

Medieval Glass from Dale Abbey.

By H. M. COLVIN.

DURING the excavations carried out on the site of Dale Abbey in 1878-9 a number of fragments of painted glass came to light, and may now be seen in a box in the abbey museum, but they are for the most part too small and decayed to be of any value. The excavations recently conducted by the present writer on the presumed site of the infirmary yielded many similar fragments, among them one of considerable interest. This represents the crowned head of a woman, and may be dated to the end of the thirteenth century. An illustration of this fine head will be found in *D.A.J.*, N.S. vol. xii, for 1938 (p. 93).

Early in the nineteenth century fragments of painted glass and inscriptions were still to be seen in the windows of several cottages in Dale Abbey,¹ but no trace of these now remains. Other fragments of glass from Dale were, during the last century, in the possession of a Miss Wright of Brookfield, who presented them to Hathersage church. They were formerly to be seen in the upper tracery of one of the windows in the north aisle of that church, but have since been removed to the vicarage to make way for modern glass. An ape seated, an owl, a griffin, and an eagle's head and wings, all chiefly of a yellow colour, can be distinguished.²

¹ Pilkington, *View of Derbyshire* (1789), ii, p. 218, and others.

² J. C. Cox, *Churches of Derbyshire*, ii, p. 230.

By far the most important remains of the Dale Abbey glass, however, are to be found in Morley church.³ Among the property from Dale Abbey which Francis Pole bought after its dissolution in 1538 were "the roof, iron, glass and pavingstones in the cloister."⁴ Tradition states that he re-erected five of the former cloister-windows in the north aisle of Morley church, but, while there is no doubt that the windows now at Morley were indeed brought from Dale Abbey shortly after its dissolution,⁵ it is far more probable that it was Sir Henry Sacheverell who installed them at Morley.⁶ Probably he bought the glass itself from Pole, and as he was steward of the abbey site⁷ the removal of the window-frames would present little difficulty. Indeed, his own tomb-slab at Morley evidently came from Dale, for when it was taken up last century the reverse side was found to bear the matrix of a very fine ecclesiastical brass.⁸

The north aisle was almost entirely rebuilt to receive the windows, four of which fill most of the north wall, while the fifth is placed in the east wall. They are each square-headed, and of four lights, with perpendicular tracery in the heads. One of the lights of the window at the end of the aisle is filled in by the seventeenth-century monument to Jacinth Sacheverell and his wife.

All five windows were originally glazed with painted glass, and were protected by external shutters. Dr. Cox

³ Four miles N.E. of Derby.

⁴ See the Inventory of the Possessions of Dale Abbey, taken at the Dissolution, printed by S. Fox, *History of Morley Church*, pp. 38-41, and in *Archaeologia*, vol. LIII (1871), pp. 221-4.

⁵ See G. Ward, *Dale and its Abbey*, pp. 64-6 and W. H. St. G. Hope, "The Abbots of Dale," in *D.A.J.*, vol. v (1883), p. 91.

⁶ Cox, *loc. cit.*, iv, p. 340. Both Dr. Cox and the Rev. S. Fox (*Hist. of Morley Ch.*) thought that the glass came from the refectory, but it is clear that it is from the cloisters.

⁷ *D.A.J.*, vol. xxviii (1906), pp. 22, 31.

⁸ Fox, *loc. cit.*, p. viii (pl. XV): Cox, *loc. cit.*, iv, p. 334. There is a rubbing of the matrix in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, London. Sacheverell's brass is in all probability a palimpsest.

suggests⁹ that the latter may have been constructed to conceal the illegal celebration of Roman Catholic services after the Reformation, for the Sacheverells, like many other conservative country families in Derbyshire, refused to adopt the new faith. By the end of the eighteenth century these shutters had become decayed, and they were not renewed, as they no longer served any useful purpose. The windows themselves fell into decay, and a most careless and indifferent period set in. One day in June 1789, for instance, the Hon. John Byng, of Torrington Diaries fame, arrived to inspect the church: "There was some stain'd glass in the windows, and some broken pieces laying upon a monument, where I *cou'd not reach*;¹⁰ the fracture of this window was made by the entrance of a *sacrilegious fellow* to steal the church plate."¹¹ Indeed, the church was regarded with so little respect that it was the custom for visitors at village functions and times of hospitality such as Christmas and the Wakes to pull a bit of painted glass out of the windows to take home as a memento, or as a plaything for their children. This state of affairs continued until 1829, when Mr. Fox, later the rector, entered upon his curacy.¹²

By then the glazing of the two westernmost windows had disappeared with the exception of a few fragments, and the panels composing the others, besides being in a much decayed condition, were scattered about the church, in no sort of order, but often upside-down or on their sides. In 1847 Mr. Fox, the rector, and Mr. T. Osborne Bateman decided to restore the remaining three, at the latter's expense, and the services of W. Warrington, of Upper Berkeley Street, London, who was at the time engaged on works for the Earl of Harrington at

⁹ Cox, *loc. cit.*, iv, p. 341.

¹⁰ The italics are the diarist's own.

¹¹ *The Torrington Diaries*, ed. C. B. Andrews, ii, p. 64.

¹² T. O. Bateman, "Notes on Morley Church," p. 132, in *Reliquary* xiii, (1872-3).

Elvaston Castle, were obtained for the purpose. Before the restoration was begun tracings of the glass were taken, showing it exactly as it was found.¹³

As the restorers were determined to complete the legends a large amount of new glass was necessary, in some cases complete panels, though whenever possible missing pieces were supplied from fragments. A number of broken pieces of glass from the destroyed windows which were not thus used up were formed into a mosaic window in the south aisle, behind the organ. It should be noted that the figure of St. Catherine embodied in this window did not form part of the original glass, but was put in by Warrington to fill up a blank space.¹⁴ The arms of Sacheverell are distinguishable, but it is probable that they formed part of the original Morley glass, and did not come from Dale Abbey.¹⁵

The other windows will now be described in order. The window¹⁶ at the end of the aisle depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary on the left, the legend of St. Ursula in the centre, and St. Mary Magdalene on the right. Underneath are three compartments probably illustrative of the *Te Deum*. The B.V.M. is shown full-length, and is a dignified and well-proportioned figure, holding the infant Christ, in whose hand is a dove symbolising the Holy Spirit. The inscription reads *SCĀ MARIA*. The figure of the Magdalen, who is holding her characteristic

¹³ Four details from the tracings are reproduced by G. J. Waller, "Ancient Painted Glass in Morley Church," in *Journal of British Arch. Ass.*, viii (1853), p. 28.

¹⁴ G. Bailey, "On a Painted Glass Window in Morley Church," p. 144, in *D.A.J.*, viii (1886).

¹⁵ The same, of course, applies to the other old glass in the s. aisle: for the latter see G. Bailey, "Painted Glass in Morley Ch.," in *D.A.J.* ix (1887), pp. 33-38; J. S. Purvis, "A Figure of St. John of Bridlington in Morley Church," in *D.A.J.*, n.s. I (1924-5), pp. 258-262; and the Bibliography at the end of this paper.

¹⁶ This window is reproduced in colour in *D.A.J.* viii (1886), plate ix, and the centre light only in outline in J. C. Cox, *loc. cit.* iv, plate xiv. *The Journal of the B. Arch. Assn.* viii (1853), p. 28, has an outline drawing of the Holy Church panel before restoration.

vase, has suffered some damage, for her feet are cut off. The inscription reads SCA MARIA MAGDALENA and is part of Warrington's restoration. With the exception of an imperfect window in the north quire aisle of Winchester Cathedral, placed there by Bishop Fox, and of sixteenth-century date, the central light is apparently a unique representation of the legend of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne. The legend of St. Ursula, who was martyred together with her eleven thousand companions while on a pilgrimage to Rome, has been described by Mr. Bailey in volume eight of this *Journal*, and need not be repeated here. In the Dale window St. Ursula, wearing a crown of martyrdom, is shown ascending to heaven with arms outspread in benediction, while the eleven thousand virgins are represented by eleven small figures in a sheet, which is being borne up after her by angels holding its corners, so that they form a somewhat comic bundle of figures in the act of adoration, all held together in the cloth.¹⁷ The writing on the scroll is SCĀ URSULA CUM XI M VIRGINUM CŪ ANGELIS ASCIENDENS IN CELUM.

Each of the three saints is shown against a blue background, and is framed by elaborate pinacled canopy-work painted in yellow on white glass. The latter is in a somewhat confused state, but it appears to belong to the figures, which date from the second half of the fourteenth century. At the top of each light there is a bird standing on a coloured border, and as the architectural work does not finish properly with these borders it seems evident that the birds are not part of the original glass.

The three processional groups below the main figures are likewise of later date, being of the fifteenth century which is the date of the other two windows of the series, and of the window frames. These three lower groups differ very much in style from the earlier figures above,

¹⁷ They appear, however, to be largely a restoration of Warrington's.

and together with the glass illustrative of the legend of St. Robert, and the Invention of the Cross, are undoubtedly Abbot Stanley's glass of 1478-82, inserted when he rebuilt the cloister,¹⁸ whilst the three saints above were perhaps re-inserted from the old cloister windows or from elsewhere in the abbey.

The three lower groups are usually held to be illustrative of the "Te Deum," and to represent respectively the "Holy Church," the "Glorious Company of the Apostles," and the "Noble Army of Martyrs."

The priestly group on the left is clearly typical of the Church. It is led by a Pope with his double crosier, followed by a Cardinal in his scarlet robes, a Bishop with his mitre, and other ecclesiastics, including an Abbot with his staff. The label from the Pope's mouth reads TIBI LAUS TIBI GLĪA TIBI DECET HONOR. The central group, that of the twelve Apostles, is headed by St. Peter, who bears two keys of large size. His label reads TE (*sic*) DECET LAUS ET HONOR DÑE. The identification of the third group with the "Noble Army of Martyrs" seems less certain, as it is headed by St. John the Evangelist, with his symbol of a poisoned cup from which is emerging a dragon, and consists of crowned or haloed men and women none of whom display any symbols of martyrdom; nor was this the manner in which St. John met his death. The inscription is IN SECULA SEMP(ER) BEATA.

In the next window is the Legend of the Invention of the Holy Cross by St. Helena, in ten compartments.¹⁹ The eleventh is occupied by a figure made up from fragments, round whose head there is a somewhat illegible inscription which appears to be ITE ADDUCITE MI IACOBŪ SIMUL CŪ PHILETO; the twelfth by the figure of

¹⁸ In May, 1478 this was described as *novites inceptum*, in July, 1482 as *ferme per circuitum edificatum*; *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia* (Camden Soc.) ed. F. A. Gasquet, II, nos. 358, 360.

¹⁹ This window is reproduced in colour in Fox's *History of Morley Church*; the *Journal of the British Arch. Assn.* has panel 8 in outline; and there is a photograph of panel 9 in *Thoroton Transactions XXIX* (1925), p. 13.

St. James the Great, wearing the shell in his hat. The backgrounds of both these compartments, and of several of the other ten are composed of fragments, as is the glass in the tops of the main lights. The spaces formed by the tracery contain plain quarries bearing a simple yellow pattern. This is repeated in all three windows.

The legend,²⁰ though subject to many variations, is substantially as follows. After the Crucifixion all three crosses were buried in the earth, where they remained undisturbed for over three hundred years. In the year 326 St. Helena (*c.* 247—*c.* 327), the wife of the Emperor Constantine I of Rome, was told of the position of the Cross while on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Palestine. After the ground had been dug to a considerable depth, the three crosses were found. This placed the searchers in a dilemma as to which was the true Cross. The difficulty was, however, soon solved, for the corpse of a woman which happened to be passing at the moment was laid on each in turn, in the hope that its recovery would determine the Saviour's Cross from those of the robbers. On being placed on the third it came to life, and further confirmation was afforded by the almost obliterated inscription placed over Christ's head by Pilate, which was discovered after close search. The nails were also found. In the meanwhile numerous brightly-coloured devils flew round, displaying their chagrin by howling loudly. This event is commemorated by a festival on the third of May, called the "Invention of the Holy Cross." It is mentioned in the Dale Chartulary (f. 55), in a deed dated 1263.

After St. Helena's discovery, a church was built on the site, and in it she placed the greater portion of the Cross, encased in a silver shrine. A small portion she took to Constantinople, and thence a piece was sent to Rome, where it is said to be still preserved in the church

²⁰ So far as it concerns Heraclius's campaigns it is historically correct in the main essentials.

of St. Croce-in-Gerusalemme, which was specially built to receive it. The portion at Jerusalem remained undisturbed until, in 614, Chosroes II, the infidel King of Persia, carried it off in triumph to his native country, after ravaging Syria and Palestine. After a long and bloody war with the Romans he was eventually overcome by the Emperor Heraclius (c. 575—642), who killed his eldest son in single combat. Chosroes was promised his life if he would become a Christian, but he proudly refused, and Heraclius immediately struck off his head. His younger son, however, embraced the religion that his father and brother had so stoutly opposed, and was baptised, Heraclius acting as sponsor.

In 629 the Emperor returned in triumph to Jerusalem, bearing with him the Cross, but as the victorious procession drew near to the gates, it was seen that the entrance had been miraculously walled up to bar his way. Suddenly an angel appeared above the battlements, and sternly told the Emperor that where he was now riding in all the splendour of war, Christ had once ridden on an ass. Weeping, the Emperor tore off his clothes, and barefoot prepared to enter the gates of Jerusalem, which thereupon opened to receive the Cross and its humbled champion.

The first compartment portrays the making of the cross, the inscription, which is modern, being **SANCTAM CRUCEM FACIUNT**. Three men are engaged in its construction, and among their tools may be distinguished a saw, a drill and a set-square. In the second compartment Christ is being bound upon the Cross, while three men stand ready to drive in the nails, which are in a basket beneath. The inscription, which is original, reads **SUPER CRUCE STRICTUS EST IH̄C**. The next compartment shows the Cross being buried after the Crucifixion—**SANCTA CRUX SUB TERRĀ CONDITUR** (inscription again modern). The fourth panel is entirely new. In it St.

Helena learns of the position of the Cross from an angel in a vision, as explained below—*SCĒTĀ HELENA PER SOMNIŪ CRUCĒ VIDET*. The angel is framed in a bright blue cloud, and holds a cross. The fifth compartment shows the search for the Cross under the direction of St. Helena. A small portion of it is visible at the bottom of a deep hole. The modern inscription reads *SANCTĀ CRUCĒ INVENIUNT AŌ CCCXXVI*.

The sixth compartment, which is new but for part of the corpse, was made to fit the inscription, which had survived. St. Helena is standing on the left, and Heraclius, distinguished by a triple crown,²¹ on the right, while the Cross is being laid on the shrouded form of the dead woman, who is resting on a six-legged bier of Tudor design. A light mauve devil is flying overhead, and red and green ones are crawling on the ground and howling loudly, as the inscription describes by *DEMONES FECERŪL (sic) ULULATŪ IN AERE*.

The wars of Heraclius and the adventures of the Cross are omitted in the glass, and the seventh compartment illustrates the scene where Heraclius struck off Chosroe's head. The Emperor, clad in a red robe, and wearing his triple crown, is standing beside the Cross brandishing a large scimitar over Chosroe's, who is seated and still holding his sceptre. Several attendants are visible, registering great surprise. The small inscription in the picture—the old one—reads *HIC ERACLIUS AMPUTAT CAPUT*, and the new one below *HERACLIUS FIDĒ COLCHOI OBTULIT*.

The eighth compartment shows the baptism of Chosroe's son, who is standing naked, up to his waist in a large font of Perpendicular design. The ceremony is being performed by a Bishop, while Heraclius stands by. The ever-present Cross shows in the background. There are again two inscriptions, the old one, *HIC ERACLIUS BAPTIZAVIT SUŪ FILIŪ JUNIOREM* round the plinth of the

²¹ The triple crown is properly the attribute of the Pope.

font, and the nineteenth-century HERACLIUS FILIŪ COLCHOIS BAPTIZAVIT below.

In the ninth compartment is shown the triumphant return to Jerusalem. Heraclius, mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, and with the Cross beside him, is approaching a medieval walled town, whose gateway is completely walled up with solid masonry. The modern inscription reads SANCTA CRUCĒ IN HIEROSOLUNĀ PORTANT.

The tenth and final scene is the restoration of the Cross to its church. It is standing upright on the floor, surrounded by a large crowd of people. The inscription, which is again modern, reads SCTÆ CRUCIS EXALTATIO XVIII KAL OCT. This refers to the "Exaltation of the Holy Cross," a festival kept on September 14th. This panel is framed in a depressed Tudor arch, above which can be distinguished part of the roof of the church. It is noteworthy that in each case it is the Tau Cross which is represented, in place of the more familiar Latin Cross. On the whole it must be confessed that the restoration, though perhaps rather too drastic by modern standards, is by no means unsuccessful.

The third window of the series illustrates the Legend of St. Robert of Knaresborough and the deer.²² This is subject to even more variation than that of the Cross, but the following seems to be the version adopted in the Dale glass.

St. Robert's corn was continually eaten by deer from the neighbouring royal forest, and in desperation he finally shot several. The keepers immediately reported this breach of the game laws to King John, who summoned the hermit to his presence. He was, however, so impressed by his piety that he gave Robert leave to impound any deer which should again steal his corn.

²² It is reproduced in colour in Fox's *History of Morley Church*, and there is a photograph in *Thoroton Trans.*, xxix (1925), p. 15; panels 5 and 6 are given in outline in *Journal of Brit. Arch. Assn.*, *loc. cit.*

This Robert did, and again the keepers went before the King, though apparently only in accordance with their instructions. St. Robert was called a second time, and John granted him as much ground as he could plough round with two deer, between sunrise and sunset.

The legend is admirably restored considering the date, the new glass being surprisingly satisfactory, in spite of the fact that Warrington—apparently in accordance with Mr. Fox's own instructions—treated it in accordance with Pilkington's totally erroneous Legend of St. Robert of Dale, the supposed founder of the Abbey.²³ Fortunately, in its essentials, this story differed but little from the real subject of the glass, and little harm resulted.

The first compartment is entirely new, including the inscription, but was made in accordance with a MS. description²⁴ left by Elias Ashmole, who visited Morley in August, 1662, when the glass was in a state of tolerable preservation. It shows Robert and an attendant, clad in monastic garb, shooting at several deer which are standing in a corn-field, while two keepers watch from a nearby wood. The legend beneath is **ST ROBERT SHOOTETH THE DEERE EATYNG HYS CORNE.**²⁵ That beneath the next panel is **WHEREOF THE KEEPERS COMPLAYN TO THE KYN(GE).** Three keepers stand before him. In the third compartment St. Robert is on his knees before John, who says **GO WHOM (home) AD PYNE THEM.** The description beneath is **HERE HE COMPLANYTH HYM TO THE KYNGE.** The fourth, which is another

²³ *View of Derbyshire* ii, pp. 208-18. This story was originated by the Rev. R. Wilmot, Rector of Morley, who communicated it to Pilkington. It was, of course, nothing more than an ingenious misinterpretation of the real subject of the glass. It is followed by other historians of Derbyshire, including Lysons. See Fox, *Morley Church*, p. 11, *Reliquary* XIII (1872-3), p. 135; W. & M. Howitt *The Forest Minstrel*, note, to a "legend of Dale Abbey."

²⁴ Ashmole MS. 854, f. 7, in the Bodleian Library. There is a fairly accurate transcription in J. C. Cox, *loc. cit.*, iv, 341.

²⁵ Ashmole gives: "Saint Robert being an Hermite
Seyng the dere eytyng ys corn."

One wonders why this was not followed more accurately in the restoration.

modern insertion, though not in this case on Ashmole's authority, shows St. Robert holding a noose, and driving the deer into a pen, while the keepers stand watching. The inscription (also modern) reads ST ROBERT CATCHYTH THE DEERE. In the fifth THE KEEPERS INFORM THE KYNGE.²⁶ They are wearing green costumes, and stand bare-headed before the king, from whom proceed the words BID HIM COME TO ME.

The next compartment shows the king kneeling before St. Robert, who has a staff in one hand, while the other is raised in benediction. A meek boy stands in attendance. The king says GO YE WHOM AND YOLKKE THEM. AND TAKE YE GROUND YT YE PLOOE. The inscription below is modern—THE KYNGE GYFYTH HYM THE GROUNDE. The seventh compartment is another of Warrington's insertions. It shows the Saint ploughing with the deer. The inscription reads HERE SAYNT ROBERT PLOOYTH WYTH THE DEERE, and is part of the ancient glass, together with St. Robert's beads and a portion of the plough.

In the eighth compartment is a scene having no connection with the legend. A monk is reading a lecture to an erring brother whose hands are manacled. Below is the admonition TAKE HEEDE TO THY WAYS BROTHER. Mr. Kerry rather ingeniously—though with little probability—suggests that this may represent Henry, the dissolute Prior of Deepdale.²⁷

In the head of each of the main lights of this window is a yellow pattern with a cresting of conventionalised foliage, the whole somewhat resembling a crown. Missing pieces have been supplied by miscellaneous fragments. The four lower compartments contain the arms of Dale Abbey, Pole, Bateman and Sitwell in modern glass, and underneath is the following inscription: THESE ANCIENT WINDOWS WERE BROUGHT HERE BY FRANCIS POLE (*sic*) FROM THE ABBEY OF DALE

²⁶ This inscription is not recorded by Ashmole, and appears to be modern.

²⁷ *Reliquary*, xxiv (1883-4), p. 219n.

AFTER ITS DESTRUCTION IN 1539 AND WERE RESTORED BY W. WARRINGTON, LONDON FOR THOMAS OSBORN BATEMAN IN THE YEAR 1847. SAMUEL FOX, M.A. RECTOR,

In the *Reliquary* of 1872-3 (vol. xiii) Mr. Bateman concludes: "the entire quantity of glass releaded, re-fixed, repaired, and somewhat augmented, was measured at 185 feet, according to the workman's peculiar way of measuring. Mr. Warrington's original rough estimate to make a good job of this was £100, but when, on completion, he told me that £200 would barely remunerate him, I paid him the money without objection, so highly was I satisfied with the result."

The remaining two windows are filled with poor modern glass by Messrs. Burlison and Grylls, which professes to imitate the style of the old glass.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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- T. O. Bateman: "Notes on Morley Church near Derby," in *Reliquary*, vol. xiii (1872-3).
- J. C. Cox: *Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv (1879), pp. 340-1; with an illustration in outline of the central light of the *Ursula* window.
- G. Bailey: "On a Painted Glass Window in Morley Church, Derbyshire," in *D.A.J.*, vol. viii (1886); with a coloured plate of the *Ursula* window.
- P. Nelson: *Ancient Painted Glass in England* (Antiquaries Books) (1913), pp. 69-71. *The Archaeological Journal*, vol. lxxi (1914), p. 376. *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, vol. xxix (1926), pp. 12-14; with photographs of the *St. Robert* window, and of one panel of the *Holy Cross* window.