

# Beds of ‘Chapel’ Form in Sixteenth-Century Scottish Inventories: The Worst Sort of Bed

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1 *Lit parement*: a ‘sperver’ with a *corona* over a bed without a tester or celour. *Bibliothèque de Genève*, MS Fr. 165 fol. 4, Charles VI and Pierre Salmon, c. 1415

Several sixteenth-century Scottish inventories mention ‘chapel beds’. A chapel bed was constructed at Dunfermline palace in November 1600 for Anne of Denmark prior to the birth of Charles I. This article proposes that these were beds provided with a suspended canopy with curtains which would surround any celour or tester (Figure 1).

The ‘chapel’ was perhaps equivalent with the English ‘sperver’ or ‘sparver,’ a term not much used in Scotland in the sixteenth century, and more commonly found in older English texts of the late Middle Ages. The curtains of the medieval sperver hung from a rigid former, which could be hoop-like, a *roundabout* or *corona*, suspended from the chamber ceiling and perhaps principally constructed around a wooden cross like a simple chandelier.<sup>1</sup> This canopy with its two curtains drawn back was given the name *sperver* from a fancied resemblance to a type of hawk, while also bearing a strong resemblance to a bell tent. A form of the word used in Scotland in 1474 — *sparwart* — is close to the etymological root of the word for hawk.<sup>2</sup> The rigid former was called

<sup>1</sup> Leland (1770), pp. 301–02.

<sup>2</sup> *Treasurer’s Accounts*, vol. 1 (1877), p. 141; Eames (1977), pp. 75 and 83; see *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘Sparver’ and ‘Sperver’.



2 *Annunciation*, Hans Baldung Grein, c. 1515. *The British Museum*



3 *Annunciation c. 1626, detail of painted vault at Provost Skene's House Aberdeen. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*

an *angel* in an ordinance of Edward IV, a term recycled in the seventeenth century during the second flowering of the hung bed.<sup>3</sup> An enclosing canopy for a bed might also be called a *traverse*. One bed with a counterpoint embroidered with the Scottish royal arms at Hampton Court in 1548, perhaps looted from Holyroodhouse during Lord Hertford's raid on Edinburgh in May 1544, had a tester with a tent;

The Tester embraudered with a kinge sitting in a bayne, with a Tente conteyning in length ii yerdes di quarter & in breadth ii yerdes quarter good having a lytle fringe on both sydes of red silke and golde and v curteins of crymson sarcenet embraudered apon the sydes and benethe with gold fringe conteyning in lengthe all together ix yerdes di.<sup>4</sup>

The sperver or chapel bed may have been particularly associated with childbirth and the christening ceremony.<sup>5</sup> The form was also established as part of the iconography of the Annunciation, featured in woodcuts, relief panels, and painted as late as the 1620s on an Aberdeen ceiling (Figures 2 and 3).<sup>6</sup> Suspended canopies were also provided for cradles, bath-tubs and close-stools.<sup>7</sup> At the Kirk o'Field in 1567, the close-stool described as a *coing ou trou* by the valet Nicolas Hubert was inventoried as *une chese persee couvert de veloux garnye de deux bassin* draped with *un pavillon de taffetas changent a sa gaarderobe*, and 'ane cannabie of yallow varian taffetie freinyeit with

<sup>3</sup> Thornton (1978), pp. 149–53.

<sup>4</sup> Starkey (1998), p. 283, no. 12174.

<sup>5</sup> Woolgar (2006), pp. 237, 252.

<sup>6</sup> Bath (2003), 126; Insh (2012), pp. 197–201.

<sup>7</sup> Eames (1977), pp. 96–98.

reid and yallow silk quhilk may serve for ane stuill of ease, Loissit in the kingis ludging quhen he deit in Februar 1567.<sup>8</sup>

The medieval sperver form of bed may also have survived longer in France. In England two such beds appear in the Hardwick Hall inventory of 1600. In France these canopies were called *pavillons*, tents. The bed of Joan de Valence, wife of the Marcher lord, was provided with a pavilion in August 1296, and in November at Goodrich Castle the structure was augmented with five crooks.<sup>9</sup> In the 1468 inventory of Chateaudun, a rectangular sperver appears as a type of the pavillon, 'ung autre petit pavillon carré, en facon d'espervyer.' Some of these hung beds, it has long been argued, were set up in public state rooms as *lits de parement* and were emblems of authority, never intended for sleeping.<sup>10</sup>

Owners of chapel beds in Scotland included the earl of Huntly and Lord Fleming. The English diplomat Thomas Randolph said Huntly's beds were 'of the worst sort'. Mary Queen of Scots had some of her chapel bed canopies cut down to make curtains for free-standing beds. At Tutbury Castle, a canopy bed was improvised for her in January 1585, and confusion occurred in discussions over her bedchamber hangings, after John Somer used the French term *pavillon* to describe the penthouse form of the room rather than the bed.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: STICKE UP THE AUNGELL

A manuscript from the College of Arms describing the duties of the officers of the English royal bedchamber was published in 1777. Although it is a paper of the time of Henry VIII, it refers to the 'oolde ordre of Kynges bedde' and is probably a copy of an ordinance of Edward IV.<sup>12</sup>

The officers were instructed to put up the *angel* and then let down the curtains only after the bedding and pillows were arranged; 'then every of them sticke up the aungell about the bedde, and to lette downe the corteyns of the sayd bedde or sparver'.<sup>13</sup> Instructions for making the bed of Edward IV mention that it had its own curtains (hanging from its *celour*), but was also set within a curtained traverse.<sup>14</sup> The quantity of fabric used in 1481 for the two side curtains and foot curtain of two of Edward's spervers was slightly more than that used for the *celour* and *testour*, at 22 and 21 yards. The *celour* and *tester* of these beds were made of 19 yards of velvet, and the sperver curtains of sarsenet of matching colour.<sup>15</sup> Although the account for a bed made in London for Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scots, in London in June 1503 does not overtly mention its arrangement, no less than 65 yards of crimson sarsenet were bought from Guido Portinari for its three curtains.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Pitcairn (1833), p. 501; Robertson (1863), pp. 33 and 178.

<sup>9</sup> Woolgar (1999), pp. 52 and 78.

<sup>10</sup> Eames (1977), pp. 84–86.

<sup>11</sup> Lodge (1838), p. 253.

<sup>12</sup> Brooke (1777).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Nichols, (1790), pp. 121–22.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolas (1830), pp. 142–43.

<sup>16</sup> Bain (1888), pp. 344–46, 440–41.

A pair of curtains and rings were bought in Bruges to encircle the sperver of the bed of James I of Scotland in 1436; 'et pro quadam circumferencie pro lecto domini nostri regis vocata sperver, duobus pandis linthiaminum, una uncia cum tribus quarteris de annulis aureis,' (and for the bed of our lord the king, to go round the place called *sperver*, two *pands* of linen, and an ounce and three quarters of gold rings).<sup>17</sup> It is tempting to identify 'quadam' — place — with day and night hangings for a state cradle called *lieu* mentioned in 1281.<sup>18</sup>

The word 'sperver' appears twice again in the fifteenth-century Scottish exchequer rolls, in the context of cradles, and has not been found in a sixteenth-century Scottish text. Forty-eight spervers appear in the index of the 1548 *Inventory of Henry VIII*, and among those entries where the curtain length is mentioned the longest were used by the Ladies Mary and Elizabeth. However, these curtains are rarely more than 4 yards deep, and it is likely that these were canopies with testers to be suspended over beds but not of the medieval sperver 'sparrowhawk' form.<sup>19</sup> Many inventories have no intrinsic clues to explain why sperver beds were differentiated from those listed with *celour* and *tester*, a typical example being the Framlingham Castle inventory of 1524, where some *celours* and *testers* accompanied 'plane trussing beds of wainscot' while the spervers and a 'square bed' are listed with matching counterpoints only.<sup>20</sup>

Many, perhaps most, royal Scottish beds would have had posts which are only rarely mentioned. A list of eleven timber bed frames was made in 1561, specified by the fabric they supported. Two important beds packed up in the royal wardrobes in 1543, constructed with travel in mind, had individual leather cases for their two *trees*; the bed trees in the wardrobe at Falkland were covered with green velvet to match the bed.<sup>21</sup> Covers were made for bed posts in Mary's reign in the 1560s.<sup>22</sup>

It seems possible that in sixteenth-century England some suspended bed canopies were called 'spervers' while in Scotland some canopy beds called 'chapel beds' were arranged in the medieval sperver hawk form. This could be viewed as a conservative retention of the prevalent fourteenth-century bed form in Scotland with its extravagant display of fabric, the 'beds of the worst sort' identified by Thomas Randolph in 1562. Mary Queen of Scots modernised a number of her chapel beds in 1565.

#### LADY FLEMING'S CHAPEL BED

Elizabeth Ross married John, Lord Fleming, in May 1562 at Holyroodhouse.<sup>23</sup> Her mother-in-law Janet Stewart, Lady Fleming, a daughter of James IV, had been the governess of Mary, Queen of Scots, in France and had a child with Henri II. Her brother-in-law, James, Lord Fleming, married Barbara Hamilton, a daughter of Regent Arran in 1553, and a sister-in-law Mary Fleming was one the companions of Mary, Queen of Scots. The Flemings were clearly well connected although they suffered at the hands

<sup>17</sup> *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol. 4, p. 682.

<sup>18</sup> Eames (1977), p. 95, quoting Deshaines, vol. 1, (1912), p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Starkey (1998), p. 454 (index).

<sup>20</sup> Ridgard (1985), pp. 132–45.

<sup>21</sup> Harrison (2008), pp. 53–54.

<sup>22</sup> Robertson (1863), pp. 41–42.

<sup>23</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Scotland*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 622 and 628.

of the Regents for their active support of the captive queen during the Marian civil war.

Little is known of the Fleming homes at Boghall near Biggar and Cumbernauld Castle. During one of Queen Mary's visits to Cumbernauld the roof of the great hall collapsed. John and Elizabeth held Dumbarton Castle for Mary until 1571, when the Regent Mar captured the castle and allowed Elizabeth to depart with her household goods. After Elizabeth died, in 1578 her effects at Boghall were delivered to her kinsman by marriage, the earl of Athol, to be kept for her heirs. The items include the dress given to her by the queen for her marriage in 1562, and an interesting group of bed roofs;<sup>24</sup>

Item, ane chapell ruif of reid skarlat cuttit out upon quhit satene & taffitie, frinzeit with reid and quhit silk;  
 Aucht (8) tappis (tops) of beds of trie & gilt;  
 Ane pein of purpour velvet freinzeit with blak and reid silk;  
 Ane round ruiff of blak satene bordourit with blak silk and freinzeit with black silk;  
 Ane ruiff of gray dalmes pasmentit with gold and blak silk;  
 Four curtingis of gray dalmes for the said roof; and three bandis to the beddis stoups (feet or posts).<sup>25</sup>

How this round black satin roof differed from the Scottish 'chapel' roof remains unclear. The eight gilt wooden finials, a rare instance of decorated carving in a Scottish inventory, may have been part of the chapel roof. While a round roof might become associated with the idea of a round chapel of the Holy Sepulchre type, the form being that described in the *Collectanea*, 'a cros of trie covered with a Bole above of silver gilt for the said sperver',<sup>26</sup> a rigid rectangular element would be more convenient for hanging curtains, and with gables formed on its side would resemble a cruciform building. The eight gilt finials could sit at the four corners and apices of the gables. This form is that of the black painted wooden canopy above a catafalque of the *chapelle ardente* used at funerals (Figure 4). Something of the character of the *chapelle ardente* is preserved at St Brides, Douglas, Lanarkshire, where the walls above the tomb of the crusader James Douglas, called the Good (d. 1330), are painted as black drapes with candle flames expressed as a pattern of heraldic teardrops. However, no illustration of a fabric or wooden bed canopy for domestic use of the gabled *chapelle ardente* form has been found, with the exception of the state bed or canopy depicted on the great seal of Scotland used from 1543. This bed, which lacks fabric hangings, has four turned posts and a celour in the *antique* manner. Perhaps for compositional reasons an arcade or screen with pilasters of baluster form and a trailing crest is shown in the background. No such architectural canopy is discernible in the royal inventories, although it may be listed as an *auld ruif*.

A simple flat-roofed rectangle with pented sides rather like the light of a billiard table could be more plausible, also utilising the eight gilt finials, a suspended celour with some of the character of the *chapelle ardente*. This form of celour, apparently

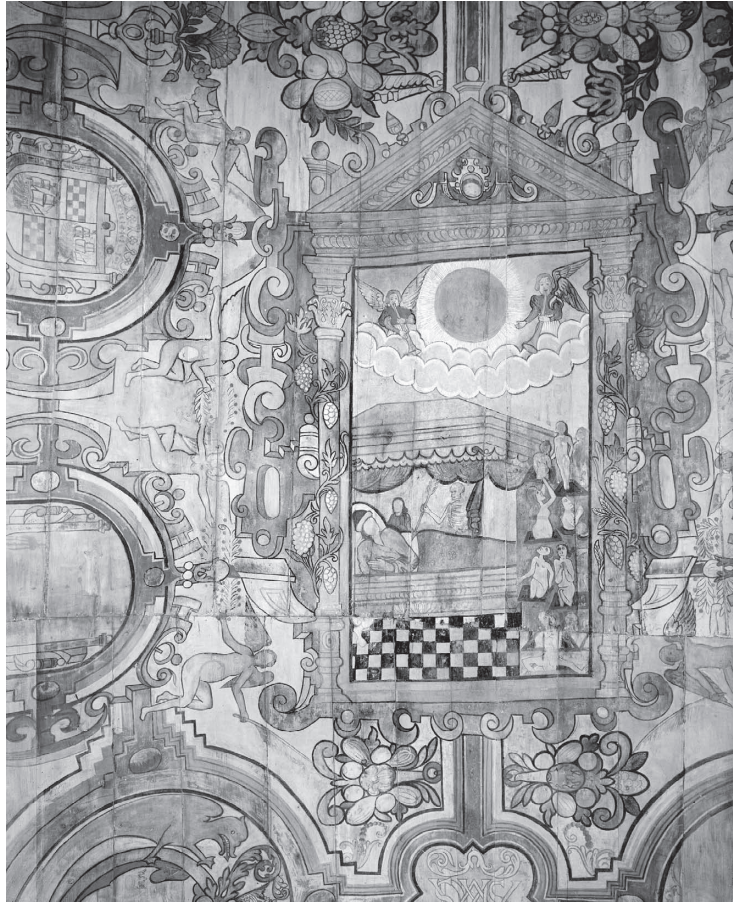
<sup>24</sup> *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. II (1916), p. 162.

<sup>25</sup> Hunter (1863), pp. 331–34.

<sup>26</sup> Leland (1770), p. 302.



4 Commémoration de la mort d'Anne, reine de France, duchesse de Bretagne, c. 1515.  
*Museum Meermano MMW, 10 C 12 fol. 24v*



5 Grandtully Chapel,  
detail of painted  
wooden vault, c. 1636.  
*Royal Commission  
on the Ancient and  
Historical Monuments  
of Scotland*

without posts, was painted in a death-bed and resurrection scene at Grandtully Chapel, Perthshire, c. 1636 (Figure 5).<sup>27</sup>

Octagonal forms, like those depicted in some Annunciation scenes, could also employ eight finials. Umbrella forms were imbued with religious symbolism; in Scotland two conspicuous examples of hexagonal chapels were the royal chapel of St Triduana at Restalrig, and a carved canopy at Linlithgow Palace, which bears a precocious resemblance to the duomo at Florence. These Scottish hexaform structures were linked with the traditional form of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the pyx used at Mass, although octagonal chapels and baldacchinos were not unknown.<sup>28</sup> A hexagonal wooden canopy like a pulpit sounding-board tops a throne-bench in a manuscript illustration of Henry IV of England (Figure 6), and an illustration of an altar of St George made for Henry VI shows a remarkable hexagonal vaulted chapel.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Bath (2003), p. 264.

<sup>28</sup> MacDonald (2000), pp. 27–60.

<sup>29</sup> BL, Royal 15 E. VI, f.439; Add Mss, 50001, fol. 7.





6 Hoccleve and Henry IV with hexagonal canopy, engraving after manuscript illumination.  
*The British Museum*

A canopy sculpture at Linlithgow is usefully suggestive with an angel in a nimbus holding two drapes above, which were originally painted with lettering to compliment the statue of the Pope beneath. The hexaform umbrella canopy is of course seen in the sperver employed as the heraldic badge of the Worshipful Company of Upholders of London, dating from 1465 in the reign of Edward IV, so-called in a grant of the arms of 1634.<sup>30</sup>

While these solemn, liminal and mystic associations are attractive, a much more prosaic alternative must be mentioned. The royal inventories are copies in Scots, written after the dissolution of Mary's court and the departure of her French wardrobe servants. It is possible that 'chapel' was a recollection of their colloquial *chapeau* and its cognates *chappelle* and *chapelet*, all referring to round forms such as hats, garlands, or these frames for the beds, a word covering any conjunction of fabric and joinery. *Chapelet* was the French name for the theatrical device of a descending cloud, a conceit used at Scottish royal festivals, a *chappel de roses* was a wedding garland, a *chappelle d'un métier* was a round weaver's frame.<sup>31</sup> While some hung beds of the late Middle Ages were intended to mark rites of passage, the use of the word *chappelle* in Mary's wardrobe may have been a mere convenience to denote a structural type. As an analogy, one French technical furniture word at least was imported into Scots in Mary's bedchamber; she had a pair of 'carrocht' — *carreau* cushions or stools.<sup>32</sup>

#### CHAPEL BEDS AT HUNTLY CASTLE

The inventory of goods seized from Strathbogie, or Huntly Castle, the caput of George Gordon, earl of Huntly, which were taken to Abedeen and shipped to Leith in November 1562, includes recognisable luxury items which must have recent

<sup>30</sup> Thornton (1978), p. 159.

<sup>31</sup> Borgnis (1821), p. 52.

<sup>32</sup> *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 12 (1970), p. 41. Christopher Rowell offered this interpretation of carrocht.

acquisitions, furnishing a palace reconstructed *c.* 1553. There was a collection of Venetian glass, other vessels apparently of maiolica and Palissy ware, and a suite of gilt leather hangings. Of the forty five pieces of tapestry only some are described, as large leaf 'verdours' with birds.

Of the nine beds, only one of yellow damask was described — 'maid like a chapel' — but it is clear that two of the others were chapel beds. The yellow bed was 'maid foure nuikit in December 1566,' perhaps for the baptism of James VI. This bed and another, of alternate cloth of gold and silver, were provided with coverings for the *stowppis*, the four feet of the bed. A third bed, of green damask with silver fringes was also made 'foure nuikit.' There was a little velvet tablecloth en-suite, a *burdclaith*, this tablecloth and five pieces of the verdour tapestry were burnt in the Kirk o'Field explosion in February 1567. Only one of the other beds was *auld*.<sup>33</sup>

The layout of the inventory, and a letter from Thomas Randolph, suggest that these nine beds were displayed at Huntly in 1562. The inventory records three consignments from Aberdeen, the first group consisting of the state beds and hangings, followed by a further consignment of wardrobe gear including ecclesiastical goods which had been stored by the earl since the reformation of St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen, and thirdly glass and ceramic vessels. The vessels were delivered to the French wardrobe servant Servais de Conde by the porter of Holyroodhouse, Alexander Bog. This trunk with contents largely intact was still in Edinburgh Castle in 1578.<sup>34</sup> While the inventory notes the receipt of all these items in the royal wardrobe in December, Randolph's letters and the *Treasurer's Accounts* tell the sequence of events at Huntly. The castle was first taken and searched on 12 October 1562 but not held for the queen, subsequently after the death of the earl and a formal surrender the castle was invested by a royal garrison.

Randolph wrote that in October the chapel at Huntly was garnished for Roman Catholic use, the house was searched for the earl who had slipped away, and no 'stuff' was found 'save a few beds of the worst sort.'<sup>35</sup> As there was not time or opportunity to unpack stored beds and assess their character, these beds of the worst sort must have been assembled in the principal state rooms. Amongst the nine beds described in the December inventory, those of chapel form appear egregious. Randolph, an agent of ultra-Protestantism in Scotland, in the context of reports of a search for Romish gear, recorded an adverse impression of these beds. This was not necessarily because they were called chapel beds, but perhaps because their form (perhaps now unusual in England) was so obviously associated with the visual culture of the annunciation and the cult of Mary. Only a few weeks before the earl's fall, Randolph had stayed two nights at Huntly and wrote; 'his howse is fayrer, beste furnished of anye howse that I have seen in thys countie.'<sup>36</sup>

The earl's great-grandson, the second Marquis of Huntly, still had three chapel beds in the best bedrooms at his other seat, the Bog o' Gight in 1648;

<sup>33</sup> Robertson (1863), pp. 49–56 and 177 (beds nos 2-H, 8-H, 9-H.).

<sup>34</sup> Robertson (1863), p. xxiv; Thomson (1815), p. 241.

<sup>35</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Scotland*, vol. 1 (1858), no. 1144.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 652.



7 Huntly Castle, from the 1648 inventory. *Historic Scotland/Picture, Stephen Conlin*

Ane chappell bed with ane imbroyddied rooffe, ane pand and headpiece of yellow floured velvet imbroyddied with gold, and fyve piece of damask rid and yellow courtines, with a freinzie of silk and gold and laid with gold laice, six gilted knappes with feathers and spaingles, a stitched taffitie matt.<sup>37</sup>

These beds at Bog had six knops, which suggest the canopies were of hexagonal form. They were in the rooms of the Marquis and his sons. The Huntly inventory of 1648 does not list any chapel beds. The inventory supplies enough detail to use for a visualisation of the Castle in the first half of the seventeenth century (Figure 7).

#### MARY DISMANTLES HER CHAPEL BEDS

According to notes in inventories of the royal wardrobe and the French wardrobe book of Servais de Conde, at the time of her marriage to Lord Darnley Mary began to dismantle her chapel beds. The beds, with those from Huntly, were either rebuilt as ‘fourre nuikit beds’ perhaps free-standing, or the hangings split up for other deployment in 1565 and 1566. Joseph Robertson, who published some of these inventories in 1863, noted that the manuscripts were certified by Mr John Wood, the secretary of Regent Moray, and so were copies made *c.* 1568–69. Items were numbered in these lists,

<sup>37</sup> NRS, GD44/49/13/1/1.

cross-referenced and added to original sheets, with an 'H' referring to the items from Huntly.<sup>38</sup> Robertson did not speculate on the motive for making these copies, but they were in all likelihood connected with the Regent's attempts to sell household goods and royal jewels in April 1568 to fund his new regime, with expensive projects like the siege of Dumbarton Castle in view.<sup>39</sup>

The reformed chapel beds included a bed of green velvet 'maid of the imperiall like a chapell garnisit with ruif'. Here 'imperial' probably refers to the pattern of the velvet, rather than the form of the bed. A part of this bed was 'worne auld'. A yellow damask chapel bed from Huntly was reconstructed, 'maid foure nukit', and its curtains used elsewhere, and a chapel bed of incarnate damask was completely broken up. The inventory notes tell us that the bed taken for Mary's use at Lochleven was the last remaining chapel bed, of green velvet, utilising curtains from the 'imperial' bed. At Lochleven her cloth of state of crimson satin with gold trim was not her own, but one taken from Huntly.<sup>40</sup>

Rebuilding the beds (some were also lengthened) would require new timberwork and posts. An inventory of the goods of her half-brother, James Stewart (later Regent Moray), compiled in 1562, surprisingly mentions a bed made by one Schang, so we know that noteworthy timber beds were made in Scotland at this time. The Schang family are well documented as wrights in the sixteenth century, three brothers featuring in the records of the craft in Perth from the 1530s, others as burgesses and deacons of the craft in Edinburgh in the 1560s, a later generation established in the Canongate and working as wrights with the royal artillery in Edinburgh Castle in 1600.<sup>41</sup> Although there is no record of any Schang making bed posts for Mary, the Regent Arran had the turner of royal artillery making posts and chair legs for him at Edinburgh Castle in 1552. This in-house team was clearly adequate to provide the furniture needs of the royal household, including the expert French carver Andrew Mansioun, who made the beds for the yacht of James V in 1539 and the stalls for St Giles Kirk in 1555.<sup>42</sup> Mansioun went to Aberdeen with the gunners in 1562 and probably helped dismantle the furnishings at Huntly Castle.<sup>43</sup> Mansioun's predecessor as Master Wright of the Artillery, the versatile John Drummond of Milnab, was making palace doors as early as 1507, and would have been equal to the task of making the chest with the royal insignia of James IV described by Aidan Harrison in the *Regional Furniture* 2012. As the oak for this chest was fast-grown, unlike the standard imported oak of the time, it may be pertinent that Drummond lead expeditions to harvest the native timber that was preferred by the royal artillery. A number of chests or *kists* procured for the household of James IV and recorded in the *Treasurer's Accounts* without a specified vendor may have been provided by the artillery wrights. Other chests were bought ad-hoc in Edinburgh to serve immediate travel requirements, one on the day of Margaret Tudor's entry, and would be unlikely to be carved with royal insignia.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Robertson (1863), pp. 177–78.

<sup>39</sup> Labanoff (1844), pp. 132–34; Blackwood (1834), p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> Thomson (1815), p. 125; Robertson (1863), pp. 19–20 and 50.

<sup>41</sup> *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (1887), p. 649; NLS Ms. 19288, fol. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas (2005), 78; *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 7 (1907), p. 307.

<sup>43</sup> *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 11 (1916), p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 2 (1900), p. 391.

The detailed record of fabric delivered from the wardrobe for the queen's use survives for this period with exhaustive detail. Some was used to make covers for bed posts *pillier*, including the four posts of a red velvet bed given to the new earl of Huntly in January 1566. The silver and gold bed from Huntly, possibly of chapel form, was broken up to make a cloth of estate and eight post covers in July 1566. These covers were used for another silver and gold bed and the old 'Bed of Amity.' Activity peaked in October 1566, anticipating the christening of James VI. Two beds of black velvet and the red 'lict des las damours' were lengthened, and supplied with post covers, and a yellow damask chapel bed broken up. The post covers and counterpoints of the old 'bed of phoenix' and the 'jennet' were enriched with silver and gold pasments (these beds were named by the embroidery of their curtains).<sup>45</sup>

Purchases of new fabric for beds recorded in Mary's *Treasurer's Accounts* do not readily match with this reconstruction project. The Italian secretary David Riccio was responsible for some work on new beds in August 1565, while Pierre Martin the household tapester, Nicola Carboneir another professional, and the courtier Margaret Carwood made curtains and *pavilzeones*. Some were of Breton *poldavie* canvas perhaps intended as nets against midges in the north. The same canvas was used for mattress covers called *emveloups*.<sup>46</sup> These beds were provided with *balhuifs*, bahun chests for transit, and are reminiscent of the tents and mattresses, *pallziones* and *palleces*, used by the royal guard during the hunting and progress to Inverness in 1564, and were undoubtedly utility items rather than grand *lits de parement*.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE PAVILLON AT TUTBURY CASTLE

When Mary was moved to Tutbury Castle in January 1584/5 an improvised tent bed was set up, perhaps akin to the beds for the north described above. A confusion of terminology arose over her bedchamber, apparently entirely on the English side due to John Somer, Ralph Sadler's son-in-law and deputy custodian of the queen. The bedchamber was in the attic of a half-timbered lodging built against the wall of the castle's innermost courtyard. Turkey rugs were required to cover the cold gypsum plaster floor. The fireplace was 7 feet from the foot of the bed. The hangings available for the house were inadequate, as Thomas Stryngar had warned in November 1584, and concerns reached Elizabeth.<sup>48</sup> Although Elizabeth wrote to Sadler expressing regret over the poor reception, Cecil made it quite clear to Sadler he was to understand that Elizabeth was not displeased with him. While two letters of advice compiled by John Somer in response and sent by Ralph Sadler to William Cecil do not survive, the remaining moiety of her gaoler's correspondence permits the reconstruction of the incident.<sup>49</sup>

Somer's description confused Cecil, who took Somer's word *pavillon* to mean the bed, though Ralph Sadler knew the bed to be satisfactory. Sadler thought his and Somer's advice was adequate, and recognised that the confusion was to be attributed

<sup>45</sup> Robertson (1863), pp. 25–178, 162–63, 165, 168–69 and 172.

<sup>46</sup> *Treasurer's Accounts*, vol. 11 (1916), pp. lviii–lx and 382; vol. 12 (1970), pp. 31 and 397.

<sup>47</sup> NRS E30, fol. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Lodge (1838), p. 253; BL MS Add. 33594, f. 174.

<sup>49</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Scotland*, vol. 7 (1913), nos 530, 544, 547.

to erroneous 'interpretation of her French word.' Cecil had come to understand mistakenly that Mary had asked for 'a tent of tapissery doble lynid with canvas for her chamber,' and Sadler had to write on 3 February that he had not heard her 'speake of any suche tent.' Instead of a sperver or traverse, Mary had 'tyghtid over her bed a large pece of her majesties (Elizabeth's hangings), from one syde of her chamber to the other, being 17 foote wyde between the wall places, following the order of the roof, which is not lofted over, but seelid under the rafters, which makith her chamber the warmer, to her good lyking, and speaketh of no want there, but of such lynid sutable hangings.'<sup>50</sup>

Somer was asked to revise his advice and on 2 March 1585 included a diagram of the room to indicate the widths of the hangings required, which survives. It is quite clear that by *pavillon* Somer was referring to tent-like space of the attic room itself with a wall head 'raison or wallplate' at 9 feet rising to 19 feet at the gable ends. The rafters were boarded underneath — 'seeled' — the improvised bed curtains hung from the apex of this 'pavilion roof,' as Somer described it. Extra hangings acquired from lord Paget were inadequate, and supplemented by purchases at Coventry. Mary, suffering from her 'old aches', spent a week in bed in February. The bed curtains improvised with Elizabeth's tapestry were renewed with 17 yards of broad green dornick taken from two whole pieces of 124 yards.<sup>51</sup>

#### ANNE OF DENMARK'S CHAPEL BED

When Anne of Denmark arrived in Scotland, Edinburgh performed a ceremony of royal entry on Tuesday, 19 May 1590. After viewing tableaux around the town, Anne was conveyed from her carriage into St Giles Kirk under a canopy called a *paill*. For this canopy we have some constructional details. The frame for the Italian purple velvet roof was made of six 'bowing staffs' bought from Thomas Gibson, bower, which suggests some kind of umbrella form. The canopy was lined with Spanish taffeta. The seams were covered with gold pasments, 9 hanks of gold fringes and 10 ounces of red crammasy silk were used in the fringing around the edge. The total length of gold finished fringing woven was 11 Scottish ells, of silk fringing 14 ells. The same fabrics were used to make bags for a bible and psalm book given to the queen. The main structure depended on iron fixings and exposed timber was painted.<sup>52</sup> A Danish description of the event notes the canopy was held up on four long poles. After a sermon, Anne went down the royal mile to Holyroodhouse where James VI was waiting. The *paill* was held over her coach on this final leg of the entry.

The six painted carrying poles of the *paill*, *stells*, were lent to the royal servants for the coronation in St Giles on Sunday, 17 May. A new set had to be provided because these poles were shortened, (under the direction of William Schaw.) During the coronation ritual after her anointing Anne withdrew to a 'tent' where she changed into royal robes.<sup>53</sup> If the *paill* poles were used at this point, they were probably shortened to match to length of the curtains used with a royal canopy, or perhaps they were longer

<sup>50</sup> Clifford (1809), pp. 501–02 and 506–08.

<sup>51</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Scotland*, vol. 7 (1913), nos 553, 561; Clifford (1809), pp. 511–12; Lodge (1838), p. 308.

<sup>52</sup> Edinburgh City Archives, *Baillies Accounts*, pp. 285–89.

<sup>53</sup> Stevenson (1997), pp. 60–61, 105, 114 and 142 fn. 41.

than the height of the aisles of the church could accommodate. The witness account mentions four poles; the other two were fitted horizontally for the bearers; six decorated poles used thus can be seen in the Sherborne Castle picture of *Elizabeth in Procession*.

At the time of the birth of Charles I in November 1600, a green 'chapel' bed was built for Anne at Dunfermline Palace. The fabrics were assembled by four *broudinsters*, who were accommodated for the time in two beds, perhaps for a month. The treasurer's account does not mention the timberwork, but at the same time a wright of the royal artillery, Alexander Abercromby, made some chairs for the queen. The details do not give a very clear picture of this bed, which had a curtains laced with latches, a 'pand', and a 'colheid cloth.' Only this canopy, its curtains, and the cloth, are mentioned. The roof and 'pand' had an inner lining with *buccrassie* buckram, which may suggest a rigid item. The table summarises the quantities and pricing data:

Summary for the queen's chapel bed & colheid cloth, December 1600

|   | QUANTITY          | @         | TOTAL (£Scots) |
|---|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| lodging for the makers                                      | 2 × 8 weeks       | —         | £7-10          |
| green velvet  | 22½ ell ½ quarter | £15       | £339-7-6       |
| double green Spanish taffeta,<br>for lining                 | 33½ ells          | £8        | £268           |
| gold & silver thread, for<br>'broidering'                   | 17 pounds         | £40       | £680           |
| silk for fringe   | 54 ounces         | 30s       | £81            |
| silver & gold passments                                     | 20 ounces         | £5-6-8    | £106-13-4      |
| silk passments for latches                                  | 3 ounces          | 33s 4d    | £5             |
| Wax   | 2 pound           | 16s       | £1-12          |
| green worset latches, used<br>above the silk latches        | 19 ells           | 12s 8d    | £12            |
| Glue  | pound             | 6s 8d     | 6s 8d          |
| yellow & white thread                                       | 4 pounds          | 20s       | £4             |
| Rings   | —                 | —         | 5s             |
| weaving fringes & casting knops<br>for the colheid cloth(s) | —                 | —         | £5-6-8         |
| candle for workmen, 8 weeks                                 | pound             | 3s        | £8             |
| Workmanship   | 4 × 8 weeks       | £8 weekly | £96 [sic]      |
| buccrassie lining   | 12 ells           | 12s 4d    | £8             |

Source: NRS E21/74, fol. 85

In the same month, at the command of James VI, the chairs mentioned above were made for Anne, one upholstered in blue the other in green, with two board cloths, with a red and a purple kirk cushion, all under the same precept.<sup>54</sup> These cushions were made for use in the church, but it seems much more likely that bed was called a 'chapel' bed because its form shared some characteristic with the royal beds listed in the 1560s.

#### CONCLUSION

The 'chapel' beds which Mary Queen of Scots reconstructed into four-corner beds may have been beds with round or polygonal suspended canopies made in fifteenth-century sperver fashion. Sixteenth-century beds with rectangular suspended canopies of the same size as the mattress were still called spervers in England. The word 'chapel' applied to the rigid canopy might not have had any specific religious connotation but the rounded form was certainly that used in depictions of the annunciation. When Thomas Randolph characterised some beds as 'of the worst sort,' in the context of a search for Roman Catholic artefacts in 1562, he may have been responding to a description of chapel beds. Mary Queen of Scots reformed her chapel beds in 1562: a new chapel bed was constructed for Anne of Denmark in 1562.

<sup>54</sup> NRS E21/74, fol. 78, 85–86.



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