

# Fragments of Sculptured Stone-work from the Tomb of Henry Wardlaw, Bishop of St Andrews

by W. Norman Robertson

A discovery of considerable interest was made in 1946 when the lintel of an upper window was taken down at 209 South Street, St Andrews.<sup>1</sup> This stone was found to be carved on its hidden upper surface; it was recognised as the lower middle part of a tomb-effigy. The figure when complete had depicted an ecclesiastic in the ceremonial vestments pertaining to his office (Pl. 13).

The alb is prominent as a square panel filled with an intricate composition of vine-leaves and grapes. The tunicle, which was worn over the alb, has a deep fringe and the dalmatic above it bears a narrow band of leaves round the hem. The chasuble also has a decorative border and a broad orphrey enriched with a design composed of vine-leaves, grapes and trailing stems. All the enrichments, which are outlined with pellets throughout, have been exquisitely designed and carved in imitation of the customary embroideries in silk and gold. There is evidence too, that the shoes were decorated in similar fashion, the feet having rested on two dog-like animals. Two dowel-holes show the position of the crosier, the shaft of which appears to have been made in wood or metal.

The prelate represented by this effigy might well have remained anonymous but for the chance survival of a small escutcheon incorporated in the ornament. This shield, which bears a fess cut in low relief, terminates the orphrey at the bottom corner of the chasuble. An early fifteenth-century date is suggested by the sculptural character of the effigy, and Henry Wardlaw appears to be the only Bishop of St Andrews of the period whose arms include this heraldic ordinary. The arms of this bishop are described as azure on a fess between three mascles or as many cross crosslets fitchée gules. There seems little doubt that as the effigy was coloured and gilded, the full emblazonment would be completed in paint.

The arms of Bishop Wardlaw may be seen on another sculptured stone exhibited in the Cathedral Museum (Pl. 14). It has been an armorial panel designed for display on a particular building, presumably to commemorate the person responsible for its construction. The panel is framed with a moulding which encloses a shield surmounted by a bishop's mitre with tassels. The inscription FUNDATOR LOCI and the letters H and W, the initials of Henry Wardlaw, have been incised in Gothic characters below the shield. The charge is a fess carved in low relief, but unfortunately only the scars confirm the existence of the other features of the heraldry.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Wardlaw was appointed Bishop of St Andrews in 1403 by Pope Benedict XIII in succession to Bishop Walter Traill. He is better known for his part in the foundation of the

<sup>1</sup> The discovery of this stone was reported to the Ministry of Public Building and Works by R. G. Cant, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.SCOt., St Andrews. In his letter he suggested the identity of the heraldry on the chasuble.

<sup>2</sup> A similar armorial panel is preserved in a gateway in St Mary's College gardens.

University of St Andrews, the first university to be established in Scotland. He was assisted in the scheme by the King, James I, Prior James Biset and Archdeacon Thomas Stewart. The ancient seal of the University of St Andrews features the Royal Arms of Scotland, the Arms of Pope Benedict XIII and the Arms of Bishop Wardlaw. Bishop Wardlaw died in the Castle of St Andrews in 1440 and was buried in the Cathedral 'with greater parade than any of his predecessors'.<sup>1</sup>

The effigy of the Bishop is in a fine grain sandstone which had been well-chosen for carving intricate detail.<sup>2</sup> The texture of the stone enables the sculptured surfaces to be riffled and smoothed in preparation for polychrome painting. Now this stone is not found locally and it is obviously different from other medieval stone-work at St Andrews Cathedral. For this reason it is possible to associate a number of other carved fragments with the effigy. They are cut from the same stone and display a similar decorative style and treatment. This particular collection of fragmentary stonework consists of five ornate arch-stones from the same arch and several pieces of architectural detail and statuary. Two of the arch-stones were found at 114 Market Street about 1870, a third was recovered from a pig-sty at the Ladebraes end of Louden's Close and in 1961 two more were extracted from a wall at 14 Market Street during the insertion of a letter box. The remainder are detached fragments found in the course of excavations within the Cathedral and Priory ground, as follows:<sup>3</sup>

1. Head of an image portraying an aged man with wrinkled face and flowing beard, and wearing a hooded gown. (Pl. 15a).
2. Fragment of a figure, apparently female, wearing a costume with a buttoned girdle strap. The surviving left hand which has been drawn and carved with obvious skill, probably clasped an emblem. A hole has been drilled behind the fingers to hold this object in place. (Pl. 15b).
3. Part of a Virgin and Child sculpture; one remaining hand supports the fragmentary figure of the Child. (Pl. 15c).
4. Lower part of a small niche figure. Part of a staff is visible in the folds of the drapery. (Pl. 15d).
5. Part of a return corner showing two finely carved niche canopies at right angles to one another. These features display intricately designed tracery panels and moulded finials decorated with crockets. (Pl. 16a).
6. Similarly carved hood, probably from the same part of the structure. (Pl. 16b).
7. Architectural fragment showing crocketed finial tops.
8. Two triangular fragments which appear to have come from spandrils which contained figures.
9. Several fragments of cusping from open tracery-work. (Pl. 16c).

The first four items were discovered in 1894 when the foundations of the Priory buildings were excavated. Fragment No. 1 was recovered from the debris which filled the reredorter pit. The list also includes some fragments which were found in a built tomb in the north

<sup>1</sup> J. Maitland Anderson, *Scot. Hist. Rev.* viii, 230-2.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Mr G. H. Collin of the Institute of Geological Sciences who examined a chip of this stone. He describes the sample as an impure sandstone containing quartz, alkali feldspar, plagioclase and many fragments of andesite. It is most probably of Lower Old Sandstone age and can be matched with specimens from the hinterland of Dundee. There, similar rocks outcrop in a triangle

with Forfar as apex and Dundee and Arbroath as base. A specimen from a disused quarry near Cockhill which is halfway between Carnoustie and Forfar is a particularly good match although rather coarser in grain size.

<sup>3</sup> This collection of sculptured fragments was kindly lent for permanent display in the Cathedral Museum by the Marquess of Bute in 1926.

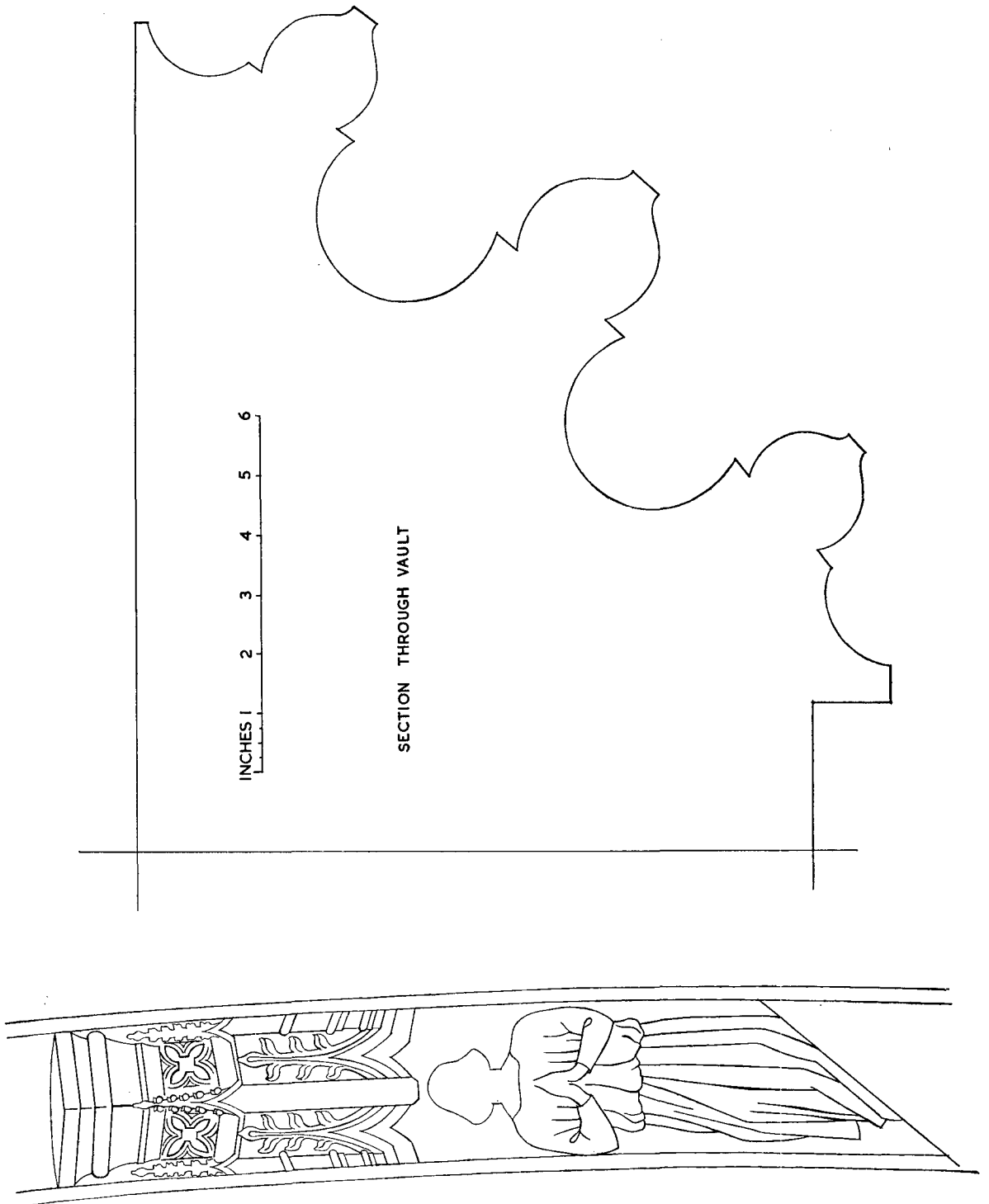


FIG. 1.

aisle of the choir in 1903.<sup>1</sup> The dimensions of the tomb are given and these measurements correspond with the large grave in the fourth bay east of the crossing.

Henry Wardlaw was an able and influential figure in affairs concerning Church and State. His long service as Bishop of St Andrews would assure him of a place of burial within the Cathedral. Presumably he would decide the position of his own grave and personally commission the construction of a sculptured tomb during his life-time. Some of the basic features of this richly decorated monument may be detected in the remaining fragments. The details display craftsmanship of a high order, and the design and style suggest a French influence.

The shape of the arch-stones indicates that they once formed an arch between two walls or piers, as the back of each stone engaged originally with other masonry. One of the voussoirs is a key-stone, and clearly proves that the arch was round-headed. It would appear from an estimate of the inner radius that the arch spanned a bay of at least 10 ft. The arch was 2 ft. 4 in. thick with a rectangular rebate 5 in. wide formed on the soffit to accept some feature such as cusping. The section is symmetrical and devised to provide two deep undercut cavettos on either side (fig. 1). Keeled roll mouldings with fillets separate these hollows which were filled with leaf ornament and little figures within canopied niches in alternate orders. The tops of two of these canopies meeting at the apex of the arch may be seen on the mutilated key-stone (Pl. 16d).

A study of this accumulation of information offers some idea of the design and scale of the monument, and also its position within the Cathedral. It has been recorded that Bishop Wardlaw was buried in the Cathedral, in the wall between the choir and the Lady Chapel.<sup>2</sup> As this chapel is believed to have been situated in the N. aisle of the choir, the tomb must have been built on the N. side of the N. wall of the choir. Remnants of this wall, which backed the wooden choir-stalls, exist between the piers of the choir arcade. The measurement between the centres of these piers is approximately 15 ft., so the tomb arch formed by the arch-stones could be accommodated comfortably within a bay. The tomb-chest with the recumbent effigy on top would be set centrally between the pillars beneath a decorative arch outlined with pendant cusping. There is evidence to show that this vault and the supporting standards were lavishly carved with tabernacle-work and a wealth of figures filled the numerous niches.

When this tomb was ready the Bishop would undoubtedly provide a liberal endowment to ensure that prayers were offered on his behalf at regular times. These prayers, it may be assumed, would have been recited before the Altar of Our Lady as the tomb actually stood within the Lady Chapel. It is interesting to note here that Prior James Halderston (1418-43) who died in the Priory was buried in the north wall of this same chapel.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Scot. Hist. Rev.* i, 243.

<sup>2</sup> Fordun, *Scotichronicon*, Lib. vi, Ch. xlvii.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*



Effigy cut to form lintel (*Crown copyright*)



Heraldic panel showing the arms of Bishop Henry Wardlaw (*Crown copyright*)



Figure sculpture (*Crown copyright*)



A



B



C



D

Architectural sculpture (*Crown copyright*)