



EFFIGY OF A KNIGHT, WARKWORTH CHURCH.

AN EFFIGY OF A KNIGHT IN WARKWORTH CHURCH,
NORTHUMBERLAND.

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Warkworth, which is pleasantly situated within a mile of the sea coast, is surrounded on three sides by the River Coquet. The ground occupied by the town rises rapidly to the south, and is crowned by the castle, a prominent and picturesque object in the landscape, and rich in historical associations with the Percys. At the north end of the village, and bordering on the river, which at this point is spanned by a mediæval bridge with a gate-house tower, is the Church of St. Lawrence, a fine example of early twelfth century architecture with a vaulted chancel.

At the west end of the south aisle of the church is an effigy of more than ordinary interest. It appears impossible to determine the person to whose memory it was erected, there being no inscription, and the arms on the shield, *a cross charged with five eagles displayed, in the dexter chief an annulet*, not belonging to anyone as far as is known connected with Warkworth. In the Treasury at Durham is a seal of an ecclesiastic, John de Derlington, prebendary of Esh, in the collegiate Church of Lanchester, in the county of Durham, on which are the same arms with the exception of the annulet for difference.¹ As, however, there are no tinctures on either shield or seal, it cannot be asserted that the arms on the effigy and those of the seal have any connection. The date of the deed to which the seal is attached is 1380, but the details of the armour of the effigy imply a much earlier date.

In a Roll of Arms, c. 1295, there is a coat *or on a cross sable five eagles displayed argent*,² attributed to Nichol

¹ In the treasury of Durham (loc. I) dated Aug. 2, 1380, the seal described in Surtees *Hist. of Durham*, Vol. IV, p. clxx, and illustrated Vol. I, Plate XI, No. 29.

² A Roll of Arms, Hen. III and Edw. I, c. 1295. *Archæologia*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 431, No. 395.

Ablin, but without anything to identify him. It seems on the whole probable that the person commemorated, although of good position, was merely one of the officials, either of John de Clavering (the assumed name of John Fitz Robert), or of Henry de Percy on whom Warkworth and its manor was afterwards (1329) bestowed by Edward III.¹

Apart from the identification of the person represented, considerable interest attaches to the effigy; and to ascertain approximately the date of its execution, it will be necessary to compare the several portions of the equipment and accessories with other and dated examples of similar figures.

The figure of the knight is placed on a slab 7 feet by 2 feet 2 inches,² over the head is an ogee crocheted canopy trefoliated within, springing from carved bosses and flanked by diminutive gabled and crocheted buttresses. The top or end of the canopy—semi-circular in shape—is filled with foliage. The canopy resembles that over the head of Brian Fitz Alan, d. 1302, in Bedale Church, Yorkshire,³ and that attributed to Eufemia, daughter of Sir John de Clavering, and the first wife of Ralph Neville, Lord of Raby, in Staindrop Church, county Durham,⁴ which must be placed before 1331, in which year Ralph Neville died.

The knight wears a mixed armour of mail and plate, the head being enclosed in a hood of mail which slightly overlaps the surcoat on the right shoulder, and has a movable plate visor attached. The latter must have been pivotted to a plate cap worn inside the chain mail. This feature appears to be unique as regards actual examples in stone or brass. In a MS. of Matthew Paris, "Lives of the two Offas,"⁵ is a group which "represents

¹ In 1329, Hartshorne, *Archaeological Journal*, Newcastle volume, p. 193.

² The slab rests on a tomb of seventeenth century date, bearing a late inscription: The effigies of Sir Hugh | of Morwicke who gave | the common to this | Towne of Warkworth. The statement as to the common is not a fact, nor are the arms those of Morwick.

³ Hollis, *Monumental Effigies*, p. iv, and Blore's *Monumental Remains*, Plate III.

⁴ In an enriched recess of the south

aisle built 1343, by the famous Ralph Lord Neville, of Neville's Cross, see description of the church by the Rev. J. F. Hodgson, M.A., in the *Architectural and Archaeological Society of Northumberland and Durham*, Vol. IV, p. 91, and an illustration in *Surtees History of Durham*, Vol. IV, p. 129.

⁵ Cotton MS. Nero, D.I., copied by Strutt in his *Horde*, Vol. I, Plate XLIII, and by Hewitt, *Ancient Armour*, Vol. I, p. 303.

the Mercian King Offa, combating in behalf of the King of Northumberland, and defeating the Scottish army," in which "on one of the figures the head defence composed of a mask of steel placed over the coil of banded mail, is very remarkable."¹ This is the only parallel that can be offered to the visor of the Warkworth effigy, and I am much indebted to Viscount Dillon, P.S.A., for kindly drawing my attention to this interesting manuscript. Matthew Paris died 1259, but the illuminations may very probably be of a date not earlier than the close of the thirteenth century.

The chain hauberk with long sleeves is seen at the armpits, beneath the elbows, at the wrists, and above the knee caps. These details are quite consistent with sculptured work belonging to the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

A scale skirt overlies the mail hauberk, the scales being pointed at the ends and ridged on the top, the skirt terminates above the knees in a band or border connecting the points, the middle scales are smaller. A skirt of scale work is to be seen in the Moccas effigy in Moccas Church, Hereford, and in the effigy of a knight at St. Peter's Church, Sandwich, c. 1320.² The skirt is sometimes worn over the mail hauberk as at Warkworth, Sandwich, and in the effigy of John of Eltham,³ and sometimes under as in the brass of Sir John de Northwode, at Minster, Isle of Sheppey.⁴ Examples of scale work, a variety of the studded garment, and most probably of leather, are of frequent occurrence in the fourteenth century for portions only of a knight's defence, and appear in every kind of monument.

The arms are sheathed in plates, and have elbow caps, with embossed rosettes at the shoulder and on the elbow caps, the plate on the forearm is ridged on the underside, and at the wrist and edges of the plate there is an incised line. A heart is borne in the hands which are bare, and point upwards in the attitude of prayer. The legs are

¹ Hewitt's *Ancient Armour*, Vol. I, p. 22.

The nearest approach is in the basinet on one of the sleeping guards in the Easter Sepulchre at Lincoln Cathedral of early fourteenth century, J. Starkie

Gardiner, *Armour of England*, *The Portfolio*, July, 1897, p. 24.

² Hewitt, Vol. II, p. 115.

³ Stothard's *Monumental Effigies*, Plates LV and LVI.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Plate LIV.

crossed the left uppermost. The knees and legs are encased in plate ridged down the centre, the knee caps being embossed with a fleur-de-lis pattern, and girt below with a cable or thong-like band. The chausses may be drawn together behind the legs, but there is no indication of the manner in which the plates covering either the legs or the arms were secured. The feet in articulated sollerets, rest on a lion now much mutilated. The spurs are of the star rowel kind, secured with straps buckled over the instep, where appears a pointed piece to cover the junction of the chausses and solleret, the end of the strap is pendent on the outside of the foot. An early example of the rowelled spur occurs on a seal of Henry III, but it is not common until the fourteenth century.

The moulded and embossed pattern of the leg armour, considered in conjunction with the scale skirt seems to indicate that the material of which these defences were made was *cuir-bouilli*. Armour of leather appears in the inventory of Louis Hutin in 1316, and of Sir Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, in 1322.¹

The *cyclas surcoat* which covers the body armour is sleeveless, supported from each shoulder by narrow bands, and is short and tight fitting in front, and at the back hangs in simple folds below the level of the knees. Garments so shaped were common in the early part of the fourteenth century and examples occur in the effigy of Sir John de Ifield, Ifield Church, Sussex, 1317,² and in the brass of Sir John de Creke, Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire, c. 1325.³

The surcoat is girt at the waist by a strap or belt buckled and pendent on the right side, and below is encircled by the sword belt with strong buckles; the end of the strap passing under and over the belt hangs by the side of the sword on the left of the figure and is terminated by an ornamental tag. The sword with shaped cross piece, extends from the hip to the knees, it is damaged at the pommel and foot.

¹ *Archæological Journal*, Vol. II, p. 319.

² Stothard, Plate LIX.

³ Waller's *Monumental Brasses*.

Waller, Part VIII. Lyson's *Magna Britannia*, Vol. II, Cambridgeshire, p. 65.

Supported by the guige passing over the right shoulder is a bowed triangular shield, reaching from shoulder to hip. It bears, *a cross charged with five eagles displayed, in the dexter chief an annulet*, all the bearings are in relief.

The arrangement of the sword, belt, girdle, and the knee caps, and the equipment generally have a marked resemblance to the effigy of an unknown knight at Norton Church, county Durham, c. 1300,¹ to the effigy of Brian Fitz Alan at Bedale, Yorks, 1302,² to Sir John de Ifield, died 1317,³ a knightly figure at Ash by Sandwich⁴ and of Sir John d'Aubernoun, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey, died 1327,⁵ and including the plates and sollerets to John of Eltham.⁶

During the first quarter of the fourteenth century the body armour varied considerably in form, but few if any of the figures exhibit such a curious mixture as the Warkworth effigy. The various examples cited above appear to show that it may be assigned to a time between 1310-1330.

The Warkworth effigy cannot be placed among sculptured art of the highest class, yet there is considerable merit in the modelling and general composition of the figure and its accessories which place it far above the rude sculpturing of the few examples of such work which still remain in Northumberland. The monument is at present most unfortunately placed in a dark corner below the level of the windows and against the south aisle wall. It seems desirable that a work which possesses such interest and antiquity, and includes at least one unique feature, should be afforded a better position in the church.

¹ Surtees *History of Durham*, Vol. III, on plate at p. 117.

² Hollis, p. IV.

Stothard, Plate LIX.

⁴ *Archæological Journal*, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁵ Stothard, Plate LX.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Plate LV and LVI.