

SCULPTURED MONUMENT IN ABERBROTHOC ABBEY.

“The Cast is taken from a stone found with other monuments mostly in a very mutilated state, buried under an accumulation of rubbish, in the Chancel of Aberbrothoc Abbey, of which it was cleared a few years since. They are now placed in the Chapter House of the Abbey. The one referred to is in the best state of preservation, and has probably formed part of the tomb of one of the Abbots. The design seems to have been for a Table Tomb of which this was the front, and, in its entire state, may have consisted of seven figures within niches, similar to the four remaining. The slab measures nearly five feet long, by twenty-seven inches high. The execution of the sculpture is in a very fine style of art. The attitude of the figures is easy, the drapery gracefully and naturally disposed, the crockets and finials though not elaborately finished, have a broad and rich effect, and when entire, it must have been a most beautiful work of art. The design consists of arched niches, separated by plain square pillars terminating in pinnacles. Within the first (on the right of the stone) is an angel with wings expanded, supporting a shield, surmounting a crosier or pastoral staff, bearing: on a fess three manchetts, between two mullets in chief, and a rose or cinquefoil in base. In the second niche is an ecclesiastic, carrying in his right hand the Aspersorium, and in his left the vessel of holy water. In the third niche is a similar figure, holding with both hands, in front of his breast, apparently a square

shaped pix, on which can be traced the circular form of the wafer. The fourth niche contains another figure of an ecclesiastic, holding before him an open book.

“ A shield, which forms part of the capital of one of the columns supporting the groined roof of the Abbey Chapter House, bears the same charges as those on the tomb. The crosier which accompanies them on the latter, can only be held as indicative of the bearer of them having filled the office of Abbot. These same arms also occur over a small ambry on the west side of the chapter house, but very much defaced. The identity of these arms would favour the opinion, that the Abbot who built the chapter house was the same to whose memory the tomb was erected, and though there exists no direct evidence of the fact, the following reasons will perhaps be considered to furnish satisfactory grounds for ascribing it to Walter Paniter, who was Abbot of Aberbrothoc in 1411, and resigned the office in 1443.

“ The name Paniter, or Panter, or Panther, is derived from the office of master baker (in the court of France, the Paniteries was an office of high consideration), and in monasteries the ‘ Paniter’ would seem to have been charged with the distribution of bread to the poor, no doubt in virtue of his office of chief baker. It is well known that armorial charges, as well as family names, were frequently assumed from office, and in this instance no charge could be more appropriate than that here sculptured on the fess—the manchet or wassail cake. The Paniter family was long established in Angus, possessing property in and near Montrose, and several of the name filling the office of Provost. This connection may perhaps explain the rose in the base of the shield. Another circumstance in favour of ascribing these arms to the family of Paniter, is, that in the list of the Abbots of Aberbrothoc, which is very complete, no other name occurs which can lay any claim to these charges. It may therefore be fairly assumed, that the chapter house is the work of the Abbot Walter Paniter, and that the sculpture here referred to, is part of the Abbot’s Tomb, a conclusion first suggested by Mr Chalmers of Aldbar.

“ Among the other monuments discovered at the same time with the above, is a remarkably fine though mutilated figure of an Abbot. The style in which this is executed, is exceedingly beautiful. The graceful folds of the drapery, the lace-work of the apparels of the tunica, maniple, &c., are executed with an elegance and delicacy quite surprising, and in some parts are as sharp as if fresh from the chisel of the sculptor. When first discovered, remains of colour and gilding in parts were observed, but these have quite faded. An excellent engraving of this figure has been executed by Mr R. C. Bell, for the ‘ Registrum de Aberbrothoc’ (exhibited along with the cast), and it has been thought not improbable that it originally formed part of the same tomb. In this case it

must have been the recumbent figure on the top ; and when placed within an arched recess in the wall, the tomb may have presented a design in some respects similar to that of James Kennedy, Bishop of St Andrews, in St Salvador's College, the erection of which is nearly contemporary with this one at Aberbrothoc."

December 8, 1851.

ROBERT CHAMBERS, Esq., in the Chair.

The following Gentlemen were elected Fellows :—

SAMUEL CHRISTY, Esq., M.P., Park Street, Westminster.

JOHN HAMILTON, Esq., Accountant.

Various valuable Donations were laid on the Table, including the *Skellach* or Ancient Bell of Kingoldrum : presented by the Rev. J. O. HALDANE, minister of the parish.

A beautiful small Roman Bronze Hercules ; together with two curious grotesque leaden figures, armed with halberts, and various coins, &c., dredged up in the Seine : presented by W. H. SCOTT, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

The following communication by Professor P. A. Munch of Christiania, Honorary Member of the Society, was read :—
