

FOOTNOTES

- 1) My thanks are due to the following museum Directors and Curators for help in the compilation of this article. Dr. J. Raftery, Dr. Kristján Eldjárn and Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson and to my colleague Mr. R. H. M. Dolley for dating the hoards.
- 2) *Acta Archaeologica* Vol. XIX, 1948, p. 74.
- 3) The symbols used under heading of "Present Location" in this and subsequent tables are: B. M. — British Museum; N. M. D. — National Museum of Ireland, Dublin; S. A. L. — Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of London; N. M. A. S. — National Museum of Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh; N. M. R. — National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavík; and P. P. for private collections.
- 4) *Christian Art in Ancient Ireland*, vol. ii, Dublin 1941, p. 68.
- 5) *Irish Art*, London, 1940, p. 160f.
- 6) R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, Late Saxon Disc-Brooches, *Dark Age Britain* (ed. Harden) London 1956, p. 171ff.
- 7) D. M. Wilson, Two Plates from a Late Saxon Casket, *The Antiquaries Journal*, vol. XXXVI, 1956, p. 31ff.
- 8) British Museum: *Guide to Anglo-Saxon Antiquities*, fig. 120.
- 9) Bruce-Mitford, *op. cit.* Pl. XXXI, A.
- 10) *ibid.*, Pl. XXVIII.
- 11) *ibid.*, Pl. XXVII, A.
- 12) British Museum *op. cit.*, p. 120.
- 13) e. g. C. Peers and C. A. Raleigh Radford, *The Saxon Monastery of Whitby*. *Archaeologia* 89, fig. 11.
- 14) Bruce-Mitford *op. cit.*, Pl. XXVIa, fig. 37, e.
- 15) *ibid.*, Pl. XXVII, E.

The Bishop's Palace at Kirkwall

By W. Douglas Simpson.

In Haakon Hakonsson's Saga we are told how the great King, returning northwards from his failure at Largs, reached Kirkwall and took up his residence in the Bishop's Palace. A distinct picture is presented of a two-storey hall, upon the upper flat of which the King took up his quarters. No indication is given us of the material out of which this hall was built. Yet there is no reason why it should not have been of stone, and indeed it is hardly credible that the twelfth and thirteenth century Bishops, then busy with the building of their noble Minster, and thus commanding on the spot the services of highly skilled mason-craftsmen, should have contented themselves with a timber *aula* for their own episcopal residence. In fact there is every reason to believe that the primary work in the existing Bishop's Palace, tinted black on the plan published in the Orkney volume of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, may represent the very building in which King Haakon died. The Commission's description seeks to date this primary work to *circa* 1500, entirely on the strength of a single loophole of reversed keyhole pattern in the west wall:

"Lighting was provided by eight lancet windows in the west wall. These were widely splayed internally, but externally they were narrow and were shaped somewhat like a reversed key-hole. One of them has a chamfered margin."

It must, however, be confessed that the above description is somewhat of a flight of fancy. There are no lancet loopholes anywhere in the Bishop's Palace. Only one of the ground floor openings, the south-most on the west front, has had the shape of a reversed key-hole — though it is now much enlarged by ill-usage and weathering. Moreover this solitary key-hole opening is quite obviously an insertion. So the Royal Commission's dating, in so far as it depends on this key-hole loop, must be rejected out of hand.

The thin walling of the central structure or hall in the Bishop's

Palace is utterly unlike fifteenth century work, which in Scotland is always very massive. As the key-hole loop, to which a date in or after 1450 might reasonably be ascribed, is an insertion in this walling, the shell of the building, in its lower portion at all events, may well be much older. Its masonry is in regularly coursed long flagstone slips, fairly open in texture, carefully selected and accurately laid; whereas the later walling above is not nearly so regularly coursed, and exhibits much greater variation in the size of the stones. Again, in the upper work of the hall and throughout the round tower, sporadic freestones, grey and yellow, occur in the rubble work, whereas no freestone, except for dressings, can be detected in the regularly coursed flagstones of the lower portion of the hall.

The three wall-presses still traceable in the south gable are original features, and so are two windows on the east side, now blocked up from the exterior. These windows are small and square and are carefully checked for a shutter or internal frame: but they are not grooved for glass like the later windows in the structure. This is an early type of window, found for example in Lochindorb Castle *circa* 1290, and in Duffus Castle of the fourteenth century.

In the north gable a small portion of the original walling remains at basement level at the north-east corner. It contains a wall-press, and also one jamb of a door in large red freestones with stubbed tails. The contrast between these stubbed tails and the long irregular tailing elsewhere found in the dressing of the Palace is highly significant. On the outside also this door jamb is visible, though here the noses of the stones have been cut away to engage with the later facework. It thus looks as if the ground floor of the early hall was entered through the north gable, just as King Haakon's magnificent festal hall at Bergen was entered at ground level through a gable.

All this early masonry, and particularly the jambs of the north door with their stubbed tails, very closely resembles the early flagstone rubble walling and red freestone quoin work in St. Magnus Cathedral. Looking at the two structures, within forty yards of each other, it is indeed hard to believe that there could be much difference in dating between them.

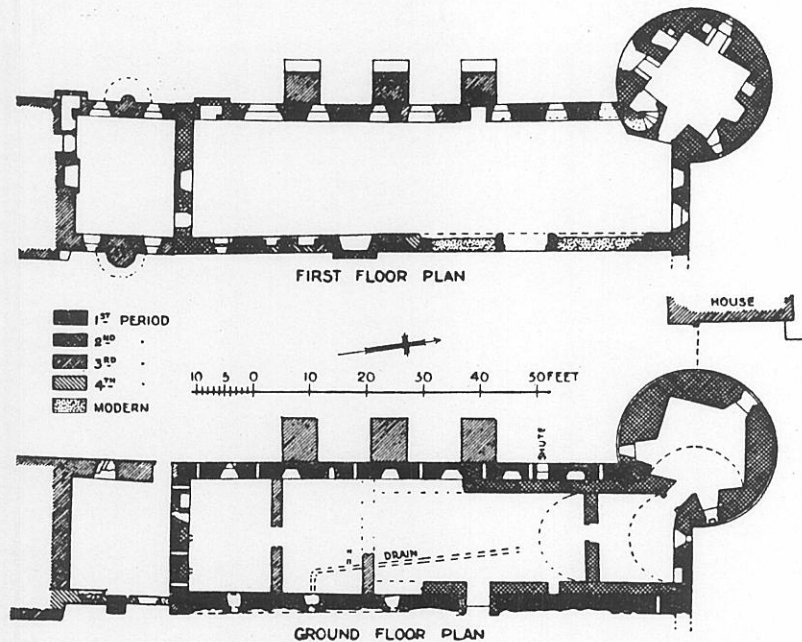
Moreover the internal quoins of the splayed bays of the eight ground-floor loopholes in the west wall are built with alternate red and yellow stones. The sides of the latrine vent outside are similarly

treated. This banded technique of dressed work is found in some of the Norman buttresses of the Cathedral and more conspicuously in the internal facework of the transepts. It becomes a self-conscious and striking feature in the transitional and thirteenth century work on the outside of the Church. This banded masonry is found nowhere else in the Bishop's Palace, and thus forms a most important factor linking the earliest work here with the first great building programme in St. Magnus Cathedral.

Upon the whole, therefore, there seems no reason why the lower part of the Bishop's Palace should not be the remnant of an early hall of the twelfth or thirteenth century.

We thus seem to recover the picture of an *aula* measuring internally 84 feet by 20 feet, within walls about 3 feet 3 inches thick. It was therefore slenderly built, as is not infrequently the case with early halls. The basement contains storage, but whether or not it was originally sub-divided is quite uncertain. This basement was entered by a door in the north gable. To the east of this in the gable was a wall-press, and there may have been another such fitting on the other side of the door. In the opposite gable in the south end were three such wall-presses. On the west side the basement was lit by a series of eight narrow loopholes with chamfered margins. On the east side there were at least three small square windows. The only other original feature surviving in the basement is the series of through-going putlog holes all round the walls. These putlog holes recall the well-known features in the twelfth century Church of Egilsay, and, like the latter, were probably used in the construction of wooden frames by which during erection the masonry was enclosed, as in concrete work at the present day. They are another feature telling decisively in favour of an early date for this walling in the Bishop's Palace.

The first floor doubtless contained the hall itself. Where was its entrance, there exists no evidence to show. I suspect that it was in the north gable above the basement entrance, as in *Haakonshallen* at Bergen. The only other original feature on the first floor is a latrine shoot on the west side near the north end. The fact that in the basement there are three small windows on the east side, whereas the west side has only narrow loops, suggests that the former (away from the sea) was the frontal aspect of the hall. No doubt, therefore, this would be developed as the show-front, with tall and stately windows like the hall at Bergen. The position



Plan of the Bishop's Palace at Kirkwall.

of the latrine on the rear side of the hall is in full accordance with this hypothesis. Its location near the north end of the hall suggests that at this time the dais was in the south end — a position conformable to the idea that the hall was entered through the north gable.

The primary masonry in the Bishop's Palace corresponds, as we have seen, to the early Romanesque masonry in the Cathedral, assignable to the period 1137 to *circa* 1150. A corresponding date may therefore fairly be claimed for the earliest work in the Bishop's Palace. We are told that after the consecration of the Cathedral, the remains of St. Magnus were translated thither from Birsay, and that about the same time the residence of the Bishop was transferred from Birsay to Kirkwall. This was during the reign of Bishop William the Old (1102—68), an able and munificent prelate, "a good Parisian scholar," the friend and Crusading companion of Earl Rognvald. Modern investigators are inclined to see in Bishop William the driving force and artistic inspirer of the first great building

effort in St. Magnus' Cathedral. He will therefore have been a likely prelate to provide himself with a stone hall as his residence when the episcopal seat was transferred from Birsay to Kirkwall.

Even today, when we see the grand outline of St. Magnus' Cathedral towering over the quaint little town, it is not hard for us to understand the impact which the building of the great Church will have had upon the Norse settlement at Kirkjuvágr. Let us picture in our minds the concourse of highly skilled imported craftsmen who must have settled down among the dry-stone and turf-roofed huts of the local inhabitants. There would be the skilled mason-craftsmen, the carpenters and plasterers, the glaziers and tilers, the painters, the workers in metal, the jewellers and enamellers, the makers of rich and costly vestments and altar cloths. The advent of all these craftsmen artists and of the swarm of purveyors who supplied their needs must have involved a social revolution in 12th-century Kirkwall; and into the middle of this hive of creative and artistic activity comes the great building Bishop himself, the ordainer and deviser, under his noble patron, of the whole work, transferring to the immediate neighbourhood of the rising Minster his episcopal residence from the outlying station of Birsay. Is it conceivable that such a prelate, amid such a setting, would have contented himself with a timber hall, like the robber chief Svein Ásleifsson's *skail* on Gairsay? Most certainly from the outset his episcopal Palace will have included a stone festal hall. I have no doubt that its remains may still be recognised in the primary work of the existing edifice, and that in this flagstone masonry, with its red freestone corner stones, and the red and yellow banded treatment of its windows, all so closely resembling the oldest work in the Cathedral, we have a remnant of the very hall in which the great King Haakon Haakonsson breathed his last.

It must not be imagined that the festal hall was the sole structure of the episcopal Palace at Kirkwall. Writing in 1808, Barry describes two square towers standing to the north-east of the hall and forming, along with Bishop Reid's round tower, attached to the latter, a triangular group bounding the northern front of the Palace. The smaller of these square towers he recognised as Reid's work. The larger he describes as "a square tower called the Mass or Mense Tower which, from the style of the structure, as well as from its very decayed state appears to have been of the greatest antiquity." In 1849 this tower was visited by the Norwegian antiquary P. A.

Munch, who describes it as "a square building with small projecting corner towers." It figures prominently as a lofty rectangular donjon in Low's Perspective View of 1774.

Doubtless Dietrichson and Meyer were right in claiming that the designation Mass or Mense Tower was "in all probability connected with the word manse — medieval Latin *mansa, mansus*, from *manere* — the Scotch name for a parsonage — thus here the tower of the Bishop's house, in which we must perhaps then seek the Bishop's chapel mentioned in the Saga."

We therefore seem to recover the two main constituent elements in the thirteenth century episcopal Palace of Kirkwall: — the Lall-house or public apartment, used for ceremonial or festal occasions, and the tower-house that formed the Bishop's private residence. It is worth recalling that in the Royal Castle of Bergen the two constituent elements of the early disposition were the hall-house built by King Haakon himself, and the tower-house added by his son, King Magnus Lagabøter. In other words, the early episcopal Palace at Kirkwall conforms to the pattern of a royal Norwegian Palace at the time.

In their account of the Bishop's Palace, Dietrichson and Meyer remark, in moving terms, that "there is no building in the Orkney Isles that is more revered by us Norwegians than the Palace in which our greatest King died, and which still stands opposite St. Magnus' Cathedral, although the parts of the building still existing are more recent than King Haakon's time." Unless in the evidence which I have set before you I have been utterly mistaken, future Norwegian visitors to Kirkwall may salute in the lowest portion of the Bishop's Palace a veritable remnant of the very building in which their great King passed away.

Topographical and Archaeological Investigations in the Norse Settlements in Greenland

A Survey of the Work of the last 10 Years

By C. L. Vebæk.

Among the many eminent exploits of the Viking age the founding of the Norse colonies in Greenland by the Icelandic chieftain, Eric the Red, must be said to be one of the most brilliant. By this daring enterprise, this "landnám" was established a Norse freestate, actually "at the end of the world," as an old papal document says. The Norse settlements in Greenland existed for more than half a millennium, although their existence as a freestate came to an end in 1261, when the settlements came under the rule of the Norwegian king. Thanks to the often very excellent state of preservation of the ruins there are in Greenland extraordinary good conditions for studying Norse culture at the end of the Viking age and through mediaeval time.

After the comprehensive investigations, carried out by Captain Daniel Bruun in the 1890's and at the beginning of this century, a pause followed, but since 1921 and just to the beginning of the last war a whole series of expeditions were sent out to investigate the Norse settlements in Greenland, at first under the leadership of the late Dr. Poul Nørlund, and after him led by Dr. Aage Roussel, whom I succeeded in 1939. Excellent results were obtained by Nørlund and Roussel — here it will satisfy just to mention the names of Herjólfssnes, Garðar, Brattahlíð, Hvalsey, Sandnes and the Austmannavalley. The last war for some years stopped scientific work in Greenland, but since 1945 Danish archaeologists have again, and nearly every year, been occupied in investigating the old Norse colonies. As the results of these investigations have partly not yet been published, partly are only known from preliminary reports, in "Fra Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark" (The year-book of the