

V.

FOUR SCOTTISH ECCLESIASTICAL CARVED OAK PANELS, c. 1500-25.  
BY WILLIAM KELLY, LL.D., A.R.S.A., ABERDEEN.

Four photographs showing the several panels, 1, 2, 3, 4, accompany this note.

The panels were bought in Aberdeen about thirty years ago, at the sale of the miscellaneous collections of Mr Robert Davidson, manufacturing chemist, who had lived for long in great retirement on "the Canal-side" near Causewayend; they had probably been in his possession for many years, but nothing is now known of their previous history.

The framing is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick, and moulded in the solid ("stuck-moulded,") on three sides of each panel, the bottom rails being splayed at 45 degrees. The raised "field" in the centre of each panel, deeply carved, measures 6 inches by 5 inches. The "daylight" of the panels is  $20\frac{1}{2}$  inches by about  $11\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Circumstances relative to the framing raise a doubt whether we now have all the panels of the original set: only two of these four pieces of framing have a *stile*—No. 1 only on the left-hand, and No. 4 only on the right-hand; all the other upright pieces are *munters* or "muntins." I have been unable to arrange the panels satisfactorily as a complete whole; but I incline to think that Nos. 1 and 3 should go together at the same level, and Nos. 2 and 4 together on another (? a lower) level—at least, apparently that was so when the panels had been *last* associated in one piece of framing, or furniture.

The carved panels show the off-hand ease and sureness that come from long practice of a craft; two of the panels are heraldic (figs. 1 and 2), the other two are filled with leafage (figs. 3 and 4). It cannot be doubted that the shield which is surmounted by a Crown represents the arms of the King of Scots, albeit the tressure is incomplete and

<sup>1</sup> Toeppen, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 154.

the Lion Rampant rather a poor beast; but the Crown, which is not quite right in form, has been carved with complete mastery and is really beautiful. Perhaps the faults in the heraldry may be accounted for if we consider that the work was probably done in Flanders.

The other heraldic panel shows a shield bearing 1 and 4 two covered cups, and 2 and 3 three birds on a fess; and this shield is surmounted by a *mitre*.

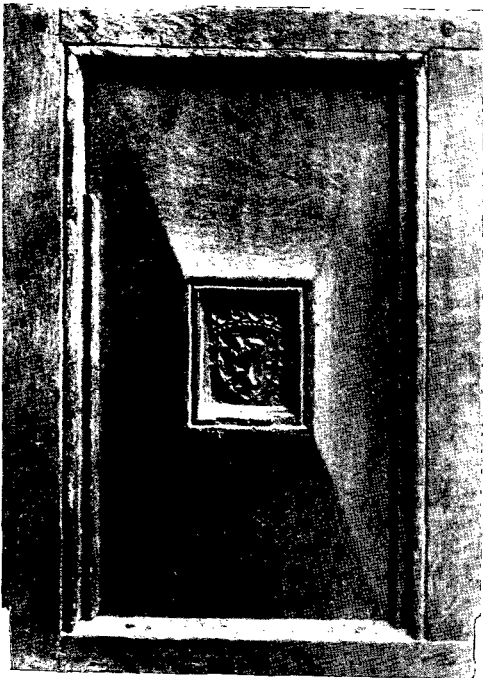


Fig. 1. Carved Oak Panel.



Fig. 2. Carved Oak Panel.

A *Shaw* coat, similar if not exactly the same, is illustrated on plate xxxvi. of the Catalogue of the Heraldic Exhibition held in Edinburgh in 1891; but that coat shows *three* covered cups in place of our *two*; otherwise the coats are identical.

It may, I think, be assumed that the coat is that of an abbot or a bishop, named Shaw, about the time of the Fourth or the Fifth James. Only two names can be cited as fulfilling the requirements: at Paisley Abbey two abbots Shaw ruled in succession—George Shaw, abbot from about 1474 to 1498, and his nephew, Robert Shaw, abbot from 1498 to 1525, when he was appointed to the See of Moray, which he occupied for two years.

George Shaw's shield, in Paisley Museum, bears three covered cups; but the four oak panels appear from their style to belong rather to the time of Robert than of George Shaw, and whether they belonged to Robert himself personally, or to some work of his at Paisley or at Elgin, it is impossible to say.

The two-leaved door in the screen of a side chapel in Bruges

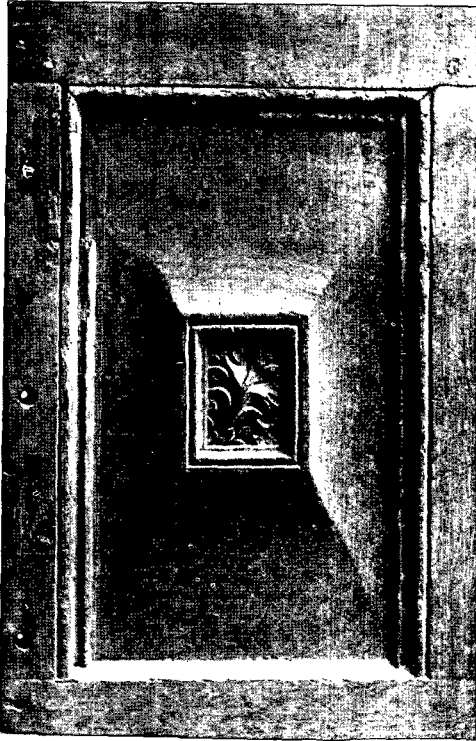


Fig. 3. Carved Oak Panel.

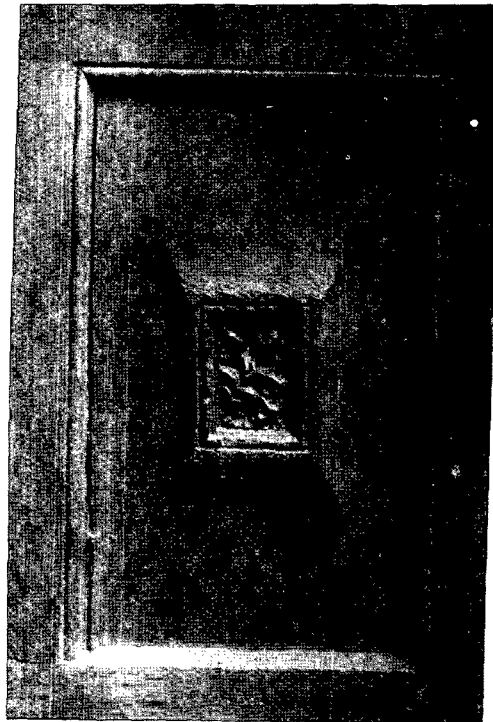


Fig. 4. Carved Oak Panel.

Cathedral, dated 1513, shows fielded heraldic panels and panel mouldings *very like* our panels. It seems probable that our panels were made in Flanders to the order of Abbot Robert Shaw of Paisley; although it is possible that they may belong to his short Elgin period.

Note that the four photographs, unfortunately, are not all to exactly the same scale, but the panels are all of the same height.