SOME FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH ALABASTER PANELS.

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Since reading, in 1914, a paper on English alabaster carvings, I have had the opportunity of examining several additional examples dating from the fifteenth century, which, so far as I am aware, have not previously been noted. They are as follows:

1. The Nailing to the Cross.
   Resting upon the ground is the cross upon which lies the figure of our Lord, who wears the loin cloth and torse. Five figures with dusky faces are engaged in the act of securing the victim to the cross, three holding nails and hammers, whilst the other two hold ropes over their shoulders, upon which they appear to be pulling. This method of depicting this scene, which is unique in alabaster, would appear to owe its origin to the 'Revelations' of St. Briget of Sweden, who declared that previous to our Lord being nailed to the cross, holes were drilled in the wood for the nails, but that owing to faulty measurement these were placed too far apart and one hand having been affixed it was necessary to drag upon the other limb by means of a rope in order to reach the other hole. This example is in the collection of the writer

2. In the vestry of Ripon cathedral is preserved a small fragment, being the upper left-hand corner of a panel depicting a scene from a St. John Baptist reredos.
   Within an embattled wall are the crowned figures of Herod and Herodias: the former has his hands before him placed palm to palm, whilst the latter, who is veiled, thrusts her knife into the forehead of the Baptist, above the right eye.
   The head rests upon a charger which was formerly held by Salome, who stood upon the spectator's right. Beneath Herod is a male attendant

1 Another representation of this is to be seen in Queen Mary's Psalter, Royal MS. 2, B vii, f. 253.
2 This incident is recorded by St. Jerome, whilst her piercing of his tongue with a needle was doubtless suggested by the treatment meted out to that of Cicero by Livia.
A very similar scene occurs in early sixteenth-century glass in Gresford church, Denbighshire.

3. The Crucifixion.

This panel, which measures 19¼ in. by 10¾ in., retains much of its original polychrome decoration, and is in the collection of the writer (plate 11, 1).

Upon the cross hangs our Lord, over whose head was the superscription, between the sun and moon, whilst below the transom were two angels holding chalices. To the left is the Holy Mother, veiled, with clasped hands, above whom is St. Christopher bearing our Lord and a palm tree, whilst upon the other side are St. John the Divine with book and palm branch; also St. Mary Magdalene, who holds a book and the pot of ointment.

The introduction of St. Christopher into this scene is most remarkable and, so far as I am aware, unique; but this saint also occurs on a St. John’s Head preserved at St. Michael’s Mount, Cornwall,¹ and this would appear to imply Nottingham as the source of this carving.

St. Dorothy appears upon a Crucifixion in the possession of Sir Francis Crawley-Boevey, Bart., and also upon St. John’s Heads in the museum at Rouen and in the writer’s collection; whether these saints imply the Christian names of the donors of these Crucifixions, or whether they indicate the saints’ altars from whence they originally came, I am not in a position to express an opinion.

4. St. Anne teaching our Lord to read.

This panel in the writer’s collection, which measures 17 in. by 10 in., was found at Bruniquel near Montauban and still retains much of its original colour (plate 11, 2).

The Holy Mother, whose head is faultily restored—it should, of course, be crowned—holds in her left hand a sceptre and on her right arm our Lord, who clasps an orb in both hands and lifts His face to regard His mother. To the left stands St. Anne, who wears a barb and a veil and holds in her left hand an open book, upon which rests a stylus loosely held in her right hand. So far as I know this panel is unique, but falls into line with the panels in the museum at Madrid² showing Joachim and St. Anne

¹ Archaeologia, vol. lii, part 2, pl. xxvi.  
² Proceedings Soc. of Antiquaries, 2nd series, vol. xxix, p. 79, fig. 3.
NO. I. THE NAILING TO THE CROSS.
NO. 2. HEROD'S FEAST: RIPON.
NO. 1. THE CRUCIFIXION. WITH FIGURE OF ST. CHRISTOPHER.
NO. 2. ST. ANNE INSTRUCTING OUR LORD.
PLATE III.

To face page 135.

VIRGIN AND CHILD: STEWKLEY CHURCH, BUCKS.
instructing the Virgin, and that described in the *Archaeological Journal*, vol. lxxv, pl. xxvii, 2, p. 333.

5. St. Roch. This figure, which is in the writer's collection, measures 14\(\frac{3}{8}\) inches in height by 5\(\frac{7}{8}\) inches in width.

The saint, who is bearded and has long hair, held in his left hand his bourdon, whilst with his right he gave his blessing. From his right arm depends his pater-noster, whilst hanging from his right shoulder is his scrip. The saint wears a short robe which exposes the plague spot on his right knee, to which the angel kneeling at his right foot pointed with his right hand, and above is a scroll, doubtless once inscribed *Patronus eris in peste*. Behind the left leg of St. Roch is his dog with a loaf in its mouth. St. Roch shared with St. Sebastian, in the fifteenth century, the ability to avert the plague from those invoking their interposition (plate iv, 1).

6. In the church at Stewkley, Bucks., is preserved a panel of the Holy Mother and Child, which retains much of its original colouring and measures 19 in. by 11 in.

The Virgin, who is crowned, holds in her left hand a sceptre and on her right arm our Lord, in whose hands is a bird. On either side upon a pedestal is a censing angel clad in a gilt albe, with red wings dotted with the usual white and black eyes, 'The peacock with his angel’s feathers bright' (plate iii).

In this church there is also preserved the upper portion of a bearded male saint with long hair. He has upon his right side a satchel suspended from his right shoulder by a narrow belt, and upon his head is a pilgrim’s hat; he holds in his right hand a bourdon and in his left a scroll. This may represent St. James or St. Roch.

7. The Nativity. This panel, which measures 10\(\frac{5}{8}\) in. in width, is in the possession of the writer. In this we see the Infant, within a golden aureole, holding an orb in His left hand, whilst giving the benediction with His right. Beside Him kneels the Holy Mother, crowned, behind whom is St. Joseph holding his cross-staff, and the midwife Zelomi, whilst in the foreground is the seated figure of the doubting Salome.¹ The ox and the ass

¹ Pseudo-Matthew xiii and Gospel of James xx.
appear above the Child, whilst in the upper part of the panel—now missing—would be an angel holding an inscribed scroll, the end of which is to be seen above the head of Zelomi (plate iv, 2).

8. The Nativity. In the museum at Marseilles is a panel which is reversed in treatment, in which we find the midwives on the right and the Holy Mother on the left. In the centre is St. Joseph and in the foreground the animals feeding from a wicker manger, whilst above, within an ellipse, is the Child. In the upper part is an angel holding a scroll (plate v, 1).

9. The Nativity. There is preserved in the church at West Horsley, Surrey, a panel of very simple style. The principal figure is the Holy Mother, who is crowned and nimbed and kneels before the Child, who lies within a rayed ellipse; behind the Virgin is a midwife and above the Child are the ox and ass, behind which is St. Joseph (plate v, 2).

Each of these Nativity panels would originally come from a Virgin reredos, of which the Nativity occasionally forms the second scene.

10. The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.

In the church at Abergavenny, at the back of the arched tomb of Richard Herbert, ob. 1510, is a remarkable panel of a combined Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, placed between groups of kneeling figures, children of the deceased, beneath whom are shields of arms. This panel which measures about 38 in. by 13 in. may be thus described:

In the centre is the tall figure of the Virgin, clad in a long robe and ample cloak, the latter held together by looped cords falling to the waist. She is being lifted up by seven angels, three on each side and one at her feet. Kneeling at her feet are to left and right Richard Herbert, in plate armour, and his wife; both hold ascending invocatory scrolls, and behind the man is St. Thomas receiving the girdle of the Virgin. Across the upper part of the panel are the three persons of the Blessed Trinity in the act of placing a triple crown on the head of the Virgin, who is encircled by a rayed ellipse\(^1\) (plate vi).

\(^1\) The researches of Mr. Philip B. Chatwin, F.R.I.B.A., would point to this being by a sculptor of the Burton school.
PLATE IV

NO. 2. THE NATIVITY.
NO. I. THE NATIVITY: MARSEILLES MUSEUM.
NO. 2. THE NATIVITY: WEST HORSLEY CHURCH, SURREY.
THE ASSUMPTION AND CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN: ABERGAVENNY CHURCH.
NO. I. TRIAL OF CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS: CLUNY MUSEUM.
NO. 2.  TRIAL OF CHRIST BEFORE PILATE: LOUVRE.
CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA: LOUVRE.
II. In the Cluny museum is a unique panel representing the Trial of Christ before Caiaphas.\textsuperscript{1} There is a very remarkable similarity of treatment of this subject to that shown on the Trial of St. Peter illustrated in \textit{Archaeological Journal}, vol. lxxiv, p. 113, pl. vii, fig. 1. The panel is as follows:

> In the centre is our Lord, nimbed, with His hands bound with a rope, being urged forward by a soldier in plate armour. Upon the right, seated in a chair is the high priest, vested and mitred, his hands raised in surprise, to whom an official explains the case. In the background are two other soldiers, fully armed, carrying halberds, a legal personage who holds in his right hand a scroll with which he appears to be enforcing his arguments on another man whose head is missing. This panel (plate vii, 1), which without doubt is from the same workshop as the panel referred to above, completes the series of 'Christ's Trials.'\textsuperscript{2}

12. The Trial of Christ before Pilate (plate vii, 2).

This panel, which is preserved in the Louvre, has unfortunately lost the upper part. We see here our Lord, who is bound and wears the torse, dragged towards Pilate by an attendant who holds the rope. Behind Him is another figure who holds His right elbow, and in the background are two soldiers holding halberds. Pilate, whose legs are crossed, with his feet on a cushion, is seated on the right-hand side of the scene and is in the act of washing his hands in a small basin held by a diminutive servant, over whose left shoulder hangs a towel.\textsuperscript{3}

13. Christ and the woman of Samaria.

This panel, which is preserved in the Louvre, follows closely the story of the incident as recorded by St. John (plate viii).

On the left side stands our Lord, nimbed and clad in a long robe and full cloak, who lays His right hand on the moulded edge of the well-head of Jacob's well. In front stands the woman of Samaria in the act of drawing up the wooden bucket from the well by means of a rope and

\textsuperscript{1} John xviii, 24: Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.
\textsuperscript{2} Matthew xxvi, 57: Where the scribes and elders were assembled.
\textsuperscript{3} Matthew xxvii, 24: He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude.
wooden crane. She wears a long robe and a turban head-dress, and at her feet is her water-pot.\(^1\)

In the distance are trees bearing masses of polyhedral foliage, which brings this panel into relation with a series of carvings which present similar leaf-work.\(^2\) Among others we would cite the example at Lydiate, Lancashire, a panel depicting St. Catherine about to be beheaded.

\(^1\) John iv, 28. \(^2\) I am indebted to M. Paul Vitry for the photographs of nos. 12 and 13.