THE DECORATION OF THE ROYAL PALACES FROM 1553-1625

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There are many forms of evidence of the artistic taste of an age, and of them architecture is not the least important. But taste, even in earlier ages, often changed rapidly, and architecture is not always capable of a sensitive expression of rapid change. The decoration applied to architecture, however, is often ephemeral and therefore far more susceptible to the moods of taste. Unfortunately, that mutable character that would make it a delicate recorder of change ensures that it rarely survives to record anything. Sadly as architecture has suffered from those twin vandals, Time and Taste, its decoration has suffered far more and often it is not easy to know how the buildings of any period appeared to contemporaries. For our period there are very few contemporary drawings, and where there are descriptions they are mostly by travellers. And travellers, even when truthful, are rarely reliable, for they have a lust for the extraordinary and an aversion from the usual that often gives, in effect, a serious distortion. The dispassionate details of building records, for all their value, rarely continue after the last tile has been nailed into position.

There is, however, one set of records that regards all building and decoration as its province ; the accounts of the Paymasters of the Royal Works. From 1570 onwards these were rendered annually, and as they deal far more with the maintenance of existing structures than the erection of new, and often describe in considerable detail the decorations carried out, they constitute a unique record of the changing decorative styles used in some of the greater houses of the period. They must, however, be used with caution, both in drawing conclusions from them about the decoration of the Royal palaces and in applying those conclusions generally. In the first place, the records are more detailed in the later years and arguments based on the silence of the earlier years must be carefully framed. Secondly, they refer mainly to the decoration of existing buildings where the decorator had not the same free hand that he might have in a new building. And thirdly, they are, in Elizabeth's reign at least, records of the sums spent on architecture and its decoration by a monarch who, unlike many of her greater subjects, spent as little on that account as she decently could. But with all these limitations it is possible from an analysis of the records in the Public Record Office to draw attention to certain very marked features of Elizabethan and Jacobean architectural decoration.

In a money economy the value men place on anything can generally be estimated not so much by what they say as by what they pay, and the sums that Elizabeth and James spent on the decoration of their houses is a good indication of its importance to them. Particularly striking are the sums spent on painted decoration. Throughout the period the amount paid in any one year to the Sergeant Painter is

generally much more than that paid to any other craftsman or contractor. It is true that their bills were usually for labour only and his for materials as well, but even so the difference is often immense. At Greenwich in 1582–3 when a range of timber buildings was being put up, the amount paid to the most important of the contracting carpenters was £33/13/4d. ; for his work there in the course of the same year George Gower, the Sergeant Painter, received £187/13/11d.[1] In 1591–2 £12/17/- was paid for carving and casting a metal figure of Justice for the fountain at Hampton Court. Gilbert Poulsen, for making in 'copper-work' all the cartouches, pendants, etc., that were to adorn the base and for 'finding all manner of stuff and workmanship', was paid £192/4/4d. ; that is, just over £200 was spent on the statue and its adjuncts. But then it had to be painted and the Sergeant Painter's bill came to £123/6/8d., or over half of all the other charges[2]. When the new Banqueting House was erected at Whitehall between 1606 and 1610, the Sergeant Painter, John de Crete, received £623 for painting done there,[3] a sum much greater than that paid to the two main contractors for the brickwork.[4] Of course such a large sum was exceptional, but in a more normal year, 1610–11, de Crete received over £324[5].

Large sums were also spent on such decorative features as wainscot and plaster-work, but never so much as on painting. In 1580–1 at Whitehall £113 was spent on 'new wainscot sealing of the gallery over the privy bridge'[6]. For the wainscoting provided for the Banqueting House of 1606–9 Samuel Jenner and Clement Chapman were paid £353[7] ; and Richard Dungan was paid £303/6/- for the plaster-work of the ceiling[8]. Such sums were not usual, but a much smaller piece of work, the plaster-work of the ceiling of the privy-gallery at Somerset House in 1609–10, cost £66/11/-[9]. The lavish spending on such items is shown not only by the amount done, but also by the rate paid by the yard. By the middle of James' reign the cheapest form of 'fretwork' plastering cost 3/- a yard. Wainscoting varied from 2/4d. to 10/- the yard ; 6/8d. was a quite usual rate.

The briefest survey then shows, by the sums expended, both the absolute importance of decoration and the relative importance of painting among other forms of it. A study of the position of the Sergeant Painter emphasises that importance. There are very few known portraits by a Sergeant Painter and, broadly, the only work of that sort that he did was mainly touching up older pictures. He therefore occupies a very low place in any survey of the development of English Art. But the question that is of importance to us is, what place did he occupy in the estimation of his contemporaries? As we have seen large sums were

[1] PRO E 351/3217
[2] *Ibid.*, 3226.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3243. De Critz or Cretes is the usual from in print of this name. In the Works Accounts he is almost invariably called De Crete.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3241, 3242.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3245. These large sums may be, in part, due to the high cost of gilding ; although gilding is rarely specifically referred to.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3215.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3243.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3243. [9] *Ibid.*, 3244.

spent on decorative paintwork, and almost without exception the work was carried out under the direction of the Sergeant Painter[1]. From the great amount of work done it is probable that the Sergeant Painter rarely touched a brush, but was responsible for the general design of the decoration and for its supervision. This is reinforced by another consideration. The journeymen painters apparently worked from patterns supplied to them. In all the accounts there is only one reference to patterns, at Greenwich in 1594–5, when 3/4d. was paid for ' patterns to painters '[2]. And this unique reference occurs on the unique occasion when the Sergeant Painter was not paid by contract but for his ' attendance '. Leaving coincidence out of the reckoning, it is clear that these ' patterns ' and the bulk of the work was patterning of one sort or another, were usually supplied by the Sergeant Painter as part of his contract. He was then the artistic director of work costing sums of money that were large absolutely, and large in relation to sums spent on other forms of architectural decoration.

But since his contracts covered the cost of materials and the payment of painters' wages it is not possible from this alone to estimate at all accurately his standing among his fellows. We have seen, however, that on one occasion, at Greenwich in 1594–5, he was paid for his ' attendance '. He then received 5/- a day. Too much cannot be built on a single reference, for there may be unrecorded special circumstances, but this sum is more than double the 2/- a day allowed to the Master Mason and the Master Carpenter, and more than the 4/- a day that Her Majesty's Surveyor received. But he was not only employed by the Office of Works. In 1615 the Wardrobe Account owed John de Crites over £1,800[3]. It had owed Leonard Fryer, de Crete's predecessor, over £400 in 1608[4]. The large sums spent on decoration under the direction of the Sergeant Painter and his ability to command the fees and the other payments that he obtained suggest that his employment on decoration reflects, not his artistic unimportance, but the importance to his royal patrons of the work on which he was employed.

This emphasis on the position of the Sergeant Painter is necessary because the commonest form of decoration and that which must have been the most immediately striking was paintwork. Throughout the greater part of the period the only reason for leaving anything unpainted seems to have been the physical impossibility of reaching it with a brush ; and the interior of a royal palace, at least in the more important rooms, must have been an uproar of colour. It is hard to find a feature or a

[1] The only important exception has been noted by Mr. Lees-Milne (' Tudor Renaissance ' Batsford, 1951, p. 84). Mr. Lees-Milne, however, does not seem to be aware of how unusual the entry is. And shortly after it comes a unique entry of the payment of 40 days' travelling charges to George Gower, Sergeant Painter, ' giving orders for work to be done among the painters '. Clearly the contract was given to another man because Gower was occupied with other matters.

[2] PRO E 351/3229.

[3] Accts. of Sir J. Caesar, BM. Add. MSS. 12498 f. 295.

[4] *Ibid.*, f. 177.

material that was left in its original state. Walls, apart from the decoration provided by hangings and wainscot, were lavishly painted. Among numerous other instances, Nicholas Lizard in 1562–5 painted 576 yards at Westminster in black and white[1]. In 1575–6 William Hearne received £66/3/4d. for painting black and white antique at Whitehall[2]. In 1618–19 de Crete painted a dining-room, a study, and two bedrooms in ' yellow and green spotted '[3].

Chimney pieces were rarely left uncoloured. At Whitehall in 1567–70 a chimney piece was ' richly wrought with gold and oil colour ' at a cost of £16[4]. In 1570–1 at Hampton Court chimney pieces were painted ' with divers stories in gold and oils '[5]. At the other end of the period in 1610–11 at Somerset House de Crete was paid £25 for painting a chimney piece with ' fine byce, lack and other rich colours '[6]. Wooden ceilings were quite lavishly painted and often gilt. Plaster ceilings, which we now almost invariably see in a dead white, were also painted. At Greenwich in 1579–80 the ceiling of the Great Chamber was painted with a blue background[7]. At Woodstock, a very neglected house, Thomas Joyce was paid 116 shillings in 1593–5 for, among other things, ' colouring the fret in the Privy Chamber '[8]. In 1624–5 at Whitehall de Crete painted ' a great compass ceiling in the Presence with curious stonework in distemper '[9]. Even Jones' Banqueting House could not wholly escape, and the plaster fretwork of the great niche was painted and gilt and ' the ground thereof picked in with fair byse '[10].

Wainscot was also painted ; and not only because it was old. In 1580–1 at Whitehall the new wainscot in the long gallery was painted in a lint colour[11]. At Oatlands in 1597–8 the wainscot was painted in a very elaborate manner at a cost of ten shillings a yard[12], and similar elaborate painting of the wainscot was carried out at Denmark House in 1617–8[13].

Stonework, and especially the stonework of windows, was also painted at Hampton Court in 1594–5[14]. At the new Banqueting House in 1619–22, where very little painting was done, the stone doors were painted white[15], and at Greenwich shortly afterwards the new window in the chapel had the transoms, mullions and casements elaborately decorated[16]. The great amount of colour that all this produced was increased by the use throughout the period of painted paving tiles for halpaces and chimney footpaces. Sometimes, if the area was small, a whole floor was laid with them. At Westminster in 1611–12 a closet was wholly paved with green and yellow tiles[17].

[1] PRO E 351/3202.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3211.
[3] PRO AOI 2422/49.
[4] PRO E 351/3204.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3205.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3245.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3214.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3363.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3258.
[10] *Ibid.*, 3256.
[11] *Ibid.*, 3215.
[12] *Ibid.*, 3233.
[13] *Ibid.*, 3252.
[14] *Ibid.*, 3229.
[15] *Ibid.*, 3391.
[16] *Ibid.*, 3257.
[17] *Ibid.*, 3246.

The only notable exception to this lavish use of colour is the great rarity of references to stained glass. From 1559 to 1625 there are only four certain references and of these three, all before 1583, are to heraldic glass. The only later reference is in 1621–22 at Whitehall when Richard Butler was paid £9/10/- for ' making of sundry pieces of painted glass in the windows of the chapel which were broken and decayed '[1]. There are probably two explanations of this ; glass is, of all painted decoration, the most durable and the least likely to need replacement, and further, as Mr. Knowles has pointed out, the wars of the Counter-Reformation were making it extremely difficult to obtain foreign glass[2]. This is emphasised by the care with which glass was looked after. An echo of the Middle Ages is heard in the Accounts when the workmen at Whitehall in 1600–1 were paid for ' taking down glass out of sundry windows and laying it up '[3].

The great amount of painting, and the colouring of surfaces which we to-day prefer to leave in a natural state, was due not only to a different sense of colour from ours, but also to a desire for display. For parallel with the great use of colour there is throughout the period, with an important qualification to be noticed later, a fondness for painting one material to look like another. The material chosen for imitation is not always more colourful but is invariably more expensive. It might be thought that this occasional eschewing of a brighter colour is an exception to the desire for display. It is, however, merely a different form of it ; an attempt to impress by the supposed cost of the material. The forms that this imitation took were many and ingenious, and almost any material might be painted to look like any other that was richer.

Wood, the least reputable material, had, of course, the greatest number of possible metamorphoses. Only a few instances need be given. At Greenwich in 1597–8 the wooden base of a seat was painted to look like brick[4]. In 1618–19 at Somerset House the new lantern was painted to look like stone[5]. The twenty-two great timber columns of the Banqueting House of 1606–9 were painted in ' marble and other stone colours '[6]. One of the most ingenious of all imitations, however, must have been the achievement of Lewis Lizard at Richmond in 1580–1 in painting seven boards over the windows ' in colour resembling cloth of gold '[7]. Brick, that ill-appreciated plebeian of building materials, was always being dressed in the livery of its betters. A good example occurs at Hampton Court in 1591–2 when brick crests and windows were ' wrought and shadowed like unto the stone crests and windows '[8]. But even stone was not always allowed to be itself. In 1581–2 the stone fountain at Westminster was ' laid with oil in marble colours '[9]. In the

[1] *Ibid.*, 3255.
[2] *Antiquaries Journal*, xxxiii, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3236.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3233.
[5] PRO AOI 2422/49.
[6] PRO E 351/3243.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3215.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3226.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3216.

early part of the second decade of the 17th century, at Whitehall, chimney pieces were being painted ' in several stone colours ', and the colours used can be guessed at from an entry of a payment to de Crete of £20 for garnishing a chimney piece ' with divers coloured stones as rance, touch, white and black marble, serpentine and porphyry '[1]. The painting of wainscot was doubtless often done solely for the colour effect, but it sometimes took the form of imitation of a richer material or, at least, of a more expensive process. In 1597–8 at Oatlands Leonard Fryer was paid at the extravagant rate of ten shillings a yard for painting the wainscot with a very elaborate design with ' draughts of gold and silver of marquetry '[2].

The ubiquitous use of colour and the counterfeiting of richer materials are two practices that run throughout the period and give it a unity. But after 1603, although the old methods are not wholly abandoned, new developments appear. Of these the most obvious is that rich materials are no longer only counterfeited, they are often used. The new practice is particularly shown in the treatment of chimney pieces and their footpaces. In the earlier period the ' apparells ' for chimneys were usually of Reigate or Caen stone, and at Whitehall in 1573–4 cost 16/6d. a piece.[3] In 1611–12 at Greenwich a quite inexpensive chimney was put in with a mantle of Reigate stone, but with the ' frieze revealed and inlaid with two rounds of touch and one round of black and white marble and two squares of rance, all finely polished '[4]. In 1610–11 at Somerset House £25 was paid for a chimney piece of ' alabaster, touch, rance and dornick stone ', and £35 was paid for a chimney piece in more expensive material[5]. Halpaces and chimney footpaces in the earlier years were of plaster of paris or of Purbeck stone, or, when economy was thrown to the winds, of painted tiles at 8d. a foot. After 1603 they were frequently of ' black and white marble fairly polished ', or, as at Theobalds in 1623–4, of ' Sussex marble squared and polished '[6]. In 1617–8 at Oatlands six old chimney footpaces were taken out and replaced with black and white marble[7]. Before 1603 the only recorded use of expensive stone was for the fountain at Hampton Court in 1584–5 when white marble and black touch were used.[8] In later years the stores at Scotland Yard held considerable stocks of these stones and of black dornick which was often used for paving, as, for instance, at Somerset House in 1609–10[9]. Black dornick, which was not ' a cheap stone '—its price varied from two to five shillings a foot—was also used for the bases of columns at the Banqueting House at Whitehall in 1606–7[1] and for columns and half-columns at Greenwich in 1614–15[11]. The new

[1] *Ibid.*, 3245.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3233.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3209.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3246.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3245.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3257.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3252.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3219. These stones were purchased from a foreign merchant and were originally intended for tombs.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3244.
[10] *Ibid.*, 3242.
[11] *Ibid.*, 3249.

development is reflected by the appearance in the accounts of a new trade—' polishers of stone '[1].

The appearance of expensive materials in royal decoration after 1603 is one of those rare cases in which a simple and direct economic cause—the death of a parsimonious queen and the accession of a king who was apt to overestimate the revenues of his new kingdom—can be invoked, and the new departure can, in consequence, be easily and clearly seen. About the same time, however, another new feature appears in royal decoration, but a feature which reflects a change in taste and is less easily discernible. Under Elizabeth the most noticeable feature of painted decoration had been the love of bright colours and bizarre effects. A few instances can show its general nature. At Hampton Court in 1582–3 windows were painted with ' a fret with divers colours and with fine gold intermeddled ' together with ' black purfling the said fret on each side '[2]. In 1594–5 at Hampton Court the casements were painted with vermilion and the stone monials gilded and painted with vermilion, byce and white lead masticott[3]. At Greenwich in 1591–2 doors and seats were painted in marble and jasper colours[4]. Vermilion, byce, rance, jasper and marble colours occur constantly. They do not wholly disappear after 1603, but they tend to be replaced by more subdued colours and, in particular, by ' fair white '.

Some idea of the contrast may be obtained by comparing the painting of the railings at Greenwich in 1592–3 with ' a dark-lion tawny colour in oil for jasping like a rance upon the flats and garnishing it upon the cants or edges white-lead russet in oil colour '[5] with the ' fair white in oil ' used for the railings at Somerset House in 1611–12[6]. The bright painting of casements and monials of the earlier period gives way sometimes to russet but more usually to ' fair white '. Gold and byce still appear in decoration but now generally in association with silver or white. The decoration at Whitehall in 1618–19 of rooms in ' yellow and green spotted ' shows a colour combination never found in the earlier period[7]. Sometimes even sombre colours were used. At Theobalds in 1610–11 de Crete was ' new painting and graining with distemper in walnut colour wainscot panels and picking out in black all the compartments about the panels '[8]. Walnut colour becomes somewhat commoner in this period and at Essex House in 1612–13 the wainscot was painted brown[9]; the first mention of that colour. In 1618–19 the roof and ceiling boards of Denmark House were treated in the same way[10].

Yet this new manner of the early years of the century is, of course, only a development or a refinement of the older treatment. In the later years of our period, about the early twenties, appears a method

[1] *Ibid.*, 3253.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3217.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3229.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3226.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3227.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3246.
[7] PRO AOI 2422/49.
[8] PRO E 351/3245.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3247.
[10] PRO AOI 2422/49.

of interior decoration, shown mainly in the treatment of wall space, that is entirely new. Earlier, whatever the length or proportion of wall space to be covered, it had received the same treatment; and decoration on walls, whether by wainscoting or painting, had been done by the yard in the form generally of a continuously repeating pattern. Whether the innumerable small panels of wainscoting were used, or 'antique work' or 'interlaced work' or de Crete's 'yellow and green spotted', the wall was not regarded as an artistic whole but as so many square yards to be covered. The new treatment either divided the space into a small number of large panels or unified it with a single subject. The difference between the two methods is striking and is basically the difference between the treatment by an 'interior decorator' and that by an easel painter.

The earliest occurrence of the new method was at Denmark House in 1618–19 when a wall in a gallery was painted in 'fair white' in 'four several parts, each of them seven and a half foot high and two of them three foot broad, one two foot and one one and a half foot broad'[1]. In 1620–1 in the King's Withdrawing Chamber at Whitehall the development had gone farther and the walls were painted in 'four equal squares showing the four quarters of the world and the four seasons with their fruits'[2]. Two years later at Whitehall the dining-room and the stairs were painted in 'panel work'[3], a description which suggests a treatment similar to that at Denmark House. In 1623–4 the ceiling and walls of a room at Theobald's Lodge were painted with 'landskips, frutages and divers kinds of beasts'[4]. 'Frutages and divers kinds of beasts' were, of course, nothing new and might well mean the type of decoration in the frieze at Gilling Castle. 'Landskips' too could be squeezed into that interpretation but taken in conjunction with the fact that this is the first use of 'landskips' in the accounts, and that it comes just at the time when signs of the new manner are showing themselves, it seems more likely that a description is being given of a room in which each wall is painted with one or two large subjects, and in a manner quite distinct from the general practice of covering the wall either with repetitive patterning or else with a great number of small scenes unified, if unified at all, only by their subject matter.

But although this 'compartment' treatment appears in wall decoration only in the last years of our period, there had been earlier signs of it. It is perhaps not accidental that these are in references to the decoration of ceilings. Ceilings offered the greatest expanse of unbroken surface in one plane and therefore the greatest amount of monotony in repetitive patterning. An attempt at breaking up these large spaces was made when Leonard Fryer painted the canvas ceiling of the old Banqueting House at Westminster in 1603–4. The greater

[1] PRO AOI 2422/49.
[2] PRO E 351/3254.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3256.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3257.

part of it was covered with ' 532 square yards of work called the clouds ', but 72 square yards at the ends were painted with the King's Arms and with architectural motifs[1]. There are not many detailed references to the painting of ceilings, but this may be compared with the painting of the same ceiling in 1584–5. Then the whole space was covered with a repetitive pattern in the form of ' diamonds, frutage and other kinds of work '[2]. At the new Banqueting House in 1607–9 Richard Dungan laid the fretwork of the ceiling with ' deep pendants and compartments '[3]. This may be no more than a description of a typical ' Jacobean ' ceiling, although their patterns were not noticeably deep. But this reference to ' deep pendants and compartments ' is unique—elsewhere a mention of ' laying fretwork ' is considered sufficient—and suggests that an unusual treatment was used which broke up the flat surface.

The point is of some interest because it seems possible that, although the trabeated ceiling of the Banqueting House of 1619–22 was a foreign importation, native treatment was, however slowly, developing towards it. And in later years, however much of the Jones' manner was submerged by the Civil War this form of ceiling decoration maintained itself throughout the 17th century. In any case, by 1625 a style of decoration of wall surfaces and ceilings was appearing which eschewed the overall patterning effects of the earlier period for a treatment which adapted its decoration to the proportions of the surfaces to be covered.

Just as important as the decoration of the interiors of the palaces of Elizabeth and James was that of the exteriors and certain common features between the two can be seen. The most obvious is the lavish use of colour, and this, as in the interiors, lasted throughout the period. But, and again parallel with interior decoration, although the old practice continued, its methods altered and old forms ended and new appeared. The changes, however, do not coincide in time with the changes in the style of interior decoration, and it is possible to distinguish only two main periods, with the break occurring in the second decade of the 17th century.

Stonework, except for mullions, doorcases, dressings, etc., was little in evidence in the exteriors of the Royal houses, and the treatment of mullions and stone dressings has already been referred to. The commonest material, and that which came in for the greatest amount of decoration, was brick. The most usual method was to colour it in a way that enhanced its natural colour, and the practice of ' pencilling ', ' red-colouring ' or ' russeting ' went on throughout the period. At Westminster in 1571–2 the painters were paid £7 for ' colouring the new brickwork '[4]. In 1597–8 the bricklayers were ' pencilling in brick colours all the gable ends and walls on the outside of the Queen's lodging ' at Oatlands[5]. In 1618–19 the walls of the porch at Enfield were pencilled ' with ochre

[1] *Ibid.*, 3239.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3219.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3243.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3206.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3233.

and russet '[1]. Such entries are numerous throughout the period and as common at the end as at the beginning.

Plastering and whitewashing of exteriors also continued unabated. Various forms were used ; roughcasting, ' white-mortaring ', ' pargeting ' and ' laying with plaster of paris '. Of these, roughcasting, except in the earliest years, was confined to such out-of-the-way houses as Woodstock, Grafton and Havering. ' Pargeting ' appears to have meant nothing more than plastering or even just whitewashing, and was one of the cheapest methods of colouring[2]. A more brilliant white was obtained by the use of plaster of paris. This was frequently used for floor surfaces, but was also employed in exterior decoration and was applied at Greenwich in 1610–11 at the expensive rate of a shilling a yard[3]. It had been used earlier at the same house on the walls of the gallery in 1582–3[4]. ' White-mortaring ' was another common form and was used throughout the period on brick walls.

But although all these practices continued, another form of decoration, the imitation of stone and ashlar, became rarer. It was sometimes done with plaster and sometimes with paint. At Hampton Court in 1584–5 a gable-end was painted ' with fret of masonry '[5], and at Greenwich in 1598–9 a new brick chimney stack was ' laid in stone colour '[6]. But plastering was the commoner method, and a typical instance occurred at Woking in 1593–4 when Ellis Johnson and John Allen were paid at the rate of a shilling a square yard for ' new-lathing, laying, plastering and drawing with stone-work joints all the sides of the house towards the garden '[7]. In 1610–11 at Greenwich a plasterer was paid at fourpence a yard for ' striking out ashlar-wise 50 square yards in Conduit Court '[8]. The next year at Somerset House the garden front was ' finished with white mortar ashlar-wise '[9]. This, however, is, with the exception of the renewal of some old plaster-work at the Tower in 1624–5, the last reference to the practice within the period. There is no observable decline in the practice ; there is a sudden stop.

The same period, the second decade of the 17th century, sees also the disappearance of the not so common but very striking practice of painting ' antique work ' on the exteriors of buildings. The extent of its general use is hard to assess, for, although ' antique work ' internally was common enough, it is only at Whitehall and Westminster that its use externally can be certainly shown. It is possible that it was mainly used to decorate the panels of timber-frame buildings, somewhat in the Nonsuch manner, but it was also widely used on brickwork. In 1604–5

[1] PRO AOI 2422/49.

[2] In 1591–2 at Westminster pargeting was done at the rate of a penny a yard, a process no more expensive therefore than ' laying with lime and hair '. In the Bassingbourne Churchwardens' book of 1498–1534 there is an early reference to ' parjett or new overcasting of the steeple with a load of lime '. (BM. Add. MSS. 39814 f. 234.) At Somerset House in 1590–1 rooms were pargeted and then whitewashed.

[3] PRO E 351/3245.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3217.

[5] *Ibid.*, 3219.

[6] *Ibid.*, 3234.

[7] *Ibid.*, 3228.

[8] *Ibid.*, 3245.

[9] *Ibid.*, 3246.

de Crete was paid at the rate of three shillings a yard for ' laying in antique work seven square yards upon the lower part of a brick chimney '[1]. In 1609–10 antique work was laid upon ' the exterior of a staircase and of the new (brick) buildings near the Council Chamber '[2]. It was also used, where it must have been very conspicuous, on gable-ends. De Crete painted two gable-ends with antique work at Whitehall in 1611–12[3]. There is, however, only one certain reference to the use of it externally after 1614–5, and that appears to have been a repainting of older work. As with ' ashlar-work ' the cessation of the practice is sudden and is in no way a slow decline ; for there are twice as many examples of the practice between 1603 and 1615 as there are between 1558 and 1603. In the earlier years it was an occasional form of decoration ; in the later, quite common.

A practice that begins at about the time that these stop is the use on brick buildings of contrasted red and white colours. As we have seen, these colours had been extensively used before but not, apparently, in deliberate combination with each other. The first occurrence of this new practice seems to have been at Somerset House in 1611–12 when the accounts refer to ' finishing with white mortar ashlar ways the front of the house towards the garden at sixpence the yard and pencilling the said front at threepence the yard '[4] ; a manner that contrasted the red and white colours. Something similar was done at Newmarket in 1620–1 when some parts of the outside walls were ' white-finished ' and others were coloured red[5]. A refinement of this was the practice of pencilling or russeting the main wall-face and colouring white the dressings and mouldings. At Newmarket in 1619–20 outside walls were coloured with red ochre while a fascia was white-finished[6]. At Whitehall in the following year all the ' facias, cornices, doors, windows and all other mouldings of brickwork ' were ' finished—i.e. laid with finishing mortar '—and ' all the rest of the brickwork ' was coloured with red ochre[7]. At the Mews in the same year the jambs of the windows were laid with finishing mortar and the walls were coloured red[8].

That all this colouring and plastering of external walls was done partly to give protection from the weather is doubtless true, but the importance of its decorative aspect is emphasised by the frequency of decoration on those parts that could be easily seen. It is noteworthy that a large number of the entries, and especially of those relating to antique-work, refer to walls in or visible from the garden. In 1597–8 Leonard Fryer was ' flourishing over all the walls in the garden upon the antique work '[9]. De Crete, at Whitehall in 1613–4, was painting antique work ' about a new chimney towards the privy garden '[10]. At Woking

[1] *Ibid.*, 3240.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3244.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3246.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3246.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3254.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3253.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3254.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3254.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3233.
[10] *Ibid.*, 3248.

in 1593–4 pencilling was done on ' all the chimneys and chases in sight towards the garden '[1]. When the white-finishing and pencilling was done at Somerset House in 1611–12 it was done only on ' the front of the house towards the garden '[2]. At Richmond in 1598–9, while most doors were painted in stone colour the doors towards the garden were painted in ' jasper colour like unto rance '[3]. The entries referring to the bright colouring of arbours and of garden seats are innumerable. The work done by George Gower at Greenwich in 1592–3 is typical. There the arbours in the garden were painted in ' rance colours ', the rails in a tawny colour and the sides in russet[4]. Seats and arbours were not, of course, part of the exterior of a building, but they were part of the ' ensemble ' seen from or in the garden.

Another aspect of the need felt for external decoration is the attention paid to such prominent parts of the building as chimney stacks and chimney shafts. At Woking, as we have already seen, it was the chimney stacks that were singled out for pencilling. At Whitehall in 1604–5 a painter was ' laying in antique work seven square yards upon the lower part of a brick chimney near the Privy gallery window '[5]. At Greenwich in 1593–4 and at Westminster in 1597–8 it was the chimney stacks alone, and not the whole of the wall, that were russeted[6]. After the early years of the century stacks are no longer mentioned, but attention begins to be paid to decorating shafts. At Whitehall in 1603–4 colour and size was provided for colouring nineteen chimney shafts[7]. The practice of ' white-finishing ' was used quite extensively on shafts, as at Somerset House in 1609–10[8] and at Newmarket in 1619–20, when the bricklayers were paid for ' hewing and finishing white the Tuscan heads and shafts of chimneys '[9]. The lengths to which this decoration might go was shown at Somerset House when a manner, which failed to become general, was followed of ' polishing and rancing the stacks of chimney shafts over the gallery '[10]. It seems, in fact, that the more prominent any part of the exterior was, the more chance it had of being decorated.

The development of the interior and exterior decoration of the Royal palaces between 1553 and 1625 can be briefly summed up. Throughout the period interior decoration of wall-surfaces, ceilings, chimneys and wainscoting had large sums spent on it, and it was of considerable artistic importance ; and this importance is reflected in the almost invariable employment on it of the Sergeant Painter. While the lavish use of colour, the painting of counterfeit materials, and the repetitive patterning of Elizabeth's reign is still found occasionally in the later years of James I, there is a marked change in treatment shortly after 1603. It is shown in two ways ; by the use of richer materials, formerly only counterfeited,

[1] *Ibid.*, 3228.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3245.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3234.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3227.
[5] *Ibid.*, 3240.
[6] *Ibid.*, 3228, 3233.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3239.
[8] *Ibid.*, 3244.
[9] *Ibid.*, 3253.
[10] *Ibid.*, 3244.

and of more sober colouring, especially of ' fair white '. Near the end of James' reign a style appears which is not a development of the old but is the expression of a new manner ; a manner of giving walls and ceilings the treatment proper to their proportions. External decoration—the painting of stone dressings and the colouring and plastering of brick-work—alters little until the second decade of the 17th century. Apart from the cessation of imitated ashlar, and of antique work at Whitehall, the most important change is the appearance of a manner of contrasting the heightened red of the brick walls with the white mortar applied to such prominent features as fascias, window and door jambs, and chimney shafts.

The question that immediately arises is, how far was the decoration of the Royal palaces typical at any given time of the country as a whole ? It is clear that in Elizabeth's reign royal decoration was in one respect—the absence of any rich materials—untypical of the practice among her wealthier subjects. Inlaid wainscot was not uncommon in the later 16th century, but there is no record of it in Elizabeth's accounts. That the desire to achieve the same or a similar effect was present is shown by the elaborate imitation of marquetry at Oatlands in 1597–8. Rich and expensive stones were never used in Elizabeth's houses but were common enough in the buildings of the wealthy. Burghley, for instance, was getting 2,000 St. Vincent stones sent to him by way of Bristol for a device in the Great Chamber at Theobalds in 1584[1]. In other respects, however, royal decoration under Elizabeth seems to have been quite typical. There are many private houses where the same features may still be seen, and it is interesting that in the accounts of George Levens for the paints bought for the Triangular Lodge at Rushton appear all the colours, masticott, vermilion, spanish ochre, that occur constantly in the Royal accounts[2]. The introduction of ' fair white ' in royal decoration soon after James' accession is not easily fitted in to its historical position. The Crest Room at Albyns and the White Parlour at Holland House are probably not so very long after the first royal use of ' fair white '. The bill of Thomas Selby of London for painting work at Bramshill in 1615 still survives and includes such items as ' for culloring of 124 windows faire white in oyle ' ; and, possibly a parallel to the contrasted red and white of exteriors in royal work, ' 94 casements faire red in oyle '[3]. It seems likely, therefore, that at this time royal practice was in the van of decorative development and was not an isolated phenomenon. The new manner of the end of James' reign is not paralleled anywhere else, except in the houses of the Court circle, before the second half of the century.

Surveying the period as a whole one can see royal practice in interior decoration catching up with, leading, and finally divorcing itself from

[1] BM Lansdowne MSS. 43/14.
[2] BM Add. MSS. 39832 f. 114.
[3] W. H. Cope ' Bramshill ' (1883), pp. 121–5.

private taste. So little external decoration has survived on private houses, and there are so few records, that it is impossible to hazard any opinion about the relation of private to royal practice in this sphere.

Although it is probable that no definite answers can ever be found, it is tempting and, I think, obligatory to seek for reasons for the changes in Royal decoration throughout this period. Such changes cannot, of course, be dated to a year or two, but it is noteworthy that they do not occur at the same time in internal and external decoration, and that the old manner of external decoration does not fade away but stops abruptly.

I think it is beyond doubt that the introduction of rich materials into Royal decoration and the consequent decline of painted imitation is due to the accession of the extravagant James. The introduction of ' fair white ' and of sober colouring is not wholly an individual matter—for it is paralleled in private work—but it coincides with the appointment of de Crete as Sergeant Painter, the first Sergeant Painter of known foreign birth in our period since Lizard. That de Crete was at least partly responsible for this new development is made more likely when we remember that external decoration, in which the Sergeant Painter did not have an entirely free hand, shows no change at this period. In fact, the change there coincides with the appointment of Inigo Jones as Surveyor and is, one may suppose, the result of it. Jones, as we know, was not a man of unformed ideas, and it is probably not chance that shortly after his appointment occurs the first reference to painting work ' ordered to be put out again and altered '[1]. It is interesting that it was de Crete's department that came in for criticism and was successfully interfered with. If, as seems likely, it was Jones that interfered here, his success may well have encouraged him to attempt a further expansion of his functions. The appearance in the last few years of James' reign of a treatment of wall surfaces that recognised their proportions—a treatment that one would *a priori* expect from Jones—was possibly due to further successful encroachments by the Surveyor upon the territory of the Sergeant Painter.

[1] *Ibid.*, 3250. The description of the painted work—' the great dial with two angels painted over it and holding a crown '—makes it clear that it was a piece of external painting.