Scottish and English architecture: a “provincial” relationship?

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1 This article addresses the question of whether there is such a thing as a distinctive Scottish architecture. From a French, or continental perspective, it is often assumed that Scottish architecture is English, or British. Anyone (outside Scotland!) may – very reasonably – think also that Scottish architecture is covered by books on British or English architecture. Frequently – until recently –, people have not appreciated that there may be a distinctly Scottish national style of architecture or that Scottish architecture fitted relatively uneasily within the everyday narrative of orthodox British architectural history.

2 For a long time, even up to the late 20th century, Scottish architecture was widely interpreted as a provincial manifestation of English or British architecture. In 1812 English antiquarian John Britton pronounced loftily that Roslin has [...] been called Scottish: but as this adjective has not been admitted into the architectural nomenclature, it is unmeaning and useless. (Britton 49)

3 This bias is derived from an English scholar for whom there was no such thing as Scottish architecture. This article evidences both the error of that view as well as the intellectual harm such statements have caused.

1. The literature

4 19th- and 20th-century architectural history books have sought typically to find a place for Scottish architecture within the canon of British architecture, and – though their authors and publishers appear unaware of the fact – usually failed to do so; notably where externally-based authors have contented themselves that their knowledge of England carried them through, or perhaps by being content to use outdated sources to address – implicitly, therefore, less-important – Scotland.
David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross in *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, 5 vols. (1887–92) developed the thesis that what happened in England would follow in Scotland some decades or centuries later. In *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830* (1953), English architectural historian John Summerson had a separate chapter, comprising an appendix to the main text, entitled “Architecture in Scotland 1530-1707”. Regarding the post-Restoration period in Scotland (ie. the period after 1660), he wrote:

> the surrender to English fashions was thereafter complete and it becomes necessary to treat Scottish architecture as a provincial extension of the English school. (Summerson 500)

Similarly, in his analysis of the functioning of the country house in the British Isles, Mark Girouard centred essentially on England.

However, a new generation of architectural historians has provided, from the 1980s onwards, a more detailed analysis, or close examination, of architecture and building types, and different conclusions. A *History of Scottish Architecture* (1996), the *Scottish Chateau* (2001), *Scotland’s Castle Culture* (2011), and most recently *Scotch Baronial* (2019), have presented the castle as a native building type. The 1992 Robert Adam bicentenary similarly revalued Scottish architecture by focusing on Adam’s work in Scotland, in particular on his villas and castles (of which there are few outside Scotland). The interior of the Scottish country house has also been the subject of relatively recent studies in visual culture.

This same generation of historians has also wanted to make European comparisons, by stressing the connections with especially France, Italy and the Low countries. *The Architecture of Scotland, 1660-1750* is themed on the fact that Scotland was part of mainstream Europe by, for example, drawing parallels between the tenement in Scotland and elsewhere on the continent, including France and Italy (noticing, in fact, that the development appears to begin earlier in Edinburgh than in Paris, while not being adopted in England). It has also been stressed, by Deborah Howard and Ian Campbell in particular, that Scotland was subject to reciprocal influences with the Continent during the Renaissance period (15th-16th centuries); that is, Scotland was not a recipient culture, but a fully-engaged participant in cultural exchange. Recent work on gentleman architect Sir William Bruce (c.1625-1710), which situated him in a European context, has further helped reverse the orthodoxy previously formulated by Sir Howard Colvin. According to him, until Bruce’s arrival on the scene “Scottish domestic architecture was still dominated by the basic forms of the late medieval castle”, and the castellated tradition was “an anachronism” (Colvin 174). By attacking Scotland’s national architectural tradition, Colvin was necessarily confirming that a distinctive Scottish architecture, different from that of England, existed. Disdainful, however, that Scotland had prized its castellated tradition and had retained its distinctive architectural character, he overlooked the latest evolutions in the Scottish castle style and the change in planning and decoration. His analysis of Scotland’s tradition was that “different” (ie, from England) necessarily meant “inferior”. Perhaps he considered that the Scots should have erased their own culture and simply followed English taste.

Although the growing self-confidence and maturity of modern-day Scotland has translated into a more substantial body of research on the built heritage and into the recognition of a proto-Enlightenment in architecture, a substantial gap remains in the...
narrative of Scotland’s development of images and image-making within the broader context of social, economic and institutional changes in Scotland. The topic has, by contrast, attracted more attention in Ireland and Wales where authoritative accounts of the art and architecture, and visual culture more widely, have been produced.⁶

It is vital to have an informed understanding of architecture because buildings say something about who they were intended for, what the political agenda of the differing patrons might have been; and therefore, they tell us much about the culture of their time. Buildings are primary historical documents; each a piece of cultural and social history in stone, and misunderstandings about the way we regard the Scottish character and Scottish history have affected the way we have in the past approached Scotland’s architecture.

The recognition of the individuality and cultural viability of Scottish architecture coincided with a shift in the historiography after WW2, as society moved away from the old trenchant British state nationalism of the days of empire and a more particularly Scottish nationalism developed. In a landmark study of university education, George Davie’s Democratic Intellect (1961) highlighted the anglicisation of Scottish education; and Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, authors of The Eclipse of Scottish Culture (1989), analysed how the very centre of the national identity had been subverted by the English (and establishment Scots), and their constant inferiorising of the cultural milieu of Scotland. Inferiorism is where the “colonising” dominant culture has successfully persuaded those of the “colonised”, or subverted culture to disparage their own culture.⁷ And we see this in Scotland – people who might have found ready alignment with John Britton. Stewart Cruden, government Inspector of Ancient Monuments, wrote on late medieval Scottish ecclesiastical architecture: “it must be acknowledged that it is an inferior architecture, the fag end of the international medieval tradition […]” (Cruden 183). A glimpse at Melrose Abbey alone – whose care, display and interpretation lay in the hands of his own organisation – should have made him hesitate before publishing that opinion.

Gordon Donaldson, at Edinburgh University, had a significant role in the shift away from the inferiorised historians. Michael Lynch, Allan Macinnes, Christopher Smout and Jenny Wormald all belong to a new generation of documentary historians who sought to reverse a unionist historiography developed after 1707 and most significantly popularised in the writings of David Hume (1711-76) and William Robertson (1721-93). These Enlightenment historians claimed that pre-Union Scotland had been a barbaric wasteland given salvation at last through union with England. This orthodoxy was reversed by 20th-century historians in their work on pre-Union Scotland. The new, postwar assertion of Scottish identity, which translated into the historiography – much of it published by John Tuckwell and his influential John Donald press from the 1970s – led to devolution being implemented in the 1990s, and to the creation of a new Scottish Parliament.⁸

Having described this general background, we must now return to our initial question: how distinctive is Scottish architecture, particularly in relation to that of England? There are obvious differences between the two countries. England’s buildings are typically red brick (as are those in the Netherlands), and often thin-walled. Scotland’s buildings, by contrast, are typically stone (as in France), often harled, and sometimes with massive walls. In his essay “The Foreigner at Home” (1882), Robert Louis Stevenson describes such differences in building types:
A Scotchman may tramp the better part of Europe and the United States, and never again receive so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners as on his first excursion into England [...] One thing especially continues unfamiliar to the Scotchman’s eye — the domestic architecture, the look of streets and buildings; the quaint, venerable age of many, and the thin walls and warm colouring of all. We have, in Scotland, far fewer ancient buildings, above all in country places; and those that we have are all of hewn or harled masonry. Wood has been sparingly used in their construction; the window-frames are sunken in the wall, not flat to the front, as in England; the roofs are steeper-pitched; even a hill farm will have a massy, square, cold and permanent appearance. English houses, in comparison, have the look of cardboard toys, such as a puff might shatter. And to this the Scotchman never becomes used. His eye can never rest consciously on one of these brick houses — rickles of brick, as he might call them — or on one of these flat-chested streets, but he is instantly reminded where he is [...] (Stevenson 89-91)

But to understand how, stylistically, Scotland’s architecture and that of England may differ from one another, we must reflect on the two countries’ distinct, and also their shared, history. The two had a cordial relationship for most of the 13th century; this was shattered in 1296 when the English invaded Scotland, aiming to annex it as part of England – precisely as they had done successfully with Wales a couple of decades earlier. Scotland defeated the English at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 thereby affirming its independence; but the relationship was damaged and numerous English invasions followed, devastating the economy and much else. Scotland and France were now firm friends against their common rival. In 1707, Scotland and England formed a union which incorporated Scotland within the new state called Britain and whose constituent parts it was agreed were to be re-named North Britain and South Britain. (Though in fact, it was the term “England” that was, and continues to be, most commonly applied to denote Britain, the two terms widely seen as being equivalent.)

2. Pre-Union Scotland

After the Wars of Independence (the first war extended from 1296-1328), Scotland’s architecture differed from English architecture. Previously, as we saw, the two countries had been at peace and similarities in 13th-century ecclesiastical buildings, for example, could be seen on either side of the border. But now, there were two ways in which Scotland developed its own individual style. Firstly, there was a revival of the Romanesque, or round arched, architecture of the 11th-12th centuries, a time of Scotland’s “golden age” when a progressive monarchy vitalised the country, with a modernising economy and energetic architectural development. Where in France, England and Germany, Gothic was overwhelmingly represented by the pointed arch in the 15th century, in Scotland this was not the case. Gothic continued still as a fashion, but it was now accompanied by the prominent use of round-arched architecture in a way that was not seen in these other countries. This latter arrangement can be seen at Dunkeld Cathedral at triforium level, and also at St Mary’s, Haddington, and Holy Rude, Stirling. In this nominally Gothic period, there was an intentional rejection of the clustered columns of the Gothic – such as was used in the 13th-century great religious houses (Melrose, for instance) – in favour of the circular column of the pre-Gothic Romanesque, and an intentional mixing of Gothic arches with round arches. In the aftermath of that collapsed political relationship the point was to accept Gothic, and more importantly re-introduce the architecture of Scotland’s earlier, “high” period of
the 11th-12th centuries, particularly under Malcolm III and David I – when round-arched Romanesque was the fashion. This same cultural revivalism is seen elsewhere in the 15th century, notably in Italy, at the Hospital of the Innocents in Florence, from 1419.

Secondly, there was a particular emphasis placed upon Castellated architecture, a style which flourished after the 13th century, and which underlined the prestige of Scotland’s feudal elites – the Stuart monarchy and the landed classes. The martial values which – it was claimed – had secured the country’s independence against the English, and which was celebrated in the triumphalist nationalist history of the Scotichronicon (1440s), translated into the architecture of Scotland’s secular buildings and of some churches. The elite residential tower, or tower-house (the leading – and subsequently much-replicated – example was David II’s tower c.1370 at Edinburgh Castle), the imperial symbolism of the Crown spire seen at turn-of-sixteenth-century King’s College, Aberdeen, at Edinburgh’s St Giles (revived again at Glasgow’s Tolbooth, 1626), and triumphal arches, all underlined the message of Scottish independence.

Despite the castellated tradition which signalled the required martial imagery, the symmetry and proportion found in the châteaux of the Loire Valley were also replicated in Scotland – the Chapel Royal project of 1594 at Stirling is both the earliest known replication of Solomon’s Temple and the earliest classical church in the British archipelago; and so, an early example of a classical building in a northern European context. Generally, the architectural language developed in Scotland was a French-looking architecture, with corbelled pointed-roofed turrets. By the end of the sixteenth century, there was an interest in Italianising classicism, seen at Crichton Castle, and more clearly at Newark Castle, whose pediment-within-a-pediment formula came clearly from Michelangelo’s Porta Pia in Rome. This pediment type seems to have had no precedent in England (although it appeared later in the work of the Smythsons); and so this innovation underlines the fact that there must have been an independent architectural agenda within Scotland which was independent from that of England.

After the Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England (and Ireland) in 1603, when a Scot now occupied England’s throne, the castle age continued unabated in Scotland. The martial discourse, and its associated architectural language, lived on in the houses of the nobility at Huntly Castle, Craigievar and Castle Fraser. After the Restoration of the Stuarts to the throne in 1660, courtiers rebuilt their houses in a castellated, yet rather hybrid classical style as exemplified at Glamis Castle, and Drumlanrig Castle, while (classical) Kinross House was set on direct alignment with the historically-resonant Lochleven Castle. The castellated style came in that period to be associated with the Stuart monarchy and its supporters.

In the half-century that followed the Revolution of 1689, when the last Stuart king, James VII, was forfeited, the castle style remained associated with a dangerous, Jacobite threat. No more royal palaces were commissioned because the monarchy no longer intended to see Scotland, and (from 1714) the new Hanoverian monarchy embraced the northern European classicism established both in England and in the Low Countries; in the decades that followed the parliamentary Union, the dominant fashion in Scotland was for a purer classicism.
3. Post-Union Scotland

It was only after the conclusion of dynastic conflict at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, at the time of the consolidation of the “new Britain”, that Scotland’s castle culture was revived. This new style was later called the Scotch Baronial, in reference to the barons or “lairds” who built the ancient houses whose detailing was to be quarried for the language of what would be Scotland’s most emblematic national revivalism; one of the first coherently-worked out national revivalisms. In 1828, in Germany for example, Heinrich Hübsch challenged the authority of classicism in “In welchem Style sollen wir bauen?” (In what Style should we build?), advocating the Rundbogenstil (round-arched or Romanesque) as Germany’s “national” architecture igniting debate amongst neo-goths and neo-classicists.16

Inveraray, commissioned after 1743 by the third Duke of Argyll (its memorial stone was laid shortly after Culloden), was a turning point in the Baronial Style; “the castle” now emerged as the paradigm for Scotland’s national architecture. Designed by Roger Morris, an English architect, Inveraray took the form of an impressive castle with corner turrets, crenelated parapets and a central tower. Because it was built for a prominent Whig and Hanoverian family (whose ancestral base was in the Scottish Highlands), the castle and its associated imagery could no longer be associated with menacing Jacobitism. On the contrary, this imagery came to represent the historical roots of the new, united Britain and to celebrate its ancient dynastic families. “The castle”, which up to about a half-century previously had represented Scotland’s establishment, once again represented the establishment – but now it was for a new, and very different establishment: that of the pro-Hanoverian Argylls and Dundases, as opposed to the ousted royal Stuarts.

Inveraray Castle inspired many derivatives; the central tower, crenelated parapet and rounded corner towers became a repeated formula used in similar or modified form at Melville Castle (1780s), Taymouth Castle (1800s), Eglinton (1810-20s), Stobo (1820s) and elsewhere. The general mid-century climate within England of “Scotophobia” and the prejudice against the Scots was now faded, and Scotland’s “wildness” was subtly appropriated by the Romantics as part of a post-Union agenda in which Jacobitism was firmly re-packaged as harmless heritage, quaint but misguided.

Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott’s new-built family home near Melrose Abbey in the Borders (completed 1824), exemplified Tory unionist-nationalism. This celebration of eclectic antiquarianism referenced the Scottish past in the full spirit of unionism. The symmetry of the Palladian plan was therefore rejected at Abbotsford in favour of the so-called Tudor-plan, and specific elements of historic Scottish buildings were replicated; for instance, Scott used a royal model for his porch (it derives from James V’s porch at Linlithgow Palace c.1540) and a corbelled-to-square off-centre stair tower, which was a common feature in sixteenth-century castles. This fashion accompanied the inauguration of the Celtic revival, and the escalated popularity of old or re-manufactured traditions like the formerly-outlawed tartan or the Highland Games.

Meanwhile, from the late 1810s onwards, architect William Burn (1789-1870) spread the new Scotch baronial idiom into urban and country house architecture, which appealed to a wealthy Tory clientèle. The style was not, however, solely the style of the Tories, and architect William Henry Playfair (1790-1850) equally referenced the style, for instance at Floors Castle (1837-45). Scotch Revivalism made a key influence in
Edinburgh from 1827 onwards, when improvements were made to the city – primarily in the Old Town.

25 The assertion of a national identity within a British context expressed itself very significantly at Balmoral. When Queen Victoria and Prince Albert purchased the Highland estate in 1848, following a visit to Taymouth Castle in 1842 where the couple fell in love with the Highlands, they wanted “Scotch architecture”. There, the monarchy itself chose to emphasise the Scottishness of Scottish architecture. So it is evident that for mid-19th-century Scots, English and Germans (Albert was German) there was such a thing as Scottish architecture. By that time the revival of the castle culture had been framed and popularised by the writings of Sir Walter Scott; and Prince Albert, who took stern control of the building works at Balmoral, referenced Abbotsford (for example, by copying the porch arrangement). This celebration, which fitted into Romanticism, was very clearly not intended to challenge the established order, but to enhance it. By then, Scotland was well-established as an active participant in the Union, including the empire. The National Wallace Monument in Stirling by John T. Rochead (completed 1869) – William Wallace was a hero of Scotland’s wars against England – fits into the same story which scholars have called “unionist nationalism”; a celebration of Scotland’s identity and past within a unionist context.

26 Scotland’s Revivalism appeared also in church architecture in the 19th century. Dunblane Cathedral’s 13th-century west gable – composed of three identical giant lancets with vesica above, set between massive plain buttresses – was favoured by revivalists; Old St Paul’s (1883) in Edinburgh by Hay and Henderson and the Barony Church (1886-90) in Glasgow by John Burnet and John A. Campbell are but two of numerous clear derivatives.

27 In England, by the third quarter of the century, Gothic was established as the pre-eminent national style with major essays by Sir George Gilbert Scott (St Pancras station and hotel, 1869-72) and Alfred Waterhouse (Manchester Town Hall, 1868) amongst others. In discussing the period 1855-75 in Victorian Architecture, Dixon and Muthesius tell England’s story; but by including several Scottish references – and failing to engage with the Baronial – it appears, misleadingly, to be Britain’s story, thereby helping prove the point made above that the supposedly “British” literature has failed Scotland badly.

28 These authors tell that Gothic was established as the pre-eminent “national” style, and they reference St Pancras station and hotel and the Manchester Town Hall. They state too that “[c]astle building was falling out of fashion as the period progressed” (Dixon and Muthesius 44). Regarding England, this seems true; but regarding Scotland, that is the opposite from the truth. To illustrate the Victorian period national “different-ness”, the Law Courts (1874-82, by G. E. Street) in London were in a turreted Gothic. In Scotland, by contrast, courthouses such as Selkirk (c.1865, by David Rhind) were castellated Baronial. Scotland and England followed divergent paths of architectural individualism, and for the remainder of the period up to WW1, the castle remained Scotland’s dominant and clearly nationally-distinctive building type.

29 Among the different strands of Scottish architecture replicated in the 19th century was the Celtic, a heritage which the Scots shared with Ireland. Iona Abbey, reconstructed from ruin at the turn of the 20th century, had lost its west gable window through ruin. It would almost certainly have originally contained a big gothic window, in conformity with both the standard formula for such buildings and the form of the doorway beneath, which had survived. However, to meet a neo-Celtic agenda, a round-windowed
arcade was instead designed for the rebuilt gable. Adopting what was considered Celtic, or Romanesque features such as that arched window was important in that it evoked an ancient Scottish and Celtic past, explicitly different from that of England. The reconstruction therefore signalled both that Iona’s religious architecture pre-dated and was different from (“English”) Gothic. This imagery was all the more significant for a very symbolic place which was, and still is, associated with the cradle of Scottish Christianity; Iona is where St Columba arrived in 563CE on reaching Scotland from already-Christianised Ireland. The formula of the early medieval ringed or wheeled Celtic cross was also revived, to become a stereotype for memorials, the most popular specific model being St Martin’s cross on Iona. Use of such crosses in 19th-century England (for instance, Epsom’s War Memorial) is typically a borrowing from its popularity in Scotland (and Ireland).

Even Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who is often considered only within the context of Art Nouveau, repeatedly referenced the Scottish castellated culture. For instance, Hill House (1902-4), in Helensburgh, has a pointed turret in the angle and is harled, and consequently, it resembles a castle. In the late 19th-early 20th century a fashion developed for castle re-occupation – Eilean Donan, Duart, Barnbougle, all of which had been abandoned, were now prized. The idea was that abandoned, semi-ruinous ancient castles should be restored, mainly to stress family antiquity. There appears to have been no parallel fashion in England.

The Scottish National War Memorial (1927) at Edinburgh Castle referenced ancient Scottish royal palaces; Stirling Castle, for the exterior (similar cusping detail, for example) and Falkland Palace (the courtyard-facing bay formula and roundels motif inside the building). For Robert Lorimer, the architect, this was the superlative way of showing the supreme status and power of the Scottish monarchy/state before the Union of the Crowns and Parliamentary Union; only Scotland’s ancient royal symbols were good enough for commemorating the war dead.

Conclusion

To encapsulate an answer to the question “Is Scottish architecture simply English architecture?”, one can say that Scotland, like France, historically used stone while England (like the Low Countries) used brick. The architectural paths of Scotland and England diverged after the Wars of Independence; England’s medieval architecture can be characterised as Gothic; while Scotland used Gothic, but rather half-heartedly, and combined it with a revived Romanesque, to signal its own “high” period. Scotland’s churches were frequently castellated, some with Imperial crown spires. By contrast, England had certainly one (St Mary-le-Bow), and arguably (should we include St Nicholas’, Newcastle) two such spires, and France possibly none. England, typically, built mansion houses with ground floor principal apartments. Scotland, up to and into the early 18th century, built castles, with elevated apartments on the piano nobile; and these castles tended to look French, rather than reference England, the common “enemy” or rival. Scotland had an extensive second castle age – the Baronial – which – as the above discussion regarding Dixon and Muthesius’s analysis shows – was totally at odds with fashion in Victorian England. And, following a long-established tradition of “British” historians, the distinction between the two countries was unvalued or ignored by these authors in order to focus upon England’s (no less viable) story. The scholarship
of such works cannot be doubted, but the readership is nonetheless misled into thinking they have obtained a rounded grasp of “British” architecture, when in fact they have learned only about England; or (following Colvin) been invited to disdain the Scottish tradition.

Scotland’s historic architecture can be characterised as castellated. No other country, in either the first castle age or the second, was producing a similar architecture. The Scottish castellated style referenced other cultures, but it was a branch of none. There was even a clearly-distinctive regional style (viz., neo-Celtic), a sub-set of the national style; and the Scottish diaspora built Scottish castles elsewhere. So the answer to the question posed at the start of the paper should now be clear. England’s historic architecture is different from that of Scotland. There was no single British architecture.

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NOTES


5. For an analysis of Hopetoun House and its continental sources, see Deborah Howard, “Sir William Bruce’s design for Hopetoun House and its Forerunners”, in A. Rowan and I. Gow, Scottish Country Houses 1600-1914 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 53-68. Ian Campbell has argued that James III and James IV transformed James I’s French-inspired palace into a Scoto-Italian palazzo, unparalleled in northern Europe, and, hence, worthy of imitation in some of the most significant buildings in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century France, Denmark and Germany. According to the author, Linlithgow Palace influenced the architecture of the châteaux.


9. As seen at Dalmeny Kirk and Dunfermline Abbey.

10. Such development was characterised by planned towns, great religious houses and abbeys (St Andrews Cathedral was conceived on a scale whose length was only several metres shorter than Notre Dame), new stone buildings, and a rich trade with northern Europe (e.g. colonies of Flemish and Germans in Berwick).


12. Of identical proportions as Solomon’s Temple, the Chapel Royal at Stirling is three and a half times longer than its depth. Ian Campbell and Aonghus Mackechnie, “The ‘Great Temple of Solomon’ at Stirling Castle” *Architectural History*, 54 (2011), pp. 91-118.


15. Loch Leven Castle was where Mary Queen of Scots was held a prisoner in 1567-8.


22. Such as, for instance, St Giles, St Michael’s Linlithgow, King’s College, Aberdeen. Crown spires were also reintroduced in the 19th century, at John James Stevenson’s St Leonard’s Church in Perth (1882-85) and at Kelvin Stevenson Memorial Church in Glasgow (1898). https://canmore.org.uk/site/160711/glasgow-62-belmont-street-stevenson-memorial-free-church Miles Glendinning and Aonghus Mackechnie, *The Scotch Baronial*, pp. 224-5.
This article seeks to explore the specificities of Scottish architecture in relation to English architecture. It focuses first on the orthodoxies presented within past literature, and how these have been sometimes unhelpful to scholars wishing to address this question. The article then seeks to identify, and then to analyse, what clearly is a national style of architecture which can be characterised, in summary, as castellated. The discussion that follows on Revivalism(s) is articulated relative to long-standing issues of nationhood; considering Scotland first as an independent European state, over many centuries until union with England in 1707; and secondly, thereafter, Scotland’s attempt to define its status within both the British union and the empire; an arrangement in which the paradigms were those of England; but an England which tolerated a degree of cultural individuality so long as political adherence to the “core” was assured. The article builds upon recent research in social and political history, as well as architecture and visual culture, and demonstrates that Scotland’s interest in its own past heritage, and its clear individuality (or “different-ness”) in architectural style, is closely connected to the nation’s recurring attempts to find a voice in a larger political entity.

Cet article étudie les spécificités de l’architecture écossaise par rapport à l’architecture anglaise. Il présente d’abord les thèses qui ont longtemps dominé l’historiographie, et comment celles-ci n’ont pas pu permettre aux universitaires de répondre efficacement à la question. Cet article s’attache ensuite à identifier et à analyser ce style proprement écossais et que l’on peut décrire, en résumé, comme dérivant du château. L’étude du/ ou des styles Renouveau est reliée aux enjeux constitutifs de l’identité nationale ; examinant l’Écosse comme un état européen indépendant jusqu’à l’union avec l’Angleterre en 1707, et qui a ensuite tenté de définir son statut au sein de l’union et de l’empire. Si le modèle qui s’est imposé alors était celui de l’Angleterre, l’Écosse est parvenue à développer son originalité propre sur le plan culturel. Cet article s’appuie sur les travaux récents en histoire politique et sociale, en histoire de l’architecture et de la culture visuelle, pour démontrer que l’intérêt de l’Écosse pour son patrimoine – et l’originalité (ou la différence) de son architecture d’un point de vue stylistique – est intimement lié à un effort constant pour exprimer la voix de la nation au sein d’une entité politique plus large.

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