

NOTES ON THE ARMOUR OF SIR JAMES SCUDAMORE
(1558-1619).

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Viscount Dillon, long-time Keeper of the Tower armoury and author of many tracts on ancient armour, published in the *Archaeological Journal* (lxxii, 1915, pp. 75-76) several notes concerning the Elizabethan armour purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These deserve brief comment.

There are now in New York two suits of armour (certain pieces restored) made in the Greenwich workshop about 1585. One of these suits is decorated with narrow bands of etching: the other is broad-banded, each band etched with a sinuous ornament broken by a narrow zig-zag line. The substance of Lord Dillon's criticism is that the pieces of the latter suit did not belong to Sir James Scudamore, to whom we ascribe them, but to another Elizabethan personage, Lord Henry Compton. Lord Dillon had, nevertheless, seen the article in which this armour was described (*Bulletin Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. viii, pp. 118-123; cf. also later, vol. xi, pp. 69-71), but he did not observe, curiously enough, that the armour which he comments upon is there shown in a contemporary portrait of Scudamore himself. Hence it is difficult to understand why our armour has not been correctly assigned: of course, it is possible that so distinguished and wealthy a worthy might have had his portrait painted wearing the armour of another person—just as he might have been portrayed in very sumptuous costume purchased at second-hand—but the possibility is humorously remote. We note, also, that the armour in question was preserved in Scudamore's ancient Holme Lacy—probably, indeed, for centuries in the same chest in which it was found packed away with the other suit which Lord Dillon admits, *vide* the Album, is attributed accurately. The Compton armour, on the other hand, which emanated from the same governmental workshop, is known to have been in the Tower armoury as late as 1625 (Sir Guy F. Laking, *A*

Record of European Armour and Arms, vol. iv, p. 10), which was many years after Scudamore was painted in similar armour and at Holme Lacy (as the picture indicates).

The case of identity, in fact, is so clear that we would not now comment upon Lord Dillon's criticism were it not that in his recent work *Laking* (op. cit.) has followed Lord Dillon's attribution. Lord Dillon's argument, as one follows it, is briefly this: 'Compton had a suit like this one and the Album pictures it; it could not have been Scudamore's, since the latter had one suit of armour pictured already, and the Album makes no mention of his having had a second suit; hence this must be the missing Compton suit.' (He might have added, 'It is true, the Scudamore suit might have been Buckhurst's armour of the Album, which had an identical design, but this is already identified in the Wallace Collection'). The argument is attractive, but obviously unsound: it presupposes that the Greenwich armoury produced no other suits of the same pattern. Nevertheless, numerous suits of the same design may have existed which are not pictured in the present 'Album,' which appears to have been but one volume of an inventory (cf. *Laking and Cripps-Day*, op. cit. p. 10).

One is tempted to comment on Lord Dillon's paper in detail: but enough material has already been cited in the *Record* (which includes the illuminating researches of its editor, Mr. Cripps-Day) to confirm the view earlier expressed by the present writer that there *was* an *English* school of armourers.¹ Lord Dillon cannot believe that there were 'several generations' of English artist-workmen already developed in Greenwich by 1575, since the ateliers were hardly earlier than 1514. He failed, apparently, to gather that when 'generations of workmen' are spoken of, they imply the relationship of master and pupil, rather than of father and son (thus, to speak of the third generation of Kaneiyé, or the twenty-eighth of Miochin, is not to assume that they are the blood-descendants of the first).

¹ *Laking and Cripps-Day*, p. 7. 'This Greenwich school of armourers no doubt learned their art from the numerous foreign armourers—Flemish, German or Italian—who had been brought to England by Henry VII and Henry VIII; but by the time of

Elizabeth they had evolved a type of armour and decoration peculiarly their own, which, as we have already pointed out (*ante*. p. 2), is very distinct from the type and decoration of contemporary suits made in Germany, Italy or France.'

Lord Dillon, it will be recalled, followed an Austrian author, Boenheim, and inclines to the view that the best English armour was of German manufacture or inspiration (alas!) The illustrated inventory of the Royal Armoury is to him an 'Almain Armourer's Album,' its 'presumed author' a certain Jacob Topf. Unfortunately, however, for Lord Dillon's conclusions this Innsbruck plattner is not known to have visited England; and the only armour (Vienna) which we can identify as his work shows clearly that he is *not* the maker of any of the Greenwich armour, although Lord Dillon suggests that Topf either made all the suits there, or provided the models from which the rest were copied (introduction of Album, p. 2).

Just a final detail: *in re* the braguette—of arch importance, though, according to Panurge! Lord Dillon declares that the Album was probably of German origin since 'most figures' are shown with this defence, a feature 'wanting in all pictures painted in England during Elizabeth's reign,' 'an article of dress' that 'never appears.' In this Lord Dillon apparently means that while *as armour* the braguette had then passed out of use in England, yet 'most figures' in the Album are shown with metal braguettes. If he intends to maintain this, he will certainly have a difficult task, for the *Album does not show that the braguette was used as a regular element of armour.* In point of fact, the braguette is represented in the published Album *in the colour of the costume*, not of the armour, in eleven cases out of twelve (the exceptional one, the harness of Sir John Smith, pl. xxvii): it does not appear at all in four instances (cf. Laking, *op. cit.* p. 9). In all cases it is reduced to a 'rudimentary organ,' as a zoologist would say. We note finally that as costume the braguette was not infrequently used in Elizabethan England: bear witness the best-known portrait of Leicester, which can justly typify the fashion of the day.