

Two painted ceilings from Rossend Castle, Burntisland, Fife¹

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SUMMARY

Two painted ceilings were discovered by accident at Rossend Castle, Burntisland, in 1957, one being of the flat, open-beam type, the other either barrel-vaulted or coved. The former was found *in situ*, virtually intact and painted with a series of symbolic emblems and other decorative devices. The latter survived only as pieces of painted board, split up and re-used as lathing to support a later plaster ceiling: enough of this was recovered, however, to show that it had been painted with coats of arms symmetrically arranged within a formal pattern imitating coffering. Neither ceiling was dated, but the open-beam ceiling bore the initials SRM, standing for Sir Robert Melville of Murdocairnie or his son, Sir Robert Melville of Burntisland, which implies that the ceiling was painted between 1581 and 1621.

DISCOVERY (pl 22)

The paintings at Rossend Castle were discovered by accident. Intruders broke into the castle which had been empty for a number of years, climbed to the second floor of the tower-house (the oldest part of the building) and dropped a large stone through a hole in the floor, breaking the plaster surface of the ceiling below and revealing painted decoration on the supporting woodwork. The existence of this painting was reported to Ancient Monuments staff of the then Ministry of Works who were working in Burntisland at the time on the ceilings from Mary Somerville's House (Apted 1958), and who were able to confirm the interest and importance of the discovery. Permission was then given by the Burgh Council for the remainder of the plaster ceiling to be removed to reveal the concealed painted ceiling in its entirety.

While the plaster ceiling was being removed it was discovered that some of the lathing boards used to support the cornice had also been painted. These proved to be fragments of a second painted ceiling, one of the vaulted or coved type, which had presumably also been in the castle although no other evidence for its former existence was detected. The fact that the overall pattern on the embossed ceiling paper followed the same decorative scheme as that on this second painted ceiling suggested that the existence of the latter was known and possibly that it was destroyed at the time the ceiling paper was manufactured.

THE CASTLE (fig 1, pls 20, 21)

The site of the castle, known in the sixteenth century as 'the tower and fortalice of Burntisland', was on a level platform of high ground overlooking Burntisland harbour. The building was in origin a tower-house, L-shaped on plan, with the principal accommodation in the rectangular main block and the stairs in the projecting jamb. Towers were built throughout the

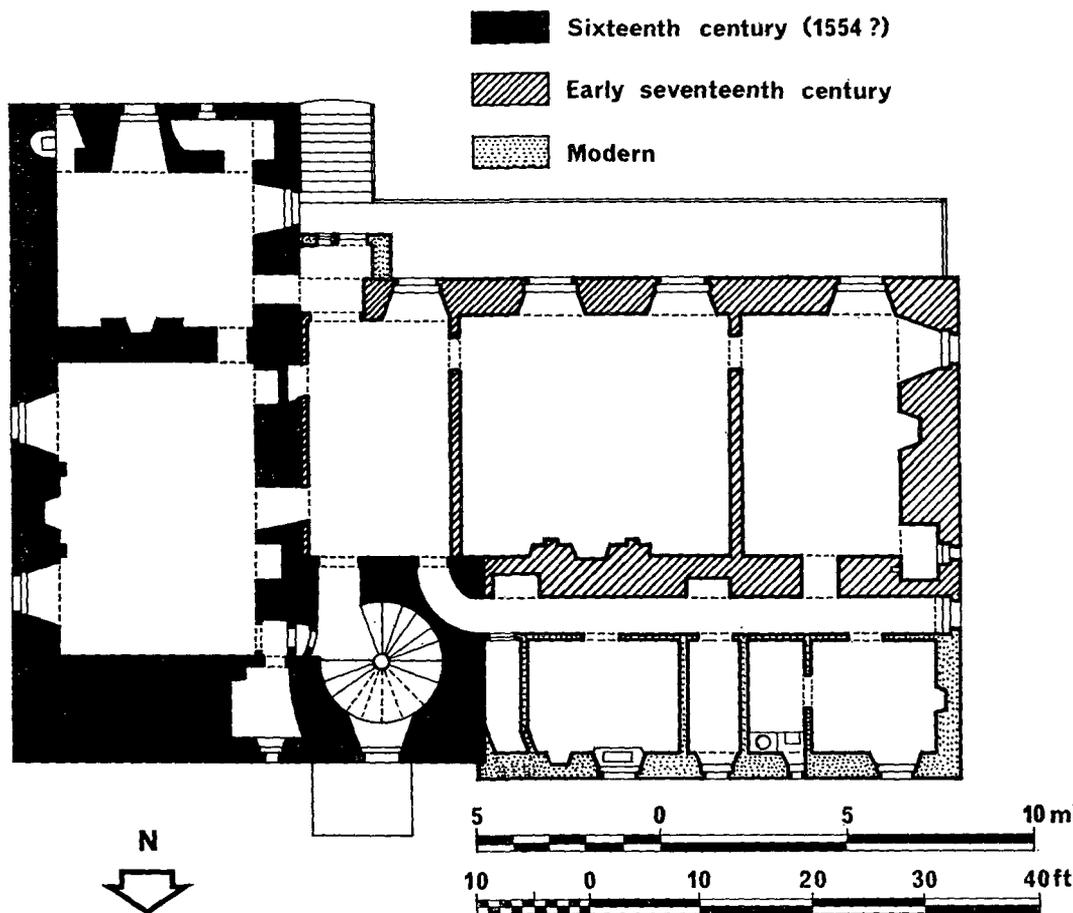


FIG 1 Plan of Rossend Castle at first floor level

sixteenth century and the existence of heraldic panels built into the castle and dated 1554 suggests that this was the date at which the castle was erected; it seems unlikely, however, that a tower of such relatively unsophisticated type could have been built as late as this. The arms displayed are those of George Durie, abbot and subsequently commendator of Dunfermline, who conceded the castle to Peter Durie in 1543. The castle thereafter passed to the family of Melville of Murdocairnie, in whose hands it was at the time the ceilings were painted (Blyth 1948; RCAMS 1933, no. 72; Young 1913).

The tower was extended early in the seventeenth century by the addition of a rectangular block at right angles to the main axis of the original tower which largely filled in one of the re-entrant angles between main block and jamb. Such a development was characteristic of the period and illustrates the principal reason why more painted decoration survives in Scotland than in England – the Scottish lairds were content to modernise and extend the houses they already had while the English gentry of the same period were prepared, and could afford, to demolish their old homes and build anew.

The castle, now T-shaped on plan, was extended yet again in the nineteenth century to provide additional accommodation at the lower levels. This was achieved by filling in the

re-entrant angle between stair and seventeenth-century extension. Throughout the castle's life, however, the main entry was retained in approximately the same position at the foot of the principal stair. Parallel with the extension of the house went the modernisation of the fabric and the improvement of the interior decoration, including the enlargement of the early windows and the insertion of plaster ceilings. It was in connection with the latter that the open-beam ceiling was retained to support the plaster ceiling and so preserved, while the obsolete barrel-vaulted ceiling became an encumbrance and was destroyed. Again this illustrates the reason why painted ceilings of the open-beam type tend to survive, albeit concealed, while the vaulted ceilings have disappeared.

THE HALL (pls 22, 23)

The painted open-beam ceiling was found in the first-floor room which had originally been the hall or principal public apartment of the tower-house. In 1928 the walls of this and the adjacent chamber were panelled, but by 1957 all such panelling had been removed and the room was derelict. In its original form the hall was entered from the main stair facing a single large stone fireplace with a window on either side. There was a garderobe in the thickness of the wall near the stair and a door in the S wall communicated with the inner chamber. All these features had been mutilated in varying degrees during the process of modernisation with the exception of the fireplace, which had been reduced in successive stages without damage to its original simple moulded lintel and jambs. The walls had been plastered with at least two layers of plaster, but this had been badly damaged at the time the panelling was attached to the walls and no traces of painted decoration contemporary with the ceiling were found.

THE PAINTED OPEN-BEAM CEILING (fig 2, pls 22-31)

The ceiling was mounted 12 ft 6 in above floor level. It was all but rectangular, measured approximately 29 by 17 ft, and was supported by thirteen oak beams which rested at one side in sockets in the wall and at the other on a half-round beam supported by two stone corbels. It was intact apart from a small area at each end which had been damaged by fire from the hearths above. The paint was somewhat decayed but the original colours could normally be identified without difficulty and included black, white, brown, blue, yellow, red and green.

The beams were painted on all three exposed sides with simple but rather garish patterns of strap-work type. One band of decoration was taken round two sides of each beam, while the third side was decorated independently, there being in effect a right side and a wrong side to view each beam. It is perhaps significant that the four beams at the N (entrance) end of the room faced into the room in one direction while the remainder faced inwards into the room in the other. The bands of decoration on the beams included the initials SRM as on the ceiling itself, as well as crescents, a heraldic device from the Melville arms. Some of the beams could be seen to have been repainted, but as the repainting included the initials referred to above such repainting must represent a change of plan while the ceiling was being repainted or relatively soon thereafter.

The beams divided the ceiling into twelve strips or sections, each with a black margin on either side. The sections were painted with a series of decorative devices connected by continuous arabesque patterns and flowing ribbon decoration. Although the overall effect was harmonious, there were in fact a number of different elements embodied in the scheme which can be classified under different headings, i.e.

- a. Emblems
- b. Animals and birds
- c. Displays of armour, agricultural implements and musical instruments
- d. Other decorative devices of Renaissance type.

While it is not always possible to be certain into which class a particular feature falls the majority can be classified with reasonable certainty under one or another of the headings given above.

The predominant decorative device was the emblem. Such emblems are derived originally from Italy although propagated widely by the engravers and printers of France and the Low Countries.² The emblem consisted in its entirety of three elements, a motto, a picture and a short text in either prose or verse, each element contributing something to the symbolic significance of the whole. On the Rossend ceiling, as at Nunraw, only the picture element was used, but both picture and motto are said to have been used at Mary of Guise's house in Blyth's Close (Wilson 1891, 194-5), and at Culross Palace the complete emblems with motto, picture and verse are still to be seen.

Emblems were widely used for decorative purposes in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by painters and other craftsmen who copied them from pattern books of foreign and subsequently of English origin. At Rossend the source of about a half of the forty or so emblems illustrated on the ceiling can be identified with reasonable probability. Identification cannot be certain because emblem books ran into many editions and popular emblems were copied by one engraver from another without acknowledgment. The majority of the identifiable emblems at Rossend are none the less almost certainly taken from one of the editions of *The Heroicall Devises of M Claudius Paradin, Canon of Beaulieu*, first published at Lyons in 1557. The London edition of this book appeared in 1591. The resemblance between some of the emblems on the ceiling and the Paradin originals is very close and amongst the former are some which have not been noted in any other source-book. Paradin's book was extremely popular in the second half of the sixteenth century and it is worth recording that the symbol of Resurrection (wheat ears growing from human bones) which is to be seen near the centre of the Rossend ceiling, also appears carved and gilded on the front of Huntly House in the Canongate and with other Paradin symbols on what may be one of the authentic surviving examples of Queen Mary's needlework.³ Another pattern book which can be identified with reasonable certainty is Geoffrey Whitney's *Choice of Emblemes and other Devises*, first published at Leyden in 1586. Gabrielle Rollenhagen's *Nucleus Emblematum Selectissimorum*, published in Cologne 1611 and Arnhem 1614, may also have been used. Some of the emblems at Rossend appear in more than one source-book, while the inspiration for others has not so far been identified at all. The device which shows a candle burning in an open lantern, for example, is clearly an emblem and also appears on the ceiling which was formerly at Prestongrange and which is now to be seen in the hall at Napier College, Edinburgh; its source and significance, however, are still unknown.

The emblems used by Paradin and others were derived from a wide variety of sources, classical, medieval and Renaissance. The selection at Rossend, for example, includes the device from Pompey's signet ring, a 'judgement of Solomon' type of story about the Emperor Galba, a reference to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and a tribute to the Queen of France. Some of the references are anecdotal, the majority have a moral and some a specifically Christian significance. Occasionally it is clear that the emblemists themselves did not fully understand the emblems they were using. The sphinx, for example, is used by Paradin to symbolise 'inextricable error' and described as a monkey or marmoset. It is possible that on occasion the painter and his patron did not understand the significance of the emblems they were using either. At Rossend

there is the curious case of the helmet and lance painted in heraldic fashion immediately over the shield with the initials SRM. These appear to be part of that device but are in fact copied quite closely from a Paradin emblem which relates to an incident in the life of the mentally unbalanced King Charles VI of France. This unfortunate monarch set out on one occasion with his army to attack an enemy of his own imagining and during a road-side halt accidentally dropped his lance on the helmeted head of one of his attendants dozing near by. The noise startled the king who, believing himself to be under attack, took out his sword and set about himself with such frenzy that his men had to run for their lives. It seems improbable that an emblem with such significance should have been used in conjunction with Sir Robert Melville's shield if its meaning had been understood.

Possibly the painter only had loose pages from the emblem book to go on and used a picture which suited his purpose without being aware of the story of the mad king as printed on the associated pages.

Some of the emblems may have a special Scottish significance – the stag's head appears in conjunction with a thistle, and there is a representation of a dog with large ears and long tail which is also to be seen at Kinneil, Traquair and Northfield (Prestonpans). This dog is said by Gesner (see below) to belong to a breed known to the Germans as the Scottish water-hound. The bagpipes, on the other hand, are copied from Paradin and symbolise pastoral care.

The animals and birds are more difficult to classify because it is not always clear whether they have a symbolic significance, or not. The basilisk and sphinx, for example, are certainly emblems, the porcupine and the ram probably represent animals as such, while the elephant and castle and camel and castle belong to the twilight world, half real, half fantasy, in between. There are about a dozen animals and birds on the ceiling which are probably not emblems and it is possible that these are derived, probably indirectly, from Conrad Gesner's *Historiae Animalium*, first published at Zurich in 1551. The Scottish water-hound mentioned above is illustrated in full cry exactly as it appears in all the examples quoted above. The stag's head also closely resembles that of the stag illustrated by Gesner. The most interesting indication of the relationship between book and ceiling occurs in the case of an animal which appears on the ceiling to be a tusked unicorn, saddled, with a horn at the front of the saddle. This curious beast is likely to be derived at second or third hand from Gesner's rhinoceros which has a horn on its nose and a second horn on its back just in front of a rectangular area of leathery scales. The original engraving is an accurate one, but one can imagine that someone making a quick sketch of it would record precisely the features which were misunderstood and miscopied by the painter at Rossend. It is interesting to note that although Gesner's book was a serious work on natural history it none the less included the unicorn which also appears on the Rossend ceiling in its own right. The book is known to have been used by the decorative painters elsewhere in Scotland, notably at Earls hall, where there is a complete ceiling decorated with representations of animals derived from it.

The displays of arms, agricultural implements and musical instruments, together with the ribbons, all come from the same type of source which is illustrated by the engraving reproduced (pl 31). This particular example was the work of Jean Vreedman de Vriese who was born in 1527. The displays of arms and agricultural implements were often used in conjunction to symbolise the arts of peace and war. Although classified separately above, there is no significant distinction between these devices and the ox skulls, masks and the like which are all derived from the same type of pattern book and equally form part of the alphabet of Renaissance decoration.

It is to be hoped that one day a letter or diary will be found explaining why a painter or

his patron came to choose a particular decorative scheme. In the meantime one can only note that ceilings painted in a particular style can be identified in more than one place and it is therefore probable that in certain instances the patron may simply have asked to be provided with a decorative scheme of a type he had seen elsewhere, possibly in the house of a friend. The ceiling at Rossend, for example, closely parallels in conception that at Nunraw in East Lothian. The decoration there is made up of the same elements, the initials of patron and wife appear as monograms on shields incorporated into the decorative scheme and the beam patterns are of the same type as those which existed at Rossend before the repaint. The only major difference between the two is that the Nunraw ceiling includes a display of heraldry (two coats of arms to each section) whereas at Rossend a similar display of coats of arms was painted on a different ceiling altogether.

THE HERALDIC CEILING (pls 32-4)

All that was found of the heraldic ceiling at Rossend were nine boards of various sizes representing a minimum overall area of about 17 by 11 ft. The precise form of the ceiling is unknown – it must either have been a semicircular barrel-vault, or a coved vault with flat sides and top. In either case it is likely to have been fitted into the converging triangle formed by the rafters of a roof space.

Ceilings of both barrel-vaulted and coved type were suspended from above, so that the area available for decoration was not divided up structurally into comparatively small areas as were those of the open-beam type. In practice, however, the painters rarely took advantage of the opportunities thus offered (the astral ceiling at Cullen is an exception) and preferred to adopt some form of geometric scheme which divided up the ceiling space into smaller and more manageable areas. This was the case at Rossend, where the overall pattern was a geometric arrangement of quatrefoils and cross-shaped interstices painted to simulate the coffering of a timber ceiling. Each quatrefoil contained a shield bearing a coat of arms, while in every interstice there was a circular centre-piece surrounded by dolphins and thistles painted in yellow and black. The borders framing these shapes were of light brown overpainted with yellow and black to simulate the mouldings of the prototype.

None of the shields was complete and their reconstruction is therefore to some extent hypothetical, but within these limitations the charges can be identified as follows:

- a.* Gules two lions passant gardant or
- b.* Per pale sable and or two lions combatant counterchanged
- c.* Sable fleur de lys between fretty or
- d.* Argent a lion rampant gules
- e.* Sable two lions passant gardant or
- f.* Or a cross gules over all a bend sable
- g.* Ermine over all (only three tails in base survive)
- h.* Gules an escarbuncle or
- i.* Argent five torteaux gules
- j.* Defaced
- k.* Quarterly 1st and 4th argent a lion rampant – 2nd and 3rd azure a bend gules fimbriated argent
- l.* Quarterly 1st and 4th gules three garbs proper – 2nd and 3rd ermine.

None of these armorial bearings has so far been identified but it is considered unlikely that they are Scottish. This contrasts with the heraldic ceilings at Collairnie, also in Fife, which display the arms of the local nobility, or that at Nunraw where the arms are those of real or fictitious monarchs.

DATING THE CEILING

There are no dates painted either on the open-beam ceiling or on the surviving fragments of the vaulted ceiling. The open-beam ceiling can, however, be dated with some precision on the internal evidence provided by the initials SRM which are painted both on the supporting beams and on the ceiling itself. These initials could belong either to Sir Robert Melville of Murdocairnie or to his son, Sir Robert Melville of Burntisland.

Robert Melville elder was second son of Sir John Melville of Raith, who was executed for high treason in 1549 during the minority of Queen Mary. He was knighted in 1581, constituted Extraordinary Lord of Session under the title of Lord Murdocairnie in 1593, and elevated to the peerage as Baron Melville of Monimail in 1616. He died in 1621, when he was succeeded by his only son Robert Melville younger.

Robert Melville younger was granted sasine of the tower and fortalice of Burntisland in 1585. He is named in 1593/4, in a judgement given by the Privy Council, as Sir Robert Melville of Burntisland and when appointed Extraordinary Lord of Session in place of his father in 1601 as Lord Burntisland. In 1603 he attended a meeting of the Privy Council with his father when their names are recorded as Sir Robert Melville of Burntisland and Sir Robert Melville of Murdocairnie respectively. In 1621 he signed a warrant for the delivery of His Majesty's Regalia and Plate as Sir Robert Melville but subsequently succeeded his father, who died in that year, and is thereafter referred to as Lord Melville.⁴

Summarising the above from the point of view of dating the ceiling, it would appear that this could not have been painted before Sir Robert elder was knighted in 1581 or after his son was elevated to the peerage in 1621. It is likely that the initials refer to Sir Robert younger since it seems to have been he rather than his father who lived at the castle from 1585 onwards, if not before. It is reasonable to assume that the heraldic ceiling was painted within the same period, and possibly at the same date as the other, but there is no evidence to prove this. One would expect the conjunction of thistle and dolphins to refer to Queen Mary's first marriage but in the present context this seems unlikely. An appropriate occasion for such a display of heraldry would have been that provided by the royal visit of 1617, when a missive was sent to Sir Robert 'to mak his house of Bruntyland patent for His Majesteis ressett.'

THE PAINTER

The name of the Rossend painter is unknown, but there is some internal evidence for the type of man he was. He must have been at the height of his powers at the beginning of the seventeenth century, he was steeped in the Renaissance decoration of the period, he had a number of the pattern books popular at the time and he was a heraldic painter of some kind. It has already been pointed out (Apted 1958) that an appropriate painter was living in Burntisland at the time the Rossend ceilings were painted, and the painter concerned, James Workman, is recorded as having been a herald painter to the Lyon Court in 1592. He may well have been the man responsible for painting the Rossend ceilings although there is no proof that this was in fact the case.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The painted ceilings from Rossend Castle were uncovered, recorded and subsequently removed from the castle by staff of the Ancient Monuments Division of the then Ministry of Works by permission of the Burntisland Burgh Council. The open-beam ceiling was subsequently gifted by the Council to the National Museum of Antiquities where it is presently stored after preliminary conservation treatment at the Stenhouse Conservation Centre. Panelling from the hall at Rossend was also gifted by the Council to the Museum. Thanks for help received at the time of discovery are due to the Burntisland authorities, notably Messrs McLachlan and Campbell, then Town Clerk and Clerk of Works respectively, and to Miss McBride, then burgh librarian. Help with the interpretation of the ceiling was subsequently received from many people, mostly staff members of the Record Office, the National Museum of Antiquities and the National Portrait Gallery. Dr F J Stopp kindly read a draft and made several invaluable suggestions which have been incorporated into the text. The photographs were taken by Mr J Pugh, the reconstruction drawings of Rossend and Nunraw prepared by Miss Thea McDonald from photographic surveys and the plan reproduced by Mr P Humphries from one of those in MacGibbon and Ross (1887-92, 558). The engravings (pls 30-1) are reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

APPENDIX

Analysis of the Open-beam Ceiling

The principal elements on each section of the ceiling are described in order from top to bottom as they appear on the reconstruction drawing (fig 2). The sections are described from left to right and are identified by the letters printed at the bottom of the drawing. The first column of the table contains a brief description of the device and its source when known, the second the Latin and English versions of its motto and the third a note on its significance. Quotations in old English are from the 1591 London edition of Paradin.

References are to:

Conrad Gesner *Historiae Animalium*, Zurich, 1551.

Geoffrey Whitney *A Choice of Emblemes and other Devises*, Leyden, 1586.

Claude Paradin *The Heroicall Devises of M Claudius Paradin*, London 1591.

Gabrielle Rollenhagen *Nucleus Emblematum Selectissimorum*, Cologne, 1611 and Arnhem, 1614.

SECTION A

Arabesques only.

SECTION B

Covered cup (Paradin 90).	'Inter eclipses exorior.' 'I shine in the dark.'	The princely Dolphin's 'great and mightie cup of gold' which 'seemeth to me to represent that ancient standing peece of Apolloes Rauen, whome the Poets do faine to be placed amongst the starres: but the inscription, or apothegme which is written aboue it, may rather be drawne to his happie birthday'. (?)
Orb surmounted by cross.		Christian symbol.

Three interlocking crescents crowned (Paradin 21, Rollenhagen 99).
 'Donec totum impleat orbem.'
 'Till he replenish the whole world.'

The moon as symbol of constant change. So the Church never continues 'in one and the same state . . . whereby it cometh to passe that it is neuer free from vexation and trouble in this life'.

Animal.

Possibly the cat (Paradin 74) symbolising liberty, but probably of no symbolic significance.

SECTION C

'Starre inclosed with an adder or snake crowned & biting her taile' (Paradin 329, Rollenhagen 62).
 'Fato prudentia maior.'
 'Wisdome is of greater force than destonie.'

Tribute to the Queen of France because 'albeit fortune hath aduanced her highness greatly . . . yet notwithstanding by her admirable vertue modestie & clemencie, she hath brought to passe that she may worthely challenge the greatest praise of all the queenes of France that euer were'.

'Lion shaking a sword betweene his forefeete' (Paradin 105, Whitney 116).
 'Celsa potestatis species.'
 'A speciall marke or token of his authoritie and power.'

Reference to story from Plutarch about a signet ring which belonged to Pompey the Great and which was brought to Caesar as proof of Pompey's death. The device is said 'to signifie perhaps a hard and bold voyage or enterprise'. (Pl 25)

Bird ascending in cloud.

? Eagle which renews youth by flying towards sun, or symbol of St John who 'takes us directly into the presence of the Divinity, like an eagle soaring up towards sun' (Anderson 1971). (Pl 26)

Ram.

Possibly Gesner - compare horn details. (Pl 25)

Clasped hands holding posy.
 Ape embracing young (Paradin 282, Whitney 188).
 'Caecus amor prolix.'
 'Love of parents to their children is blind or voide of reason.'

'The Ape is sayde to loue his young ones so vnmeasurable, that whilest hee clippeth them in his armes more than reason would, hee after killeth them with griping them so fast to him. In like manner many parents are wont to be so lauish in the nice education of their children that with their too much cockering of them, at the last they bring them to naught.' Recorded as having been at Mary of Guise's House, Blyth's Close; see Wilson 1891, 95. (Pl 25)

Birds with wings displayed.

SECTION D

Rabbit.
 Beehive and poppies.

Possibly Gesner.
 For possible significance see Whitney 200, where the beehive symbolises return of wanderer, i.e.:

'Wherefore, when hadde some golden honie bringes
 I will retourne, and rest my wearie winges.'

Normally symbolises diligence.

<p>Knife and anvil (Paradin 68).</p>	<p>'Non quam diu, sed quam bene.' 'It forceth not how long a thing be in doing but how well it is done.'</p>	<p>Illustrates the 'Philosophicall knife' invented by Thomas of Aquinas 'by continual observation of the planets' which 'was made so perfite thorow the vertue and force thereof, that it cut a thicke and hard Anuell, even in the midst'. Thus 'we must not respect the long tract of time that we spend in it so that by line and levill, as they say, we finish all our actions'.</p>
<p>Hands holding trowel and sword (Paradin 145, Whitney 66).</p>	<p>'In utrumque paratus.' 'Ready to both.'</p>	<p>Reference to the Israelites who, on their return from Babylon, rebuilt Jerusalem 'taking in the one hand a trowell, in the other a sword (such were the continuall troubles of their enimies)'. This symbolises the actions of God's ministers 'who are bound to instruct the ignorant and to bring again those that do erre in the faith (which are very ruines indeed) and to fight manfully with the sword of God's word against the enimies thereof which are vices and sinne'. Also in Blyth's Close; Wilson 1891, 194. (Pl 25)</p>
<p>Ostrich (possibly Rollenhagen 36).</p>	<p>'Nil penna sed usus.' 'The fethers are of no force but use -'</p>	<p>Ostrich shown with horseshoe in beak to indicate power of digesting iron. English motto from Paradin 55, where a different version of the ostrich symbolises hypocrisy, 'you see how with great preparation and ostentation of her feathers she endeauours to take a great flight, and yet for al that is not an inch higher from the ground when she hath done all shee can'. More normally symbolises fortitude since the ostrich was thought to eat iron. (Pl 26)</p>

SECTION E

Display of musical instruments.

 Display of musical instruments.
 Animal - rhinoceros?

Likely to have been copied directly or indirectly from an appropriate pattern book as pl 31.
 As above. (Pl 26)

At first sight appears to be saddled unicorn but probably debased version of Gesner's rhinoceros. Compare horns on nose and back, plus rectangular area of leathery scales which have degenerated into saddle. Gesner's version in turn derives from Dürer rhino of 1515. (Pl 26)

Helmet and lance
(Paradin 77).

'Vltorem vlciscitur vltor.'
'The reuenge lighteth vpon the reuenger.'

Reference to a story of King Charles VI of France derived from Frossard. The King allowed his spear to fall on the helmeted head of one of his pages sleeping near by, then 'hearing a sodaine noise and looking aside, saw a man at his heeles whom as yet he knew not, so he was maruellously troubled, and in a great rage leaped downe

Shield with initials SRM
for Sir Robert Melville.

Crocodile.

Grain sprouting from three
interlaced bones
(Paradin 320, Whitney 23).

'Spes altera vitae.'
'Another hope of life.'

Bird with wings outspread.

SECTION F

Dragon or possibly
salamander.

Basilisk.

Goat suckling wolfcub
(Whitney 49).

'In eum qui sibi ipsi
damnum apparat.'

Raven drinking from jar full
of stones (Paradin 179,
Rollenhagen 52).

'Ingenii largitor.'
'Necessitie the minister of
pollicie.'

from his horse and as one that had bene
besides himsele drew his sword, and
neither regarding the order of his owne
men, neither vsing the aduise of reason,
laid about him as if he had bene in the
thickest of his enimies, vsing these words
"Bestirre you, play the men and dispatch
me these traitors"'. When the Kings pages
heard him say so, 'they made all the hast
they could to saue their liues by running
away.' (Pl 26)

Compare Nunraw where initials PCH
appear twice, once on shield with helmet
above and motto 'Gratus esto'. Initials
form monogram for Patrick Hepburn and
wife Catherine, c 1595-1615.

Crocodile chained to palm tree appears on
Paradin 81; here the crocodile symbolises
the Nile and the device as a whole is said
to have been used on coinage by Caesar
Augustus to signify that he was the first
man to conquer Egypt. Crocodile also
appears in *Gesner in its own right*.

Symbol of resurrection. 'Corne, graine and
seeds of sundrie sorts, being dead & cast
into the ground, do reuiue and spring
again. So mans bodie falling into the
ground shall rise againe in glory in the last
and general day of the resurrection of the
flesh.' Also appears on the façade of
Huntly House, Canongate, and on needle-
work attributed to Queen Mary. See Note 3.
(Pl 26)

Could be debased version of crowned
salamander given as badge of Francis I of
France on Paradin 17 and elsewhere.
'which worme, Plinie writeth, is of such a
cold nature that she quencheth the fire like
ise. Others write that she liveth & is
norished in the fire'. Equally debased, but
different version at Nunraw.

Mythical creature from medieval bestiary.
Hatched from egg of cock and incubated
by toad. Glance kills but can be reflected
back on itself by mirror. (Pl 27)

The goat suckles the wolfcub which will
subsequently devour her, symbolising
ingratitude. (Pl 27)

Reference to Pliny's story of the raven
which was unable to drink because the
water was at the bottom of the jar. 'She
filled verie craftely the vessell with little

Bird with wings outspread standing on rabbit.	stones, vntill the water which was in the bottome swelled up to the toppe and so she dranke her fill.'	Also at Nunraw and elsewhere. Might be Gesner's eagle.
SECTION G		
Griffins combatant.		Emblem for Christ. (Pl 27)
Three fishes interlaced.		Could be purely decorative.
Two men dancing.		Possibly Gesner – note position of foreleg.
Unicorn.		Not a close parallel. (Pl 27)
Hand shaking snake into fire (Paradin 242, Whitney 166).	'Quis contra nos.' 'If God be with us, who can be against us.'	Reference to the story of St Paul being bitten by a viper and shaking the snake from his hand into a fire 'whereof we may see that they to whom God's mercie is readie at hand, nothing can hurt or annoy.' (Acts 28, 3-6).
Winged hat, serpents and cornucopiae (Rollenhagen 76).	'Virtute fortuna comes.'	Symbols of Mercury as god of arts and eloquence.
SECTION H		
Dog.		Not a close copy but probably the dog said by Gesner to be called 'ane Rache' in Scotland and 'Ein Schottischer Wasserhund' in Germany. Better versions appear at Kinneil, Nunraw and Traquair. (Pl 28) (Pl 28)
Purse.		Significance could be same as bird shown in rectangular cage in Whitney 101. This refers to nightingale.
Caged bird.		'Beinge kepte in cage, she ceaseth for to singe And mournes because her libertie is barrde.' Bird caged in circular cage is shown in Rollenhagen 84, but in this instance is threatened by a vulture.
Castle.		See above. (Pl 28)
Display of arms.		Refers to story from Suetonius about the Emperor Galba who settled a dispute about the ownership of a horse by ordering it to be led blindfolded to its drinking place and there to be released to make its own way back to its owner. (Pl 28)
Blindfolded horse (Paradin 176).	'Premitur, non oppremitur.' 'Pressed, not oppressed.'	
Hands clasping cornucopia (Paradin 352).	'Ditat seruata fides.' 'Fidelitie inricheth.'	Device showing two hands holding a cornucopia containing 'a certain hearb called Semper Viueus (whereby was signified plentie of all thinges)'. Symbolises the rewards of loyalty.

SECTION I

Facing masks.		Comedy and tragedy? Probably decorative device only.
Crook and bagpipes (Paradin 224).	'Attendite vobis.' 'Take heed to your selues.'	Symbolises need for 'faithful preachers of God's word . . . (to) exercise their duties by preaching the word diligently without ceasing'. (PI 28)
Porcupine.		Possibly version from Gesner. (PI 28)
Crown with flowers.		Probably decorative only, but for crown see Paradin 314.
Cornucopiae.		Symbols of plenty.
Bird shedding feathers before sun (Paradin 220).	'Renouata inuentus.' 'Youth is to be renewed.'	'The Goushauke is wont to prune her selfe, and set her fethers in order against the beames of the Sunne, so hee that will come to Christ our Lord, it behoueth him to put off all wickedness and sinne, and to be clothed with a new apparell and amende-ment of life.'
Thistle.		Scottish national flower? (PI 28)
Stag's head.		May be derived from Gesner's stag although this shows complete animal.

SECTION J

Elephant and castle.		Also appears at Nunraw.
Ox skull.		Popular Renaissance decorative device. As a symbol denoted labour.
Display of agricultural equipment.		Displays of this type appear with displays of arms in pattern books. (PI 29) Frequently used in conjunction to symbolise arts of war and peace.
Goblet (Paradin 119).	'Quid non mortalia pectora cogis?' 'Filthy love constraineth men to commit all wickednesse.'	Reference to Pliny's story of Cleopatra offering poisoned goblet to Anthony and then preventing him from drinking it, 'and hereby we may see what may be the audacitie and impudent boldness of a shamelesse woman'.
Display of arms.		As above.
Winged wreath.		Possibly decorative device only.
Burning candle in open lantern		Likely to be a symbol. Also recorded at Prestonrange.

SECTION K

Birds on standard.		Probably decorative device only, but see Paradin 289 for birds on standard.
Female figure.		
Sphinx (Paradin 37).	'Inextricabilis error.' 'Error is inextricable.'	Identified by Paradin as monkey or marmoset which is said to have been carried by Augustus Caesar to signify that serious matters of state should not be committed to the common people.

Double-headed eagle transfixt by lance (Paradin 222).	'Praepete penna.' 'With speedie wing.'	The emblem of the spread-eagle symbolising the division of the Roman Empire in the days of Charlemagne. (Pl 29)
Wreath with crossed arrows.		Possibly a symbol.
Bird with wings spread.		Probably no symbolic significance.
Dragons entwined.		Possibly decorative device only.
Camel and castle.		(Pl 29)

SECTION L

Turtle.		Probably decorative only, but could be derived from Gesner.
Torches and hour glass.		Symbols of time.
Ox in front of bonnet on staff and banner with crescent.		Almost certainly a symbol. Possibly derives from Paradin 350 which shows ox with heraldic banner attached to neck. Crescent could be reference to Melville arms. (Pl 29)

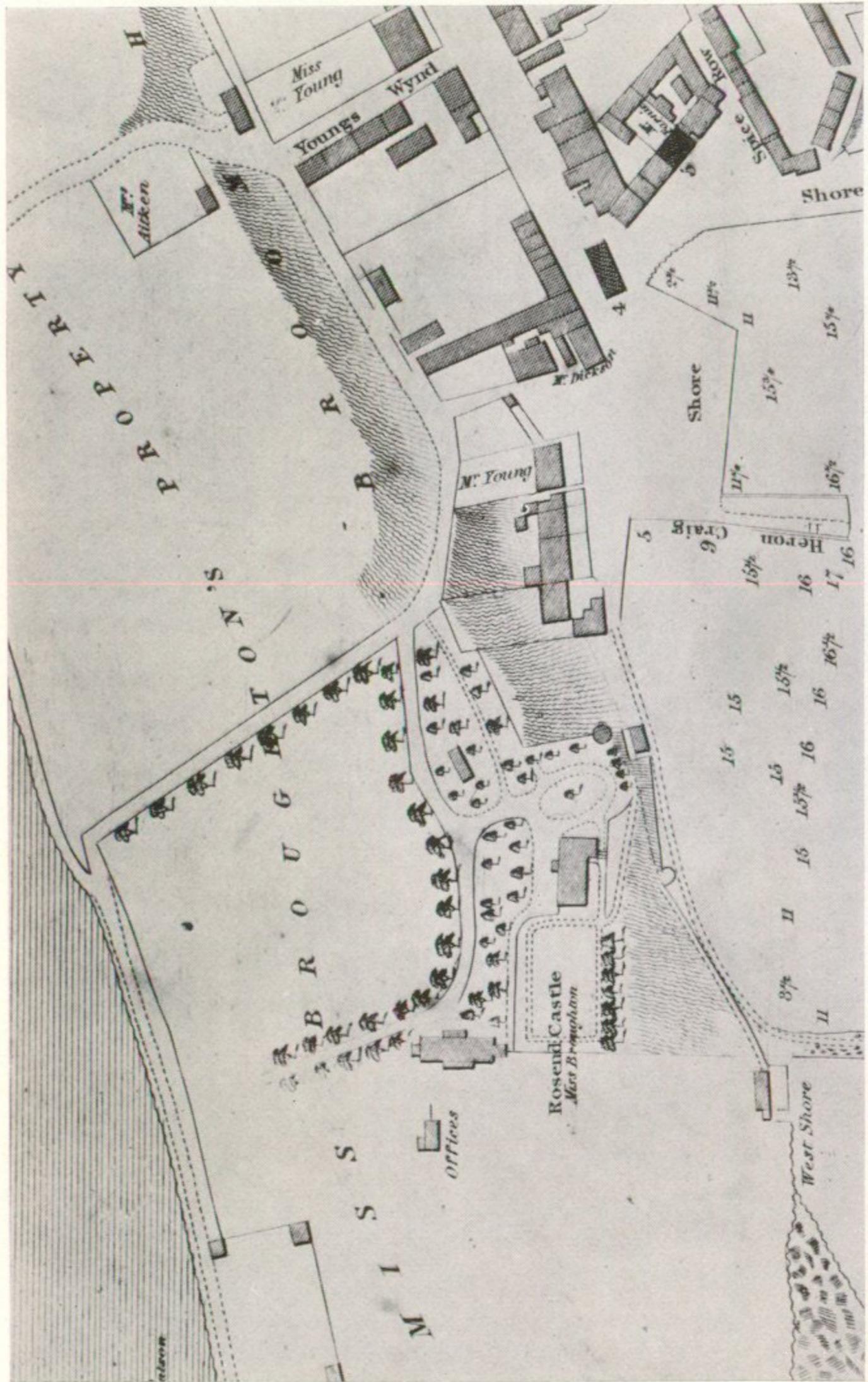
NOTES

- 1 For an illustrated introduction to painted decoration in Scotland see Apted 1966; for a more detailed account see Apted 1964.
- 2 For a general introduction to emblem books see Freeman 1948; for the medieval bestiary, etc, see Bond 1910 and Anderson 1971.
- 3 Panel from Oxburgh bed-hangings now in the Victoria and Albert Museum; see exhibition catalogue NMAS 1959, no. 74.
- 4 For the Melville family see Young 1913, Blyth 1948, Paul 1909 and Works of Sir John Fraser. For Robert Melville younger's sasine of tower and fortalice of Burntisland, see Burntisland Burgh Records, Protocol book of Andrew Wilson, 1581/2-1598, folios 16-17 (SRO B9/1/1).

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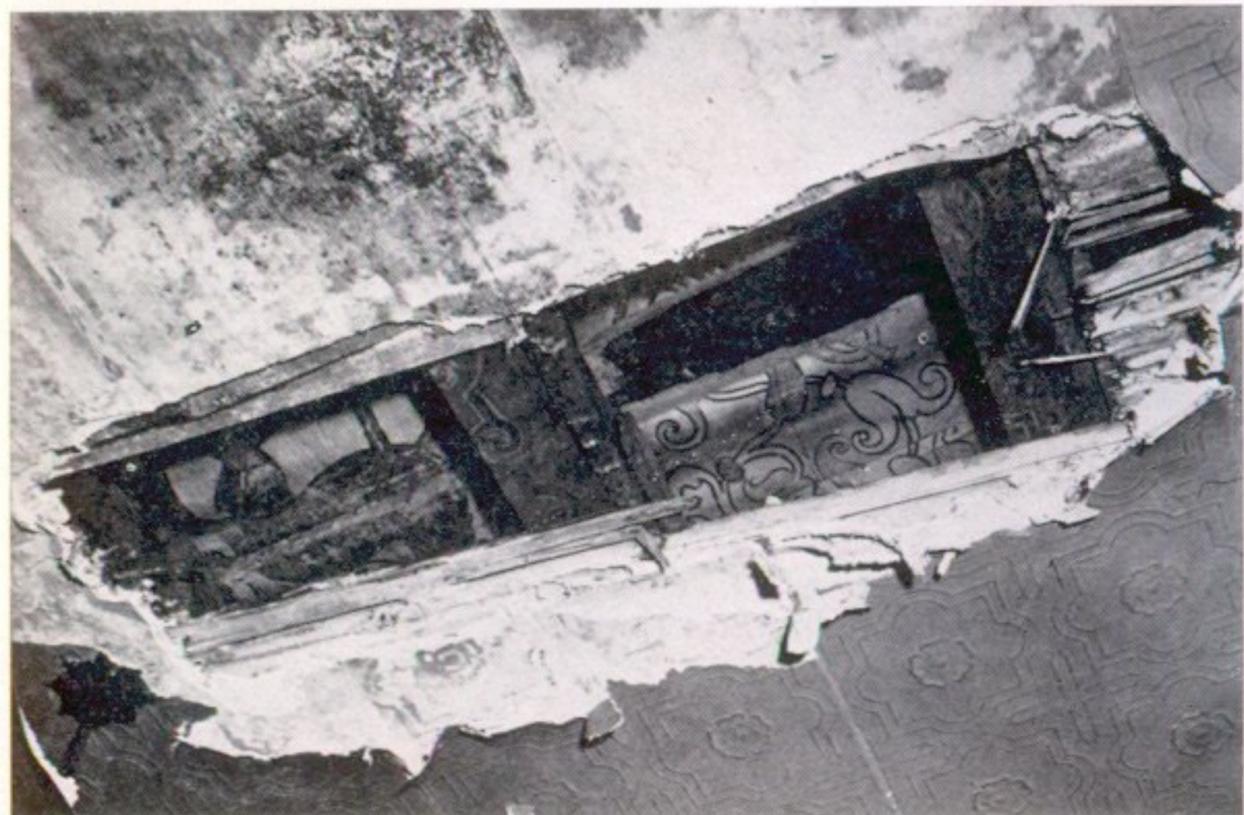
Rosend Castle and the north part of Burntisland harbour in 1824



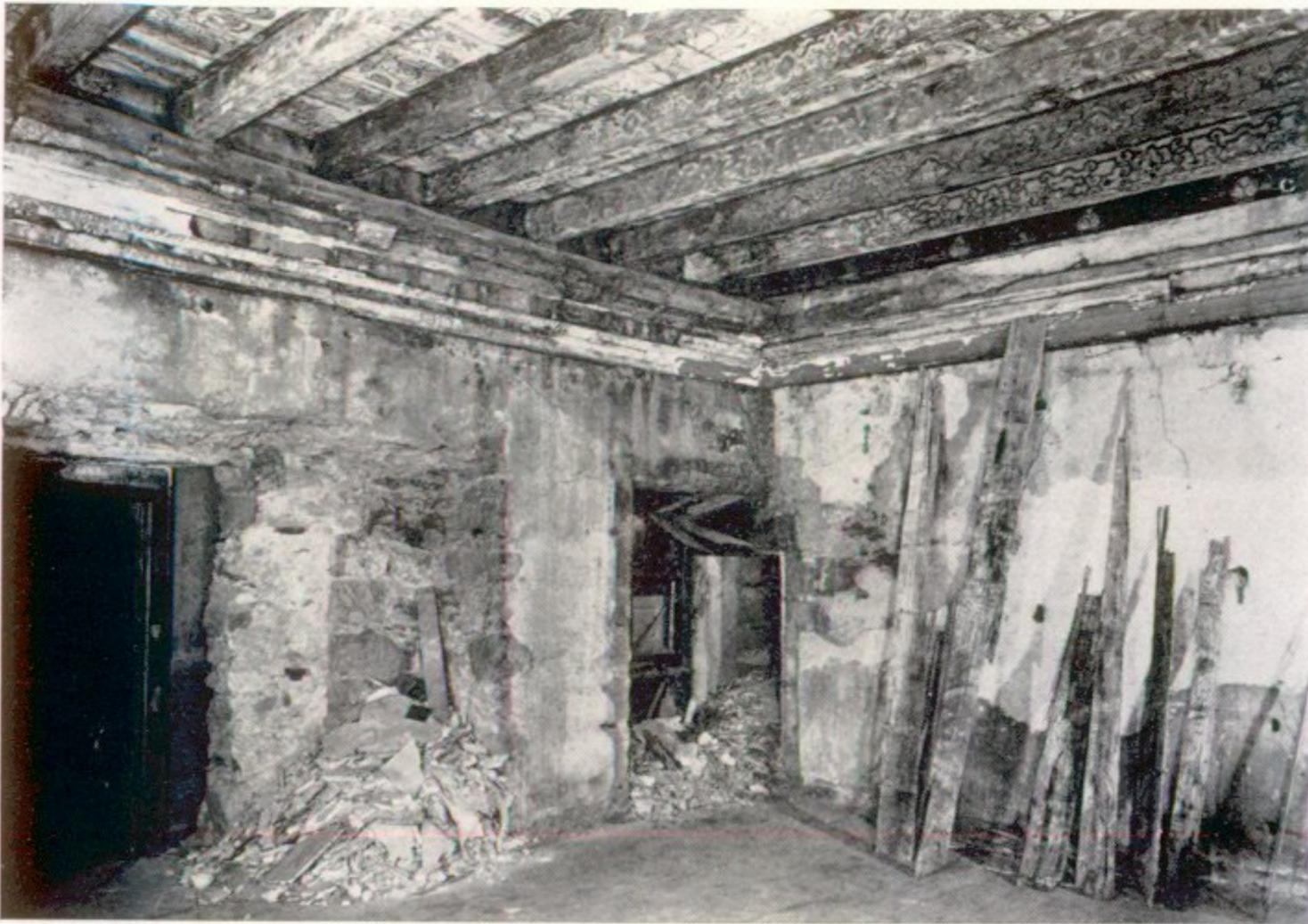
The castle in 1957, with the original tower-house in the foreground



a The hall at the time the painted ceiling was discovered



b The damaged plaster ceiling, with part of the painted ceiling revealed behind. Compare pattern on ceiling paper with lay-out of heraldic ceiling as shown on pl 33



The NW corner of the hall after removal of the plaster ceiling



The painted open-beam ceiling (sections D, E and F). Note evidence of repainting on beam to right of shield



Details from open-beam ceiling – sections C and D



Details from open-beam ceiling – sections D and E



Details from open-beam ceiling – sections F and G



Details from open-beam ceiling – sections H and I



Details from open-beam ceiling – sections J, K and L.

In eum qui sibi ipsi damnum apparat. 49



THE rauening wolfe, by kinde my mortall foe,
 Yet lo, inforfde, I foster vp her whelp:
 Who afterwarde, as it did stronger growe,
 Though as my owne, I longe the same did helpe:
 Yet, coulde I not contente it with my teate,
 But that my selfe, hee rent to be his meate.

Nic. Reutherus.
Impulsus falcibus sensit
impus uere raptus
D'amatque ferus mis-
ferum in matrisbus
agnei.
Claudius Minois e
Græco.

a Whitney's symbol for ingratitude – the goat suckling the wolf-cub which will ultimately devour her (see pl 27)



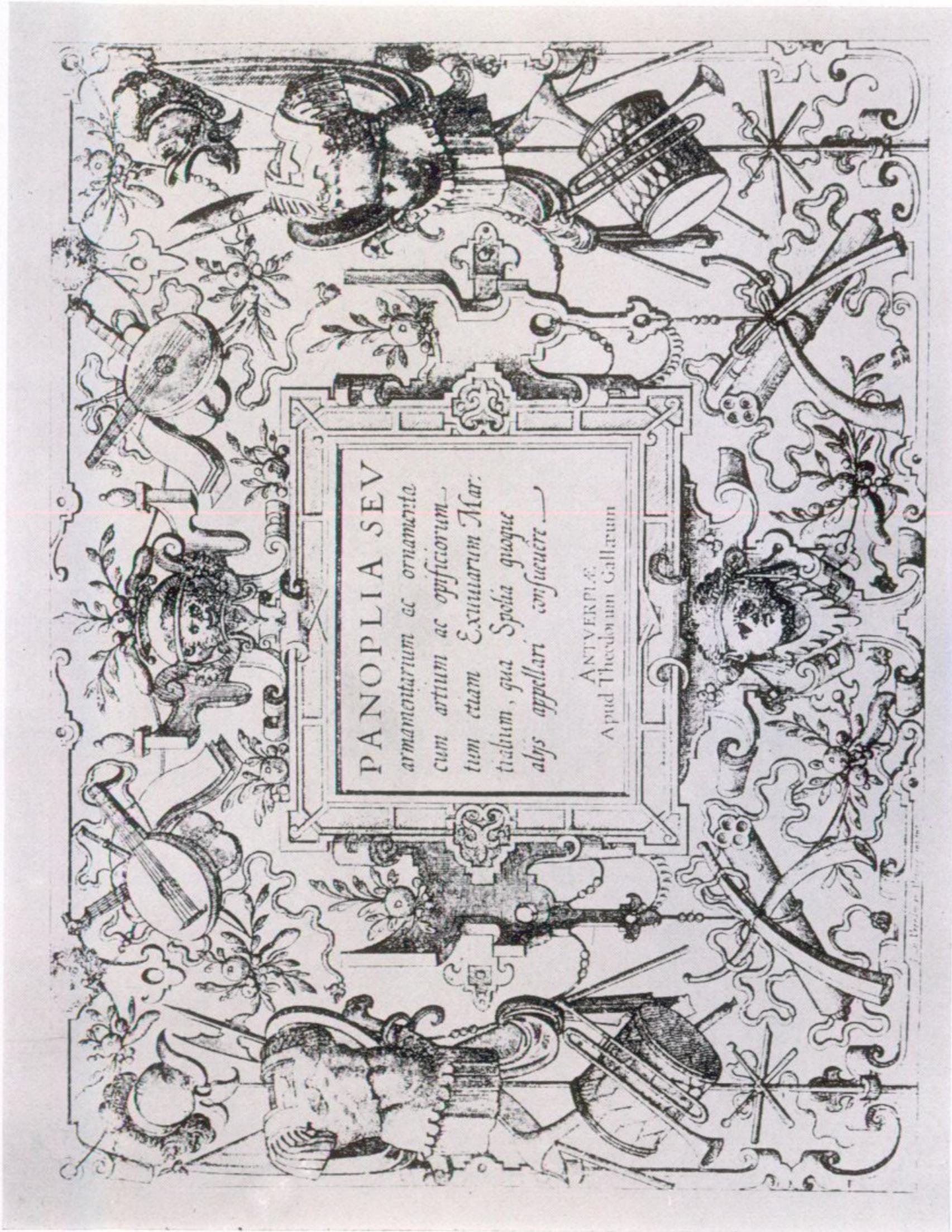
b Paradin's symbol for resurrection (see pl 24)

36

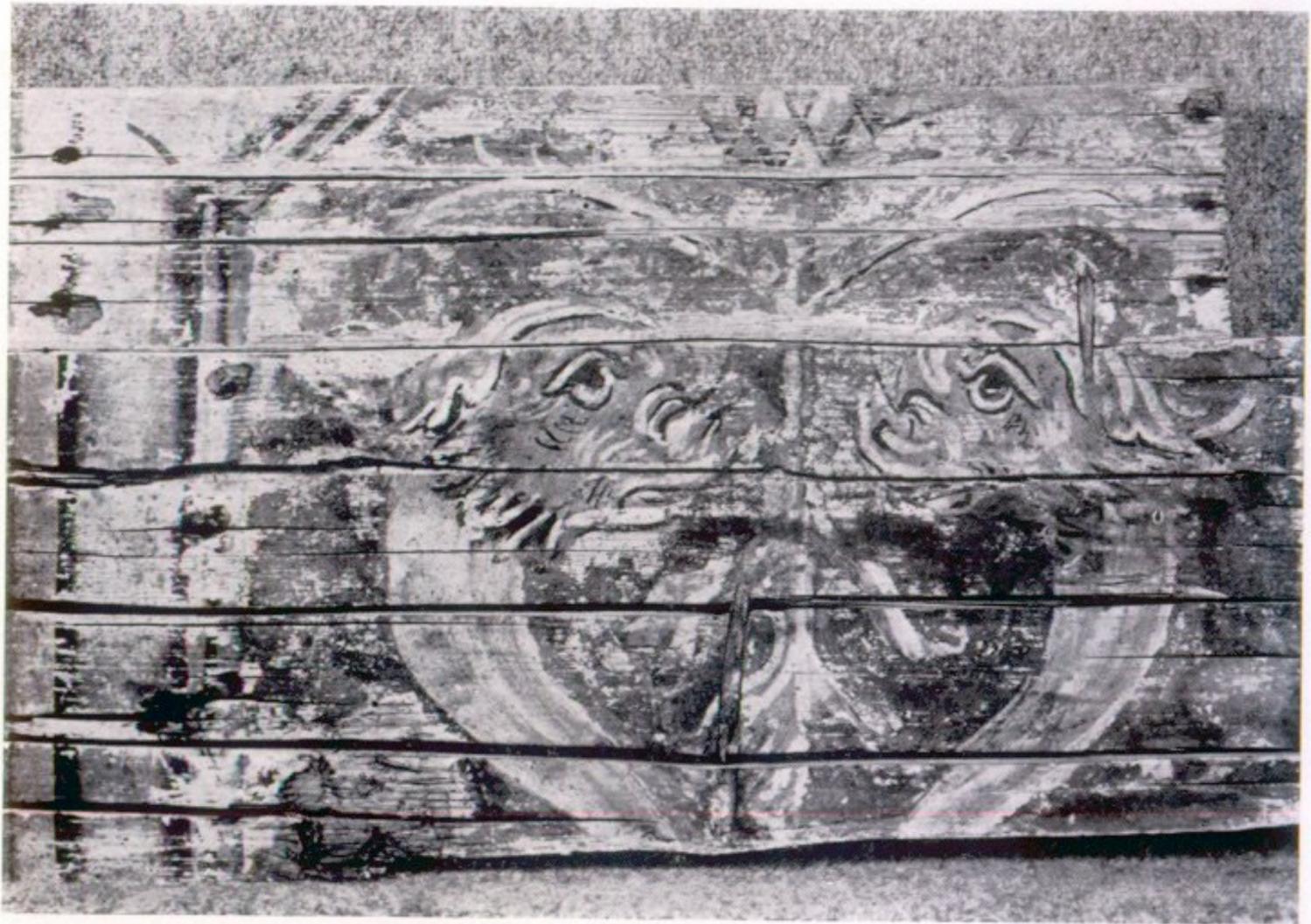


En struthum NIL PENNA parat, quod nesciat vi:
NON PENNA EST scribas que facit, vsq; erit.

c Rollenhagen's ostrich, symbolising hypocrisy (see pl 26)



An engraving by Jean Vreedman de Vriese (see pls 26, 28)

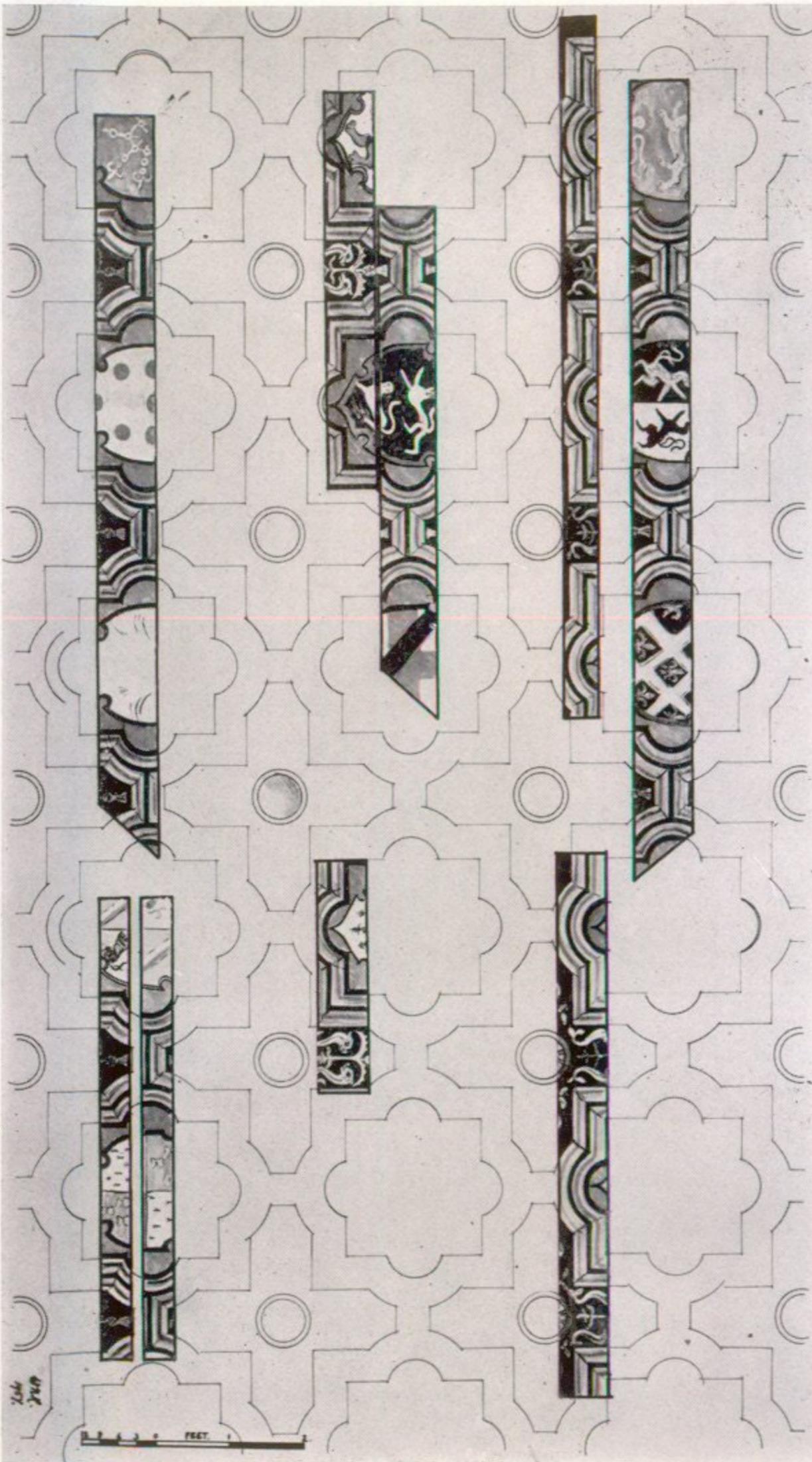


a



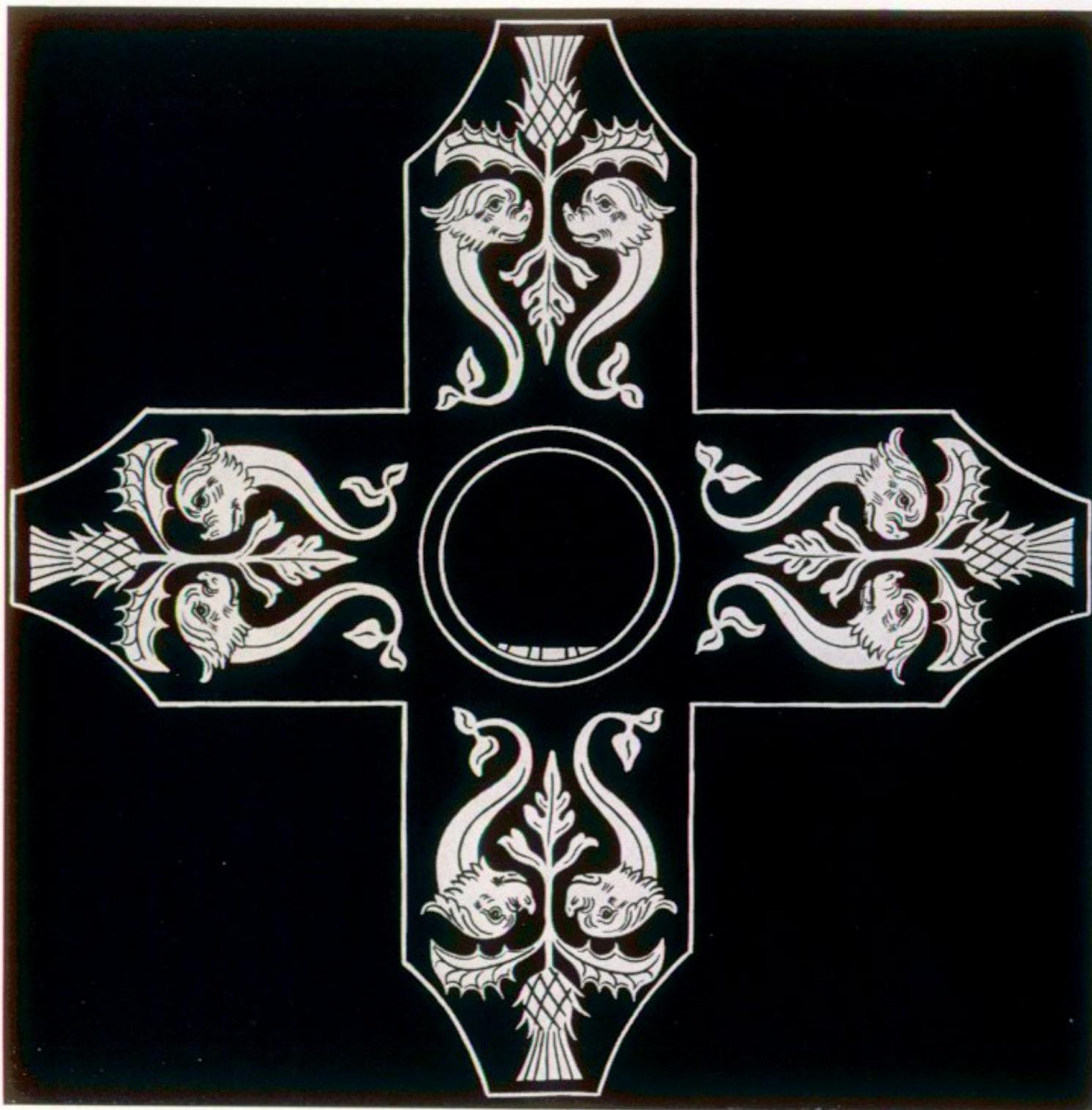
b

Painted fragments from the heraldic ceiling: a, dolphins and thistle; b, part of a shield of arms – per pale sable and or two lions combatant counterchanged



Heraldic ceiling – reconstruction drawing

APTED and ROBERTSON | Rossend



Heraldic ceiling (detail) – reconstruction drawing