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NOTES ON THE EAST WINDOW OF THE CHOIR OF BOTHWELL CHURCH, AND ITS ARMORIAL SHIELDS. BY JOSEPH BAIN, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

This ancient ecclesiastical building has received but superficial notice at the hands of archæologists or topographers—scarcely, indeed, what it merits from its position in the county of Lanark, where, with the exception of our venerable cathedral, we possess so few remains of the piety of pre-Reformation times. Indeed, after being degraded, during the barn-building era which succeeded the Reformation, by its attachment to one of the meanest-looking of the wretched edifices which that age produced,¹ the old choir is even now looked upon, I fear, merely as the receptacle for the heating apparatus which comforts the worshippers in the modern but handsome parish church, which harmonises *externally* somewhat better with the old fabric; and also as the place of sepulture for the local magnates of the district. With two exceptions (the houses of Hamilton and Home, which, in different lines, represent the Angus branch of the house of Douglas), not one of these has any right to appropriate the choir as a place of burial, any more than had the numerous heritors of the barony of Glasgow, who, for the better part of half a century, took violent possession of the beautiful crypt of Glasgow cathedral.

Hamilton of Wishaw, the earliest historian of Lanarkshire, whose taste, however, did not lie so much in the ecclesiastical walk as in chronicling the possessions of his brother lairds, dismisses Bothwell choir with a word or two. He merely says (p. 39), “the queer” [of Bothwell] “is of curious workmanship, built and covered with polisht stone.”

In the “Geographically Description of the Paroch of Bothwell” (Appendix to Wishaw, p. 132), said by the editors to be from the Macfarlane MSS., and probably by the incumbent, Mr William Hamilton, about 1720, the following occurs:—

¹ See the plate of Bothwell church, p. 132 in Hamilton of Wishaw’s “Lanarkshire,” in proof of the truth of these remarks. The *western* portion of that building was shortly afterwards replaced by the present parish church and tower, which last forms a conspicuous ornament of the landscape over a great part of the county.

“The kirk, or rather quire, is a very stately structure, not very large, but old Gothik work, ane arched roof, and very fine workmanship. It was built and endued by the family of Douglass, as is evident by the armes of that family cutt in stone, both without and within the house, at the south corner of the great window in the east end of the Quire. There is no description by which it can be understood when the church was built; only in both the above-mentioned places the Douglass armes are quartered with the Royall armes, which probably poynts at Archebald the Grime, who was marryed to King Robert’s daughter; and, as the tradition goes, both of them lyed buried under a very large marble stone within the said Quire.”

The worthy incumbent seems, therefore, to have been a little more observant than his neighbour and contemporary the laird of Wishaw, though, as we shall see, his historical information was far from being correct, and his description of the arms is by no means exhaustive.

Pennant, in his Scottish tour of 1772 (4to edition, of 1790, Part i. p. 143), remarks of the church, “The outside is said to be incrustated with a thin coat of stone, but I confess it escaped my notice.” The traveller then proceeds to state, with a disregard for accuracy which one would scarcely expect to find a *Welshman* exhibiting in a matter of *pedigree*, “In it are interred the founder and his lady, daughter of Andrew Murray, son to King David Bruce, with whom he got the lordship of Bothwell.”

The learned editors of the “*Origines Parochiales*” do not notice the architectural features of the choir, and, to the best of my recollection, little or nothing is said regarding them either in the Old or New Statistical Accounts of the parish. I have, however, writing in the country, at present no means of reference to these last. Where Pennant got his information regarding the “thin incrustation of stone” I am at a loss to imagine, nor is it easy to suppose what the object of such a troublesome piece of work could be. I am inclined to think that such is not the case, and that the building is constructed in the ordinary manner. It is to be regretted that Billings gives no account or drawing of the choir, and that it will not be preserved in that beautiful work, “*The Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*.”

I shall not attempt any detailed description of the building, not having been able to make the necessary measurements, &c.; and, moreover, the

chief interest centres in the eastern window. It is, as the old minister says, a "stately structure, not very large," built of the reddish stone of the district, but apparently of a better quality than is now found there, having stood, with but trifling repair, the storms of nearly 500 years. It has four bays, with deeply-recessed windows, separated by plain buttresses. The north and south windows, at the western extremity, are of smaller size than the others, having two lights only; while the remainder, with the exception of the east window, the old tracery of which has long disappeared, have three lights.¹ The very high pitched roof, one of the most picturesque features, is covered with large grey stones, overlapping each other, and must be of enormous weight. At its eastern extremity a modern stone cross, of the heraldic shape known as a "cross crosslet," occupies the place of one, possibly of coeval antiquity with the building, which was blown down in the tremendous gale of 9th February 1856. The entrance is on the south side, by a low circular-headed doorway, below the second window from the west, to which a descent of one step is necessary, from the interments in the churchyard having raised the level of the ground. In the buttresses on either side are niches for statues of saints, now empty. On entering, the principal feature which one observes is the loftiness of the vaulted stone ceiling, and likewise the nakedness of the interior, stripped of the tapestries and other ornaments which, no doubt, it possessed in the days of its glory. Among others to persons of inferior note, two huge mural monuments, in the florid style of the 17th and 18th centuries, occupy a large space of the eastern walls. The earlier one is, I think, to the memory of James Marquess of Hamilton, the other is that of Archibald Douglas, Earl of Forfar, who died of wounds received at Sheriffmuir. No vestige is traceable of the place where the altar stood. There is a piscina in the south-east angle, and three sedilia, the tabernacle work on the canopies of which shows the rude treatment to which they have been subjected by the "rascal multitude." A doorway on the north side gives access to a small vaulted chamber, probably a vestry, so dark (there being only one little square pierced window), that it must have been artificially lighted. In the south wall of this there is a very

¹ The lights of the windows have trefoiled heads, and the enclosing arch is filled with quatrefoils. The window tracery seems to have been much renewed, and to be of a later date than the building. But on this point I speak with submission.

deep recess, perhaps for holding the vestments and other articles for the service of the church. The stones which compose the floor of the choir must, I think, be of comparatively modern date, as none of them exhibit any inscriptions or other marks of burial; while the probability is, that, besides the distinguished founder, others of his wife's predecessors and kin must have been removed from the former parish church to his new choir, which is believed to occupy nearly the same site.

Let us now, without further preliminary, examine the armorial shields on the eastern window, which, so far as I know, have not before been particularly or accurately described. They are four in number, of the usual triangular shape, and one supports the impost of the window arch on either side. The first, at the north side of the window, outside, exhibits the heart, *uncrowned*, on an ermine field; on a chief, the three stars. It has no supporter, and is in good preservation. This is known to have been the shield borne by Archibald the Grim, as Lord of Galloway, previous to his succession to the earldom of Douglas in 1388. It is singular that no impalement of *her arms commemorates his marriage with Johanna de Moravia, the heiress of Bothwell, which took place some time after 1366, the date of her father's death, though on this last point there is some difference among authorities.*¹ Sir Archibald must then have been a man of mature age, for he was a renowned warrior as early as the field of Poitiers, where he was captured and ransomed, as picturesquely related by Fordun. The corresponding shield at the south side of the window has a single supporter, apparently a human figure. It is impaled, and the dexter side exhibits a figure, much weather-worn, but which, I think, is intended for the Scottish lion. The sinister impalement is unmistakably the Douglas coat—the heart, *uncrowned*, in base, and three stars in chief. Surmounting *both* impalements there is a very distinct label of three teeth. We may conclude that this represents the arms of the unfortunate David Duke of Rothesay, and his wife Marjory, the daughter of Archibald the Grim. The "Extracta e Cronica Scocie" (p. 207), states that they were married "apud Bothwele;" and such an illustrious connection would no doubt be commemorated by the venerable founder on the walls of his choir.

¹ The Moray stars, however, form the third quarter in the shields of her son and grandson.—Seton's *Scottish Heraldry*, plate xii. figs. 8 and 9.

The third shield, inside the window, and opposite to that of the founder, is without supporter, and impaled. The dexter presents the three Moray stars, two and one, surrounded by the tressure. On a chief the three stars again appear *in fesse*. The sinister impalement exhibits the three Moray stars, two and one, quite plain. This must indicate the alliance of a Moray of Bothwell (which family, *alone* of that name, originally bore the tressure to show their royal descent from Christian Bruce) with a lady of the same surname, not of royal blood. I do not know who was the wife of Thomas Moray, the last Baron of Bothwell, but should think the dexter impalement must represent his shield.¹

The fourth and last shield at the south corner of the window inside, and opposite to No. 2, is also impaled, and has a single supporter, apparently a savage man, whose naked arms encircle it. The dexter side shows the heart, still *uncrowned*, and in chief the three stars. The sinister, though in better preservation than its neighbour outside, yet is rather indistinct, but appears to be the Scottish lion. In this last, therefore, we have probably the arms of Archibald the Second, the "Tineman" of Homildon and Shrewsbury, who died at Verneuil, Duke of Touraine, and of his wife Margaret, daughter of King Robert III.

If my views then are correct regarding the historic personages commemorated by these shields, what a suggestive family chronicle is briefly recorded on these slowly mouldering stones! The mental eye of the gazer recalls the long career of the distinguished founder, who, though starting in life with the bend sinister on his shield, yet became the head of the house of Douglas—the tragic death of his ill-fated son-in-law at Falkland—and the honours won in France by the "Douglas" of Shake-

¹ The late Mr Vere Irving, "History of the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire," vol. i. p. 122 (Account of the Parish of Crawford-John), states that John de Crawford, owner of that barony, died in the first half of the fourteenth century, leaving two daughters and co-heiresses, one of whom married Thomas de Moravia, who in that way acquired half of the barony. But this does not seem to be borne out by his reference to the *Chamberlain Rolls* for the year 1359, which state that Thomas then drew the rents of half the barony, "*ex concessione regis, quamdiu est obses pro rege,*" quite a different thing from being its *absolute* owner.

The shield, if his, is additional evidence that his wife could not have been a Crawford, their arms being "*ermine, a fesse gules.*"

speare, whose ashes, with those of his gallant son-in-law, the Constable Buchan, repose in the chancel of Tours.

Such reflections as these, arising from the contemplation of genuine heraldic remains, supply cogent reasons why antiquaries should sternly discountenance and expose on all occasions the erection of sham armorial shields, either in stone or in the shape of stained glass windows, both far from uncommon of late years, and utterly meaningless, even when they do not declare deliberate falsehood.

According to the *Origines Parochiales* (v. *Bothwell*), the collegiate church was founded by Archibald the Grim, on 10th October 1398, just two years before his death, for a provost and eight prebendaries, and was liberally endowed with lands and teinds in Lanark and Peebles shires.

The provost at the era of the Reformation was John Hamilton, a brother of the notorious Bothwellhaugh. The houses of the churchmen have long since been demolished, but their sites still retain the name of the "Prebends' Yards."

We have thus seen that the worthy minister's account of the "quartering" (as he calls it) of the Douglas and Royal arms is not much beside the mark, though his deductions are erroneous. Yet for his incurious age, the information is tolerably minute. I fear that the "large marble stone," which, according to tradition, covered the remains of some



Incised Slab in Bothwell Church.

one or other of the distinguished persons buried in the choir, has ceased to

exist. The sole relic of monumental sculpture is a fragment of a large double slab, which now stands upright against the wall beneath the east window. I have no information in what part of the building it formerly stood. It is of Bothwell stone, about four feet in height, by three in breadth, and in two compartments. The upper is occupied by a circle enclosing a cross with triangular-headed limbs, between which are four smaller circles, all in low relief. (See preceding woodcut.) The dexter half of the lower compartment, if any arms were ever sculptured on it, shows no vestige of them now. The sinister exhibits an incised shield (rudely carved) bearing the Moray stars, and its lower extremity prolonged into a plain crosshanded sword, in pale, point downwards, one half at least of this however being broken off. Resting on the top of the slab is a detached stone, bearing an inscription, still easily decipherable, in Old English characters—*Magister thomas tron.*"¹ I do not know which of the lords of Bothwell is commemorated by the tombstone. The rudeness of its carving, and the want of the tressure would seem to point to the conclusion that it belonged to William or Walter de Moravia, who both flourished in the thirteenth century. (Reg. Glasg.) The coveted distinction of the tressure only came into the family, according to Mr Riddell, with Christian Bruce. I regret that though I took accurate sketches of the several shields, the time and means at my disposal on my last visit, did not permit of my taking a rubbing of this upright stone, which might perhaps have enabled some brother antiquary to determine its date.² It would appear that Thomas de Moravia was buried at Bothwell, no doubt in the Old Parish Church. Mr Riddell in *Stewartiana* (p. 97), cites the following entry from Gray's MS. Obituary and Chronicle, written early in the 16th century. "Dominus Thomas de Moravia de bothuel dominus obiit anno gratie MCCC Sexagesimo sexto³ in assumptione beate Marie Virginis, et *jacet apud Bothuell;*

¹ I learn from Mr J. G. Scott, Fairyknowe, Bothwell, to whom I am indebted for a photograph of the stone and the monumental slab, that the stone was the lintel of a window in the old Tower, as its shape in fact indicates. May it not record the name of the architect or master builder of the choir?

² This want has been supplied by Mr Scott's illustration.

³ Lord Hailes, *Annals* (Vol. ii. p. 273 n.) says on the authority of Fordun, that Thomas Moray died in 1361 of the Plague.

decessit apud Newcastlell. Obitus Archibaldi comitis de Douglas, viz. *blak Archibald* qui fundavit collegium de bothuel in vigiliis natalis domini anno domini J^m IIII^c, apud trief; jacet apud bothuell. Iste Archibaldus dispensavit filiam et heredem Thome de Moravia post mortem patris sui, et duxit eam de Anglia, propter quod prius obtulit se ad duellum cum quinque Anglicis." Sir Thomas was then, and had been for some years, a hostage for the ransom of David Bruce. The "gallant and chivalrous way," as Mr Riddell calls it, in which Archibald the Grim won his wife from his English rivals, bears out the character which Froissart and Fordun have handed down to us of that eminent Scotsman.

"Archibald Douglas, a worthy knight, and much dreaded by his enemies, dismounted and held up before him a long sword; its blade was of two ells; scarcely could another man raise it from the ground, yet he wielded it with ease. He dealt such heavy blows with it, that wherever he reached, he overthrew. Before him the hardiest of the English army shrank." (Froissart cited in Hailes' Annals Ed. 1797, III., p. 261.) And Fordun's continuator, Walter Bower, says, (as rendered by Lord Hailes,) "In 1400 died the Lord Archibald, first of that name, Earl of Douglas, surnamed the *Grim*, who surpassed all Scotsmen of his age in civil wisdom, prowess, and hardy enterprise, in the extent of his acquisitions and in wealth. Most upright was he in judgment, yet severe. Faithful to his promise, he had always a numerous retinue of valiant men. He showed high reverence to the ecclesiastical order." (Hailes *sup. cit.* p. 263 note.) And the *Extracta e Cron. Scocie* (p. 207), thus sums up his character. "Dowglace primus comes Archibaldus dictus Gryme sive terribilis, obiit: prudens, iustus, fortis, audax, conquestor, fidelis, ecclesiasticis graciosus, monasteriis non onerosus. Quia propter insolenciam monialium Linclowden in collegium clericorum reformavit, Bothwell collegium fundavit." It is such traits of character as these from the pens of contemporaries that give life to a picture, and relieve the monotonous grandeur of history. The great earl, though he died at Threave, his stronghold in Galloway, was borne to rest within his own choir. But no stone now remains to mark the spot where his dust reposes.

I cannot bring these remarks to a close, without expressing a natural regret that the Presbyterian form of worship did not admit of the

incorporation of this ancient building with its modern adjunct the parish church, in a more becoming and suitable manner. Had the addition, for instance, taken the form of a nave for Episcopal service, how different in that case would have been the present aspect of the choir? It would not then have been reduced to the position of a lumber room and general burial place for a number of families, many of whom are but recently connected with the parish, and have no right of sepulture within the walls other than assumption. More than this, the very reprehensible practice has obtained of digging graves and burying the dead *close to the foundations*, both inside and outside of the choir, in the latter case, in the recesses formed between the buttresses surrounding it, thus most materially injuring the stability of the foundations; and not content with this, the appropriators of these have in most instances erected hideous railings or cages over their departed relatives, thus quite preventing proper drainage around the walls. This practice, as is known, had been carried on extensively round the Cathedral of Glasgow, and much trouble and expense was occasioned before the excrescences were finally removed, and a system of drainage properly established. This was one of the many evils strongly condemned by the late Mr Archibald M'Lellan in his talented *Essay on the Cathedral of Glasgow*, a work which pointed the way, it may truly be said, to all the improvements which have since taken place, and which have made that venerable building the most perfect relic of mediæval church architecture left to us in Scotland.