Cristina Gonzalez-Longo

Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675

Abstract

The small sepulchral monument dated 1675 to Alexander Bethune of Long Hermiston (d.1672), writer to the signet, by Robert Mylne of Balfargie, was the first to display an elaborated mixture of pagan and Christian symbolism and iconography within a well-designed architecture of classical language. Commissioned by the widow, Marjory Kennedy, it clearly departs from the strapwork decoration displayed in the older tombs flanking it on the east wall of Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh. It not only created the precedent for subsequent, larger monuments in Greyfriars but it also influenced the design of the main entrance to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the most prestigious architectural project during the 1670s in Scotland. Bethune's monument was subsequently reused as burial by the Spens family during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the inscriptions modified in accordance. This paper analyses the monument in its context, discussing its architecture and influence.

The tomb and its context: Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh in late seventeenth century

Reformed Scots' attitude towards death is particular; despite the repression of the majority of the burial rites, not all Catholic practices were to be dismissed. The deceased were considered less important and no longer to be in a state of transition as before the Reformation. Taking also into account the expected resurrection, burials became rites of temporary separation.[1]

W. Pitcairn Anderson noted that the mural monuments at Greyfriars Kirkyard are perhaps the best examples of Scottish sepulchral architecture during the hundred years following the Reformation,[2] the majority belonging to

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[1] Raeburn, Gordon D, *The Long Reformation of the Dead in Scotland* (doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 2013).
[2] W. Pitcairn Anderson, *Silences That Speak: Records of Edinburgh's Ancient Churches and Burial Grounds; with Biographical Sketches of the Notables who rest there*, (Edinburgh: Alexander Brenton, 1931

old landed Scottish families and important Edinburgh citizens.[3] As we will see below, at the end of the seventeenth century the design of the mural monuments changed but they still are some of the finest in Scotland. The Reformation promoted equality in the sight of God, irrespective of rank; however, these monuments are very personal and show the status of the people buried there.

The mural monument to Alexander Bethune (or Beatton), Writer to the Signet (*Signeto Regio Scribae*) and owner of Long Hermiston and Currie, to the south of Edinburgh, is situated on the east wall of Greyfriars Kirkyard, in Edinburgh. It was formerly part of the grounds of the monastery of the Greyfriars, founded around 1436 and demolished during the Reformation in 1560, which included the prohibition to make burials inside the churches. In 1562 Mary Queen of Scots, at the request of the citizens, granted the gardens to the Town as a burial ground and it was immediately used by a number of Scotland's nobility and prominent families. It was the main graveyard for the city in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[4]

The Town Council were the custodians of Greyfriars Kirkyard and had stringent controls concerning burial. The erection of monuments was subject to the Council's permission and a substantial fee; from 1616 they were also subject to the control over the design by the Dean of Guild, regulating construction within the city boundaries.[5] Until the1620's, the monuments and gravestones were only erected along the perimeter walls and the enclosed land remained grass and trees. This overall configuration is still visible in the James Gordon of Rothiemay plan of 1647.[6]

By 1675, when the monument of Alexander Bethune was erected, the East wall of the churchyard was full. However, a small space was found for it, between the tomb of Sir Robert Dennistoun, 'conservator of the Scots privileges in the Netherlands', to the south and the tomb of John Nasmyth, barber to King James VI, to the

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[3] Nobles were normally interred in their family vault on their estates or their parish church, as in the case of the Dukes of Queensberry: MacKechnie, Aonghus, 'Durisdeer Church', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. 115, 1985, pp. 429-442.
[4] Golledge, Charlotte, *Greyfriars Graveyard*, (Amberley Publishing, 208); Hay, George, Greyfriars Kirkyard, unpublished paper dated Edinburgh, 1959 in Historic Environment Scotland Archives, Folder 176, MS 793/176.
[5] The Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland, *An inventory of the ancient and historical monuments of the city of Edinburgh, with the thirteenth report of the commission*. (Edinburgh, 1951), p. 48.
[6] The plan can be accessed at the National Library of Scotland website: s://maps.nls.uk/towns/rec/211, accessed 21 November 2018.

north (Fig. 1).[7] Perhaps no other location was available in the churchyard or the East wall was preferred as a matter of tradition and prestige.

Figure 1: Bethune's monument in its context (Author)

Robert Mylne, James Smith and the Royal Master Masons in Scotland

As the Minutes of the Town Council meeting on 4th September 1674 confirm, the author of the Bethune's monument is Robert Mylne (1633-1710).[8] In 1668 Robert succeeded his uncle John (d.1667), to whom he was apprenticed, as the King's Master Mason and remained in this role until his death. Mylne's illustrious family had provided many generations of hereditary Master Masons to the Scottish Crown. The first of the line was John, Master Mason to James III from 1481. A book by one of their descendants explains the history of the family and

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[7] Brown, James, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard* (Edinburgh: J. Moodie Miller, 1867), p. lxix.
[8] 'Warrant to the relict of Alexander Beatton of Longdennistoune to build a tomb', MTC 4/09/1674, Edinburgh City Archives, SL1/1/28. I am very grateful to Dr Kate Newland for providing the transcript of the minutes. The authorship has been already recorded by John Gifford in: Gifford, John; McWilliam, Colin; Walker, David. *The buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*. (Yale University Press, 1984), p.157.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

their principal works; it also includes a portrait of Robert extracted from the 1720 painting of the craftsmen of Mary's Chapel in front of Holyroodhouse Palace by Roderick Chalmers, also included in the book.[9]

Robert Mylne's most important commission was the rebuilding of Holyroodhouse Palace, started in 1671, as noted by the inscription in the internal courtyard, which includes his name. He also worked on a very significant number of speculative and innovative buildings in Edinburgh's Royal Mile, including Mylne Square, Mylne's Land and Mylne's Court, which still exist; these were true seventeenth century high-risers in masonry. This lucrative activity allowed him the economic power to purchase two estates: one at Balfargie in Fife and the other at Inveresk, near Edinburgh.[10] As stated in his epitaph on the family's tomb, Robert was also Surveyor to the City of Edinburgh:

> Sacred to the Memorie of ROBERT MYLNE of Balfargie, Master Mason to several Kings of Scotland, and Survieor to this Citie, who duringe ane active life of honest fame, Builded amonge manie extensive warks Mylne's Court, Mylne's Square, and the Abbie of Halierud House, Leaving by ane Worthy Wife Eight Sonnes and Six Daughters, all placed in the World with Credit to himself, and consecrated this Monument to the Honour of his Ancestrie. Died December 10, 1710: Aged 77.[11]

The 1670s was a crucial period in the development of the architecture in Scotland and beyond. We have previously demonstrated the importance of Mr James Smith (c.1645-1731), the first professional architect in Scotland, in this development.[12] When Smith returned to Scotland in 1676, after four years at the Scots College in Rome, he found it in the same state of political, religious and economic instability that he had left. The unpopular Duke of Lauderdale, a favourite of King Charles II was administering his affairs in Scotland in a very

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[9] Mylne, R.S. *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland and their works*, (Edinburgh, 1893). (Edinburgh: Scott & Ferguson and Burness & Co., 1893).

[10] 'Robert Mylne', *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, <http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_fu ll.php?id=406343>, accessed 21 November 2018.

[11] W. Pitcairn Anderson, *Silences That Speak*, p. 289

[12] Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, 'The architectural innovations of Mr James Smith of Whitehill (c1645-1731) within the European context' in Lowrey, John; Humm, Louisa and Mackechnie, A (eds.), *The architecture of Scotland 1660-1750*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, To be published in 2019); González-Longo, Cristina and Theodossopoulos, Dimitris, 'From Master Mason to Architect: James Smith's Construction Techniques at the End of 17th Century in Scotland' in R. Carvais, A. Guillerme, V. Negre and J. Sakarovitch (eds.) *Nuts & Bolts of Construction History. Culture, Technology and Society*. Proc. of the 4th International Conference on Construction History. (Picard, Paris, 2012); Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, 'James Smith and Rome', *Architectural Heritage* XXIII, 2012.

authoritarian manner, dictating the Government policies. However, he seemed to have good architectural taste and an eye for detail that he was putting in practice in the ongoing rebuilding of the Palace of Holyroodhouse.[13]

The mason was still a key figure in the Scottish building industry at the end of seventeenth century and his professional status was recognised by membership of a guild.[14] By right of his marriage to Janet, the eldest daughter of Robert Mylne in 1679, Smith became a burgess of Edinburgh and a member of the guild of masons and wrights in Edinburgh, the Incorporation of Mary's Chapel. He was officially recognised as 'archetecter' in the register and was the only mason listed with his name prefixed with 'Mr', meaning that he was a university graduate.[15] By marrying the daughter of the deacon of the guild he avoided the formal apprenticeship of around seven years.[16] However, with a master mason father it is probable that he may have already undertaken training. Smith took on two of his cousins as his apprentices: first James (1680-1686) and then Gilbert (1693-1700), who married Bella, Smith's daughter; he also enrolled another relative, Andrew Smith, as his apprentice in 1726.[17]

Masonic lodges may have provided masons and wrights with access to printed resources; they also gave opportunities for interaction with members of higher social ranks, and the chance to raise their own social status, helping to create the profession of architect.[18] However, perhaps due to language and cultural barriers, Italian treatises seem to have been too often treated more as pattern books from which designs were copied rather than being used as inspiration for more original design. Smith was able to read Latin and Italian, which was undoubtedly fundamental for his development as architect.

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[13] Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland, p.162*
[14] González-Longo and Theodossopoulos, From Master Mason to Architect
[15] Boog Watson, C. B. *Roll of Edinburgh burgesses and guild-brethren, 1406-1700*, Scottish Record Society, 59, (Edinburgh, 1929), p. 456.
[16] Newland, Kate, *The Acquisition and use of Norwegian timber in seventeenth-century Scotland, with reference to the principal building works of James Baine, His Majesty's Master Wright*, (University of Dundee PhD Thesis, 2010), p.116, n.6, p.145.
[17] Boog Watson, C.B. (ed.), 'Register of Edinburgh Apprentices, 1666-1755', SRS, 110, Edinburgh, 1929, p. 80; Boog Watson, Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses, p. 456; Carr, H, *The mason and the burgh : an examination of the Edinburgh Register of Apprentices and the Burgess Rolls*, (London, 1954), pp. 24, 25, 44, 45, 64.
[18] Howard, Deborah, *The Architectural History of Scotland. Scottish Architecture from the Reformation to the Restoration, 1560-1660* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 212; P. Harding, 'John Mylne IV (1611-1667): Great Artisan, Grave Senator', *Architectural Heritage* XXIII, (Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Stevenson, David, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century*, 1590-1710, 1990.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

There is frequently a perceived confusion between the terms mason, master mason and architect in documents of the late seventeenth century in Scotland. By that time however the characteristics of the architect were well established, in terms of being able to create a design:

> What the others have to do with their hands, he [Architectus] orders it first with his invention [ingenio].
>
> Caramuel, *Arquitectura Recta y Oblicua*, 1678[19]

> I must here remember that to choose and sort the materials, for every part of the Fabrique, is a Dutie more proper to a second Superintendent, over all the Under Artisans called (as I take it) by our Author [Vitruvius], Officinator lib. 6. cap. II. and in that Place expressely distinguished, from the Architect, whose glory doth more consist, in the Designement and Idea of the whole Worke, and his truest ambition should be to make the Forme, which is the nobler Part (as it were) triumph over the Matter ...
>
> Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture,* 1624[20]

Vitruvius was still a reference for the seventeenth-century Scottish architectural profession: John Mylne's (d. 1667) epitaph at his classically designed monument, erected by his nephew Robert against the east wall on the south of the main entrance at Greyfriars, refers to architecture as 'Vitruvius' art'.[21] Apart from the knowledge of materials and proportions, understanding and using orders was still the fundamental language to express the character of new buildings.

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[19] Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan, *Architectura civil recta y obliqua* (Vegevano, 1678), Libro II, Tratado V, p.1

[20] Wotton, Henry, *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624) ed. C. Davis, p. 33, <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/1870/1/Davis_Fontes68.pdf>. Accessed on 21 November 2018.

[21] Brown, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, p. 249

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Figure 2: Measured drawing of Bethune's monument (Author)

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Colen Campbell (1676-1729), a lawyer who became an architect, in his introduction to Vitruvius Britannicus in 1715 mentions those that he calls the 'Restorers of Architecture', including Bramante, Barbaro, Sansovino, Sangallo, Michelangelo, Raphael Urbino, Julio Romano, Serlio, Labaco, Scamozzi, and highlights Palladio as the most important. But he forgot an extremely important one – or perhaps because he disliked it – the 'ultimate design guide' from a practising architect: Vignola's 1562 simple rules on the five orders, which included an addition with Michelangelo's doorways:[22] as we will see it was extensively used by Smith.[23] Campbell, who seems to have been in close contact with Smith, bought a collection of drawings attributed to him and his circle.[24] They are theoretical works relating to the work of Palladio and Serlio.

The design and commissioning of the monument

The structure takes the form of a baroque mural monument with an aedicule of Corinthian order with shafts at each side in antis, surmounted by a pediment broken by a scalloped coat of arms, with a lozenge shield with eight quartering, including the coat of arms of the Bethune of Balfour and Kennedy families, with an inscription and relief carving of heraldic nature (Figs. 2, 3). The shield is supported by two reclining cherubs on the pediment cornice, now only fragmentary, mutilated figures, flanked by the date 1675. The classical cornice of the entablature integrates in the soffit underneath two types of rosettes between the modillions, one with fan pattern and one quinquefolia (Fig. 2).

Between the columns, a drapery inscription tablet is held by a Green Man's mouth; the recess for the inscription is flanked by panelled pilasters supporting the entablature. According to Betty Willsher, [25] the Green Man, originally a Roman emblem and extensively used in medieval Europe, is a unique motif in Scottish tombs from seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Scotland. It appears in Greyfriars for the first time in Scotland, in monuments dated between 1645 and 1686.

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[22] Vignola, Giacomo Barozzi da , *The regular architect: or the general rule of the five orders of architecture of M. Giacomo Barozzi Da Vignola: With a new addition of Michael Angelo Buonaroti*, (London: 1669)
[23] Gonzalez-Longo, 'The architectural innovations of Mr James Smith of Whitehill'
[24] RIBA Drawings Catalogue, RIBA/V&A Prints and Drawings study room, p. 86.

[25] Willsher, Betty, 'The Green Man as an emblem on Scottish Tombstones'. Offprint of article, c1990, Historic Environment Scotland Archives, MS 6381/1.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Figure 3: Bethune's monument (Author)

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Figure 4: Frontispiece to Palladio's *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. From Palladio, Andrea, *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. Facsimile of the first edition (1570) with an illustrative note on the life and the work of Palladio by O. Cabiati (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli Editore Libraio, 1990). Published with permission from the Casa Editrice Libraria Ulrico Hoepli.

As many contemporary individuals of similar social status in Scotland, Bethune's tomb is well designed and executed. The monument's architecture is very different from the rest of the monuments in the East wall (Fig. 1). It presents the form of a gateway and uses classical orders as promoted by the *Quattro Libri* (Four Books) of Palladio.[26] The overall design of a curved broken pediment refers to the book's frontispiece (Fig. 4).

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[26]   Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. Venezia, 1570

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

The space restriction for this East wall location was such that the monument, in order to keep the classical proportions, had a limited height. The fact that the site was so tight required a site visit of some of the members of the Town Council in order to make sure that the new construction will not interfere with the adjacent ones.[27] The foot of the monument is currently covered by an accumulation of soil and is only visible from the base of the column, as the pedestal seems to be buried under the ground (Figs. 2, 3). The visible portion of the monument visible today, from the base of the column is only three meters high and just under two meters wide.

James Brown recorded and translated in 1867 the inscriptions in the monument.[28] The most formal inscription in the entablature, which has almost disappeared since, is in Latin and capital letters and tells us about the status of the deceased (Figs. 2, 3):

HIC IACENT EXUVIAE ALEXANDRI BETHUNE DE LONGHIRDMONSTON, SIGNETO REGIO SCRIBAE; EX PRISCA ET PRAECLARA FAMILIA DE BALFOUR ORTUM HABIENTIS, VIR ERAT PRUDENTIA PIETATE & INDUSTRIA HAUD LEVITER IMBUTUS. EX UXORE SUA MAJORANA KENNEDIE CUM QUA TRIGINTA ANNOS CONJUNCTISSIME VIXIT NUMEROSAM SOBOLEM SUSCEPIT: EX QUIBUS SEPTEM MARES CUM UNA FILIA ET DUOBUS NEPOTIBUS HIC UNA TUMULANTUR. OBIIT 9 NOVEMBRIS 1672 AETATIS SUAE 57

[Here lyes the body of Alexander Bethune of Longhirdmonston, Writer to the King's Signet; descended of the ancient and honourable family of Balfour. He was a man of great prudence, piety, and industry. By his wife, Marjory Kennedie, with whom he lived most lovingly thirty years, he begat a numerous issue, of whom seven sons, and one daughter, and two grandchildren, are all here buried together. He died 9th Nov.1672, of his age 57.]

The inscription in the drapery, in English, lower case, and following the curve that the hanging drapery forms, is more personal and poetic. It is still largely visible and gives more details about his character and skills:

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[27] 'Warrant to the relict of Alexander Beatton of Longdennistoune to build a tomb', MTC 4/09/1674, Edinburgh City Archives, SL1/1/28.
[28] Brown, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, pp. 9, 10.

Amidst two nephews and sev'n sones heir lyes

One of good birth, was prudent in his wayes;

And tho' God blist him in his law profession,

To conquest riches, and a lairge possession,

Himselfe he never valu'd by these things,

But by the grace that Christ's salvation brings.

So he, by Christian prudence, did acquire

More than the world's gaine or the heart's desire:

Of godly, sober, just, the blessed name,

And left unto posteritie his fame.

Just doing, speaking, writing, was his glorie,

Above all elogies of worldlie storie

This is a very good example of the fine lettering of the seventeenth century, perhaps unique to Scotland. Although many letters were economically joined together, the spaces between letters are equal, showing the high standards of the stone carvers (Fig. 2).

As many others, including, for example, John Bayne of Pitcairlie's also at Greyfriars',[29] Bethune's monument was commissioned by his widow, Marjory Kennedy, who was the daughter of John Kennedy, a wealthy Edinburgh burgess.[30] Women seem to have played an important role at the time, not only as patrons – for example at Dalkeith and Hamilton palaces – but even as designers and drawing plans.[31] Colvin notes that

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[29] Edinburgh City Archives, *Greyfriars Record of Internments 1590-1838*, 3 December 1684. Extensive research about this mausoleum is contained in Cooper, Christopher, *John Bayne of Pitcairlie, writer to the signet*, 2016.

[30] Old Edinburgh Club, *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club for the Year 1910*, 3rd volume. (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 183.

[31] Marshall, Rosalind K. *The Days of Duchess Anne, Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton*, 1656-1716 (London: Collins, 1973); Jeffery, Sally, 'From England to Scotland in 1701: The Duchess of Buccleuch returns to Dalkeith Palace'; Godard Desmarest, Clarisse, 'Women patrons and designers in early eighteenth-century Scotland: Lady Panmure and Lady Nairne', in Lowrey, John; Humm, Louisa and Mackechnie, Aonghus (eds.), *The architecture of Scotland 1660-1750*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, to be published in 2019).

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Robert Mylne's eldest daughter, and Mr James Smith's wife, Janet (1662-1699), was 'a good Drawer and very Clever'.[32]

As a common practice, the tomb was subsequently reused for burial during the eighteenth century. Many times bodies were interred in lairs belonging to a relation or friend but no mention was made of this on that person's monument. Sometimes stones were taken over and 'revised' (i.e., used for a second time), so that all or part of the original inscription may have been lost, as seems in the case of Bethune. The monument now bears an inscription to Thomas Spens M.D. (d. 1842) in the entablature. In 1808, the City Council had permitted his father, Dr. Nathaniel Spens, to enclose the piece of land in front of the monument, measuring 6 feet 7 inches from north to south and 16 feet from east to west,[33] for a memorial for his wife Mary Mileiken (d.1774), who is remembered at the foot of the monument, in an inscription recorded by Brown[34] and now almost invisible under the winged angel (Figs. 2, 3):

To the memory of:
MARY MILEIKEN, who died 3[d] March 1774
Wife of Dr N. SPENS.

A picture of Francis M. Chrystal dated in the 1840s shows the enclosure, formed by a low wall with a railing above. Pictures from 1930-40 and 1950s evidence that the railings were taken down, as many were during WWII.[35] The enclosure has now totally disappeared although some small remains of the wall are still visible next to the monument.

This enclosure could be the reason why the monument was not moved. As we have mentioned before, the bottom of the monument is covered at the moment by an accumulation of soil and the pedestal seems to be buried under the ground (Figs. 2, 3). The adjacent Dennistoun Monument presented a similar situation, as shown in a photograph by Hill & Adamson dated 1843-47, where the railings around the Bethune tomb are also

[32] Colvin, H. M. 'A Scottish Origin for English Palladianism', *Architectural History*, 17 (1974).
[33] Edinburgh City Archives, *Greyfriars Record of Internments 1590-1838*, 16 November 1808.
[34] Brown, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, p. 10.
[35] RCAHMS, Greyfriars Churchyard Photographs, Historic Environment Scotland Archives, ED 7286, ED 9512, B38735.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

visible.[36] While the adjacent monuments seem to have been moved and amended, probably during the restoration in 1893,[37] Bethune's appears to have remained in its original position.

This operation of enclosing the tombs has also precedents in John Mylne's monument; in 1779, Edinburgh City Council gave permission to the architect Robert Mylne, the designer of Blackfriars Bridge in London, to enclose the burying ground in front of his family's tomb with a railing of semicircular shape.[38]

A pioneer of later architectural developments in Scotland

We can find a direct relation between Bethune's monument and John's Mylne's tomb, of which Robert Mylne is also the author. As we have mentioned, Robert was his brother's son and his apprentice as well as his successor in office and had out of gratitude erected this monument. The basic composition a baroque mural monument with an aedicule of Corinthian order with shafts at each side in antis, surmounted by a curved pediment broken by a coat of arms, is similar to Bethune's monument, but the scale of Mylne's mural monument is much bigger. The drapery inscription tablet is held by a mask or Green Man's mouth similar to Palladio's *Quattro Libri*'s frontispiece (Fig. 4). Mylne's mural monument is commonly considered as the first of the new classical monuments' design,[39] including also elements from popular folklore such as the Green Man. We would however argue that Bethune's monument design and construction precedes Mylne's.

Edinburgh Town Council granted in the same year, 1674, the warrant for the erection of the Mylne and Bethune's monuments.[40] John Mylne died in 1667 but a different, temporary monument may have been placed on his tomb as the current one only received the warrant for its erection on 4 March 1674; as explained above, this was necessary before it could be built. The Bethune monument received the Council's warrant to "erect

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[36] David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, 'Greyfriars' Churchyard, the Dennistoun monument with David Octavius Hill, his nieces the Misses Watson and an unknown man', Scottish National Portrait Gallery , Print Room, PGP EPS 296. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/73802/greyfriars-hurchyard-dennistoun-monument-david-octavius-hill-his-nieces-misses-watson-and-unknown>, accessed 21 November 2018.

[37] 'Restoring Tombstones in Greyfriars Churchyard' short article in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, 27 September 1893: "At a meeting of a sub-committee of the Lord Provost's Committee of Edinburgh Town Council to-day, it was agreed to restore the tombs of Denyston, Natsmith, Innes and Joseph Black in Greyfriars Churchyard." I am very grateful to Charlotte Golledge for providing this information.

[38] Edinburgh City Archives, *Greyfriars Record of Internments 1590-1838*, 17 February 1779.

[39] Documentary Survey for Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh Graveyards Project. <https://ewh.org.uk/project/graveyards>, accessed 5 October 2018.

[40] Brown *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, p. lxix.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

and build" on 4 September."[41] His descendant R.S. Mylne, states that the Mylne tomb was erected when Robert died in 1710, but he does not provide the evidence for it.[42]

The Latin epitaph in the monument records that Bethune died in 1672 but the date shown in the pediment is 1675. We can assume that during this time the monument was being designed by Mylne, probably in the restricted time left over from his ongoing major work with Sir William Bruce in the transformation of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the most important ongoing construction in Scotland. The inscription on the monument states that Bethune died at 57 and he would probably not have thought of his own burial, which, as we have mentioned, was commissioned by his wife.

The discrepancy between the date shown in the monument and the one in which permission for erection and construction was granted by the Town Council is made also evident in James Chalmers' monument, in the West wall of the graveyard, whose classical design may also indicate Robert Mylne's authorship. Chalmers, also an advocate, died 29th November 1675, and the monument displays that date as its construction also, but the permission for its actual construction ('"liberty and warrant… to erect and build") was given on 28 March 1677; there was probably afterwards a change of design as a new permission was given on 9 August 1678 to his "eldest lawful son" to erect a tomb of eight by eight feet.[43]

At the time of the construction of Bethune's monument, the architectural scene was changing, dominated now by the gentleman-architect Sir William Bruce (1630-1710), a former merchant in Rotterdam and now Surveyor General and Overseer of the King's Works in Scotland.[44] Bruce approached architecture from a formal viewpoint and needed assistance from knowledgeable and skilful master masons and draughtsmen to implement his grand plans. His main associate at the time was Robert Mylne.

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[41] Brown, The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard, p. lxix
[42] Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*, p. 238.
[43] Edinburgh City Archives, *Greyfriars Record of Internments 1590-1838*; Brown, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, p. lxix. Brown transcribes incorrectly the name from the Council records (Chambers instead of Chalmers).
[44] Mackechnie, Aonghus, 'Introduction: Sir William Bruce and Architecture in Early Modern Scotland'; Mackechnie, Aonghus, 'Birth-stool of Scottish Romanticism? Holyrood and Sir William Bruce, 'Surveyor-General and Overseer of the King's Buildings in Scotland'; Wemyss, Charles, Image and Architecture: A Fresh Approach to Sir William Bruce and the Scottish Country House. All in *Architectural Heritage* XXIII, 2012; Wemyss, Charles, 'Merchant and Citizen of Rotterdam: The Early Career of Sir William Bruce' *Architectural Heritage* Vol. XVI, 2005; Dunbar, John, *Sir William Bruce 1630-1710*. (Scottish Arts Council, 1970)

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

The inner courtyard at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which carries Robert Mylne's signature, provides an emphatic statement of a 'Roman' design intention characterised by the superposition of architectural orders as Serlio and Vignola had dictated. As Deborah Howard has noted,[45] classicism as a system of design (articulation and proportion) was not present before in Scottish Architecture, only in individual elements, such as the superposition of orders in George Heriot's Hospital (1628-1640s).

A real paradigm shift can be traced with the 1676 design of the new entrance to the Palace of Holyroodhouse.[46] The portal is built with stone from the Dalgety Bay quarry at Dunfermline.[47] Bruce's original plans for Holyrood seem to have been to keep the existing west façade,[48] only removing Cromwell's addition, in a design which King Charles II seemed to like on 3 June 1671:

> 9. His Majestie likes the front very well as it is Designed, Provided the gate where the Kings coach is to come in, be large enough … He likes not the covering of all that betwixt the two Great toures with platform at the second Story, but would have it heightened to a third Storie, as all the Inner Court is … His Majestie thinks the way proposed for the Inner Court would be very noble; but he will not goe to that charge, and therefore his pleasure is that it be plaine aisler, as the front is, with table divisions for Stories.[49]

However, at the end of February 1676, he approved the changes proposed by Bruce, including the rebuilding of the front: 'in pillar work conforme to and with the Dorick and Ionick orders and to finish the ends above the platforme of the front order agreeing with the Corinthien Style'. In July the contract was signed with a description of the new portal:

> To make a gaitt of the Dorricke order Two columns upon each side of the said gaitt with pedestell Base colume chapterhead and intablor of ane Modell according to threttie ane foott height Raill and Ballesters and pilasters with proper finisheing above about and alongest the

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[45] Howard, Deborah, *The Architectural History of Scotland. Scottish Architecture from the Reformation to the Restoration, 1560-1660* (Edinburgh, 1995), p.218.
[46] Gonzalez-Longo, 'The architectural innovations of Mr James Smith'.

[47] Dunbar, John G, *Minerva's flame: the great houses of James Smith of Whitehall (c.1645-1731)*, (Dalkeith, 1995), p. 10
[48] Mackechnie, 'Birth-stool of Scottish Romanticism? Holyrood and Sir William Bruce'
[49] Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*, p. 170.

> said intablitowre quhich rownes from towre to towre As also above the cornishe of the In syde to the quholl breadth of the court. The conrishe enriched onelie with dentellie. The columes tuo pairt sett off the portch and the portch thrie or ffour foott off the naiked of the wall of the front. The doore within consisting of six ffoott and twelve ffoott With ane architrave goeing rownd freise and cornise finisheing above by ane modell accordeing to threttine foott high with ane plint above the cornise. The out side off itt plume with the first face of the architrave above quhich the Scotts armes is to be sett exactlie weill cutt with the supporters standing on the said plint. Matleing crowne & creist built and wrought weill in ane hansome copairtment or howseing.[50]

This was a major change which Bruce had no reason to make, unless there were new influences. Smith's arrival from Rome that year, 1676, could be the reason for this change in the design. In the same year the brother of King Charles II, James, Duke of York, had converted to Roman Catholicism, taking residence in Holyrood in 1679 and again in 1681-2. He became King James VII of Scotland and II of England when Charles II died in 1685. Apparently, Smith established good relations with him, and became Royal Surveyor in 1683, on the recommendation of the Duke of Queensberry and probably based on the reputation gained in his major projects so far (Holyrood, Drumlanrig and perhaps Hatton).[51]

The new design is clearly inspired by the Roman portals, especially the Porta del Popolo as drawn by Vignola;[52] we should remember that Bruce never visited Italy and that he bought a copy of the 'basic' Palladio's *Quattro Libri* the same year, 1676.[53] Although we must recognise the changes already being made in Scotland by Bruce and Mylne at Balcaskie House (Bruce 1665-74), Leslie House (1667-74) and in some tombs at Greyfriars, it is the architecture of Smith's portal at Holyrood Palace that marks the end of strapwork decoration in Scotland and the start of a more holistic architectural design approach, including the more common and rigorous use of Palladio and Vignola's treatises as the main architectural references. [54]

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[50]Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*, pp. 190, 193.
[51]Glendinning, Miles; MacKechnie, Aonghus; Oran, Richard, *The Architecture of Scottish Government*, Dundee, 2004, p.144.
[52]Vignola, *The regular architect;* Gonzalez-Longo, 'James Smith and Rome'.
[53]Dunbar, *Sir William Bruce*, pp. 7, 41.
[54] Gonzalez-Longo, 'The architectural innovations of Mr James Smith'

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Bethune's mural monument presents a similar overall gateway design scheme with a broken pediment flanked by cherubs resting on it, and thereafter can be considered the immediate precedent for the Palace of Holyroodhouse portal. This is reinforced by the fact that, as we will see later, the Bethune's monument received from the Town Council in September the warrant to "erect and build"[55] and in February 1676 the King approved the design. Robert Mylne must have thereafter been working in these two projects at the same time. Considering that Mylne was not getting paid on time for his work at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, other projects allowed him to stay in business.[56] We also know that Smith arrived by the New Year 1676 in London from Rome,[57] and the development of these designs may also contain some clues about the possible relationship between Mylne and Smith before their professional collaboration at Holyrood, perhaps even before Smith's return to Britain. I propose that this cultural exchange has been the trigger for the shift in the architecture of the time in Scotland.

Symbolism and Craft

The design of the monument is similar to altars or tombs found in Roman Catholic churches, but it would not appear so out of place at the time considering the local influence that James Stuart, Duke of York, had. He converted to Roman Catholicism in 1667 and in 1673 married the Catholic Mary of Modena. As mentioned above, James went to Scotland as the King's Lord High Commissioner and stayed at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh from 1679 to 1682.

The fact that the Bethune tomb has been reused and inscriptions added means that other original iconography may have been lost, in particular relating to biographical details. However, the present monument gives sufficient evidence for an interpretation of its design. Although the Bethune monument is small, it has a number of carvings with a great variety of symbolism. It departs from previous seventeenth-century iconography in funeral monuments which included representations of the attributes of time and death such as the bow and arrow, the coffin, grave tools, bones and the skull, which can be seen in other monuments of Greyfriars.

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[55]Brown, *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars Churchyard*, p. lxix

[56]Mylne makes a petition in 1708 for over 20 year of arrears. Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*.
[57] Letter dated 10 Jan 1676 from Christopher Irvin, Paris. Scottish Catholic Archives, BL1/1/45/8.

Gonzalez-Longo, Cristina, ' Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Jupp, Peter C. and Grainger, Hilary J. (eds.), *Death in Scotland: Chapter from the Twelfth to Twenty-First Centuries* (draft title), Peter Lang Ltd, Oxford, England, 2019.

Together with the return to classical architectural orders as explained above, Bethune's monument includes elements of funerary symbolism from classical antiquity. Some of these elements were however present in earlier monuments; what we find here is their integration within a well-designed overall classical architectural language, which also includes elements from folklore such as the Green Man; the result is a baroque configuration.

Despite the poor condition that the monument presents at the moment (Fig. 3), it is possible to appreciate not only the very fine design but also the very high standard of craftsmanship of the monument. The stone carving is of the highest quality, something that Robert would probably prioritise as the son of the architectural sculptor Alexander Mylne (1613–1643). The scalloped coat of arms is very skilfully elaborated.

The shape of the fan and quinquefolia rosettes between the modillions of the classical cornice of the entablature (Fig. 2) makes reference to the ones found in the classical Corinthian order but also to a popular symbol in the medieval imagery on Scottish stones: the wheel of life, turning from the past, through the present and to the future.

The pagan symbol of the Green Man, uncommon in Scotland, signifying the earth and rebirth, is in this case stylised, looking more like a leonine theatrical mask, similar to the ones found in Mylnes' monument and above the main entrance of Drumlanrig Castle, another of Robert Mylne and Mr James Smith's works.[58] The drapery hanging from the mouth of the Green Man represents the mourning drape, part of the funerary process. The lion's head in Palladio's *Quattro Libri*'s frontispiece seems to have been the inspiration for this design (Fig. 4). The fact that the lines of the very fine lettering follow the curve that the hanging drapery forms shows a remarkable craftsmanship.

The ancient Greek winged figure of Psyche – 'the angel head' image of the soul of the dead leaving the body and rising to heaven – was the most popular emblem of immortality; it appears here at the bottom unlike most of the tombs of the period that display it at the top, including Chalmers'.

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[58] González-Longo, Cristina,. "The Transformation of Drumlanrig Castle at the End of seventeenth-century", in J. Campbell et al. (eds) *Proceedings of the First Conference of the Construction History Society,*, Queen's College, (Cambridge: Exeter, Short Run Press,2014),. pp 169-180

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Conclusion

The mural monuments at Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh are some of the finest showing the Reformed Scots attitude towards death in the late seventeenth century. The fine architecture of Bethune's mural monument reflects not only the status of the deceased, Alexander Bethune of Long Hermiston, but also of the patron: his wife, Marjory Kennedy. It encapsulates the constraints which even people of high status experienced concerning the lack of available space at Greyfriars and the need to obtain permission to erect and build the monument.

This small sepulchral monument is not only a great example of the art of the Scottish master masons of the 1670s, but also reflects the emerging of the profession of architect. It may also contain some clues about the origins of the Robert Mylne and James Smith relationship, perhaps even before the return of Smith to Britain. This critical cultural exchange has been the trigger for the shift in the architecture in Scotland at the end of seventeenth century.

It clearly departs from the strapwork decoration, creating an overall architecture of classical language with an elaborated mixture of pagan and Christian symbolism and iconography, with the result of a baroque '*bel composto*.'[59] It sets a clear – and previously unknown – precedent to the subsequent architectural developments in Scotland, in particular to the 1676 design of the new entrance to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, a real paradigm shift. This makes the case not only for further research but also for the conservation of this important monument.

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[59] This is how Bernini's biographers described his work, meaning 'beautiful composition', an integrated design. Lavin, I. *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts*, Pierpoint Morgan Library, Oxford Library Press, 1980 I, p.6