

EDZELL GARDEN, LIBERAL ARTS CARVED PANEL: GEOMETRIA

Use this worksheet to colour your own renaissance image!

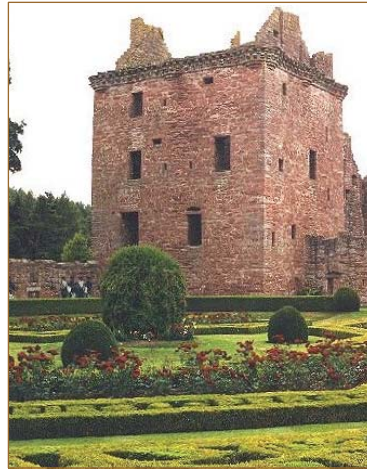
Edzell castle, located in Angus, was built in the 15th century, and had a walled 'Renaissance' garden added to it in the early 16th century by Sir David Lindsay, (*top right*). The Renaissance was a European wide movement, embraced by members of the Scottish aristocracy and in particular King James V, that sought to learn from and build upon the knowledge of classical antiquity. These gardens are thought to have been relatively common in Scotland at the time, but Edzell represents a unique survival. As well as being an ornamental garden there were carved figurative representations of the seven Planetary deities, the seven Virtues, and the seven Liberal Arts - most of which have survived. Geometry, a Liberal Art, is represented by the female 'Geometria', which we can see here, (*centre right*). Such a garden was therefore a place for relaxation and entertainment, but also serious contemplation.

It is believed the carvings are all based on a popular series of engravings, which were often published in pattern books. Nuremberg was the origin of numerous such books, and one may have been brought to Edzell by the miner Hans Ziegler. Specifically, the images of the deities are derived from engravings of 1528-29 by the German artist Georg Pencz (or Iorg Bentz, c.1500-1550), a pupil of Albrecht Dürer, (the initials I. B. appear on the carving of Mars). The arts and virtues are both based on engravings derived from paintings by the Flemish artist Marten de Vos. The engravings, by Jan Sadeler and Crispijn de Passe, were widely distributed in Scotland, along with those of the deities.

Note the similarity between the carved stone panel, (*centre right*) and the engraving by Jan Sadeler, (*bottom right*). The image on the far right is a line drawing based on the stone carving, and uses information from Sadeler's image to fill in the missing areas where the stone carving has been damaged, such as the toad that sits at the bottom of the globe.

The word geometry comes from the ancient greek words geo, "earth", and metron, "measurement", so it is appropriate that we see Geometria measuring the earth with calipers. The early 16th century was a time of increasing exploration and scientific advancement, where the practice of geometry was being used to help map the world as it was being discovered. The learning of the time is represented not only by the measuring tools that surround Geometria, but also the books that she must have been referring to. The snake is a biblical reference to the serpent in the garden of Eden, possibly representing the dangers of knowledge, and implicitly, the tension between religion and science.

It is likely that these carvings would have been painted, but having been exposed to the elements have long since lost their pigment. You can now restore this image to its former glory by colouring it in.



Edzell castle and garden, looking west.



Carving of the Liberal Art, Geometria, at Edzell.



An engraving of Geometria by Jan Sadeler.



Reconstruction line drawing of 'Geometria'.

0 20cm