

UNPUBLISHED COUNTER-SEAL OF KILWINNING.

W. H. Scott, Esq., communicated an account of an unpublished seal of Kilwinning Abbey:—"Mr H. Laing¹ describes a seal of the Monastery of Kilwinning, as follows: "S' COMMVNE ABBIS ET CONVENTVS MONASTERII DE KYLWYNYN, Gothic lettering. Within a Gothic niche, the Virgin seated, holding the infant Jesus; the background ornamented with foliage. A round seal of an exceeding rich and beautiful design." The counter seal is as follows (No. 1064): "S' COMMVNE · CAPITVLI · MONASTERII · DE · KILVYNYNG. Within a Gothic niche, St Winnin, with a crozier and a book. Appended to a charter, A.D. 1557."

¹ Laing's Scottish Seals, p. 191, No. 1063.

Mr Laing adds the following note : " The form of the letters, as well as the execution of the design of this counter-seal, evidently proves it the work of a later period than the preceding, which is probably as early as the fourteenth century, when the art was in the highest state of perfection. Most likely the original matrix of the counter-seal had been lost, and this one substituted by an artist of inferior skill, a short time previous to the date of the instrument to which it is appended."

Mr Scott exhibited a specimen of the seal and counter-seal, Nos. 1063, 1064, as described by Mr Laing; and also the other, which supplies an impression of the original counter-seal unknown to him. It is unfortunately detached from the original charter, to which the parchment still adhering to it shews it to have been affixed. It precisely corresponds with the other on the obverse; whereas the reverse, though the same type as 1064, is superior in style and execution, agreeing in this respect with the counter-seal, and bears the legend: S · COM · MVNE · ABBIS ET CONVENTVS MONASTERII · DE · KYLWYNYN, in lettering corresponding with the older seal. The workmanship is very good, and it is possible, as Mr Laing thinks, that the original matrix of which *this is an impression, was lost, and a new one prepared shortly before 1557.* From the fact, however, that the legend is changed from: *Sigillum Commune Abbatis et Conventus Monasterii de Kylwynyn,* to *Sigillum Commune Capituli Monasterii de Kilvynnyng,* Mr Scott remarked that he was inclined to suppose the substitution was intentional, depending on some change in the jurisdiction of the monastery; but he must leave this to be explained or denied by those learned in monastic antiquities. The lettering on the modern counter-seal corresponds to that on the latest billon coins of James V., or the earlier of Mary. Whatever reason be finally adopted to account for such a change, the subject is not unworthy of notice, the example being curious, if not, indeed, unique.