

SOME NOTES ON THE ANCIENT ENCAUSTIC TILES IN GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL¹

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No Church in England can show a greater number of Ancient Encaustic Tiles than the cathedral of the city in which we are now met. They are probably all of Worcestershire manufacture, and most of them date from 1400 to 1460.

The most interesting is the pavement in the area before the High Altar, one half of which remains as it was originally put down in 1455 by Abbot Sebroke. It is formed of several compartments of which the most remarkable is composed of nine tiles. The centre one bears the arms of the Abbot "Ermine a cinquefoil," with the words "Dompnus Thomas Sebrok Abbas." On the upper tile will be seen the arms of the Abbey of Gloucester, "cross keys with a sword in pale." They were adopted as the arms of the See on its creation in 1541, and continued in use till the sword was taken away by Bishop Frampton in 1681. On a scroll are found the names of six of the monks who had assisted the Abbot in his undertaking, and the bearings of one of them, Brugg or Brydges, is introduced in the angles, his arms being "a cross charged with a lion's face in nombril point, differenced by a pine cone in dexter chief;" these arms also occur in one of the north windows of the church of Longdon, in Worcestershire. On a band is the appropriate first verse of the 133rd psalm "Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum."

Among these tiles will be found the two coats of arms of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the second son of King John, one the well-known lion rampant for Poictou, in a bordure bezantée, for Cornwall, and the other the eagle displayed which he bore as King of the Romans. Tiles bearing these arms are found not only here, but also at Worcester, Bordesley, Dale, Windsor, Holt, Malvern, Exeter and Dublin, and it might naturally be supposed that these tiles would all date between 1256, the date of Richard's election as King of the Romans and his death in 1271. This, however, is not the case, as they are evidently of much later date; and it is certain that, though these and other armorial designs were originally made for some one building, to which the person whose arms they represent had been a benefactor, yet they were later on freely supplied to other churches, and were used merely with a view to their decorative effect.

¹ Read in the Architectural Section at the Annual Meeting of the Institute, at Gloucester, August 14th, 1890.

This observation probably also holds good with regard to many of the tiles which will be observed in different parts of the Church. There is one tile which was certainly originally made for the Abbey of Bristol, and while the noble families of de Bohun, de Warenne, Maltravers, Beauchamp of Powyke and others may have been benefactors to the Abbey of Gloucester, it is not safe to conclude that they were so without corroborative evidence.

Some of the arms, however, were doubtless introduced as marks of respect to friends of the Abbey. The three covered caps point either to Abbot Boteler, or to Boteler, Lord of Sudeley, who was made a K.G. in 1439, and died in 1473; the arms of de Clare remind us of the generations in which the earldom of Gloucester was in that great family, and their successors the Despenchers are similarly commemorated. There are several tiles bearing the arms of abbots, and one of these commemorates the great Abbot Parker, who bore "Sable, a buck trippant arg between three pheons or, within a bordure engraved of the third." Some of the armorial tiles in the Lady Chapel were brought from New Lanthony on the dissolution of that Priory. Conspicuous among these is one bearing "on a chevron three pastoral staves between three Cornish Choughs," impaling the arms of the See of Canterbury. These are the arms of Henry Dene, who was Archbishop 1501-1503. He was prior of Lanthony to the day of his death, having been allowed to retain that office in commendam during his episcopate at Bangor, Salisbury, and Canterbury.

Other tiles worthy of notice in the Lady Chapel are one bearing the arms of the See of Worcester, another bearing the words "Croys Christ me spede, Amen," and a very beautiful design with the inscription "Orate pro anima Johannis Hertlond." Perhaps some local antiquary may be able to tell us who this John Hertlond was.

In a room in the Deanery is a fine pavement partly composed of a splendid pattern of griffins, which is also to be found at Tewkesbury, and forms a prominent feature in the magnificent pavement at Broadwas in the neighbouring county of Worcester. Here will be found also several examples of a tile which is frequently found in churches in this part of England, quite thirty examples being known to me. It is evidently the lower tile of a set of four, the whole set giving the arms of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and his wife Isabella. The bearings on this scutcheon were quarterly Beauchamp and Newburgh impaling quarterly de Clare and le Despencer.

It is a remarkable fact that though so many of this lower corner tile are known, the other three of the set can nowhere be discovered. It is possible that the set was originally made for Hanley Castle, the great house of Malvern Chase, where according to Leland the Earl and his Countess "lay much." Of that castle not one stone remains upon another.

The arms of the great Earl and his Countess seems to have been very differently marshalled at various times. In the example before us he impales his wife's arms; on a seal attached to the Llantrissaint Borough Charter, dated 1424, his arms are quartered with those of his wife, the contents of each quarter being impaled, while on the monument at Warwick the Countess' Arms are borne on a 'scutcheon of pretence.

Dallaway figures in his "Heraldry in England" a set of four tiles

which must have been designed by the same hand as those which I have just spoken of. He says that they are in the Library of the Cathedral at Gloucester, but I have been unable to find them, though they exist in a very perfect state at Middle Littleton near Evesham. The arms are those of the great Earl of Shrewsbury, who quarters the arms of his first wife (Furnival) and impales those of his second wife (Beauchamp)

Mr. Bazeley has called my attention to some very remarkable thirteenth century tiles which are now in one of the upper chapels. They represent a Knight tilting, and are similar in character to others which have been observed at Romsey, Lewes and Tintern. He wears a flat topped helmet, and carries a heater shaped shield and a spear with a triangular pennon.

I have thus glanced at a few of the more interesting tiles in this Church, and commend all of them to careful examination.