

II.

NOTICE OF PLANS, AND A BIRD'S-EYE PERSPECTIVE, BELIEVED TO BE THE OLDEST AUTHENTIC VIEW OF EDINBURGH CASTLE, NOW IN THE KING'S LIBRARY, BRITISH MUSEUM. BY SIR R. ROWAND ANDERSON, LL.D., H.R.S.A., F.S.A. SCOT.

On the east outside face of the old Palace and between the Half-Moon Battery and the south-east corner of the building, are three projections, octagonal on plan, corbelled out from the main wall, one of them having a shaft running down to the rock. These are distinctly seen on the illustration from a photograph reproduced in fig. 1. I have often speculated as to what these were. I have examined every drawing I could fall in with, as well as every description of the building, but I can find no indication or explanation of what they were in their completed condition. I have always held that they are the roots or bases of tall projecting windows; their structure being light, they were easily destroyed in one of the many sieges of Edinburgh Castle. Some say that they were only balconies: I adhere to the projecting window theory.

A short time ago I took the opportunity of visiting the King's Library of the British Museum, and asked if they had any drawings of Edinburgh Castle. A portfolio was brought to me containing a number of loose plans and views of the Castle, but none of them gave any indication as to the original condition of these projections; but on looking over the collection I found three drawings which I thought of great interest, and I was allowed to have photographs of them taken, which are now reproduced as illustrations to this paper. In the Appendix to Wilson's *Memoirs of Edinburgh in the Olden Time* there is a very full notice of "Ancient Maps and Views of Edinburgh." None of these plans is alluded to by him.

The first drawing (shown in fig. 2) is a plan of the Castle signed VOL. XLVII.

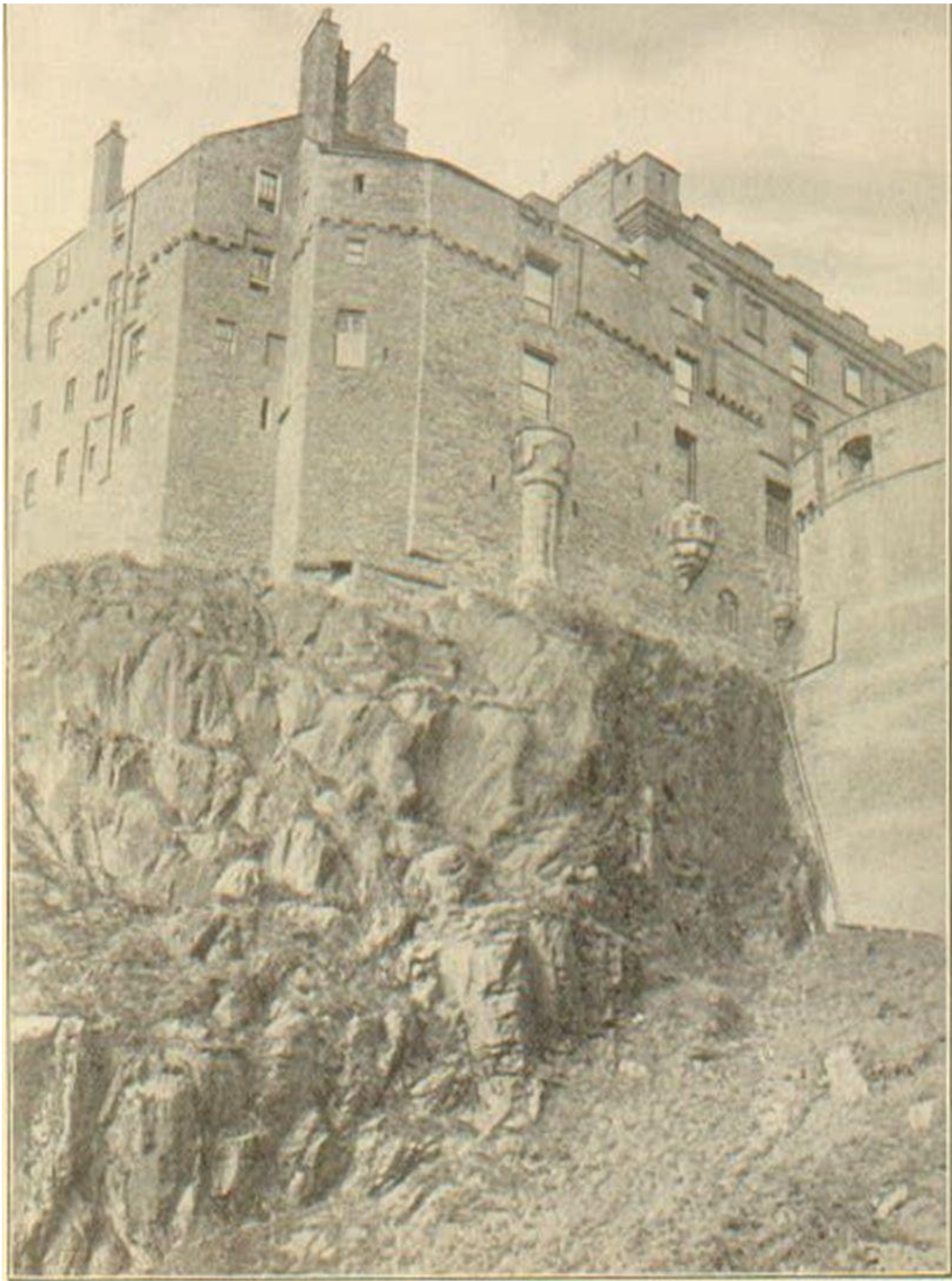


Figure 1. View of Edinburgh Castle at the south-east corner, showing projections.

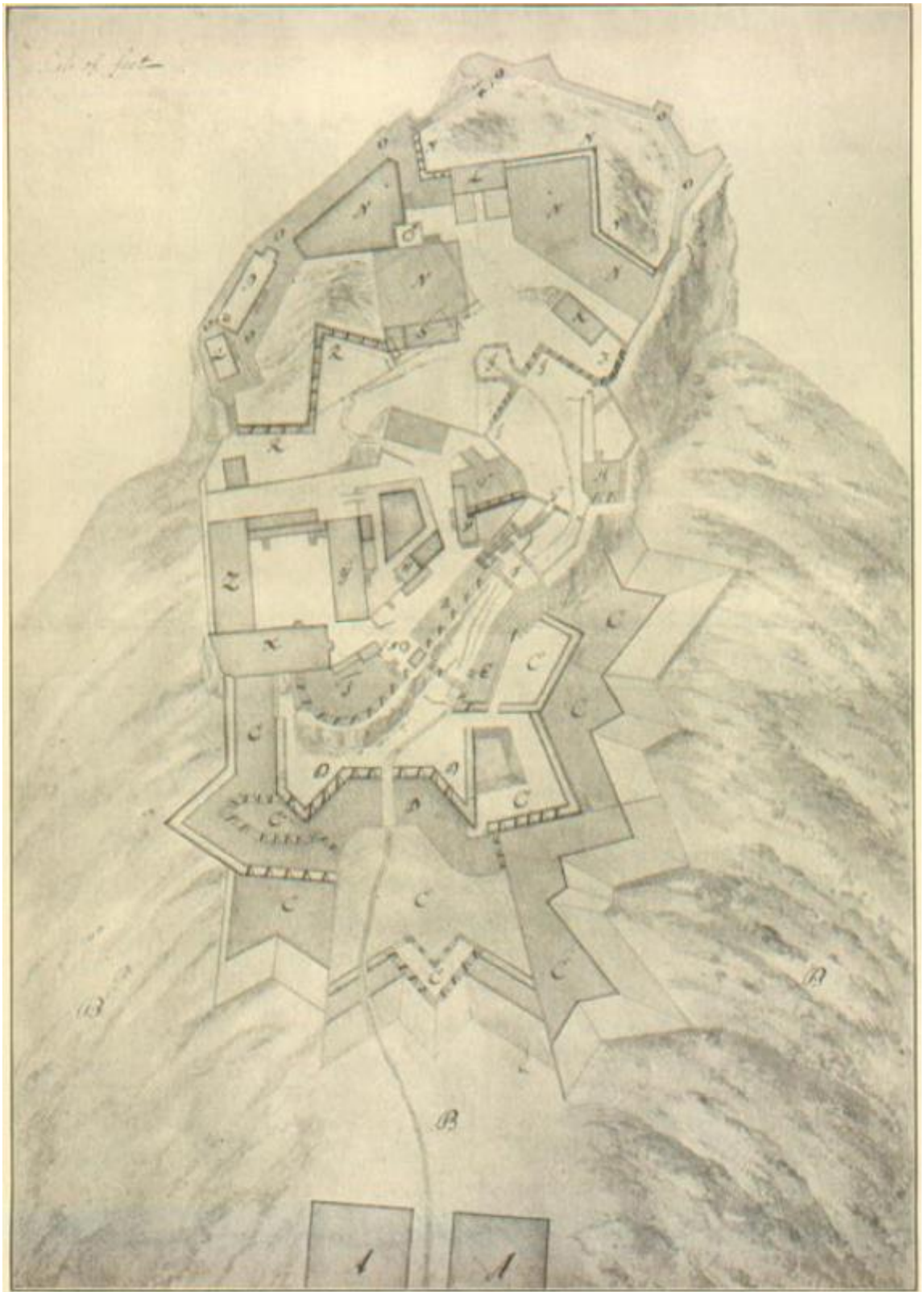


Figure 2. Plan of Edinburgh Castle by Slezer, 1675.

by J. Slezer, the author of *Theatrum Scotice*. In March 1675 it is recorded that the Lords of the Treasury recommend that the Lord Treasurer Depute should visit the Castle and examine the ground where the

additions to the fortifications are to be made, and he was to take Mr Slezer with him. Now, Slezer, no doubt, made a report on this visit, and my belief is that this is the drawing which accompanied it. My reason for saying so is this: the marginal notes on this drawing not only specify the names of existing buildings, but also a number of suggestions for improvements, such as:—

C.G.G., Intended Outworks.
T., Intended Chapel Batterie.
R., Intended Batterie on the Hawk Hill to command the highways on that side.
S., Intended Main Gard.
Q., Intended Firework Laboratory.
N., The new entrenchments towards the South-west.
O.O.O., etc., Levelled Ground at the inside of the walls for the Rounds to go along in the night time, it being at present impossible to do it on a stormie night.

This is the oldest accurate plan of the Castle upon which I have come.

The second drawing (shown in the illustration, fig. 3) is a large pen-and-ink drawing, measuring 2 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 10 inches. It is a bird's-eye view from the south of the Castle and its surroundings. There is no date or mark on it to indicate who made it or when it was made, but I think it is possible to approximate to the date. In 1689, when the Castle was held for James VII. by *the Duke* of Gordon, the Earl of Leven, who was on the other side of politics, was ordered by the Convention, then sitting in Edinburgh, to blockade the rock on the west. To assist in accomplishing this, he dug a trench from the West Port to St Cuthbert's. At the time it was said that it was so badly done that, but for the humanity of the Duke of Gordon, every man in it could have been killed. The trench is clearly indicated on the drawing, and this proves that the drawing could not have been



Figure 3. Bird's-eye view of Edinburgh Castle from the south.

made before 1689. After the Union in March 1707 the Scottish flag, namely the St Andrew's saltire, ceased to be the national flag of Scotland. This was lowered, and the Union flag took its place. On 26th March the Regalia were deposited in the Crown Room, never after to be removed from the Castle. This drawing shows a tall flagpole with the Scottish flag flying from it, and this indicates that the drawing was made before the Union in 1707. One can therefore safely assert that this drawing was made between the years 1689 and 1707, a period of eighteen years. It had evidently been made to illustrate a big scheme of fortification, something of the Vauban type, covering what is now the Esplanade; but this project, like many others of the same kind, was never carried out. I have not been able to connect this proposal with any name or date.

There are one or two other points on this drawing to which I wish to call attention. The view shows that the west side of the Quadrangle had not then been built, as the building now on this site is shown on a plan dated 1709, and is called "New Barracks for Officers." The large church which formed the north side of the Quadrangle is clearly shown here. When it was disused as a church, it was made into a great storehouse, and you will notice on the drawing the large pointed windows of the church built up. The church was used as a store at least up to 1755, as there is a plan dated 1755 now in the Office of Works showing a design of a building to take its place. This building was burned a good many years ago, and the present building on the site took its place.

The third drawing I found in the portfolio is one dated 1746, signed W. Adam's. This must be William Adam of Maryburgh in Fife, the father of the two brothers Adam who occupied a leading position as architects in the eighteenth century. William Adam was an architect of considerable repute, and held the appointment for a time as King's Master Mason.

This plan (fig. 4) is a very careful survey of the Castle as it was

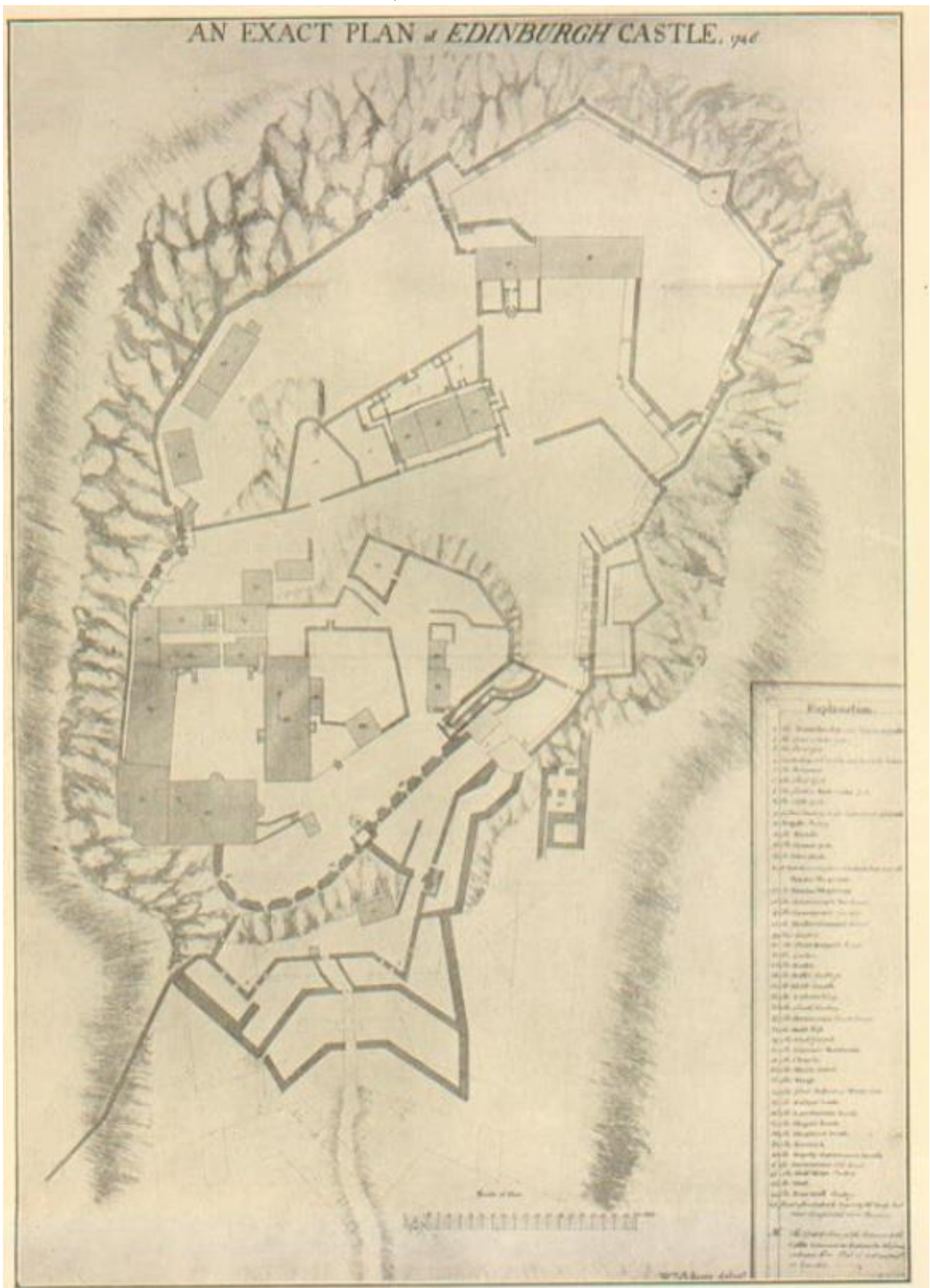


Figure 4. Plan of Edinburgh Castle as it was in 1749.

in 1746. It is also interesting as showing in dotted lines one of the many schemes for fortifications on the Esplanade, none of which was ever carried out.

I now show two plans at present in the collection of plans belonging to the Office of Works. The first one (fig. 5) is dated 1725. Its interest is that it shows the original arrangement of the walls, etc., at the postern-gate on the west side, and a pathway is clearly indicated leading up to it from the bottom of the rock. I have had this path examined, and there are distinct evidences of it still remaining. The first notice of this gate goes as far back as 1093. Queen Margaret died in the Castle on 16th November 1093, when Donald the Fair-haired, the younger brother of Malcolm III., had himself proclaimed king and invested the Castle with the hope of capturing the children of Queen Margaret, putting them to death, *and* securing the crown for himself. Apparently he knew nothing of this postern-gate on the west side, so he confined his attention to the access to the Castle from the town or east side. The children escaped by this postern-gate and fled to England, and the body of the dead Queen was conveyed to Dunfermline and buried there. It was also at this postern-gate that the celebrated interview took place on 18th March 1689 between Viscount Dundee and the Duke of Gordon.

The other plan (fig. 6) is dated 1735, ten years later than the one just described. It shows very distinctly the arrangements at the sally-port. The original wall projected considerably and was rounded like a tower, forming a very deep re-entering angle, and in the recess thus formed was the actual postern-gate of the Castle. In Slezer's view of Edinburgh Castle from the west (fig. 7) the arrangement indicated on the plan I have just described is clearly shown. A white cross has been inserted on the illustration to point it out. It was thus sufficiently screened from outside observation and well protected against any attempt to surprise and force an entrance. All these arrangements were done away with about 1735, as I find

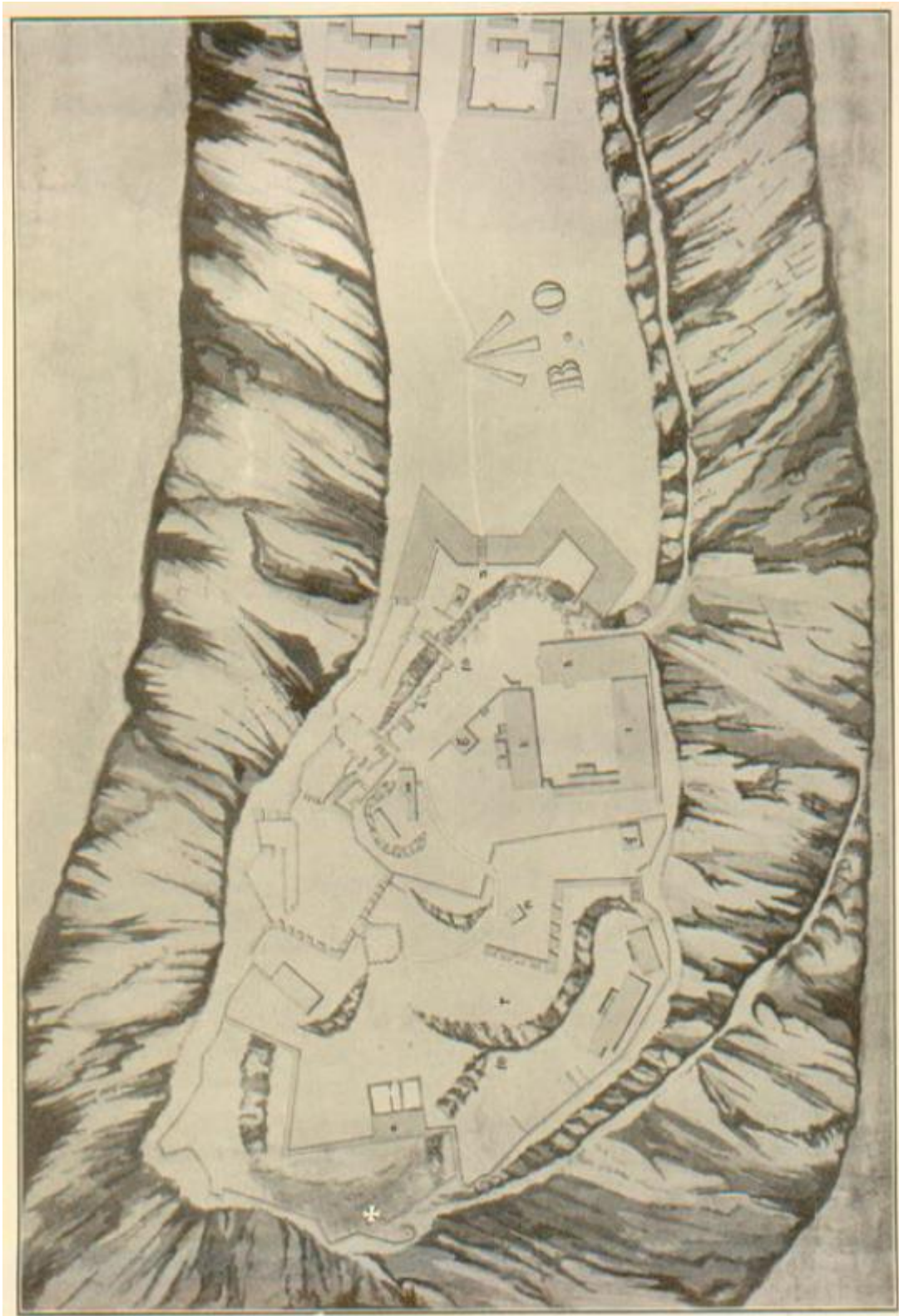


Figure 5. Plan of Edinburgh Castle, dated 1725, showing postern-gate (marked by a white cross).

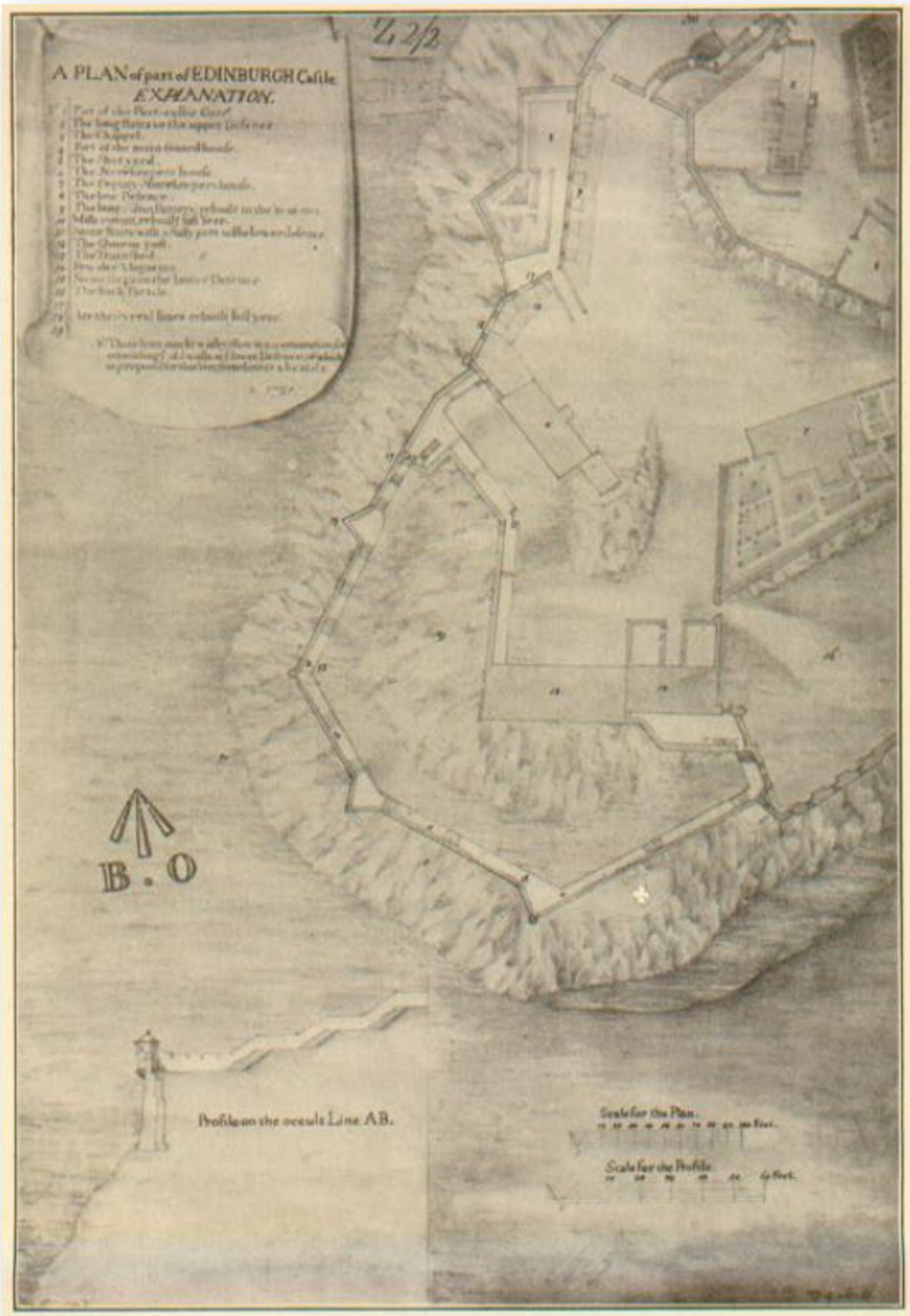


Figure 6. Plan of Edinburgh Castle, dated 1735, showing postern-gate (marked by a white cross).

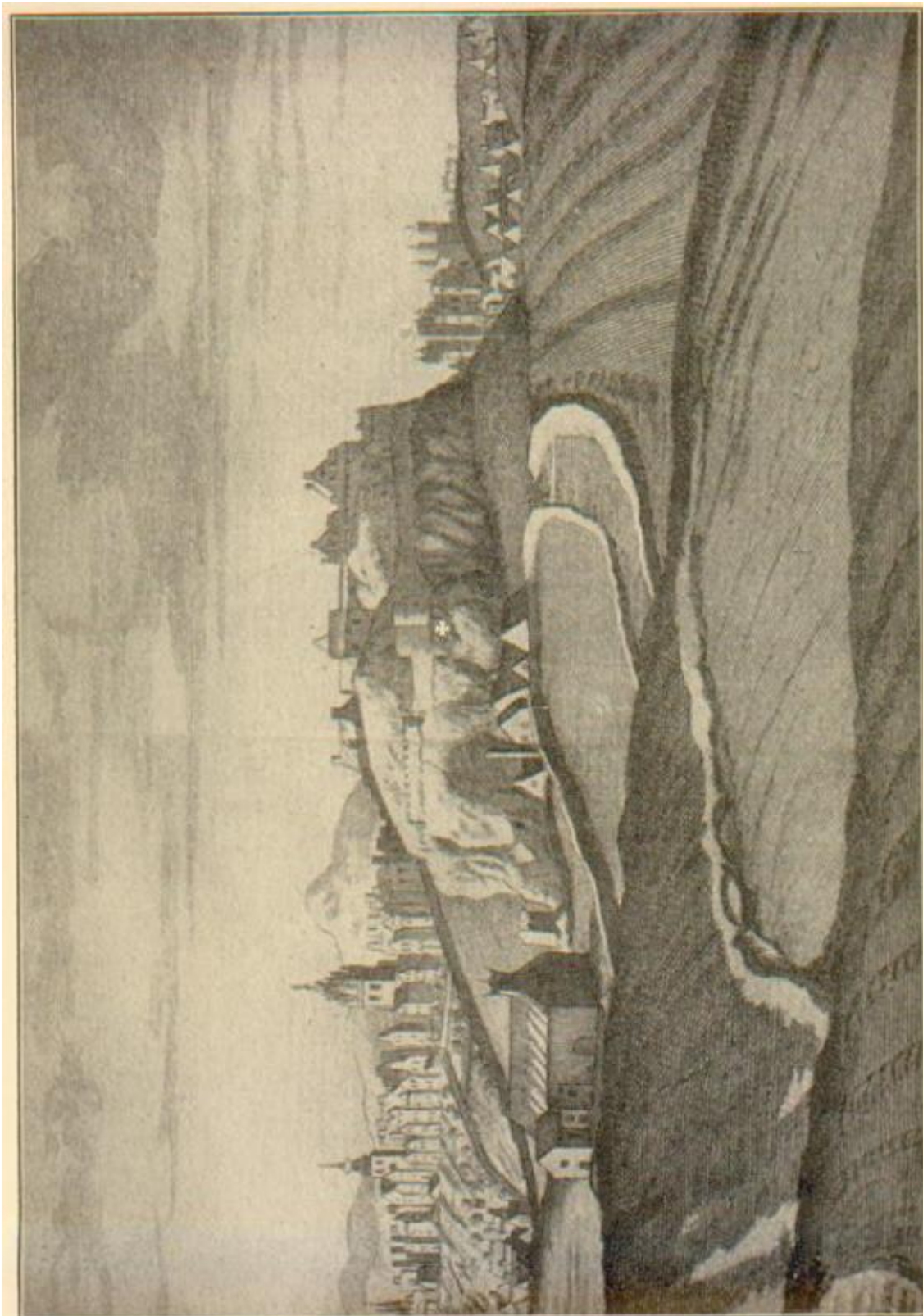


Figure 7. Slezer's view of Edinburgh Castle from the west, showing the postern gate (marked by a white cross).

that on another plan relating to this part of the Castle, it is stated that the alterations here were carried out by instructions from General Wade, who was in Scotland from 1726-1748. At the bottom of the rock close to the path in the gardens lies a large mass of rubble masonry (also indicated in the illustration (fig. 8) by a white cross). This had become detached when making the alterations above, and rolled down until it came to rest in the position in which it has been lying since about 1735. An entirely new wall was rebuilt with a postern-gate, and up till within a few years ago a small guard-house existed on the inside. This postern-gate is now built up on the inside, but shown as a gate from the outside. Above this gate has been placed a tablet with the following inscription on it:—

“At this Postern John Graham of Claverhouse,
Viscount Dundee, held a final Conference
with the Duke of Gordon, Governor of Edin-
burgh Castle, on quitting the Convention
of Estates 18th March 1689.”

This interesting and very appropriate inscription is true as to the fact that an interview did take place, but not true that it took place at this particular gate, as I have just shown that the whole of this part of the fortifications had been pulled down and rebuilt as it now exists. The interview, therefore, could not have taken place here, but at the old sally-port, shown in the illustrations, figs. 5, 6, and, 7.

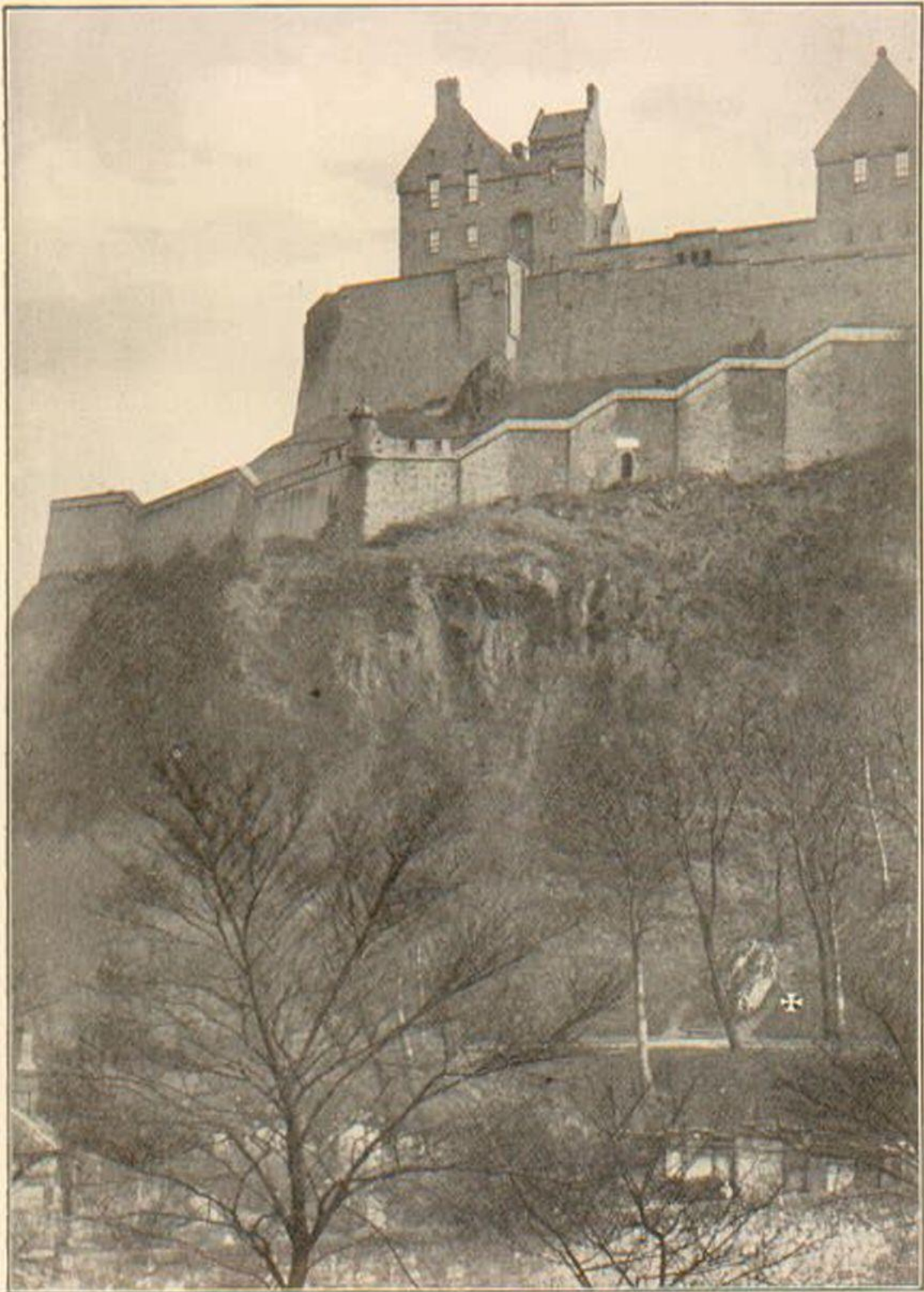


Figure 8. View of Edinburgh Castle from the west, showing the mass of fallen masonry (marked by a white cross).