# STIRLING CASTLE PALACE INTERPRETATION OF THE EXTERIOR SCULPTURE

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Produced in 2021 by

**Historic Environment Scotland**
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Charity number SC045925

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# CONTENTS

# STIRLING CASTLE PALACE: INTERPRETATION OF THE EXTERIOR SCULPTURE

## INTRODUCTION

This report argues for princely virtue as the theme underpinning the sculptural programme at Stirling Palace. The kingship literature of Western Europe, the medieval genre of the *speculum principis*, was concerned with the interdependence of Christian virtue and good government. As the government of Europe became increasingly centred upon individual rulers, the literary form was taken up by humanist writers as a means of influence within autocratic political systems. Good government was interpreted as the practical application of virtue and, moreover:

> By confining themselves to the composition of catalogues of virtues, the writers could pattern themselves closely on ancient models and adopt schemes provided by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean ethics* or by Cicero in *De officiis*. Under this influence the humanist catalogue of virtues took on a new aspect and came to differ from those of the middle ages. Purely worldly virtues took their place beside the religious ones and even superseded them in the degree of interest they aroused; moreover, those worldly virtues were considered purely from the point of view of their effect, their advantages and disadvantages being exactly weighed.[1]

The modern prince sought both heavenly glory and worldly fame. In the search for different ways of manifesting the right to rule, the catalogue of secular virtues was expanded. Hunts, tournaments and games became essential expressions of the new princely virtue of *magnificentia*, a constituent of *majestas* or the visible demonstration of power. Hunting and jousting were the peaceful demonstration of the prince's ability to defend his realm, and magnificence and majesty were essentially linked to principal tasks of the ideal prince, both medieval and modern: the maintenance of peace and the just administration of his realm.[2]

Scotland had singular need of a virtuous prince who could restore peace and prosperity to a troubled realm. Accordingly, the writers Hector Boece (c 1470–1536), John Bellenden (c 1495–1548) and Sir David Lindsay (1486–1555) addressed the wider need for moral reform and attention to the commonweal. According to Plato's moral theory (*Republic*, 4: 427ff). Justice, in that it regulated self-interest, was central to public and personal virtue over and above the other three Cardinal Virtues, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude.[3] Renaissance humanists, therefore, promoted Justice above all other virtues. Carol Edington identifies Justice as Lindsay's principal theme: 'Every one of his works dealing with kingship concentrates not upon the defence of the realm but almost exclusively upon the royal obligation to ensure the administration of justice within it'.[4]

Given the public nature of the sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace and that it physically encased the body of the king, it can be read as the equivalent of the decorative programmes mounted upon triumphal arches for a royal entry (ideally a rehearsal of the contract between a prince and his people rather than a demonstration of power). As Andrea Thomas comments on royal entries in general and those staged in Scotland in particular:

> The use of allegorical figures of virtues, representations of biblical scenes and classical heroes was designed to emphasise the peace, justice, prosperity and good rule that the people sought from their sovereign lord and lady. The expressions of loyalty and devotion were accompanied by symbolic reminders of the responsibilities and duties of monarchs to secure the welfare of their subjects and to uphold the church. In fact it is possible to interpret the royal entries of this period as a visual equivalent of the traditional *speculum principis* literary genre.[5]

As their presence within the sculpture programme is not in doubt, this report examines the pagan deities as personifications of moral and natural forces.[6] It perseveres with the identification of Jupiter, Venus and Saturn addressing, in each case, issues with missing attributes. Having argued for their identification, it explores the iconographic narratives normally associated with them and tests, through comparison with contemporary decorative programmes elsewhere and patterns of humanist thought familiar to the Scottish court, the probability of these narratives also being present at Stirling Palace. The administration of justice and the maintenance of peace are interdependent. James V occupies a corner position at one end of the north elevation, with *Venus* at the centre surmounted by a dove. This report is most confident in its

interpretation of the north elevation and argues that, first and foremost, Venus represents the peace to be enjoyed under James V as king and its benefits: judicious government and the well-being of his people.

The report on the Stirling Heads identifies Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) as a humanist thinker and writer of influence in Scotland. Erasmus, together with his friend and associate Sir Thomas More (1477/8–1535), author of *Utopia* (1516), had a vision of a new era of perpetual peace giving rise to responsible government and cultural endeavour (the equivalent of the Augustan *Pax Romana*). His writings include *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516), addressed specifically to the future Charles V and *The Complaint of Peace* (1517), which was sent to all European rulers. In the latter, Erasmus' arguments regarding the negative impact of war upon society are presented by the personification of Peace. The prince, having been prepared by a humanist programme of education, should seek to cultivate the 'arts of peace' above the 'arts of war'. It was his duty to protect the rule of law and seek the well-being of his people.[7]

On a spiritual rather than political level, attention is drawn to the humanist Masilio Ficino's (1433–99) diagram of a hierarchical universe distinct but not separate from God, and consisting of the Cosmic Mind (incorruptible ideas and intelligences, governed by Saturn), the Cosmic Soul (dynamic celestial causes generating visible products, governed by Jupiter), the Realm of Nature (unstable compound of form and matter, imperfect physical manifestation of the divine) and the Realm of Matter (formless and lifeless). Ficino was a leading member of the Platonic Academy which assembled under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici (Cosimo the Elder, Pater Patriae, 1389–1464) at the Villa Careggi outside Florence (a gift to Ficino from Cosimo). From 1463 to 1469, Ficino worked on translating the works of Plato into Latin. This highly significant contribution to humanist thought was followed by his own *Platonic Theology Concerning the Immortality of the Soul* (1469–74) which argued for the independence of the body and soul and the ability of the soul, in its capacity for pure incorruptible thought, to participate in the divine, and attempted the fusion of Platonic thought and Christian theology. This Platonic duality of being is possibly represented at Stirling Palace by the two Venuses and Ganymede, whose soul is purified of base desires by Jupiter's divine fire.[8] A sub-text of the Stirling Castle Palace sculptural programme might be north elevation: the Cosmic Mind (Saturn and the *Venus armata*); east elevation: the Cosmic Soul (Jupiter and the *Venus pudica*); south elevation: the Realm of Nature.

The most significant contribution of this report to the study of the Scottish Renaissance is the identification of the ambition central to any truly Renaissance artistic endeavour, the presentation of classical ideas in classical form. The sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace is a remarkable attempt, with limited available visual information, to recreate Roman antiquity. This itself must be indicative of its iconographic intention. Antique statues were sought after in Renaissance Italy by noble families (or those aspiring to noble status) to suggest genealogical antiquity and a direct ancestral link to the glorious past of ancient Rome. New sculpture representing historical and mythological subjects from the classical past served the same purpose.[9] Arguably, this was also the intention with the sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace.

While the French Renaissance was highly relevant as a conduit of visual information and a stimulus to James V's ambition to be remembered as a builder of great palaces, the analysis of the sculptural programme must begin to consider in what ways the Scottish court was looking beyond France to Italy. This report also suggests that the arguably crude execution of the sculptural programme at Stirling Palace is due to the lack of visual, as opposed to literary, sources available to assist with the task in hand. It begins to outline how, in the 1530s, even within Italy, knowledge regarding the appearance of the characters from classical mythology was partial, and how the excavation of Roman copies of Greek sculptures and their display in the courtyards of modern Roman palaces was breaking news in princely circles.

In the absence of supporting documents, the primary evidence for the interpretation of the sculptural programme is the sculpture itself, and its potential meaning had to be unlocked from the visual material presented. The following analysis is guilty of proposing ideas prompted by visual comparison and then going in search of the supporting evidence. The generation of ideas was always guided by the question: 'In this context, what would you expect to find?' No matter how plausible, the analysis remains speculative.

# NORTH ELEVATION: A NEW GOLDEN AGE

## BAY 16: SATURN

RCAHMS *Stirlingshire* identified the similarity between certain of the Stirling Castle Palace full-length sculptures and Burgkmair's representations of the seven planetary deities, that in Bay 16 possibly being a 'free rendering of Burgkmair's *Saturn*'.[10] (Figs 1–3) Helena Shire accepted this and discussed Saturn's presence as a 'malignant planet'.[11] While the figure in Bay 16 compares to Burgkmair's *Saturn*, definite identification is complicated by the absence of the conventional attributes. If, however, this identification is even tentatively accepted, the thematic interpretation of the north elevation as a whole becomes a possibility. Saturn is associated with:

- The mythological Golden Age as described by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 1:89–107) and Virgil (*Fourth Eclogue*).
- The identification by classical writers of the reign of the Emperor Augustus as a new Golden Age of peace, economic prosperity and cultural achievement.
- The celebration of the rule of Renaissance princes, particularly Cosimo I de' Medici, as a new Golden Age, with the prince, by association, posing as a new Augustus.
- The ascension or marriage of a Renaissance prince as heralding a new Golden Age.

### *The attributes and characteristics of Saturn*

In the attempt to get closer to the 16th-century understanding of Saturn, based on the study of classical texts, this report makes use of *The Mythology and Fables of the Ancients, Explained from History* by Abbé Banier (1673–1741, translated into English and published in London in 1739–40) tested against

Fig 1 (below, left to right) Bay 16, Stirling Castle Palace: *Saturn.*

Fig 2 *Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, German),* 'Saturn', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, (1510-14, Augsburg), woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.

Fig 3 Bay 16, Stirling Castle Palace: *Saturn*. Detail.


David H Brumble's *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (1998). The Olympian deities are referred to by their Roman rather than their Greek names.

## 1 Old age

'... the Name of *Saturn*, which the *Latins* gave him, signify'd according to that Author [Horace], *one who is full of years: Quòd Saturatur Annis*.'[12]

## 2 Time and the seasons

*Cicero*, in his Books on the Nature of the Gods, where he brings in two Philosophers speaking on the Subject, seems to have considered *Saturn*'s History only in a physical Light, when one of his Speakers says he was that God who governed the Course of the Times and Seasons; agreeable to what his Name signifies in *Greek*: For *Cronos* which is the Greek Name of Saturn, if you give it the Aspiration, is the same with *Chronos, Time*. Thus according to Cicero, when it was said *Saturn* devoured his Children, it was a plain Allegory taken from Time which devours and consumes all things: *Tempus edax rerum* as *Horace* has it.[13]

## 3 Saturn as *Autumn* or *Winter*

'... they [the Poets] believed that *Saturn*, as a Planet, being Cold and Dry, over-ruled Persons of a melancholy and splenatick Disposition. As to the Seasons of the Year, the same Planet presided over *Autumn*; and in the Week over the seventh Day.'[14]

The *Saturnalia* was celebrated on 17 December (the winter solstice) and was later extended to a seven-day festival in the temple dedicated to Saturn in the Forum Romanum.[15]

## 4 Saturn devouring his children

Saturn was a Titan, one of the first sons of the Earth and founders of great cities such as Troy. His father was Caelus (Sky) and his mother Tellus/Terra (Earth). After Tellus prophesied that one of Saturn's sons would depose him, he devoured his children, male and female. Pregnant with Jupiter, Saturn's wife Ops fled to Crete and gave birth secretly in a cave. When Saturn found out, she presented him with a swaddled stone which he then devoured, thinking it was his newborn son. The adult Jupiter was counselled by Metis to administer Saturn a potion which would cause him to vomit up the children he had devoured: Vesta, Ceres, Juno, Pluto and Neptune. Along with Pluto and Neptune, Jupiter then made war upon Saturn and the Titans and banished them to Tartarus.[16]

## 5 Scythe or sickle

The scythe or sickle can be a reference to how Saturn escaped from Tartarus to exile in Italy where he was welcomed by the god Janus and introduced the art of agriculture, assisted by his wife/sister Ops: 'He was generally drawn old and stooping, with a Scythe in his Hand, to denote that he presided over *Agriculture* which he had taught the Latins.'[17] As a protector and sower of seeds, he ruled over a Golden Age of peace and plenty. It may also refer, however, to Saturn using a sickle to castrate his father, Caelus. This was given him by his mother, Tellus, who could no longer bear the pain of giving birth to monstrous children. Central to the Renaissance mythology of Venus is the understanding that the heavenly Venus was born from the foam created when Caelus' genitals fell into the sea.

## 6 Capricorn

The Sun enters the sign of Capricorn in December. James V married Madeleine on 1 January 1537.

## 7 Chained feet

'If he was sometimes represented with his Feet chain'd, it was to signify ... that the Seeds of the Earth, over which he presided, are bound, and, as it were, inanimate till the Time of his Festival, when they begin to grow and sprout forth ...'[18]

They may also refer to his being taken prisoner by Jupiter.

## 8 Tree and wreathed snake

'Bossart ... gives us an Image of him, which represents an old Man, leaning upon a Trunk of a Tree, round which a Serpent wreaths itself.'[19]

The snake biting its tail is an ancient symbol of endless recurrence and has been associated with Cronos-Saturn since the 4th century AD.[20]

## 9 Hourglass

As the personification of *Time*, Saturn is represented by a timepiece, usually an hourglass:

> Such was the state of affairs when the artists began to illustrate Petrarch's (1304–75, Italian scholar and poet) *Trionfi* [Triumphs]. Chastity, as everyone knows, triumphs over Love, Death over Chastity, Fame over Death, and Time over Fame – to be conquered only by Eternity. Time's outward appearance not having been described by the poet ... the illustrators were at liberty to represent

him in whatever shape they liked … Petrarch's Time was not an abstract philosophical principle but a concrete alarming power. Small wonder that the illustrators decided to fuse the harmless personification of 'Temps' with the sinister image of Saturn. From the former they took over the wings, from the latter the grim, decrepit appearance, the crutches, and, finally such strictly Saturnian features as the scythe and the devouring motif. That this new image personified Time was frequently emphasized by an hourglass, which seems to make its first appearance in the new cycle of illustrations, and sometime by the zodiac, or the dragon biting its tail.[21] (Fig 4)

## 10 Historical ruler over a Golden Age

Saturn was understood to be a historical rather than a mythological figure, a founder of Rome and an illustrious ancestor:

> All the *Latin* Authors are unanimously agreed that *Saturn* reigned in *Italy* after *Janus*, who had receiv'd him into his dominions, upon his being dethroned by *Jupiter* … He governed this new State with so much Justice and Equity, that he made himself to be adored by his Subjects, and hence that Period wherein he reigned came to be accounted the Golden Age. The Truth is, that Prince putting all his Subjects upon a level left no Room for one to be in Servitude to another; nobody possessed any personal Property; all things were common, as if the World had been but one Patrimony. 'Tis on this Article that *Ovid's* Talent of verifying peculiarly shines.[22]

And

> The Poet Hesiod gives a happy description of it to this Effect:

Fig 4 Georg Pencz (c 1500–50, German), 'The Triumph of Time', *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, (c 1539), engraving, 15.2 x 20.7 cm. British Museum.

> 'These were the Subjects of old Saturn's Reign:
> Like Gods they liv'd, with Bosoms void of care,
> To Toil and Pain estrang'd. Cold Age ne'er shook
> Their vigorous Limbs; but in eternal Feast
> They pass'd the joyous Time: Then, full of Days,
> As if o'ercome by gentle Sleep, they dy'd.
> In Life each Good was theirs; the fruitful Earth,
> Spontaneous, pour'd perpetual Harvest round;
> Which, in glad Ease, they quietly enjoy'd.
> And when, descending to the Grave, in Dust
> They shrouded lay, their Souls, by *Jove's* high Will,
> Were Guardian Genii made; in airy Forms,
> To wander Earth, and bles the Kindred Just;
> Unseen, observing every Deed of Man,
> Of Wealth and bless th' Awarders here below.[23]

Are the cherubim at Stirling 'Guardian Genii'?

## *The Stirling Palace* Saturn

The Stirling Palace *Saturn* is not shown devouring his children or bearing a scythe. The male figure is, however, elderly, stooped and, comparatively, emaciated. He wears a distinctive loincloth. Should he be *Saturn* or *Time*, the strange object hung on a ribbon about his neck may be a primitive timepiece. The male figure in contemporary dress forming the corbel beneath him clasps a snake in his left hand (Fig 5). Saturn was married to Ops (his sister) who, in the form of *Abundance*, is standing next to him.

At this point it is relevant to ask, within the context of a Renaissance palace constructed at the time of a highly significant dynastic marriage, does reference to Saturn as a planetary god necessarily require him to be represented devouring his children or bearing the instrument with which he castrated his father? If not, could he be present in another capacity, which does not require the inclusion of his attributes?

## *The Golden Age and dynastic marriage*

Elizabeth Armstrong writes in *Ronsard and the Age of Gold* (1968):

> The Age of Gold, a legendary era of human happiness, ruled over by Saturn … and sanctified by the presence among men of Astraea, the virgin goddess of Justice, had been succeeded by an Age of Silver, an Age of Brass, and finally an Age of Iron. Whether it had been an age of simple civilised life favoured by ideal conditions, or an

Fig 5 Bay 16, Stirling Castle Palace, corbel: *Man Holding a Snake*.

> even earlier phase when Nature supplied every need unbidden, the provision of 'good cheer' for everyone was a constant feature of the reign of Saturn. That the cycle of the years might one day bring it back again was an ancient belief, consecrated by Virgil, the most respected of all the poets of antiquity: the occasion would be (according to Book VI of the *Aeneid*) the reign of Augustus, or (according to the *Fourth Eclogue*) the birth of a mysterious child.
>
> Renaissance poets, orators and pageant masters, called upon to celebrate an accession or a marriage, the birth of an heir or the signing of a treaty, could do no less than promise the same to their patrons.[24]

As a young page in the service of the French court, the French poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85) accompanied James V's first queen, Madeleine de Valois, to Scotland in 1537, but his poetic exploration of the ideology of the Golden Age belongs to his later career under the patronage of the French court.[25] The adoption of the theme as the celebration and justification of dynastic rule seems to begin with the Medici and arrive in France through marriage of the future Henry II and Catherine de' Medici in 1533. Armstrong lists instances of the Valois/Medici employment of Golden Age imagery:

> For the entry of the recently crowned (1547) Henry II into Lyons in September 1548, the Florentine merchants in residence there presented a performance of the comedy *Calandria*. The prologue and intermezzi featured the Golden Age: after Act IV, the *Age of Gold* appeared in a golden costume accompanied by *Peace* (white) and *Justice* (silver and black) and *Religion* (blue and white); after the last act, the *Age of Gold* was brought back by Apollo who addressed the king and presented the queen with a golden lily. Ronsard, heralding Henry II's entry into Paris (16 June 1549) wrote the ode *Avant-entrée du Roy treschrestien à Paris*, predicting that Astraea (Justice) would accompany the king. A year later, for the king's entry into Rouen (1 October 1550), the town gate was transformed into a triumphal arch representing the Age of Gold and was surmounted by a gilded statue of Saturn. Catherine de' Medici was given a gold figurine of *Astraea* holding the sword of in her right hand and 'une sphere de félicité', a symbol of *Heaven*, in her left.[26]

## *Cosimo I de' Medici and Saturn*

Janet Cox-Rearick's study of the Medicean 'imagery of dynasty and destiny' investigates the significance of astrology and personal horoscope to the understanding of the works of art commissioned by Pope Leo X and Cosimo I de' Medici.[27]

Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–74) became the second duke of Florence in 1537, the year of James V's marriage to Madeleine, and embarked on a programme of patronage intended to celebrate the triumph of the Medici dynasty. In 1569, he became the first grand duke of Tuscany. The artist and architect Giorgio Vasari (1511–74) was central to the realisation of Cosimo's ambitions, and it is his decoration of the *Sala degli Elementi* within the Palazzo Vecchio (1555) that is of particular interest in relation to the Stirling Palace *Saturn*. Cosimo moved from the Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo Vecchio (formerly the Palazzo della Signoria and, briefly under Cosimo, the Palazzo Ducale) in 1540 and, from 1555 to 1572, Vasari superintended the transformation of the interior into a chronological parade of dynastic achievement. Dynastic longevity was reinforced by the display of Cosimo's collection of antique artefacts, some inherited from Lorenzo the Magnificent. Cox-Rearick explains the political exploitation of Cosimo's natal horoscope: '… by far the most auspicious feature of this horoscope was the Capricorn ascendant which it shared with the horoscopes of Augustus and, most significantly for Cosimo's political situation as a vassal of the emperor, Charles V …'.[28]

In the *Sala degli Elementi*, it is the 'conceit of Cosimo as Saturn, ruler of the Capricorn ascendant of his natal horoscope' that underpins Vasari's fresco decoration.[29] The ceiling is dedicated to *Air* and the central panel, which depicts *Saturn Castrating Heaven*, is essentially a creation myth. Cosimo was at one and the same time the Cosmos/Caelus and the son who castrated him, Saturn.[30] The walls are reserved for the other three elements, and *Earth* is represented by *The Golden Age of Saturn-Cosimo receiving the tributes of the Earth* (Fig 6). The only attributes or characteristics identifying the seated male figure as Saturn are the serpent biting its tail (also an emblem of the eternal rule of the Medici), his elderly physique and the goat (with a serpent's tail) crouching beneath him and holding a red globe (world dominion and the Medici badge, the ball or palla).

Cox-Rearick comments:

> … it is the first time that the duke actually becomes Saturn in his art (although, of course, the old man

Fig 6 Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574, Italian), *First Fruits of the Earth offered to Saturn*, study for the *Allegory of the Earth*, Sala degli Elementi, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, drawing, pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, over traces of red chalk, 17.2 x 39.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

> is not a true portrait). It is also the first time that Cosimo's Capricorn is combined with the globe (the 'corpo del mondo' held by Capricorn) and the cornucopia (held by the goddess of the earth) – the emblems of Fortuna (also personified here) and Imperium which accompany the Capricorn of Augustan coins.[31]

Joscelyn Godwin explains how each of the four elements combine in a defence of Cosimo I's right to claim the hereditary rule of Tuscany: *Fire* (Vulcan forging Jupiter's thunderbolts) represents Cosimo I's military might; *Earth* (the Golden Age under Saturn) represents the wealth and prosperity enjoyed under his rule; *Water* (the birth of Venus) represents the peace brought by his rule; *Air* (the castration of Caelus by Saturn) represents God's powers and the blessings of the Medici.[32] At Stirling Castle Palace we also have Saturn as an elderly man, possibly accompanied by a serpent, and with Venus holding a globe and a goddess of the Earth (or Fortuna) bearing a cornucopia standing alongside.

The mythology of the Golden Age is literary in origin and the sculpture on the north elevation of Stirling Palace may be simply another illustration of the classical texts most relevant to the justification and celebration of dynastic rule. Virgil's writings, particularly the *Aeneid*, were the literary instrument of the transformation of Gaius Octavius Thurinus (63 BC–AD 14) into the Emperor Augustus (27 BC–AD 14). He was adopted as a son by his uncle Julius Caesar and, as the first Roman Emperor, introduced autocratic rule to the essentially republican Roman state. As his politically strategic and intelligent government put an end to internal power struggles, the new Roman Empire enjoyed two centuries of territorial expansion, peace and prosperity, and his successors adopted the familial names Augustus and Caesar as imperial titles. The appropriateness of reference to the Augustan Golden Age as a means of justifying the authority of the great autocrats of the early 16th century is obvious, particularly that of the Medici who, in 1532, were confirmed as hereditary rulers of the former Florentine republic by Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Cosimo I de' Medici came to power in 1537, the year of James V's marriage to Madeleine, and married in 1539. The Medici family were banished and returned to power twice over and, given his virtual imprisonment by the Douglases during his minority, James V would have identified with their family motto, 'Time Returns'.

The criteria of a true 'Golden Age' include artistic patronage and achievement. Virgil (70–19 BC) was the most celebrated poet (alongside Horace and Ovid) and Livy (59 BC–AD 11 or 16/17) the most the celebrated prose writer of the Augustan Golden Age. Gavin Douglas completed his Scots translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (c 29–19 BC), the *Eneados*, in 1513. In 1531, under the patronage of James V, John Bellenden translated the first five books of Livy's

*History of Rome* which, like the *Aeneid*, deal with the foundation of Roman history. The dynastic mythology underpinning the first part of the *History of Rome* and the *Aeneid* is that the Julian family, *Julian gens*, were descended from the semi-divine Trojan prince, Aeneas, the son of Venus and Anchises, whose destiny was to escape the destruction of Troy and, under supernatural guidance, sail to Italy and marry Lavinia, the daughter of King Latinus. His devotion to duty (perseverance and self-sacrifice) and reverence of the gods were identified as the virtues which underpinned the greatness of the Roman civilisation.

In April or May 1539 the 13-piece *History of Aeneas* tapestry listed in the 1539 inventory of James V's wardrobe accompanied the king to Saint Andrews for the celebration of the marriage of Joanna Gresmor, a member of Marie de Guise's household, and the Lord of Creich.[33] This is the only known recorded instance of a tapestry being selected for use at the court of James V on account of its subject, possibly 'extraordinary' marriage as a means of strengthening sovereignty. Douglas' *Eneados* includes Maphaeus Vegius' *Supplement* of 1428 which mitigates the abrupt ending of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Douglas describes how peace between the indigenous Italians and the new Trojan Italians was secured by the marriage of Aeneas to Lavinia, and the warrior became a lover. Saturn gave the people of Italy the rule of law and the means of prosperity, while Aeneas founded a secure new city upon the ruins of the old and Venus appeared to effect the transfiguration or apotheosis of her son.[34] Campbell traces the history of this set of tapestries back to a set of six (lost after 1825, but known from preparatory drawings and later weavings) known as the *Navigazione d'Enea*, designed by Perino del Vaga (Pietro Buonaccorsi, 1501–47), an Italian associate of Raphael, for the palace of Andrea I Doria (1466–1560), a *condottiere* in the service of first Francis I and then Charles V, at Fassol on the outskirts of Genoa. Campbell examines the arguments as to the relationship between Perino del Vaga's cartoons and the expanded sets subsequently woven in the Netherlands.[35]

The year 1539 was also that of Cosimo I de' Medici's marriage to Eleonora of Toledo where, according to the description by Pier Francesco Giambullari (1495–1555) addressed to Giovanni Bandini, Florentine Ambassador to the court of Charles V, quotations from Virgil consistently explained the allegorical decoration of the streets of Florence and the Medici Palace, scene of the wedding banquet and play. The wedding banquet was held in the inner/second cortile of the palace on 6 July. The dressing of this cortile included 12 paintings, and Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* was the text for the painting presenting Cosimo as the divine child heralding the new Golden Age:

> On the other side, on the west, opposite the return of Cosimo, appeared the auspicious nativity of the Most Illustrious Duke Cosimo, as a new beginning of a happier century. The architrave showed this clearly, having in its round a Phoenix, with these letters: MAGNUS AB INTEGRO SAECLORUM NASCITUR ORDO. Below: FORTES CREANTUR FORTIBUS. On the side toward the loggia: IAM NOVA PROGENIES. On the other, common to this and the following painting: REDEUNT SATURNIA REGNA.[36]

So was James V, too, participating in this European trend of claiming dynastic continuity as far back as antiquity and casting himself as a new Augustus?

## BAY 15: VENUS COELESTIS/ARMATA

The figure in Bay 15 compares closely with Hans Burgkmair's depiction of *Venus* within his series of engravings representing the seven planetary deities (Figs 7 and 8). While two of her attributes are in place, the arrow and orb (the pangs and terrestrial power of love), Venus' son, Cupid, is missing. There is no archaeological evidence that he was ever present, as seen in Burgkmair's woodcut, dancing on the orb holding his bow and arrow.

While Venus is normally accompanied by Cupid, this report perseveres with the mythological identification of the female figure in Bay 15 and interrogates its iconography.

With reference to the new Golden Age, Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* declares: 'the great line of the centuries/ begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns; now a new/ generation descends from heaven on high'. The virgin is Astraea, the goddess of justice and daughter of Jupiter and Themis. During the first Golden Age the gods lived alongside mankind but, as mankind became more and more corrupt, the gods abandoned them. Astraea was the last to leave, being transformed into the constellation *Virgo*, and her return heralded the new Golden Age. Accordingly, Astraea, as discussed by Roy Strong, plays a leading role in 16th-century imperial imagery and was particularly appropriate for the glorification of the Tudor dynasty as represented by Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen:

> The cult of Elizabeth I stems from this role as the just virgin of imperial reform, descended from the imperial house of Troy, the embodiment of the Tudor *pax* by virtue of the union of the two roses of York and Lancaster. In her oft sung role as

Fig 7 Bay 15, Stirling Castle Palace: *Venus*.

> Astraea, she is actually identified with the virgin of Virgil's prophetic *Fourth Eclogue*, whose advent fortells the Age of Gold and imperial *renovatio* … The rhetoric of Golden Age falls as fast round Elizabeth I as it does around Valois or Hapsburg. Gloriana, under which name Spenser [*The Faerie Queene* (1590)] celebrates the public aspect of his sovereign, is descended from the line of Trojan Brutus, from whom spring kings and 'sacred Emperors'.[37]

The identification of the female figure in Bay 15 as *Astraea* would fit perfectly with the proposed overarching theme of a new Golden Age of peace and prosperity together with the pursuit of ancient ancestry. Erwin Panofsky identifies the orb as being a specifically Italian attribute of Justice but her other attribute, the sword, is missing.[38] Although, evidently, she played a leading role in the pageantry of civic entries and dynastic marriages, specific representations of Astraea are hard to find.[39]


Fig 8 Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, German), 'Venus', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, (1510–14, Augsburg), woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.

Fig 9 Bay 15, Stirling Castle Palace: *Venus*, detail of the greaves.

It is necessary, therefore, to reconsider the female figure in Bay 15 as Venus without Cupid, and the meaning of the dove above her head. Although the Stirling Castle Palace *Venus* compares closely in form to Burgkmair's *Venus*, the narratives surrounding them are different. The latter is a planetary force ruling the destiny of mankind in conjunction with the star sign Taurus kneeling at her feet. While the Stirling Palace *Venus*, like the Burgkmair *Venus*, seems to be wearing a diadem in elaborately braided hair rather than a helmet, she has greaves strapped to her calves (Fig 9). Helena Shire, in her pioneering attempt to interpret the sculptural programme at Stirling Palace, thought this to be significant: '… here she is *Venus armata*, helmed and with a dart in the crook of her left arm. Her right hand holds a large ball – the crystal ball that stands for the fragile bliss of a happy marriage'.[40]

Is the Stirling Palace *Venus* a *Venus armata* and, if so, what does this mean? Rather than an allegory of Love, requiring the presence of Cupid, do we have an allegory of Concord and Peace? She is holding an arrow or dart and, while this is one of Cupid's attributes, it also can also connect Venus, via Virgil, to Diana the Huntress, the goddess of chastity. If this statue were an allegory of Love, the arrow refers to the power of beauty to wound at distance and pierce the eye as an arrow pierces the heart.[41] The absence of Cupid and the very precise inclusion of a single dove with its religious associations with Noah and the olive branch (Genesis 8:8–12), however, may indicate the alternative interpretation.

When Francis I was searching for Italian artists to work at Fontainebleau, his agent, Pietro Arentino, sent him a drawing of *Mars Disarmed by Cupid and Venus Disrobed by the Graces* (1530) by Rosso Fiorentino. Edgar Wind, in *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, explains:

> The many and famous Renaissance idylls in which the victorious Venus, having subdued the fearful Mars by love, is seen playing with his armour, or allowing her cupids and infant satyrs to play with it, all celebrate this peaceable hope: that Love is more powerful than Strife; that the god of war is inferior in strength to the goddess of grace and amiability …
>
> The discordant element becomes more prominent when, instead of putting Mars to sleep, Venus adopts the martial weapons as her own. Dressed in armour, the *Venus victrix* or *Venus armata* signifies the warfare of love: she is a compound of attraction and rejection, fostering her gracious ends by cruel methods … Even Virgil's Diana-like Venus – *virginis os habitumque gerens et virginis arma* – is but a variant of the *Venus armata*: a bellicose Venus who has donned the weapons which normally belong to her opponent – either Diana, Minerva, or Mars.
>
> But again, while appearing armed, Venus may give to the armour a peaceable motive. The martial Venus may stand for the strength that comes from love, for the fortitude that is inspired by charity … The Romans retained toward the armed Venus an attitude of religious respect. The ancestral goddess of the Julian house, she appears on gems and coins of Caesar and Augustus, as a martial figure of Roman peace, of victorious generosity relying on her strength.[42]

Art historians agree that Rosso's drawing of *Mars Disarmed by Cupid and Venus Disrobed by the Graces* is an allegory of Francis I's reluctant marriage in 1530 to Eleanor of Austria, the sister of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Following the *Paix des Dames* (3 August 1529), hostilities between Francis I and Charles V were suspended and France enjoyed four years of peace and the benefits of its king turning his attention to artistic patronage rather than warfare.[43] The propitious outcome of the union of Mars and Venus is also the allegorical context for the use of Burgkmair's prints of the planetary deities to decorate a writing desk assumed to have been made for Henry VIII and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1520–7). The interior displays faithful copies of Burgkmair's *Mars* and *Venus* together with the royal arms and the badges of Henry VIII (portcullis, Tudor rose, dragon, greyhound and fleur-de-lis) and Catherine of Aragon (sheaf of arrows), aunt to Charles V. Stylistically, two pairs of medallion heads suggest that the writing desk was made after 1520, but it must have been completed before 1527 when this dynastic alliance between England and Spain ended in divorce. One pair are labelled *Paris* and *Helen*, the Tudor dynasty once again claiming descent from Troy and bringing the heroic epics of Homer and Virgil into play (Figs 10–11).[44]

Fig 10 Unknown, Writing Desk (1525, London or Europe), walnut and oak lined with painted and gilded leather and crimson silk velvet (replaced), H 5 x W 41 x D 27 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Purchased with the aid of the Murray Bequest.

Fig 11 Unknown, Writing desk (1525, London or Europe), walnut and oak lined with painted and gilded leather and crimson silk velvet (replaced), H 5 x W 41 x D 27 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Purchased with the aid of the Murray Bequest.

The Platonic concept of the two Venuses is discussed under Bay 11, but Bernardus Silvestris' (fl 1136)[45] commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* Book I in *The Cosmographia* is also quoted here:

> We read that there are indeed two Venuses, one lawful, and the other the goddess of lust. The lawful Venus is the harmony of the world, that is, the even proportion of worldly things … This subsists in the elements, in the stars, in the seasons, in living beings. The shameless Venus, however, the goddess of lust, is carnal concupiscence which is the mother of all fornications.
>
> … Venus sometime designates the concupiscence of the flesh and sometimes the concord of the world … Therefore whenever you find Venus as the wife of Vulcan, the mother of Jocus and Cupid, interpret her as pleasure of the flesh, which is joined with natural heat and causes pleasure and copulation. But when you read that Venus and Anchises have a son Aeneas, interpret that Venus as the harmony of the world and Aeneas as the human spirit.[46]

Accordingly, the interpretation of the female figure in Bay 15 as the heavenly Venus, the *Venus Coelestis*, in the guise of *Venus armata* is appropriate to the theme of the new Golden Age. The Venus on the north elevation of Stirling Palace, as opposed to her counterpart on the east elevation, is the mother of Aeneas, the ancestress of imperial Rome and the Emperor Augustus, and symbolic of the *Pax Romana*. Scholars of Virgil at the Scottish court would be familiar with the following passage in *The Aeneid*, Book I describing an encounter between Venus, in disguise, and Aeneas in the woods outside Carthage where she urges him to shake off the self-pity of defeat and set out on the path of his destiny:

> As he walked through the middle of the wood, his mother came to meet him looking like a Spartan girl out hunting, wearing the dress of a Spartan girl and carrying her weapons, or like the Thracian Harpalyce, as she wearies horses with her running and outstrips the swift current of the river Hebrus. She had a light bow hanging from her shoulders in hunting style, her hair was unbound and streaming in the wind and her flowing dress was caught up above the knee. 'Hey there soldiers' she called out to them, 'do you happen to have seen one of my sisters wandering about here or in full cry after the

foaming boar? She was wearing a spotted lynx skin and had a quiver hanging from her belt.'

So spoke Venus, and Venus's son so began his reply: 'I have neither seen nor heard any of your sisters. But how am I to address a girl like you? Your face is not the face of a mortal, and you do not speak like a human being. Surely you must be a goddess? Are you Diana, sister of Apollo? …'

Venus replied: 'I am sure I deserve no such honour. Tyrian girls all carry the quiver and wear purple boots with this high ankle binding.'.[47] (Fig 12)

Both Burgkmair's *Venus* and the Stirling Palace *Venus* display the dress caught up above the knee and the flowing hair of Virgil's Venus/Diana. Within the context of dynastic marriage, Virgil's Venus/Diana, complete with arrow/dart, flowing hair, dress caught up above the knee and boots, kept company with other planetary deities in the wedding triumph of Costantio Sforza (1447–83, Lord of Pesaro and nephew of the Duke of Milan) and Camilla of Aragon (d 1499, natural daughter of the King of Naples) which took place in Pesaro at the end of May 1475, as recorded and illustrated in *Le nozze di Costantio Sforza e Camilla d'Aragona* (1480).[48]

The Stirling Castle Palace sculpture is, arguably, a crude and provincial reflection of the Italian and French Renaissance. Looking beyond Burgkmair's *Venus* to the antique models behind it illustrates the process of image degradation, from three-dimensional marble sculpture to two-dimensional woodcut and back to sandstone sculpture. Burgkmair's *Venus* is too classical to have been invented by the artist, and this raises the question of how 16th-century artists, particularly those working outside Italy, assembled their knowledge of the appearance and attributes of the mythological deities. On account of the drapery looped over Venus' left arm (and also the diadem, wavy hair and Cupid with his arm above his head), a possible model for the Burgkmair *Venus* (1510–14) is the *Venus Felix* which, although it is unclear where it was found, had made its way into the papal collections by 1509 and was on display in the Belvedere sculpture court by 1523.[49] As Kathleen Wren Christian comments with reference to the casting of Pope Julius II as a second Julius Caesar: 'The imagery of the *Aeneid* certainly echoes through the sculptures displayed in the statue court: the *Venus Felix*, for example, could be remembered as the mother of Aeneas and of the Julio-Claudian dynasty as a whole …'.[50]

If Burgkmair never went to Rome, however, the exact the source of his *Venus* remains open to question.

Fig 12 Perino del Vaga (1501–47, Italian), Venus directing Aeneas to Carthage, (c 1532), drawing, pen and brown ink and wash, 24 x 21.4 cm. British Museum.

There is very little published on Hans Burgkmair (1473–1531) and, although his knowledge of the achievements of the Italian Renaissance is clearly evident in his work, whether or not he ever visited Italy can only be guessed at. His native city of Augsburg was, however, a major centre of cultural exchange, particularly with Venice.[51] The perceived crudeness of the Stirling Palace sculpture partially reflects the highly plastic and expressive response of graphic artists such as Burgkmair and his more famous contemporary Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) to the overly delicate naturalism and insipid sentimentality of late Gothic German art.

## BAY 17: ABUNDANCE

If the theme of a new Golden Age is accepted for the north elevation, introduced by Saturn, what is the anticipated identification of the remaining three figures in Bays 14, 15 and 17?

A new Golden Age brings with it the rule of law and, therefore, peace and plenty. Saturn is essentially connected with agriculture and the cultivation of the earth. He married his sister, Ops (Plenty), the Roman goddess of the earth and so fertility, abundance and wealth. There were temples dedicated to her on the

Capitoline Hill and in the Forum Romanum in Rome. Of all the figures on the north elevation, the only one that can be identified with iconographic certainty is that in Bay 17, *Abundance* or *Plenty*, or possibly *Flora*.

Here we have a semi-naked female figure holding either a cornucopia or simply flowers in her left hand and gathering up her drapery in her right. (Fig 13) Stylistically, *Abundance* is the most sophisticated of all the Stirling Castle Palace figures: as a figure in motion, the sense of movement enhanced by fluttering drapery, she reflects Greek Hellenistic sculpture and its Roman imitations. She compares with two monumental sculptures thought to be of ancient Roman origin which were acquired by Alessandro Farnese, the *Flora Farnese* and the *Flora Farnese minore*. These are now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.[52] (Fig 14) A study of both these sculptures, drawn from multiple angles, made in Rome between 1532 and 1537 by the Dutch artist Maerten van Heemskerck (1498–1574), fixes the period of their excavation and illustrates their incomplete state prior to restoration (Carlo Albacini, c 1561). The Heemskerck drawing[53] was not reproduced as a print and circulated, but should it be argued that the Stirling Palace *Abundance* cannot therefore be based on the *Flora Farnese*, no alternative model can be suggested. Mid-16th-century print sources for the *Abundance/Flora* type exist but, again, their exact relationship to the *Flora Farnese* or alternative classical models is unclear (Figs 15 and 16).[54] If a connection is accepted, it demonstrates Scotland's alertness to the significant Italian archaeological finds of the 16th century. The *Flora Farnese* is thought to be a Roman imitation of a Hellenistic sculpture, an Athenian *Aphrodite*, dating from the end of the 5th century BC. In the 16th century she was given a garland which was then, in the 19th century, replaced by a bouquet. Her plaster head is likewise a restoration. The second sculpture is more static and reflects Greek works of the second half of the 5th century BC. On account of the fruit and flowers held in a fold of her cloak, the second statue was also restored as *Flora*.[55]

The tripping step, drapery held in the right hand and drawn across the calves, the raised left hand and exposed bosom link the Stirling Castle Palace *Abundance* to the *Flora Farnese*, although the former cannot compare in naturalism and sensuality.

Fig 13 Bay 17, Stirling Castle Palace: *Abundance*.

Fig 14 *Flora Farnese*, (1st century–2nd century AD, Roman, based on a Greek original), marble with restorations. Farnese Collection, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.

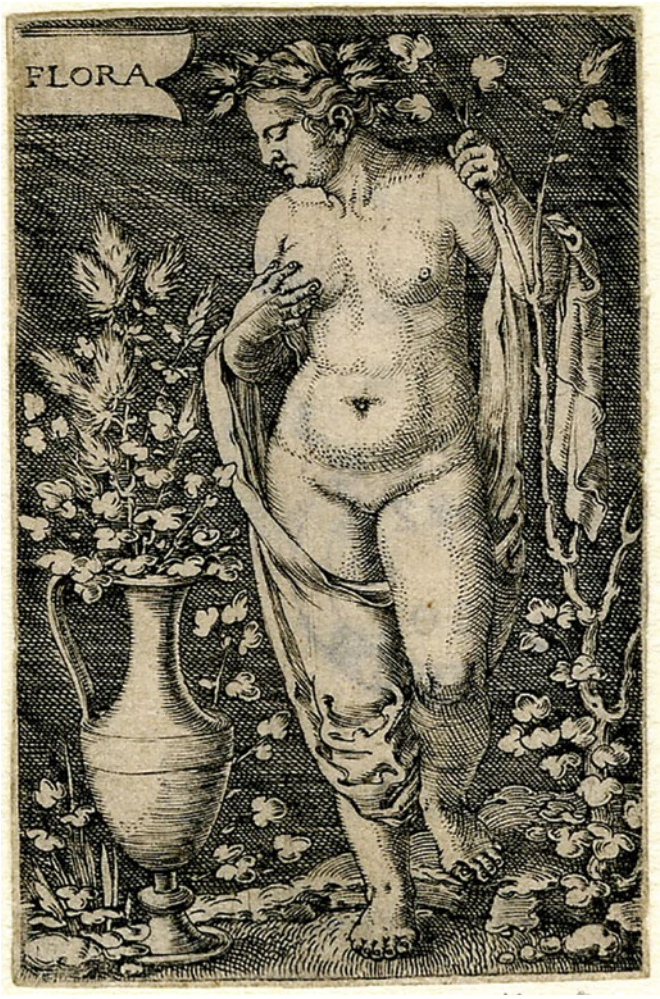



Fig 15 Barthel Beham (1504–40, German), *Flora*, (1520–40), engraving, 6.1 x 4 cm. British Museum.

Fig 16 Enea Vico (1523–67, Italian) printmaker, Ferrando Bertelli (fl. 1561-71, Venice) publisher, 'Flora', *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, (c 1561), engraving, 41.5 x 29 cm. British Museum.

Is the history of the Farnese Floras relevant to Stirling Palace? They were both excavated in Rome, probably on Farnese property, during the 1530s. What happened to them during the next ten years is unclear. Their shared title derives from their display in the inner courtyard of the Farnese Palace, Rome. Alessandro Farnese was elected Pope Paul III in 1534 and his accession marked a recovery of artistic patronage following the Sack of Rome by Charles V's troops in 1527. Among his most notable public commissions is Michelangelo's fresco of *The Last Judgement* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel. For the personal benefit of himself and his family, he expanded the Palazzo Farnese (begun by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger c 1523) to surpass his official papal residences. The embellishment of the Palazzo Farnese included the assembly of a private collection of classical sculpture, rivalling the sculpture court adjoining the Vatican Belvedere.

The site of the ancient Roman Baths of Caracalla was on Farnese property and it was here, in 1545, that, firstly, the *Farnese Bull* and then the gargantuan *Farnese Hercules* were uncovered. By 1550, the as yet unrestored Farnese Floras had joined these in the courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese.[56] Although the creation of the sculpture court at the Palazzo Farnese probably post-dates the completion of the sculptural programme at Stirling Palace, the similarity between the Stirling Palace *Abundance* and the Farnese Floras raises questions as to whether James V wished to pose as a collector of antique sculpture in emulation of his peers and, in so doing, confirm his allegiance to the Pope.

The Stirling Palace *Abundance* also introduces the question of one of the most controversially classical aspects of the sculptural programme, that classical

subjects are presented not only in antique form (*all'antica*) but also in the antique manner, upon columns as if they were pagan idols. Michael Camille has drawn attention to Donatello's monumental *Dovizia* (prosperity or wealth) in the Mercato Vecchio, Florence (c 1430), and the subsequent identification of the figure in Bay 17 as *Abundance* makes it highly relevant to the interpretation of the Stirling Castle Palace sculptures.[57] (Fig 17)

The Florentine marketplace was not only the city's commercial centre but also the site of the former Roman forum. It is thought that the ancient column carrying the *Dovizia* was placed on the site of another ancient Roman column carrying a 'genius' of the Florentine colony.[58] It has been argued that Donatello's *Dovizia* represented the Florentine civic virtues of Wealth and Charity, the latter made possible by the active generation of the former.[59] Over and above this, it may have been intended to reinforce the Florentine connection with ancient Rome and serve, in the pagan manner, as a guardian spirit guaranteeing abundance and plenty:

> Another possible meaning for the *Dovizia* is suggested by the figure's overwhelming classicism; to eyes accustomed to earlier sculptures in Florence … the *Dovizia* must have seemed to have sprung directly from the ancient pagan past. In addition, in Rome during the quattrocento there was at least one ancient Roman figure still standing on a column near the Colosseum, and the Dovizia may well have been a reference to Rome, suggesting that Florence was the 'new Rome'.[60]

The desirability of Donatello's *Dovizia* was essential to her allegorical meaning:

> Donatello's *Dovizia*, then, with her invigorating movement and seductive beauty, her message of financial prosperity and communal beneficence, seems to have been intended to help inspire confidence in the Florentine state and its economy.[61]

Fig 17 Jan van der Straet (Joannes Stradanus) (1523-1605, Italian), *Piazza de Mercato Vecchio, Florence*, (1555), fresco, Palazzo Vecchio (Palazzo della Signoria) Florence, Italy.

While in a Christian context the actual reintroduction of statues on columns representing beneficent powers had problematic associations with pagan idolatry, they appear in the humanist vision of the ideal city. Three images of the ideal city survive (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino; Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; and Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) and their uniqueness and stylistic similarity together suggest that they have a shared provenance.[62] One, *View of an Ideal City* or *The City of God*, is thought to have been executed for the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino by Luciano Laurana (c 1420–79), court architect to Duke Federico da Montefeltro (1422–82). In another, four virtues displayed on columns command the central public space and testify that the visual order and dignity of the city is the consequence of the practical application of virtue and the magnanimity of those that rule over it. Three of the four Cardinal Virtues are present, *Justice*, *Fortitude* and *Temperance*, but *Prudence* has been replaced by *Liberality* or *Abundance* bearing a cornucopia, conflating the ideas of generous patronage and general prosperity.(Fig 18) Once again, when the sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace is examined within the context of humanist thought, it reads as both daring and precocious.

Fig 18 After Giulio da Sangallo (c 1445–1516, Italian) *The Ideal City*, (c. 1480-84), oil and tempera on panel, 77.4 x 220 cm. Possibly executed for Duke Federico da Montefeltro of Urbino (1422–82). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

## BAY 14: GANYMEDE

The most likely mythological candidate for a young male bearing a cup is Ganymede. (Fig 19) Ganymede was the son of Tros, the founder of Troy who was seized by Jupiter, in the form of an eagle, and taken up to the heavens as cupbearer to the gods. During the Renaissance, in the Christian-Neoplatonic reading of the myth, Ganymede represented apotheosis and transcendence rather than homoerotic love.[63] It was the purity of his soul, rather than his youthful beauty, that caught Jupiter's attention. Ganymede's reward was the honour of serving as cupbearer to the gods, eternal youth and immortality as the constellation Aquarius. The gods of Olympus were both immortal and ageless, their eternal youth being sustained by the consumption of *nectar* and *ambrosia*. As cupbearer, Ganymede served nectar to the gods.[64] Given the presence of Saturn on the north elevation, at Stirling Castle Palace Ganymede could represent the idea that time ravishes all that it has itself created, including youth and beauty. A more positive interpretation would be that Ganymede represents the perpetual youth enjoyed by the Roman people during the first Golden Age under Saturn. Banier quotes the Greek poet Hesiod's (active c 700 BC) description of the five Ages of Man in *Works and Days* (109–26):

> These were the Subjects of old *Saturn's* Reign:
> Like Gods they liv'd, with Bosoms void of care,
> To Toil and Pain estrang'd. Cold Age ne'er shook
> Their vigorous Limbs; but in eternal Feast
> They pass'd the joyous Time

Fig 19 Bay 14, Stirling Castle Palace: *Ganymede* (or *Aeneas*).

Fig 20 Stirling Castle Palace: *Cherubim*.

Hesiod describes their transformation into 'Guardian Genii' after death:

> And when, descending to the Grave, in Dust
> They shrouded lay, their Souls, by *Jove's* high Will,
> Were Guardian Genii made; in airy Forms,
> To wander Earth, and bles the Kindred Just;
> Unseen, observing every Deed of Man,
> Of Wealth and bless th' Awarders here below.[65]

Are the cherubim at Stirling 'Guardian Genii' (Fig 20)?

Accordingly, the presence of Ganymede possibly introduces a second layer of Neoplatonic meaning to the sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace, essential to the interpretation of the east and south elevations. Ganymede does not have an obvious place within the iconography of the Golden Age but, beyond his association with eternal youth, perhaps it is his apotheosis that is important here. As he brings with him a new age of peace and prosperity, does the north elevation of Stirling Castle Palace also illustrate James V's apotheosis and the immortality of fame secured through virtue?

*Ganymede* stands between James V and the *Venus armata* and, as he is wearing a classical breastplate and greaves, *Aeneas*, as the founder of ancient Rome and ancestor of Augustus, would be a more plausible identification. (Fig 21) A cup, however, does not feature in the iconography of Aeneas, who is most often represented in the Renaissance as the epitome of *pietas* (loyalty to the gods, country and family) carrying his aged father, Anchises, and his family gods (*penates*) away from burning Troy with his son, Ascanius, running at his side.[66] The passage from human to god is arguably, however, a central theme in the *Aeneid* and Virgil's account of the apotheosis of Ganymede (*Aeneid* 5.250–7) can be read as a prefiguration of the deification of Aeneas and so Augustus (and James V).[67] While Virgil only forecasts this through discussions amongst the gods (*Aeneid* 1.259–60 and 12.794–5), Ovid describes how Venus secures permission from the gods for the deification of her son and herself anoints Aeneas' body with perfume and gives him a cup of nectar and ambrosia to drink (Metamorphoses 14:581–608).[68] Douglas likewise concludes his supplementary Book XIII of the *Eneados* with the apotheosis of Aeneas.

The scene in Virgil's *Aeneid* where Venus appears to her son dressed as a huntress and extols him not to delay in fulfilling his destiny has already been described. It is difficult, however, to find a Renaissance model for Aeneas as the wandering

Fig 21 Marcantonio (1470/82-1527/34, Italian), *Venus disguised as a huntress and Aeneas*, (1510–27), engraving, 18.1 x 11.6 cm. British Museum.

hero and founder of ancient Rome that compares to the figure in Bay 14. While the search for models for the sculptural programme at Stirling Castle Palace has inevitably focused on prints, the significance of James V's tapestry collection as a vehicle of Renaissance iconography, figure composition and knowledge of antique dress and ornament must not be overlooked. As mentioned above, it is known that by 1539 James V owned a set of tapestries related to the *Navigazione d'Enea* set designed by Perino del Vaga for Andrea I Doria of Genoa. Doria was in the process of reconstructing and decorating the Villa Doria in order to receive his imperial protector, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (from 1519) in 1533 and the tapestries were most likely intended to compliment the nautical theme of the ceiling frescoes in the Neptune salon.[69] The iconographic programme not only celebrated Doria's rise as the founder of the Genoese republic (1528) and admiral of the Hapsburg fleet but also paid tribute to Charles V, within a crusading Christian context, as a new Augustus and descendant of Aeneas, both by title and through the mythic genealogy of the Burgundian and Hapsburg houses.[70]

While the original Villa Doria set is recorded as comprising six large pieces, James V acquired a much expanded set comprising 13 pieces.[71] A tapestry depicting the meeting of Aeneas and Venus disguised as a huntress and arguably belonging to one such expanded set is now in the Palacio Real in Madrid. A drawing by Perino del Vaga presents a more dramatic treatment of the same subject but is unlikely to be a preliminary study for the cartoon.[72] (see Fig 12). In both examples, unlike the youthful figure in Bay 14, Aeneas is presented as a physically mature and bearded warrior. While the figure in Bay 14 is wearing a breastplate, the way in which the tunic beneath is caught up at the sides may be based upon Burgkmair's depiction of the also eternally youthful *Mercury* (Figs 22 and 23). In the story of Cupid and Psyche as told in *The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius (2nd century AD), it is Mercury who escorts the human Psyche to Olympus to marry Cupid and gives her a cup of nectar/ambrosia.


Fig 22 (*far left*) Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, German), 'Mercury', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, (1510–14, Augsburg), woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.

Fig 23 (left) Bay 14, Stirling Castle Palace: *Ganymede*, detail.

# EAST ELEVATION: THE ART OF RULE

## BAY 8: JUPITER

Although the upper half of this figure is missing and it is hard to determine the position of the left arm, it closely resembles Burgkmair's *Jupiter*. As none of Jupiter's attributes, the sceptre, thunderbolt, eagle and astrological signs of Sagittarius and Pisces, are present this identification raises certain questions. As the figure in Bay 8 is presented in Roman military dress, without the Burgkmair print, the automatic identification would be either a Roman emperor or James V in the guise of one. As the suggestion would be of a Roman emperor keeping company with the gods, Augustus would be the most likely candidate. Burgkmair's presentation of the male planetary gods Jupiter and Sol in Roman military dress as well as Mars, the god of war, seems to be a reversal of the ancient Roman visual conflation of Augustus with Jupiter (Figs 24–27). Both Burgkmair's *Jupiter* and *Sol* wear the radiate crown associated with Helios/Apollo, the Roman cult of Sol Invictus and divine emanation, which was adopted for the posthumous imagery of Augustus. The ancient Greeks and Romans, however, represented Zeus/Jupiter as mature, bearded and partially draped with a naked torso, the prototype being the colossal seated statue by Phidias for the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (c 435 BC). When the deification of Augustus allowed the association of worldly emperor and supreme deity, cult statues of Divus Augustus are thought to have been modelled on those of Jupiter.[73]

As with *Saturn* on the north elevation, the identification of one key figure may unlock an overarching theme. Saturn ruled over the Golden Age and Jupiter ruled over the following Silver and

*from left to right*:

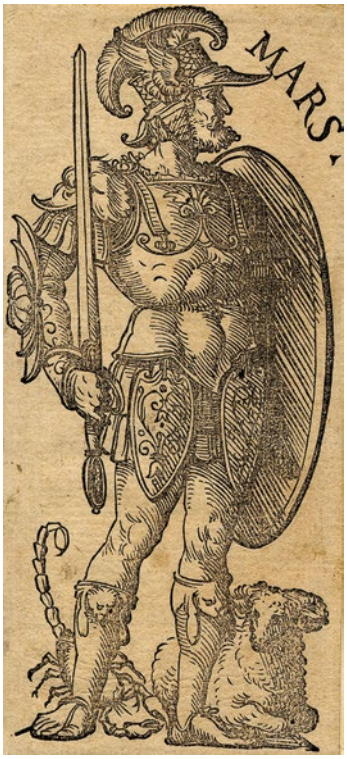
Fig 24 Bay 8, Stirling Castle Palace: *Jupiter*.

Fig 25 Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, Germany), 'Jupiter', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, (1510–14, Augsburg), woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.

Fig 26 Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, German), 'Sol', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, (1510–14, Augsburg) woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.

Fig 27 Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531, German), 'Mars', *The Seven Planetary Gods*, woodcut, (1510–14, Augsburg, Germany). woodcut, 15 x 7 cm. British Museum.





Iron Ages. As the observer encounters the east elevation before the north elevation, the chronology and progress of the ages (Hesiod, *Works and Days* and Ovid, *Metamorphoses*), from the Saturnian to the Jovian, would then be reversed, as in Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, and the reign of James V represents escape from a troubled present and the recapturing of an idealised and idyllic past.[74] When James V assumed his majority in 1528, the beginning of his personal rule was celebrated with rhetoric comparing Scotland to imperial Rome and conceiving of James as the indomitable offspring of Jupiter.[75]

Jupiter, the son of Saturn and Ops, was the supreme deity (and so an allegorical substitute for the Christian God). As the heavenly Venus is present on the north elevation and has Saturn as her thematic companion (Golden Age), is Jupiter the thematic companion of the *Venus vulgaris* on the east elevation? For Neoplatonists such as Ficino, Jupiter governed man's reason and the active application of moral virtue, *iustitia*, and taught mankind the art of ruling.[76] He governed the realm of the Cosmic Soul which was also the dwelling place of the *Venus vulgaris* or earthly Venus, his daughter by Juno and the corporeal manifestation of divine goodness or beauty.[77]

On the East Elevation, therefore, do we have the opposing forces of temperance and lust and an essay in the art of rule?

The poetic and dramatic works of James V's usher and then herald, Sir David Lindsay (c 1490–c 1555), deal with these very subjects, and most radically *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, the preliminary version of which, the *Interlude*, was performed before James V at Linlithgow Palace in 1540.[78] The *Satyre* tackles issues of social injustice and clerical corruption, as summarised by Greg Walker:

> The 1540 Interlude was a petition for reform, an appeal within the elite courtly world for James V to act and, implicitly, for the church to respond in order to forestall the worst aspects of the Reformation happening south of the border and elsewhere in Europe.[79]

Hope for reform was invested in the person of James V. The king, and by extension his kingdom, is represented by Rex Humanitas who initially cannot see Sensuality, welcome at all the courts of Christendom and especially the clerical Court of Rome, and her attendant vices for what they truly are. Seduction and fall are followed by repentance and reform under the guidance of Gude Counsall and Divyne Correctioun.[80]

Alternatively, the planet Jupiter had a hot and moist effect upon the bodily humours and so, like the earthly Venus, was associated with lust.

## BAY 11: VENUS VULGARIS/PUDICA

The *Standing Venus* also on display in Belvedere sculpture court from 1536 was cast in bronze for Francis I and may well be the model for the other Stirling Palace *Venus*.[81]

Why should there be two Venuses at Stirling Palace? Plato outlined in his *Symposium*:

> No one, I think, will deny that there are two goddesses of that name – one, the elder, sprung from no mother's womb but from the heavens themselves, we call the Uranian, the heavenly Aphrodite, while the younger, daughter of Zeus and Dione, we call Pandemus, the earthly Aphrodite. It follows, then, that Love should be known as earthly or heavenly according to the goddess in whose company his work is done … (Plato, *Symposium*, 180 d–e).[82]

So the *Venus armata* on the north elevation of Stirling Palace may be the *Venus Coelestis* or heavenly Venus that appears to Aeneas in *The Aeneid*, Book I, in the guise of Diana the Huntress, whereas the *Venus pudica* (modest Venus) on the east elevation is the *Venus vulgaris*, her earthly counterpart.[83] The *Venus Coelestis* is the daughter of Coelus but, as she has no mother, is free of the suggestion of fertility and represents contemplative love of the divine and immaterial beauty. The *Venus vulgaris* is the divine given bodily form and beauty made visible. For Ficino, the love generated by the *Venus vulgaris* was a sensory response to beauty, was carnal, active and procreative but, being governed by reason, still chaste. Ficino's follower, Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) categorised both Venuses as heavenly and gave the name *vulgaris* to a third Venus, the goddess of sensuality uncontrolled by reason, and so animal lust.[84]

The Venus in Bay 11 is of the *Venus pudica* or 'modest' Venus type, both arms shielding her body, which perhaps places her above a goddess of lust. (Fig 28) It must be acknowledged that the lower left arm is missing but appears to be bent at the elbow. As with *Abundance* on the North Elevation, the *Venus pudica* raises the question of antique models known in the Renaissance and how they were adapted to contemporary use. As Freedman comments:

Fig 28 (*left*) Bay 11, Stirling Castle Palace: *Venus pudica*.

Fig 29 (*below*) Amico Aspertini (1474–1552, Italian), *Venus Pudica*, London Sketchbook, vellum, H 24.8 x W 18.4 (each page) cm. British Museum.

> The way the Olympians have been depicted in ancient sculptures, paintings, and coins – garments, hairstyles, postures and gestures, objects and creatures that serve as attributes – was learned during the Cinquecento in an ongoing process of exploring, depicting, and sculpting each of the gods and goddesses anew. Seen in this light, it is amazing that these sixteenth-century creations fully reflect the results of grasping the visual language of the ancient representations of the Olympian deities.[85]

The *Venus pudica* is a development the ancient Greek *Cnidian Venus* by Praxitiles, (c 350 BC) from the sanctuary on the island of Cnidos, which captured the goddess about to step into a ritual bath, letting her final garment fall from her left hand and shielding her lower body with her right. This is known only from ancient Greek and Roman (Pliny) descriptions and later copies. The more provocative versions with the right arm raised, and at one and the same time concealing and revealing the breasts, are known as the Capitoline type (eyes cast down, found 1670–6) and the Medici type (gazing over the left shoulder, acquired in Rome before 1587).[86] These reappeared in Christian disguise, transformed into a self-conscious woman anxiously shielding her body with her arms, firstly as *Prudence/Eve* supporting Giovanni Pisano's pulpit in Pisa Cathedral (1302), and secondly as *Eve* in Masaccio's *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* in the Brancacci Chapel, Florence (1422–6).[87] There was a direct connection between Sandro Botticelli's (1445–1510, Italian) patron Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici (1463–1503) and Ficino, and the associated paintings, the *Primavera* (c 1482) and *Birth of Venus* (c 1485), have been interpreted with reference to Ficino's writings and letters addressed to Lorenzo. In the *Birth of Venus*, Venus appears as herself for the first time in Renaissance art. Here the *Venus pudica* type is used to portray the heavenly Venus emerging from the waves, born from the foam created when Saturn castrated his father Coelus and the severed genitals fell into the sea. As yet, however, art historians cannot fully explain the closeness of the antique *Venus pudica* to Pisano, Massaccio and Botticelli's *Venuses*.[88]

A version of the *Cnidian Venus* (1st century BC to 2nd century AD) acquired by Clement VII (pope from 1523 to 1534) was on display in the Belvedere sculpture court from 1536, the *Venus ex Balneo*, and copied in bronze, using casts made by Francesco Primaticcio (1504/5–70), for Francis I in 1541–3.[89] An antique *Venus pudica* of the Capitoline type was well known in early 16th-century Rome. Amico Aspertini's sketchbook known as 'London I' (1532–5) in the British Museum includes studies of the antique statues in the collection of the della Valle family, including a *Venus pudica* (the arms are arranged oppositely to the *Venus pudica* in Bay 11). (Fig 29) In the early 16th century this was a high-profile collection displayed in the internal courtyard of the refurbished Palazzo di Mezzo on the Via Papalis in Rome. The statues were placed in purpose-built niches in the *piano nobile* above a frieze composed of antique relief sculpture and, in 1513, some were temporarily removed to decorate a triumphal arch constructed in the street outside in honour of Pope Leo X's *possesso*.[90] As the *Venus pudica* in Bay 11 has the left rather than right arm raised, it is closest to the Venus Santacroce (Roman copy of a Praxitelean 4th-century type). This was acquired by Prospero Santacroce in the late 14th century and displayed in the courtyard of the Palazzo Santacroce built by his son Antonio c 1500. Several contemporary drawings of this survive: the Umbrian Sketchbook (c 1500) and the Holkham Hall Album (before 1502).[91]

A conflation of the *Venus vulgaris* and Eve, banished from the Garden of Eden, would not be implausible in the context of the Jovian versus the Saturnian age: Jupiter introduced the seasons and so the need for shelter, the earth ceased to be spontaneously bountiful and needed cultivating, and the rule of law brought the need for punishment.[92] Pisano's *Prudence/Eve* and Massacio's *Eve* cast their gaze backwards and across the arm, shielding their upper body (shame rather than modesty), towards the lost Garden of Eden. This is very different, however, to the della Valle and Santacroce Venuses who cast their eyes down demurely and the *Venus pudica* in Bay 11 who looks upwards and to the right, away from the arm shielding her upper body and similar to the Venus de' Medici.

## BAY 9: THE FOOL

While this figure is intact, it is badly weathered. The most singular feature, the dog sitting between the figure's feet, has suggested Orpheus as a possible identity, but we are looking at a docile pet rather than the three-headed hound Cerberus. With regard to dress, we are looking at neither classical costume nor contemporary court costume. Despite weathering, it is clear that the face is framed by a hood with a decorative toothed edge which appears to be one with a short cape covering the shoulders. Beneath this, the figure wears a jacket/doublet with very full sleeves and breeches also with a decorative edge. The Stirling Heads include a highly animated figure of a court fool in conventional costume featuring animal elements: a hood (or comic crown) with two ass's ears and a coxcomb extending down over the shoulders into points each terminating in a bell; a jacket with full sleeves finishing with a bracelet of bells at the wrist and a skirt also with points terminating in bells; and boots with a ring of bells around the top of each one. The sound of the bells distracted the fool's attention and mentally distanced him from his immediate surroundings.[93] The presence of the court fool among the external sculptures would reinforce the iconographic correspondence between the two schemes. (Figs 30–32) The protuberances on top and to each side of the stone figure's head may be the remains a coxcomb, continued in the toothed edging of the hood, and ass's ears. Towards the back where

Fig 30 (*top left*) Bay 9, Stirling Castle Palace; *Fool*.

Fig 31 (*top right*) Bay 9, Stirling Castle Palace; *Fool*, detail.

Fig 32 (*left*) Stirling Head No. 36: *Fool*.

the weathering is less severe, the round fringing of the cape can be read as a row of bells. The sleeves seem to have terminated in a bracelet of bells. While the *Fool* among the Stirling Heads is laughing, the face of the stone figure appears to be pulled into a grimace.

As Jupiter governed man's reason and its application within the context of rule, is the fool the inversion or opposite of Jupiter, and does the east elevation – with the *Fool* at the centre – present a play of rule and misrule, cosmic order and disorder, the immortal and the mortal, temperance and self-indulgence? Does the presence of the fool mitigate the agency of the *Venus vulgaris*: does he represent and at the same time reprimand the king who is too susceptible to physical temptation and distraction? As the *Fool* is presented in heroic *contrapposto*, should he be read as a 'mock king' or Lord of Misrule, familiar from courtly festivities? Does the austere, long-bearded James V occupying the pivotal position between the east and north elevations represent the king turning his back upon the follies of his youth and facing his responsibilities with maturity and wisdom? On either side of the *Fool*, the accompanying grotesques are monkeys, both with chains around their necks and one with wings. (Figs 33 and 34) The monkey was a visual metaphor for sin and foolishness, and a fettered monkey for enslavement by sensuality and vice. The small dog with its nose in the air may be the faithful guardian of the fool's moral welfare, sniffing out the Devil.[94] Underneath the *Fool*, the corbel depicts a woman screaming in pain as a lizard bites her left breast, possibly a visual metaphor for lust, where the punishment for the sin is inflicted upon the offending part of the body. (Fig 35) The same image, however, appears beneath the *Venus armata*.[95]

Erasmus has already been introduced as an intellectual influence upon the Scottish court, and his ironic and satirical *In Praise of Folly* (written for Sir Thomas More in 1511 and published 1515) must be considered within any discussion of representations of fools at the Scottish court. According to Erasmus, fools (either natural or artificial) were:

Fig 33 (*above left*) Bay 9, Stone 9.05, Stirling Castle Palace: Monkey with a chain.

Fig 34 (*below left*) Bay 9, Stone 9.11, Stirling Castle Palace: Winged monkey with a chain.

Fig 35 (*below*) Bay 9, Stone 9.17, Stirling Castle Palace: Woman with a lizard or salamander biting her breast.

> the favourite of kings … They are the only ones who speak frankly and tell the truth … They can speak the truth and even open insults and be heard with positive pleasure; indeed the words which would cost a wise man his life are surprisingly enjoyable when uttered by a clown.[96]

As cast by Erasmus, Folly presides over the irresponsible self-indulgence of youth and, musing that children are conceived in moments of foolishness, offers an answer to the strangely bearded and furrow-browed James V:

> But give me a man who is a stoic … even if he keeps his beard as a mark of wisdom, though he shares it with the goat, will have to swallow his pride, smooth out his frown, shake of his rigid principles, and be fond and foolish for a while. In fact, if the philosopher ever wants to be a father it's me he has to call on …[97]

Lindsay's *Satyre* concludes that anyone who does not listen to Gude Counsall, marked by his 'boustous beard' (line 1020), is a fool.[98]

## BAY 7: SAINT MICHAEL

It is generally accepted that the figure at the angle of the east and south elevations is Saint Michael the archangel. (Fig 36) As this also stands on a square pilaster rather than round column or baluster, it reads as a counterpart to James V. The figure is muscular, adopts a heroic *contrapposto* pose and wears *all'antica* armour. The right arm holds what should be a spear (the lower section is either missing or was never there) and the left a shield in the form of a mask (rather than a sword). As the figure is trampling a winged dragon with its left foot, the right arm should be raised in a thrusting action, but the static closeness of the arm and spear to the body may be explained by the carver needing to shape the entire figure from a single block of stone. Is this also the explanation for the absence of wings? It is unlikely that the figure is Saint George, the patron saint of England, who conventionally, within the heraldic context of the Order of the Garter, is represented in contemporary armour, on horseback and subduing the Devil with a lance (rather than sword and spear).

At Stirling, the treatment of Saint Michael belongs to the Renaissance rather than the Middle Ages. The most seminal image of the archangel dating from the first half of the 16th century is the painting by Raphael (of Urbino) commissioned as a gift for Francis I by Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino (1492–1519), father of Catherine de' Medici, wife of Henry II of France.[99]

Fig 36 Bay 7. Stirling Castle Palace: *Saint Michael*.

In 1469, Louis XI founded the French order of chivalry in the name of Saint Michael and Francis I bestowed the order on James V in May 1536.[100] It may be that an image of the archangel based on the Raphael painting made its way to Scotland then, or that the badge of the Order of Saint Michael was itself the model for the sculpture. Raphael's vision of the archangel is highly dynamic (composed of opposing vertical and diagonal lines) and shows him descending upon the Devil. The images deriving from Raphael (in print form), however, show the archangel in a more static pose closer to the Stirling figure. (Fig 37)

The Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle was dedicated to Saint Michael.[101] On account of his agency between God and men, there is a tradition of shrines to the archangel being constructed on raised sites (most importantly Monte Gargano, Apulia, Italy).[102] Going back to the book of Daniel (Daniel 10:21), Saint Michael 'had represented the ultimate nationalistic warrior-angel', and so his presence as a guardian and watchman would be highly appropriate for one of Scotland's strongest fortresses.[103] He commands

Fig 37 Marcantonio (1470/82-1527/34, Italian), 'Saint Michael', *Piccoli Santi* (Small Saints), (1500-27), engraving, 8.3 x 4.9 cm. British Museum.

the entrances to the castle. As a warrior-angel and conveyor of heroic souls, Saint Michael appears in chivalric romances such as the *La Chanson de Roland* (French, anonymous, 1040–1115) and *Orlando Furioso* (Italian, 1515–32) by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533). Both *La Chanson de Roland* and *Orlando Furioso* are concerned with Christian crusade, supported by Saint Michael, against the infidel.[104] At Stirling, Saint Michael, representing James V himself, may have been resisting the invasion of Henry VIII's religious reforms. Lined up on Saint Michael's right, along the south elevation, is a legion of monstrous and hostile creatures, in both human and animal form, led by the Devil. Are they the agents or objects of crusade? While the north and east elevations are internal to the castle, the south elevation faces out across the carse of Stirling, and this way England lies.

The presence of a fool at the centre of the east elevation suggests a morality play and a battle between good and evil, the ultimate symbol of which was Saint Michael defeating the Devil. In the *Satyre*, the battle is for the soul of Rex Humanitas and, being described as a winged figure, Divyne Correctioun may have been realised theatrically as Saint Michael. There is a reference in the *Satyre* to Divyne Correctioun carrying a 'wand' or sceptre of judicial authority, and this may solve the issue of the spear discussed above (line l.711). In his reformed state as the 'new cumde King' (line l.2433), Rex Humanitas wields the 'divinely bestowed power of correction', and so he also becomes the counterpart of Saint Michael.

## BAY 10: FERGUS MAC FERCHAIR (3RD CENTURY BC) OR FERGUS MÓR (4TH CENTURY AD)

While the head is missing, the curiously archaic style of dress possibly points to this male figure's identity. Below the knee he wears soft boots terminating in a curling toe. Above the knees he wears breeches or hose (which appear to be composed of slashed bands like Renaissance military dress), and over these a cloak wrapped around the body (like a plaid) and clasped in the left hand. There is the ghost of a chain around his neck. (Fig 38) An explanation

Fig 38 Bay 10, Stirling Castle Palace: *Fergus mac Ferchair or Fergus Mór.*

for the archaic footwear and cloak is that the figure represents, within a 16th-century iconography, an ancestor and progenitor from northern Europe, and a comparative image would be *Tuiscon aller Deutschen Vater/Tusicon, Tusicon Father of All Germans*, by Peter Flötner (c 1543). According to Tacitus (*Germania* 2) Tuiscon was the mythological, earth-born son of the Germanic god Tuis and the ancestral god of the Teutons. This image appeared in Burckard Waldis, *Ursprung und Herkummen der Zwölff ersten alten König* … (Nuremberg: Hans Guldenmund, 1543) and was then published as a series of broadside prints. (Fig 39)

In a Scottish context, the most likely candidate would be either Fergus mac Ferchair (3rd century BC) or Fergus Mór (4th century AD), both candidates for the first king of Scots and founding figure in the Scottish origin myth. As the leaders of the Scots belonged to a long line of Irish kings, 'the lustre of ancient ancestry … was attained by claiming descent from key figures in Irish pseudo history'.[105] The presence of either Fergus would reflect and support the genealogical and dynastic interpretation of the Stirling Heads. It would also demonstrate that the Stewart dynasty was enlisting them to underpin its claim to the English throne via the markedly weaker Tudor dynasty from the very beginning. James VI/I later claimed to be the 'happie Monarch sprung of Ferguse race', not only from Fergus Mór but, speaking to his first English parliament on 19 March 1604, beyond from Fergus mac Ferchair, 'to which I am in descent, three hundred years before Christ'.[106] Charles II visually affirmed the Scottish origin myth by means of an ancestral portrait gallery at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, executed in its entirety by Jacob de Wet II. For Lindsay, however, James V's ancestors were necessarily all models of virtue and he cautioned the young king to learn from history:

> Sen first kyng Fergus bure ane Dyadame,
> Thou art the last king, of fyve score and fyve.
> And all ar dede and none bot thou on lyve.
>
> Of quhose number, fyftie and five bene slane,
> And moist parte in thare awin misgovernance.
> Quharefor, I beseik my soverane,
> Consydder of thare lyvis the circumstance.
> And, quhen thou knawis the cause of thare mischance,
> Of vertew than exault thy salis on hie,
> Traistyng to chaip that faitalee destanie.
> (Lindsay, *The Testament of the Papyngo*, 322–4) [107]

According to the chronicles, Fergus mac Ferchair first led the Scots out of Ireland to conquer Alba or Albion and, having been expelled and scattered, they returned 600 years later led by Fergus Mór. As Dauvit Broun in his discussion of John of Fordun's (d 1384) *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* (c 1360) explains:

> an expulsion of the Scots from Scotland was invented in order to present Fergus Mór as a founding father leading the Scots back to Scotland in AD 403: this was necessary because his usual role as 'first king of Scots in Scotland' was given in the Chronica to Fergus mac Ferchair in 330 BC.[108]

Fordun's work on the early history of Scotland was continued by Walter Bower's (1385–1449) *Scotichronicon* (begun 1440) and Hector Boece's (1465–1536) *Historia Gentis Scotorum* (1527, translated from Latin into Scots at the request of James V by John Bellenden in 1536). Book 1 of the *Historia* introduces Fergus mac Ferchair as a moral exemplar – chivalric hero and ideal ruler, bringer of the rule of law, peace and prosperity. Book 2 presents Fergus Mór as a chivalric hero of similar stature, but also as a defender of the Christian faith.[109] Accordingly, whether the figure in Bay 10 is Fergus mac Ferchair or Fergus Mór, they stand as an example of the ideal ruler and what Rex Humanitas should be.


Fig 39 Peter Flötner (c 1485/90–1540, German) printmaker, Hans Guldenmundt (fl. 1526–60, German) publisher, 'Tuiscon, the Father of all Germans', *Ancestors and Early Kings of the Germans*, series of twelve broadsides (c 1543, Nuremberg), woodcut, hand coloured, 45.7 x 26 cm. British Museum.

# SOUTH ELEVATION: DEMONS AND MONSTERS, DEFENDERS OR ASSAILANTS?

There are four surviving figures, and possibly a missing one at the east end on an empty column. Charles McKean has made a case for this being the original location of *Saint Michael*.[110] If there were five figures, the *Devil* would take centre stage. Consistent to all the figures (except the Devil), including those along the battlements, is that they are armed either with weapons or missiles (stone balls). Two of the figures on the battlements are wearing contemporary dress and wield a sword and crossbow, presumably signalling that the castle is well defended. One of these figures is in courtly dress, and McKean dearly wanted this to be identified as Sir Hamilton of Finnart, the 'architect' of the palace.[111]

All the main figures are naked. The *Devil* (Bay 4) is typically monstrous and sexually ambivalent with female breasts, male genitalia (possibly), an additional grimacing face emerging from its belly (signifying unchaste openness of the body) and a reptilian tail.[112] (Fig 40) Among the cherubs which make up the cornice running around all three elevations, but not directly above the *Devil*, is an angel without wings falling from Heaven with his hair streaming out behind. (Fig 41) While the nakedness of the three remaining figures (two males and one female) suggests bestial and sub-human otherness, they are not a monstrous synthesis of man and beast, although the two male

Fig 40 Bay 4, Stirling Castle Palace: *Devil*.

Fig 41 Bay 4, Stirling Castle Palace: *Devil*, detail.

Fig 42 (above) Stone 23:28, Stirling Castle Palace: *Fallen Angel*.

Fig 43 (below left) Bay 3, Stirling Castle Palace: *Dwarfish man throwing a missile.*

Fig 44 (below right) Bay 5, Stirling Castle Palace: *Dwarfish man throwing a missile.*

figures are winged. (Figs 42 and 43) The primitive missiles held aloft by two of them (the right arm of the third is missing) support the sub-human interpretation. The bodies of the two male figures do not conform to the classical norm: they are short and full-bellied, and their faces are heavy and distorted. They do, however, bring to mind portraits of the dwarfs collected and showcased at 16th-century courts as sub-human and lecherous transgressions of nature.[113] Although ugly (and therefore sinful), there is a warm and humorous cast to their faces. The corbels beneath the figures are more overt incarnations of evil, consisting of: a man with thick lips and a wide nose typical of a black African, under the female figure who has similar features; a dog in a hat (possibly with wings); a crouching man with wings and clenched fists (under the *Devil*); and a winged beast with cloven feet (the head is missing). (Figs 45–8).

Fig 45 (*top left*) Bay 2, Stirling Castle Palace: *Woman with Ethiopian features throwing a missile.*

Fig 46 (above) Bay 2, Stone 2.17, Stirling Castle Palace: *Ethiopian man*.

Fig 47 (*top right*) Bay 3, Stone 3.17, Stirling Castle Palace: *Dog in a hat*.

Fig 48 (*above right*) Bay 4, Stone 4.17, Stirling Castle Palace: Man with wings.

Fig 49 (*right*) Gargoyle, Stirling Castle Palace: *Tusked boar.*

The gargoyles appear to be tusked boars, although the folded ears give them a canine cast. (Fig 49)

The shared associations between dogs and boars, and devils and demons, were ferocity, lack of cleanliness and unrestrained sexual behaviour. Generally, with human beings, dark skin was considered ugly and the outward manifestation of sin and vice. In the Middle Ages, the tusked boar and the monstrous Ethiopian head (black with curly hair and thick lips) were used heraldically to signal the Islamic infidel.[114] Shakespeare's *Othello* plays upon the deep-seated associations of black skin with the bestial and evil.[115] Within the context of the Scottish court, the poet William Dunbar (b 1459/60) wrote satirically of 'My ladye with the mekle lippis', a female Moor with an ape-like mouth who, when her generous body was finely dressed, shone as bright as a barrel of tar. She was essentially associated with darkness as 'Quhen schou was born the son tholit clippis' – she was either born during an eclipse or the sun hid when she was born.[116] In the *Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare pejoratively associates Jews with dogs (Shylock) and the dog in hat may represent a Jew: 'Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause, / But since I am a dog, beware my fangs' (*Merchant of Venice*, III. iii. 6–7).[117]

Fundamental questions are: what is the relationship of the *Devil* (bad angel) to *Saint Michael* (good angel) immediately around the corner; are the supporting cast defenders or assailants; is the south elevation independent of or integral to the narrative presented by the east and north elevations? Henry VIII's temporary palace at the Field of the Cloth of Gold had, surprisingly, a figure of Saint Michael (rather than Saint George) over the entrance, supported by figures throwing missiles down from the battlements. (Fig 50) Here at Stirling, the three figures turn towards the *Devil* and could be aiming their missiles at him. It is often remarked that, in comparison to the east and north elevations, the south elevation is outward-looking and faces an approaching enemy. Accordingly, the *Devil* may have served an apotropaic function, and the weaponry and missiles were a gesture of defiance. The *Devil* and *Saint Michael* would then both serve as a doorkeeper and defender, the monsters and demons within averting and taming monsters and demons without.

A humanist interpretation of the south elevation as the Realm of Nature ungoverned by reason and the imperfect physical manifestation of the divine has already been suggested. Lindsay's writings, however, constantly present themselves as relevant to the interpretation of the sculptural programme, and the origins of the south elevation may be literary. Moreover, the elevations present themselves as the equivalent of a large-scale outdoor theatrical performance where the action moved between elevated scaffolds. Standard to the *mystères* performed in 15th- and 16th-century France was a scaffold for Hell or Enfer

> to which we can attribute several levels, barbicans aloft, moving doors and/or jaws, an underground, a superstructure with Lucifer chained to it, a cauldron, much fire and smoke … visible places for torments, a well into which Sathan [sic] could be cast, and a doorkeeper called Cerberus.[118]

Such a scaffold with a devil similar to the one at Stirling can be seen to the right of Jean Fouquet's 'The Martyrdon of Saint Apollonia' in *Heures d'Etienne Chevalier* (c 1445, as identified by Happé).(Fig 51) In medieval morality plays, the castle under siege is an allegory of the battle for the human soul and the defence of virtue. *The Satyre of the Three Estaitis* is often related to the earlier *The Castle of Perseverance* (1380–1425, possibly never performed) where:

> cosmic enmity between Satan and the soul is the play's central device, but the metaphor is not ingestion [mouth of Hell] but warfare … the World, the Flesh, and the Devil besiege a castle that signifies perseverance in salvation on the part of Humanum Genus, who gains access to the castle in the first place through the sacrament of baptism.[119]

So the sub-human characters on the south elevation would become aggressors, not defenders. Their nakedness might reference the Flesh ungoverned by reason. As Stirling Castle was a site of chivalry and tournament, such an allegorical device would have been familiar and appropriate. The south and east elevations would then join as a narrative of the battle of good and evil, virtue and vice, with the soul of the king or Rex Humanitas as the prize.

Alternatively, and continuing with the idea of siege, *The Dreme of Schir Dauid Lyndesay of the Mount* (c 1526/8, lines 11.43–5) is the first recorded mention of the Scottish folk tale the *Gyre Carling*, a giant/mother witch who feeds on the flesh of Christians. The *Dreme* recalls the heroic and traditional tales with which Lindsay entertained the young James V:

> At the time Lyndsay first told the Gyre Carling to the royal child, the tale would have drawn for James a memorable verbal landscape of his kingdom's wondrous origins, placing in perspective his harsh present experience of destructive factionalism and captivity. When Lyndsay recalled the tale in 1528, the changes were obvious: the

Fig 50 (*above*) British School, *The Field of Cloth of Gold*, (c 1545), oil on canvas, 168.9 x 347.3 cm. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.

Fig 51 (*left*) Jean Fouquet (c 1420–80, French), 'Martyrdom of St. Apollonia', *Heures d'Etienne Chevalier*, (c 1445), vellum. Ms Fr 71 fol.39, Musée Condé, Chantilly. I, Sailko, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

potential for the realm's restoration was now in the hands of the newly-empowered king, whose sieges were real. As with the Red Etin tale, we can see why Lyndsay might have reminded James V of this tale, too, and linked both, as he does, to his own following dream vision, in which much useful information on kingship in general, and on the good government of Scotland in particular, is set out for the young Scots ruler.[120]

In the story, the King of Faery and his elves lay siege to Gyre Carling's stronghold within the territory overlooked by Stirling Castle using a local canine or bestial force from Dunbar and Perthshire, a *tyk* being a mongrel or cur, or a low, worthless and vicious person:

> In Tyberius tyme, the trew imperatour,
> Quhen Tynto hills fra skraipiug of toun-henis was keipit,
> Thair dwelt are grit Gyre Carling in awld Betokis bour,
> That levit upoun Christiane menis flesche, and rewheids unleipit;
> Thair wynit ane hir by, on the west syde, callit Blasour,
> For luve of hir lanchane lippis, he walit and he weipit;
> He gadderit are menzie of modwartis to warp doun the tour:
> The Carling with are yren club, quhen yat Blasour sleipit,
> Behind the heil scho hat him sic ane blaw,
> Quhil Blasour bled ane quart
> Off milk pottage inwart,
> The Carling luche, and lut fart
> North Berwik Law.
>
> The king of fary than come, with elfis many ane,
> And sett are sege, and are salt, with grit pensallis of pryd;
> And all the doggis fra Dunbar wes thair to Dumblane,
> With all the tykis of Tervey, come to thame that tyd;
> Thay quelle doune with thair gonnes mony grit stane,
> The Carling schup hir on ane sow, and is her gane,
> Grunting our the Greik sie, and durst na langer byd,
> For bruklyng of bargane, and breikhig of browis:
> The Carling now for dispyte
> Is maieit with Mahomyte,
> And will the doggis interdyte,
> For scho is queue of Jowis.[121]

Janet Hadley Williams explains:

> the area covered by the Gyre Carling is logical and coherent. The 'defensable bestis' of the poem's king of faery are recruited from an area between Dunbar and Dunblane. These towns are likely alliterative companions, but also define a stretch of country that would be looked-to naturally to provide extra troops to resolve a siege to the south. They in turn are sensibly supplemented by 'all the tykis of tervey' (1.17), a more northerly-and more wild and bellicose town in Perthshire.[122]

The references to non-Christian otherness mount up: the Gyre Carling flees on the back of a sow eastwards beyond the Mediterranean sea, marries Mohammed and, as Queen of the Jews, converses with dogs. If the *Devil*, or the *Ethiopian Woman* in Bay 2, on the south elevation are read as the Gyre Carling and the male figures throwing missiles as elves, many of the character components of tale are in place.

# CONCLUSION

Conformation of the line of interpretation offered in this report is offered by future rather than preceding events, a festival for which the sculptural programme may itself have been a model, presenting the king as the agent of harmony and order within his realm, 'as both hero and reconciler of a divided kingdom' and the triumph of the Stewart monarchy.[123] The baptism of James VI in the Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle on 17 December 1566 was marked by a three-day programme (17–19 December) of banquets, masques and spectacles attended by ambassadors from France, Savoy and England, and culminating in a 'triumph of the fireworks'.[124] Lynch argues that it was 'a triumphant Renaissance festival, the first which Scotland and indeed Great Britain had ever seen', but Stirling Castle Palace already stood as an allegorical pageant, mystery play and magical tournament frozen in stone.[125] Mary Queen of Scots recreated a French Renaissance festival in Scotland, but her father had also spent time at the French court and celebrated his wedding to a Valois princess in Paris. While Mary's knowledge of festivals staged in France following her departure for Scotland was presumably acquired through her Guise relations, Stirling Castle Palace was built for her mother Marie de Guise and was where she spent her early years. The Valois rhetoric of a return to a Golden Age may be traced back to Italy through Catherine de' Medici and its employment at Stirling may not necessarily be a reflection of French precedent only.

Lynch points to the festivities staged at Bayonne in June 1565 when Charles IX and his mother Catherine de' Medici received emissaries of Philip II as the primary model for the Stirling festival.[126] It was the culmination of a series of festivals, intended as a display of recovery following the French wars of religion that had accompanied a royal progress through France during 1564–5. On 21 June, a triumph was staged in the ballroom at Bayonne in which the Duke of Guise had a leading role:

> An enchanted castle, held by the duke of Nemours representing the temporary triumph of Bellona over Peace, and additionally guarded by demons, was assaulted by a series of six captains, with six men at-arms apiece. Each assault team was led by a great noble, who included the dukes of Guise, Nevers, and Orleans, and was dressed in a different colour. Each in its turn failed, although the king's younger brother (later Henry III) made more headway than most, even defeating a giant who guarded the drawbridge. Victory went, of course, to Charles IX himself, who alone could fulfil the prophecy of Merlin and restore Peace and true Christianity to the realm in a new golden age. The theme of an enchanted castle, which had also been played out at Fontainebleau in February 1564, had a longer history, for a fortress had been used since the fourteenth century as a symbol of the French kingdom, but it was now being used for more explicitly political purposes. The king was the only possible agency to restore harmony and stability to the state.[127]

This had been preceded, on 19 June, by the Tournament of Diverse Nations:

> Again, different groups of six men-at-arms had been headed by great nobles: their costumes were elaborate and fantastic, representing French, Romans, Greeks, Spaniards, and infidel Moors, whereas the King's troop were dressed as Trojans, reflecting the legendary origins of the French monarchy. The troop led by the young duke of Guise was dressed a 'L'Escoçoise sauvage', reflecting his family's connections with Scotland.[128]

John Chisholm, comptroller of the royal artillery, engineered the mock siege and firework display at Stirling, and has left an informative account of the expenses incurred.[129] An enchanted castle, to be encircled by rings of fire, was constructed out of planks of wood on the site of the modern esplanade as the object of a mock siege. This would have been directly overlooked by the south elevation of Stirling Castle Palace which, if it was illuminated, would have served as both silent supporting cast and monumental backdrop, not unlike an ancient Roman theatre. Among the combatants were Highland wildmen clothed head to foot in goat skins, Moors with curly-haired wigs made from lambs' skins and devils. The Highland wildmen threw fireworks, small balls of fire reminiscent of the missiles thrown by statues on the south elevation.[130] Lynch's conclusion is as appropriate to Scotland c 1538–42 as in 1566:

> It is not clear whether the castle was taken or not at Stirling. Yet, as the central message was

undoubtedly the image of the power of the Stewart monarchy, it is likely that here was another variant of the Bayonne themes: the various assailants, all threatening war and chaos, were repulsed and the royal castle remained intact.[131]

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| HMSO | Her Majesty's Stationery Office |
| RCAHMS | Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland |
| *TA* | *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland/Accounts of the Treasurer of Scotland* |

# ENDNOTES

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