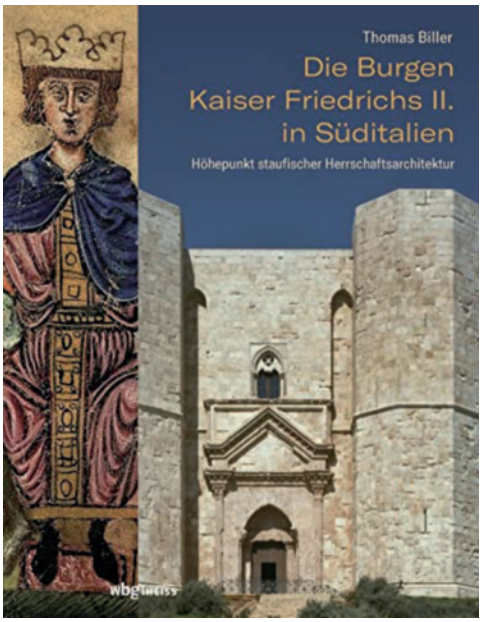


Die Burgen Kaiser Friedrichs II. in Süditalien: Höhepunkt staufischer Herrschaftsarchitektur

(The castles of Emperor Frederick II in southern Italy: the high point of Hohenstaufen Imperial architecture)
Author: Thomas Biller
Publisher: wbg Theiss, Darmstadt
Language: German
Published: 28 April 2021
Price: (Amazon - £46.00)
Reviewer: Dr. Peter Purton FSA

This magnificent book is the definitive work on the castles of Emperor Frederick II, King of Sicily (which included southern Italy) and Jerusalem, and from 1215 Holy Roman Emperor. Frederick of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), grandson of Frederick Barbarossa, was a dominant figure of his age, both in the eyes of later historians, and of contemporaries (he fills ten pages of the index to Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora*, more than his contemporary, Louis IX (St. Louis)). The only ruler to lead a crusade while excommunicated, German nationalist-inspired histories once portrayed him as superhuman, a (very) precocious renaissance free-thinker and similar nonsense, now happily discarded. The title of David Abulafia's 1988 biography (*Frederick II. A medieval emperor)* encapsulates a properly historical approach to someone who was, for all the myth, genuinely a remarkable man, but did not – could not – step outside the limits of his time. Thomas Biller adopts this approach in this study of his castellar architecture and starts his new book with a review of the existing historiography of the castles, earlier examples of which were also sometimes undermined by ahistorical assumptions.

The second chapter begins with a review of the evidence. Many difficulties hinder a proper study of the 40 castles that can reliably be attributed to Frederick in Italy. The catastrophic wartime destruction of the royal archives of Naples is only part of the problem; few surviving documents can be associated with specific castles. Many were subject to new building after the end of the Hohenstaufen dynasty in 1266. The new regime made substantial alterations, and renaissance modifications for gunpowder weapons inflicted more damage, followed later by decay and sometimes unsympathetic restoration. Biller frequently reminds the reader of the problem of reliable dating.

Moving onto the buildings, Biller looks first at function, concluding that nearly all – whether based on existing castles, or new built - were defensible: just a few are properly seen as undefended palaces (such as Foggia) or hunting lodges (of which the best surviving example is Gravina in Puglia). Few were intended as residences of the ruler, most were assigned to royal officials. Frederick's castles were indeed massive statements of power, both representative and real. Nor was the form original: the quadrangular 'Kastell' shape, derived from the Roman *castellum*, was already well-established in the crusader kingdom from the late twelfth century (Belvoir) and also, locally, dates from Frederick's Norman predecessors. Biller proposes an experimental but not a straight-line development in the first castles built or altered under Frederick, a large

proportion based on the 'Kastell' form, sometimes modified by the typography (e.g. Milazzo, Sicily). These culminated in the small number of what he describes as 'ideal buildings': geometrically and proportionately perfect and architecturally magnificent - Castel Maniace (Syracuse), Castel Ursino (Catania), Castel del Monte, 'Torre di Federico' (Enna), Augusta (insofar as its original plan can be recovered) and the palace at Lucera. What were the inspirations? Biller expertly identifies the influences. Frederick grew up in Sicily, the Byzantine-Arab-Norman splendours of the royal palace of Palermo were a constant companion. To this inheritance can be added the influence of the new castles of Philip Augustus of France and existing Apulian Romanesque style reflected in (e.g.) the cathedral of Bari (Apulia). Biller presents Frederick's works as a happy merging of these influences. Castel del Monte was unique, as was the original design of the interior of Castel Maniace in Syracuse, lit by a small internal courtyard. There were few (if any) successors.

The author approaches his subject thematically after the broad introductory sections. Current states of preservation make it difficult to determine the functions of the rooms in Frederick's castles. Biller identifies a forerunner in the 'continuous wing' style of the interiors of Templar and Hospitaller castles, but with the difference that most Frederician sites were of two floors, suggesting a more traditional European model. Identifying chapels are part of the problem: leaving aside the accusation of his enemies that Frederick was an atheist, Biller proposes likely locations in the quadrangular layouts of many castles where there is little remaining evidence. Garderobes are studied, as are galleries (rare) and doors (themselves modest, though the portals could be architecturally splendid), and sometimes substantial entrance chambers (Catania, Prato, Castel del Monte). Only in three cases was there a 'great tower' attached to a 'Kastell'. The exceptions were when it represented the focal point of the whole castle (as at Enna and Castel del Monte). The common features of the towers were their geometric design and their monumentality.

Frederick's castles may have been defensible as well as representative, but lacked the aggressive forms of defence becoming common elsewhere. Outer walls and towers rarely have arrow slits (and exceptions may date from the Angevin period) or even ditches, so defensive capability was restricted to the wall and tower tops: but many of these are now missing. Nor did most of these castles possess an encircling outer enclosure (German *Zwinger*) nor in most cases an outer ward (exceptions include the *Vorburg* added to the existing Castello di Lombardia (Enna)).

There is a good summary of the evidence for who the designers or architects were, in a discussion reminiscent of that surrounding what Master James of St George actually did for Edwardian castles. There are few names. Richard of Lentini held office as master of imperial buildings in the 1240s and is associated with castles in Sicily, but in what role? Inscriptions preserved the names of others (masters? Patrons?) at Trani (Puglia). Evidence from earlier in Frederick's reign of Cistercian lay brothers being employed as erectors of churches and castles suggests another source of stylistic influence. Biller admits we cannot know and that is a sensible conclusion. But given what is known of the emperor's wide range of interests, it seems highly probable that he had an input into the overall concept, if not into the details of the designs.

Thomas Biller is an architect and architectural historian and his analyses of the sculpture, window design, portals, capitals, different styles of vaulting, and different shapes of embossed masonry used to such powerful effect on walls and towers reflects this strength. The conclusion that these castles represented a "free combination" of inherited influences, evolving with time and experiment, and culminated in a new synthesis of (Burgundian Gothic) vaults and symmetry with the Kastell

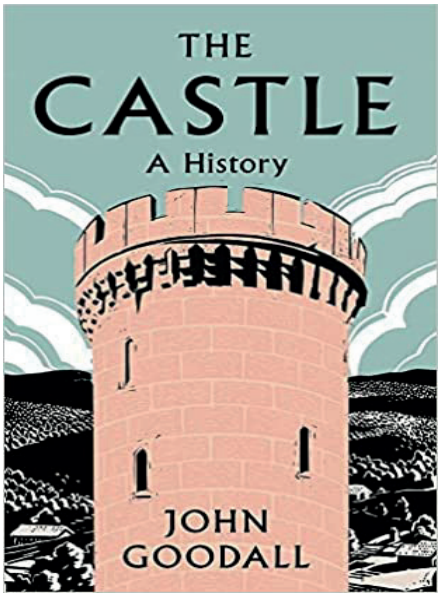
Castello Ursino or Castello Svevo di Catania, 1239 and 1250, as one of the royal castles of Emperor Frederick II, King of Sicily. © Neil Guy

form in the 'ideal buildings' of the 1240s, seems the best way to describe the powerful impact of these monumental architectural assertions of imperial power. The strength of these conclusions lies in Biller's close integration of his arguments with study of the actual buildings.

The author completes his survey with a look at the further development of Frederick's castles by his successors. His analysis of the work of Angevin king Charles I (1266-85)'s builder, Pierre d'Angicourt, at Melfi, Lucera and Bari, is an added bonus.

The rest of the book is a gazetteer of the castles according to province – Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and two outliers (Prato in Tuscany and Monselice in Veneto). There is a proper description of each of the main sites and sufficient information on the lesser, along with many detailed, phased plans, some of them taken from the previous studies of G Agnello, P F Pistilli, and others. The final section lists another dozen castles falsely assigned to Frederick, providing an alternative history of these sites. The thematic approach works well but has disadvantages if seeking information on specific castles, as references (and photographs) are scattered across the different themes, also leading to some repetition. The absence of an index doesn't help! There is a substantial bibliography also broken down by topic, which can delay finding a reference, along with a useful reading list by castle.

These are very minor quibbles. Thomas Biller has succeeded in identifying and explaining the elements that combine to achieve the visual impact of these astonishing monuments, throwing aside long-established myths to present as clear a view as is possible with the evidence of the castles built by a giant historical figure, but one whose unquenchable ambition to claim all the attributes and powers of a truly holy roman emperor led him into endless conflict, driven by the hatred of successive popes, and to the extinction of his dynasty in the male line. His castles remain to give us a sense of his image as 'stupor mundi' and Thomas Biller's majestic new book will serve as a reliable guide for a long time to come.



The Castle - A History

Author: John Goodall
Publisher Yale University Press
Hb: 352pp 75 b&w and colour illus
ISBN: 978-0-300-25190-6
Price: £16.99
Published April 2022
Reviewed by Neil Guy

"Don't judge a book by its cover," the popular adage goes. But, as humans, we often do just that. The strange Yale cover hardly cries out for attention with this writer - in fact it is a rather jejune, whimsical melange. The background is from a 1940s block print by a celebrated Arkansas artist Olin Herman Travis, and is titled 'In the Ozarks' used courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art. The Ozarks is a mountainous physiographic region in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri, United States, well-known, of course, for its population of medieval castles.

Superimposed over the black and grey block print background is a salmon-pink coloured circular tower with machicolations and battlements - it could be either fictional or actual – and of any period from, say, the 15th century in any European country. In fact Yale have actually mistakenly reversed the 'negative' and the background print is reproduced the wrong way round in part. Is there any cryptic meaning in all this – probably not. Just a fashionable retro modernist background with a medieval building overlaid - to catch the eye perhaps and highlight the obvious incongruity.

The castle has long had a pivotal place in British life, associated with power, lordship, landholding, and military might, and today it remains a powerful symbol of Britain's history. But castles have never been just impressive fortresses—they were centres of social life, activity, and imagination. Here John Goodall skilfully and thoughtfully weaves together the history of the British castle across the span of over a millennium, up to the twenty-first century, through the voices of those who experienced it; (castles have a very broad definition as explained in his Introduction and has a short section on 'The Word 'Castle', pp. 12-14). Drawing on chronicles, poems, letters, and novels, including the work of figures like Gawain Poet, Walter Scott, Evelyn Waugh, and P. G. Wodehouse, Goodall explores the importance of and attitudes to the castle in our culture and society. Themes that the writer touches on includes Art; Backdrop; Besieged; Under Construction; Domestic Life; Food; Garrison; Gunpowder; History; Hunting; An Idea; Legend; Lineage; Literature; Noble Identity; Prison; Restored; Ruined; Tourism.

From the medieval period to the Civil War and up to modern manifestations in Harry Potter, Goodall reveals that the castle has always been put to different and widely-changing uses, and to this day continues to serve as a source of inspiration, especially with children. Most children can draw a castle: a tower at each corner, a moat, battlements, a drawbridge. Their castle would look very like the last example in the book ('Epilogue' pp. 352-3) and oddly not illustrated in Goodall's fascinating, but sometimes whimsical book. That is, Disney's *Cinderella* castle, based on the Sleeping Beauty castle built in 1955 at Disneyland, California, which has now become an enduring fanciful children's model in their cinematically fed imagination.

John himself helped to cement this image of the archetypal castle in his acclaimed, scholarly, well-researched and illuminating book, *The English Castle* (Yale 2011), with its attractive cover of Bodiam bathed in golden light, saved for the nation by Lord Curzon in 1917 (mentioned in ('1911 Tattershall Castle - Saving the Nation' pp. 318-321).

This refreshing look at some of the most imposing buildings in Britain is a very different offering from that archive of beautiful colour photographs, floor plans and scholarly analysis found in his *magnum opus - The English Castle.* This time each castle gets one short chapter (just two or three pages), prefaced by a vignette - usually a photograph, some occasionally poorly reproduced, I have to say, e.g. 1348, Stafford; occasionally antiquarian prints (also sometimes poor e.g. 1562 Pontefract, 1648 Kenilworth, and 1665 Rochester). More importantly, are the words of the people who either commissioned the castle, built them, lived in them, admired or feared them. They are key to exploring the texts, not the illustrations. It is the dateable quotations that drive the sensible chronology from 635 (Bamburgh) to 'after 1800' with the final entry on Lancaster when it closed as a prison .

These eyewitness comments are mined from historical inventories and surveys, events, court cases, and literary sources - letters, poems and novels, sometimes primary. Horace Walpole's 1764 *The Castle of Otranto,* is there along with John Bunyan's *Doubting* (1678, 'The Capture and Escape of Christian and Hopeful'), Wodehouse's *Blandings* (1923,'The castle as Idyll') and J. K. Rowling's *Hogwarts* castles (1997, 'The Modern Gothic Castle'). In the 12th century a contributor to the annals known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* wrote: "They greatly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle-work; then when the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men." Unfortunates vanished into the castles "where they were tortured with unspeakable tortures". Castles as prisons had long history - Carlisle, Dover, Tower of London and many more. In March 2011 the remaining prisoners left HMP Lancaster Castle, the last medieval castle in Britain in such use..

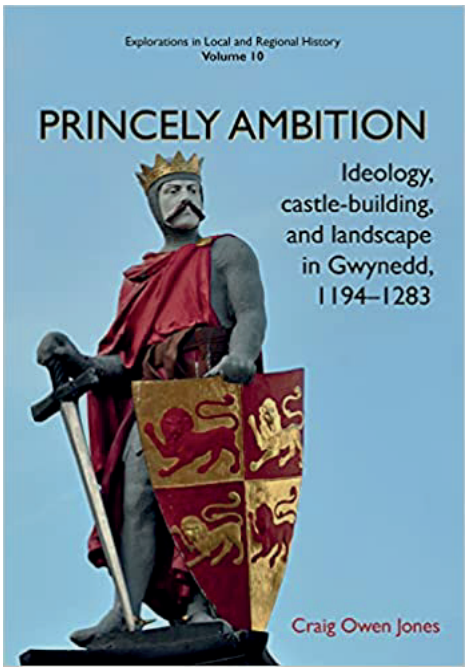
Most of Goodall's extant castles, symbols of authority usually built to shock and awe, were created in stone after the Norman invasion. However, his first castle is far older, Bamburgh (Northumberland). In 655 AD, according to local monk the Venerable Bede, the Mercian king Penda attempted to burn it down. Bede here describes Bamburgh castle as a city.

Relating the contents of *The Castle: A History* to other castle papers and themes included in this current CSG journal, Warwick is in (1485, 'Castles, Lineage and History'), Lady Anne Clifford is represented for 1649 'A Patrimony Restored' - Skipton, Appleby, Brough and Brougham (222-224); 1 and Windsor (1344, Arthur's Round Table and the Order of the Garter). Other interesting entries that caught this reviewers eye include Tattershall (1911) a date when Lord Curzon once again involved himself in saving the precious artefacts of the castle 'coming to view historic monuments not only as intrinsically valuable but as monuments to the history of the nation and the empire', and Ludlow, 'An Exhortation to Virtue' still the seat of the Council of the Marches, for 1634, (208-10). The entry of Dinefwr 'Castle as a Picture' (265-269) is an interesting essay on the picturesque aesthetic.

Kenilworth is one of several castles for which the author's chronological approach works well, thus allowing multiple entries; in fact there are seven entries for Kenilworth, from 1414 through to 1899: we see Henry V spending time there in 1414 ('A Retreat from Formality'); and then in 1899 Henry James visits, ('Mass Tourism') grumbling with his jaundiced eye at 'twopenny pamphlets and photographs' and 'beery vagrants sprawling on the grass'. 'I had learnt that with regard to most romantic sites in England, there is a constant cockneyfication with which you must make your account. There are always people on the field before you and there is something being drunk on the premises'.

John Goodall has a keen eye, with astute choices of texts for inclusion; they are sometimes surprising, evocative, and valuable reminders, broadening our horizons on the castle's place in history and culture and its lasting effect in our short lives.

NG



Princely Ambition: Ideology, castle-building and landscape in Gwynedd 1194-1283

Author: Craig Owen Jones
Publisher: University of Hertfordshire Press
Pb: xvi, 170pp., Illus.
ISBN: 978-1-912260-27-0
Price: £16.99
Published: February 2022
Reviewed by John R. Kenyon

Craig Owen Jones, who took his doctorate at the University of Bangor and now lectures in California, at San José State University, first came to the reviewer's attention as the author of two booklets on medieval Welsh heroes, Llywelyn Bren and Madog ap Llywelyn (published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch in 2006 and 2008). Since then, he has published several papers, including aspects of castles of the Welsh princes.

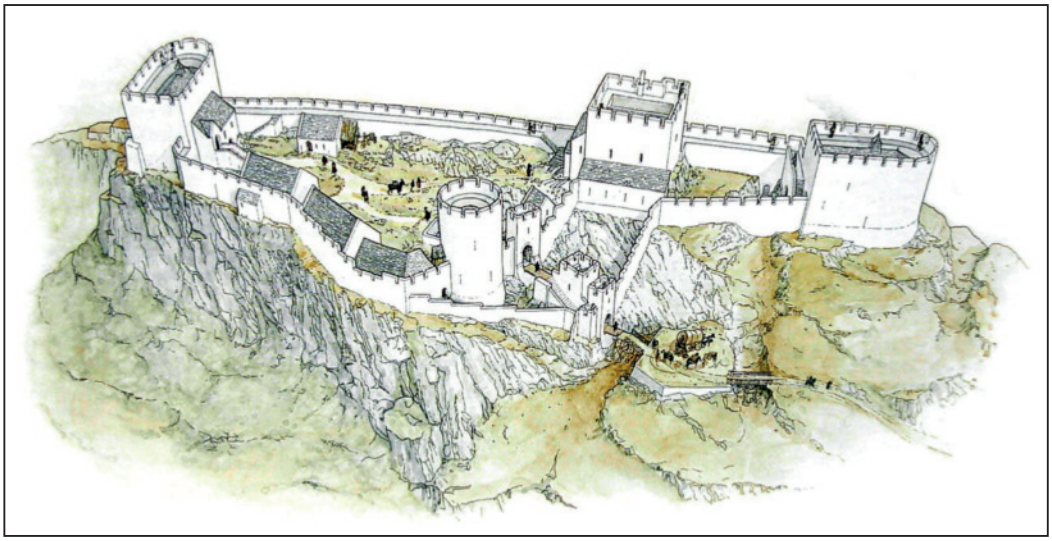
The modern study of the castles of the Welsh princes is almost a century old, beginning with Wilfrid Hemp's study of Ewloe and the Welsh castle plan in *Y Cymmrodor* (39,1928). Bryan O'Neil's work on Cricieth in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (98, 1944-5), some ten years after the castle came into state care, established the phasing of the Welsh and English occupation, although there is still disagreement regarding the different theories, the various relevant publications as well as the guidebook making interesting reading.

From the 1980s, Cadw was encouraged to take action in the promotion of native Welsh castle studies, with Richard Avent's booklet on the subject published at the time when the Edwardian castles were being celebrated. There were excavations of Dryslwyn in Carmarthenshire and Dolforwyn in Montgomeryshire, as well as several new Cadw guidebooks.

Nevertheless, and leaving aside Paul Davis's important contributions to the subject, Jones's *Princely Ambition* is the first academic study of the castles as a whole, concentrating on the buildings of Llywelyn the Great (d. 1240) and his grandson, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282), and it comes soon after two stimulating papers in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (164, 2015) by Hugh Brodie and David Stephenson, as well as David Hopewell's analysis of Castell Carndochan near Bala in the same journal (169, 2020).

The author examines three strategic stages in the princes' castle building 'programme': up to 1220; 1220-40; and the time of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the first two stages being the work of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, the Great. The latter's first castles see the need to control routes deep into Gwynedd, with Dolbadarn and Dolwyddelan. How much of a role Ewloe in north-east Wales had a place in this role is open to question, apart from 'cocking a snook' at nearby Chester and the English. Nevertheless, David Stephenson's work on this castle has suggested that a reinterpretation of the Latin *affirmavit* in a document of 1311, originally thought to mean that Ewloe had been built by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, is now taken to mean that this Llywelyn restored the castle of his grandfather.

The castles of the second phase of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's castle buildings are significant for their coastal location – Cricieth, Deganwy, with the possible use of the mottes at Caernarfon and Aber.



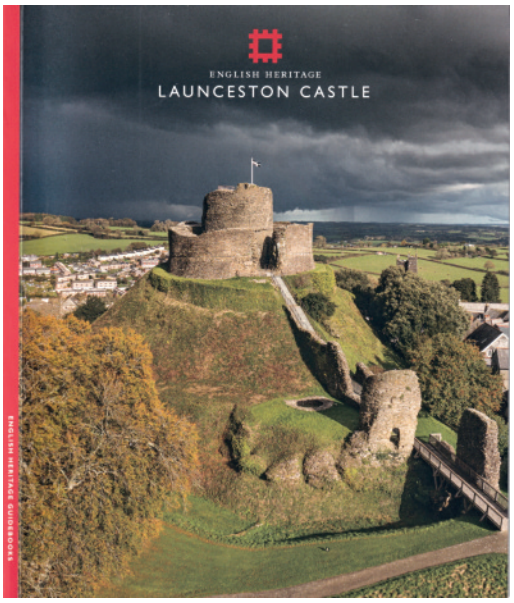
Artist's impression of how of Castell y Bere may have looked towards the end of the 13th century. The upper levels of the towers are conjectural, based on evidence from other Welsh stone-built castles. View from the west. Illustration by Chris Jones-Jenkins, 2004. © Cadw. Reproduced with thanks.

However, the most intriguing castle of this period in the reviewer's mind is Castell y Bere, in the foothills of Merioneth, seemingly built following a dispute between Llywelyn and his son Gruffudd.

Despite the poorer resources at Llywelyn's disposal, compared to the kings and great lords of England, Bere boasts two great apsidal towers, the southern added by Llywelyn's grandson, a sophisticated entrance arrangement, and a small keep. Work on the castle by the owner, William Wynne of Peniarth, in the 1950s, and when it came into state care in 1949, may have obscured elements that might have led to a greater understanding of the castle's development from the 1220s through to the time of Edward I, following its fall to the English in 1283. Nor should we forget the fine carved masonry that came from the north tower in the nineteenth century, some of which is in the collections of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and on display at Cricieth Castle and also at the museum's National History Museum at St Fagans, in the building Gwaithdy. Although access would not be easy for one of the CSG's studies on site, Castell y Bere would benefit from such an examination.

As a Salopian, it was good to see that Castell Bryn Amlwg merited coverage in the book, and this is another site that merits further discussion. Finally, I must defend myself in a small way regarding the first paragraph of the book. I am quoted as saying in my presidential address to the Cambrian Archaeological Association that Wales was once 'poor man of British castle studies' (*Archaeologia Cambrensis* 166 (2017), 16). In fact, I was referring to the study of the native castles, not Wales in general!

This is a book that needs to be read and then read again to mine all the information that the author presents. *Princely Ambition* should be on the shelf of everyone with an interest in medieval Wales, as well as castellologists. Although the resources of the Llywelyns were not great, especially when compared to the English crown and marcher lords, the castles that they built demand our respect in terms of their building and 'fitting out'. There is an excellent bibliography (Beverley Smith's works should have been listed under Smith, as Beverley himself does), and there is a good index. The author is to be congratulated on his book, and the publisher has produced a fine volume, up to the high standard of the other volumes in this series.



Launceston Castle

Author: Oliver H Creighton
Publisher: English Heritage
Pb 40 pp
ISBN: 978 1 910907 51 1
Published: July 2022
Price: £4.50

Reviewer: Neil Ludlow

This is a very attractive new guidebook. The arresting cover image – Launceston's imposing, triple-crowned motte, dramatically front-lit by a shaft of late summer sunlight, against a moody, rain-filled sky – gives a foretaste of its excellent layout and design. The text is both detailed and economical, and rather more discursive than its predecessor (Saunders 2002). This time, we begin with the motte and work our way towards the entry, arguably reflecting the relative importance of the surviving structures. Good use is made of maps, plans and contemporary prints, although the omission of John Norden's 1584 view is to be regretted. The fold-out plan now shows the main buildings at all levels. A number of new box-sections deal with topics such as the medieval town, the deer park (a particular highlight), excavations in the bailey and even animals at the castle. And the post-medieval period, rightly, receives a lot more attention.

Launceston is one of our most thoroughly investigated castles, having been comprehensively excavated by Andrew Saunders between 1961 and 1983. Around 20% of the bailey was opened up, while the motte was also investigated. The author of this guidebook has been closely associated with southwestern castles for over 20 years. He ably summarises Saunders's work, along with the current thinking on Launceston and its most important patron, Richard of Cornwall. In general, he follows the narrative established by Saunders (1998, 2002 and 2006), although some significant departures are made.

Probably established in 1068-9, the castle was initially an earth-and-timber enclosure to which the large motte may be secondary (Saunders 2006, 67, 229). A masonry gate-tower was added on the south side during the twelfth century, and stone bases possibly belonging to square, timber towers as at Restormel. The shell-keep is also regarded as twelfth-century.

Under Henry III's brother Richard, earl of Cornwall 1227-72, the castle received a masonry curtain wall with at least two mural towers, and the South Gatehouse was augmented with flanking towers. A cylindrical donjon, the 'High Tower', was built within the shell-keep, with views over the neighbouring deer park. The present North Gatehouse, facing the town, was added later. Both gatehouses may have been fronted by fortified bridges, surviving in part on the south side. Saunders assigned them to the mid-fourteenth century, maintaining 'at least three phases' separated the southern bridge from the gatehouse (Saunders 2006, 241, 458), but Creighton favours a mid-thirteenth-century date – while judiciously avoiding Saunders's term 'barbican'.

His other work shows Earl Richard to have been a conservative builder. Even so, all aspects of the standing masonry suggest that, apart from the

North Gatehouse, it was substantially complete by 1240 at the latest: the roll-moulded string-courses above pronounced basal batters, the solid South Gatehouse towers and its low arch, the rounded heads of the surviving two-centred arches, and the square portcullis grooves. The D-shaped gate-tower at the base of the motte meanwhile belongs to an 'Angevin' tradition of the 1190s-1230s, with entrances variously in the nose or in the flank e.g. Dover (Ludlow forthcoming). This accords with Saunders's view that Richard commenced work early on in order to assert his new authority in the southwest – and, as he noted, Launceston was Richard's only personal residence until 1231 (Saunders 2006, 33). His grant of the borough charter, between 1227 and 1242 (Creighton 2015, 327), may also be significant in this regard. Creighton nevertheless suggests construction after 1257, and perhaps extending into his son Edmund's tenure (also see Creighton 2015, 328; Higham 2009, 248-9).

The internal buildings within the excavated area were transformed under Earl Richard, reflecting the castle's changed status and functions. A dense arrangement of buildings, with timber superstructures, gave way to a more formalised layout of larger buildings, wholly in masonry and the ones now exposed to view: a substantial hall – to which an administrative chamber ('Council House') was added in the mid-fourteenth century – an associated kitchen, and a second large building identified as a stable.

Under Edmund (1272-1300), county administration was transferred to Lostwithiel, but Launceston remained the centre for the royal assizes and manorial courts. The earldom was held by Piers Gaveston between 1307 and 1312, but thereafter was subject to short-term grants until the Duchy of Cornwall was created for Edward the Black Prince in 1337. As with Edward's other properties, a survey was undertaken providing a valuable insight into the nature of the castle; I would have liked to have seen it reproduced in full, and unabridged – as a box-section, perhaps.

Like so many county-town castles, Launceston's role became increasingly that of judicial centre and gaol, which by the seventeenth century was yielding to borough control. Yet evidence of real 'decline' before 1500 is open to debate: fifteenth-century sources record the maintenance of a multitude of buildings (Saunders 2006, 40), few of which can be equated with the excavated structures.

The castle was garrisoned for the Crown during the Civil War, but escaped slighting. Under the Commonwealth, the duchy was dissolved but its estates were recovered after the Restoration in 1660. It is thought that the County Gaol shown in the bailey by the Buck brothers in 1734 had been established in the late seventeenth century, but this is based solely on a description of 1684 which mentions the 'very large base court [with] in it the King's Gaol' (Saunders 2006, 43). Launceston is unfortunate in lacking a contemporary plan of this gaol, which would allow its location and layout to be established more firmly – its remains appear to have been comprehensively robbed, and it is not shown on Creighton's plan.

The stable building has a complex developmental history. Initially, it was heated by a central hearth, later replaced by a corner smithing hearth, but both phases were associated with numerous finds of horse equipment (Saunders 2006, 129, 132). The hearth was disused in the final phase, when the quantity of tack diminishes. Instead, the building received a latrine, screened off at the low end, and a possible dais at the high end; two rows of postholes were thought to be for benching (Saunders 2006, 140, 214). This phase was regarded by Saunders as administrative. The building was disused, and fairly promptly demolished, around 1300, which Saunders plausibly argued was associated with the transfer of county administration to Lostwithiel (Saunders 2006, 216, 257.

Space may have prevented mention of the evidence for medieval buildings behind the South Gatehouse, and they are not shown in the reconstruction on pp. 26-7. An associated

cesspit produced finds of high status, and Saunders argued that the remains relate to the earl's hall and chamber mentioned in the sources (Saunders 2006, 24, 37, 461-2). A link with the gatehouse is suggested by a fifteenth-century reference to a 'withdrawing chamber over the gate called Southyate' (Saunders 2006, 40). Nevertheless, most of the exposed masonry here is seventeenth-century, as correctly shown in Creighton's plan; Saunders's guidebook mistakenly shows it as late-medieval.

There is only one indisputable error, which arguably the editor should have detected. The photograph on p. 37 does not show American soldiers in 1944, but First World War patients from the hospital established at nearby Werrington Park in 1915.

Saunders's work, as Creighton admirably shows, was a major achievement. Nevertheless, Saunders pointed out that it posed as many questions as it answered. For this reviewer, the outstanding ones are:

1. **Date of shell-keep:**

There is no direct dating evidence (Saunders 2006, 254). The main entry through the shell-wall is fragmentary and only the arch springers survive, but it is regarded as of two phases: an inner arch springing from a chamfered impost, assigned to the twelfth century, augmented in the thirteenth century by a lower, chamfered outer arch fronted by a square-grooved portcullis. But the facework is similar throughout, suggesting that the two may in fact belong to a single, rebated archway.[1] One of the two mural stair entries moreover shows a pointed head and chamfered jambs (Saunders 2006, 15), both of thirteenth-century character. It must also be emphasised that there is no physical evidence, either above or below ground, for any internal buildings and the mural chamber on the west side, with its latrine, was interpreted as a prison cell by Sidney Toy (1933, 214). Creighton, like Saunders, notes that the shell-keep summit provided both a viewpoint and an appearance platform; it could be argued that these were its primary functions as built, accounting for its thickness – twice the width of the average shell-wall – a grand, purpose-built 'promenade'. So was it a 'shell-keep', as we understand the term, at all?

2. **Date of High Tower:**

The High Tower is considered to be secondary to the shell-keep,[2] perhaps even late thirteenth-century (Saunders 2006, 58), but all evidence suggests the two were built as a unit, with a surrounding 'chemise' wall – rebuilt in the nineteenth century – following shortly afterwards. Creighton likens this triple structure to a crown, perhaps celebrating Richard's election as King of the Romans in 1257. But close parallels exist at unrelated castles e.g. Tretower, where the round tower/shell-keep combination was in place before 1250, as it may have been at Carmarthen by *c*.1230, and also possibly Bedford, Southampton and Marlborough; other donjon chemises also existed in Britain, e.g. at Lyonshall, Herefs.. The High Tower's ground-floor entry, with a double-chamfered, segmental-pointed head, is early fourteenth-century in character, and evidently an insertion into the mural-stair lobby; a large area of infill is visible above it in the photo on p. 9 of the guidebook.[3] Otherwise, the tower's features accord well with a 1220s-30s date, including the curving mural stair – which is not dissimilar to those in the shell-wall. So it is possible that, as built, the main entry was at first-floor level, accessed via an external timber stair as at Tretower, but here the landing doubled as a bridge to the shell-wall. The marked ovality of the shell-wall may have been deliberate, to create space for a

[1] They show different mortars (Saunders 2006, 16), but repairs are recorded throughout the medieval period and this may result from repointing.

[2] It is described as lying stratigraphically above the shell-keep in the excavation report (Saunders 2006, 62-4). However, the accompanying section drawing suggests the two were built from the same horizon, with no intervening deposits (ibid., 65 fig. 5.4). The 'Blue Guide' assigned both to the early thirteenth century (Jones 1959, 4-5).

[3] *cf*. the secondary ground-floor entries in many other donjons, e.g. Pembroke, Skenfrith and Dinefwr.

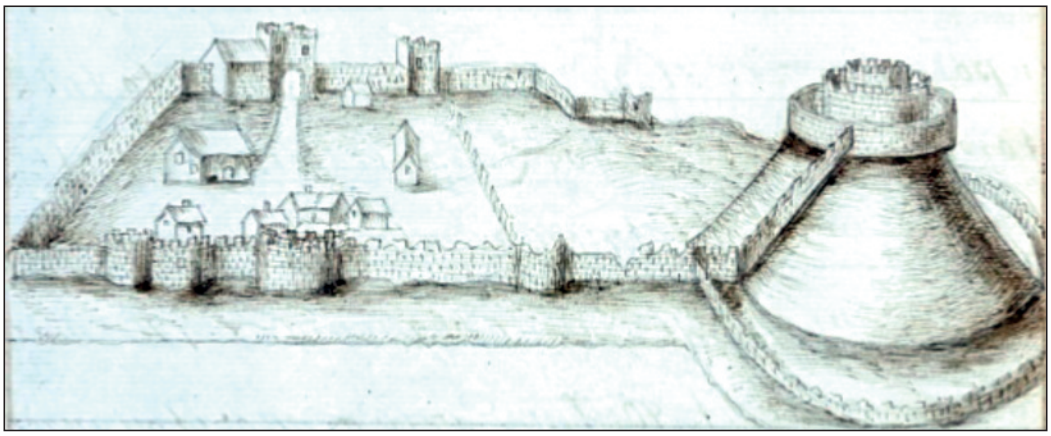
straight stair; timber stringers fixed at both ends, but otherwise free, might account for the absence of physical evidence. And although it is contended that the joist-sockets are primary features, to support a continuous platform between tower and shell-wall, the resulting space would be impossibly dark, while it is also recognised that, in their *present* arrangement, the sockets are later, perhaps Civil War period (Saunders 2006, 17, 231). Creighton suggests that the ground-floor chamber may have been repurposed as a prison; perhaps this occurred under the Black Prince, to compensate for the weakness of the existing gaols as recorded in 1337, providing a possible context for the insertion of its external entry (and, perhaps, for the renewal of the first-floor fireplace hood brackets with their present, cavetto-moulded consoles). The mural stair could be drawbarred against the ground-floor entrance lobby, which itself could be barred against both the exterior and the interior. Access to the motte top was maintained well into the seventeenth century, when it was recorded that one of the castle gaols occupied a tower (Saunders 2006, 42, 77).

3. **Date and function of North Gatehouse:**

The North Gatehouse is assigned to Earl Richard, but its construction truncated all stratigraphic relationships with the rest of the castle (Saunders 2006, 177). The 'Blue Guide' felt it might instead be early fourteenth-century (Jones 1959, 14), consistent with its multiple-chamfered arches and rib-vault. Gaveston's tenure 1307-12 is a possible context. But the quality of the late-medieval finds retrieved from its cesspit – amongst the 'highest-status artefacts of all' found at the castle (Saunders 2006, 461) – and windows that were possibly glazed, may confirm that it was the constable's lodging. If so, it cannot have been the lodging that was described in 1337 as 'old and weak', and treated separately from the gatehouses (Saunders 2006, 37), suggesting the present gatehouse was built shortly afterwards (though apparently not recorded). The contemporary cesspit served latrines at both floor levels, divided from the ground-floor chamber by a wall and with an arch to carry a further partition and seating. The latrine became disused during the sixteenth century but the dividing wall survived until the later nineteenth century (Saunders 2006, 180-3). High status militates against medieval use of the ground-floor chamber as a 'common' prison – while an account from 1650 clearly distinguishes the constable's lodging from the county gaol (Saunders 2006, 42)[1] – but it is nevertheless traditionally associated with a seventeenth-century gaol notorious as the 'Doomsdale'. It might have been a porter's lodge; while no observation slit survives, the north wall has been considerably rebuilt (Saunders 2006, 179).

Creighton, like others, regards Earl Richard as one of the outstanding castle builders of his generation (also see e.g. Goodall 2011, 188). But of his nine or so masonry castles, only Launceston, Tintagel and Lydford show masonry that can be confidently attributed to Richard. None of them can really be compared with the castles of the Crown, nor such peers as William de Valence (e.g. Pembroke, 1250s) and Ranulf Earl of Chester (e.g. Beeston and Bolingbroke, 1220s). Richard's castles reveal little of the ambition and conspicuous consumption for which he was apparently known, or indeed of his fraternal relationship with the Crown. Only Wallingford was particularly large or complex, to which Richard appears to have added a concentric defensive line, regarded as innovative, in the 1250s. However, the castle is thought to have been more-or-less fully concentric since the mid-twelfth century (see Creighton 2015, 318 fig. 4, 321), while Paul Remfry has suggested that the concentric earthwork around Richard's Berkhamsted, instead a siege-work from 1216, was a similar defence added *before* the siege (also see Goodall 2011, 44).

[1] And the gatehouse cannot be identified with the 'Dungeon of Pit' recorded in 1611, as references to '*le pitte* in which thieves and felons are kept' occur from the mid-fifteenth century onwards (Saunders 2006, 40, 42) – when use of the gatehouse was at its most prestigious.



John Norden's view of Launceston Castle from his original notebook, 1584. (Trinity College Cambridge image ref: Launceston O.4.19_384_O.4.19_f181v.jp2.jpg). The full page is printed in Renn, 'Three Shell Keeps', 1969. A good coloured John Speed (1611) modified copy of Norden is published in the new Launceston guidebook, but is less detailed.

Mere Castle, begun by Richard in 1259, has gone but excavation revealed a rectangular enclosure with cylindrical corner towers and two square interval towers (Lovibond 1938, 432), in the kind of geometric layout becoming well-established in Britain during the mid-thirteenth century e.g. Skenfrith (1220s), Dublin (1210-30), and Goodrich (1216-45: Ludlow forthcoming). And Mere's extensive rebuild in 1300 suggests poor-quality construction (Baker 1896, 230-1), while Richard's documented three-storey tower at Berkhamsted has left no definite trace. Tintagel is architecturally modest, but here it was perhaps deliberate – a medieval idea of a 'Dark Age' palace?

In the absence of any murage grants, it is also uncertain whether Launceston's masonry town wall belongs to Earl Richard's tenure; only a gatehouse survives, which is fourteenth-century in character (*cf*. the castle North Gate, and High Tower entry) and appears not to incorporate any earlier fabric.

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