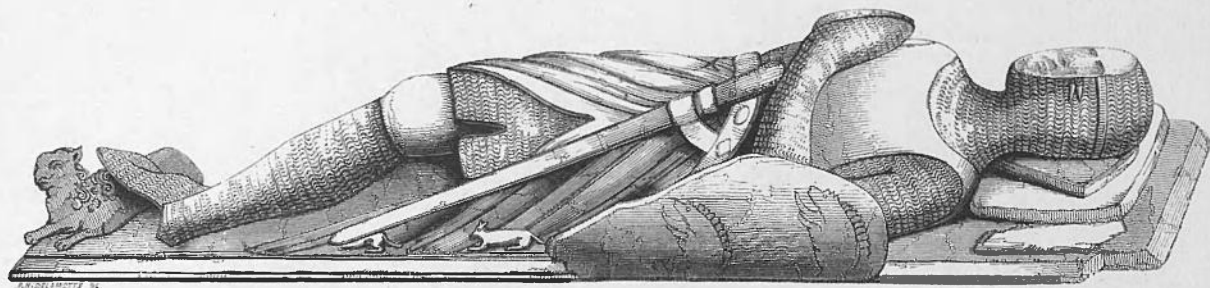


GONALSTON CHURCH, NOTTS.



Effigy of a Knight (De Heriz.) Fig. 1.

DISCOVERY OF MONUMENTAL EFFIGIES AND OTHER ANTI-  
QUITIES IN GONALSTON CHURCH, NOTTS, 1848. COMMUNI-  
CATED BY RICHARD WESTMACOTT, JUNIOR, F.R.S.

BEING resident for a short time in the autumn of the past year at Gonalston, a small village situated between Nottingham and Southwell, and distant about five miles from the latter, I was anxious to ascertain whether there was any record or tradition, on the spot, of some monumental effigies which formerly existed in Gonalston Church, and which had disappeared since Thoroton described them in 1677. Other antiquaries, more worthy of the title than myself, had felt an interest in the same subject, and I determined to take advantage of the opportunity afforded me to prosecute the inquiry, and literally, to leave no stone unturned, until I had satisfied myself as to the possibility of recovering these monuments.

In Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire (published in 1677) are the following notices under the head of Gunholston, Gunnovelston, and the Spittle or Hospital of Brodbuske. "There is a charity or hospital founded there by — Heriz, called the charity or hospital of Brodbusk, in Gonastun, which, through many patents of concealments, continueth an hospital at this day, and is called Gonalston Spittle . . . . In Gonalston Church, three ancient stone-tombs, low on the ground, two of knights cross-leg'd : upon one of their shields, three hedgehogs were embossed ; the third is a woman." Thoroton also describes a considerable number of armorial bearings in painted glass in the windows ; of the families of Heriz, (*Azure*, three hedgehogs *or*) of Swillington, Roos of Hamlake, Belers, and others not named. The pedigree of Heriz is also given from the time of Robertus de Heriz,<sup>1</sup> to the marriage of Matildis de Heriz,<sup>2</sup> when the name of Heriz no longer appears ; the estate being inherited by that lady, and passing to her as the wife of one Richardus de la Rivere. The subsequent history of the property is carried down to the Pierpoints and others, and from them to the family of

<sup>1</sup> Temp. Hen. I.

<sup>2</sup> Temp. Ed. III.

Monoux, who, in the person of Sir Humphrey Monoux, Bart., held the lordship of Gonalston, when Thoroton wrote his account.

In Throsby's continuation of Thoroton (1797), is the following entry, appended to the account of Gunholstone: "Here is a spital or chapel, an ill-looking place; of note only that the new incumbent of the living preaches here on his induction. It is without glass in the windows." "The Church," he proceeds to say, "which is dedicated to St. Lawrence, is neatly paved; one aisle, two bells. It is visible it has been much larger. The figures mentioned by Thoroton were removed, or rather destroyed, at the diminution of the Church, as usual. Thanks to friend Thoroton for preserving copies of them."

On examining the Church, I found, in the first place, that of all the painted glass mentioned by Thoroton, only two small pieces were remaining. These are in the upper part or head of a small early decorated window on the south side of the chancel. They give two coats of arms. One of these is "*Azure*, three hedgehogs *or*,"—for Heriz, (a canting charge, *Hericius*, hedgehog) according to Thoroton. On inquiry, I ascertained that the whole of the glass, with the above exception, had been removed towards the end of the last century, and appropriated to decorate some of the windows in the neighbouring church of Southwell. The present windows on the north side of the Church are made in the arches (now stopped up, but distinctly traceable), which formerly divided the nave from the north aisle. This diminution of the Church, as Throsby calls it, was effected by Sir Philip Monoux, Bart., in 1787. Having mentioned my desire to trace the history of the removal of the effigies, I was told there was a widow, eighty-four years of age, living in a neighbouring parish, who remembered having seen them in Gonalston Church. I had an interview with her, and she confirmed the report which I had heard, and even told me whereabouts in the Church the monuments were formerly placed. This so far valuable information, was afterwards repeated by a former resident in the parish, who also remembered having seen them when he was a boy, nearly seventy years ago.<sup>3</sup> I determined then to make a careful examination of the Church. My impression

<sup>3</sup> Mr. T. Hinde, of Goverton, who rendered me great assistance in the inquiries I made respecting these and other matters connected with Gonalston.

was, that in order to make room in the present aisle or nave for that which had been lost by taking down the north aisle, the figures had either been buried or, more probably, turned over, and the bottoms of the slabs on which the figures were carved, used for pavement. My first examination was, therefore, made all along the centre of the Church, between the pewing. I discovered nothing here beyond the fact, that a former pavement of the Church, laid in large square tiles, was six or eight inches below the present level. I next examined the chancel, in which are some slabs of considerable size; but I was equally unsuccessful with regard to the figures, though I made a discovery of another kind, which is not entirely without interest: namely, of no less than three (so called) altar-stones, their five crosses, cut in the centre and angles, being more or less clearly traceable on each. It is remarkable that but three altar-stones of the kind have been found in the neighbouring Cathedral of Lincoln: one of which has been used for a modern gravestone. It is in Bishop Fleming's chapel. Doubtless, of these altar-stones in Gonalston Church, one must have belonged to the present chancel, and another to the east end of the destroyed north aisle. In all probability, there was, as usual, a third chapel in this Church, to which the third stone had belonged, as I found, lying neglected in a corner at the west end of the Church, a very fairly preserved stoup or basin, with a drain, evidently a piscina, making the third of these existing in Gonalston Church. The other two are in their original situations; namely, in the chancel, and in the south wall of the old north aisle. These were entirely stopped or filled up with large stones and mortar, and plastered over even with the face of the wall (in the usual churchwarden fashion); I had them both cleared out. They are in recesses, with simple trefoil heads of the early decorated period; the style of the architecture of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The third piscina alluded to above is a projecting basin attached to a block of stone. It is fluted, and terminates underneath with a boss much broken. In order to preserve this relic from further injury, I had it built into the north wall of the chancel.

Having failed in my endeavours to recover the effigies within the Church, I determined now to try outside, in the

<sup>4</sup> A wooden shelf remained in that in the chancel; but it fell to pieces as the rubbish was cleared away.

ground of the old north aisle. I had some of this opened, and other portions pricked with iron bars, but still equally without success, and I began to fear that the latter part of Throsby's expression, "that the effigies had been removed, *or rather destroyed,*" meant that they had been broken up. I had not, however, examined under the pewing of the Church, and I therefore determined to take up some of the flooring. Four of the pews afforded nothing to encourage me; but on digging under the next, the workmen came upon some hard substance, which offered resistance. Upon descending into the hole they had made, I distinctly felt the beveled edge of a large stone slab, and I began to hope I had now discovered the long lost effigies. But upon clearing away the earth, instead of a figure, a large stone coffin was exposed, on the top of which was an extremely well preserved incised ornamented Cross, standing upon five steps. The coffin measured six feet seven inches in length, by two feet one inch in width at the head, and one foot four inches at the feet. The lid was nearly six inches thick. On raising this, an operation of some difficulty from its great weight, a curious appearance was, at first sight, presented. There was a male figure within, of which only the skeleton remained, but it was entirely and thickly covered with a substance of a dull red colour. This on examination turned out to be a coating of fine red mud, which had accumulated over the bones, and formed a bed in which the skeleton was lying. The figure had all the appearance of never having been disturbed. The head had fallen a little on one side. The hands had been placed on the breast, and the left arm was in its original position, excepting where the fingers had fallen in, with some of the bones of the ribs. The right arm had also fallen. The bones were hard and firm, and exhibited no signs of decay. The thick covering of mud had, no doubt, assisted in preserving them. With respect to this deposit, it may be mentioned, that Gonalston Church stands very low, and the mud was composed of the soil of the neighbourhood. As there were no indications of it in the upper part of the coffin, it had evidently penetrated upwards, through the aperture usually left in the bottom of stone coffins, and, in a long series of years, had left coating after coating upon the skeleton; the water afterwards subsiding, and being drained off by the way it had entered. This deposit was so deep at

the feet, that the bones of the toes were scarcely visible. Having made a sketch of the Cross, I had the whole carefully covered up again, and left in its original state. While clearing away the earth and loose stones from the side of the coffin, one of the workmen requested me to examine what it was that again obstructed his digging. I passed my arm into a hole formed under the accumulated rubbish, and my satisfaction was indeed great, when, on disengaging one of the larger stones, we brought to view a lion couchant, resting against which was the foot of a knight in chain armour; and I have the gratification to say, that in this spot were, in a short time, discovered all three of the effigies described by Thoroton; namely, two of knights cross-legged and a female. All the figures are more or less injured, and some portions are lost. They had been thrown in carelessly, and were not even placed horizontally, but were lying edgeways against each other. Two of the statues, however, though much broken, have most of the parts or fragments very fairly preserved; but of the second knight all the upper portion from the shoulders is, unfortunately, missing. The more perfect knight (Fig. 1.) is lying with his hands clasped horizontally on his breast, as in prayer. The face has at some period been restored, a flat sawed surface being left where the restoration had been applied to the original. The figure is habited from head to foot in chain armour, over which is a long surcoat, which is open from the waist, exhibiting the termination of the hawberk and one of the genouilleres or knee pieces. Round the head is a band or fillet, and on the left side, just below this, are two ends or ties, probably the fastening of the hood. The right leg, which is crossed over, is perfect down to the ancle, and a portion of the spur-strap is visible; but the foot is lost. The left leg is broken off at the thigh, but the foot remains, and rests against the lion couchant. The handle of his sword is just under his hands, and the weapon partially crosses the body and rests on the ground. The belt is ornamented with large studs, which, however, are nearly obliterated. On the left side, underneath the fold of the surcoat, and again under the point of the sword, are two small animals like dogs; one is entire, but of the other only the hinder part is visible. A portion of a shield remains attached to the knight's left arm, and it appeared to me that, when perfect, this must have entirely concealed the more perfect



of these small animals.<sup>5</sup> The shield gives a great interest to this statue. It is much broken, but it bears arms, two *hedgehogs* being distinctly visible ; thus identifying the statue, without the shadow of doubt, with the family (De Heriz) which bore the arms still remaining in the small portion of stained glass in the window of the chancel. It may be added of this interesting effigy, that the head rests on a double cushion—one square, the other diamond shaped ; and that there are traces of sculpture on the mattress on each side of the pillow ; doubtless of small statues of draped angels kneeling.

The effigy (Fig. 2) of the lady is chiefly interesting, in the absence of any marks of family, for the extreme grace and elegance exhibited in the composition of the drapery, and for the unaffected simplicity of expression in the whole figure. It is more perfect than either of the others. The nose is slightly injured, but otherwise the face is well preserved, and has all the individual character of a portrait. The hands are composed with elegance, but the fingers are unfortunately more or less injured. She clasps before her an object of an oval form, about the size of an ostrich's egg, of which a portion of the upper part is broken off. Her feet rest against an animal, probably a dog, closely resembling, though on a larger scale, the animals mentioned above, as lying at the side of the knight. The costume consists of a hood or veil falling on the shoulders, with a broad strap across the forehead, and another similar to it passing under the chin. The throat is bare. The upper part of the dress fits closely, but from the waist downwards it terminates in ample and graceful folds, just showing the points of the shoes. Over the head of this effigy is a trefoliated testoon or canopy, of early decorated architecture, the ends terminating in prettily-devised foliage continued from the moulding.

In the third figure, the knight is cross-legged, and habited, like the other, in chain armour ; but his surcoat is short, and he has no shield. His feet rest on a lion demi-couchant. It seems to represent a young man ; for, although the slab on which the figure reposes measures very nearly the same length as that of the other knight, the figure is several inches shorter, and of a more delicate frame.

I should observe in conclusion, that there are some faint

<sup>5</sup> See the note at the conclusion of this Memoir.

GONALSTON CHURCH, NOTTS.



Effigy of the Lady. (Fig. 2)



remains of colour on different parts of these statues, as well as on the canopy over the head of the female figure.

The engravings given in Thoroton's work, under his notice of these monuments, are so little like the statues, that it is difficult to believe they could have been drawn from the originals.

Of course, nothing can be said with certainty as to what particular personages are represented by these effigies. No inscriptions were found, but there are data on which a very fair speculation may be offered on the subject. The lands of Gonalston were held by the family of Heriz as far back as King Henry the First, and were in the possession of that family, and in the same name, till the reign of Edward the Third, at which period they passed away, as we have seen, to the husband of Matildis de Heriz, Ricardus de la Rivere; and the name of Heriz no longer appears.<sup>6</sup> The shield borne by the knight determines the family identity of that figure, and the costume is of the warrior of the thirteenth, and part of the fourteenth century. At the west end of Gonalston Church is a window of that date, the dripstone of which is terminated on each side by a head; one of a hooded knight, the other of a female. The knight represented in both these pieces of sculpture may possibly have been a benefactor, or even the builder of the Church, probably on an older foundation, and it is probable that in memory of his pious works, his portrait may have been introduced in the corbel described. He may also have been the founder of the Hospital of Brod-buske. The founder is stated to be Johannes de Heriz, and it appears there were no less than three of the family called Johannes consecutively, at or about the date referred to. Tanner calls the founder of the Hospital "William," but this is in all probability an error.

In Dodsworth's Collection of MSS., vol. viii., (as quoted by Dugdale) is this notice, "*Ordinatio Cantariæ Hosp. S. Mariæ Magd. de Bradbuske fundatæ per Joannem fil. Johannis de Heriz patronum Hospitalis, A. D. 1326.*"

The effigy of the lady may also be referred to the above early period, and it probably represents a daughter of the house. The object she holds clasped before her of an oval shape, is about the size of an ostrich's egg. At first I thought it might be a heart, but it appears somewhat too round and

<sup>6</sup> Thoroton, Hist. Nottingham, vol. iii., p. 52.

compact for that emblem, compared with other specimens I have seen. I was then disposed to consider it a reliquary of some kind ; but upon finding that the Hospital above alluded to was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, it occurred to me that the lady may have borne the name of the saint, and, having the Magdalen for her tutelary patroness, may have been represented holding an unguentarium, a vase for ointment, such as is usually seen in representations of this holy person.

The Hospital of Brodebusk above mentioned is that alluded to by Throsby, as being in existence as late as 1797. He describes it as "a spital or chapel ; an ill-looking place, without glass in the windows," &c. It was situated a few hundred yards from the present Church, and a farm on its site is still called the Spital Farm ; but, I regret to say, there are no remains whatever of the old chapel. I made what inquiry I could respecting its total disappearance, and it will scarcely be believed that it was taken down somewhere about fifty years ago by the then rector of Gonalston, and the materials, which were stone, used to form drains for draining the adjacent grass lands. This statement is made on the authority of persons now living, who remember the chapel standing, and who also recollect its total destruction, and the use to which it was applied, by the rector : and during whose incumbency, the painted glass in the Church of Gonalston was also allowed to be abstracted by the more tasteful, perhaps, but not more scrupulous parties who desired to enrich the windows of Southwell Church with the spoil thus improperly acquired.

At this time, it appears that the family who owned the estate resided altogether in a distant county, seldom visiting Gonalston. The rector, therefore, in all probability, was entirely uncontrolled in his proceedings. At the same time, judging from the treatment the Church met with at the hands of the proprietor, in the diminution of the north aisle, and the reckless removal of the monuments of the very old family who had formerly possessed the property, there is little reason to believe that any opposition would have been offered to the destruction, and it may justly be called desecration, that was so ruthlessly effected.

The property is now held by John Francklin, Esq., who inherits from his maternal grandfather, Sir Thomas Monoux,

Baronet. I am indebted to his kindness, and the facilities he afforded me, for the success which attended my exertions to discover the very interesting monuments above described. The broken portions of the effigies will be repaired as far as possible, and the figures will be placed in safety in the chancel; there is great reason to hope that, before long, other repairs and improvements will be effected, to preserve this little Church from the ruin with which it is threatened, both from its age, and from long-continued neglect.

RICHARD WESTMACOTT, JR.

NOTE.—Some examples of the introduction of small human figures, or animals, of very diminutive proportion as compared with the sepulchral effigy, in connection with which they occur, may deserve notice, for the sake of comparison with the interesting figure discovered at Gonalston. The effigy, attributed to Sir John Lyons, 1385, at Warkworth, Northamptonshire, is curiously sculptured with ornaments allusive to his name and arms, and a miniature lion sejant is quaintly introduced upon the breast, supporting the corner of the shield, which is considerably under-cut. A mutilated torso, found in the ruined Abbey of Arbroath, N. Britain, and supposed to represent the founder, William the Lion, exhibits traces of not less than four very small figures, apparently represented as engaged in arranging the folds of the drapery, in which these henchmen, booted and spurred, are partly concealed. This interesting sculpture was communicated to the Institute by Cosmo Innes, Esq. The head of a horse and a diminutive attendant squire is seen at the feet of a knightly effigy in Minster Church, Isle of Sheppey, represented by Charles Stothard. The occurrence of angels, of very small proportions, supporting the pillows on which mediæval effigies recline, is too frequent to require any mention of examples: figures of bede-men, or chantry-priests, praying for the repose of the defunct, and represented at the feet of monumental figures, are less common: examples are supplied by the monuments of Brian Fitz Alan, 1302, Bedale, Yorkshire; William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, 1404; Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmoreland, and his two wives, at Staindrop, Durham. Under the lion, against which the feet of the remarkable effigy of King Richard I., at Rouen, are supported, miniature representations of a dog, a bird, a hare or rabbit, are introduced in an unusual manner. On either side of the head of the figure of King John, in Worcester Cathedral, is introduced a diminutive episcopal figure; these have been supposed to represent St. Oswald and St. Wulstan, between whom that king was interred. Diminutive representations of the departed spirit, conveyed by angels to the heavens, of frequent occurrence in sepulchral brasses, are rare in monumental sculpture. An example is afforded by the effigy of Aymer de Valence, 1323, in Westminster Abbey.

A similar usage of mediæval art is frequently to be noticed in painted glass; representing personages of heroic proportion, as compared with the diminutive size of figures introduced in immediate connection with the subject portrayed. This usage, either in painting or sculpture, may doubtless have been sometimes caused merely by the fancy of the artist, but it seems to present, in many instances, a certain analogy to a rule of proportion observed in antique art, which may entitle it to more detailed notice than it has hitherto received.—ED.