



## Effigy in Holy Trinity Church, Chester

BY STEPHEN W. WILLIAMS, F.S.A.

**T**HE effigy of John de Whitmore, in Holy Trinity Church, Chester, is an interesting specimen of the military equipment of an English Knight of the middle or latter part of the 14th century, and is of a type that prevailed during that period, the main features of which dominated through the first half of the succeeding century.

The characteristics of this type are: the pointed bascinet, with a camail, or mail covering for the neck and shoulders, attached to it (generally by laces drawn through staples or loops); the tight surcoat or jupon, much padded on the breast, and often emblazoned with the knight's armorial bearings; the horizontal sword belt, worn low down on the hips, formed of square plaques of embossed metal, which were frequently ornamented with enamel work; the thighs, arms, and legs covered with close-fitting plate-armor, simple in form, and shewing the mail beneath at the joints; the hands covered with steel gauntlets, often of most elaborate design and workmanship; and the feet covered with flexible steel shoes, called sollerets.

In all probability the surcoat covers a breast and back plate of steel; but, so far as the effigies go, this is a question they do not answer. We know that when the surcoat is first worn it covers a simple hauberk,

and that when it is discarded, a hundred years later, it discloses a very complete and well-constructed breast and back plate of steel. It is, however, most probable that not only was a steel back and breast plate worn at the period of which we are now treating, but even at an earlier date it was worn as an additional protection under the coat of mail.

The bascinet had sometimes a movable vizor, generally fastened on by means of a pin passing through a hinge or loop fixed on each side. When this was not used the tilting helm was worn over the bascinet in the time of actual combat; and in monumental effigies the knight is generally represented with it under his head.

The writer of this short paper has not had the advantage of seeing the Chester effigy, and it is of course very difficult to properly describe its characteristics from a drawing, however carefully it may be made. The figure, which is recumbent in an attitude of prayer, is represented in a complete suit of plate-armour, wearing a jupon or tight-fitting surcoat, upon which his armorial bearings are emblazoned, as well as upon the shield which is suspended by a broad strap over the right shoulder, and lies on his left side. The arms are "*Fretty*," or "*Trellis*"; careful examination of the monument may disclose the tinctures.

The bascinet is acutely pointed, the camail is attached to it by means of laces passed through staples or "*vervelles*." An enriched orle or wreath surrounds the bascinet; this was probably intended to keep the tilting helm steady when placed over it.

There appears to be a chin piece or *mentonnière* of plate, to which the camail is attached. This is a some-

what unusual feature. The introduction of a gorget or *bavier* of plate, worn over the camail, took place about the end of the 14th century, and the gorget and chin-piece eventually superseded entirely the use of the camail.

Èpaulières (epaulets), consisting of overlapping plates, protect the shoulders; they were usually three or four in number.

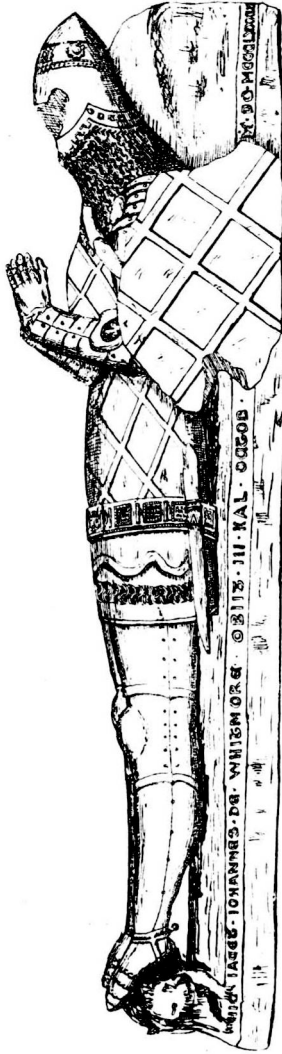
The forearm, so far as can be seen in the illustration, is protected by a *vambrace* of laminated plates, and the elbows by *coudières*, with some kind of ornament on the fan-like portion. The hands are not covered; as a rule, effigies of this period are generally depicted with gauntlets.

There appear to be only some fragments left of the sword suspended on the left side from the broad belt worn below the hip, and ornamented with metal plaques; the detail of these are often very beautiful. On the right side the "miserecord" or "anelace" would be found, also suspended from the belt.

Below the belt is seen the scalloped edge of the jupon—beneath that was worn the hauberk of mail; in this case it cannot be traced on the illustration, unless the line of ornament under the edge of the jupon is intended to represent it. Below that again would be the quilted gambeson, in all probability indicated by the double line below the band of ornament.

The thighs and legs are encased in plate; laminated and pointed sollerets protect the feet; and rowell spurs are buckled over the insteps.

The date in the inscription is A.D. 1374. The general characteristics of the armour agree very well with that date, or a somewhat later period; and it



Plaster Effigy of John de Whitmore, Mayor of Chester 1369 to 1372,  
now in Holy Trinity Church, Chester.



must be borne in mind that the monument may not have been executed immediately after the decease of the person represented, and in that case the artist might have followed the prevailing fashion of a later period.



BY HENRY TAYLOR, F.S.A.



JOHN DE WHYTEMORE or Whitmore was Mayor of Chester in 1369 and the three following years. He married Cicely, sole daughter and heiress of John son of Margaret, daughter and heiress of John son of Eustachia, daughter and heiress of Ralph de Vernon, son of Warin de Vernon, Baron of Shipbrook, in the time of King John. They had a son John, who combined in himself through his father and his mother the two lines of the old family of Haselwell or Heswell of Thurstaston, and may thus be looked upon as the first member of his family who was sole Lord of the Manor of Thurstaston.

On the Chester Recognizance Rolls there is the following entry:—

1393. John son of John de Whytemore being about to leave the country in the train of Hugh de Calveley, Knight, Senior, the King granted his licence to John de Capenhurst, Edmund de Whytemore and Roger de Merton to act as the Attornies of the said John during his absence.

In 1395 he had returned, and entered into a recognizance with Hamon de Bostock. In 7 Henry IV. he had protection on going to Ireland in the King's service in the retinue of Thomas de Lancastre, Steward and Admiral of England and Lieutenant of Ireland. He died 16 Henry VI.

John the father died on the 3rd October, 1374, and was buried at Trinity Church, Chester, where the alabaster monument (of which an illustration is given in this number of the Journal with the paper by my friend Mr. Stephen Williams, F.S.A., and also in Volume I. of the Old Series, page 356), was found on the 30th May, 1853, near to the eastern door, under the pew then belonging to the late William Makepeace Thackeray, M.D. It is mentioned by Hemingway in his *History of Chester*, that "this figure was removed in consequence of some alterations, and deposited in a vault under the seat now occupied by Dr. Thackeray."

It was exhumed by order of the vestry. Since then the church has been rebuilt, and it is to be regretted that more care has not been taken of this, one of the oldest and most interesting monuments in the city. From the description given in Volume I., before referred to, it would appear that the monument when exhumed was not so much damaged as might have been expected. It has evidently suffered since its exhumation, and more care should be taken to preserve it. I fear the anticipations of the writer in Volume I., as to the reverence for and care of monuments once consigned to the care of the Parish, have not been well founded. It is also stated, "It may be observed how close a resemblance the general design bears to that of Hugh Calveley at Bunbury Church." It is possible that it was the work of the same sculptor, for we have seen that John Whitmore the son was a comrade of our celebrated Cheshire "Soldier of Fortune," Sir Hugh Calveley, whose exploits in France, Spain, and other parts of the continent of Europe have been so vividly depicted by Froissart, and have furnished materials for so many historical romance writers. An able and interesting

paper on Bruera Chapel, Bunbury Church, and Saughton Grange, the home of Sir Hugh's family, the Calveleys of Lea, written by the late Mr. William Ayrton, will be found in Volume I. before mentioned.

The Arms upon the shield on the monument, viz. :— "Vert Fretty Or," prove the connection of the Whitmores of Chester and Thurstaston with the Shropshire family of the same name. The Whitmores of Apley Park, Salop, are lineally descended from William de Whytemore, who resided at Whytemore in the Parish of Bobbington, in the same County, in 39 Henry III. (1255.)

Mr. Helsby in the last edition of Ormerod's *History of Cheshire* says of the Whitmore pedigree that its compilation cost him more labour than any other pedigree in his valuable work, as it was so difficult to reconcile the contradictions of the Cheshire genealogies in the earlier descents.

In Volume II. of our Journal (New Series), page 180, in my paper on some early Chester Deeds, I give one dated June 24th, 1367, which conveys to John son of William de Whytemore, junior, citizen of Chester, a messuage in Bridge Street, Chester, which "lies in width between the Mothalle lone (now Commonhall Street) on the one side, and the land of John de Whytemore senior and the land, &c., on the other."

In the pedigree in Ormerod there is no mention of this John the son of William, nor yet of his father. I think, however, the John de Whytemore senior, described as the owner of adjoining land, was very possibly the one to whose memory the monument was erected, and, if so, then we may perhaps fix his residence as having been in Bridge Street. I find from a note by



Mr. Helsby in Ormerod, that in the time of Henry VII., among their other possessions in Chester the Whitmores had a messuage "called the Black Hall in Brygge Streete in the tenure of Joan Ledsham, Widow."

I wonder if this was the same property as that mentioned in the deed; if so, it was probably situate where the "Harp and Crown" Inn now stands. Attached to this deed is a seal in a very perfect condition. An illustration of it is given (at page 168, Vol. II.) in my former paper. It bears a shield fretty, charged in the first quarter with a Frette. The legend around it is: "Sigill' Iohis de Whitemore." I am inclined to think it was the seal of John the father of William, the Frette being charged upon the first quarter of the shield for a difference, to mark his cadency—as a younger son.

There is much to be gathered about this old Chester and Cheshire family, which took such an active part in the affairs of the city and neighbourhood in the mediæval past, which I hope may sometime be printed in our Journal.

