

## II.

## SOME ROXBURGH GRAVE-SLABS AND A COPED STONE AT ANCRUM. BY J. HEWAT CRAW, F.S.A. SCOT.

## ROXBURGH GRAVE-SLABS.

As no vestige now remains of the royal burgh of Roxburgh, founded by David I., and one of the four chief burghs of its time in Scotland, a special interest attaches to any relics dug up on its grassy site at the confluence of the Teviot and the Tweed.

In *Kelso Records*,<sup>1</sup> published in 1839, Mason refers to the remains of cloisters standing on the farm of Friars till within a few months of the time at which he wrote; he also states that the tenant, Mr Roberton, had found coffins "ornamented with rude plates of iron," and various other relics. The farm of Friars, which occupied the site of the convent of the Grey Friars at Roxburgh, is designated "Freres" in Pont's map of Teviotdale; it no longer remains, but Friar's Haugh and Friar's Cottages still preserve the name.

Some time previous to 1857, as recorded by Mr Thomas Craig in the *History* of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club,<sup>2</sup> six stones were dug up during levelling operations on St James' Green, where an annual fair is still held on the festival of St James the Apostle. The position was near the western limits of the fair ground within stone's-throw of the Tweed, the stones being found at no great depth beneath the surface. They were taken to a small clump of trees on rising ground overlooking the haugh, but when looked for at a recent meeting of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, only one of the six could be found. Another was found later in the adjoining meadow, and four more fragments much damaged subsequently came to light.

The following is a description of the stones, taken in the order in which they were described by Mr Craig:—

I. The most important, and the only one which had not been taken away from its position in the clump of trees. A slab of hard shale measuring 3 feet 4 inches by 19 inches by 6 inches, apparently about a quarter of its original size. It bears the incised representation of a crocketed canopy; no portion of the figure below, however, remains. Round the edge runs an incised inscription in Lombardic capitals, the

<sup>1</sup> P. 21.<sup>2</sup> Vol. viii. p. 289.

preserved portion being “. . . LE · MCC · ERC · DE · RORBVR . . .” The first letter, now broken off, is shown in a photograph, dated 1899, in the possession of Mr John Rutherford, The Square, Kelso; that it is an L is doubtful. The second R of RORBVR : . has had an incision made across it at a later period, probably to form an X. Mr Craig’s reading is at several points inaccurate.

II. A sandstone slab measuring 3 feet by 14 inches. It bore the lower half of an effigy showing the feet protruding from the folds of a robe; “a portion of one of the arms and hand, and the other hand” were shown at the top (Craig). A fragment bearing the feet is all that remains.

III. A sandstone slab, 3 feet by 1 foot, showing a portion of “a human figure under life size, clothed in a loose flowing robe which conceals the feet” (Craig). This stone has been replaced in the clump of trees; another portion of it also came to light.

IV. A sandstone slab, now lost, measuring 6 feet by 15 inches by 9 inches, and bearing masons’ chisel-marks on the back. It was chamfered round the edge except at the top, which seemed to have been broken off. In the centre was the incised representation of a pair of shears.

V. A sandstone slab, 19 inches by 12 inches, now lost. It bore in fair preservation a cross of eight arms, each arm “thickening towards the end and terminating in half-diamond-shaped, half-pear-shaped figures.” The shaft of the cross rose from a calvary.

VI. Sandstone, well preserved, measuring 5½ feet by 1 foot, “evidently the lintel of a window”; a small portion remains. Craig’s description is far from clear: “at the centre there is a raised projection, pointing inwards, which, roughly speaking, may be said somewhat to resemble the club represented on playing cards, but, instead of being rounded, having five sides borne on a narrow shaft. At the top and bottom are halves of this figure. Between these figures the stone is cut slopingly downwards.”

The same writer described an earlier and more important discovery of stones, deriving his information from *The British Chronicle* of 17th October 1788, a newspaper published in Kelso. The relics were found while digging out the foundations of some religious houses on St James’ Green; two stone coffins with well-preserved skeletons were found, also pieces of painted glass and a silver coin of Robert II. One of these stones was the Johanna Bulloc stone described below. In the issue of the same paper dated 24th October several more stones are reported as found at the same place, some without inscriptions. One which was incomplete bore “a St George and a St Andrew’s cross

intersecting each other, with a pair of wool-scissors on the right-hand side of the shaft, and an inscription which, so far as it can be made out, is HIC JACET ALICIA—LC—. Burnt wheat and barley were

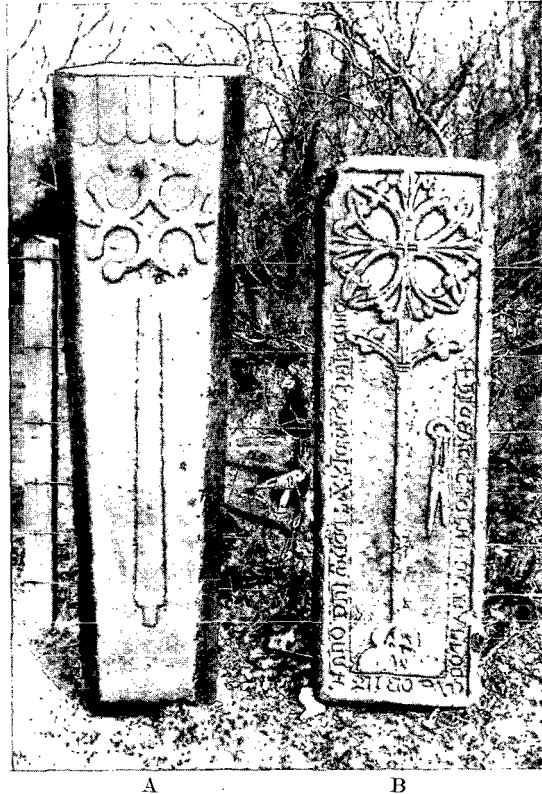


Fig. 1. Cross-slabs from Roxburgh.

found on the pavement of the church, which consisted of small bricks or tiles.”

Inquiries being made in the hope of tracing some of the missing relics, it was ascertained from Mr William Turner, Beaumont Street, Kelso, that several large slabs were to be found at the edge of a wood near the gardens at Floors Castle. These with others had been brought from the site of Roxburgh many years ago for the purpose of covering a drain, and, not being required, were fortunately left above ground. Investigation showed three sandstone grave-slabs at the spot indicated. The first measures 6 feet in length by 22 inches

at the head and 15 inches at the foot; it is 4 inches thick; the edges are chamfered, but the stone is otherwise plain. The second (fig. 1, A), of red sandstone, is 6 feet in length by 21 inches at the head and 13 inches at the foot, and is 6 inches thick. It bears a cross, the arms of which are extended into three projections, the side projections being rounded and the middle one pointed. The shaft has at its base a curious projection, apparently a tenon to facilitate attachment to a socket; and at the head of the slab, above the cross, a band consisting of six oblong figures, with their inner ends rounded, passes across the slab. The edges are chamfered, but there is no inscription.

The third slab (fig. 1, B), of grey sandstone, measures 5 feet 1 inch by 20 inches at the head and 18 inches at the foot, and 6 inches in thick-

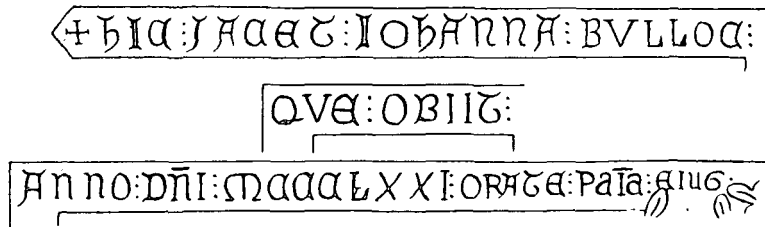


Fig. 2. Inscription on Slab, fig. 1, B.

ness. This is the stone described by Craig. It bears a floriated cross of conventional design, the shaft rising from a calvary or mound of two rounded steps which bears a fleur-de-lys. To the right of the shaft is shown a pair of shears. The edge bears the inscription in raised Lombardic capitals: "HIC IACET JOHANNA BVLLOC QVE OBIIT ANNO DNI MCCCLXXI ORATE P AIA EIVS" (fig. 2). Cross slabs of this type are not often dated; this example belongs to the close of the period during which Lombardic lettering was used. It is believed by Mr Eeles to be of later date than the second slab.

An additional interest attaches to this stone by a note from the Journal of John T. Brockett, written in 1833, and printed in 1906 by the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club;<sup>1</sup> a rough sketch of the slab was also reproduced: "Monument of Johanna Bullock, the lady of the governor of Roxburgh Castle, near the ruins of which it was found. On the discovery, nobody near could decipher the letters, but on its being shown to Sir Walter Scott, then a mere boy,<sup>2</sup> he easily read the inscription, and, as he has himself told the story at the Duke of Roxburgh's table at Floors, he was much delighted with his own capability." I have not been able to verify the statement as to the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xx. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> In 1788 he was seventeen years of age.

lady's identity; Roxburgh Castle at this period was in the hands of the English.<sup>1</sup>

It is satisfactory to know that through the services of the Ancient Monuments Department of H.M. Office of Works, his Grace the Duke of Roxburgh has granted permission for these slabs to be removed for more careful preservation in the precincts of Kelso Abbey.

*Note.*—A cross slab in Eckford churchyard, some 4 miles from Roxburgh, is figured and described in the *Proceedings*, vol. xxxix. p. 35.<sup>2</sup>

#### COPED GRAVE-COVER AT ANCRUM.

I am indebted to Mr Robert Robson, Bridge Street, Hawick, for informing me of a coped grave-cover found by him in the churchyard at Ancrum, in the county of Roxburgh.

This stone, which lies 66 feet south of the chancel partition of the church, is of red sandstone, and measures 6 feet 7 inches in length; at the head it is 22 inches in breadth, and at the foot 14 inches; in height it is 1 foot at each end, rising to 13½ inches at about 2 feet from the head. A slight groove runs along the top, and five rows of semi-circular scale ornament extend along each side. The stone has suffered somewhat in parts from weathering; only the top of it is at present visible above ground.

A coped grave-cover of similar design, found in Nisbet churchyard in the adjoining parish of Crailing, was described and figured in the *Proceedings*, vol. xxxix. pp. 36, 363. Similar examples in Orkney were figured last year in the *Proceedings*, vol. lv. pp. 132-3.

<sup>1</sup> At this period the governor was Alan del Strother; in 1389 his wife's name is given as Margaret. (Rev. John Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, part ii. vol. i. p. 254.)

<sup>2</sup> On the plate facing p. 80 of the new *History of Northumberland*, vol. ii., are shown several grave-slabs at Embleton. The crosses on two of these stones bear a close resemblance to those figured above. Crosses of the same type as fig. 1, A, may also be seen at the chapel on Farne Island, Northumberland.