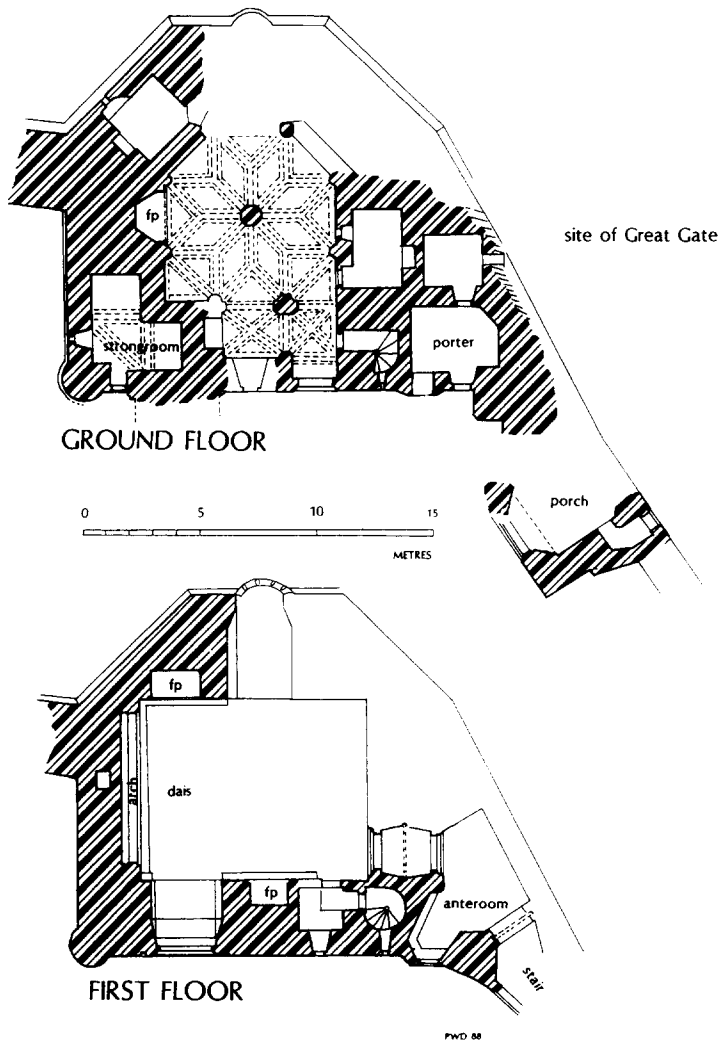


Plate 7. Plans of Knaresborough Keep, Yorks, by P. W. Dixon, showing the elaborately vaulted ground floor attendants' hall, with direct outside and upward access, fireplace and chamber. The 'strongroom' and porter's lodge are separately accessible from the courtyard. Despite destruction of part of the outer portion of the tower (built 1309–12), the contrastingly elaborate access to the first floor presence chamber has been clearly elucidated by Dr Dixon.

Edward II's aim to set up his *protégé* Piers Gaveston in the lordship as new-made lord of Knaresborough and earl of Cornwall. The previous keep (certainly 'stronger') lacked the necessary *éclat*. Gaveston's tenant or suitor would enter the 'gracefully vaulted gatepassage', linking the two baileys, mount 'by a (probably) broad set of gentle steps, covered in elaborate vaulting', and at the top pause 'in an ante- or waiting-room, lit by a fine window, provided with seats around its walls, and perhaps heated by a fireplace in

the missing eastern wall'. Two sets of two-leaf doors (with one of probably three portcullises in the lobby between them) admitted to the lord's presence, enthroned on a dais set in a grand arched recess and warmed by two fireplaces and by the flue of another behind, rising from the finely-vaulted retainers' room below, the light from the small windows (one an oriel), overlooking the steep escarpment of the Nidd, eclipsed by 'the great traceried window, facing southwards' to the left of the dais in its blind archway, 'whose purpose, like that of a proscenium arch, was to focus attention ... with the dramatic effect of a *coup de théâtre*'.⁹⁶

Thomas of Lancaster and his affinity, powerfully based only fifteen miles to the south at noble (now almost vanished) Pontefract,⁹⁷ were not impressed, seizing Gaveston in 1312 from Scarborough castle, murdering him and humiliating Edward II. Violence could well have been expected—but Knaresborough *donjon* was disarmed. The triple doors, three portcullises and 'murder holes' to the stairway (which deceived the romanticising surveyors of 1538⁹⁸) and opulent defencelessness everywhere else only enhanced what is exemplified at Castle Rising. A great lord aspired to earn the style of *redoubté et puissant*. His castle, and especially his *torre del homatge*,⁹⁹ was one medium of the message so misunderstood by modern materialists of the battering-rams and boiling-oil persuasion. Much of what has been said (1992) about the front entry at Bodiam is true of Knaresborough: 'the bravado of double portal chambers, "murder holes" and three portcullises, is mere rodомontade when the lateral (gate-passage) doors are so weak'. At Bodiam, furthermore, the main entry is by-passed by 'a short and direct approach to a weak back door (Postern) which entirely lacks elaboration'. Castle-visits were choreographed. Tenants, suitors and superiors each received the courtesies due to their rank at the *perron*, public hall, ante-chamber and presence-chamber in turn. Etiquette at Bodiam evidently suited the exaggerated militancy of the late fourteenth century: 'at the outer "barriers", having negotiated the circuitous water-girt roadways, a guest of the greatest honour would be ... received ...; conducted past the specious challenge of Dallingridge's tenantry ... , via the Octagon and Barbican ... Lesser folk perhaps would dismount at the Octagon (Plate 8), the great within the inner courtyard suitably impressed by portcullis, "murder holes" and mummery'.¹⁰⁰ Landscape survey at Bodiam and elsewhere has begun to show that castles in their parks might be given a setting as contrived as that of any classical mansion.¹⁰¹ Descriptions of occasions of

⁹⁶ Dixon, 'Knaresborough', 126–8; similarly at Castle Rising, note 73 above.

⁹⁷ Brown *et al.*, *King's Works*, Vol. 2, Plate 51, shows the glory of Lancastrian Pontefract, demolished in 1654.

⁹⁸ *King's Works*, Vol. 2, 690; Dixon, 'Knaresborough', 125, for quotations. The 'caricature' of which Sandy Heslop complained (note 87 above) originated in Tudor 'medieval chaos' mythology.

⁹⁹ A.A. Weissmüller, *Castles from the heart of Spain* (London, 1967), 66; the book typically wavers between militarism and the cultural milieu.

¹⁰⁰ Coulson, 'Bodiam', 83, 89. Mackenzie, *Castles of England*, 1, 262, relates Francis Bacon's famous account of Henry VII's visit to Hedingham. Prestwich, 'Castles ... Edward II', 168, concludes: 'although castles may not have played a very central role in the major civil conflicts of the reign, at least in comparison with the experience of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, they did feature significantly in disputes at a local level'.

¹⁰¹ Coulson, 'Structural symbolism', 75 note 8, 76 note 11, 85, 90; Michael Leslie, 'An English landscape garden before "the English landscape garden"?' , *Journal of Garden History*, 13 (1993), 3–15 (reference due to John Kenyon); C. Taylor, P. Everson and R. Wilson-North, 'Bodiam Castle, Sussex', *Medieval Archaeology*, 34 (1990), 155–7; C. Coulson, 'Bodiam Castle, truth and tradition', *Fortress*, 10 (August, 1991), 15.



Plate 8. Bodiam Castle, Sussex (author) shown in summer 1970, when the lake was emptied for scouring, from the N.W. bank across the line of the original trestle bridge to the Octagon (far LHS), Barbican (centre LHS) and main north gateway, all built 1385–92. The Grand Front was intended to be especially impressive from the Viewing Platform on the slope of the facing hillside (see note 101).

joyeuse entrée, coronation visits to capitals, jousts, Leicester's entertainment of Elizabeth (1575) at Kenilworth, masques, the romances and chivalric chronicles like Froissart, all supply essential background.¹⁰²

The sort of rounded cultural purview, integrating a close architectural study with the social, political and iconographic context, which we advocate, has begun.¹⁰³ David King's great survey will undoubtedly broaden new popular literature, but a great historical and sociological expansion is also due. MacGibbon and Ross have facilitated the synthesis in Scotland, H. Gordon-Slade's 'Glamis Castle 1371–1626: from medieval hunting-lodge to feudal castle and Renaissance palace' (1994) being a notable instance.¹⁰⁴ Weighing physical defence against martial fashion is particularly difficult with sub-baronial buildings in the north of England, a task suited to the exceptional range of skills deployed by Philip Dixon in his 'Towerhouses, pelehouses and Border society' (1979), pursued further in his '*Mota, aula et turris*: the manor-houses of the Anglo-Scottish border',¹⁰⁵ published among a seminal collection on *Manorial domestic buildings in England and northern France* (1993). Its focus upon *l'habitat noble rural* in its own right is long overdue. The target, being novel, is hard to define as Jean Mesqui, foremost exponent of the admirable *castellologie* combining architecture with

¹⁰² Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean tournaments* (London, 1987), condenses much retrospectively important information.

¹⁰³ Neither P.E. Curnow, 'The tower-house at Hopton Castle and its affinities', *Studies presented to R.A. Brown*, 81–102; nor G. Fairclough, 'Meaningful constructions—spatial and functional analysis of medieval buildings', *Antiquity*, 66 (1992), 348–66, covers some of this ground.

¹⁰⁴ Notes 47, 51 above.

¹⁰⁵ P.W. Dixon, 'Towerhouses', *Archaeological Journal*, 136 (1979), 240–52; *Manorial buildings*, ed. G. Meirion-Jones and Michael Jones, Society of Antiquaries occasional papers, 15 (London, 1993), 22–48 (with bibliography); see also note 91 above.

documents, freely acknowledges. The effort is vindicated by his contribution (on the north and east of the Ile de France), Edward Impey's (Normandy) and that of Professors G. Meirion-Jones and Michael Jones with J.R. Pilcher (Brittany, 1000–1700),¹⁰⁶ on that muted castellated style of the lesser *résidence seigneuriale* which is misleadingly represented by 'seigneurial domestic' and much better by 'Scottish baronial'. As the seignorial concept is applied English castellology will belatedly come of age. Beric Morley, of English Heritage, showed the way with his expositions of two late fourteenth-century castles, Hylton Tower (Durham) and Wardour (Wilts). Hylton (1976) 'was built as a fine gatehouse tower resplendent with a magnificent display of (hierarchically graded) heraldry and with extravagant battlement works' (Plates 9 and

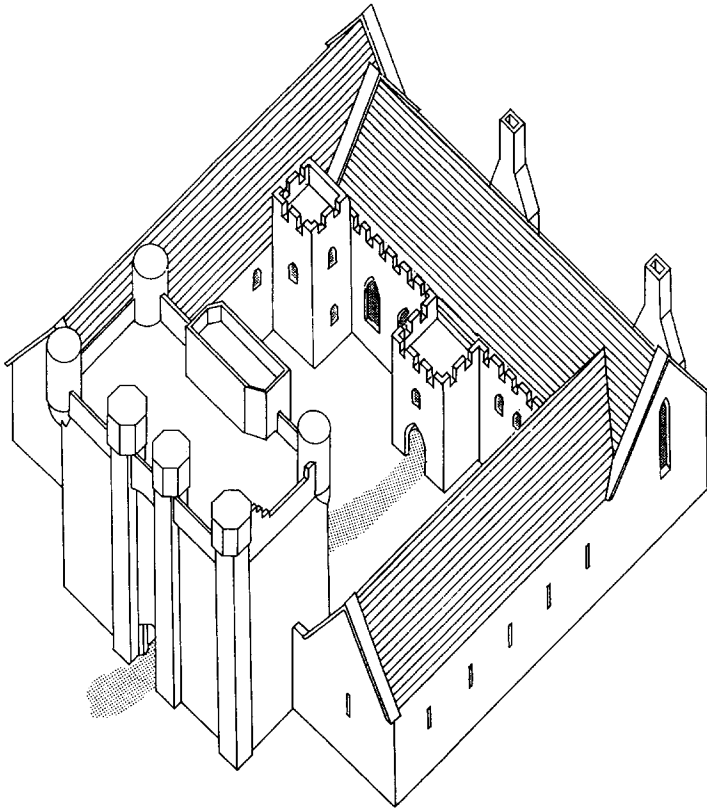


Plate 9. Hylton Castle, co. Durham; reconstruction by Beric Morley of the 'frontal gatehouse' and courtyard ranges as completed about 1400. Lordly display, in 'military' style outwardly, combine with noble domesticity in this important later castle. Little more than foundations survive outside the much modified tower, but its setting is essential to its appreciation.

¹⁰⁶ *Manorial buildings*, 82–120, 121–40, 158–91. Selection is invidious. See also M. Jones, G. Meirion-Jones, F. Guibal and J.R. Pilcher, 'The seigneurial domestic buildings of Brittany...', *Antiquaries Journal*, 69 (1989), 73–110.

10), fronting very subordinate buildings and set, perhaps, in a landscaped park.¹⁰⁷ The very complete, self-contained accommodation, comparable originally with Lumley and Bywell, attracted Tudor, Gothick and Victorian remodellings during (for England) an exceptionally prolonged occupation. Its romanticism was original: machicolated parapets with statuettes (as at Alnwick, Raby, Lumley, Bothal and previously at Caernarfon's Eagle Tower) and over-hanging turrets of the fragile but ostentatious 'bartizan' type. Such an efflorescence of castellation (Herstmonceux of the 1440s, is a southern example; Plate 11) has nothing of decadence or 'decline' about it. The message is just more massively expressed by Edward I's Welsh castles, especially by Caernarfon, capital of the new Principality, all ambivalently dual-purpose as ever.¹⁰⁸ The reception of

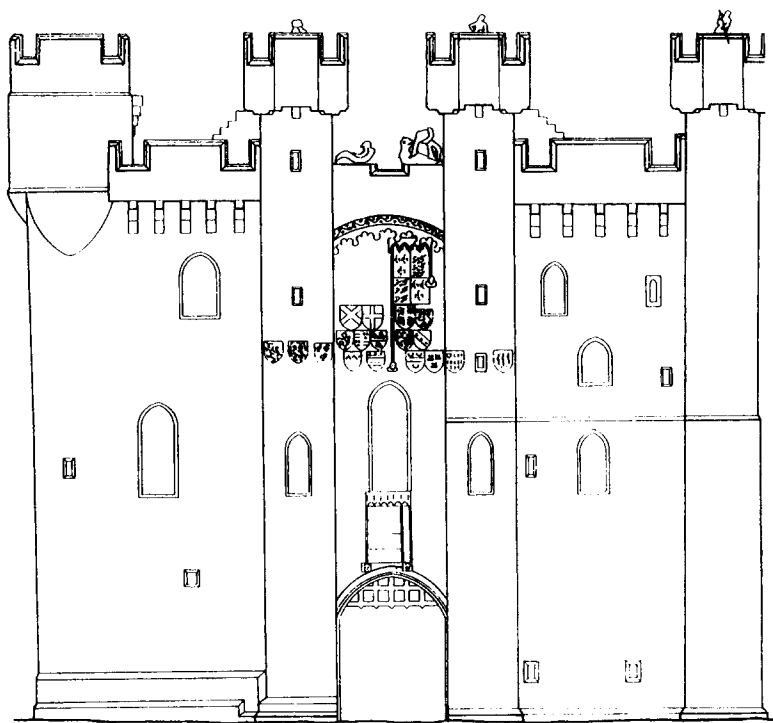


Plate 10. Hylton Castle, reconstruction of west front elevation by Beric Morley (*Archaeological Journal*, 133, 1976, 121b). Surviving structural detail is plentiful, although 'the sizes of the interpolated windows are hypothetical'. The carved figures on the parapets, for which there are numerous parallels, are based on pictorial evidence. (Reproduced by permission of the Royal Archaeological Institute.)

¹⁰⁷ B.M. Morley, 'Hylton Castle', *Archaeological Journal*, 133 (1976), 118–34. Christopher Dyer, 'Gardens and orchards in medieval England', in: *Everyday life in medieval England*, ed. C. Dyer (London, 1994), 114–6, comments: 'the lord's garden ... was enclosed sometimes very strongly within a moat or stone wall, and it was often attached to a fortified house or included within a walled precinct'.

¹⁰⁸ Discussed by Dixon briefly, 'Knaresborough', 128–9; with Beryl Lott, 'The courtyard and the tower: contexts and symbols in the development of late medieval great houses', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 146 (1993), 93–101, more widely.



Plate 11. Herstmonceux Castle, Sussex, the upper part of the gatehouse of the grand front (author). The Fiennes' brick and stone-dressed moated castle (licensed 1441) displays the whole panoply of crosslet arbalist-type loops, heraldry, machicolation and *pont à bascule* (beam-slots flanking the central window). As at Hylton, but on a larger scale, frontal magnificence consorted harmoniously with domesticity.

William Burges's restoration of Castell Coch near Pontypridd (Cardiff) is an object-lesson in stultifying architectural puritanism, most obstinately English.¹⁰⁹

The reality vindicated by Hylton Tower was outward panache, and within—'planning of a very high order . . . the rooms . . . arranged with ingenious compactness into suitable "public" and "private" suites', graded according to 'the complex hierarchy of the medieval household'. There is no question here of the 'private armies' of Bastard Feudalism (nor at Bodiam,¹¹⁰ or elsewhere), nor at Wardour licensed in 1393 to be 'crenellated and made a castle' by John Lord Lovel.¹¹¹ Morley's study, again with a careful reconstruction of this unique hexagonal courtyard-plan hunting-box (Plates 12 and 13) miniaturised castle or magnified tower-house, adapts the Faulkner fashion of working from the *domus* outwards. Not starting with the layout, overall form or 'trace', as the militarists and the architectural conceptualists both tend to do, is a radical change

¹⁰⁹ Coulson, 'Structural symbolism', 77 note 15; Peter Floud's *Castell Coch, Glamorgan* guide (London, 1954) is deplorable: '... a gigantic sham ... No prisoner ever mouldered in its dungeon, its courtyard echoed to the sound not of mortal combat but of week-end shooting parties, its portcullis barred the way to nothing more dangerous than a dog cart, and it was shaving-water rather than boiling oil that was carried up the spiral staircase to the gatehouse battlements' (p. 3). Thompson (*Decline*, 165–7) affirms the authenticity of the plan, but typically rejects the conical roofs though 'normal in late-medieval France', for fear of frivolity; compare the spirited reconstructions by Alan Sorrell in: *British castles* (London, 1973), 15, 27, 43, 45, 61, 63, 65.

¹¹⁰ Thesis applied by W.D. Simpson to Bodiam and widely, see note 74 above.

¹¹¹ C. Coulson, 'Specimens of freedom to crenellate by licence', *Fortress*, 18 (August 1993), 13–4; for the Wardour reconstruction see Plate 12. B. Morley, 'Aspects of fourteenth-century castle design', in: *Collectanea historica. Essays in memory of Stuart Rigold*, ed. A. Detsicas (Maidstone, 1981), 104–13. Licences to crenellate are misunderstood (105) and defence exaggerated.

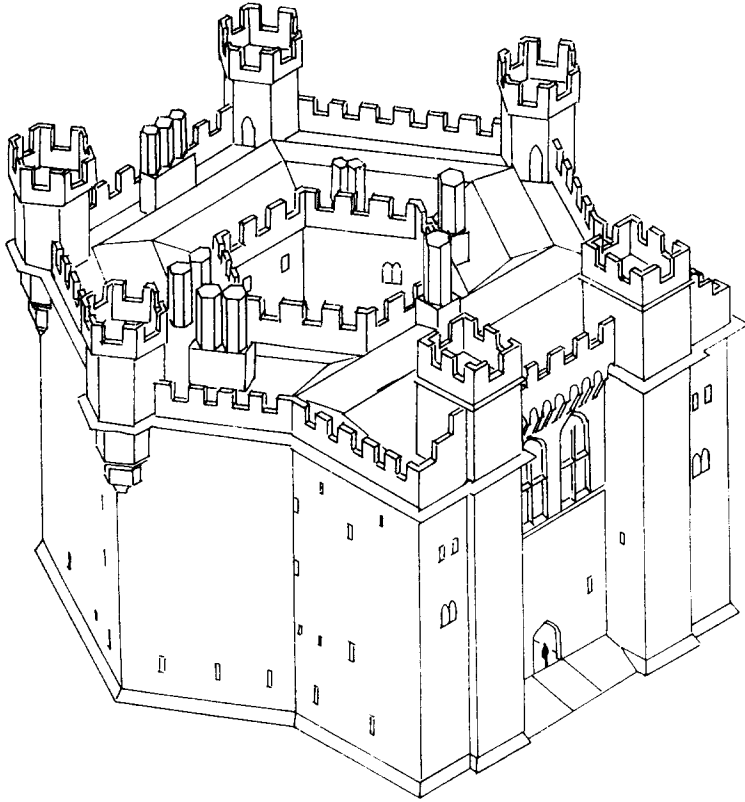


Plate 12. Wardour Old Castle, Wilts., reconstruction by Beric Morley as it was about 1400, before enlargement of many of the windows and partial vindictive demolition after the Civil War. The windows fronting the miniaturised double-tower gatehouse suggest that those elsewhere were larger than shown, even allowing for the central light-well (resembling the coeval but smaller version in the keep of Warkworth Castle, Northumberland).

of great importance, mirrored by some shift by archaeologists from the walls to the way of life within them. Morley considers also two accretive pattern castles, mainly twelfth century, Okehampton (Devon) and Middleham (Yorks.), seeing their (internal) 'planning' and 'defensibility' as merged in the overall form, suites of rooms being differentiated in the standard 'Faulkner' way (still under-valued) by the degree of 'embellishment'. Middleham's large 'hall keep' (1125–50) with unusual clarity shows how little modification was needed later to meet higher residential standards. Including in his discussion of 'planning' the great 'undefended' (but still mildly castellated and towered) late fourteenth-century Dartington Hall (Devon) serves to emphasise that the castle-type house was not the only formula, although the Holand duke of Exeter was setting himself up in some rivalry to the Courtenay earls. As Thompson (1987) has made clear, the courtyard house was a perfectly 'safe' alternative. Further breaking down of these categories will clearly be fruitful, with more scepticism about the

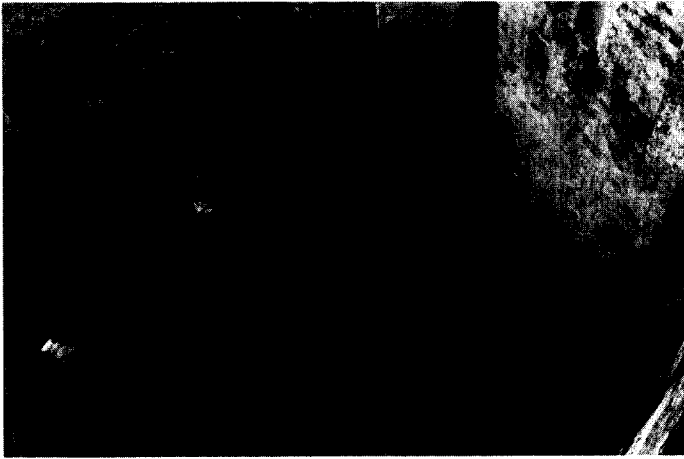


Plate 13. Wardour Old Castle, the diminutive hexagonal courtyard, viewed from roof-level facing west (Anthony Emery), showing the compact planning of this exquisitely-sited and constructed castle and hunting-lodge. This and very many other castellated houses will receive treatment of exemplary sensitive scholarship in Anthony Emery's forthcoming multi-volume work (Cambridge U.P., and note 130).

orthodox 'military'–'domestic' dichotomy, dispensing entirely (among many other errors) with the idea that 'licences to crenellate' regulated castle-building. But Beric Morley's warning should alert social historians, as well as followers of Patrick Faulkner, that 'more often than not we are inventing a social structure based on the analysis of the planning . . . it is too easy to slip into circular argument'.¹¹² Wardour, in fact, displays ten undifferentiated lodgings, with up to sixteen more rooms in the portion punitively thrown down in the Civil War. Numerous high-status guests for the hunting in the large pale park could be accommodated without 'violating medieval etiquette', the rooms being dignified fittingly with 'varying qualities of hanging or furnishing'. Not all furniture was built-in. Plans resembling university colleges, and even modern hotels, were correspondingly frequent in castles and great houses.

All this is a world away from 'the castle' of tradition, expounded as an adjunct to military history. Just how far cultural awareness has diverged from the opposite tendency can hardly be more clearly shown than by quoting from General Sir John Hackett's foreword to the sumptuously discursive *Castles of Europe* (1970).¹¹³ The book itself is dedicated by William Anderson to his father 'architect and soldier, died of wounds, France . . . 1944', like Raymond Ritter's *Châteaux, donjons et places fortes: l'architecture militaire française* (1953), written to commemorate three paternal ancestors who were military architect, civil engineer and engineering officer.¹¹⁴ Theirs is

¹¹² Thompson, *Decline*, Chap. 4; Morley, 'Aspects', 105.

¹¹³ W. Anderson and Wim Swaan, *Castles of Europe from Charlemagne to the Renaissance* (London, 1970); more succinctly as Hackett's Foreword to R.A. Brown, M. Prestwich and C. Coulson, *Castles. A history and guide* (Poole, 1980).

¹¹⁴ R. Ritter, *Châteaux* (Paris, 1953). Viollet-le-Duc, however, dedicated his *Architecture militaire* to the novelist and antiquary Prosper-Mérimée, his *Premier Maître*.

an honourable, pious and deeply serious tradition, strengthened by the armed services' professional academies and by their intellectualising of warfare which has proclaimed the ethical and social centrality of soldiering. In his final conclusion Christopher Allmand's *The Hundred Years War* (1988) quotes with approval Michael Howard's dictum that 'whether one likes it or not, war has played for better or for worse a fundamental part in the whole process of historical change'.¹¹⁵ General Hackett is no less emphatic: 'the development of (our) culture ... probably owes more to military factors than to anything else'. In his foreword he acknowledges the mutual intolerance of military, economic, aesthetic, romantic and political castellogists (but not that all in proper combination make a cultural view), and then demonstrates his point. The castle, having been 'put up almost always for a functional (*sic*) purpose, was usually located on a spot that mattered' (strategically).¹¹⁶ While there is 'no exclusively respectable way of thinking about castles ... what distinguishes the castle from other habitable edifices is an essential military purpose ... creating a secure space ... by denial of entry'. Its 'chief function ... was to furnish in a military structure a secure base for offensive action ... by virtue of the soldiery it harboured', defence being secondary.¹¹⁷ The castle was an 'immobile weapon platform with certain conceptual similarities to the hardened silo which houses a ballistic missile'. Knights, to Hackett, were essentially horsemen whose 'radius of effective action' may be estimated using the British Army manual *Cavalry training*. 'All the immense and still incalculable effect ... of the military structure of western Europe in the Middle Ages ... upon the development of our culture depended above all on the stirrup'.¹¹⁸ Hackett quotes Anderson that 'the castle is ... a machine for ruling and fighting', but prefers to see it as 'the major component, perhaps, in a complete weapons system'. Passing over 'speculative early origins', General Hackett expatiates on the 'better-known' Norman castle, used as never before 'as an instrument for the consolidation of conquest', before dilating on the wider repercussions of this stroke of Norman genius. Thus, he says, 'a central theme in the growth of western society will now be better understood'. It is one of the virtues of *Castles of Europe* that by force of compiling material of wide topical, chronological and geographical range a much more than sand-table picture is presented. The omission of (inconveniently 'unmilitary') buildings such as towns and precincts is standard, but the wider outlook which occasionally exposes excessive specialisation is due to Europe. One instance must suffice: the caption to the photograph of the keep-like Sicilian Norman la Cuba accepts that 'it was surrounded on three sides by a lake and was probably used for official receptions'. Moreover, 'an inscription around the top of the building bade the visitor

¹¹⁵ C. Allmand, *The hundred years war* (Cambridge, 1988), 172. Philippe Contamine's *War in the middle ages*, trans. M.C.E. Jones (Oxford, 1984) has the same 'war and society' theme: see my 'Valois powers over fortresses on the eve of the hundred years war', *Harlaxton Symposium*, 12 (1995).

¹¹⁶ Compare Eales, 'Royal power and castles', 63–9.

¹¹⁷ On the transition from secure camp to defensible *castellum* see Stephen Johnson, *The Roman forts of the Saxon Shore* (London, 1976). Hackett's view is that of K. Mallory and A. Ottar, *Architecture of aggression ... north west Europe 1900–1945* (London, 1973).

¹¹⁸ 'Technical determinism' has provoked much discussion since Lynn White's *Medieval technology and social change* (Oxford, 1962), Chap. 1.

“pause and admire the illustrious dwelling of the most illustrious King of the Earth, William the Good”,¹¹⁹

Owing to its sociological, institutional and art-historical method, the collaborative *The Flowering of the Middle Ages* (1966), edited by Joan Evans, was able to deal under ‘Kings and Castles’ (Christopher Hohler) with all aspects (including the military, without any caricature) as ‘Court Life in Peace and War’.¹²⁰ The literary context is at once set by quoting eight lines from the later-fourteenth century Middle English romance ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight’. This vivid evocation of an idealised castle, since studied (1989) by Michael Thompson, tells us something of the aesthetic image of the knightly home vital to our understanding of design-motivation. It is the only sound alternative to modern conjecture.¹²¹ It has not been much applied to castles since E.E. Viollet-le-Duc’s *Dictionnaire raisonné* and T.H. Turner and J.H. Parker’s *Some account of domestic architecture* . . .¹²² so the place given to the romances in Dr Tom McNeill’s culturally very aware *English Heritage book of castles* (1992) is very welcome.¹²³ How illuminating literary and truly ‘interdisciplinary’ studies can be the papers of the May 1983 conference by Minnesota University fully showed. Published as *The medieval castle, romance and reality*,¹²⁴ they range from the technical, as Bernard Bachrach’s cost-analysis of Langeais (dated as 992–4), and Frederick Suppe’s ‘The garrisoning of Oswestry, 1160–75’; to the iconographical and literary represented by ‘Otherworld castles in Middle English Arthurian romance’ (Muriel Whitaker); by ‘French medieval castles in Gothic manuscript painting’ (Dean Mackenzie), and Barry Gaines on ‘Malory’s castles in text and illustration’, which also touches on the ‘Tolkien’ fantasy sub-culture. Most directly useful for tackling the gap between idealisation and supposed military reality is Wolfgang van Emden’s ‘The castle in some works of medieval French literature’. To reconcile all this, and the narrative literature of ‘the Age of Chivalry’, with the structural ‘vocabulary’ of castellated architecture would be most valuable if rigorously done and with due sophistication.¹²⁵

Specialists collaborating by accidental convergence are the next best thing. Both Sheila Bonde in her ‘Castle and church building at the time of the Norman Conquest’ and Stephen Gardner’s ‘The influence of castle-building on ecclesiastical architecture in

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Castles of Europe*, Plate 21 (37).

¹²⁰ Evans, *Middle Ages* (London, 1966), 133–78. Hohler’s caption (140, Plate 16) to an aerial view of Bodiam Castle, describing it is ‘though planned (on) sound military principles (*sic*) . . . really an old soldier’s dream house . . . (which) could never have played a significant part in a late 14th century war’, was almost the first note of dubiety (Coulson, ‘Structural symbolism’, 76 note 11), provoking D.J. Turner’s ‘Bodiam, Sussex. True castle or “old soldier’s dream house”’, *England in the fourteenth-century*, Harlaxton (Woodbridge, 1986), 267–79; see notes 27, 101 above.

¹²¹ Larger extract with alternative translation in R.K. Morris, *Cathedrals and abbeys of England and Wales* (London, 1979), 29; M.W. Thompson, ‘The green knight’s castle’, in: *Studies presented to R.A. Brown*, 317–25.

¹²² Note 64. (Turner and) Parker, *Domestic architecture* (Oxford, 1851–9).

¹²³ McNeill, *Castles*, 109–11.

¹²⁴ ed. K. Reyerson, F. Powe (Dubuque, Iowa, 1984).

¹²⁵ Nowhere is the modern culture-gap wider than between popular castle-books and, for example, the Arts Council’s *English romanesque art* (London 1984) and the Royal Academy of Arts’ *Age of chivalry* (London, 1987) exhibition catalogues.

the Paris region, 1130–50', show the 'fortified' and turriform style to be the common denominator. Gardner's case on Lincoln cathedral has been powerfully supported by Dr Richard Gem,¹²⁶ who has also cited the Templar church at Shipley (Sussex) as an example of the inter-penetration of 'religious' and 'military' which inspires Gardner's comparison of elements in what he calls 'the defensible façade' of the abbey church of St Denis with surviving castles of the Ile de France. Direct iconographical affinities are worth far more than the conceptual generalities of less disciplined art history.¹²⁷ On 'Fortified monastic granges in the Rouergue' C.H. Berman is very thorough but confined to a deterministic linkage of brigandage, especially after the Peace of Brétigny (1360), with elements of fortification in the buildings whose defensive value and seigneurial *éclat* are neither of them assessed. In contrast, Mary Dean's 'Early fortified houses, defenses and castle imagery, 1275–1350, with evidence from the S.E. Midlands' is a new-generation socio-architectural study where it is not dogged by atavistic 'military'–'domestic' ideas and an untenable view of 'licenses to crenellate'.¹²⁸ If contemporaries failed to differentiate 'castles' from 'fortified manor-houses', to insist that moderns should correct them is odd. That 'symbolism' was part of the 'reality', both incorporated in the fortified style is an insight more natural, perhaps, to the sociological approach prevailing in Edward English's broad and well-documented 'Urban castles in medieval Siena: the sources and images of power', imbued as it is with the dynastic and clan rivalries of the patrician families. His (somewhat castro-phobic) evocation of the blend of propaganda, rivalry especially in height and *macho* embellishment, and low-level violence historically locates the Italian urban tower-house in general, providing comparisons for what little we know of the vanished towers of medieval London.¹²⁹

One of the most lucid lines of research, where the documents are available, is undoubtedly the 'patronage' angle, as Anthony Emery has shown for Dartington Hall, Raglan, Ashby-de-la-Zouche and for Kirby Muxloe castles, among others.¹³⁰ Moulding profile analysis, now for some time habitual elsewhere, seconds this approach in Dr Richard Morris' important re-dating of the mid- and later-fourteenth century gloriously romantic remodelling of Warwick.¹³¹ Although 'military architecture' he does not hesitate to ascribe the lobed plan of Caesar's Tower to providing 'a suite of three rooms in each floor of lodgings'. Caesar's, Guy's and gatehouse towers 'should be viewed as an episode' (and very likely a trend-setting venture) 'in a constant exchange of ideas

¹²⁶ R.D.H. Gem, 'Shipley', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 6 (1983), 238–46. The churchyard is moated on two sides (240). Of 'features . . . bearing some resemblance to domestic or military architecture' (244), some are specific, others of visual effect. Also 'Medieval art and architecture of Lincoln Cathedral', *British Archaeological Association*, 1982 conference transactions, 9–28.

¹²⁷ See H.M. Colvin's corrective 'The "court style" in medieval English architecture: a review', in: *English court culture in the later middle ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London, 1982), 129–39.

¹²⁸ See Coulson, 'Freedom to crenellate', 116–34, *Romance and reality*, 147–74.

¹²⁹ *Romance and reality*, 175–98. Stow mentions 17 towers surviving in Tudor London (information D.F. Renn), 19 in the City and environs had licence to crenellate.

¹³⁰ A. Emery, *Dartington Hall* (Oxford, 1970); also, 'The development of Raglan Castle and keeps in late medieval England', *Archaeological Journal*, 132 (1975), 151–86; 'Ashby de la Zouche Castle', and 'Kirby Muxloe Castle', also 'The Hastings family: their properties and influence . . .', in: *The Nottingham area. Proceedings of the . . . meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute* (1989), 60–77.

¹³¹ R.K. Morris, 'The architecture of the earls of Warwick in the fourteenth century', *England in the fourteenth century*, 161–79 (166, 168, 173 quoted).

amongst the courtly military *élite* of Europe'. It is alarming to realise how much castles have lacked this approach in the past.¹³² The pervasive and stunting influence of the battering-rams and boiling-oil brigade is largely to blame for what Philip Dixon condemns as the rigid 'filing system' operating since A. Hamilton Thompson (1912),¹³³ but not the fault of his sensitive work. Dixon himself, and a few others, have already done much to remedy the low standard of investigation and the poor quality of data which he deplores, for 'time and again buildings have been interpreted according to what has been expected rather than what is there'.¹³⁴ (Bodiam is the classic case of this doctrinaire myopia.) New input has been deterred or absorbed: 'proven cases must be used to construct the new framework'; so far 'the new material provided by individual detailed studies has failed to result in any significant reassessment of the medieval castle'. Philip Dixon with Beryl Lott shows what he means in their 'The courtyard and the tower: contexts and symbols in the development of late medieval great houses' (1993).¹³⁵ The contributions of propaganda in general (Caernarfon, Harlech, Flint); of the numinous seigneurial *donjon* and solar tower (Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Largoët-en-Elven, Longthorpe, Raglan, South Kyme, Tattershall, Vincennes, Warkworth) as late as Lathom, Nottingham and Tudor Greenwich and Richmond (and much more) are compactly discussed, cogently rejecting ideas of late medieval 'decline' based on superficial militarism. This manifesto should be set beside John Kenyon's compilation (1990) of excavational data since 1945, which tends to regard its limitations as being inherent.¹³⁶ Similarly the review by Jonathan Coad (radically-inclined excavator of Castle Acre) of the Royal Archaeological Institute's involvement in castle studies, has no higher view of the future than aiming 'to build up a broad picture of all aspects of life in a medieval castle', using entirely traditional methods and assumptions.¹³⁷

Perhaps the most hopeful sign of progress of late has been that complacency is deserting not only historians but also some publishers. The general books (good new regional or period studies still do not exist) by Professor Colin Platt (1982), Dr Michael Thompson (1987, 1991, already referred to) and Professor Norman Pounds (1990) represent a significant advance.¹³⁸ Platt is less narrowly 'military' in developmental scheme (e.g. 'castles of chivalry' in the late middle ages) and thorough in historical and archaeological synthesis, as is to be expected. Although authoritative, Professor Allen Brown's *English Castles* (1976) was conventional by comparison, and Derek Renn's *Norman castles in Britain* (1968) offered much less interpretation.¹³⁹ For comment on

¹³² D. King, *The castle*, 156, on Warwick gatehouse: the barbican 'added a new terror to the entrance . . . The very idea of venturing into a killing-ground of this sort must have been intolerable'.

¹³³ See note 90 above; inevitably constrained, but a deeply cultural study.

¹³⁴ Dixon, 'The great tower', 431.

¹³⁵ See note 108 above.

¹³⁶ J.R. Kenyon (Secretary of the Castle Studies Group, compiler of the invaluable up-dated bibliography in the Newsletter), *Medieval Fortifications* (Leicester, 1990), esp. Chap. 11.

¹³⁷ See note 7 above, 218 quoted.

¹³⁸ C. Platt, *The castle in medieval England and Wales* (note 86 above), including valuable French excursions; M.W. Thompson *Decline, and Rise of the castle*; and (also Cambridge University Press) N.J.G. Pounds, *The medieval castle in England and Wales. A social and political history* (Cambridge, 1990).

¹³⁹ See notes 5, 78.

Thompson and Pounds, reviewed as part of a trenchant diagnosis of the malaise in English castellology, we may turn to the 'Shorter Contribution' by David Stocker (English Heritage) published in the *Archaeological Journal* for 1992. By his title 'The shadow of the General's armchair' Stocker marks the seminal influence of the pioneer Pitt-Rivers, and of like-minded hypothetical war-gamers, on castle-studies.¹⁴⁰ Some quotation (with interpolations) must suffice: 'Darwinian evolutionary principles' led to 'the assumption that each development was a tactical improvement'. The outlook 'of the professional soldier in an optimistic age' spawned 'the military strategists (who) have long held sway over the social and economic historians' (archaeologists no less). Ella Armitage (a significantly rare female castellogist) exceptionally seemed 'less than dominated by military theory'.¹⁴¹ The evolutionary scenario of Saxon 'aristocratic lethargy', then baronial disorder from 1066 to the Black Death (1349), then 'decadence' thereafter, belongs to the discredited 'Rape-and-Pillage school of History' but has been allowed 'to continue distorting the study of castles'. This hypothesis, says Stocker, affects Thompson who 'is still proposing an underlying military imperative'. Despite his major contribution to understanding the origins of keeps, and his 'multidisciplinary' treatment of German castles (thanks to *Kunstgeschichte*), on English and French castles Thompson is 'more narrowly military-strategic'. He is conventionally 'hard-nosed' on Edward I's (Welsh) castles, an attitude which 'turns the back of the strategist's armchair against the tide of current thinking', which Stocker in part derives (but not the metaphors) from my 'Structural symbolism' and 'Hierarchism in conventual crenellation' (1982).¹⁴² Regarding Bodiam, twice (and rightly) identified as 'the touchstone in this debate', and as 'the anvil of any scholar's thinking on the whole question of motivation in castle-building', Stocker feels Thompson (as on Bodiam) is 'schizophrenic', demonstrating 'how dominant the armchair strategist's view . . . still is 'even when looked at with Thompson's critical eye'. Even Pounds' *The medieval castle in England and Wales, a social and political history*, which Stocker regards as the blue-print for future (archaeological) work unfortunately 'ducks the issue on this most diagnostic site'. Stocker had only my brief 'Bodiam Castle, truth and tradition' (1991) before him, not the full discussion which appeared in 1992.¹⁴³

Norman Pounds' 'extraordinary book' is rather more novel to the archaeologist,

¹⁴⁰ D. Stocker, 'The shadow of the General's armchair', *Archaeological Journal*, 149 (1992), 415–20; also Coulson, 'Freedom to crenellate', 86–9. The present writer began a large-scale model of 'the ideal castle' in war-gaming spirit (generating focused investigative field-work). It has evolved, with his perceptions, since then (1955), perforce in a cultural direction.

¹⁴¹ See note 14 above. Hilary L. Turner, *Town defences in England and Wales. An architectural and documentary study AD 900–1500* (London, 1971), a valuable pioneering work, wavers between sociological insight and military tradition: e.g. Chap. 5, Walls and Wars; Chap. 6, Embattled Majesty.

¹⁴² See notes 1, 32 above. Stocker, 'General's armchair', 416, 418, 419–20. Thompson, *Archaeological Journal*, 151 (1994), 439–45, in reply shows only that Viollet-le-Duc not Pitt-Rivers was responsible for 'the military interpretation of castles', along with Round, Armitage, W. St J. Hope and Hamilton Thompson. He thinks this 'was initially dictated by the fact that only the fortifications usually survive'. Whereas other than an 'entirely military approach . . . may be more fruitful . . . we have to bear in mind that the prime consideration of the builder was to make the site defensible, and if we overlook that we lose sight of the reason for the castle's existence'. This, at least, clarifies Michael Thompson's mind-set.

¹⁴³ See notes 27, 101 above. Professor Pounds regretted these appeared too late to be digested in his remarkable synthesis (personal communication).

primarily as a thorough compilation with some original expansion of published (mainly documentary) material, than it is to the historian. Assembled over a lifetime, Stocker rates the book ideologically as 'emerging from the shadows of the armchair-strategic view', but he under-states its natural atavism. Economically and geographically it is strong, sociologically somewhat, and politically much less so. Treatment of 'royal control' of 'private castles' (especially 1066–1155) and of 'licences to crenellate', the latter despite some use of work by the present writer, is crucially old-fashioned.¹⁴⁴ Compared with Thompson, Pounds is materialistically blind to all 'non-defensive' castellation, such as of ecclesiastical precincts, ignoring some site-types accepted as 'military' even by King's *Castellarium Anglicanum* (1983).¹⁴⁵ His omission of town walls is unfortunately conventional also.¹⁴⁶ Given his otherwise comprehensive scope these omissions are the more symptomatic. In these areas Pounds does not improve upon Hamilton Thompson's *Medieval military architecture in England* of 1912. It graphically shows the prolonged adolescence of English castle-studies that the intervention of so distinguished an economic geographer has been able to present so much material re-ordered and new. An eloquent testimony to the state of affairs is that Stocker needs to emphasise that Pounds' 'main point is that castles are integrated into the whole panoply of medieval lordship and cannot be divorced from the rest of medieval society'.¹⁴⁷

After Kenyon's the fourth book¹⁴⁸ Stocker pungently reviews is Andrew Saunders' *Fortress Britain* (1989).¹⁴⁹ Although substantially post-medieval it provokes a pregnant comment: 'reading the books on the medieval period first, one cannot help asking how much of the exposition of our medieval castles is merely an imposition . . . of theories which, as Saunders explains so clearly, were the common currency of the period between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries'.¹⁵⁰—*rem acu tetigisti*.

¹⁴⁴ Coulson, 'Anarchy castles' (note 16, above), 68; also, 'Freedom to crenellate', 135–7, on Pounds' militarism and anachronistic monarchism, a very prevalent combination of 'constitutional' and soldierly ideology (*Medieval castle*, 102–6, 141–5, 260–3, 277–8, 296–7).

¹⁴⁵ See notes 12, 20. King's lists of 'rejects' following each county catalogue are (even defensively) highly subjective as well as inconsistent.

¹⁴⁶ Coulson, 'Battlements and the bourgeoisie'. Kenyon, *Medieval fortifications*, Chap. 10, is an honourable exception.

¹⁴⁷ 'General's armchair', 418. Professor Allen Brown consistently made the same appeal (still not fulfilled), see Vivien Brown, 'Bibliography of the writings of R. Allen Brown', *Studies presented to R.A. Brown*, 353–7.

¹⁴⁸ See note 136. Kenyon 'does not seem to want to play any part in such debates at all . . . The point that the castle may be something more than a fortification occasionally is alluded to . . . , symbolic intent . . . gets short shrift . . . Kenyon is quite sure that Bodiam is nothing other than a military machine'. 'General's armchair', 416–7.

¹⁴⁹ A.D. Saunders, *Fortress Britain, Artillery fortification in the British Isles and Ireland* (Liphook, 1989).

¹⁵⁰ A large genre may be represented by: Francis Grose, *Military antiquities respecting a history of the British army from the Conquest to the present time* (London, 1812) 2, Chap. 1 (medieval castles); and Capt. H.F. Thuillier, Royal Engineers, *The principles of land defence* (London, 1902), Chap. 3.

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