

## VI.

### NOTES ON SCOTTISH INCISED SLABS (III).

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*Read January 12, 1948.*

(A) ABERDALGIE, PERTSHIRE.

*Sir William Olifaunt, 1330 (fig. 1).*

*(Slab engraved later, c. 1365.)*

This wreck of a once magnificent example of Franco-Flemish craftsmanship lay originally at the north-east corner of the pre-Reformation parish church which was pulled down in 1773 when the present one was erected about 90 yards to the south-west. From 1773 to 1780 it lay in the open churchyard exposed to the weather, but in the latter year some attempt was made to protect it by putting over it another slab supported on six 12-inch pillars. This, unfortunately, proved quite inadequate, and by the end of last century most of the engraving had weathered away. Sketches of the slab were taken about 1895 by Macgibbon and Ross and by Robert Brydall, F.S.A.Scot., but, as was to be expected in the circumstances, neither of these was altogether complete. In their written descriptions both authors drew attention to the deplorable condition of the monument, and not long afterwards, in 1904, it was brought into the church and placed upon a platform under a modern sepulchral arch at the east end of the south wall. At the same time a small brass was affixed to the wall of the recess; it bears the Oliphant arms, with this inscription:

THIS MONUMENT  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
SIR WILLIAM OLIPHANT  
OF ABERDALGIE  
THE HEROIC DEFENDER OF STIRLING CASTLE  
A.D. 1304  
WAS REMOVED FROM THE SITE OF  
THE OLD CHURCH OF ABERDALGIE  
AND PLACED HERE BY  
MAJOR-GENERAL LAWRENCE J. OLIPHANT, C.V.O., C.B.,  
OF CONDIE  
A.D. 1904.  
SIR WILLIAM OLIPHANT DIED 1329.

In the following year a high tomb was erected in the churchyard by the County Council on the site of the old church. The top slab bears in the centre the Oliphant arms carved in low relief, and round the edge an incised inscription in Roman lettering:

HIC JACET DOMINUS WILLIELMUS OLIFAUNT DOMINUS | DE ABERDAGY  
QUI OBIT | QUINTO DIE MENSIS FEBRUARII MILL CCC VISCESIMO (sic) NONO |  
ORATE PRO ANIMA EJUS.

while on the south side is another inscription, also in Roman characters:

HERE OVER THE BURIAL VAULT OF THE LORDS OLIPHANT  
LAY SINCE 1780 THE MEMORIAL ERECTED IN THE OLD CHURCH  
OF ABERDALGIE TO THE MEMORY OF SIR WILLIAM OLIPHANT OF ABERDALGIE  
WHOSE BRAVE DEFENCE OF STIRLING CASTLE WHEN BESIEGED  
BY EDWARD I OF ENGLAND IN 1304 FORMS ONE OF THE MOST STIRRING AND  
IMPORTANT EVENTS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY  
RENEWED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF PERTSHIRE 1905.

The slab, of bluish-grey Tournai stone, 8 feet 3 inches by 4 feet 2 inches, was originally engraved with the effigy of a man in armour under a handsome canopy with weepers in the side shafts, two shields of arms, and black-letter marginal inscription with evangelistic symbols at the corners. All that now remains is part of the figure and canopy, one shield, a few fragments of letters, and part of one evangelistic symbol (St Luke),<sup>1</sup> and the surface was in such a perished condition when I took this rubbing in September 1936 that extreme caution and a most delicate touch were needed to avoid injuring what is still left of the engraving.

<sup>1</sup> Wrongly given as St Mark by Macgibbon and Ross, *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 553.

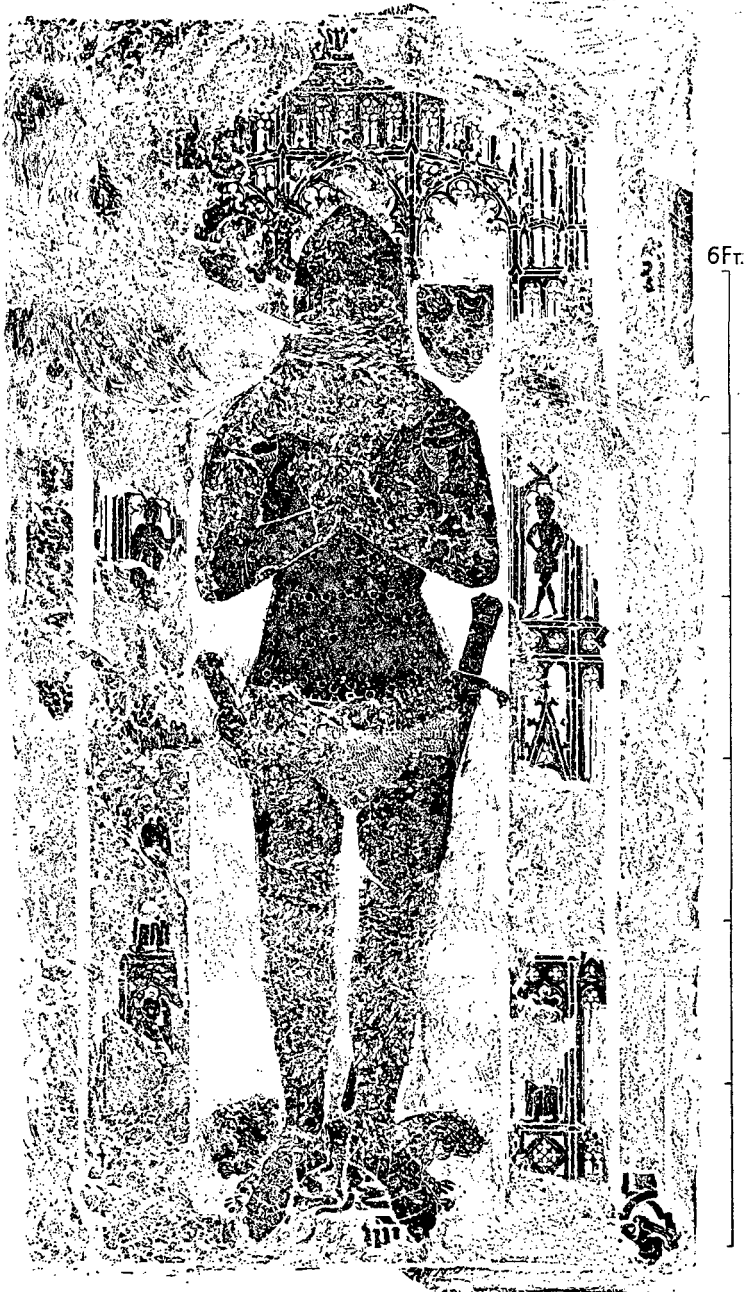


Fig. 1. Sir William Olifaunt, 1330.  
(Slab engraved *circa* 1365.)  
Aberdalgie, Perthshire.

The background has been recessed, leaving figure and accessories standing out in flat relief, giving an effect somewhat similar to that of a monumental brass, but the edges of the effigy, instead of being cut off almost at right angles as in the rest of the design, are bevelled down. The detail photographs (Pl. XIII, 1 and 2), for the use of which I am indebted to Mr Stewart H. Cruden, F.S.A.Scot., will demonstrate the successive stages by which the work was probably carried out: first, the outlines of the design would be incised on the flat slab; the background would then be hollowed out, and finally the details of the design filled in and the edges of the effigy rounded off. A similar treatment may be observed on two other foreign slabs of the fourteenth century; one, at Nossendorf (Gherard de Lynden, priest, 1364), is illustrated on page 194 of Dr Wilhelm Lübke's *Ecclesiastical Art in Germany* (Edin. 1876). The other, in the abbey of St Bavon, Ghent, bears the effigy of a civilian placed beneath a canopy; Pl. XIII, 3, which shows part of this slab, is from a photograph kindly lent by Mr James S. Richardson, LL.D., F.S.A.Scot., Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

Of the marginal inscription only a few fragments of letters (now undecipherable) survive, but most of it has fortunately been preserved in a Gask MS. of 1719:

“Dominus Willielmus Olifaunt Dominus de Aberdalgie qui obiit quinto die mensis Februarii anno Domini Mill. CCC vicesimo nono”<sup>1</sup>

and this has been more or less reproduced in the modern inscription in the churchyard.

As in the fourteenth century the year in Britain ended on 24th March, instead of (as nowadays) the previous 31st December, the date of death falls by modern computation within the year 1330.

The knight is depicted in armour of mixed mail and plate; pointed bascinet with camail; hawberk of mail, all concealed save bottom portion and insides of sleeves on upper arms; studded jupon, rather short, its lower edge hidden under the broad hip-belt or bawdric; and plate defences for the limbs, comprising épaulières of three overlapping plates on the shoulders, articulated coudes at the elbows, rerebraces (secured by straps) protecting outsides of upper arms, vambraces on the forearms, cuisses and jambarts covering thighs and legs, with genouillères at the knees and sollerets of five overlapping plates on the feet. The sword, with ornamented pommel, plain grip and slightly curved quillons, is suspended from the left hip, passing behind the leg; on the right side hangs the miséricorde. Rowel spurs are worn. The hands are completely effaced; the feet, which impinge on the bottom margin, rest upon two dogs addorsed.

From the arming of the figure, it is evident that this slab could not have been engraved until thirty years or so after the knight's death. The

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Anderson, *The Oliphants in Scotland* (Edin. 1879), Introduction, p. xxi, note.



1.



2.



3.

Detail Photographs.

1 and 2. Aberdalgie, Perthshire.

*(By courtesy of Stewart Cruden, F.S.A.Scot.)*

3. Abbey of St Bavon, Ghent.

*(By courtesy of James S. Richardson,  
LL.D., F.S.A.Scot.)*

armour he must have worn throughout his lifetime, apart from the large pot helm comparatively seldom shown on monuments, was mail, either complete or with one or two minor reinforcements of leather or plate, and the long linen surcoat, as portrayed on the sculptured effigies of "the Good" Sir James Douglas (1330) in St Bride's Kirk, Douglas, Lanarkshire, and a knight of the Menteith family, of about the same date, at Inchmahome Priory, Perthshire. The harness depicted on the slab only came into use shortly before 1360. I have not seen an example of the studded jupon later than c. 1370, and the figure bears a decided resemblance to that of Sir Miles Stapleton (1364) on his brass (now lost) at Ingham, Norfolk.<sup>1</sup> As the arches of the canopy also bear a distinct likeness to those on another brass of the year 1364 (Robert Braunche, at St Margaret's, King's Lynn, Norfolk), this slab can confidently be dated c. 1365. It was probably ordered by Sir William's son, Sir Walter Olifaunt, who last appears in 1378.

The canopy is of three arches, cusped and crocketed, with a panelled arcade above. Each of the side shafts contains three canopied niches in which are placed small figures known as "weepers"; one of these is missing, while of the remainder one only is entire, the other four surviving in a somewhat fragmentary condition: all are in civilian dress:

- (1) UPPER DEXTER.—Man in curious cap, wearing cloak fastened from neck to middle of breast, beneath which it is open, revealing what seems to be a tunic; lower part effaced.
- (2) MIDDLE DEXTER.—Man, apparently wearing some form of cap, ankle-length tunic and long pointed shoes.
- (3) LOWER DEXTER.—Man, all lost but head, on which is a close-fitting cap or coif.
- (4) UPPER SINISTER.—Man, arms akimbo, attired in short close-fitting tunic belted round the loins, long hose and pointed shoes; on his head a queer cap with small button-like ornament on top.
- (5) MIDDLE SINISTER.—Figure now lost, but Brydall's sketch,<sup>2</sup> taken c. 1895, shows the lower part of what was apparently a civilian in long tunic.
- (6) LOWER SINISTER.—Man, lower part only now left, in long tunic and long pointed shoes.

To sinister of the head is a shield bearing Oliphant (*Gu*) 3 crescents (*arg.*); the dexter one has now disappeared, though part of the outline is given in Macgibbon and Ross's drawing.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ill. Cotman, *Sepulchral Brasses in Norfolk* (London, 1838), pl. iv., and Stothard, *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (London, 1876), pl. lxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Ill. *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxix, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 552.

The slab is foreign work, and there is no doubt that members of the wealthier classes in mediæval Scotland were in the habit of ordering their monuments from abroad: all the slabs I have seen in this country bearing indents of brasses are of Tournai stone, while incised slabs of foreign make still survive at Rossie, Perthshire, St Andrews Cathedral, Fife, and Kelso Abbey, Roxburghshire,<sup>1</sup> and we know from the Halyburton Ledger that Archbishop Schevez of St Andrews, who died in 1497, had his monument prepared at Bruges, in which city the "throwcht" of his successor in the primacy, James Stewart, Duke of Ross, was also made.<sup>2</sup>

It will be noted that the modern inscriptions in the church and churchyard identify the Sir William of the monument, who died in 1330, with the famous defender of Stirling Castle in the great siege of 1304. There was, however, another Sir William—Sir William Olifaunt of Dupplin, probably a cousin of the Constable of Stirling<sup>3</sup> and contemporary with him; he acted as second-in-command of Stirling Castle during the siege, and up to that time was closely associated with his more renowned kinsman. Thereafter there is record of both till 1313, after which only one can be traced, and it is impossible to be certain whether this was the Constable or the knight of Dupplin.

They first appear together in 1296, when one was already a knight, the other an esquire. The former was evidently by then a man of some standing, for a document executed in 1294 by Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow, forbidding the principal men of the Lennox to hold intercourse with certain excommunicated persons, expressly mentions Sir William Olifard,<sup>4</sup> knight (presumably the same person), as one of those to whom the inhibition is addressed,<sup>5</sup> and about the same time he witnessed charters by the Earls of Atholl<sup>6</sup> and Lennox.<sup>7</sup>

In the disastrous action at Dunbar (27th April 1296) both were captured and sent prisoner to English castles, the knight to Devizes,<sup>8</sup> the squire to Rochester,<sup>9</sup> where they remained till the following year, when they were liberated, the squire on 18th August, the knight on 8th September,<sup>10</sup> on condition of serving in the English expedition then preparing against France. In fulfilment of this engagement they passed overseas, embarking at Sandwich, but nothing seems to be known of their doings in Flanders,

<sup>1</sup> Of the Kelso slab only a fragment now remains.

<sup>2</sup> *Ledger*, pp. 7 and 215.

<sup>3</sup> In the official record of the surrender of Stirling Castle (see Rymer, *Fœdera* (1727), vol. ii. p. 951) Sir William Olifaunt of Dupplin is described as "consanguineus" of the Constable.

<sup>4</sup> As the name was written prior to about 1310.

<sup>5</sup> *Reg. de Passelet*, p. 203.\*

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. MSS. Commission Report*, vol. vi. p. 690 (as Sir William Olifard, knight).

<sup>7</sup> *Cartularium Comitatus de Levenax*, pp. 41, 46 and 81 (as William Olifard, knight), and p. 87 (as William Olifard).

<sup>8</sup> *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 176.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>10</sup> *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland, 1286-1306* (1870), vol. ii. pp. 257 and 259.

though they were doubtless among the Scots who, with Atholl and Comyn, escaped to the French at the time of Edward's hurried return to England early in 1298, for when towards the end of 1299 the small English force in Stirling Castle was starved out and surrendered to Sir John de Soulis, one of the regents, the fortress was committed to the keeping of Sir William Olifaunt.

Edward's invasions of 1300 and 1301 did not penetrate to central Scotland, but in 1303 he overran the country as far as the Moray Firth, leaving Stirling to be dealt with at leisure; and early in 1304, after dispersing the last remnants of the Scottish field forces under Comyn near Stirling Bridge, prepared to besiege the one stronghold that still defied his authority. Olifaunt, realising the hopelessness of resistance, felt bound nevertheless by his oath to the regent (then in France) not to surrender without the latter's consent. He therefore asked for time to refer to France for instructions, undertaking to deliver up the castle immediately on receipt of the necessary orders from de Soulis. Edward promptly rejected the proposal. "If he will not surrender the castle," he cried, "let him keep it against us at his peril."

The defence of Stirling Castle from 22nd April to 13th July 1304 with only 140 men against an army directed by Edward in person stands out as the most heroic episode of the Wars of Independence, and established the Constable's fame as one of the leading soldiers of his time. Seldom have enemies paid more glowing tribute. "A knight right vigorous and prudent,"<sup>1</sup> exclaims Trivet; while Matthew of Westminster calls him "a doughty knight, a chosen man among thousands."<sup>2</sup> Edward himself, who on at least two occasions during the siege narrowly escaped with his life, said that Olifaunt and his men fought "like mad dogs."

His little band reduced by famine, the walls battered to pieces by Edward's siege engines, Olifaunt was at last compelled to surrender unconditionally. His life and those of his followers were spared, but the officers were all removed to English prisons. Sir William was lodged in the Tower, where Wallace was soon to be his fellow-captive. His second-in-command, Sir William Olifaunt of Dupplin—evidently the squire of 1296 who had received knighthood during the interval—was consigned to Wallingford Castle.

The Constable of Stirling remained in the Tower for nearly four years, but on 24th May 1308 he was released on surety<sup>3</sup> and went to Scotland in the English interest. In November 1309 he was once more at Stirling, and towards the end of 1311 succeeded the Englishman Sir John Fitz-Marmaduke as Warden of Perth.

<sup>1</sup> "Militem admodum strenuum et cordatum."

<sup>2</sup> "Animoso milite, electo de millibus."

<sup>3</sup> Rymer, *Fœdera* (1818 edn.), vol. ii. p. 45.



It is disappointing to find so sturdy a patriot entering the service of England, even though there were very few among the prominent Scottish leaders who did not change sides at any rate once during the long struggle. But powerful reasons were not lacking. The judicial murder of Wallace, perpetrated while Olifaunt lay in the Tower, may have convinced him, however sorely against his will, that the cause of independence was finally lost. For Bruce, who had furnished siege engines to Edward to help batter down the walls of Stirling Castle while he and his brave handful were starving within, he can hardly have felt anything but hatred and contempt. Prior to the murder of Comyn, he probably detested him as a "collaborator," and that ill-starred act may well have served to inflame his animosity, for the murdered man had been the last to try and make headway against Edward in the field and had fought on while a spark of hope remained, while Bruce's conduct up to that time had been, at best, equivocal. When after the murder Bruce rose in revolt and had himself crowned, Olifaunt, like many others, probably saw in it only the mad gamble of an adventurer, for few could then have foreseen the amazing development that in a few brief years was to transform a selfish time-server into a national hero.<sup>1</sup> And so when in November 1312 Bruce (according to the usually received account) sat down with his army before Perth, he encountered such a stubborn defence by Olifaunt and his mixed garrison of English and Scots that after six weeks he found it expedient to draw off and resort to stratagem. Having concealed his force at a distance until Olifaunt, finding no trace of the enemy, began to relax his vigilance, he returned secretly after an absence of eight days, and in a brilliant night attack on 8th January 1313 took the defenders by surprise and carried the town. All the Scots leaders in the garrison were put to death save Olifaunt, who, according to the *Lanercost Chronicle*, was "bound and sent far away to the Isles."<sup>2</sup>

It is at this point that all certainty regarding Sir William Olifaunt, Constable of Stirling Castle and later English Warden of Perth, comes to an end.

There was undoubtedly a Sir William Olifaunt in England on 10th March 1313,<sup>3</sup> within a few weeks of the capture of Perth, and on the strength of this Joseph Bain, in the Introduction to Volume III, *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland* (pp. xvii and xviii), and Mrs Maxtone Graham, in her book on the Oliphants of Gask (p. 30), throw doubt on the Lanercost story. But while a bad conscience may have prompted Bruce to spare the hero of Stirling, it is inconceivable that he should permit so dangerous an adversary to depart out of his power, and it seems that the Sir William

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps significant that several of his former officers in the Stirling garrison (though not the knight of Dupplin) returned with Olifaunt to Scotland in the English service.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chronicle of Lanercost* (trans. Sir Herbert Maxwell) (Glasgow, 1913), p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezchequer D.R. Miscellanea*, fo. 28.

who was in England at that time could only have been the knight of Dupplin. We know that he was in prison at Wallingford till February 1307 at least, and it looks as though he had so far remained in England. He was presumably the "William Olyfaunt, knight," who on 5th June 1309 granted a bond to Sir Hugh le Despenser, *père*, for 100 shillings, to be paid at the latter's hostel in London "at the quinzaine of St John next."<sup>1</sup> On 21st October 1313 he received a safe-conduct to go to Scotland and return again.<sup>2</sup> Whether he fulfilled its terms or broke them by staying in his own country we have no means of knowing. All that is certain thereafter is that a Sir William Olifaunt—either the Constable or the knight of Dupplin—appears in record from 1315 onwards as one of the Bruce's main supporters. In February of that year he witnessed a charter of King Robert to Sir Andrew Gray. Five years later, as one of the greater barons, he was present at the Parliament of Arbroath, and his seal, containing the first known portrayal of the family arms, is among those affixed to the celebrated Letter to the Pope of 6th April 1320. On 8th March 1327 he attended the Parliament held at Holyrood, and on 16th January 1330, at Newbattle, rendered an account of his receipts as King's Escheator for Perthshire.<sup>3</sup> On the following 5th February he died, outliving King Robert by exactly eight months. He received from the Crown at various times grants of lands in Angus, Ayrshire and Perthshire, and his son Walter wedded the King's daughter, Elizabeth Bruce. This is the Sir William of the monument.

To the question "Which of the two was he?" there appears to be no final answer. Joseph Anderson<sup>4</sup> assumes that he was the Constable, though without stating his grounds for so doing. Mrs Maxtone Graham<sup>5</sup> likewise identifies him with the Constable, perhaps through mixing up the latter with the other Sir William who was in England in March 1313. Their attribution was evidently accepted by those responsible for the modern inscriptions set up in the church and churchyard. Dr Maitland Thomson, however, while admitting that the matter is not entirely free from doubt, adopts the opposite view. Speaking of the Constable's banishment to the Isles, he says: "Probably he died there in captivity; at all events he appears no more in record."<sup>6</sup> He also points out that the appearance of the Constable among the chief men of the Lennox in 1294 would seem to indicate his early marriage with a lady of that region, while Aberdalgie came to the Olifaunts through matrimony with a Wishart.

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office*, vol. iv., A6310.

<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. iii., No. 339.

<sup>3</sup> *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> *The Oliphants in Scotland*, Introduction, pp. xvii. and xviii.

<sup>5</sup> *The Oliphants of Gask*, pp. 30-31. She does, however, in a footnote to p. 30, refer to Dr Maitland Thomson's contrary view.

<sup>6</sup> *The Scots Peerage*, vol. vi. p. 532.

On these grounds, apparently, he identifies the Sir William of the monument with the knight of Dupplin.

As to the points made by Dr Thomson:

(1) It is true that we have no certain record of the Constable's career after his banishment to the Isles, but we are left equally uncertain as to what became of the knight of Dupplin after he got his safe-conduct in October 1313. There is, of course, nothing improbable in Dr Thomson's assumption that the latter violated its terms and remained in Scotland. But is there any greater improbability in assuming that the Constable would be likely to make an early return to the national party? Bruce had surely every incentive to win over so potentially valuable a supporter, while the Constable had everything to lose by longer adherence to the English side, and could now without loss of honour seek a reconciliation with his old enemy.

(2) The Constable's presumed marriage with a lady of the Lennox prior to 1294 would not appear to negative the possibility that at a later period he became laird of Aberdalgie. According to the *Scalacronica*,<sup>1</sup> he was still, in 1304, "un iouen bacheler Descoc" (a *young*<sup>2</sup> Scottish knight), and if the Lennox lady predeceased him, he would in the normal course be likely to marry again. According to the Midlothian escheats of 1337,<sup>3</sup> Walter Olifaunt was then still a minor, which goes to suggest that whichever of the two Sir Williams it was who married the Wishart heiress wedded her fairly late in life. The lands of Aberdalgie were certainly held about 1300 by one William Wycharde,<sup>4</sup> and in 1330 by the Olifaunts, but I can find no record of the date at which the latter acquired them, though it seems unlikely that this would be earlier than about 1315.

It is worth noting that the inscription formerly on the slab described its subject simply as laird of Aberdalgie. Now if, as Dr Thomson infers, the original seat of the Olifaunts in Perthshire was Dupplin, where they had been settled since about 1200, one would expect that if the monument related to the knight of Dupplin, he would have been described as of that place. If it had been he who married the Wishart heiress, he might have been designated as of Dupplin and Aberdalgie, or of Aberdalgie and Dupplin, but hardly, one would suppose, as of Aberdalgie alone.

In February 1365, *i.e.* at about the same time as this slab was ordered, Walter Olifaunt and Elizabeth his wife, the King's sister, received from David II new charters of all their lands in return for their surrender under the old infeftments, and one of these charters was granted in respect of the lands of

<sup>1</sup> *Scalacronica* (Maitland Club, 1836), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>3</sup> *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 379. "Concerning a certain piece of land called Nakederse which belonged to William Olifant who held in chief from the king, now remaining in the king's hand as guardian and which extends to the value of 66 shillings and 8 pence, it will be liable for 16 shillings and 8 pence." (The translation is mine.)

<sup>4</sup> *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol. ii., No. 1970.

Aberdalgie and Dupplin.<sup>1</sup> This, and the mention of Aberdalgie *only* in the inscription, may possibly imply that the lands of Dupplin were never held by the Sir William, laird of Aberdalgie, who died in 1330, but came to Walter at some time subsequent to his death, *i.e.* that this Sir William was the Constable of Stirling and not the knight of Dupplin. Walter, however, on 1st March 1363 witnessed a charter<sup>2</sup> as “dominus de Abyrdalgy,” so that unless the lands of Dupplin came to him between that date and February 1365, they had presumably been merged with those of Aberdalgie prior to 1363, in which case the monument might be that of either.

Incidentally, the traditional genealogy, compiled in 1580, states that Walter Olifaunt *was* the son of the Constable, but while it may well be correct as to this, it contains several errors on other points, so that its testimony cannot safely be relied on.

On the meagre evidence thus far available there seems no way of determining which Sir William the slab commemorates, and the attribution of the modern inscriptions set up in the church and churchyard must remain in doubt.

And here it is necessary to draw attention to an error in Sir Herbert Maxwell's translation of the latter part of the *Scalacronica*.<sup>3</sup> At page 52 (dealing with the events leading up to Bannockburn) the following passage occurs:—

“ . . . the chronicles explain that after the Earl of Atholl had captured the town of St John for the use of Robert de Brus from William Oliphant, captain [thereof] for the King of England, being at that time an adherent of his [Edward's], although shortly after he deserted him, the said Robert marched in force before the castle of Stirling . . . ”

This, had the translation been correct, would have provided the valuable information that the Constable *did* return to the national side soon after the capture of Perth, which in turn would have established a strong probability that the monument was his. Unfortunately, the passage hardly admits of such a construction. It reads:

“ . . . lez croniclis devisent qe apres ceo qe le count de Athelis avoit emble la vile de saint Johan sure William Olifart, capitayn depar le roy Dengleterre, al use Robert de Bruys, com cely qenherdaunt estoit a ly al hour mais tost ly guerpy, qi Robert se trey en ost devaunt le chastel de Strivelyn . . . ”<sup>4</sup>

On referring to this, it seemed to me that “cely” must almost certainly refer, not to Olifaunt, but to Atholl, and I therefore submitted the passage to Professor John Orr, M.A., B.Litt., L. ès L., of Edinburgh University (to

<sup>1</sup> *The Scots Peerage*, vol. vi. p. 536, note.

<sup>2</sup> Charter of the lands of the barony of Meikleour by Maurice Drummond to John Mercer, burgess of Perth, printed in Cowan, *The Ancient Capital of Scotland* (London, 1904), vol. i. pp. 266-268.

<sup>3</sup> Glasgow (1907).

<sup>4</sup> *Scalacronica* (Maitland Club, 1836), p. 140.

whom I would express my thanks for his ready help), whose expert judgment confirmed my view. The correct rendering is therefore:

“ . . . the chronicles explain that after the Earl of Atholl had taken the town of St John against the opposition of William Olifaunt, captain [thereof] for the King of England, on behalf of Robert de Brus, whose adherent he [Atholl] was at the time, though he soon deserted him, the said Robert, etc. . . .”

This accords exactly with what is known of Atholl's conduct at this period. In February 1312 he is Edward II's "well-beloved and faithful David, Earl of Atholl," and has a grant of two of the Templars' manors in Yorkshire, to be held by him during the King's pleasure.<sup>1</sup> In May 1313 the grant is revoked, because David, Earl of Atholl, "now adheres to Robert de Brus, our enemy and rebel, as we have heard."<sup>2</sup> But by the end of 1316 he is once more in high favour at the English court, and receives permission to keep any movable goods of the Scots, "our enemies and rebels," that he can seize, and also the ransoms of any of the said enemies he is able to capture, the King binding himself, should he desire to have any of the Earl's prisoners handed over to him, to pay the Earl 100 marks for each such person.<sup>3</sup>

I would express my grateful acknowledgments to the Rev. R. S. V. Logie, parish minister of Aberdalgie, and Miss Mary Smith, interim County Librarian, Montrose; also to the late Mr Thomas McLaren, F.S.A.Scot., and the late Mr J. Ross Smyth, of the Sandeman Public Library, Perth, for much kind help.

#### (B) STOBO, PEEBLESSHIRE.

There are three slabs here, all in the north chapel; all are of brownish-grey sandstone. No. 2 stands against the east wall, the other two are built into the north wall. I took these rubbings in April 1945.

##### (1) *A Man in Armour* (? early Sixteenth Century).

I think the title of this paper should perhaps have been "Dignity and Impudence," for after the magnificent slab with which I have just dealt, it almost savours of an obscene jest to introduce this (fig. 2).

The slab was discovered in May 1928. The effigy, without exception the crudest I have seen on any Christian monument, and obviously not the work of an ordinary engraver, but of some very raw local hand, is more suggestive of a South Sea idol than a human form, and the only excuse for putting it on record is the somewhat unusual costume its begetter

<sup>1</sup> Rymer, *Fœdera* (1727), vol. iii. p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 587.

has attempted to portray. On the body is a garment presumably intended for a jack—a form of “poor man’s armour”—in this case probably of quilted linen, over which is worn a narrow hip-belt. The limbs are apparently in plate armour, for it seems that coudes are intended at the elbows and genouillères at the knees, and the feet are encased in pointed sollerets, with rowel spurs. Whether the lines which fringe the upper part of the face are meant to represent hair or a small close-fitting helmet it is impossible to say, but the slight peak at the top, together with the absence of ears, may perhaps suggest the latter. The hands are evidently supposed to be placed one behind the other in an attitude of prayer. On sinister side, partly covered by the left shoulder and arm, is a large two-handed sword with pear-shaped pommel, bound grip, and straight quillons.

At top, to sinister of the head, are two curious objects more lightly engraved than the figure and sword, which are deeply cut: what these are intended to be I cannot make out, as they do not seem to be identifiable as initials; they may be the idle work of some tomb-defacer of later days.

The extreme crudeness of the engraving renders the fixing of an approximate date in this case somewhat difficult, but pointed sollerets went out of fashion in England about 1485, and allowing for some time-lag in Scotland, the slab should probably be assigned to the first half of the sixteenth century. It is, so far as my experience extends, unique in its representation of the jack.

The dimensions are 5' 6½" long by 1' 8" at top and 1' 6" at bottom.

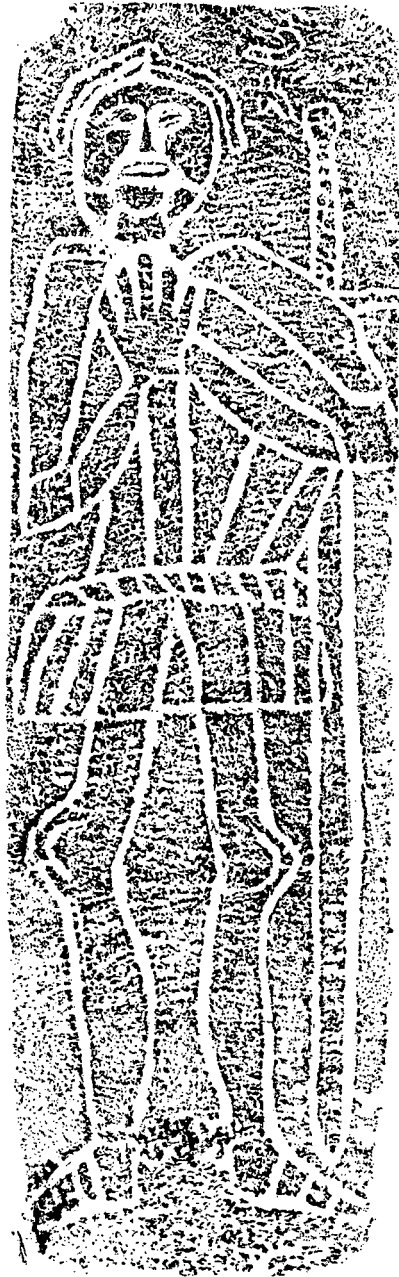


Fig. 2. A man in armour (? early 16th century).

Stobo, Peeblesshire.

5 Ft.



Fig. 3. A mill-rind (? late 13th or 14th century).  
Stobo, Peeblesshire.  
(same scale as fig. 4)

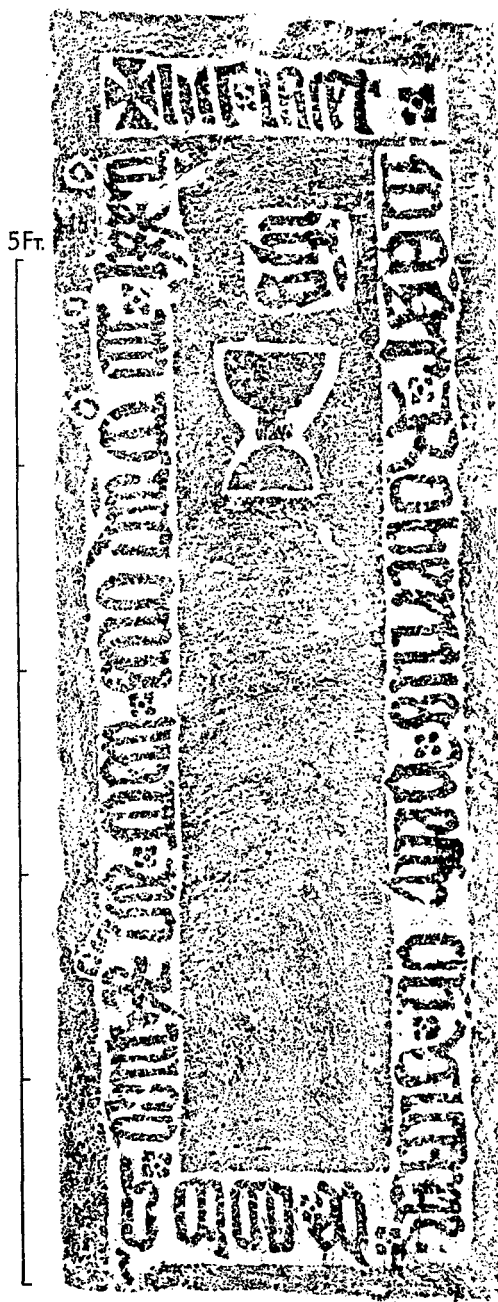


Fig. 4. Robert Vessy, Vicar of Stobo (1473).  
Stobo, Peeblesshire.  
(extra margin on sinister side not shown)

(2) *A Mill-rind (? late Thirteenth or Fourteenth Century).*

This slab (fig. 3) is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick and measures  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length. It tapers slightly, being 1 foot  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide at top and 1 foot 7 inches at base. In top dexter corner is a mill-rind; the only other engraving consists of two lines marking off an oblong section along the upper sinister edge, whose significance I am unable to determine (? possibly some part of the furnishings of a mill). The slab is extremely difficult to date, but may perhaps be as early as the late thirteenth century, and presumably covered the grave of a miller.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Wilson, the schoolmaster, informs me that a few years ago this slab, which lay previously in the churchyard, was removed and placed in its present position at the charge of a casual visitor.

(3) *Robert Vessy, Vicar of Stobo (1473).*

The slab (fig. 4) is 6 feet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and apparently about 3 feet 1 inch wide, and partly concealed on sinister side by the roof vaulting. It bears a chalice with sacred monogram above. The black-letter inscription runs close to the top, dexter and bottom margins, but the sinister line is some distance in from the edge of the stone, a most unusual arrangement (not shown in illustration). Beginning at top and running to sinister, it reads:

“Hic iacet | Mag(iste)r Robertus Vessy oli(m) vicari(us) | de stobo q(u)i | obiit x° die Maii an(n)o d(omi)ni M°CCCC°LXXIII.”<sup>2</sup>

The letters in brackets are represented by contraction marks. At the commencement is a cross patée, and quatrefoils are interposed between most of the words.

<sup>1</sup> For other illustrations of mill-rinds on tombstones, see *Proc.* xl. 235, 236.

<sup>2</sup> This differs from the reading given in *Scot. Eccles. Soc. Trans.*, vol. ix. p. 76, but after careful study on the spot I believe it to be correct.