

## Carved Panels from the Old Home of the Babingtons in Derby.

BY REV. CHARLES KERRY.



LOVER, in his History of Derbyshire (Vol. ii., p. 521), states that in 1712 the ancient stone gateway of old Babington House was standing. "This gateway was ornamented with the arms of Babington sculptured in stone, and supported by baboons upon tuns. *The hall was wainscotted with oak: on the panels were various devices, and baboons upon tuns carved thereon; the same being a play upon the name of Babington.*"

Six of these panels are now in the possession of the Rev. Charles Kerry.

The first (Pl. I., No. 1) has a tree with three drooping branches on each side, each having a cluster of berries on a twisted stem, each leaf plain, and ending in a single point. The foot of the tree is inserted in a tun—plainly indicating a rebus. The stem of the tree is supported by two lions rampant, their noses being in contact in front of the stem; their forelegs are placed on each other's shoulders, as if in the act of embracing.

The same device, but without the lions, also appears on two oak spandrels, taken from the old roof of Dethic Church, and still preserved there. This roof was erected by Sir Anthony Babington, Knight, about 1530. The following extract from the fourth volume of the Surrey Archæological Collections (p. 294) may serve to throw some light upon this rebus. Mr. Charles Baily, in his remarks on timber houses, writes: "Much painted glass, con-

sisting of coats of arms, badges, and other figures, is still preserved in many of the windows at Sutton Place, near Guildford; amongst which is a curious rebus of the Weston family, which was interpreted and explained for the first time by Mr. William Henry Black, F.S.A., upon the occasion of the visit of the members of the Surrey Archæological Society on July 7, 1864. It appears also on many parts of the exterior, executed in terra cotta. It is a vine leaf with a bunch of grapes in conjunction with a barrel or tun. Mr. Black reads it in Norman French—the *grapes* as UVES; the 'UV' in which is equal to 'VV' or 'W,' UVES thus becomes 'WES,' and the tonne or tun completes the name WESTON."

In this panel, however, the tree bearing the grapes or clusters is planted *in* the tun—hence, according to this interpretation, we shall obtain the word WES-IN-TUN, or *Wessington*, the name of an adjoining township to Dethic.

I can find no traces of an alliance of the Babingtons with the Wessington family, but the device may refer to some connection of the Dethics with a neighbouring family of this name, which alliance would naturally be perpetuated by the Babingtons as the heirs of the Dethic family.

The second panel (Pl. I., No. 2) has a Phoenix rising from its ashes within a conventional wreath. The folding of the wreath above is probably not without its significance. The bird will imply resuscitation, and the wreath duration.

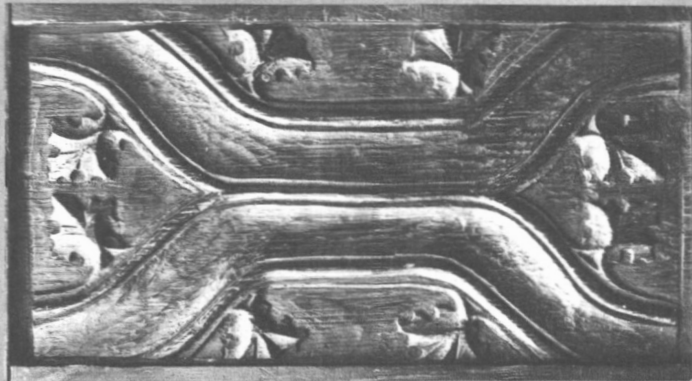
The third panel (Pl. I., No. 3) is very interesting, and, taken with the first, corroborates unmistakably its Babington origin. At the top of the panel is the head of a baboon. In its mouth is a flute, dividing itself a little below the voice-hole (formed exactly like that of a child's modern whistle) into two curved and diverging pipes, each showing five recorders or finger-holes. The pipe for the right hand has three above and two below. In the pipe for the left hand this order is reversed. These pipes, combined with pomegranates, form a sort of canopy to the principal compartment, which contains a cockatrice rampant, with three claws and a spur on each foot; its dragon-like tail is curved over from beneath. Whether the bird is intended to be rampant or "saltant," I

No. 4.

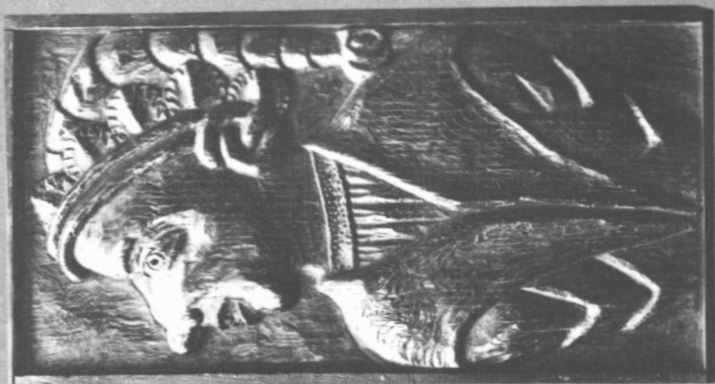


PLATINOTYPE.

No. 5.



No. 6.



R. KEENE, DERBY.

OAK PANELS FROM BABINGTON OLD HALL, DERBY.

No. 3.

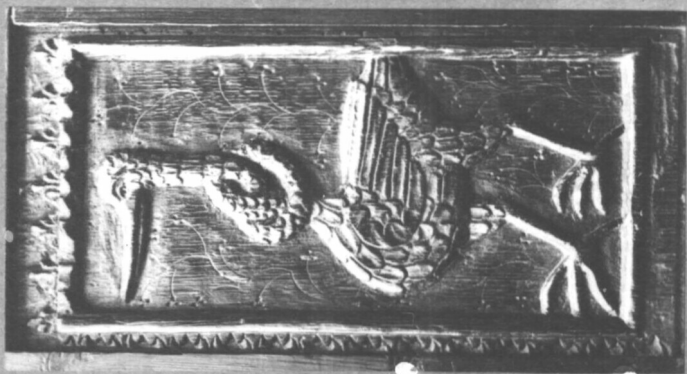


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No. 2.



No. 1.



PLATINOTYPE

OAK PANELS FROM BABINGTON OLD HALL, DERBY.

cannot say, but its lively attitude would lead one to suppose that it was not insensible to the strains of the piper above.

The baboon with his pipe is clearly intended for Baboon "*tune*," or "*tone*," a form of the family rebus which is most unusual.

The fourth panel (Pl. II., No. 1) has a bird of the wading family, with its long neck tied into a single knot. The wings are very short and the bill long. The feet (unwebbed) have each four long claws—three and one. The bird is enclosed in an oblong compartment by a plain moulding with Vandyke foliation on the top and sides. From the treatment, this also may be intended for a family device.

The fifth (Pl. II., No. 2) has a common form of late Gothic panelling, with leaves for cusps.

The sixth (Pl. II., No. 3) has the bust of a laughing jester looking across his right shoulder. His dress consists of a conical shaped cap, the point of which falls behind the head and terminates in a globular perforated pendant. The cap is secured by a double cord passing round the head and forming the belt of a feathery crown. He wears a fine linen shirt, finely pleated round the neck into a plain punctured collar or band, probably fastened at the back. The collar of his jerkin is of fur, and of the most ample dimensions, rising from a point at the waist and completely covering the shoulders.

From the amount of character depicted in the face, the prominent forehead, the bright piercing eye, the Roman nose, and the expressive mouth, there can be no doubt but that we have here a tolerably good portrait of a valued servant and favourite of the Babington household.