

IV.

THE AUGUSTINIAN PRIORY AND PARISH CHURCH OF MONYMUSK,
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The picturesque village of Monymusk is situated on the right bank of the Aberdeenshire Don, at the point where that beautiful river, after emerging from the narrow, rugged, and wooded gorge between Bennachie and the Menaway range, spreads itself out in graceful loops over the fertile haugh extending eastward and northward to Kemnay and Inverurie. The scenery all around exhibits singular variety and charm, owing to the sharp, immediate contrast between the bosky howe, with its rich agricultural bottoms, and the rugged heath-clad hills rising into the craggy "Mither Tap" of Bennachie, which dominates the whole landscape. Monymusk, indeed, exhibits all that *insita sibi species venustatis* which is so usually characteristic of old Celtic religious sites. That its charms have been long appreciated is evidenced by the ancient couplet— ascribed, of course, to Thomas the Rhymer:—

"Monymuss shall be a buss
To draw the dun deer down."

The parish of Monymusk is one of high antiquarian and historic interest. That a district so favoured by nature as this secluded and smiling vale, sheltered by its northern rampart of hills, would have been early settled is what we should expect; and evidence for this exists in the stone circles in the deer-park, Monymusk, at Nether Coullie, at Tombeg, and at Whitehill,¹ and in the weapons and implements of the Stone and Bronze Ages which have been found in various parts of the parish. Coming to historic times, the Early Celtic period is illustrated by the beautiful sculptured stone and by the famed Breccbannoch, both preserved at Monymusk House. We may note also the highly interesting old church site at Abersnithack, across the Don from the Priory, which bears the name of St Finan, one of the group of Welsh missionaries brought by St Kentigern along with him from Llan-Elwy during his mission into Aberdeenshire towards the end of the sixth century. To medieval and later times belong the Priory and the Parish Church, and the two picturesque castellated houses of Pitfichie² and Monymusk. The

¹ Described and illustrated by F. R. Coles, F.S.A.Scot., in *Proceedings*, vol. xxxv. pp. 201-8, and by J. Ritchie, Corr. Mem.S.A.Scot., in vol. li. pp. 41-7.

² Described and illustrated by me in *Proceedings*, vol. lv. pp. 135-9.

parish has a literary flavour all its own, due to the facts that one of its medieval rectors (1496-7) was the poet Gavin Douglas;¹ that in more modern times it became the scene of the astounding fiction of Archangel Leslie; and that John Skinner, the gifted author of *Tullochgorum*, was for some time schoolmaster here. Another Rector of Monymusk, though merely in a titular sense, was the saintly Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow under the Restoration Episcopacy.² On two occasions, in 1761 and in 1764, John Wesley preached in the ancient church. One of the most popular of Scottish reels is Daniel Dow's "Monymusk Strathspey." To students of Scottish land economy, Monymusk is well known as the scene of Lord Cullen's great improvements in the early years of the eighteenth century, which marked the beginning of a forward movement in north-eastern agriculture.³ And, lastly in this catalogue of varied interests, the naturalist remembers Monymusk as the scene of an interesting though unsuccessful effort, in the nineties of last century, to acclimatise the American Wapiti deer in Scotland.

I. HISTORICAL SKETCH.

A Columban origin has been claimed for the Culdee settlement at Monymusk, but on no historical foundation. The first specific account that we have of the place refers to the time of King Malcolm Canmore (1057-93). It is said that, on the occasion of an expedition against the men of Moray in 1078, the King made a grant of the lands of Keig and Monymusk to the Church of St Andrews. The record of this gift is not contemporary,⁴ but is accepted as authentic by Skene and other authorities.⁵ It would seem difficult otherwise to account for the historical connection between St Andrews and a monastic community so far away. The other priories dependent on St Andrews—St Serf's, Loch Leven, St Mary's, Portmoak, St Ethernan's (St Hadrian's), Isle of May, and St Mary's, Pittenweem—were all in the nearer neighbourhood of the superior community. Thus was commenced the long connection between this Aberdeenshire centre of early Pictish Christianity and

¹ See *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, vol. i., No. 139.

² See Rev. D. Butler, *The Life and Letters of Robert Leighton*, p. 355, note 1.

³ See *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. ii. pp. 96-7.

⁴ See *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff* (Spalding Club), pp. 171-2, where the detailed specification of the lands granted by Canmore is given from a sixteenth-century transcript in the Monymusk charter chest. The boundaries, which are described with great minuteness, have been investigated by Rev. A. Low, F.S.A.Scot., in *Proceedings*, vol. vi. pp. 218-24. The story of Canmore's visit and grant is picturesquely told by J. Bellenden, *Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland*, ed. 1821, vol. ii. p. 283.

⁵ W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ed. 1887, vol. ii. p. 389; J. Stuart, *Book of Deer*, Introduction, p. lxxvi; but cf. W. Reeves, "On the Culdees," *Trans. Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. part iii. (1873) p. 253.

the first episcopate to be founded (*circa* 900) under the influence of the Romanising clergy who were introduced by King Nectan Mac Derile (706-29) and his successors during the eighth and ninth centuries. This association resulted in the thirteenth century in the replacement of the ancient Culdee settlement at Monymusk by a Priory—sometimes in later records styled an Abbey—of Augustinian Canons Regular, under the Bishop of St Andrews. And just as under the influence of Rome the old foundation of St Kenneth at the latter place was dedicated to St Mary in the new regime, so also at Monymusk the reconstituted Priory was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.¹ It has been said that Canmore founded the Norman Parish Church at Monymusk; but this building belongs, as we shall see, to the end of the twelfth century.

In face of the lack of documentary evidence for a remoter antiquity, Dr Joseph Robertson was led to conjecture that the Culdee settlement at Monymusk was sent thither from St Andrews as a result of Canmore's gift in 1078.² But the uniform voice of tradition that there was a much earlier settlement of the Celtic Church here is strongly supported by the existence at Monymusk to-day of an exceedingly fine sculptured stone (fig. 1), belonging to a class the style of whose ornament may be referred to the ninth century. Now preserved at Monymusk House, the stone originally stood at Nether Mains, 1 mile eastward from the Priory. It is an unhewn striated granitic boulder, 7 feet high, with sculpture partly incised and partly in relief. The sculpture consists of an equal-armed Celtic cross, with shaft and base, all ornamented with knot-work; the "step" symbol, and the "disc and double-ring" symbol.³

¹ In the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen," 1732, it is wrongly stated that "the Priory Church was dedicated to St John"—*Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 171. Perhaps there may have been an altar to this saint in the church. The dedication is given correctly by the same author in another place—*ibid.*, p. 584.

² See his article on "Culdees" in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, ed. 1923, vol. iii. p. 609. On the other hand, Dr Reeves, though he suspected the genuineness of Canmore's grant (see *supra*, p. 35, note 5), was inclined to think that if this King had any real connection with Monymusk, "the probability is that he was a restorer, not a founder, and that, as in the subsequent case of Deer, he revived a decayed monastery and enlarged its endowments. At all events, Monymusk was affiliated at the above date to the Church of St Andrews, and partook of its discipline as an institution of Keledei."—"On the Culdees," *ut supra*, p. 173.

³ See J. Romilly Allen and J. Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part iii. pp. 192-4; also old *Statistical Account*, vol. iii. p. 69. The bench-mark on the stone, of course, is modern.

Any attempt to estimate the date of the Monymusk stone must be based upon a balance cast between those respects in which it differs from, and those in which it resembles, other specimens of its kind.

Displaying the cross in association with symbols, the stone belongs to the second class into which these Pictish sculptured monuments have been divided by Anderson and Romilly Allen. The period of this class has been fixed upon sound evidence as falling within the ninth and tenth



Fig. 1. The Monymusk Stone.

The other relic of Celtic Christianity associated with Monymusk, the famous "Brecbannoch," or reliquary of St Columba, has no ascertained connection either with the Culdee settlement or with the Priory. Along with the lands of Forglen, in Banffshire, which pertained

centuries (see *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part i. p. cix). It remains to be considered whether within these limits an earlier or a later date should be preferred.

Stones belonging to Class II. are usually carefully dressed and shaped to a slab-like form; but the Monymusk stone is a rude undressed monolith, similar in all respects to the rough Aberdeenshire pillar-stones of Class I., displaying symbols without the cross. This circumstance might be taken to favour an early date; though it should be remembered that the hard igneous and metamorphic rocks of Aberdeenshire do not lend themselves to cutting and dressing like the sandstones of Forfarshire, where the finely tooled and elaborately sculptured monuments of Class II. are specially found. Indeed, it may be guessed that to this circumstance is due the comparative paucity of monuments of Class II. in Aberdeenshire, which contains only four others—the Formaston ogham stone, the Migvie stone, the Dyce stone No. 2, and the Maiden stone. On the other hand, it should be recollected that one of these, the Maiden stone, is a finely shaped and dressed monolith wrought in the obdurate Bennachie granite.

Passing now to the decoration on the Monymusk stone, the equal-armed cross in Pictland, harking back to *Candida Casa*, points to an early date, although the pedestal (an unusual feature) suggests the influence of the later shafted cross, as if the equal-armed form were already felt to be archaic. The shafted cross is the usual one on Class II. monuments. But an equal-armed cross upon a pedestal occurs on the Woodwray stone, which is of a late type, having symbols but showing also animal and zoomorphic forms. The pedestal is seen also on the Ulbster stone, where the "step" symbol, found on the Monymusk stone, occurs as well. Two other examples of the equal-armed cross with pedestal are found upon the Skinnet stone No. 1. All these three monuments are advanced specimens of Class II. An equal-armed cross upon a pedestal occurs on a stone of Class III. at Holm, near Kirkwall. Another example of Class III. type was found on a slab with an inscription in scholastic oghams dug out of the Broch of Burrian, North Ronaldshay. An equal-armed cross with a pedestal of peculiar type occurs on the Dunfallandy stone, and also on the Meikle stone No. 5. Both these stones belong to Class II., but are late in their period. The semicircular base upon which the pedestal stands on the Monymusk stone is seen again on the Farr stone, which is of late date (Class III.). It also occurs on the St Vigean's stone No. 12 (Class III.).

Another early feature, recalling Class I., is that the decoration is applied to the figures only, not to the field of the monument. The fact that some of the ornament is incised is also an archaic characteristic.

The pattern (Romilly Allen No. 1108) in the centre of the cross is seen in the "double-disc" symbol on the Fordoun inscribed stone. The inscription there is in minuscules, the epigraphic use of which in Britain ranged between the middle of the eighth and the tenth century (see Æ. Hübner, *Inscriptiones Britannicæ Christianæ*, p. 21). The same pattern occurs in the "double-disc" symbol on the Brodie ogham stone, which seems of an advanced date, the ornamentation of the symbols being very rich and the ogham script belonging to the later or scholastic variety. The pattern also is found in the illuminated Gospels of MacDurnan, an Irish manuscript ascribed to about the year 900 (Sir E. Maunde Thomson, *Introduction to Greek and Latin Palæography*, p. 380. Mælbride MacDurnan, Abbot of Derry, died in 927).

The interlaced pattern work on the pedestal of the cross is of a simple and early type. The pattern on the arms (Romilly Allen No. 728) is unique.

The "step" symbol, as it here occurs with expanded crescentic and scrolled terminations, is unique. The vesica or almond shapes with which it is adorned occur on the Woodwray stone, on the Strathmartine stone No. 3 (which like the Monymusk stone has sculpture partly incised and partly in relief), and (doubtfully) on the St Vigean's stone No. 5. All these are monuments belonging to Class II. The almond shapes strongly recall the amygdaloidal bosses occurring in Late Celtic ornaments of the Pagan period, such as the bronze armlets found with a coin of Nerva (A.D. 96-8) in an earth-house at Castle Newe, Aberdeenshire. See J. Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times (The Iron Age)*, pp. 141-3.

The general inference in regard to the Monymusk stone seems distinctly in favour of an

to the office of its guardianship, the Brechannoch was granted by William the Lion to the great Abbey of St Thomas the Martyr at Arbroath, which he founded in 1178.¹ On 18th January 1315, Bernard de Linton, Abbot of Arbroath, executed a deed conveying the lands of Forglen and the wardenship of the Brechannoch to Malcolm de

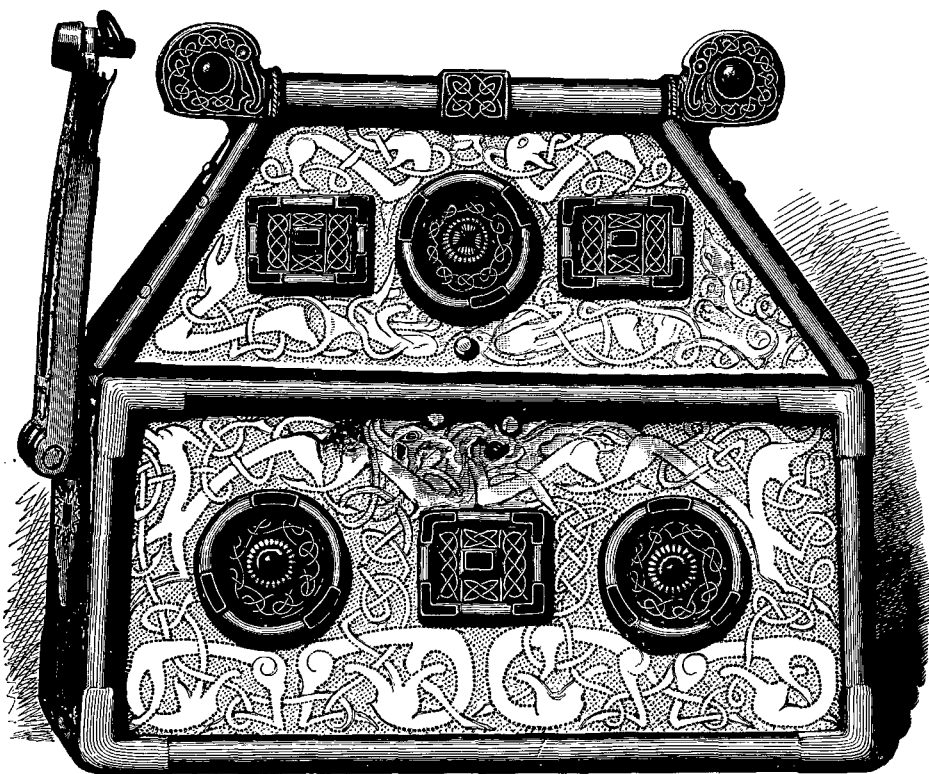


Fig. 2. The Brechannoch—front view.

Monymusk,² on the condition that he and his heirs should take the Abbot's place in carrying the reliquary before the King's host on the

early date within the limits of Class II. Hence the ascription of the monument to the ninth century in the text. As suggested therein, the point has some bearing upon the alleged very late period of the Culdee foundation.

¹ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 510; cf. Adamnan's *Life of St Columba*, ed. W. Reeves, *Historians of Scotland* ed. (1874), Introduction, pp. xcvi–ix.

² For the de Monymusks, see W. M. Macpherson, *Church and Priory of Monymusk*, pp. 139–44; also A. J. Monday, *From the Tone of Somersetshire to the Don of Aberdeenshire*, pp. 29–35. The place of their capital messuage is unknown.

day of battle.¹ From the family of de Monymusk the lands of Forglen ultimately passed to the Irvines of Drum, in the charter chest of

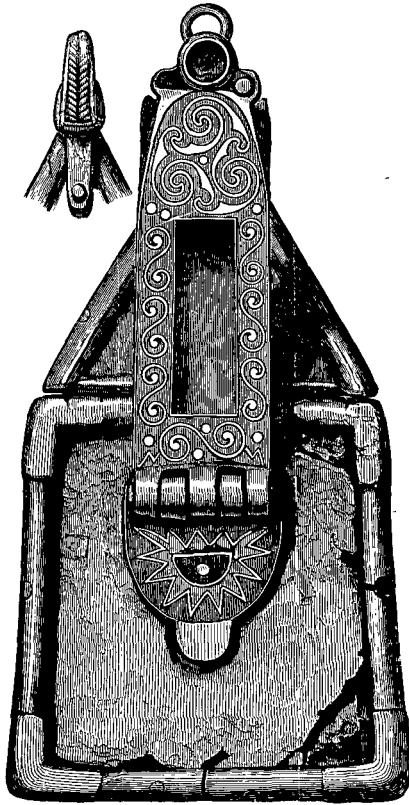


Fig. 3. The Breccbannoch—end view.

which family writs connected with the custody of the Breccbannoch, and the obligation to carry it in the King's army, are found under the years 1481, 1483, and 1494.² How the reliquary itself found its way back to Monymusk is not known. This beautiful remnant of Early Christian art (figs. 2, 3), dating perhaps from the eighth century, has been fully described by Dr Joseph Anderson.³ It is a casket cut out of solid wood, and plated with bronze and silver, which is adorned with enamelled work, jewels, and engraved and stippled Celtic scroll and zoomorphic ornament. Its dimensions are: length, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches; breadth at base, 2 inches; height, $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches.

The history of Monymusk and its Priory has been ably and exhaustively explored by a former parish minister, Rev. W. M. Macpherson, D.D., in whose careful book⁴ all the important documents are translated at full length. I need not, therefore, do more than present here an outline of the main facts, particularly as supplying evidence for the character

and architectural history of the buildings.

The first mention of "the Culdees of Munimusc" occurs in a grant of produce by Gartenach, Earl of Buchan, assigned to the period 1120-30,

¹ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 511.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 514-7.

³ *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, pp. 241-51. See further, *Proceedings*, vol. xiv. pp. 431-5, and vol. xlv. pp. 260-6; and *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part i. p. lxxxix; also J. Stuart, *The Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii. Pl. 11, Appendix to the Preface, p. lxxxii, and Notices of the Plates, pp. 75-6.

⁴ *Materials for a History of the Church and Priory of Monymusk*, published in 1895. Having had occasion, in the preparation of the present paper, to test this work pretty thoroughly in the original sources, it is a pleasure to record my sense of the patient and accurate scholarship of its reverend author, whose characteristic modesty conceals, in his choice of a title, the fact that in this unpretending volume he has provided one of the finest histories extant of any Scottish religious house. Dr Macpherson's memory is fittingly preserved by a brass tablet in Monymusk Church.

and confirmed by his grandson Roger about 1170.¹ They also received grants of land from Robert, Bishop of St Andrews (1122-59),² and from Gilchrist, Earl of Mar (died *circa* 1211). An undated charter of Earl Gilchrist bestows the Church of St Marnan of Leochel upon "God and the Church of St Mary of Munimusc and the Culdees serving in the same."³ Two confirmations made by Bishop John of Aberdeen (1199-1207) reveal that this munificent Earl also bestowed upon the Culdees of Monymusk three other churches, those of St Walloch of Logie, St Nidan of Invernochty, and St Andrew of Alford.⁴ He further granted them the lands of Dolbethok and Fornathy.⁵ Afterwards the Church of Logie was bestowed by Duncan, Earl Gilchrist's successor (died *circa* 1244), upon the Cathedral of Aberdeen, and in exchange the Church of St Andrew at Kindrochit in Braemar was made over to the Convent of Monymusk.⁶ Later gifts included the Church of St Mary of Nemoth, the Church of St Diaconianus of Keig, granted to the Priory by William Malvoisin, Bishop of St Andrews (1202-38),⁷ and large gifts of produce from the great family of Durward, who established themselves in the southern portion of Mar early in the thirteenth century.⁸

One of the two charters of confirmation by John, Bishop of Aberdeen, speaks of "that gift which Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, gave to his own Monastery which he built at Munimusc in the Church of St Mary, in which Culdees formerly were."⁹ Here, therefore, we have definite documentary evidence of the building of the Priory by Earl Gilchrist about the end of the twelfth century. The dates of this Earl are somewhat obscure. By some authorities he is placed from 1170 to 1204, but others give the lower date as 1211. There is much difficulty

¹ *Registrum Prioratus Sancti Andree*, ed. T. Thomson, p. 370.

² *Ibid.*, p. 369.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 373-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 370-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 367; *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, ed. C. Innes, vol. i. p. 16. The motives for the gift to Aberdeen Cathedral are set forth in full, and afford a fine example of the ideas prompting the pious munificence that endowed our churches in the thirteenth century: "*ad ampliationem divini cultus et ad communam dictorum canonicorum ampliandam et ad sustentationem vnius capellani quem dicti canonici invenient ad celebrandum perpetuo pro anima mea et antecessorum meorum sponse mee et heredum meorum in dicta ecclesia sancte Marie ubi vovi et legavi corpus meum sepeliendum inter venerabiles patres nostros episcopos ibidem sepultos.*" For the Church of St Andrew at Kindrochit, see my paper on "The Royal Castle of Kindrochit in Mar" in *Proceedings*, vol. lvii. pp. 86-9. Its connection with Kilrymont or St Andrews, of which Monymusk also was a cell, dates from the reign of Angus Mac-Fergus (729-61). Bearing in mind the association of Monymusk with Malcolm Canmore, is it a mere coincidence that Kindrochit also is linked in old-descended tradition with this King and his campaigns against Moravia (see my paper, *ut supra*, pp. 83-6)?

⁷ *Registrum Sancti Andree*, p. 366.

⁸ For the Durwards, see my paper on "The Excavation of Coull Castle" in *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. pp. 47-8.

⁹ *Registrum Sancti Andree*, pp. 374-5: "*donacionem illam quam Gilchrist comes de Marr donavit cenobio suo quod construxit apud Munimusc in ecclesia sancte Marie in qua keledi ante fuerunt.*"

about the genealogy of the Mar earldom at this period. "Two series of Earls," says Lord Crawford, "appear in rivalry and competition, and many of the Earls cannot be properly affiliated."¹ In any case, as Bishop John died in 1207, the Priory must have been built before this year.

In the other confirmation of Bishop John, reference is made for the first time to the "*canons of Munimusc.*" The charter previously quoted speaks of "the church in which Culdees formerly were." These phrases are significant in connection with the efforts now being made to abolish the Culdees or to bring them under the new-fashioned Roman discipline. A complaint was lodged before Pope Innocent III. by Bishop Malvoisin against the Keledei or Kildei of Munimusc, as a result of which a Commission of Inquiry, given from the Lateran on 23rd March 1211, was issued to Adam, Abbot of Melrose,² William, Abbot of Dryburgh, and Robert, Archdeacon of Glasgow. From the terms of reference as tabled in this Commission we learn how Malvoisin had complained that "certain Keledei who profess to be canons, and certain others of the diocese of Aberdeen, in the manor (*villam*) of Munimusc which pertains to him, do not fear to establish a kind of regular canonry in opposition to him, contrary to justice, and to the prejudice and hurt of his³ church." Evidently the Culdees were attempting on their own initiative to reform themselves and to bring their constitution into line with the new ideas, without episcopal sanction, a course to which their Bishop-superior objected. Perhaps, as Dr John Stuart suggested, they "wished to be regarded as canons without being subject to the ecclesiastical rule thus involved."⁴ The upshot of the dispute was a composition of high interest, because it defines in precise terms the constitution of the convent as existing in the thirteenth century. It is provided that the Culdees

"shall have in future one refectory and one dormitory and one oratory without a cemetery, so that the bodies of Culdees and of clerics or laymen staying with them shall receive ecclesiastical burial in the cemetery of the parish church of Munimusc as freely as hitherto they are wont to be buried, the right of mother-church being preserved in all cases. And there shall be

¹ *The Earldom of Mar*, by Lord Crawford and Balcarres, vol. i. p. 166. For the two sets of Earls in rivalry, see a letter by the Hon. R. Erskine of Mar in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 27th February 1924.

² Afterwards the ill-fated Bishop of Caithness (1213-22), who was roasted to death by his flock on his own kitchen fire. See my paper on "Dornoch Cathedral, the High Church of Caithness," in *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. p. 227; also my paper on "The Cathedrals of Moray and Caithness" in *Aberdeen University Review*, July 1924, p. 210; and my *The Castle of Kildrummy: Its Place in Scottish History and Architecture*, pp. 41-2.

³ Not "their," as translated in Macpherson, p. 109.

⁴ *Book of Deer*, Introduction, p. cxxii.

twelve Culdees there, and a thirteenth, Bricius, whom the Culdees themselves shall present to the Lord Bishop of St Andrews, that he may be their master or prior. And upon his dying or retiring, the Culdees shall by their common consent choose three out of their fellow Culdees, and present them to the Bishop of St Andrews whoever he may be, that the Bishop of St Andrews according to his own will and disposition may select one of the three to be prior or master. And in the election of the prior or master of the Culdees this shall be observed: with the addition that it shall not be lawful for the same Culdees to profess the life or order of monks or canons regular without the consent of the same bishop or his successors there, nor to exceed the number of the Culdees beforementioned. But when a Culdee dies or retires they shall be at liberty to substitute another up to the number beforenamed."

In accepting these conditions the Culdees receive confirmation of their lands and revenues, and undertake to do nothing "to the hurt of the Parish Church of Munimusc."¹ Thereafter Pope Innocent III. took the Priory into his special protection, in return for a yearly payment of two shillings sterling.²

Thus we gather that the Culdee fraternity consisted on the Apostolic pattern of twelve brethren and a master or prior, that they were bound by no vows and had no cure of souls, that they possessed a refectory³ and a dormitory, an oratory, and the right to burial in the parish graveyard. The oratory—dedicated, like the Priory and the Parish Church, to St Mary—was for use of the Prior, and stood on the farm of Balvack.⁴ In the writs connected with the Priory reference also occurs to the chapter-house.⁵ From two instruments dated 6th February 1534, it appears that each canon at that time had his own cell within the dormitory.⁶ This may have been a survival from Culdee times, for in Celtic monasteries each brother had his own cubicle. Connected with the Priory was a school, the memory of which is still preserved in the Scollatis or Scoloc's land.⁷ There were also three gardens ("perhaps an orchard, parterr, and kitchen garden"), a croft equal to 4 bolls sowing, and pasture for 6 horses and 15 wethers.⁸

It will be noted that in the document of 1211 the Bishop of St Andrews

¹ *Registrum Sancti Andree*, pp. 370-2. There is a copy in a later hand in the *Registrum Aberdonense*, vol. ii. pp. 264-6, and vol. i., Preface, p. lxxx. The translation is Dr Macpherson's, with sundry corrections.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 375-6.

³ The "refectory or hall" is mentioned in two writs of 1534—see *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff* (Spalding Club), vol. iii. pp. 493, 496.

⁴ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 169, 170, 585.

⁵ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. pp. 484-5, 488-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 492-3.

⁷ *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. v., Appendix to Preface, p. 6; *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. p. 504. See also *Trans. Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, vol. i. part iv. pp. 23-5.

⁸ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 171. One of the monastic gardens was on the site of the old schoolmaster's garden, just north of the Parish Church (Macpherson, p. 70).

is expressly called "the founder of the house of the Culdees" at Monymusk. This fact seems to support Dr Robertson's conjecture that the Culdee settlement at Monymusk was sent out from St Andrews after Canmore's grant in 1078. On the other hand, the act may have been merely, as Dr Reeves thought, the reviving of an older house. It would appear that discipline among the Culdees was slack, for another document of Bishop Malvoisin, apparently subsequent to the composition of 1211, and issued at the request of the Prior and Culdees themselves, fulminates against certain of the brethren who had forsaken their vows and returned from their religious profession "to the common ways of men and of regress . . . as a dog returning to his vomit or a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."¹ No doubt the existence of such indiscipline led to the final transformation of the Culdee College into a Priory of Augustinian Canons Regular. In one charter by Duncan, Earl of Mar (1211-44), the brethren are styled "*Keledei sive Canonici*," and in another the term canons alone is used.² The Durward charters also speak only of canons.³ Finally, a bull of Pope Innocent IV., dated from Lyons on 19th May 1245, is addressed to "our beloved sons the Prior and Convent of Munimusc of the Order of St Augustine in the diocese of Aberdeen."⁴ This date may therefore be taken as marking the completed transformation of the Culdees into Canons Regular in the Roman obedience.

In 1360, Monymusk was honoured by a visit from David II., as appears from an entry in the *Exchequer Rolls*, under date 21st April, accounting for the sum of £6, 13s. 4d. paid to William of Coryne, burgess of Aberdeen, for a jar of wine "bought for the use of the Lord King and carried to Monymusk," also a sum of 53s. 4d. paid to Laurence of Garvok for fodder purchased "for the King's use and carried to Monymusk."⁵

In 1437, Monymusk is entered as a prebend of the Cathedral of Aberdeen, the manse, as appears by a deed of 1454, being in the Chanonry beside the Cathedral "as one goes by the highway to the mount which is called in the vernacular *Dunnydronishil*" (Tillydrone).⁶ Another entry in the Aberdeen Register states that Bishop Ingram de Lindsay, in 1445, with the consent of the Bishop of St Andrews, added the prebend

¹ "*Tamquam canis ad vomitum rediens ut sus lota in volutabro luti.*"—*Registrum Sancti Andree*, pp. 368-9.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 362, 367.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 363-5, 369.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁵ *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 32. Laurence of Garvok is otherwise known. He was one of three representative burgesses appointed by the burgh of Aberdeen to act, along with others from Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee, as procurators to negotiate for the ransom of King David II., 26th September 1357.—*Charters and other Writs Illustrating the History of the Royal Burgh of Aberdeen*, ed. P. J. Anderson, p. 301.

⁶ *Registrum Aberdonense*, vol. ii. p. 65; vol. i. pp. 267, 302-3.

of Monymusk to the College of Canons.¹ The rector would generally be resident at his manse in Aberdeen, his parochial duties at Monymusk being discharged by a "perpetual" vicar or curate. The vicar's salary would be a fixed charge on the canon's income from the parochial revenues; for the lesser tithes, which in impropriated churches were often reserved to the vicar, were in this case assignable to the See of St Andrews. Monymusk was a mensal church of the Bishop of St Andrews; but in the event of a vacancy in that see, the usufruct of the second tithes of Monymusk was enjoyed by the Bishop and the Cathedral Church of Aberdeen. Thus upon the death of Archbishop Andrew Forman of St Andrews in 1521, the second tithes of the lands of Keig and Monymusk were paid over for two years to Bishop Gavin Dunbar of Aberdeen.²

By the sixteenth century affairs in the Priory of Monymusk, as in many other Scottish conventual houses, had got into a bad way, and the records of the years 1534-6 reveal that Prior David Fairlie and his subordinates were parted by bitter and protracted strife.³ Nor were the material possessions of the fraternity in happier case. In two writs, dated respectively 17th March 1549 and 9th December 1550, the conventual buildings are stated to be "now in ruins," and "ruinous and almost levelled to the ground."⁴ A third document, dated 11th July 1554, informs us more precisely that the monastery "is alluterlie brint exceptand ane pairt thair of als distroyit with fyre throcht negligence of the said Priour and his seruandis." This document relates that at a Justiciary Court held in Aberdeen, Prior John Elphinstone⁵ had been ordered to "cause reperall and bete" the desolated monastery. That a certain amount of restoration had been effected seems to be indicated by the words of the document, which states that Prior John had been directed to "caus vphald the divine seruice quhilk of veritie is better donne and ma novmer is put thairto nor wes thir ten yeris bygane."⁶

Amid these embarrassments the canons had got themselves into debt, and in security for moneys advanced by Duncan Forbes of Corsindae towards repairing the buildings, they had pledged the lands of the

¹ *Registrum Aberdonense*, vol. ii. pp. 253, 152; see also vol. i. pp. 54, 58, 171; and cf. W. Orem, *Description of the Chanonry, Cathedral, and King's College of Old Aberdeen, in the Years 1724 and 1725*, ed. 1791, pp. 77-8.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 58, 171, 359. For the date of Archbishop Forman's death, see P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 364, note 2.

³ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. pp. 490-6. The documents are translated *in extenso* by Macpherson, pp. 169-78.

⁴ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 179, 182.

⁵ Coadjutor Prior with David Fairlie from 1542.

⁶ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iv. pp. 778-9.

monastery lying in the parish of Monymusk by a deed bearing date 17th March 1549.¹ Once established in these lands, the Forbeses were not to be dislodged. In 1550, Prior Elphinstone was brought to trial for murder, theft, adultery, and violent assault upon the Rector of Methlick with "roungis" and "battounis," "within the Cathedral Church of Aberdeen where he was for the time celebrating matins and divine service."² In or after 1584, the last Commendatory Prior, Robert Forbes, handed over the ruinous buildings to his kinsman, William Forbes of Monymusk, son of Duncan, the first laird. The deed of gift recites "that the place and monastery of the said Priory of Monymusk is now almost ruined and waste, and that all convents of the same are extinct, so that there is no residence or house fit for habitation for the present at the said monastery." In conveying the property to William Forbes—described as "feudatory of the lands of the manor of Monymusk"—the deed provides for the foundation and maintenance of a school (*gymnasium*) "for instructing boys in honourable studies and literature."³ Thereafter Forbes is said to have built for himself the Castle of Monymusk, the tall, much-altered keep of which still forms the nucleus of the present stately baronial mansion. It is asserted that to build his fortalice he plundered the ruins of the dismantled monastery.⁴

A block plan of the House of Monymusk is shown at fig. 4. The central portion is on the traditional L-plan, but modified by a southward projection in the manner of the variations often seen in late examples of this plan, for example at Craigievar and Balfuig⁵ in the same county. To this keep wings have been added at various periods. The round tower at the south-east corner (fig. 5), which is four storeys high and vaulted in the basement, with a spiral stair serving all floors, is doubtless one of the angle-towers of the ancient barmkin wall. This tower is built with a very pronounced rake or batter throughout its whole height. In the west wing, which is dated 1888, at the point A on plan, an old freestone loophole has been built into the wall at the first-floor level. It is of the cruciform shape, with an oilette below, found at the

¹ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 179-80. This deed specifically states that some restoration of the monastery actually had taken place: "*magna pecunie summa . . . in utilitatem dicti nostri loci et Monasterii nunc ruinosi conuertenda et alias conuersa pro edificatione et restauratione eiusdem.*"

² R. Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 356. Prior Elphinstone was also Parson of Invernochty, and as such a Canon of Aberdeen.

³ "Chartour of the ruinose hous of Monymusk be Robert Commendatour."—*Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 184-5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171; *cf.* p. 27. Notes about the ruined conventual buildings will be found in Macpherson, pp. 70, 281; Monday, *From the Tone to the Don*, p. 36; J. A. Henderson, *Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, p. 299. The fishponds mentioned by Monday are apocryphal—see A. I. M'Connachie, *Donside*, p. 65 (large paper ed., pp. 109-10).

⁵ See my description of this castle in *Proceedings*, vol. iv. pp. 142-6.

neighbouring and contemporary castle of Tillycairn.¹ The keep comprises five storeys and a garret, the two upper storeys having been added, as evidenced by the old corbel-table and bases of angle-turrets still remaining at the original wall-head. Below this corbel-table on the east front are two ancient windows opening from the third-storey level. They have projecting hoods in the form of a depressed arch carried by corbel-masks. The east wall of the top turret in the addition displays a figure of an elephant in low relief. The internal arrange-

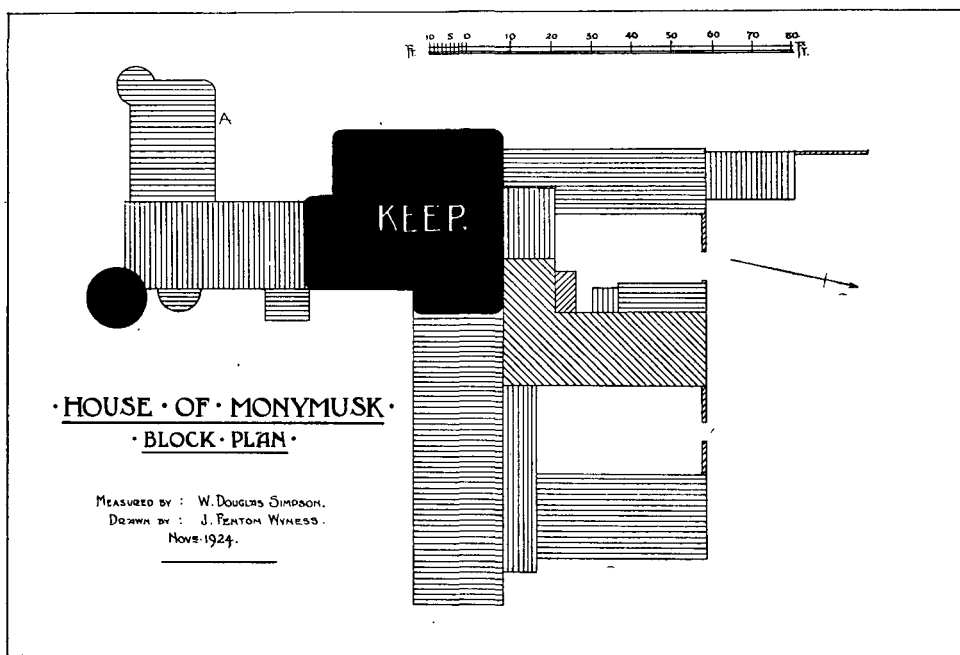


Fig. 4. Plan of Monymusk House.

ments of the keep are now somewhat altered, but have been of the usual type. Originally the door was in the re-entrant angle, looking south. The basement contains vaulted kitchen and offices, and on the first floor is a fine dining-hall, with traces of the usual service stair at the south-west corner leading down to the cellar below, in which is a well. At present the walls are panelled over, but a portion of the panelling at the north-west corner has been made removable in order to show a fine aumbry in the stone wall behind, the plastered surface of which is richly painted in tempera-work. The aumbry measures

¹ See my description in *Proceedings*, vol. lv. p. 139.

1 foot 3 inches broad by 2 feet 7 inches high by 2 feet 10 inches deep. Its lintel is wrought as an ogee arch having a trefoiled head with scrolled side points. On the tympanum a scroll is carved with a hand pointing to the motto LATYAMSAY wrought in relief in letters of the sixteenth century. The aumbry is fitted with an oaken frame, but its shutter is gone. The portion of the painting now exposed includes a shield with the royal arms of Scotland, also another shield charged with a crescent between three bears' heads, ensigned with a helmet, and flanked by the initials M. F., the whole being enclosed in a laurel wreath. The decorative pattern of the wall painting consists of flower vases and scrolled foliaceous ornament. One vase has the date 1618



[Photo W. Norrie.

Fig. 5. House of Monymusk—view from S.E.

inscribed on the stand which bears it. The colouring, which has been restored, is in rather dull yellows, greens, reds, browns, and blacks.¹

¹ Descriptions of the aumbry (with an illustration) and the paintings, of which only a small portion is now accessible, will be found in an article by C. E. Dalrymple in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, May 1888. See also Monday, *From the Tone to the Don*, pp. 37-40. In a description of Monymusk in 1716, written by Sir Archibald Grant, the following picturesque account of the mansion is given:—"The house was an old castle, with battlements, and six different roofs of various heights and directions, confusedly and inconveniently combined, and all rotten, with two wings more modern, of two stories only, the half of windowes of the higher rising above the roofs, with granaries, stables, and houses for all cattle, and of the vermine attending them, close adjoining; and with the heath and muire reaching in angles or goushets to the gate, and much heath near, and what land near was in culture belonged to the farmers, by which their cattle and dung were always at the door."—The Monymusk Papers, in *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. ii. p. 97.

The session records of Monymusk, which are extant from 18th August 1678, are full of entries connected with the fabric and furnishings of the church. Most of these relate to matters of detail, but a number of extracts may be quoted as casting light upon its structural history. As in other northern parishes, the post-Restoration episcopacy seems to have resulted here in a certain improvement of taste and a desire to augment the decency of public worship.

1685, *July 19th.*—"The sd day after the invocat'ne of the name of God the Min'r made overtures to the session it being by the late Visitat'ne¹ a roome destinate for the building a desk to the Min'rs familie in all time coming that therfor yr might be a desk built upon the sessions expenses in the sd room & for the sd effect, and that the Min'r serving now the cure and all his successors should pay the interest of the money that should be spendit, to which overture all the elders consented as judging this a good improvement of so much mōney & a standing advantage to the poor in the place.

"The sd day also the Min'r reported to the session how inconvenient the passage was to the pulpit being from the comon kirk door throw the whole body of the kirk & so consequently uneasy both to the Min'r & people, he wished therfor some passage mor easy and convenient might be contrived. Whereupon it was moved that a door might be struck out hard by the pulpit, Which might be a passage to it and to the Min'rs desk, to which motion all consented and the thesaurer ordained to imploy workmen for that effect.

"The sd day also it was moved by the Min'r that whereas ther is now a great deal of confusion & disorder in the body of the kirk by chairs and seats, & the people not so weel accomadate, that therfor piewes might be built & forseats of every desk taken away for that end, to which the elders consented for the reasons above sett down, & a standing advantage to the poor in the place. And the thesaurer is ordered to buy materialls and imploy workmen for that effect.

"The sd day also the Min'r overtured that whereas he had receaved several complaints that ther was so little accomadatne in the comon loft be reason that the seats wer so few & the people so numerous, that therfor yr might be many mor seats built and the loft put in another order, to which the elders consented as most reasonable, & appointed the thesaurer to advyse wt workmen & to imploy them for yt effect."

On 2nd August following these deliberations the "thesaurer" reports that he has come to terms with a carpenter and two masons; and on 4th October the "piewes" being now completed, the session decide to let them at 3s. 4d. per seat. The allocation of seats was duly made on 17th October, and the list of seat-holders is entered in full.² They are grouped in two divisions, in the "backside" and "forside" of the kirk. On 24th January 1686 the treasurer reported that the minister's seat had been completed and the new door made in the wall

¹ A recent visitation of the Presbytery of the Garioch, whose attention had been called to the lack of a desk by the minister, Rev. John Burnett. See Rev. Dr J. Davidson, *Inverurie and the Earldom of the Garioch*, p. 348.

² The list has been published by Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

adjoining.¹ From these various entries we can see clearly what the arrangement of the church was in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The pews were arranged, as they are now, along the north and south sides of the nave, with a central alley between. The pulpit would be in its present position near the middle of the south side, and "the door struck out hard by the pulpit" is doubtless the opening which is still traceable at a low level in the outside wall at this point. Opposite the pulpit, along the north wall, was the "comon loft," and as there was then no north aisle, we can easily understand how cramped this loft must have been in the long narrow nave of the ancient church. What the condition of the east end and chancel was at that time we have no means of knowing.

From an entry dated 17th January 1686 we learn that the stool of repentance was at the west end of the church adjoining the door from the tower.

"The sd day John Fergus gave in a petition to the session craving liberty to build a desk in the room behind the comon kirk door where now the stool of rep'ance stood, and for yt end he might take down the stool of rep'ance, obliedge himselfe to build another befor the breast of the comon loft and to uphold it upon his own expenses."

This petition was duly granted by the session on the 24th following. From the phrase "the room behind the comon kirk door" it might be inferred that the stool of repentance actually stood in the vaulted basement of the tower. But throughout the session records of this period the word "room" is used simply in the sense of "space," as in the extract previously quoted about the minister's desk.² If the nave arch of the tower had already been built up, then the stool of repentance would not have been visible from the interior of the kirk, had it occupied the porch of the tower—quite apart from the manifest inconvenience of such a position.

At the same time as these improvements were being made in the church itself, a good deal of attention was being devoted to its surroundings. In 1679 dykes were erected round the churchyard, at a cost of £14. Next year a new church stile was built, having stone gateposts and a wooden gate bound with iron, payments for which are

¹ Some of the items in the cost of these works are:—For building the door, £5; for bands and locks for the said door, 12s., and an iron bar, 7s. 6d.; for building the pews in the church and erecting the seats in the loft, £28, 17s. 8d.; for building the minister's desk, etc., £17. All the items in these records are of course in Scots money.

² "Behind" probably refers to the north side of the door, the north wall being the "back" of the church. The stool of repentance would thus be on the left-hand side of the door entering the body of the church from the tower—a very suitable position alike for the rebukes of the minister from the pulpit and the edification of his flock.

specified in full. These are doubtless the gateposts that still remain built into the later house gables on either side of the entry from the village square. On 18th December 1682, £4 was expended on trees planted in the churchyard.

In July 1685 a new tongue was made for the church bell, at a cost of £1, 0s. 8d. In the following March the bell, being "in hazard of falling" through decay in the "stock and iron-work," was remounted at a cost of £11, 3s. 4d. It required attention again in 1694 and in 1695.

On 21st August 1692 "the thesaurer reported that the stair of the comon loft was so rotten yt it was dangerous to go upon it,¹ As also yt the loft itselife was in hazarde of falling in respect that it had but two posts." The session accordingly ordered him to have a new stair built and an extra post inserted to carry the loft. The cost of this post was £3, 12s.,² and of the "sparrs & boards" for building the stair, £5, 8s.

On 8th August 1697 the session received an overture from the Laird of Monymusk to the effect that as the two bells in the steeple were not good, and weighing only nine stones between them were too small to cast into one, he would be agreeable to present a new one. Probably the bells thus condemned were the medieval ones. The session accepted the laird's offer with alacrity; and on 10th October following, Monymusk came forward again with the suggestion "that since they wer now like to have a good bell, they may think of makeing a cloak, which wold be both for ornament & use to the place." To this the session agreed, and the bell and a clock with dial were duly made by Patrick Kilgour, Holyrood House, at a cost of £145, 6s. 8d. The bell, however, was found too small, and was recast by John Meikle, Edinburgh, at the laird's expense, in 1700. The new bell weighed 204 lb., and cost 20s. per lb. As against this charge Meikle received Patrick Kilgour's discarded bell and a balance sum of £121, 14s. Scots. The new bell required mending, at a cost of £1, 16s., in 1719, and in passing the account for payment the session minuted (5th July) as follows:—

"And considering that the too frequent tolling of the bell att Burialls might be the occasion of her being so frequently disordered, Thought fitt to enact that she should be tolled thrie or four times at most att every buriall."

¹ Evidently an internal wooden stair is signified.

² A previous post bought for the loft on 17th February 1689 cost only £1, 8s. Mr James S. Richardson, F.S.A.Scot., Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland, has expressed to me the opinion that the fact of the common loft having only two posts indicates that it was situated at the west end of the nave. He points out that if the loft extended along the north wall (as suggested in the text), these posts would have been at 15-foot centres. On the other hand, the position of the stool of repentance seems to negative Mr Richardson's view. It could hardly have stood *under* the common loft. See further note 3, p. 52, *infra*.

On 24th February 1723 the clock is reported "so worn that she could not be made to go right," and on 21st April following a sum of £21 is paid to "John Mouat" for dressing it. This was doubtless the same John Mowat who cast the bell now existing in the church.¹ As there is a gap in the records between 1730 and 1772, no notice is available about the purchase of this bell in 1748.

On 22nd May 1726 "ye loft hard by ye head of ye Ministers Desk" was reported in danger of falling. As we know from the entries of 1685 that the minister's desk was on the south side next to the pulpit, and as it appears from the present entry that there was a loft overhead, it follows accordingly that the desk must have been east of the pulpit and that there was at this time a loft across the adjoining end of the nave, as there is to-day.² On 12th June the repairing of the crazy structure was agreed to, and on the 19th an alteration in the completed work was directed to be made, because "ye entrey therto was somqt uneasy." A rearrangement in the seating of "ye loft att ye back of the Kirk"³ was also contemplated, but was abandoned owing to the expense.

On 14th July 1770 an account for £38, 8s. was paid for "painting the Dial plates on the Steeple." Two years later the clock was reported to be "in much need of a thorro' Repair, being now almost useless," and an estimate of £11 sterling was obtained from Charles Lunan, clockmaker in Aberdeen, for the cost of putting it in order, but nothing was done in view of the expense.

On 24th August 1778 accounts were passed for repairing the north and west dykes of the churchyard, from which it appears that these were covered with "feals" or sods. An entry under this date reveals the fact that there was a music gallery in the church—no doubt in the east loft. Upon this point it is interesting to recall that on 7th May 1761 John Wesley preached in Monymusk Church, and has left on record his high opinion of the musical quality of the service.

"About six we went to the Church. It was pretty well filled with such persons as we do not look for so near the Highlands. But if we were surprised at their appearance, we were much more so at their singing. Thirty

¹ John Mowat, bell-founder in Old Aberdeen, was admitted a member of the Hammerman Trade of Old Aberdeen in 1717; became a Trade Burgess on 13th June 1719; and died in 1771—information kindly supplied me by Mr R. Murdoch Lawrance, Aberdeen.

² The arrangement of the nave at this time was precisely similar to that of the choir of Coldingham Priory as used for parochial worship in the eighteenth century. See the illustration in A. A. Carr, *History of Coldingham Priory*, p. 320, which gives a good idea of the squalid church furnishings in vogue at this period.

³ This phrase distinctly indicates that there was a loft along the north side of the church (cf. *supra*, p. 51, note 2).

or forty sang an anthem after service with such voices as well as judgment that I doubt whether they could have been excelled in any Cathedral in England."¹

On 25th June 1787 the bell was reported in disrepair, and on 29th August an examination by the session, with expert assistance, revealed "the Bell Stock, the Cross-trees and supporters upon which it is suspended, all decayed and rotten," and "the Bell on that account in danger of tumbling." It was agreed that the whole woodwork should be rebuilt, and doubtless the mounting then erected is that now in use.

The only entry relative to the reconstruction of the church in 1822 is a brief one, but it is pleasing as evidence of the fact that in Monymusk the Presbyterian and Episcopal congregations dwelt together in terms of amity and mutual helpfulness unusual at the period:—²

December 29th, "Collection for the Chapel, the Parish having met there for public Worship while the Church was under repair, Two pounds."

And we are glad to find that at a later date the Presbyterians were able to return the compliment:—

1834, *November 24th*.—"Collection by the Episcopal Congregation in acknowledgment of their use of the Parish Church, while their own Place of Worship was undergoing repairs, £4."

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE REMAINS.

The material remains that still survive to recall the ancient ecclesiastical importance of Monymusk are now reduced to the Parish Church, greatly altered but still Norman in substance. About 40 yards north-east of the church, just within the gate leading to Monymusk House, is the site of the Priory. Here a flat recumbent stone, measuring about 4 feet 11 inches long by 2 feet in greatest breadth, is pointed out as a threshold, and two gate-pillars have been built to mark its position. But it should be observed that this stone exhibits various bolt sockets and a leaden bat, indicating clearly that it has at one time been used for a gatepost, and its connection with the Priory must thus be regarded as highly suspect.

THE CHURCH.

The church consists (see Plans, fig. 6) of a western tower, measuring 22 feet by 19 feet over the walls, the basement of which contains a

¹ *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. J. Benson, vol. iv. pp. 59-60. Wesley preached again in the church on 7th June 1764—*ibid.*, pp. 202-3.

² This pleasant relationship between the two congregations seems to have been characteristic of Monymusk throughout the eighteenth century. See Macpherson, p. 245.

vaulted porch; a nave, measuring 52 feet 11 inches by 26 feet over the walls, with a north aisle erected in 1822; and an anomalous structure, partly unroofed, and measuring 52 feet 10 inches by 21 feet over the walls, which occupies the position of a chancel.¹ The church is oriented 10° N. of E.²

Tower—(a) *Exterior*.—The tower is at present 50 feet 10 inches in height to the summit of the modern parapet. At the first-floor level

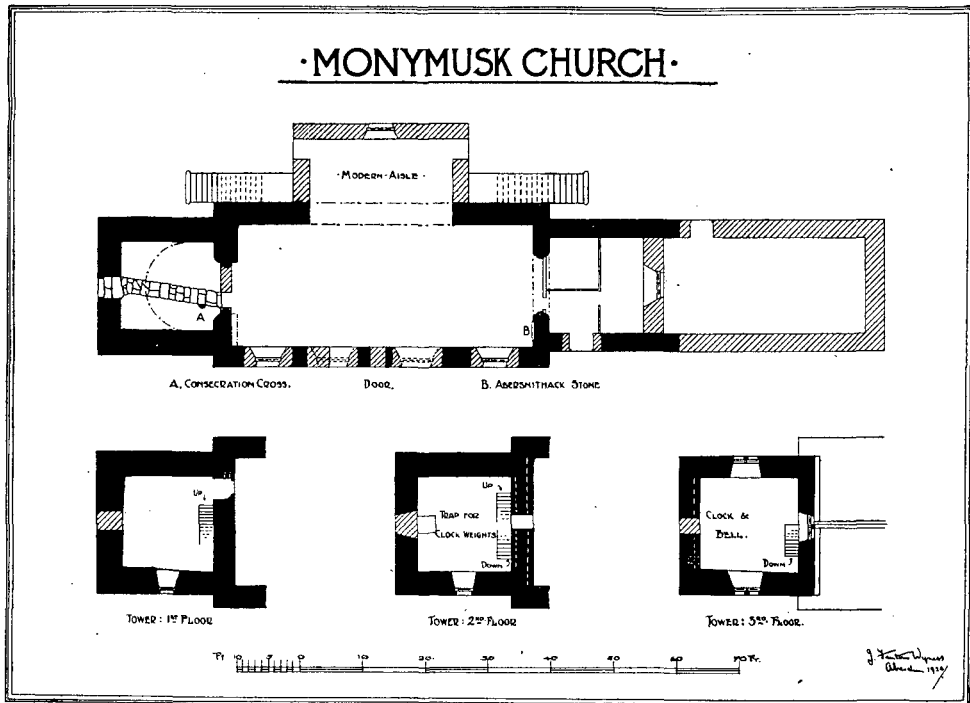


Fig. 6. Plans of Monymusk Church.

it bulges somewhat, and thereafter batters all the way up, the batter being accentuated on the upper third part. This indrawing of the wall-planes near the summit was doubtless for the purpose of relieving a corbelled parapet, as on the tower of Iona Cathedral. On the east side is an offset at 17 feet 8 inches from the present summit, or

¹ I do not know what the authority is for the statement by Mackenzie E. C. Walcott (*The Ancient Church of Scotland*, p. 322) that there was "a later polygonal apse."

² F. C. Eeles in *Proceedings*, vol. xviii. p. 182, where the church is wrongly stated to have been dedicated to St Andrew. In medieval times the church contained several altars, including one to St Michael.—Henderson, *Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, p. 295.

just below the roof ridge of the nave. The walls under this level are 3 feet 8 inches thick. The upper portion of the tower, under the modern parapet, has been much patched and partly reconstructed, but the substructure still exhibits the original Norman masonry undisturbed. On the free angles the quoins are carefully wrought in sandstone from Kildrummy. At the north-west angle these quoin-stones extend to a height of 24 feet 4 inches, and at the south-west angle to a height of 18 feet. Above this level the quoins are roughly wrought in local granite. On the north face of the tower the newer work above is very distinct, the junction at about three-quarters up the tower being fully apparent. The whole north-east angle above the nave has been rebuilt in rough nondescript rubble. On the south face of the tower, also, the masonry has been much disturbed, and the Norman work appears to cease shortly above half-way up. The masonry on the east face, above the nave, is featureless rubble work. Remains of an old roof-raggle exist above the present nave roof.

On the west front of the tower are visible several ancient openings. At the ground-level is the round arched doorway (fig. 7),¹ 6 feet 6 inches high and 3 feet 1 inch broad. The jambs and full-centred arch are wrought in Kildrummy sandstone and are absolutely plain. There are 6 jamb-stones on either side and 10 voussoirs. On the third jamb-stone from the bottom, at the north side, has been incised a bench-mark of the Ordnance Survey. Over the arch is a hood-moulding of trilateral section, springing from a plain stop. It is formed in 6 Kildrummy stones, and is rapidly wasting. There seems, however, to be no trace of an enrichment on the intermediate



[Photo J. F. Wyness.

Fig. 7. West Doorway, Monymusk Church.

¹ The session records show that in the eighteenth century this entrance, as "the most patent door of the church," was used for displaying public notices.

face, such as often occurs in Norman strings of this section. Indeed, a masculine boldness and robustness in detail, with a contempt for petty refinement, is characteristic of the ancient work in this church throughout. Over the door are successively:—(1) an open window, square-headed, with jambs and lintel in Kildrummy freestone; (2) a similar window, blocked; (3) a round-arched loop, blocked, with Kildrummy dressings, the arch being cut in a single stone; and (4) a large oblong window, blocked, which has been reconstructed, the dressings being partly in sandstone and partly in granite. On the south side of the tower are two modern windows, one above the other, with granite dressings,¹ and between them a narrow, blocked, square-headed loop, also with granite dressings. Over all, on the north, east, and south

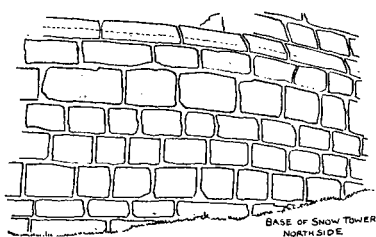


Fig. 8. Romanesque Masonry, Snow Tower, Kildrummy Castle.

faces, are modern belfry windows of two square-headed lights. The west face of the tower at this level is occupied by the clock-dial, which is dated 1865.

The Norman masonry on the exterior of the tower is in red granite, formed of coursed ashlar, the blocks varying from cubical to oblong in shape, and the joints being very open, often as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide. As frequently in Norman work, there is a notable tendency to build without breaking bond, continuous vertical joints running through two or three courses. The red granite with its large felspar phenocrysts, often beautifully twinned, is different from that used elsewhere in the church.² It has been used for the Norman work throughout the building, and when weathered through centuries of exposure shows a very rich colour. The masonry has a highly characteristic appearance, and recalls—save for the difference in material—the freestone ashlar of Romanesque type (fig. 8), which occurs on the north face of the Snow Tower at Kildrummy Castle.³ The tower is not bonded into the gable of the nave.

¹ In the upper window two of the jamb-stones are in freestone.

² This granite is said to have come from Tombeg. See Macpherson, p. 72; and cf. J. Ritchie in *Proceedings*, vol. li. pp. 46-7. Mr C. B. Bisset, M.A., B.Sc., Aberdeen, who kindly undertook a geological examination of the stone in the tower at my request, informs me that the granite is not from Tombeg. "The bottom courses," he writes, "to a height of 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, are built of a pink, even- and medium-grained granite. A similar rock is quarried in the Cunnigar Wood, Cluny Castle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the church. Above this the walls are built of porphyritic granite of a distinctive type—pale pink with large crystals of felspar and smoky quartz in a fine-grained ground-mass. Rock identical with this is found in a quarry on the north-east slope of Pitfichie Hill, about 2 miles north of the church, and near Ord Mill. The quarry at Tombeg, 1 mile south-west, which is traditionally a source of the building stone, contains a fine to medium- and even-grained grey, yellow granite. No such rock is visible in the masonry of the lower part of the tower."

³ See my *Castle of Kildrummy*, pp. 127-8.

(b) *Interior—Basement.*—The basement of the tower contains the porch giving access to the nave. It is waggon-vaulted, with an east-to-west axis. This vault is not original, and partly blocks the bay of the lowest window on the west face of the tower, the rear-arch of which emerges over the vault in the stage above. The vault is 13 feet 2 inches high above the present floor. The west door has a semicircular unmoulded rear-arch 7 feet 7 inches high. Above it is the window already referred to, which has a wide inward splay. Towards the nave the porch had opened by a semicircular freestone arch of two orders, 11 feet 9 inches high. This arch is partly built up, leaving a



[Photo J. Ritchie.]

Fig. 9. Cross in Floor of Tower, Monymusk Church.

low door of ingress,¹ and the piers and archivolt are nearly buried in plaster and limewash, so that it is almost impossible to describe their architectural features. The abaci have been heavy, square, and turned off below in a broad chamfer. All the walls and the vault are plastered and limewashed. The floor is of concrete, save for a medial paving of granite slabs. Near the nave arch, on the south side, is an incised cross (fig. 9), equal-armed, set within a circle $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.²

First Floor.—This is entered at the north-east corner from the west

¹ This door is off the central line of the nave, doubtless to suit a stair rising to the threshold of the slapped-out door which gives entry to the first floor of the tower. By this stair also access to the common loft would be obtained.

² I agree with Mr James Ritchie's view (*Proceedings*, vol. xlv. p. 349) that this stone is probably not in its original position.

gallery of the nave by a straight-headed door about 2 feet 6 inches broad and 5 feet 7 inches high. The door has a wooden rear-lintel beneath a roughly wrought relieving arch, partly in freestone. Although clearly an insertion, the door has every appearance of considerable age. On the north side behind the rebate are two bar holes, 5 inches square, and extending 9 inches back into the wall. As there are no corresponding bar holes on the south side, it is clear that the bolts must have plied upon the door.

This floor is lighted by one oblong window to the south, there is a built-up window to the west, and below it the freestone voussoirs of the semicircular rear-arch of the window lighting the upper part of the porch just rise clear of the stone floor, which is the upper surface of the inset vault. The masonry of the side walls of this floor is Norman and little altered, consisting of roughly dressed granitic ashlar blocks, regularly coursed, with very wide joints. The blocks are cubical, or oblong, but always high in the course, and frequently not breaking bond. Some of the larger stones are as much as 2 feet 5 inches long. An old bearing hole remains at the base of the north wall.

Second Floor.—The two upper floors are of wood, the joists bedded in the north and south walls resting on a central bressumer supported by a post. Wooden stairs give access up the east wall. On the second floor is a large oblong window in the south and west faces, the latter window being blocked. On the east side a low door leads out to the tie-beams of the nave roof. An arrangement of this sort is usual in Norman west towers, but the door in its present form is a late insertion. The masonry at this level has evidently been much renewed, and is largely uncoursed rubble-work of surface boulders. An exceptionally fine fragment of typical Norman work remains *in situ* in the north wall at the north-east corner. The blocks are cubical, or oblong high in the course, with joints about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide. Dressed granite quoinstones are also visible in the lower parts of the other three corners. Two rows of bearing-holes, the upper row built up, are visible in this storey. On the east wall occurs an old floor-scarcement, 4 inches broad, 14 inches below the present third floor, and at a height of 21 feet 6 inches above the upper surface of the vault in the basement of the tower.

Third Floor.—The tower here seems to be wholly rebuilt. All the masonry is rough, featureless rubble. On the north, south, and east faces there are large modern belfry windows of two lights, with drop-centred rear-arches in brick. In the north jamb of the east window has been used an old granite rybat stone with roll and hollow moulding.

On the west wall is a scarcement, 5 inches broad, about 2 feet below the present flat roof, and also the bearing-hole for a joist about 3 feet 6 inches below the scarcement.

This floor is largely taken up with the clock and bell. The bell, swung on two canons, is $21\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. Its base is enriched with bands of narrow filleted mouldings, and round the upper part is a broad zone of ornament containing festoon-and-tassel, *fleurs de lis*, and rosettes, with the inscription:—“IOAN · MOWAT · ME · FECIT · VET · ABD · 1748 · IN · USUM · ÆCCLESIE · DE · MONIEMUSK · SABBATA · PANGO · FUNERA · PLANGO.” The “P” in the last word is reversed through a mistake in the mould. Beautifully proportioned and enriched, and finely toned, this graceful bell is a notable example of Mowat’s skill. On the clock, a quaint piece of mechanism, is inscribed “Wil^m Lunan, Aberdeen, 1792.”

Roof.—Dr Macpherson states that the tower was originally finished with an open parapet about 8 feet higher than the present one.¹ In 1822 this parapet was removed and some 14 feet of the walls, which showed signs of weakness, were taken down.² The curtailed tower was then roofed in with a tall and very handsome, octagonal, slated broach spire (fig. 10),



Fig. 10. Monymusk Church—view from S.W., showing old Spire.

¹ No doubt in Norman times the tower would finish with the usual stunted pyramidal spire—see M. H. Bloxam, *Principles of Gothic Architecture*, 11th ed., vol. i. pp. 103-4, with illustration from the seal of Kenilworth Priory. A similar roof is shown on a Romanesque tower in the most ancient seal of Holyrood, dated 1141 (figured in Sir D. Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, 2nd ed., vol. ii. p. 363; and also by W. de Gray Birch, *History of Scottish Seals*, vol. ii. Pl. 104). The thirteenth-century chapter seals of St Andrews show a roof of this kind upon the tower of the Norman Church of St Rule—see J. Russell Walker, *Pre-Reformation Churches in Fifeshire*, Church of St Regulus, Pl. 4; also Birch, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. Pl. 66. The subject of Norman tower roofs has recently been discussed by E. Tyrrell-Green, *Parish Church Architecture*, pp. 107-11.

² *New Statistical Account*, Aberdeenshire, p. 469; Macpherson, pp. 71-2.

40 feet in height, showing a just perceptible entasis. This beautifully proportioned spire was a remarkable triumph of local craftsmanship, and formed a striking object in the views around Monymusk for several miles in every direction. It is not a little surprising to find a spire of such decidedly medieval feeling erected here so late as 1822, on the very eve of the Gothic Revival. The Monymusk spire, however, may be compared with that which, dating from 1728, still beautifully crowns the tower of Dornoch Cathedral.¹ Unfortunately, the Monymusk spire was allowed to fall into decay, and in 1891 it was removed, and the present flat leaded roof, behind inartistic battlements in Kemnay granite, was erected in its stead. On the middle embrasure on the west side is incised the date 1891.

In its original condition the tower, or so much of it as still remains, was five storeys high, as appears from a consideration of the ancient windows on the west face, and from the scarcements and other indications still visible on the interior walls. To these we must doubtless add a sixth storey in the upper portion taken down in 1822. There is no evidence of a stone newel stair, such as exists in the Norman towers of Dunblane, Dunning, Kirkliston, and Markinch. Originally the tower must have been ascended by a series of ladders and hatches in the various floors. The insertion of a vault in the basement cut off all direct communication with the upper storeys, and these must then have been reached from within the church by a stair up to the door then slapped out at the north-east corner.

Nave—(a) Exterior.—The south wall (fig. 10) is in substance Norman, but has been greatly altered at several periods. The quoins are in Kildrummy stone except at the upper part of the south-east angle, where granite stones have been substituted. At present there are six modern round arched windows in this wall, and remains of a window and a door,² both blocked, with granite dressings, may be seen at the ground-level. The north wall of the nave has been almost destroyed by the modern aisle, in which a large number of the red Norman stones have been reused, particularly in the upper part. The north-west quoin is in sandstone, rebuilt above in granite. One of the granite quoin-stones here shows a roll-moulding set on a chamfer. Except for the granite skew-putt, the north-east quoin is wholly in sandstone. On one of the sandstone blocks are incised the initials I. F.,³ and on another the ligatured initials H. F., and the date 1692. All these letters

¹ See *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. p. 232, fig. 3.

² The door is no doubt that "struck out hard by the pulpit" in 1685—see *supra*, p. 50.

³ Henderson (*Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, p. 295) suggests that this is for Sir John Forbes, third baronet.

are now greatly wasted. One jamb, in granite, of a built-up window is still visible in the north wall, near the east corner. The aisle enters at either end by outside stairs against the north wall of the nave. On the east gable, which is of coursed old masonry and contains two modern roof-lights, is seen the raggle of an old chancel roof, at a higher level than the roof of the present vestry. The height of the nave walls now is 22 feet 6 inches; but originally, as revealed by the raggle against the tower, the walls had been a few feet higher. The present roof dates from 1822.¹

(b) *Interior*.—Except the chancel arch, no ancient work is now visible in the interior of the nave. The walls are masked with trashy lath and plaster, there is an embowed plaster roof of mean aspect, and hideous galleries have been intruded into the east and west ends and in the modern north aisle.

The chancel arch has been appallingly maltreated, but is still a feature of exceptional interest. On the south side the pier is intact, and consists of a central bearing shaft, semi-circular on plan, about 12 inches in diameter, flanked by half-engaged nook-shafts. Between the shafts emerges the square arris of the pier. The bases, which are beneath the floor, have been completely hacked away.² All three shafts carry

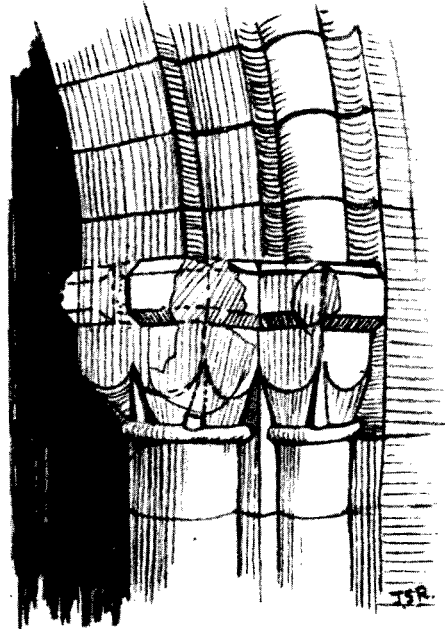


Fig. 11. S.E. Pier of Chancel Arch, Monymusk Church.

cushion capitals (fig. 11), rising from a neck-mould, slightly stilted in profile, and the capitals have heavy abaci, the under sides of which are turned off in a broad chamfer.³ The capital of the bearing shaft is invected, and the escallops are separated by a moulding in the form of a half cone, supported by the neck-mould. On the in-go face the abacus has been cut as if for a screen. The capitals of the nook-shafts are plain cushions, with a semicircular cone-moulding rising from the neck-mould

¹ *New Statistical Account*, Aberdeenshire, p. 469.

² They may be examined by lifting the hatch which gives access to an old heating flue beneath the flooring here.

³ In the sketch the upper edge also of the abaci is shown as chamfered. Owing to the extremely damaged state of the capitals it is difficult to be certain on this point.

to the angle. The north pier has been fearfully hashed. The bearing-shaft is gone, and its place taken by a miserable sham in painted wood. Its capital has been hacked away. The capital of the nook-shaft towards the nave has a plain groove instead of the half cone. In the chancel the nook-shaft has been obscured by a stokehouse built up hard against it; behind which abomination it may be dimly seen, and appears to be intact, with capital of the usual form.

The semicircular archivolt arising from these capitals is partly concealed by the east gallery. It is in two orders. The inner, which is quite plain, springs from the capitals of the bearing-shafts, while the outer rests on the lateral nook-shafts. The outer order consists of a massive quirked bowtell, one quarter engaged, and set within a broad one-quarter cavetto. The height to the apex of the chancel arch, reckoned from the modern floor, is 10 feet 10 inches.

All the foregoing details of the chancel have been much obscured by repeated coats of ochre. The material is Kildrummy stone throughout, and the shafts are built in separate stones. In the archivolt are 27 voussoirs, the springer on either side being wrought with a level upper bed as a kind of *tas-de-charge*. Medieval masons were always anxious to economise in centering, and it is remarkable how regularly this trick of building is found, even when the arch is of comparatively narrow span. Here the space between the piers has been about 8 feet 6 inches. It is now blocked by a wooden partition, in which is a small door leading to the vestry and coal-hole.

Chancel—(a) Exterior.—The walls of the structure now occupying the place of a chancel are 2 feet 9 inches thick and 13 feet 4 inches high, with a plain modern coping of Correen stone (andalusite mica-schist). Originally the walls had been somewhat higher, as shown by the old roof-raggle against the gable of the nave. The south and east walls are almost entirely masked by ivy. Near the centre of the north wall is a door, 7 feet 1 inch high and 3 feet 6 inches wide, with freestone jambs and granite lintel. As far eastward as the west jamb of this door the masonry is apparently of Norman character, very similar to that in the tower but inferior in finish, and somewhat lower in the course. Beyond the door the masonry is partly coursed rubble of later date. As far as can be seen through the ivy, a similar change in masonry takes place at about the same point in the south wall. The evidence is thus clear that the eastern part of the chancel has been rebuilt, and this conclusion is confirmed by an examination of its interior. A modern door has been opened in the south wall close to the nave, in order to give access to the vestry.

(b) Interior.—The western portion of the chancel, enclosing an area about 15 feet square, has been walled off and roofed in to form a

vestry and coal-hole. The eastward extension is roofless, and is used as the burial-ground of the Grants of Monymusk. There is no trace of any windows, or of a piscina, bench, and aumbry, and the interior presents no features of interest. Old freestone rybats have been re-used in the east window of the vestry. Some are grooved for glass, and one has a half bowtell set on the chamfer. This stone is a fragment of some work considerably later than most of that appearing in the ancient parts of the church. The type of moulding suggests a date about 1580-1600.

The entire absence of windows and ecclesiological detail in the roofless eastward extension, and the whole character of this building, suggest that it was designed to serve its present purpose of a burial enclosure. The difficulty was felt by Dr Macpherson, who hints a doubt as to whether the whole of this burial enclosure was really included in the chancel.¹ The evidence bearing on the question is exceedingly obscure. In the *New Statistical Account*, dated November 1840, we are told that "the eastern part of the church, commonly called the quire, and now seated for about 40 persons, is connected with the main part of the building by a large opening through the end wall, arched in form of a semicircle."² This statement makes it quite clear that the portion east of the chancel arch then under roof must have extended beyond the present vestry, which would not seat anything like forty persons. Moreover, Dr Macpherson himself remarks that "there is no tradition that the part without a roof was added in later times, and one of our oldest parishioners recollects that her parents used to speak of seeing the whole under one roof, and of there being access to the whole from the nave." Again, in a note of the seating in the church, 14th December 1825, the ground area, west, north, and east galleries, and "*east aisle*" are mentioned, the aisle having six pews 9 feet 2 inches long, and two pews 4 feet long. In a note of "Alterations made in July 1851" the east aisle is omitted. This may indicate that the chancel was abandoned at that date. All this literary evidence is so far confirmed by the fact that the east wall of the vestry is an obvious insertion, butting without bond against the lateral walls of the chancel, in which the distinctive red Norman masonry is seen to pass behind the inserted cross-wall. It is thus at all events clear that the Norman chancel extended out beyond the present vestry. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that the burial enclosure, with its lack of any ecclesiological detail and its windowless walls, could ever have formed an integral part of the church. A way out of the *impasse* could be found if we assume that

¹ Macpherson, p. 74.

² *New Statistical Account*, Aberdeenshire, p. 469.

the east end of the Norman chancel was demolished, the present cross-wall enclosing the vestry inserted further to the west, and the burial enclosure erected eastward, all at a date subsequent to 1840, when the original chancel was roofed and in use as stated by the *New Statistical Account*. But this assumption only involves us in a fresh set of difficulties. In the first place, if so important an alteration had taken effect so recently as after 1840, it is incredible that all memory of it would have been lost when Dr Macpherson, who came to Monymusk in 1868, published his book in 1895. On the contrary, as we have seen, what local tradition he was able to glean pointed all in the other direction. And in the second place, the masonry of the burial enclosure has no appearance of being so late as after 1840, while the north door into it, the freestone jambs of which are considerably weathered, seems distinctly to belong to the late seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Though simple, the details of Monymusk Church are good and quite decided in style, and leave us in no doubt as to the approximate date of the work. The depth of the hollows flanking the bowtell in the chancel arch, producing a prominent relief in light and shade; the stilted profile of the neck-mould; and the half cone dividing the scalloping of the cushions, are all features marking a late period in the Norman style, or in the last quarter of the twelfth century. At the same time, there is nothing which in any degree suggests Transitional work, such as is found, in this part of the country, in the transepts of St Nicholas' Kirk at Aberdeen and in the south doorway of the Kirk of Auchindoir.¹ Precisely the same inference may be drawn from the character of the masonry. Norman ashlar work is typically formed of cubical blocks with open jointing. As the Romanesque style passed into the Gothic, the stones grew longer and lower in the course, and the jointing became exceedingly close, until in thirteenth-century ashlar it is often hardly possible to insert a knife-blade between the stones.² Here at Monymusk the change is already beginning: the stones, though still often square, tend distinctly to length, but the joints remain very wide. Bearing all these facts in mind, it can hardly be doubted that the church is part of the buildings erected by Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, and the Mar connection is confirmed by the use of Kildrummy stone.

The only monument of historic interest now preserved in the church is illustrated in fig. 12. It measures 3 feet 9 inches high and

¹ See my *Castle of Kildrummy*, p. 64, fig. 12.

² The transition between the two types of masonry is beautifully illustrated by the early and later thirteenth-century ashlar at Kildrummy Castle—*ibid.*, pp. 124–8, and fig. 36.

interest, there may be noted four links of the "jougs"; a Bible with the arms and initials of Charles II., which was purchased by the session in 1679 at a cost of £15, 6s. 8d. Scots¹; and six silver communion cups, four of which were bought in June 1691 at a cost of £125, 2s. Scots,² and the other two in March 1712. The cost of the latter is specified in some detail. The cups weighed 23 ounces and 12 drams at £3, 4s. per ounce, making £76, to which was added £9, 10s. for workmanship and £1, 4s. for engraving, thus bringing up the total cost to £86, 14s. Scots.³ There



[Photo J. Ritchie.]

Fig. 13. Incised Cross, Monymusk Churchyard.

is also a silver baptismal bowl, made in London in 1726-7, and presented by Lady Grant to the church in 1772.⁴

¹ *Session Records*, 10th and 24th August 1679. The cost is entered in the "account of debursed money" under that year.

² *Ibid.*, 18th and 25th January, 21st June (wrongly entered May), and 28th June 1691. In the same year "thre hand mettal basons wt an ewer, tuo of them for holding the elements, & the other wt the ewer for holding the water when children are baptized," were bought for £16, 3s. Scots—*ibid.*, 5th July, 25th October, and 1st November 1691.

³ *Ibid.*, 9th March 1712. These six communion cups, which are of great beauty, are described in Macpherson, p. 258, and more fully in *Old Scottish Communion Plate*, by Rev. T. Burns, pp. 430-1.

⁴ *Session Records*, 9th August 1772; Macpherson, p. 284.

III. THE PARISH CHURCH AND THE PRIORY.

Having thus completed our examination of the church, the problem that faces us is this: what were its relations to the monastery that it adjoined? Was it the Parish Church, or the church of the Priory? Dr Joseph Robertson¹ and Messrs MacGibbon and Ross² took the view that the church was the monastic place of worship, while Dr Macpherson considered that it was a joint concern, the nave serving the parish and the chancel or choir the Priory. Assuming that the present eastward extension stood for the ancient chancel, he argued that the relatively great size of this portion, which is slightly longer than the nave, was due to the fact of its having been specially appropriated to the service of the canons.³ In favour of Dr Macpherson's view may be set forth the following considerations:—

(1) The Constitution of 1211, in which the most absolute accuracy and fulness of language were obviously essential, describes the various monastic buildings—including the oratory which was at Balvack—but *does not specify a church*. Moreover, it is expressly provided that there was to be no monastic cemetery, the Culdees using the parish churchyard. If the monastery had possessed a church of its own, we may expect that it would have been inventoried. Again, the official proviso, inserted with distinct stress, that the Culdees were “to do nothing to the hurt of the parish church,” taken along with the absence of any mention of a monastic church, suggests that the Culdees had an interest of some kind in the parochial church. Otherwise the words seem meaningless. Moreover, the same document clearly states that the Culdees had a right to one-fourth part of the dues in respect of those buried in the parish cemetery. An instrument of 8th December 1533 is done “within the cemetery of Monymusk,”⁴ while another instrument, dated 3rd October 1525, referring to the casting of a new common seal for the Priory, is done “within the cemetery of the said monastery.”⁵ As the Constitution of 1211 lays down that there was to be only one cemetery in the parish, the above two writs seem to show that the cemetery at all events was a joint one, belonging equally to the Parish Church and the Priory. Considered along with the absence of any mention of a Priory Church in the Constitution of 1211, this fact certainly lends colour to the view that

¹ In his essay on “Scottish Abbeys and Cathedrals” (*Quarterly Review*, June 1849; reprinted Aberdeen, 1891, p. 36) he classes Monymusk along with Scottish conventual churches in the Romanesque style.

² *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 218.

³ Macpherson, pp. 74–5.

⁴ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. p. 499.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

the church, like the cemetery which surrounds it, belonged jointly to the Priory and the parish.

(2) Bishop John of Aberdeen's charter speaks of "the monastery which Earl Gilchrist built at Munimusc in the Church of St Mary in which Culdees formerly were." This language is very unusual. It strongly points to the Church of St Mary being something pre-existent and apart from, though connected with, the monastery. Had it been merely the Priory Church, it would have been unnecessary to specify it in this way.

(3) The immediate juxtaposition, within 40 yards' distance of each other, of the Parish Church and the monastic buildings points to their close association. It hardly seems likely that the Priory would have been erected so close to the church had there not been some definite connection between them—particularly as there are otherwise no special advantages in the monastic site. Indeed it may be urged that, if the canons had not wished to have their convent as near as possible to the Parish Church which was to be in part their place of worship, they would more likely have selected a stance nearer the stream that runs through the manse grounds,¹ and might readily have been made available for the drainage of the reredorter.

(4) Dr Macpherson preserves the fact that the west door of the church was called the "civil door."² This seems to confirm the dual character of the building as a partly parochial and partly conventual place of worship.

(5) The part control that the Bishop of St Andrews exercised over the Parish Church—which was a mensal church of St Andrews as well as a prebend of Aberdeen—shows that the connection between the Augustinian house of St Andrews and its impropriated priory at Monymusk went hand in hand with a parallel connection between the episcopal see of St Andrews and this extra-diocesan parochial church. Such a parallel connection is explicable on the theory of the dual status of the church.

(6) It is clear from the writs that the Parish Church and the monastic church were both dedicated to St Mary.³ But in the entire *corpus* of documents relating to the parish and Priory, there is none which indicates the existence of two separate "churches of St Mary of Monymusk," while there is also none that is inconsistent with the view that the Parish Church also served the monastery. Moreover, a

¹ This stream is mentioned in the Forbes charter of circa 1584: "*ex boreali parte torentis currentis ad dictum locum.*"—*Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 184.

² Macpherson, p. 73.

³ Cf. *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 584: "Monimusk hath for its tutelar the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY."

writ dated 15th December 1522, recording the induction and investiture of Prior Fairlie, describes the ceremony as taking place first in the chapter-house and thereafter in the choir of the church, and speaks of the prior's "usual and accustomed place in the chapter and stall in the choir."¹ Unless we assume that within 50 yards of each other there were two Churches of St Mary, both with choirs, this writ seems to confirm Dr Macpherson's idea that the choir of the present church was used as the monastic chapel.

On the other hand may be adduced the following arguments:—

(1) The plan of the church, with its western tower and lack of transepts, is that of a parochial, not a monastic building.²

(2) In the *View of the Diocese of Aberdeen, 1732*, the Priory Church is expressly mentioned as distinct from the parochial place of worship.³

(3) The fact that in the Constitution of 1211 no church for the use of the Culdees is specified, may be met by the objection that this document was drawn up for the Culdees before their conversion into Canons Regular. While the Culdees may have used the Parish Church, ordinary practice would suggest that the Canons Regular who succeeded them would erect a monastic church for their own use. If we assume that the canons inherited cloistral buildings erected for the use of the Culdees, and in close proximity to the Parish Church where the latter had worshipped, this would explain the nearness of the Priory to the church.

(4) Dr Macpherson's suggestion that the great length of the chancel is due to its having been appropriated to the canons, is weakened by the fact that there is no proof that the east wall of the present burial enclosure, whatever its date and original purpose, represents the east end of the Norman chancel. All we can say is that the chancel certainly extended further east than the inserted cross-wall that now terminates the roofed part of the church.

(5) The arrangement of a parish church serving also in part as the church of a monastery, the conventual buildings of which were structurally separate, seems to be unparalleled,⁴ and must have been attended

¹ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. pp. 484-5.

² On the question of plan no help is afforded by the sixteenth-century common seal of the monastery, which exhibits, on the reverse, a purely conventional picture of a church of Pointed architecture, with nave, choir, transepts, and central *flèche*; on the obverse, within a Gothic niche the Blessed Virgin and Child. The seal is figured in Dr J. S. F. Gordon's *Ecclesiastical Chronicle for Scotland, Monasticon*, p. 101. The reverse is also illustrated on the title-page of Dr Macpherson's book. I have examined originals appended to writs in Monymusk House.

³ *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 584.

⁴ Indeed, on quite general grounds it may be said that the burden of proving a case so unique must lie entirely with those who make it, and that without the most positive evidence such an arrangement as Dr Macpherson imagined cannot be taken for granted.

with serious practical inconvenience. According to normal custom, the monastic church would form one side of a cloistral group of buildings, the dormer gable abutting in the usual way against the church in order to provide a night entrance. It is difficult to believe that the canons would have crossed some 40 yards of open ground in order to attend the nocturnal hours. But no vestige of tusk, roof-plate, corbel-table, or joist-holes remains to indicate that any building has ever abutted against the north side of either the nave or the chancel (so far as preserved).

(6) A joint occupancy of the church by the monastery and the parish would have raised questions about the cost of upkeep of the fabric, as between the prior and the rector, and their respective superiors, the Prior of St Andrews and the Bishop of Aberdeen. It is hard to imagine that this dual control would not have led to overlapping and friction, and that the two ecclesiastical bodies concerned, regular and secular, would have worked always in harmony. Yet there is no documentary evidence of any dispute, with the single exception of the proviso in the Constitution of 1211 that the Culdees shall do no hurt to the Parish Church.

(7) A writ dated 6th February 1535 concerning the strife between Prior Fairlie and his subordinates, is "done within the *nave of the church of the said monastery*."¹ But on the theory that the chancel of the Parish Church was appropriated to the canons, the nave was under the jurisdiction of the rector or vicar, and would not ordinarily be available for monastic business.

As will be seen from the arguments marshalled above for either view, the problem is an obscure one. It can be solved only by thorough excavation on the site of the conventual buildings, and also at the church, in order to reveal what the Norman east end was like.

In writing this paper, I have enjoyed the interest of two successive parish ministers of Monymusk, the late Rev. Fred. W. Lovie, M.C., M.A., and the Rev. J. Grant Forbes, M.A., both of whom readily gave facilities for making the survey and taking photographs of the church, while Mr Grant Forbes also kindly allowed me access to the Session Records. To Colonel Sir Arthur Grant, D.S.O., C.B.E., D.L., Baronet of Monymusk, I am indebted for permission to take notes and measurements of Monymusk House, and for access to the sculptured stone, the Brecbannoch, the Moorish coin, the writs, and other historical material preserved in the house. Mr William Norrie, F.S.A.Scot., Aberdeen,

¹ *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iii. p. 490. The writ of 17th March 1549 speaks of "the doors of the church of the Priory of Monymusk."—*Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 179.

supplied the photographs at figs. 5 and 12, and Mr J. Fenton Wyness, Aberdeen, prepared the measured drawings and took the photograph at fig. 7. The drawing at fig. 11 was made by Mr James S. Richardson, F.S.A.Scot., H.M. Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland, who has also done me the honour to read carefully through my manuscript and to go over the church in my company, and has furnished me with much helpful criticism, whereby I have been able to improve my description in several important respects.
