

CATHEDRAL, PALACE AND CASTLE: THE STRONGHOLDS OF KIRKWALL

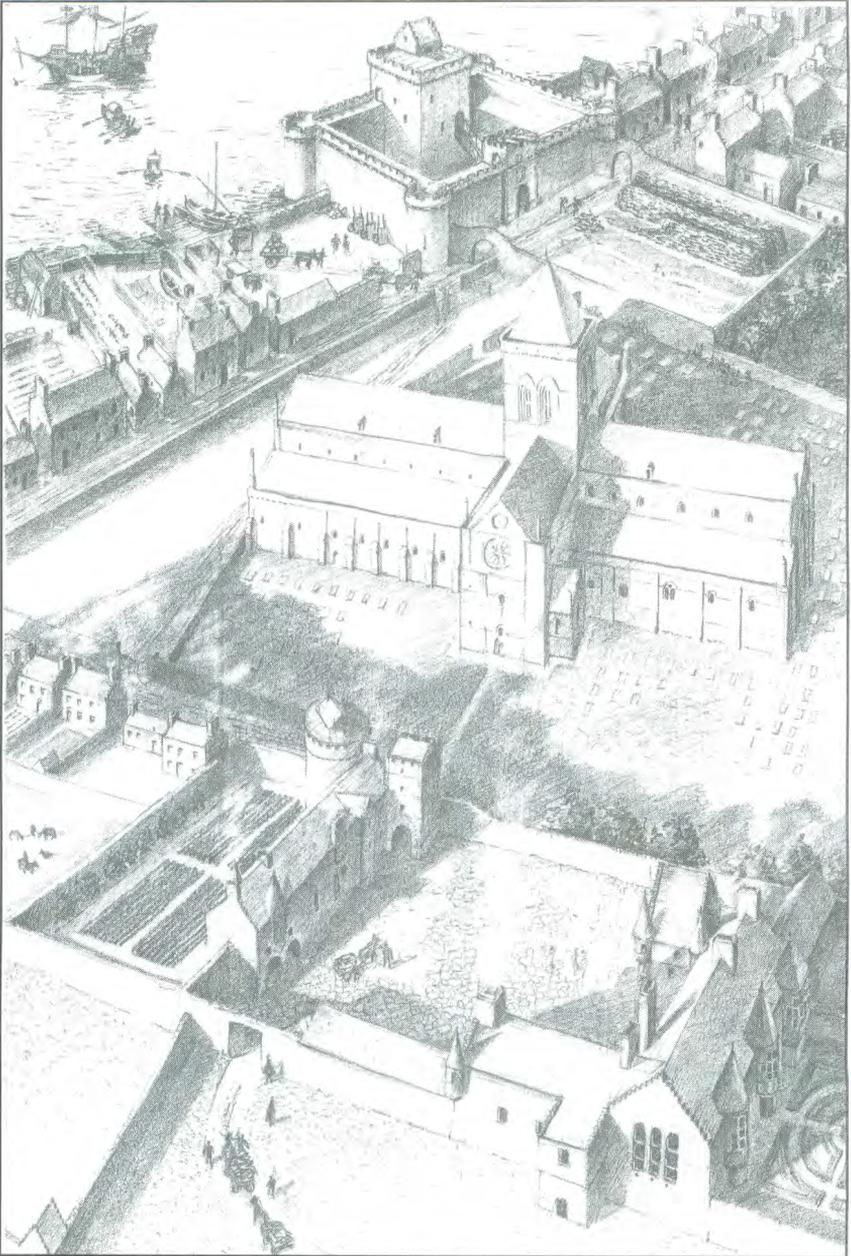
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In 1614, forces under the earl of Caithness cornered the followers of Robert Stewart, illegitimate son of Patrick Stewart, earl of Orkney, in the strongholds of Kirkwall: the cathedral, the castle, and the Palace of the Yards. They were forced to lay siege to this extraordinary concentration of buildings, dominating what was then a very small town. By the end, the castle had been reduced to rubble and the palace, though it continued to be used for another 70 years or so, was damaged and never enjoyed the same significance again. Only the cathedral remained intact, as it does today — one of only two pre-Reformation cathedrals in Scotland to have remained continuously in that condition.

The Cathedral

The cathedral was the earliest, and on any sort of reasonable scale of values the most important, of these three buildings. But it is necessary to remember that in 1614 it was seen, not only as a holy building, a shrine to the saint, Magnus, but as a great, massive, stonebuilt military feature. There are admittedly no references in the saga, and for long after, to St Magnus being used as anything other than a place of worship and an episcopal seat, but certainly from the mid-16th century and for at least a century before it had on occasion been looked at in this purely profane way. Indeed one must consider its effect on observers from the first moment it became clear just how massive Earl Rognvald's vision was. St Magnus is not a large cathedral — it is barely half the size of its near contemporary Durham — but it dwarfed any other building that had ever stood in Orkney. Even in today's Kirkwall, only the power station comes anywhere near it in size and bulk. It must have been clear even in the 12th century that such a structure would be a formidable obstacle in the wrong hands.

This view would not necessarily be impious or cynical. There is plenty of evidence that the piety of Scandinavia's warrior saints had running through it a heavy dash of realism. The motives of Earl Rognvald in building St Magnus are interesting — this curious mixture of pirate and pilgrim did not raise it in honour of St Magnus so much as in fulfilment of a contract he had made by prayer to his martyred uncle to help secure his patrimony against his rivals. His prayers were answered, and his part of the bargain was to erect a stone kirk to the saint 'so that there be not a more magnificent in the land'. Despite its ecclesiastical nature, Rognvald retained proprietorship of the building itself, a right which Scandinavian benefactors in particular had maintained against the



Kirkwall in the time of Patrick Stewart — an impression.

claims of the church to receive endowments as an absolute gift (Mooney 1947: 19). Thus the cathedral was in a curious way a speculative structure, belonging to the earl yet designed to attract the relics of Magnus as well as the bishop's chair (Taylor 1938: 248; Cruden 1988: 78; Mooney 1947: 10, 20).

This arrangement meant that in time the cathedral came into the hands of James III, king of Scots, who made himself earl of Orkney and thus inherited it. Sixteen years later, in 1486, he granted a charter to the burgh of Kirkwall elevating it to royal status and including transfer of his rights to the cathedral building, a privilege unparalleled in Scotland (Mooney 1952: 10, 20). Since he had other options, James's choice of recipient for this gift is interesting. He could have given it into the keeping of whoever was the tacksman of the royal and earldom estates, or he could, as the church had long desired, have granted it to the bishop outright. The objection to the first option was that his Norwegian predecessors had not managed to keep the tack out of the hands of the Sinclairs, and he was not keen to see the power of that family extended. The objection to the second is more mysterious. The bishops had been for a time the preferred holders of the tack of the king's estates, the bishopric was shortly to receive grants of land from those estates at the hands of James's son (Paul 1882: nos. 1974, 2232), and there is evidence that bishops were to be responsible for some very late additions to the building (Fawcett 1988: 109).

Perhaps King James felt that the bishops too were not strong enough to maintain safe possession of such an important building, so he gave it instead to his new royal burgh, as part of its emoluments. The question is: was he attempting to create a third power in the islands, besides tacksman and bishop, making a trio of powers symbolised by the three great buildings in the centre of Orkney's capital — the castle of the earldom, the palace of the bishopric, and the cathedral belonging to the burgh? The original creation of the royal burgh followed the revival of Sinclair power in the islands with the appearance there of Henry, Lord Sinclair, grandson of the last earl. Its confirmation in 1536, repeating the cathedral condition, came with the rise of the Warsetter Sinclairs in the Summerdale period (Anderson 1982: 20, 25).

On the other hand the king of Scots may simply have been creating an entity which could hold the cathedral out of the reach of other powerful forces. Whatever the answer, one has to question just how effective the burgh could be in looking after and guarding the cathedral. For the first century and more of the burgh's possession of the building, there are few indications of who was in real control of it, but from the mid-1560s the picture becomes clearer. In April 1566, Bishop Adam Bothwell sought a guarantee before the privy council that:

the house and castle in Kirkwall . . . together with the steeple of the kirk, being given back to the bishop, shall be surely kept and no rebels find refuge there, especially Patrick Bellenden and his servants (Burton 1877: 455).

Two years later, in March 1568, John Brown, a servant of Robert Stewart, feuar of Orkney, went to morning prayers in the cathedral. Afterwards, he apparently made for one of the turnpike stairs leading up to the triforium. The men of the bishop who were guarding the building warned Brown that they would shoot him if he did not leave. Brown went out in high dudgeon and returned with seven companions. They rushed into the cathedral and opened fire on the bishop's men, who were only five in number. Two of them, Nicol Alexander and James Moir, were killed; the others scampered upstairs and let themselves down the outside of the building on a rope, leaving Robert's men in possession of the building (Anderson 1982: 58, 59).

When Robert Stewart heard what had happened, he hustled back from Sandwick, affecting to take charge of a situation not of his making. Later he came clean. These were early days in his rule in Orkney, and he was locked in dispute with the Bellenden family; he was to remain so for the rest of his life. Patrick Bellenden was said to be in the process of mounting an expedition to drive him out of Orkney, and one of his first objectives in this campaign would have been to re-take the cathedral. For this reason Robert had made sure that the bishop's men, naturally sympathetic to Bellenden, were removed from the building. Had he wished to, Robert might have pointed to at least some legitimacy in his actions, since not long after his arrival in Orkney the previous year, he had made himself provost of the burgh (Mooney 1952: 124).

The Palace

The surviving bishop's men would no doubt have fled to the bishop's palace. In some ways the palace, or palaces, which lie to the south of the cathedral, are the most mysterious of buildings. Essentially we know of only three building phases. Firstly there is the original stone palace of William the Old, built contemporaneously with the cathedral itself; then nothing for more than four centuries till the 1550 reconstruction under Bishop Robert Reid; and finally there are the extraordinary works from 1600 under Earl Patrick (Simpson *et al.*, 1998: 4, 10).

In earlier times, the building was simply referred to as 'the place of the bishop', but by about 1560, ten years or so after Bishop Reid's massive reconstruction, it came to be known as the 'Palace of the Yards' (e.g. Clouston 1914: 269, cliv). What were the 'Yards'? Presumably they were courtyards; perhaps one which lay to the west of the range now known as the Bishop's Palace, and another on the east side which came to be surrounded by the buildings erected by Earl Patrick. Nowadays we talk of the 'Earl's Palace' and the 'Bishop's Palace', yet it is clear that what stood there, even before the days of Patrick and his 'New Wark of the Yards', was quite different from, and more elaborate than what remains of the Bishop's Palace today. The problem is that what we know to have existed, though very large, does not add up to 'Yards' — rather it

comprised one long range, the ruins of which are still visible today, with two large square towers at its northern end. One of these was called the Manse Tower, which is thought to have been the bishop's own residence; the other may be the one referred to during the siege of 1614 as the 'Chapel Tower'. On the other hand, there is evidence of building running northward — towards the cathedral — from what we today call the Earl's Palace, which appears to predate it, and it may be that Patrick built on top of what had previously been part of the bishop's Palace of the Yards. In any event, the latest edition of the guidebook to 'The Bishop's Palace and the Earl's Palace' contains a fine reconstruction drawing purporting to show how the palace of the bishop might have looked at the time of King Håkon's visit in 1263. Unfortunately it is labelled 'Palace of the Yards', and it does not seem likely that the palace was really so called until after the time of Robert Reid, under whom it really developed 'yards'.

Bishop Reid's additions included the 'formidable' round tower which he had 'equipped . . . with ample provision for firearm defence. Clearly the militarism of the Sinclair rulers of Orkney was compelling the bishop to look to his own defences' (Simpson *et al*, 1998: 7). It is only fair to point out that by the time of the building of Bishop Reid's tower the Sinclairs' days had largely passed and the superior of Orkney was the dowager queen Mary of Guise, whose rule seems to have met no serious opposition. However, the form of the building does indicate at least the acceptance in principle of the need for defence.

The Castle

The 'militarism of the Sinclairs' was perhaps spent, but the bishop had only to walk a few yards to the other side of the cathedral to see massive evidence of how strong it had been. The construction of Kirkwall Castle was perhaps the main reason why the bishop fortified his house, and why Orkney's holiest building became a military strongpoint. Before the building of the castle, Orkney history had not been notable for its sieges, since it had not been an age of great strongholds; a man of the sagas was more likely to have his home burned quickly over his head than have it the subject of protracted investment. The exceptions to this are the siege of Erlend the Younger by Earl Harald Maddadarsen in the broch of Mousa in the spring of 1153, and that of the *goðingar* by the kinsmen of the murdered Earl John in Cubbie Roo's castle about 70 years later (Taylor 1938: 211; Thomson 1987: 82). In both cases the sagas say that these were 'difficult places to attack', despite the fact that Cubbie Roo's Castle was only 25' square in plan. This was because the men of the saga were largely without the means or expertise to make such an assault.

The building of Kirkwall Castle changed all that. It was begun soon after 1379 by Earl Henry Sinclair, in conspicuous violation of his installation document (Clouston 1914: 21). It is well known that not one stone of it stands upon another today; but the sources are such that we can make some reasonable

inferences about what it must have been like. It was a tower house on the Scottish pattern, built close to the east side of the Peedie Sea, which formed a partial moat. The entrance probably faced to landward, positioned halfway up the side of the keep, approached by a dismountable ladder. This suggests that the tower was square in plan; the more sophisticated L-plan, typified by castles like Craigmillar, usually had a door at ground level, since the shape of the building provided a much more defensible position for the doorway, in the re-entrant angle of the L (Simpson 1980: 4).

At Kirkwall Castle, the entrance would have provided access at second floor level, as at Lochleven (Simpson 1959: 11), and have consisted of an outer door, leading to what we know to have been an iron yett. This would give access to what was called the 'lang hall', probably the main apartment of the building, which incorporated a 'king's gallery', a name it perhaps acquired after James V's visit in 1540. From this floor there was a turnpike stair to the other floors, perhaps situated at the far end of the building, in order to provide a further obstacle for attackers. Upstairs were the family apartments in the 'midhall' and 'overhall', and thence to the roof; downstairs led to the 'servant hall' and the cellars, which held stores, the water supply, prison cells and, in 1614, a torture chamber. Another turnpike also led to the roof from another part of the building. The roof was flat, with a platform on which military engines or cannon might be placed. The two turnpike heads were also large enough to house a cannon each. The stonework of these may have provided shelter from musketry for the gunners, but it did not come near to matching the strength of that of the rest of the building (Anderson 1992: 163-166).

Perhaps because of the Norwegian king's toleration of such a stronghold, some doubt has been cast on whether it was in fact built by the earl at all. However, a keystone in dressed red freestone bearing the arms of the Sinclairs was found among the rubble on the site in the 19th century, and was probably mounted originally above the door of the keep (Anderson 1992: 165). It seems much more likely that the kings of Norway were unable to do anything about the construction of the building there and then and simply bided their time until an opportunity arose to check the power of the earl. On the death of the second Earl Henry in 1420, King Erik of Norway granted to Bishop Thomas Tulloch a grant of 'all the Orkneys with royal rights', and withheld investiture from the young earl, William Sinclair (Clouston 1914: 31). On 10 July 1422 Bishop Thomas acknowledged that he had been given a grant of the 'castle and fortress of Kirkwall, situated in Orkney in Norway, with the country of Orkney and the countship in the same place' (Clouston 1914: 32).

The appointment of a bishop to a position of power in the islands, accompanied by a grant of the castle, the supreme expression of temporal power, signalled a new, and for the future significant, policy for the kings of Norway, who had not always been on the best of terms with the bishops of Orkney. It

was aimed at curbing the power, less of the young earl himself than of his uncle Sir David Menzies of Weem, the late earl's brother-in-law. Menzies has a name notorious among Orkney historians as an oppressor and precursor of the Stewart earls. Against such a strongman Bishop Thomas was unable to take possession of 'the tower' and thus remained powerless, at least for the time being. On the other hand, Menzies's rule did not long survive. He was named in 1425 as a hostage to be sent to England in exchange for the repatriation of James I and thereafter disappeared from the northern scene. For some time, Bishop Thomas was in control, and King Erik continued to withhold Earl William's investiture until 1434, at least 14 years after his father's death (Thomson 1987: 104-105); when William was finally installed, the castle was noted as having been built against the terms of his grandfather's appointment and was to be ceded to the king on his own death (Clouston 1914: 49).

By that time the castle was probably a much more elaborate structure than the simple massive keep erected by Earl Henry I. Craigmillar Castle has been referred to as a parallel to Kirkwall, though perhaps a more advanced one, and when compiling the reconstruction drawing of Kirkwall Castle in the book *Black Patie*, some use was made of its example (Anderson 1992). The two works must have started within a few years of each other. Sir Simon Preston of Gorton, builder of the first stage of Craigmillar, acquired his estates there in 1374, only five years before Henry Sinclair became earl of Orkney (Simpson 1980: 24). Both castles began as lone keeps, using the local topography to defensive advantage — a rocky outcrop in the case of Craigmillar, the sea in the case of Kirkwall. At a later stage, both had large curtain walls built about the tower house. At Craigmillar, the addition of the curtain walls began in 1427, at just the time that the earl of Orkney was struggling for his inheritance. This is pure coincidence, but according to Barry the outer wall of the Kirkwall Castle bore a stone with arms and a mitre. Was it the bishop therefore who was in charge in Orkney in the years between the departure of Menzies of Weem and the long-delayed investiture of Earl William, and who added the curtain walls to Earl Henry's tower house? The relationship between king, bishop and earl, and the question of who owned the castle — was it the earldom or the Sinclair family? — is a complex one (Crawford 1976: 163). But it does seem highly likely that the second stage of the building of Kirkwall Castle was undertaken at the behest of Bishop Thomas Tulloch.

The curtain walls at Kirkwall had several blockhouses, or towers, set into them, one of them beside the gate, the others presumably set into the corners. In Craigmillar, the entrance to these walls was placed on the far side from that of the keep. This had a distinct defensive advantage. Attackers might penetrate the front entrance, but they had a perilous journey, beneath the curtain walls and round the keep, to attack its door. At Kirkwall the entrances in curtain wall and keep probably faced in the same direction, but, as we have seen, the keep

door stood 'about the mids of the whole hight of the house' and was thus very difficult of access if someone dismantled the bridge, as the rebels did in 1614. According to Bishop Law, this upward climb was the main obstacle to anyone negotiating the outer entrance, and elsewhere he does refer to 'ascending and entering' at the iron yett of the keep.

The castle was bordered by: what is now termed Broad Street on the east; the Peedie Sea (then generally known as the Oyce, and much larger than it is today) on the west and to some extent on the north; and by buildings of the town on the south. The total frontage on Broad Street was between 100 and 150 feet. The outer wall was set back a number of feet from the roadway, the intervening space being the site of the castle's peatstacks. In 1856, the surviving inner wall was 11' 4" thick, the outer 8'. It cannot now be said whether this was a double wall, or whether the outer of the two walls merely marked the outside of the castle precincts, but its strength can hardly be denied. When the walls were built, a well was enclosed which lay at what is now the eastern end of Castle Street (it is still there, capped, beneath the roadway). So close to the main street did this well lie that it was not possible to build the wall around it. It had to be accommodated in an arched recess within the thickness of the wall, lined with dressed freestone and approached by a door in the inner side of the wall (Anderson 1992: 163-166).

The castle was the centre of unrest on a number of occasions before 1614. It was seized from William, Lord Sinclair, by his illegitimate brothers James and Edward, at the beginning of the struggle that was to culminate in the battle of Summerdale in 1529 (Clouston 1914: 57). And even Patrick Stewart himself was said to have besieged it in 1592, though to what end remains obscure (Anderson 1992: 82).

The 1614 Siege of Kirkwall

These, then, were the buildings involved in the 1614 siege of Kirkwall. Robert Stewart, Patrick Stewart's illegitimate son and by then his only major representative in Orkney, had made a previous attempt to capture the strongholds of Orkney in 1612 (Anderson 1992: 98). We know little about it, but from hints we may infer that it had the same strategic aim of seizing all these strongholds, as well as the girmel, the warehouse which held the payments from the earldom estates which, though originally intended as payment of rent, feu and skat, were in kind — grain, butter and other produce — and thus the means of feeding the defenders against a siege.

Robert Stewart was only the nominal head of the rebellion. The actual director of the forces was Patrick Halcro, probably a member of the Aikers branch of that family (Anderson 1992: 161). After taking over the palace of Birsay, Patrick and Robert moved their forces towards Kirkwall, mustering at the Bu of Corse, one of the main headfarms of the earldom and still a farm today,

perched on a hill with an excellent view of the objects of attack. From there they made an abortive attack on the Kirkwall house of Bernard Stewart, Halcro's brother-in-law, who had been keeper of Birsay, and who had refused to join in the enterprise.

An attack was finally made on the strongholds of Kirkwall. The first objective was the cathedral, which was taken by a group of between 10 and 20, led by Halcro himself, who with a companion entered the building by a window and opened the doors from inside. A party was left in the steeple under Thomas Black, and supplies were later sent to them. Halcro then went back to Corse, gathered a force of 60-100 men and marched on the castle, which surrendered without a shot being fired, as did the palace. The only casualty in the whole operation was one of the palace defenders, Robert Chalmers, who was wounded in the hand by a musket ball.

The erstwhile defenders of the strongholds were allowed to leave Orkney while the new occupants spent the next days preparing them for siege with the contents of the gironel, as well as sheep and other supplies brought in from all over the islands. They then waited to see what the response of the government might be. Robert, interestingly, billeted himself in the palace, probably in obedience to his father's wish to repossess a building dear to his heart, rather than for strategic reasons.

Among the anxious observers in Edinburgh there was some argument over just who should lead the expedition to retake the strongholds. In the end, it set sail on 20 August under the leadership of the earl of Caithness. It consisted of three boats from Burntisland, one carrying armed seamen and their weapons, one carrying two large cannon, and one acting as a tender for the other two. They arrived at Castle Sinclair in Caithness two days later and crossed the Firth the following day, anchoring at Elwick, the harbour on the south coast of Shapinsay, guarded by Helliars Holm. A herald, with his trumpeter and attendants, was sent across to Kirkwall in an attempt to charge the rebels formally to surrender, but was physically prevented from exercising his office. This was followed by an appeal for support from among the islanders which proved, to the earl's annoyance and our interest, distinctly disappointing.

On 26 August, Caithness crossed over to Carness with his own men and the smaller of his two artillery pieces. This was dragged through deep soil to Weyland, where it was trained on the castle. An early shot shattered the stonework of the turnpike head of the castle, and raised the hopes of the attackers of an early conclusion. The success proved misleading. Further shots broke against the massive stonework of the keep like golfballs.

The following day the cannon was moved to Newbigging, 'within ane muscatt schott' of Patrick's palace, and trained on the 'Chapel Tower', where Patrick Halcro had positioned Robert's musketeers. Exactly what was happening was not entirely clear, since neither Newbigging nor the Chapel Tower can

be clearly identified today, but it seems highly likely that the earl, having found out how strong the castle was, had switched his attention to the weakest of the three positions, the Palace of the Yards. The Chapel Tower, as we mentioned earlier, was probably one of the towers of the old bishop's palace which lay close to that of Bishop Reid, and the musketeers positioned there and in the Cathedral were making life extremely difficult for the earl's men. Where the cannon was positioned we cannot say, but it probably lay somewhere to the south of the palace. Caithness does say that his bombardment of the Chapel Tower and its occupants with his cannon did 'noy them much', so it may be that the Chapel Tower was badly damaged. Since no real evidence other than the references survive, we cannot say.

Caithness's next move was to bring ashore his larger cannon — a machine whose name, *Thrawn Mouth*, was a testimony to its calibre — and position it to fire on the massive oriel windows of Patrick's great hall. The threat to this proud feature of the building was enough. There is no evidence that these windows were badly damaged, however they may appear today, and it is clear that Robert quickly surrendered the palace. Shortly afterwards the cathedral too yielded through the treachery of one of its occupants, one John Guild, who concluded a separate surrender which left the leader of the cathedral party, Thomas Black, himself trying to negotiate, trapped in the custody of the earl.

Guild was an acknowledged knave, who had physically assaulted Caithness's herald and torn his tabard, but this extremely serious crime was ignored in the earl's desperation to negotiate the surrender of the cathedral which, he said was 'the rebels strongest hauld', where his forces 'could have no angle in all the place of the Yairdis, frie from the danger of the schottes from the stiple'. If the cathedral had not surrendered, then it would have been necessary for the earl to turn his cannon on it.

It is this point that probably lies at the root of one allegation made against the earl of Caithness by Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, author of the earliest detailed account of the siege (Gordon 1813: 301). He accuses Caithness of actively wishing to demolish the cathedral. Following this, John Mooney gives credit to James Law, bishop of Orkney, for his part in the preservation of the two intact Scottish medieval cathedrals — St Mungo's in Glasgow from sectarian zealots, and St Magnus from the vindictiveness of the earl (Mooney 1947: 4). In fact Gordon's account seems to be the confusion of two elements — Caithness's genuine belief that he might have to bombard the cathedral if it did not surrender and the actual demolition of the castle, albeit partial, after the end of the siege. Caithness cursed the castle roundly enough for its strength, and his destruction of it may well have given personal satisfaction. But he had no such animus against the cathedral.

In fact, Caithness now enjoyed an unforeseen advantage, since possession of the steeple exposed a defensive weakness in the castle. From the top of

the cathedral, it was possible for the earl's men to fire, not only on the castle's cannon on its roof, but on the yett of the keep itself, which, being high on the side of the building was visible from the steeple, causing great alarm among its defenders. Caithness was now able to position his musketeers at will, in surrounding houses as well as in the strongpoints, and place his cannon to fire on the castle ramparts, straight across Broad Street.

He initially had high hopes of beating the building down, but as in the case of the turnpike head, early success with battlements could not be repeated with the stonework of the walls themselves. The walls and blockhouses added a potent line of defence. Besides being elaborate enough to be manned by part of the garrison, they were also able to maintain communication with the keep — possibly because the walls were joined to the keep on the seaward side. Some damage was done to the blockhouse at the entrance, perhaps creating a hole large enough to allow the cannon to be trained on the yett of the keep inside. An attempt was made to penetrate the breach, both by direct assault, and by using a 'sow' or wheeled shelter. Neither was successful, with two fatalities and numerous injuries; even had they achieved more, it became clear that this would simply result in those manning the walls falling back into the tower. At the same time, Caithness himself was running out of gunpowder and ammunition.

The exchanges were now of musketry only. Supplies arrived on the last day of actual military operations, 19 September, but by now Caithness was running out of ideas as well as ordnance, and resorted to negotiation. In the end it became clear that, despite a surprising degree of support for the rebels among the population and unexpectedly high morale among Robert Stewart's followers if not in the boy himself, there was no future for the rebellion and, with Caithness hanging captured rebels within sight of the castle, there gradually arose an attitude among the castle defenders of every man for himself. The story of how the rebels were persuaded to surrender, ten days after the last action in the siege, has been told elsewhere (Anderson 1992: 125-126).

Conclusion

The castle was taken, the bridge between the outer and inner entrances rebuilt, and the royal colours run up amid general rejoicing. This was now the end for Kirkwall Castle. When Caithness left Orkney, he entrusted to his kinsman Sir John Sinclair of Ratter the demolition of that 'startingoill and place of retreat for tratouris and rebellis'. One wonders what King Erik of Norway would have thought. Although parts of the castle remained until the mid-19th century, these were simply lumps of masonry. The earldom of Orkney too was finished, despite efforts to revive it by Patrick's brother John, and its greatest military stronghold had gone with it.

The Palace of the Yards lasted longer, though its career was a chequered one. With the eclipse of episcopacy between 1638 and 1660 it was neglected,

though it was briefly used by Montrose during his stay in Orkney in 1650. From 1671 until the final end of the bishopric in 1689 it was again a bishop's palace, but from then on it crumbled. Alexander Peterkin suggested refurbishing Earl Patrick's contribution as a sheriff court, but his idea was ignored and the decline continued until 1921, when the building was taken into the care of the state.

The cathedral has had its vicissitudes too. It was woefully neglected in the early 19th century. But never since 1614 has it been thought of as a military, as opposed to an ecclesiastical, structure. Alone of the three buildings we have discussed, it is intact (and more so than Glasgow Cathedral, which was indeed protected by Archbishop Law; it had its end towers removed in a misguided attempt at improvement in the 19th century). It is used for the purpose for which it was built more than eight-and-a-half centuries ago, and it still belongs to the successor of the municipality which received it from the king of Scots in 1486, who acquired it, for good or ill, from the successor of the man who pledged it to the saint it commemorates.

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