

V.

NOTES ON SCOTTISH INCISED SLABS (I.).

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Incised slabs form the largest class of sepulchral monuments of the Middle Ages now remaining in Scotland. They fall naturally into two main groups, corresponding to the geographical division of the country: (1) the West Highland slabs, in which Celtic influence strongly predominates; these are especially numerous in Argyllshire and the Isles; (2) what may by contrast be called the Lowland slabs, which follow the general style of contemporary monuments in Western Europe. The former are generally of mica-schist, the latter of sandstone.

The West Highland slabs have received considerable notice from antiquaries. One has only to recall the names of James Drummond, R.S.A., Captain White, and John Stuart, to realise how much has already been accomplished in this field, yet despite their invaluable work, supplemented by the contributions of others, there are still some blanks to be filled. The Lowland slabs, on the other hand, have received comparatively

little attention. A few of the best have formed the subject of articles in previous volumes of the *Proceedings*, but the greater number still remain to be dealt with.

In this and future communications I shall hope to bring to the Society's notice some of the more interesting of the slabs of both classes so far unrecorded in the *Proceedings*. In the present paper I will deal with four, all of pre-Reformation ecclesiastics. I exhibit rubbings of the three which still survive; the fourth has now disappeared.

COUPAR ANGUS (PERTHSHIRE).

1. *John Schanwel, Abbot (1506)*.

This fine and well-preserved monument is mural in a wooden frame in the north-west vestibule of the parish church, which occupies part of the site of the pre-Reformation abbey. It is of brownish-coloured sandstone, the exposed portion 2 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in breadth, with an extreme length of 6 feet $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch, and commemorates John Schanwel, who was abbot from 1480 to 1506, and a man of some note in his day (fig. 1).

The slightly lopsided effigy is placed under a fine vaulted canopy. The inscription, beginning just beneath the canopy on the sinister side, runs round the edge of the stone to end at the same level on the dexter side. Blank shields are put at the commencement and termination of this marginal strip, and a blank shield, enclosed in a quatrefoil, in each of the bottom corners. These shields may originally have been painted.

The abbot's figure is vested in alb and cope, with the special insignia of his rank, the sandals, gloves, pastoral staff, and mitre. The alb has a large oak-leaf apparel on the front of the skirt, and a plain one at the left wrist, the other four being hidden. The cope, fastened across the breast by a lozenge-shaped morse, has its edge enriched with an orphrey embroidered with alternate mascles and voided ovals, which by an engraver's error is not continued right round the vestment, but stops short on the left side at a fold. The whole treatment of the cope is curious, for instead of falling straight down from the shoulders, it is draped up over the forearms in such a manner as to pull it away on the right side and trail it on the left. The gloves are of plain gauntlet type, without adornment, but the mitre is richly embroidered and studded with jewels, its fringed lappets, or *infulæ*, falling one on each shoulder. The slender pastoral staff has a large trefoil in the crook, and lacks the usual pointed end.

The feet have been hatched, probably to receive colour, and the same process has been applied to other parts of the design, *e.g.* the mitre, the crook of the pastoral staff, the orphrey of the cope, the apparel on the skirt of the alb, the background of the marginal inscription, and the two quatrefoils in the bottom corners, all of which were probably filled in with colouring



Fig. 1. John Schanwel, Abbot (1506).
COUPAR ANGUS (PERTHSHIRE)

matter, though all sign of this has now perished. This rather suggests that the slab probably formed the top of a tomb raised above the floor level.

On the canopy is a shield, bearing the abbot's initials and a pastoral staff, linked together by a looped cord. The staff, perhaps by design, has been drawn too long for the shield, and the crook, with its trefoil adornment, protrudes above it.

The inscription—a very late example of the use of Lombardic type outside the West Highlands—is in flat relief against a slightly recessed background; at the beginning is a cross patée, at the end a tiny quatrefoil, and the words are separated by lozenge-shaped stops. It reads as follows:—

“Hic iacet venerabilis pat(er)
d(omi)n(u)s Ioh(ann)es Schanwel
quo(n)da(m) abbas de Cupro q(u)i
obiit. A(nn)o Do(min)i M(illesim)o
D VI ?IX K(a)l(endarum) No(vem)-
br(is).”

The combination of vestments worn by the abbot is remarkable, and calls for some comment.

The dress of the mediæval clergy falls into two main groups: (1) eucharistic vestments, worn when celebrating mass, (2) processional (sometimes called canonical) vestments, which formed a dress of dignity for ecclesiastics of rank, and on monuments are mainly confined to members of cathedral and collegiate bodies.

Except when shown in academic robes, clerics are almost always depicted in one or other of these two classes of vestments, though they do not necessarily wear all the vestments of that class, and (with one important exception,

to which I refer later) it is comparatively rare to find eucharistic and processional vestments worn together.

Bishops and mitred abbots are usually portrayed in eucharistic vestments, with the gloves, sandals, mitre, and pastoral staff, as on the slab of Abbot John Barwick (1526) at Selby Abbey, Yorkshire.¹ Very occasionally they appear in processional vestments; I know of one example in England² and two on the Continent,³ but it is extremely rare to find them wearing vestments of both classes together, as in this case, where the abbot is shown in one eucharistic vestment (the alb) and one processional (the cope). I know of no other instance on any monument in Britain, though a wood-carving at Barnack, Northamptonshire, shows a similar combination. The only example abroad that has so far come to my notice is a German brass in Naumburg Cathedral,⁴ but the number of vestments portrayed on it (apart from the purely episcopal ones) is five, as against Abbot Schanwel's two, which must surely be the smallest number to be found on the monument of any churchman of his rank.

Some notices of this abbot are to be found in *The Register of Cupar Abbey*,⁵ Jervise's *Memorials of Angus and the Mearns*,⁶ and Rev. Æneas B. Hutchison's *Memorials of the Abbey of Dundrennan*.⁷ He is said to have been the second mitred abbot of Cupar, the dignity having apparently been conferred in 1464 on his predecessor, David Bayn, and by the marriage of his sister with John Reid of Akynhead he was uncle of the celebrated Robert Reid, Prior of Beaulieu, Abbot of Kinloss, Bishop of Orkney, and President of the Court of Session, one of the last great prelates of the pre-Reformation Scottish Church.

Abbot Schanwel sat in the Parliaments of 1481, 1482, 1488, and 1491, and again in 1504; in 1491 he was one of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes. His name appears in a lease of the abbey lands of Murthlie in Mar, granted 10th March 1488 to Margaret Charteris and her sons John and Alexander of Strachan, and in a later lease of the same on 14th March 1494 to William Forbes of Towie. He was also party to an agreement of 6th May 1500 between the monastery and Andrew Liel, pensioner of the Church of Brechin, anent the lands of Redgorton; this deed gives the names of the sub-prior, Thomas Schanwel (doubtless a relative), and fifteen of the brethren.

During the pontificate of Innocent VIII (1484–1492) a General Chapter of the Cistercians appointed Abbot Schanwel to visit and reform the

¹ The stole and gloves are omitted.

² The brass of Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York (1631), at Chigwell, Essex.

³ The brass of Bishop Rupert (1394) in Paderborn Cathedral, Germany, and the incised slab of Luke Munnich, Abbot of St Bavon (engr. 1600), in Ghent Cathedral, Belgium.

⁴ Bishop Theoderic von Buckenstorf (1466).

⁵ Grampian Club (1879), edited by Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D., F.S.A.Scot., pp. 88–95.

⁶ 1885 edn., II. pp. 189–190.

⁷ Exeter, 1857, pp. 11–12.

monasteries of the Order in Scotland. In the course of his visitation he is said to have deposed the abbots of Melrose, Sweetheart, and Dundrennan, presumably for some defect of discipline, though neither the cause nor the names of the deposed have come down to us.

The last notice of this abbot is of his attendance at the Parliament on 11th March 1504.

I rubbed this slab in September 1936. For a long time all efforts to ascertain the manner and date of its discovery proved fruitless, despite the curious fact that Macgibbon and Ross, in their description of the abbey published in 1897,¹ make no mention of it, while describing and illustrating all the other mediæval remains. The omission from their pages of such a fine monument seemed inconceivable except on the assumption that at the time of their visit it was still undiscovered—and this, combined with the statements of Rogers (1879) that the date of Abbot Schanwel's death is unknown, and of Rev. James Gammack (editor of the 1885 edition of Jervise's *Memorials*) that he was abbot until 1509, led me to conclude that despite the apparent lack of all knowledge as to when it was found, the slab must have been brought to light within the last half-century.

Just a fortnight after reading this paper, I had the good fortune to secure a copy of Jervise's last (and somewhat rare) work *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland*, and at p. 74 of vol. i (published in 1875) came upon this passage:

“About four years ago a mutilated slab was disinterred. It bore the following inscription, which has been kindly communicated by the Rev. Dr Stevenson:

+HIC IACET VENERABILIS PATER DOMINUS IOHANNES.
SCHANWEL QUONDAM ABBAS DE CUPRO QUI OBIIT.
A.D. M.D. VI.

(Here lies a venerable father in God (*sic*) JOHN SCHANWEL late of the Abbey (*sic*) of Cupar, who died A.D. 1506.)

According to the *Reg. Ep. Brechin* (i. 220), Thomas (?) Schauvel was sub-prior of Cupar in 1500, and is a witness to a deed by Abbot John Campbell (*sic*) regarding the lands of Redgorton, dated 6th May of same year.”

As the contents of this volume were largely based on articles contributed by the author to the *Montrose Standard* between January 1868 and November 1874, I set inquiries afoot, and have now ascertained, through the kind offices of Miss Mary Smith, interim County Librarian, Montrose, and Mr James S. Henderson, editor of the *Blairgowrie Advertiser*, that the slab was unearthed

¹ *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1897), iii. pp. 491-497.

by the sexton while digging a grave in the churchyard towards the end of 1869, the find being reported in the *Blairgowrie Advertiser* of 11th December of that year.

This, in the light of Jervise's note, raises some interesting points.

(1) Jervise failed to identify John Schanwel with the contemporary Abbot John of Cupar whom he mentions in the first edition of his *Memorials* (1861). In this he may have been to some extent misled by the *Reg. Ep. Brechin*, which appears to have confused Abbot Schanwel with Donald Campbell, the last abbot (1526-1564), but there seems no doubt that "small Latin" was at least a contributory cause, for his errors in translating the inscription make it clear that he never even realised that John Schanwel was an abbot.

(2) The discovery of the slab could not have become widely known at the time, otherwise the statements of Rogers and Gammack referred to above would be unintelligible.

(3) How did Gammack come to make the statement that Schanwel was abbot till 1509? One can only suppose him to have inferred that this year, which saw the transfer of Abbot Turnbull from Melrose to Cupar, must also have witnessed Schanwel's death or resignation, since there seems to be no record of another abbot coming between them. It is quite obvious that he missed the reference to the slab in the *Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, although he mentions this book specifically as one of the authorities he used.

(4) The silence of Macgibbon and Ross would strongly suggest that at the time of their visit the slab had not been set up in the church, but was probably lying neglected in some odd corner.

2. *A Monk* (c. 1450). (?) *Now lost*.

On p. 493 of Macgibbon and Ross's third volume,¹ published in 1897, is a line drawing (fig. 1449) showing a slab engraved with the lower half of a figure in monastic dress and part of the bottom line of a marginal inscription ("obiit anno dni millesim[o]"). The following note regarding it is on p. 492:

"A broken slab, measuring about 3 feet 3 inches high by 3 feet in breadth (fig. 1449) is lying in the churchyard. In the Rental Book it is referred to as being built into the wall of the church which preceded the present one (erected about thirty years ago) and as bearing 'the effigies of a priest' with the inscription on the margin: 'Monachus de Cupro qui obiit anno dni. Millesimo quadringentesimo quagesio.' From the present state of the fragment, it is evident that little respect is paid in Coupar to the remains of the ancient abbey."

I was unable to find this slab in September 1936 or on any of my subsequent visits. All inquiries have so far failed to elicit any clue as to its

¹ *Ibid.*

fate or present whereabouts. Many of the abbey stones are said to have been used as building material in the burgh; a sculptured shield inserted in a modern house opposite the west wall of the churchyard provides melancholy corroboration of this, and it seems that the monk's slab has probably, at some time since 1897, suffered a similar doom. It may, one hopes, turn up unexpectedly some day, but for the present it must be regarded as lost.

SADDELL ABBEY (ARGYLLSHIRE).

A Monk (Early Sixteenth Century).

In the ruins of Saddell Abbey, on the Kintyre peninsula, are nine slabs and part of a tenth. Some of these were described in a paper read before this Society on 12th April 1869 by the late Captain T. P. White, R.E., with illustrations of two out of the five that bear effigies.¹ Of the other three, the most interesting is this slab of a Cistercian monk (fig. 2).

The slab is of mica-schist and shaped like a coffin-lid; the extreme length is 5 feet 9 inches, the sides measure 5 feet 2 inches, and the breadth tapers from 1 foot 6 inches at top to 10 inches at base. Apart from the upper portion, whose surface has either weathered or been hacked away, the stone is in fairly good preservation. The figure is clad in the Cistercian tunic or cassock, with a hood covering the head. The hands hold a book, which is clasped against the breast; the feet are absurdly small. Over the head was a cusped and crocketed canopy which the very small surviving fragment shows to have been Celtic in type. The foot inscription is in debased black-letter with a cross patée placed at the commencement: only the words "Hic iacet" are unmistakably clear—of the remainder I can make nothing. The background of the slab has been recessed, leaving canopy, effigy, and inscription standing out in flat relief.

In his *Archæological Sketches in Scotland—District of Kintyre*, published in 1873² Captain White both illustrates³ and describes⁴ this slab, but he is clearly in error in stating that the monk is wearing a surplice; the garment is quite plainly the "tunica," or cassock. He mentions that the slab had been discovered a few years earlier by a carpenter, who came upon it two or three feet below ground when digging a grave for a child.

Captain White does not suggest any date for this monument, but the use of black-letter in the inscription practically fixes it in the first half of the sixteenth century, as this type only came into use in the West Highland area about 1500.

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, viii. pp. 122-135.

² Edinburgh (Blackwood).

³ *Ibid.*, pl. xlv.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.



Fig. 2. A monk (early sixteenth century).
 SADDELL ABBEY
 (ARGYLLSHIRE).



Fig. 3. Alexander Douglas, Canon of Dunkeld and Rector of
 Moneydie (1548).
 DUNKELD CATHEDRAL (PERTSHIRE).

DUNKELD CATHEDRAL (PERTHSHIRE).

Alexander Douglas, Canon of Dunkeld and Rector of Moneydie (1548).

On the tower floor lies a slab of brownish sandstone, engraved with the effigy of a priest. The extreme bottom portion is missing, and the remainder, now broken into four, measures 2 feet 10 inches in breadth, and the vertical sides 5 feet 3 inches and 4 feet 9 inches respectively (fig. 3).

The figure is shown with eyes closed and hair somewhat less than shoulder length, wearing alb and chasuble, and as a head-covering the almuce, whose lower edge, with its fringe of pendent fur tails, falls around the shoulders. The wearing of the almuce (a processional vestment) with the ordinary eucharistic ones by canons in some countries is, so far as I know, the only normal departure from the general rule whereby a priest is shown in either eucharistic or processional vestments, but not in a mixture of both.

The almuce is variously portrayed on monuments. Originally a hood of grey fur, it was later enlarged by the addition of a cape and two large pendants in front, made from the tails of the animals whose fur was used, and the lower edge of the vestment was often trimmed with smaller pendants. On English monuments this later form is the one generally shown, with the cape worn on the shoulders and the hood thrown back, presenting somewhat the appearance of a roll collar, and a number of brasses of German canons show a similar treatment. On French monuments, however, the almuce, though usually depicted in its later form, is often placed on the head with the cape and pendants hanging down behind¹; at other times it is shown carried over the left arm.² I know of no English monument showing it as a head-covering save for two sculptured effigies at Bitton, Gloucestershire, where it is worn with the other processional vestments, neither can I recall a single English example of it worn with eucharistic vestments. The only evidence of Scottish practice I have yet noted is this slab from Dunkeld and three sculptured monuments of canons in St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, and in all four cases the more primitive form—the hood without the cape—is shown, worn with eucharistic vestments, which would seem to indicate that Scottish canons, while following in general the fashion of their French brethren, continued to use the earlier and doubtless less costly form of the almuce.

The alb and chasuble are very plain; no apparels are visible on the former, and the orphrey of the latter is unenriched. By what looks like an engraver's error, the chasuble is shown much longer behind than in front, a peculiarity also found on an incised slab of a priest (c. 1520) at Lowdham, Nottinghamshire.

¹ Examples occur on incised slabs of canons in the cathedrals of Rouen, Laon, Noyon, and Châlons-sur-Marne.

² As on two incised slabs in the cathedral of Saint-Pol-de-Léon, Brittany.

The marginal inscription is in flat relief against a recessed background, the words being separated by lozenge-shaped stops. The surviving portion is in capitals (the earliest example of their use I have yet found in Scotland) except for two "x"s which are in the older black-letter. It reads as follows, beginning at bottom dexter corner:—

“(H)ic iacet eximius vir magister Alexander Douglas rector de Munidi qui obiit XVII Decembri(s Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo XLVIII).”

The missing portion is supplied from a copy of the inscription given in No. XV of *The New Statistical Account*,¹ published 1837, when the slab was apparently complete—unfortunately its position in the cathedral at that time is not stated.

Quite apart from the evidence afforded by the costume, there is no doubt that Alexander Douglas, though described only as Rector of Moneydie, was also a canon of Dunkeld. From about 1510 at least, when Alexander Myln was presented to the living,² the Rectory of Moneydie formed the prebend of one of the Dunkeld canonries. Myln held the benefice till 1517, when he became abbot of Cambuskenneth,³ and during the period of his incumbency frequently appears in the records as one of the auditors of the diocesan accounts and master of work at the bridge, being variously referred to as “Rector of Monydy,” “Prebendary of Monydy,” and “Canon of Dunkeld.”⁴ In a statement of the rental of the bishopric, drawn up in 1561, Moneydie appears as one of the richest of the 15 prebends, only Menmure and Ferne having a greater money value—it was at that time set in tack for 100 pounds, out of which ordinary expenses amounting to 20 pounds had to be met, leaving a net income of 80 pounds,⁵ a fair sum for those days, so that it is hardly surprising to find the last Catholic rector, Walter Struthers, bringing an action in 1568 against Thomas Makgibbon, first Protestant minister of the Parish, who was doubtless in enjoyment of the income, calling on him to produce his “provision to that prebend.”⁶

To sinister of the head is a small and graceful cross fleury rising from a three-stepped calvary. The rude cross and initials on the other side are a later scratching.

Low down on the dexter side, and partly obscuring the figure, is a large shield, surmounted by a chalice and wafer; the arms are Ermine, in chief

¹ Page 199.

² *The New Statistical Account* says it was held by him about the year 1480, but this must be wrong, as he only graduated in 1496 (*Rentale Dunkeldense*, Scottish History Society, 2nd Series, No. 10, 1915, pp. xiv–xv).

³ He subsequently became first President of the Court of Session.

⁴ *Rentale Dunkeldense*, pp. 38, 54, 143, etc.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 350 and 351.

The Presbytery of Perth, by Rev. John Wilson (Perth, 1860), p. 154.

two mullets. I have not so far succeeded in identifying these arms with certainty, but they are probably either an error for Douglas of Whittinghame (Ermine, on a chief gules two mullets argent) or else that coat differenced. If it is Whittinghame with a difference, the most likely inferences seem to be:

- (a) That the canon differenced by omitting the chief and counter-changing the mullets, in which event his arms would have been Ermine, in chief two mullets gules, and the engraving would be substantially correct; or
- (b) That he differenced by making the chief wavy or dancetté; if so, there is an engraver's error in the omission of the chief line, unless, as is possible, it was just painted in.

Of these alternatives (a) seems the more probable, as according with what is shown on the slab; either method would be unorthodox, but by no means impossible, or even perhaps very improbable in the sixteenth century.

In pre-Reformation times, however, ecclesiastics frequently used their family arms without a difference, and the shield may have been intended for Whittinghame. In that event the engraver committed the glaring error of putting in the charges before drawing the chief line, and found afterwards that he had not left room for it. Although engravers were often careless, it is hard to credit quite such a stupid blunder, and I therefore incline to the view that the arms are Whittinghame differenced as in (a).

The pedigree of Douglas of Whittinghame gives no help, for it does not mention an Alexander Douglas. If the canon were an ordinary member of that family he would presumably have been some connection—perhaps a younger son, younger brother or cousin—of William, the second Douglas laird, who first appears in 1484 and is mentioned as late as 1544; but he may, of course, have been illegitimate. I have not been able to unearth any biographical details concerning him,¹ but it does not seem unlikely that he may have succeeded Myln in the benefice when the latter went to Cambuskenneth, for the bishop at that time was a Douglas, and would have been more than human, according to the standards of the day, had he neglected so good a chance of providing for a kinsman.

As to whether the shield may have been painted, this is quite possible, though not, I think, probable, unless the slab was originally on a high tomb or inserted in some part of the flooring, such as an altar enclosure, where it would not be subject to the constant tread of feet.

In conclusion, I would express my great indebtedness to Thomas Innes of Learney, Albany Herald, who has given me the benefit of his unrivalled

¹ In view of the arms, it seems doubtful whether the Alexander Douglas who matriculated at St Andrews in 1493 and graduated B.A. 1495 and M.A. 1497 can be the same person, since the Matriculation Roll describes him as "nationis Angusiae."

NEWLY DISCOVERED SCULPTURED STONES FROM PAPIL. 91

knowledge in trying to identify the arms, and to the following for advice and aid generously given to me in my search for information about the canon: Rev. John Chisholm, parish minister of Moneydie, Dr H. W. Meikle of the National Library; Mr H. M. Paton, Curator of Historical Records, H.M. Register House; Sir Hugh S. Gladstone, Capenoch, Penpont, Dumfriesshire; and Mr Ian R. Russell and Miss Norah Brodie, Dumfries.