

## III

## FRAGMENTS OF ALTAR RETABLES OF LATE MEDIÆVAL DATE IN SCOTLAND. BY JAMES S. RICHARDSON, F.S.A. SCOT., CURATOR OF THE MUSEUM.

A retable of late mediæval date consisted of a number of tables or panels carved in relief, set in a framework of architectural character, and sometimes furnished with hinged shutters. This screen occupied a position immediately above the back of the altar. The scenes carved on the tables were in sets, the most usual being those depicting the "Passion," and the "Life of the Virgin"; other sets illustrated the Bible life of St John the Baptist, the Martyrdom of St Catharine, and episodes in the lives of saints and martyrs.

The "Passion" set, comprising the Easter Cycle, is represented by the *Agony in the Garden*, the *Betrayal*, *Christ before Herod*, *Christ before Pilate*, the *Flagellation*, *Christ crowned with Thorns*, the *Mocking of Christ*, the *Carrying of the Cross*, the *Crucifixion*, the *Taking down from the Cross*, the *Entombment*, the *Descent of Christ into Limbo*, the *Resurrection*, *Christ the Gardener*, and the *Ascension*.

The "Virgin" set presents the Christmas episodes, and consists of the *Annunciation*, the *Immaculate Conception*, the *Salutation*, the *Nativity*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Adoration of the Three Kings*, the *Circumcision*, the *Presentation in the Temple*, and the *Flight into Egypt*. Further scenes from the Life of the Virgin are the *Birth*, *Marriage*, *Death*, *Assumption*, and the *Coronation*.

The usual arrangement of English alabaster retables was in sets of either five or seven scenes, sometimes with images of saints at the ends and between the tables (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The central panel was given more prominence by additional height; in most cases it was the *Crucifixion* or the *Assumption*. This central feature was carried up to an even greater height in the Flemish retables of wood of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The "Passion" and the "Virgin" scenes frequently appear together on Flemish retables, those of the "Passion" being the larger and placed over the "Virgin" set; small scenes and images are introduced into the richly carved framework.

In Scotland the remains of the tables are represented for the most part by broken pieces. These are of stone or wood. How they were assembled it is impossible to say.

<sup>1</sup> Prior and Gardner, *Medieval Figure Sculpture in England*, Society of Antiquaries, *English Medieval Alabaster Work*.

Owing to the destruction of the actual retables and of documentary evidence it is unknown to what extent this type of altar sculpture was in use in Scotland. It is important to note, however, that many of the Scottish mediæval churches resemble those on the Continent, in that they have unbroken wall-spaces at the back of the altar sites, designed for the display of reredoses or retables, which in certain instances must have been of considerable height. Whitekirk,<sup>1</sup> Mid-Calder,<sup>2</sup> and Fowlis Easter<sup>3</sup> parish churches, and the ruined presbytery of Dalkeith Collegiate

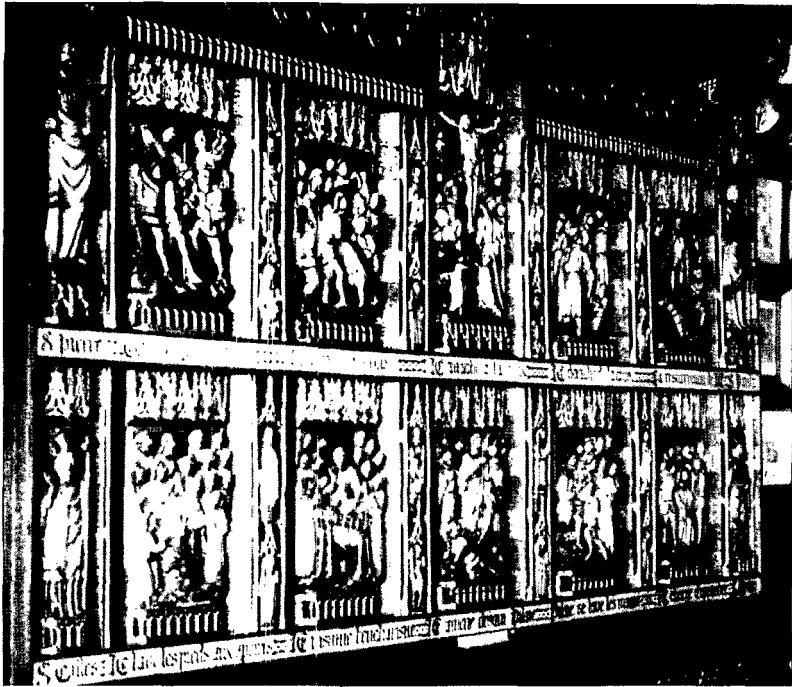


Fig. 1. English Alabaster Passion Retable of Ten Tables, Compiègne, France.

Kirk,<sup>4</sup> afford good examples of wall-spaces at the back of High Altars. Wall-spaces over altar sites occur at Melrose Abbey<sup>5</sup> in the choir and nave aisle chapels, at the east end of choir aisles at Haddington Collegiate Kirk,<sup>6</sup> at the east end of nave aisles at Dunkeld<sup>7</sup> and Dun-

<sup>1</sup> *Inventory of Ancient Monuments (Scotland): County of East Lothian*, No. 200.

<sup>2</sup> MacGibbon and Ross, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 344.

<sup>6</sup> *Inventory of Ancient Monuments (Scotland): County of East Lothian*, No. 68.

<sup>7</sup> MacGibbon and Ross, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 28.

blane Cathedrals,<sup>1</sup> and in the remaining transept of the Priory Church of Inchcolm,<sup>2</sup> and the transepts of the Collegiate Kirks of Haddington, Seton,<sup>3</sup> Dunglass,<sup>4</sup> and Rosslyn.<sup>5</sup> At Inchcolm, above the remains of an altar, are features on the wall indicating how the altar-piece was affixed. At Rosslyn, on the walls of the ruined transepts, the height and the length of the altars are clearly traceable. There is a space for the retable. Above this there are the three corbels for altar images (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Rosslyn Chapel, East Wall, South Transept.

Corbels.  
 Sacrament House.      Space over Altar.      Piscina.  
    Altar Site.

From a register of the furnishings of King's College Kirk, Old Aberdeen, dated 1542,<sup>6</sup> we learn that two of the altars had stone retables displaying sculptured panels of figure composition and images. One of these altars, described as being in the nave, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the statues being those of Our Lady and St Kentigern.

<sup>1</sup> MacGibbon and Ross, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 251, fig. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Inventory of Ancient Monuments (Scotland): County of East Lothian*, No. 191.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 124.

<sup>5</sup> MacGibbon and Ross, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> Spalding Club, *Fasti Aberdonenses*, see *Registrum Omnium Vasorum*, etc., p. 560.

The dedication of the altar suggests that the tables belonged to the "Virgin" series. The other altar was dedicated to St Germain; the carvings suggested by the dedication probably represented episodes from the life of this saint. In connection with this altar the images inventoried were our Lord after the Flagellation and St Christopher. In this same building the altar of the Blessed Sacrament appears to have had a retable ornamented with a gilded diaper pattern. It had two alabaster figures of equal height, the one representing the Virgin and the other St Catharine, the patron saints of the College. These figures were probably from the Nottingham workshops. From Myln's lives of the Bishops of Dunkeld we gather that the altar dedicated to St Mary in St John's Kirk, Perth,<sup>1</sup> had a fine retable, and that, at Dunkeld Cathedral, the High Altar was furnished in 1461 with an *antemural* of considerable height depicting twenty-four scenes from the legendary life of St Columba.<sup>2</sup>

The reredos or *antemural* of the High Altar in St Machar, Old Aberdeen, survived the Reformation, but was destroyed in 1642. From the account of this destruction<sup>3</sup> we gather that this feature must have been singularly imposing, "for within Scotland there was no better piece of work," it was "curiously wrought in fine wainscot" and had three richly carved and gilded canopies or "crouns" above, and an arrangement of smaller canopies underneath. This may possibly have been one of those remarkable, carved, gilded, and coloured retables of wood produced by the Carvers' Guilds of Antwerp and Brussels, who supplied Sweden, Spain, and other countries with their masterpieces, at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. Scotland at that time was importing ecclesiastical furnishings from Antwerp and Bruges. From the latter town came the carved wood stalls that furnished the choir of Melrose Abbey Church,<sup>4</sup> and the paintings by Hugo Van der Goes preserved at Holyrood Palace which once formed the wings of an altar-piece in Holy Trinity College Kirk,<sup>5</sup> Edinburgh. The co-operation between the great Flemish masters and the Carvers' Guilds is well known, and it may have been that the Holy Trinity paintings formed the shutters of a Flemish retable resembling the one from the church of Fröstuna, now in the National Museum of Antiquities, Stockholm (figs. 3 and 4).

With the exception of the set of tables in Paisley Abbey, illustrating

<sup>1</sup> Scottish History Society, *Rentale Dunkeldense*, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> The Bannatyne Club, Myln's *Vita Dunkeldensis ecclesie Episcoporum*, p. 23. In 1508 Bishop George Broun furnished the High Altar with a tabernacle imported from Flanders.

<sup>3</sup> William Orem, *A Description of the Chanonry in Old Aberdeen*, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Archæologia*, xxxi. p. 346.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Paul Lambotte, K.B.E., *Flemish Painting before the Eighteenth Century*, p. 15.



Fig. 3. Retable from the Church of FRÖSTUNA ; end of the fifteenth century. (*Antwerp School.*)  
National Museum of Antiquities, Stockholm.

*Carrying of the Cross.*                      *Crucifixion.*                      *Taking down from the Cross.*  
*Annunciation.*    *Visitation.*                      *Nativity.*                      *Adoration of the Magi.*    *Circumcision.*    *Presentation.*

scenes from the life of St Mirin<sup>1</sup> (figs. 5 and 6), all examples of Scottish table stones have been recovered from the floors or from wall packings in churches, and from graveyards. These carvings were made during a period from the middle of the fifteenth century to the Reformation, and in some instances two or three scenes have been carved on a single stone slab. The scenes in the "Passion" and "Virgin" series closely resemble, in their composition and dramatic feeling, the miniatures and wood-block prints produced on the Continent. This is doubtless the source from which the Scottish sculptor drew his inspiration.



Fig. 4. FRÖSTUNA RETABLE—Dexter and Sinister Shutters.

The position of the ten tables from the legendary life of St Mirin in the chapel dedicated to this saint in Paisley Abbey suggests a later arrangement; it is not improbable that in their original setting they formed a reredos. Remains of stone retables are to be seen at Paisley Abbey; St Michael's Church, Linlithgow; St Salvator's College Kirk, St Andrews; Wemyss Castle, Fife; Mains Kirkyard near Dundee; the Town Museum, Banff; and the National Museum of Antiquities. The fragment found in post-Reformation masonry at Paisley Abbey depicts part of a *Crucifixion* and part of an *Entombment*, and can be dated approximately. The Linlithgow table stones, all of

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxv. p. 44.

which are incomplete, were recovered from the floor of the church during the restoration work. They all belong to "Passion" sets, and represent the *Agony in the Garden* and the *Betrayal*, the *Flagellation* or *Christ carrying the Cross* (?), *Christ crowned with Thorns*, and the *Crucifixion*, the only carving still retaining traces of the original polychromy. The two imperfect table stones at St Salvator's College Kirk are from a "Virgin" set; the one represents the *Annunciation* and the other the *Circumcision*. They were found during the recent work of restoration, and even in their present mutilated condition these carvings are of great value as illustrating a very high standard of sculpture. The arrangement and carving of the draperies bear a remarkable resemblance to the treatment of those on a sculptured panel assigned to the early sixteenth-century period in the Musée d'Art Ancienne de Courtrai (fig. 19), and also on a funeral bas-relief of fifteenth-century date, to the memory of Robert de Quingheim in the Musée de Tournai.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that the St Salvator's examples were produced either by a Franco-Fleming or a Scot who had been trained in Flanders. In this latter connection it is of interest to note that in the list of *Sculpteurs inscrits à la Gilde Anversoise aux xv<sup>e</sup> et xvi<sup>e</sup> siècles*<sup>2</sup> the following names occur: 1495, Thomaes Adam (apprenti); 1513, Jan Wraghe, Gillesone; 1520, Matheus Boentyn (tailleur de pierres), all of which might well have been Scottish. The Wemyss examples are the *Carrying of the Cross* from a "Passion" set, the *Circumcision* and *Flight into Egypt* from a "Virgin" set. The first is preserved at the Castle, and the others are built into a wall erected thirty years ago on the south side of a private burial-ground within the policies, where owing to exposure they have deteriorated very much. It is said that these tables were found on the site of a pre-Reformation church which stood adjacent to the Castle.

At Mains Kirkyard, near Dundee, there is a mutilated table depicting the *Annunciation*. It is built into the upper part of a gable of a reconstructed burial aisle on the site of a mediæval church. The stone is of local freestone and the carving is laminating badly. An interesting table representing *Our Lady of Pity*, of sixteenth-century date, is preserved in the Banff Museum.<sup>3</sup> The upper part of the carving is mutilated, the head of the Virgin and that of the dead Saviour are missing (fig. 31). This relic was found in 1866 in the churchyard on the site of the church which was built in 1471.

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Soil de Moriamé, *Les Anciennes Industries d'Art Tournaisiennes à L'exposition de 1911*, p. 82, Pl. xlix.

<sup>2</sup> Jean de Bosschere, *La Sculpture Anversoise aux xv<sup>e</sup> et xvi<sup>e</sup> Siècles*, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xx. p. 356.



1

2

3

Figs. 5 and 6. St Mirin Table Stones, Paisley Abbey.

1. The mother of St Mirin presenting her little son to St Congal.
2. St Congal putting the religious habit on St Mirin.
3. St Mirin taking oversight of the Monastery of Bangor.
4. St Mirin being driven from the door of the Palace.
5. The King suffering the pains transferred to him by St Mirin's prayer.
6. The Queen Mother and her child.
7. The King supplicating St Mirin.
8. The reconciliation of the King and Queen with St Mirin.
9. The monk spying on St Mirin.
10. St Mirin resuscitating a dead monk.



4



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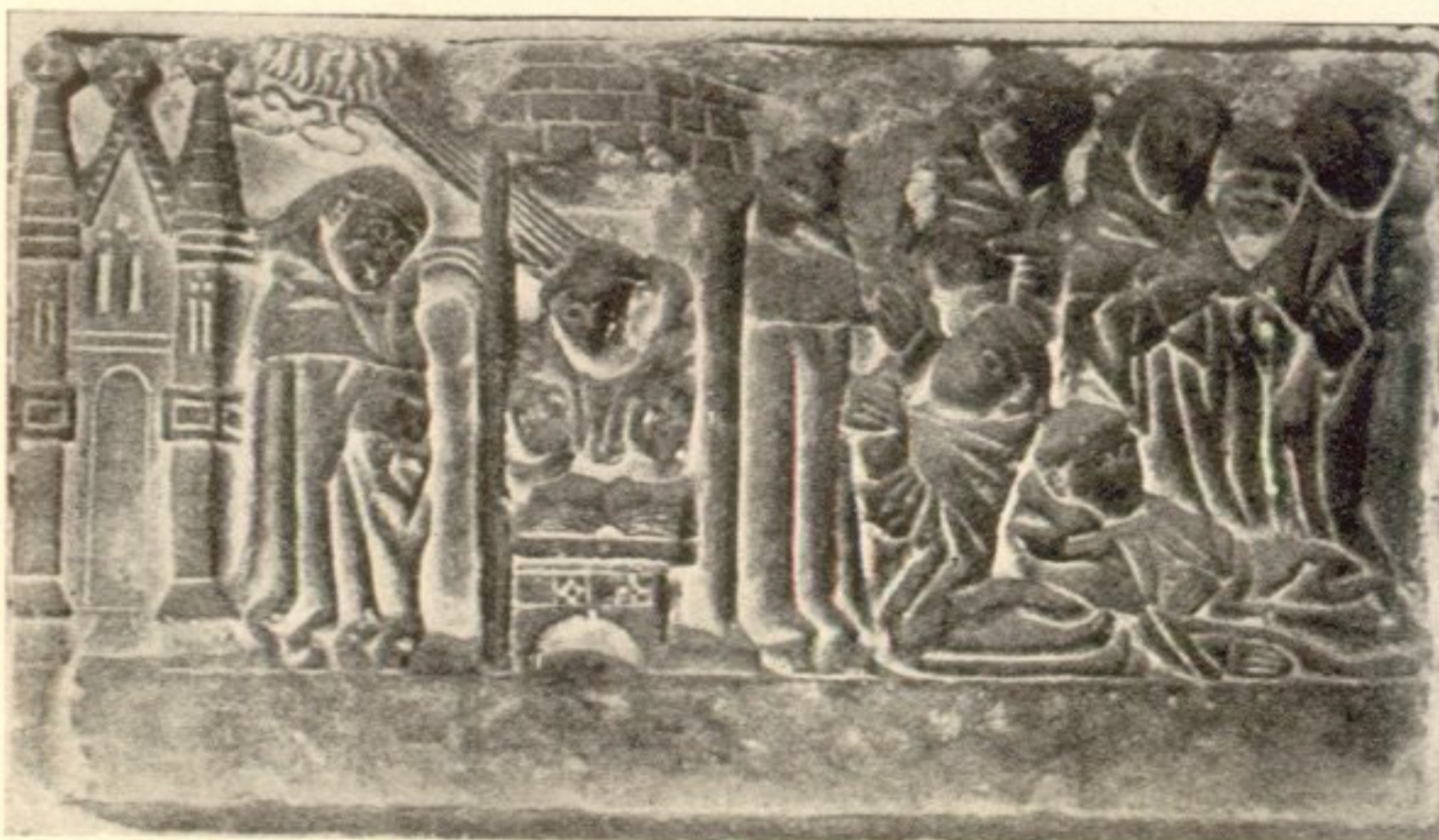
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A fifteenth-century Edinburgh example is to be seen in the National Museum of Antiquities. The carving represents *Extreme Unction* (fig. 7), from a set portraying "The Seven Sacraments." This relic was found in 1859 when clearing the foundations of an old house in Mary King's Close.<sup>1</sup>

During the late mediæval period there was an enormous output of retables from the workshops of alabaster men at Nottingham;<sup>2</sup> it is

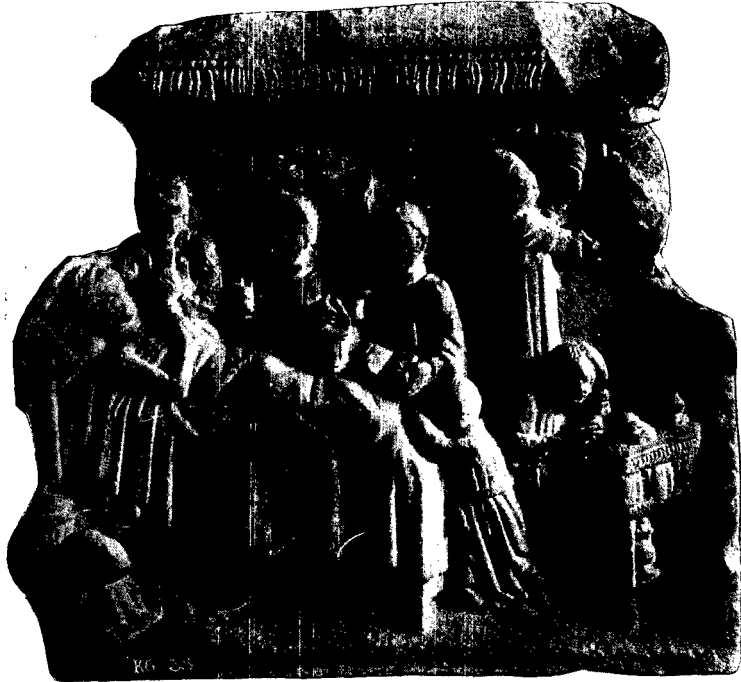


Fig. 7. Carved Stone from Mary King's Close, Edinburgh. *Extreme Unction*.

remarkable, therefore, that no fragments of alabaster tables have been found in Scotland. Complete examples of these retables can be seen in France, Italy, Spain, and Iceland. In the National Museum of Antiquities there are ten fragments of an alabaster, pierced, tracery canopy (fig. 8) (KG 66-75), showing gilding and colour treatment. They were found in the floor of Dunfermline Abbey Church. It is impossible to say whether the canopy was part of a retable or of a tomb resembling that of the Duchess of Suffolk (d. 1473) at Ewelme, Oxfordshire.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. viii. p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Prior and Gardner, *Medieval Figure Sculpture in England*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

It is interesting to note that at Rosslyn Chapel and Lincluden College Kirk there are stone carvings similar in subject to those on "Passion" and "Virgin" retables. The Rosslyn group, carvings set on the abaci of respond capitals and on the capital of one of the pillars, represents *Christ before Pilate*, the *Carrying of the Cross*, the *Crucifixion*, and the *Resurrection*. The Lincluden examples are to be seen on the

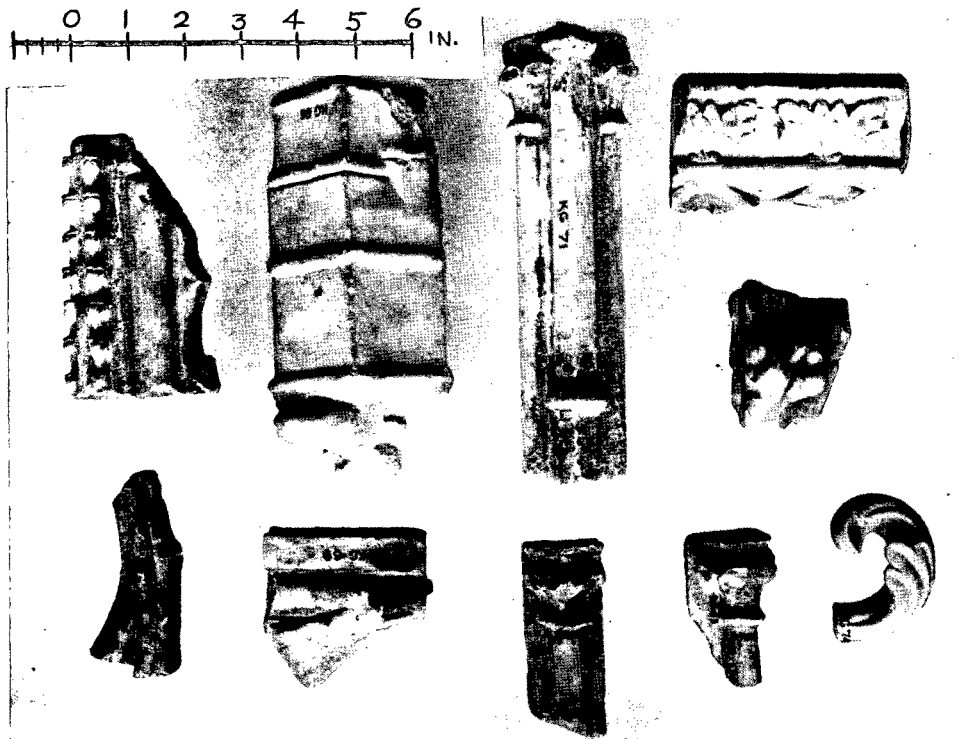


Fig. 8. Fragments of Alabaster Canopy from Dunfermline Abbey.

rood-screen, the subjects of which are not now recognisable with the exception of two carvings representing the *Annunciation* and the *Adoration of the Three Kings*.<sup>1</sup>

Of the fragments of wood retables the following are in the National Museum of Antiquities: (1) Three pieces of different tables belonging to a "Resurrection" set. They represent the *Entombment*, the *Descent of Christ into Limbo*, and *Christ as the Gardener*. These carvings are of definite Scottish character, and were purchased in 1851 from the

<sup>1</sup> *Inventory of Ancient Monuments (Scotland): Stewartry of Kirkcudbright*, No. 431.

Sharpe Collection. (2) A complete table, the *Resurrection*, presented in 1864, bears a resemblance to the foregoing, and might have belonged to the same set. (3) A carving of the Antwerp School representing the *Taking down from the Cross*; its history is unknown. It is from the Bell Collection.

### FRAGMENTS OF STONE RETABLES.

#### PAISLEY ABBEY.

*The Crucifixion* (fig. 9).

The lower right-hand part only of the scene, showing the legs of the crucified with the right foot placed over the left and nailed to a low



Fig. 9. Fragment of Retable, Paisley Abbey.  
*Crucifixion.* *Entombment.*

cross, at the base of which lies a small open book. To the right and close up is the Centurion in plate-armour and wearing a long mantle, terminating in conventional folds and fastened at the neck with a clasp. The right arm of this figure is uplifted, and with the left hand he holds the pommel of his sword. A man in a quilted doublet, a cap on his

head and a small sword at his side, stands behind the Centurion, whom he is touching on the arm. The attitude of the Centurion is similar to that of the one depicted on a fragment of a French wood-block of late-fourteenth century date illustrated (fig. 10).

*The Entombment* (fig. 9).

All that remains of the representation of this subject is the naked upper part of the dead Christ, laid on a shroud which partly drapes the front of the tomb in which He is being laid. The front of the tomb is panelled with a Gothic window-like design. The projecting rim is splayed and the base ornamented with a "tablet flower" repeat.

Carved on one slab, the panels are divided by an engaged slender shaft, below the base of which is carved the coat of arms of Prior George Shaw (1472-1498). The remains of a two-lined inscription in Gothic ribbon letters is below the Crucifixion, and there has been a single-line inscription, of which the letters SEPU can be traced, below the Entombment.<sup>1</sup> Such inscriptions would describe the subjects portrayed above them. The slab is of sandstone and measures 11 inches in height and 10 inches in width.



Fig. 10. Part of Crucifixion, Woodcut, French, end of fourteenth century,

CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL, LINLITHGOW.

*The Agony in the Garden* (fig. 11).

In the centre of this panel is our Lord kneeling in prayer and facing the cup of suffering ("If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." Matt. chap. 26 v. 42). Seated and asleep in the foreground are St James and St Peter; behind Christ appear the head and shoulders of the sleeping St John, and in the background above St John is a landscape featuring an olive tree and rock, representing the Mount of Olives. With the exception of St John the figures are bearded and have long hair.

*The Betrayal* (fig. 11).

In the midst of the group is Christ being embraced by Judas Iscariot. With His right hand our Lord is touching the wounded head of Malchus,

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr J. Jeffrey Waddell, F.S.A.Scot., for having called my attention to this interesting fragment, a cast of which he has presented to the National Museum of Antiquities.

who lies in the left foreground. This servant of the High Priest wears a short embroidered tunic and tight hose. He holds a lantern with his right hand and in the other a stave. On the right, St Peter kneels sheathing his sword. The cloak which he wears is fastened by a large annular-studded brooch. Behind our Lord and gripping His right arm is a soldier in plate-armour, a quilloned small sword hangs at his side



Fig 11. Fragment of Retable, St Michael's, Linlithgow.  
*The Agony in the Garden.* *The Betrayal.*

and the visor of the helmet is raised. The head of another soldier, wearing a *chappelle-de-fer*, appears in the background; this man holds a halberd in the right hand. Behind St Peter is the head of a third soldier, set in profile, with a halberd head showing in front of his helmet. Above Judas is the head of a man wearing a long-eared cowl, resembling the usual head-dress of a jester.

Both of these scenes are cut on the one slab, and are divided by a slender, engaged, decorated column. The canopy over each panel con-

sisted of twin ogival, Gothic arches, cusped on the under sides and crocketed on the upper, each terminating in a finial. Between these arched heads were small buttress-like features, and the intervening spaces were decorated with window-like designs in miniature.

With the exception of a small fragment of one of the arches, the upper part of the panels as they now are is an inaccurate nineteenth-century restoration in a cement composition. Fortunately the original arrangement can be determined from a detached fragment now in the church (fig. 12). The upper part of the cup is also a restoration, and the whole carving is coated with a cement wash.

This relic is built into the wall over the fireplace in the restored revestry on the north side of the church. Sandstone. Overall size of panels: H. 35½ inches, W. 35½ inches.



Fig. 12. Fragment of Canopy, St Michael's, Linlithgow.



Fig. 13. Fragment of the *Carrying of the Cross* (?), St Michael's, Linlithgow.

*The Flagellation or the Carrying of the Cross* (?)—a fragment (fig. 13).

A very small fragment of two scenes belonging to the same series as the foregoing, and similarly divided. The remains of a figure dressed in a tunic of diaper pattern and a head-dress with decorated fillet and plain crown occupies the left side of the remains of the table on the right. This man holds a birch with the right hand, the other hand is closed, and over his left shoulder appears the head of a soldier wearing a helmet. The birch or scourge suggests the only possible scenes which this table could have represented. All that

remains of the other table are two heads, both helmeted. Size: 10 inches by 10 inches.

The stone is set on a wooden base, and stands in a mural recess at the west end of the south aisle.

*Christ Crowned with Thorns* (fig. 14).

In the middle, the seated figure of our Lord wearing the purple robe, falling from the shoulders, leaving the breast bare and enveloping the legs in loose folds. In the lower left corner, a young man seated on the ground is presenting the mock sceptre. On his head is a conical hat of unusual design, and the costume he wears resembles that of



Fig. 14. Fragment of Retable, St Michael's,  
Linnlithgow.

*Christ Crowned with Thorns.*



Fig. 15. Oak Carving in Amsterdam.

*Christ Crowned with Thorns.*

Malchus in the *Betrayal* scene, and in attitude he is also somewhat similar. On either side of Christ and behind Him are other tormentors, who with crossed rods are pressing the Crown of Thorns upon His head. The figure on the right faces inwards, and stretches up from the toes as if endeavouring to put his weight on the end of the rod which he holds. His costume is a short tunic, drawn in at the waist in folds and completed by tight hose. Above are the mutilated remains of another man. In the left upper part there are three figures, one of which is now indicated by an arm only; another wears a crown-like head-piece,



a jerkin with slashed shirt, and his tunic sleeve is ornamented with a reticulated pattern. Under his arms appears the head of the third man, wearing a conical head-dress. The table is incomplete at the top. Two of the heads are defaced, that of our Lord and the tormentor on the right, and indications only of the rods and the sceptre remain.

The base of the table is ornamented with quatrefoil pateræ of similar design, and there is evidence of there having been an engaged column on the right-hand side. This relic is now built into the ashlar wall over the doorway in the east wall of the revestry. Sandstone. H. 22½ inches, W. 15½ inches.



Fig. 16. Fragment of *Crucifixion*, St Michael's, Linlithgow.

Fig. 15 illustrates a Flemish wood carving of this subject of late fifteenth-century date in the Netherlands Museum of Art and History, Amsterdam.

*The Crucifixion* (fig. 16).

A small part of this scene only survives. It shows the swooning figure of Our Lady overcome with grief being supported. In the left corner is one of the Holy Women kneeling; her hands are crossed. The figures are without heads.

This fragment, which represents the left lower corner of a table, shows traces of blue and red colour; it has a moulded base with pateræ on one of the members, and is finished by a pendant, repeating, quatrefoil



Fig. 17. Fragment of Retable, St Salvator's, St Andrews.  
*The Annunciation.*



Fig. 18. Fragment of Retable, St Salvator's, St Andrews.  
*The Circumcision.*

ornament, and is set up on a wooden base in a recess at the west end of the south aisle. Sandstone. Size of carving: H.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches, W.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. H., additional with moulding,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

ST SALVATOR'S COLLEGE KIRK, ST ANDREWS.

*The Annunciation* (fig. 17).

The lower part only of a table. On the right, Our Lady dressed in a gown and mantle is seated on a stool set on a low platform in front



Fig. 19. Sculptured Panel, early sixteenth century. Musée d'Art Ancienne de Courtrai.

of a desk, on which lies an open book. She faces outwards, and her hands are crossed as in ecstasy. On the left, facing the Virgin, is the Archangel Gabriel clothed in a long albe and mantle.

*The Circumcision* (fig. 18).

The lower part only of a table. In the middle, upon a plain altar, is the Infant Jesus supported by His mother, who stands on the one side in a mantle which falls in well-arranged folds; on the other side is the High Priest, vested in albe and dalmatic, performing the rite.

The carvings, which are in high relief, have each been recessed within a Gothic architectural surround with a canopied top. The treatment

of the side elevations indicates that the tables were arranged apart, the space between being filled by an image. Sandstone. Size: H. 15 inches, W.  $22\frac{3}{4}$  inches, D.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

WEMYSS CASTLE, FIFE.

*Christ Bearing the Cross* (fig. 20).

In the midst of a group our Lord is seen stumbling under the Cross, forced down to make it heavier by one of the tormentors. On the left



[Photo Roy. Com. Anct. Mon.]

Fig. 20. Panel of Retable, Wemyss Castle, Fife.

*Christ Bearing the Cross.*

is a man with his arm raised in the act of striking with a scourge; with the other hand he holds a rope attached to our Lord's waist. On the right are two nimbed figures, the Virgin Mary and St John. The former stands in front in a long gown and mantle. Behind the Cross is a tormentor, his arm raised in a throwing attitude, with an undefined

object in the hand. The tormentors wear hose and girdled tunics with serrated hems, two of them wear cowls and have distinctly sardonic expressions. There is a shield now worn to a plain surface below the advanced foot of the Saviour. The carving is set within a splayed margin. Preserved at Wemyss Castle. Local sandstone. Size: H. 3 feet 4 inches, W. 2 feet 8 inches.

*The Flight into Egypt* (fig. 21).

The Holy Mother with the Infant in her arms is seated on the Ass following St Joseph, who bears the baggage. Sculpturings of this subject



Fig. 21. Panel of Retable, Wemyss Castle, Fife.

*The Flight into Egypt.*

are rare. It is unfortunate that the carving has now almost scaled off, consequent on the panel having been built into a modern wall and exposed to the weather. In Wemyss Castle policies. Local sandstone. Size: H. 2 feet 6½ inches, W. 3 feet 4½ inches.

*The Circumcision* (fig. 22).

In the centre is the nimbed figure of Our Lady standing behind a low altar, on which she supports the Infant Saviour while the High Priest on the left, vested in cope and mitre, performs the rite. Behind him is a Clerk in rochet, his left hand raised, and holding in the right a torch. To the right of Our Lady is a woman carrying in a boat-

shaped basket the accustomed offering of young pigeons. On her left stands St Joseph with a hand raised. The altar is covered with



Fig. 22. Panel of Retable, Wemyss Castle, Fife.  
*The Circumcision.*

a linen cloth and the front of it is relieved with a sunk trefoil panel. The carving is laminating owing to exposure to the weather; it is built into the wall before mentioned. Local sandstone. Size: H. 2 feet  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches, W. 3 feet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.



Fig. 23. Fragment of Retable, Mains Churchyard.  
*The Annunciation.*

MAINS KIRKYARD, NEAR DUNDEE.

*The Annunciation* (fig. 23).

On the right, Our Lady, gowned in a long robe and mantle, stands with hands held in the attitude of prayer. On her right are the remains of a reading-desk. On the left, the archangel in a girdled albe genuflects and presents the scroll on which has been painted the Salutation. Placed on an heraldic shield and set between the figures is the "pot of lillies." The head and hands of the Virgin, the head and right wing of the angel, the pot, and the desk have scaled off.

The shield is charged with the arms of Graham of Fintry.<sup>1</sup> The date is probably late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Local sandstone. Size: H. 22½ inches, W. 17½ inches.

FRAGMENTS OF WOOD RETABLES.

IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES.

Fragment of an *Entombment*. KL. 12 (fig. 24).

Shows the head and shoulders of the dead Christ being laid in the tomb and supported by a cowled figure. In the left background is part of a weeping figure holding the hem of his garment up to his right eye; on his head is a fillet. Oak. H. 14½ inches, W. 5 inches.

Part of the *Descent of Christ into Limbo* (fig. 25).

The dexter side of a table showing Adam and Eve and other figures coming out from Hades to approach our Lord. The figure of Christ has been carved on the missing part of the panel, and would have been shown dressed in a loose mantle and carrying the Cross and Banner of Victory. The subject, which is a comparatively rare one, is also known as the *Harrowing of Hell*. Oak. H. 15 inches, W. 5 inches.



Figs. 24 and 25. Oak fragments.

*Entombment.*

*Descent of Christ into Limbo.*

Part of *Christ appearing to St Mary Magdalene*, otherwise *Christ the Gardener*. KL. 13 (fig. 26)

The sinister side of a table showing our Lord appearing to the Magdalene. A shroud is draped loosely round His body, His right hand

<sup>1</sup> My thanks are due to Mr J. H. Stevenson, M.B.E., K.C., F.S.A.Scot., *Marchmont Herald*, for having identified the coat of arms.

is raised in blessing, and with His left He holds a spade. Set on the ground in front is the Magdalene's box of ointment. Oak. H. 15½ inches, W. 5 inches. The illustration (fig. 27) shows a rendering of this subject by the Antwerp School, now preserved in the Riksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 26. Oak fragment.  
*Christ the Gardener.*



Fig. 27. Oak Carving, Amsterdam.  
*Christ the Gardener.*

This representation of the episode was carved during the late fifteenth century.

*The Entombment*, which is from the Sharpe Collection, might possibly have belonged to the same retable as the two others, which are undoubtedly by the same sculptor, and apparently Scottish.

*The Resurrection* (fig. 28).

Christ is seen stepping out of the tomb, dressed in a loose robe, the right arm and breast bare, the hand raised in blessing. The Cross and Banner of Victory has been held in the left hand. An angel figure is



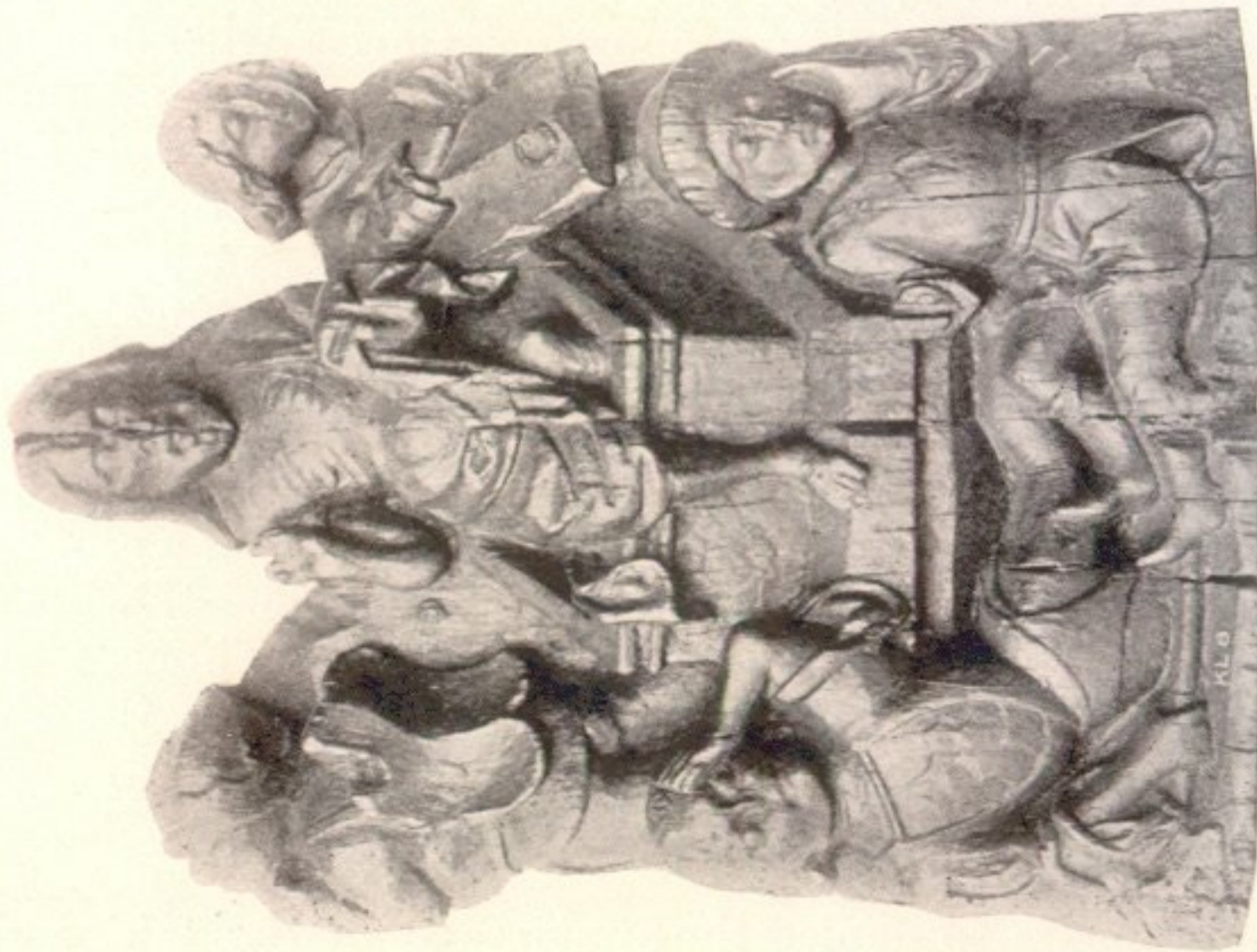


Fig. 28. Oak Carving.  
*Resurrection.*



Fig. 29. Oak Carving.  
*Taking down from the Cross.*

removing the lid of the tomb. Two sleeping guards recline in the foreground, one is holding a halberd. In the dexter background is a sleeping soldier wearing a *salade*, an *écusson à bouche* hangs on his back. In general characteristics this carving resembles the Linlithgow stone examples. Oak. H.  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches, W.  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

*The Taking down from the Cross.* KL. 7 (fig. 29).

Three men standing on the ground receiving on a shroud the dead Christ, while a fourth, standing on a ladder resting on the Cross, is supporting His left arm. The lower part of the subject is not carved, indicating that the foreground has been on a separate block of wood. The moulding round the base is an addition of much later date.

*Antwerp School.* From the Bell Collection. Oak. H.  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches, W.  $10\frac{5}{8}$  inches.

#### CARVINGS AT ROSSLYN CHAPEL.

Carved on a convex surface, *circa* 1450. The three scenes illustrated are shown in a developed form on the drawing. No. 1 is on the west side, and No. 2 is on the east side of the south doorway; No. 3 is on the west side of the north doorway.

*Christ before Pilate* (fig. 30, No. 1).

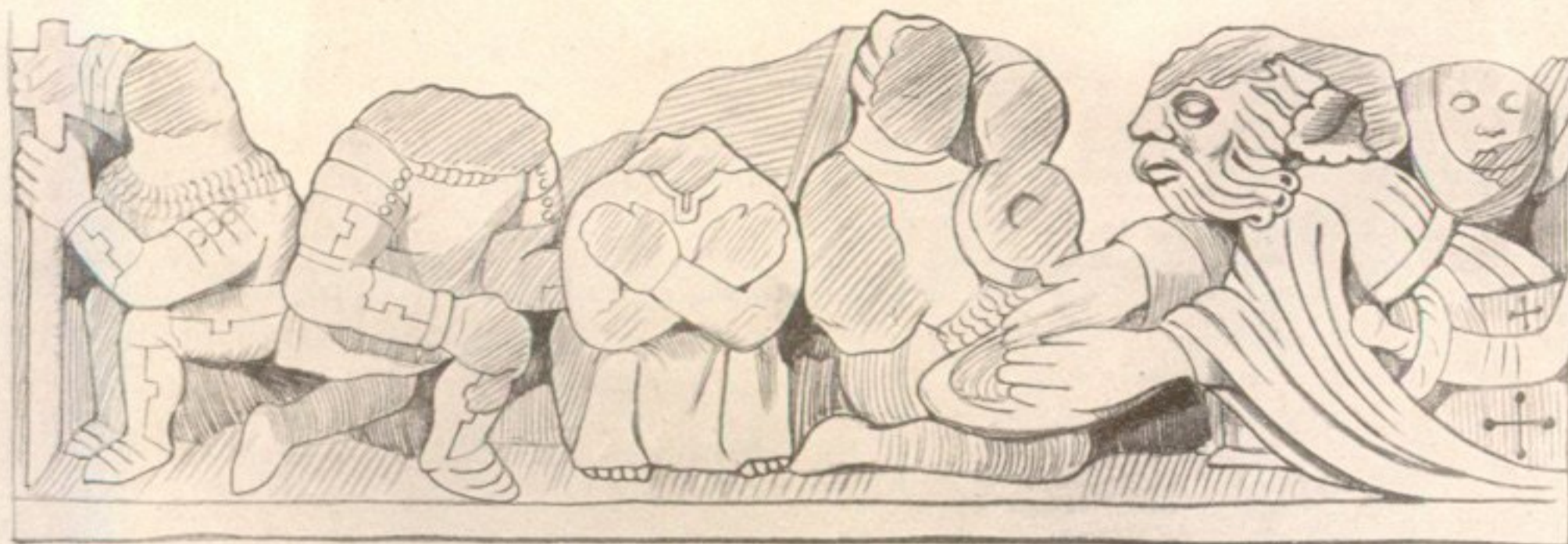
Reading from left to right—A soldier in armour seated and holding a halberd; a kneeling soldier supporting Christ with his left hand. Our Lord is seated with his arms folded; a soldier kneeling and pouring water from a pitcher into the basin in which Pilate is washing his hands. Pilate is shown as a bearded figure, seated on a chair, he is wearing a girdled tunic with long, loose sleeves, a scimitar is suspended from his belt; behind this figure is the head and hand of a soldier. H. 9 inches, L. 26 inches.

*Carrying of the Cross* (fig. 30, No. 2).

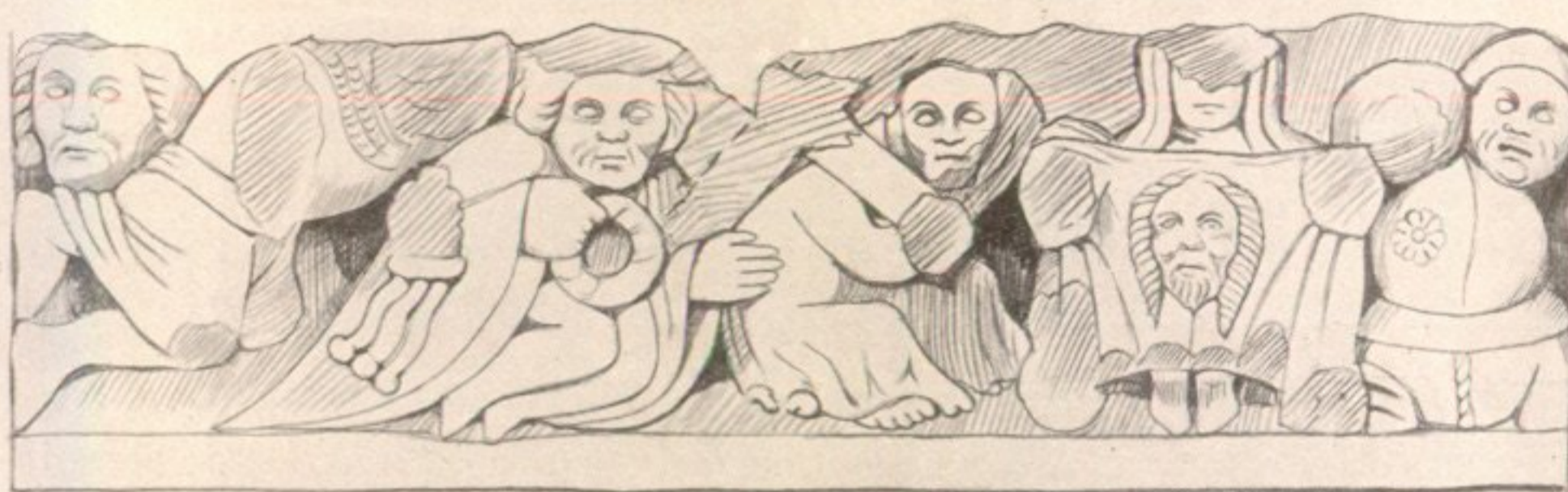
From left to right—a man's head; a figure holding a scourge in the right hand, the left resting on the shoulder of Christ, who is shown dressed in a long robe and holding the Crown of Thorns; Simon the Cyrenian carrying the Cross; St Veronica displaying the Sudarium; a soldier in armour(?). H. 8 inches, L. 25 inches.

*The Crucifixion* (fig. 30, No. 3).

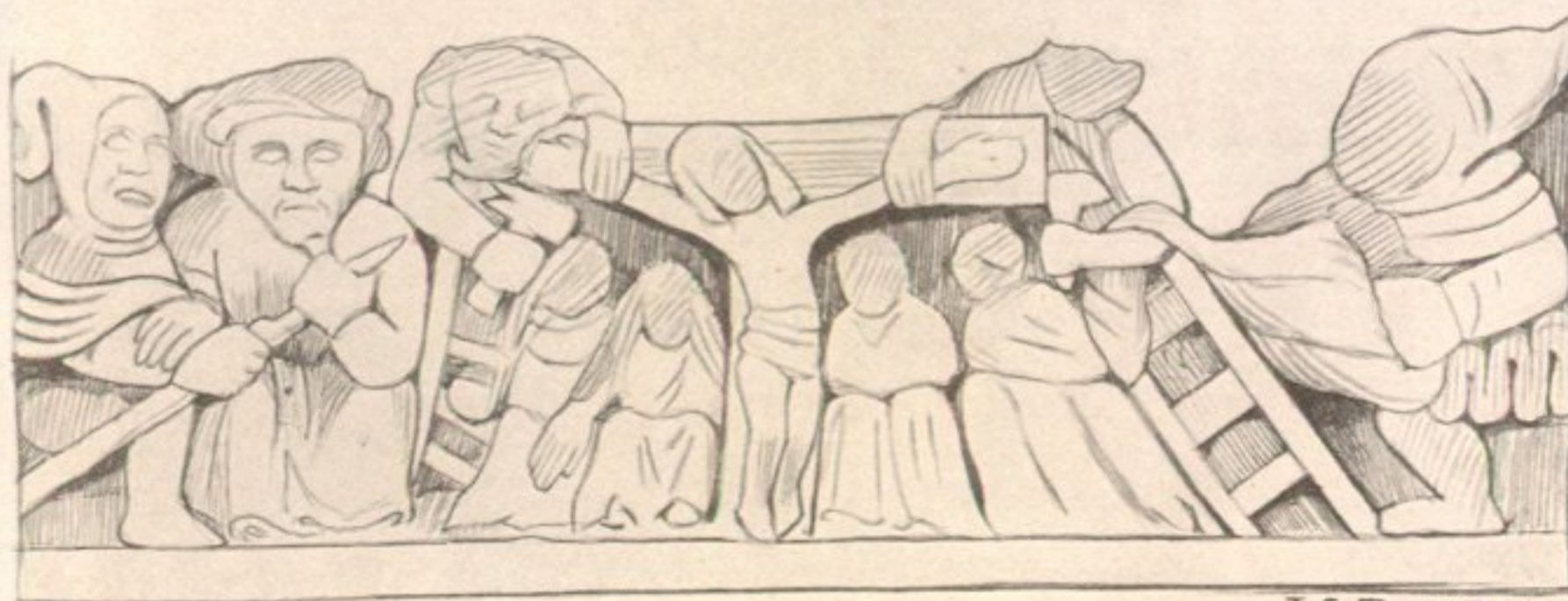
The scene appears to depict the first stage in the taking down the dead Christ. In the centre is our Saviour crucified on a low Cross,



Nº 1



Nº 2



Nº 3

J. S. RICHARDSON.

Fig. 30. Carvings at Rosslyn Chapel.

No. 1. *Christ before Pilate.*

No. 2. *Carrying the Cross.*

No. 3. *Crucifixion Scene*

below the arms of which are four seated figures representing St John, The Virgin, and Holy Women. On either side, mounted on a ladder,



Fig. 31. Carving representing Our Lady of Pity in Banff.

is a man supporting an arm of our Lord with one hand and holding a clawed hammer in the other. Over the right arm of the man on the right is the end of the linen cloth held up by Joseph of Arimathæa, who is shown as a cowed figure. On the left side of the scene are two figures, the one is holding a spear (?) in his hand, he is dressed in a cowl, tunic, and tight hose. The other figure is gowned, and appears to be arresting the arm of the first man with his right hand, while with the other he holds the end of the spear or reed. H.  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches, W.  $23\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

*The Resurrection.*

This carving is badly mutilated, it has shown our Lord stepping out of the tomb holding the Banner of Victory in the left hand, at either corner of the sarcophagus are huddled the sleeping soldiers—one of whom holds a halberd. H. 6 inches, W.  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches.