

ON CROSS-LEGGED EFFIGIES COMMONLY APPROPRIATED TO TEMPLARS.

ON the occasion of the cleansing and restoration, recently effected by Mr. Edward Richardson, of certain effigies in the Temple Church, which I have for many years known and been accustomed to regard with great interest, and the details of which I was much gratified to see once more brought to light, I became curious to ascertain on what authority cross-legged effigies of knights, habited in mail and surcoats, are generally reputed to be representations of knights of the order of the Temple. I have been frequently reminded of the prevalence of this opinion by the remarks of intelligent friends with whom I have at various times examined the Temple effigies, and it may suffice to shew how general it is even among archæologists by reference to the "Hints of the Cambridge Camden Society," where, under the head of Ancient Armour, (p. 36, 4th edit.,) effigies of Knights Templars are mentioned as if they were numerous. I have not much acquaintance with matters of this kind, but after having given to the subject of these remarks all the attention which my limited leisure would permit, I have arrived at the conclusion that such effigies are not those of Templars, and moreover that there does not exist a single effigy of a knight of that order in this country. In support of these positions, which may appear novel to many, I adduce the following observations.

If any effigy of a Templar do exist in England, it is surely most likely to be among those in the Temple Church here in London; but possibly some one elsewhere, hitherto overlooked, may from its costume or historical testimony have a better claim to be so considered. Now, we have at the Temple nine effigies, all in military costumes of the era of the Templars except one, which is perhaps of a later date, being in a sleeved surcoat and chain mail, the others being in ring mail; but this effigy was not originally in the Temple, having been brought thither from Yorkshire about 1682, as Mr. E. Richardson, in his recently published work on these effigies, has satisfactorily shewn. Of the nine effigies, six are cross-legged, but three of these six, there is great reason to believe, represent persons who, though buried there, were not of the

order, and therefore I doubt whether any of the nine be effigies of Templars. The effigy brought from Yorkshire—one of the cross-legged—represents, we have good ground for supposing, a Lord de Ros, who was not a Templar. There are two however not identified, that have a great resemblance to each other. They may possibly be representations of knights of the order, but only one of them is cross-legged. I do not infer from the circumstance of some gilding and painting having been found upon them, that the living originals were not Templars, because the order, or at least the superiors among them, may have departed from the plainness of attire enjoined by St. Bernard. No one, however, of the nine effigies is bearded or habited in a mantle, or has any cross apparent; but some of those not identified have mustaches, and their chins being hidden by the hoods or helmets, they may be supposed to have also beards. I can hardly believe that a Templar would be represented without the peculiar distinctions of his order being made quite evident.

As far as my information extends, the only known effigy of a Templar is or was to be found in the church of St. Yvod de Braine, near Soissons in France, and is figured by Montfaucon in his "*Monumens de la Monarchie Française*," (tome ii. planche 36). It appears to be that of John de Dreux, second son of John first Count de Dreux, who is said to have been living in 1275. He is not mentioned in the list of those confined at Paris, A.D. 1310, given in the "*Memoires Historiques sur les Templiers*," (published in 1805). Probably he died some years previously. He is represented bearded, and wearing the coif or cap, but, what is very remarkable, without armour of any kind, in a gown and a mantle with a cross upon it; probably the undress habit of the order. The cross on the mantle is of Greek form, but the horizontal arms of it are rather shorter than the perpendicular arms, and it is not at all of patée form. This example is therefore altogether unfavourable to the supposition of the effigies in the Temple Church here being those of Templars.

There would not, I conceive, be much difficulty in shewing that many of the cross-legged effigies in this country are representations of persons who died seised of manors and estates—a fact inconsistent with the opinion of their having been Templars;—and others must be known from direct evidence not to have belonged to the order. The surcoat

commonly worn by the knights of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries may have been sometimes mistaken for the religious habit of the Templars.

My enquiries have been likewise directed to monumental effigies of knights of other military religious orders. I have not been able to find, or hear of, any effigy of a Hospitaller; none I believe are known to have existed at Clerkenwell. As far as I can learn there were no monuments of this kind in the church of St. John at Valetta on the dissolution of the order of Malta, though the floor was almost covered with sepulchral stones. Of the order of St. Lazarus and the Teutonic order, I have no information. Stothard, in his well-known Work, (p. 52,) has given two effigies—those of Sir Roger de Bois and his lady—in the mantle of the order of St. Anthony, with the Tau-cross on the shoulder.

Were it not for the solitary instance which I have mentioned from Montfaucon, I should be much disposed to infer from the result of my enquiries, that there was some rule or statute of the order of the Temple, or some tacit understanding among them, forbidding the representation of the knights by monumental effigies; although I can find no such prohibition in the rule of St. Bernard. With the German translation of the Statutes by Münter, (Berlin, 1794,) I am not acquainted farther than from the account given of them in the “Memoires Historiques.” They seem to have furnished much of the information contained in an article on the Templars published in the “Library of Entertaining Knowledge.” Many of them appear to be of later date than the rule of St. Bernard. They required, for example, that each knight of the order should have a white ‘cotte d’armes’ ensigned with a red cross before and behind: which cotte d’armes I conceive was the surcoat, and this new regulation was probably made after it had become customary for secular knights to display armorial bearings on their surcoats. Such regulations no doubt were subordinate to the rule of the order, and only enacted from time to time by a general chapter, in the same manner as were the statutes of the knights of Malta.

After all, whether there be or be not effigies of Templars existing, is a fit subject for archæological enquiry. Should there eventually be discovered any effigy referrible to their era, representing a man, whether in armour or not, habited in a mantle with a cross on his breast or shoulder, and with a long

beard, or having either of these peculiarities, such an effigy may probably be that of a Templar or a Hospitaller. At this distance of time, however, the colours which distinguished the two orders would hardly remain ; but the form perhaps of the cross, or, in the absence of a helmet, the coif, cap, or chapeau, might furnish the means of determining to which of the orders he belonged.

I have confined these remarks to knights of the order of the Temple. Some of the effigies in the Temple Church may very likely represent persons who were attached to the order as lay-associates, or affiliated. These however were not properly Templars ; they were not of the order ; they neither took the habit nor the vows ; and in fact lived and died as if they were quite independent of them.

I may mention, in conclusion, on the authority of Mr. Addison's History of the Knights Templars, (p. 97. 2nd edit.,) that a monumental effigy of a priest of the order, holding a chalice, may be found in the church of St. Mary at Bologna, in Italy. The time of his death appears in the following epitaph.

“*Stirpe Rotis, Petrus virtutis munere clarus,
Strenuus, ecce, pugil Christi jacet ordine charus ;
Veste ferens menteque cruce[m] nunc sidera scandit,
Exemplum nobis spectandi cœlica pandit :
Annis ter trinis viginti mille trecentis
Sexta quarte maii fregit lux organa mentis.*”

Although this monument was executed after the dissolution of the order, viz. A.D. 1329, or later, it would be interesting to see a careful drawing of it. For I think it highly probable that it represents the Peter of Bologna, who, with Raynal de Pruin, defended the order from the charges preferred against them before the Papal commission. Mr. Addison calls him Peter de Rotis ; but though “*Stirpe Rotis,*” he might also have been called, from the place of his birth, Peter de Bologna. Mr. Addison also mentions a clock at the Temple House in Bologna, on which are the words “*FR. PETRUS de BON (Bononia) PROCUR. MILITIE TEMPLI IN CURIA ROMANA M.CCC.III.*” Surely this Peter and that in effigy were one and the same person !

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