VIII.—A Short Notice of Arnold Bronckhorst, Portrait Painter to King James VI. Communicated by Alexander Macdonald, Esq. F.S.A. Scot. With an original Account for Painting Portraits of His Majesty and of George Buchanan.

[Read, 10th April 1826.]

So little is known respecting the state of the Fine Arts in Scotland at an early period, that, previously to the time of Jameson, it would be difficult to name any native artist of the least celebrity. Various foreigners, however, were occasionally led to this country; and the encouragement they received seems to have been sufficient to induce them to a protracted residence. Among this number, during the minority of King James VI., was Arnold Bronckhorst, a person of some note, and of whose history a few particulars occur in a work, entitled 'The Historie and Discoverie of the Gold Mynes in Scotland,' written in the year 1619 by an Englishman of the name of Atkinson (a). He speaks of Bronckhorst as 'being known to be a good artist, skilfull and well seen in all sorts of stones, especially in meneralls and menerall stones;' and gives the following account of his visiting Scotland. After stating that 'Queen Elizabeth of famous memory was possessed often with a good opinion of the Gold Mynes in Scotland,' &c., it is written (says Atkinson) 'that the Earl of Morton, being then Regent, would not give way unto Van-Bronckhorst his patent, and so at last he was forced to become one of his Majesty's sworn servants at ordinary in Scotland, to draw all the small and great pictures for his Majesty; and by this means Mr Hilliard and Cornelius Devose lost all their charges,' &c.

This account of Bronckhorst's appointment of portrait painter to his Majesty is confirmed by an original precept preserved in the General Register House, dated 9th September 1590, by which King James, in his munificence, authorised his treasurer to pay him the sum of 100 marks: 'quilk we have grantit him as ane grateitue for his repairing to this country.' And the following appointment is recorded in the Register of the Privy Seal (a)—

'Aene Lett召 Arnold Bronckhyst, floung, makand, constituent and ordinand him owne Sovereine Lordis Painter, and gevand him the office thairof for all the dayis of his lyvyetyme with all fein, deviwis and casuallesis wit and went: For using and exercyng quhaisof his Hienes gevis and grantis to the said Arnold ane yeirleis pension of ane hundreth pundis money of this realmes,' &c.—'At Glasgow the synetene day of September the yeir of God 16 v c lxxxvi yeiris.'

The following is an exact copy of this curious Account and precept for payment, subscribed by the King, and also by the Earls of Argyll and Angus, two of his Majesty's Privy Council, at Holyroodhouse, 9th September 1590:

'Certaine Portraitures maid be me at his Majesties command and deliberly lastle to his Hienes quahisof I have receivit as yit na payment.

Ane Portraict of his Majestie fra the belt upward, last delyerit. Price thereof, - - - - - - viij lib.

Ane other Portraict of Mr. George Buchanan - - - - viii lib.

Ane Portraict of his Majestie full length - - - - xi lib.

Somma xxij lib.

Rex.'

Thesaurair We greet you well. It is our will and We charge you That ye Incontinent after the yocht heirof answer our love servitor Arnold Bronckhorst our Painter of the sownne of thirte score four pundis restand awand him for the thirte Portraictures and pieces abone mentionit maid and delwerit to us at our command; and sicyke of the sowne of ane hundreth merkis money quhilk we have grantit him as ane grateitue for his repairing to this countrey. To be thankfulie allowit to yow in your comptis, koping this our precept together with the said Arnoldis aqcuittance theurpoun for your warrant Subseroyvit with our hand At Halyroodehouse the nynt day of September 1590.

JAMES R.

ERGYLL.'

ANGUSS.

(a) Registrum Secreti Sigilli, xliv, 40.

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