

THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE MANOR-HOUSE AND TOWER OR CASTLE OF HILTON.

THERE are, at Hilton, evidences of repeated alterations in the remaining fabric, and the internal walls were found to be placed upon foundations which, if not of an earlier period, were unusual in such buildings. But no details, prior to such as distinguish the Perpendicular style, have turned up.

In fact, there is not the slightest ruin of work which can safely be ascribed to a date previous to that of the builder of the Great Gate-house or Tower, Baron William of Hilton, who died in 1435.¹ Even in the chapel, a trace of a square-headed trefoiled doorway, in the interior of the south wall of the chancel, may not point to an earlier period than that of similar objects in the Tower. It is, however, almost certain that the chapel, which was built a little before 1500, would occupy the consecrated site of the earlier one which was in existence as early as the time of the first baron whose name we know, Romanus, Knight of Helton, in 1157, when it was called the chapel of that vill. The Gate-house was plainly intended to be viewed from the west, and there is no reason to suppose that its founder renewed the dwellings of his fathers, in addition to his costly annexation of the "house of stone," as the inquest after his death distinguished it. The presumptions are all in favour of the manorial buildings standing to the east of the Tower, and to the south and east of the chapel. The old stone wall which was traced as far up as the quarry above the chapel, and that which may or might be traced below the south terrace of the chapel, cannot be depended upon, as any cemetery would require walls. But a third wall, traced at some distance east of the Tower, and running north and south,

¹ The early history of the family is traced under the Church of Guyzance in Vol. III. of this series, p. 134. But I find that the scribe of *Placita de Quo War-ranto* is wrong in supposing that the charter of 1256-7 was produced *eidem Roberto* in 1293. In 1289, Robert de Hilton held the Tison estates. On 6 Jan., 1290-1, *Alexander de Hiltonne*, Dominus de Renyngton, executed a charter touching the possessions of Alnwick Abbey in that manor. In 1293, another Robert presents the charter of 1256-7, and in 1303-4, Elizabeth, wife of Alexander, was living, with dower. The charter which thus proves that Alexander's tenure of the estates was between 1289 and 1293, was noticed in Mr. Tate's investigations for his *History of Alnwick*.

The title "Baron of Hylton" is discussed in *Nichols's Herald and Genealogist*, iv, 348.

might really be connected with the square of the Manor-house. The superstructure of the erections, whether older or younger than the Tower, would most likely be of timber and plaster, post-and-pan, as were the great Percy house of Topcliffe, albeit called a castle, and many considerable piles of lodgings. Yet it is possible that the noble west front, like John Lord Lumley's armorial array at Lumley, was to be viewed from a courtyard, here to the west. The east front, with its coat and crest and badge of the Hiltons is good enough as an external one, specially as only overlooking a chapel-garth. Sculls have been found at a distance of 20 feet from it, at a proper depth. And a large regular paved square, as if of a courtyard, not shown in any engraving, has recently been discovered on the west side of the Gate-house.

Between 1435, or even 1448-50, when the same description occurs, and 1559, there is ample time for a complete renovation of the dwelling, and it would be idle to attempt identification of the chambers of both periods. However, it may be mentioned that in 1435, after a statement of the tenure of the Manor of Hilton, the inquest runs thus:—"And there are in the same Manor a hall, four chambers, a chapel, two barns, a kitchen, a house constructed of stone, called Gate-house, which are nothing worth yearly beyond outgoings by reason of the cost of their repairs."

These may be compared with the enumerations at a later period thus:—

1435.	1559.	1600.	1600.
	The order indicated by figures.	The order indicated by figures.	Additional items at end of inventory.
Four Chambers.	1 Great Chamber.	1 Red Chamber.	11 Portal in Great Chamber and hangings in Great Chamber.
	2 Green Chamber.	2 Green Chamber.	
	3 Middle Chamber.	5 Lady Chamber.	
	4 New Chamber.	6 Nursery.	
	5 Gallery.	4 Low Gallerie.	17 Wardrobe.
	6 Wardrobe.		
	7 Cellar within the Parlour.		
	8 Parlour.	3 Parlour.	
	9 Chamber over the Hall door.	8 High Checquer.	16 Checquer Chamber.
Kitchen.	10 Low Checquer.	7 Low Checquer.	15 Kitchen.
	11 Kitchen.	9 Kitchen.	13 Larder house.
	12 Larder.		14 Brew house.
Gatehouse built of stone.	13 Brewing vessels.		
	14 Tower.	10 Tower.	
Hall.	15 Hall.		18 Hall.
	16 Buttery.		12 Buttery.
Two Barns.	17 Garner.		
	18 Barne.		
Chapel.			



The Gate-house or Tower of Hilton, which now alone is known as Hylton Castle, first appears in the Inquest after the death of the great baron William, in 1435, as "a house of stone constructed of stone, called zethous." In 1461 it occurs as the Tower of Hilton, and the chaplain of William Bulmer during the minority of the young lord of Hilton had its custody. In the inventories of the effects of Sir Thomas Hilton in 1559, and of Sir William in 1600, it is, as we have seen, also called the Tower. Previously to the last date, its nobility was probably the reason of the whole manor-house receiving the name of castle. In 1583 we have a settlement of the castle and manor of Hilton, and the first edition of Camden's *Britannia*, in 1587, speaks of "Hilton Hiltoniorum Castrum."² It was the fashion of the day, and Hilton was in no worse position than Ravenshelm with its four early towers in its previous exclusion from the castelic rank. In 1600, a sort of official sanction to the style was given, for although the word castle does not seem to occur in Sir William's inventory, yet, five days previously, administration had been granted to his widow "in the Great Chamber within the Castle of Hilton." This Great Chamber occurs in 1559 far away from the Tower, and to the commencement of the 18th century it must have been clearly understood that the present edifice was only within the manor-house or castle, and did not constitute its entirety. Gibson, in his edition of Camden, 2nd. edit. 1722, adds to Camden's "Hilton, a castle of the Hiltons", the following passage: "an ancient family, wherein is preserved to this day the title of the Bishop's Barons. The Gate-house, which is all that remains of the old castle, shews how large it hath been; with the Chapel, a fine structure, wherein there were chaplains in constant attendance, it being the burying-place of the family." So also a plate nearly identical with Buck's view of 1728, and dedicated to Mr. John Hilton, of Coventry, says: "It was formerly a very large and strong building, but at present there is little remaining except the Great Gatehouse and an old Chapel."

An ill-lighted and circumscribed hall appeared to be indicated in the Tower by carved corbels, but it seems to have only occupied the position which the halls in older keeps held in relation to the baronial halls in

² There may be two earlier instances, but it is open to doubt whether the word "castle" in them refers to Hilton. In an inquest about the tithes of Hilton in 1428, nine acres called Russel-land are said to be between Stiklaw and *Castelway*. In proceedings of 1467 as to whether Mary, the heiress of Vipont and of Stapleton, had, after the death of her husband Baron William Hilton, married William Haggerston or Richard Musgrave, she is stated to have proceeded from some castle to Newcastle to be married to Haggerston, but an unlucky imperfection in the MS. follows the word "Castle." And in another part of the record she is said to have been besieged by Sir ... Maners and other accomplices of Musgrave "in her *manerium* of Hilton" at night, and to have escaped to the cell of Wearmouth "per *porticulum* ejusdem *manerii*."

the outer works of castles. At all events, in 1559, the Tower merely contained a "great caldron, a pan, an iron spit, and eight complete harness (suits of armour) from the knee up." In 1600, it covered "four corslets with their furniture without weapons," and "certain hay," valued at 26s. 8d., an item which seems to exclude all possibility of the projection externally and internally in the eastern front of the building at the summit being considered as the Tower in itself.

The Tower would therefore be only used in case of danger. It is a peel-tower or gateway elongated and made gigantic to serve in lieu of a regular castle. Independently of the armorial evidences on its walls, its whole detail points to Baron William, (in the inquest upon whose death it first appears,) as its founder. There is some resemblance to Lumley Castle in the machicolation, but while the detail at Lumley is more chaste and delicate, that at Hilton Tower is more exuberant, and its peculiarity of form has given to it a mass and a skyline which on the whole are more impressive. There is, moreover, a weird grandeur about the Hilton sculptures which is wanting in those at Lumley. Lumley Castle was built in the days of Richard II., and we cannot place the work at Hilton, which is decidedly later, in an earlier reign than that of Henry IV. There are reasons, indeed, for locating it in the years of Henry V. or early in those of Henry VI. The fleurs de lis of France in the royal banner are reduced to three, agreeing with the change in the great seal of Henry V., and there is no licence of crenelation for the work on the episcopal rolls. For any other period after the palatine usurpations fairly set in, it might be supposed either that there was a previous tower, or that a gatehouse was not within the scope of licences. But, looking at other instances, these explanations would be by no means satisfactory. The true reason probably is that the Tower was built in defiance of the Bishops. In 1432, three years before the founder's death, his son, Robert Hilton, chivaler, occurs at the head of the jury which at Hartlepool found Bishop Langley and his predecessors guilty of divers offences against the crown and the subjects of the realm, putting the alleged palatine jurisdiction, in fact, upon its trial. One of the articles was that the Bishop, during the reigns of Henry IV., V., and VI., had usurped the granting of licences for building, embattling, and machicolating castles, walls, and other houses and defensible erections. The presentment was quashed in Parliament in 1433, by reason of Hartlepool appearing to be in the Bishop's liberty and of the inquisition being taken there without authority, and of the age and merits of Langley, Parliament being unwilling to put him to the fatigue and costs of traversing the presentment.

While the manorhouse generally was going to decay, the family in-

the seventeenth century being, through Baron Henry's charitable gifts, disabled from any great outlay, the Tower seems to have remained in much its original condition, until about 1705. In that year John Hilton, who had married a Musgrave, placed the impaled arms above the door of a house which is now the Golden Lion at Ford, and we may fairly assume that at about the same time he made the alterations and doorway bearing the same coat, which appear in Buck's plate of Hilton Castle in 1728. With reference to the stiff but valuable plates by the Bucks, it may be remarked that drawings of Hilton, Lumley, Raby, and other castles by one of the brothers Buck occur, dated June, 1728, in which material variations from the plates occur. Judging by a comparison of the drawing and plate of Lumley Castle, the drawings are to be preferred, but, singularly enough, certain details, such as the bearings on the Hylton shields, are better in the plates than the drawings. The inference seems to be that the drawings of one of the Bucks were afterwards amended with details separately, and finally much damaged in the transfer to copper.

By Buck's plate of Hylton we see that the old gateway was partially built up, a north wing added or remodelled, a new doorway with the arms of Hilton and Musgrave driven through the wall at the junction of the old building and the new, and numerous Italian windows pierced through the walls. A square Elizabethan or Jacobean window had displaced something or other near the Royal banner at an earlier date. John Hilton's architect, by design or accident, gave a little irregularity to the form and position of his windows, preserving the general effect from disagreeable uniformity of shape and level, and, by squeezing the windows on the right close to the buttress, he fortunately left the traces of one of the ancient lights (see Billings's plate) to guide any future restorer. He also left the charming elevation of the centre of the western front untouched.

It is observable that Buck makes the north wing join the Tower without the intervening buttress, which now balances that at the other end of the Tower. On investigation it seems that for a considerable portion of its height from the ground this buttress is modern, built against ancient quoining. The turret above, therefore, was corbelled out of the angle, an arrangement which may give colour to the idea that the Hall or some other edifice ran off where the north wing afterwards stood, and that the angular buttress at the other end marks the corner of the manorial square of buildings. No signs of ancient windows seem to have appeared at the north end, which, indeed, on the recent destruction of the north wing had to be considerably rebuilt, while they are not wanting at the south end, one of the ancient windows therein

being of singular grace. Other circumstances might however account for this.

Buck, the engraver, also makes the north western turret circular. It is now in existence³ and shows that, intentionally or not, he has brought one of the eastern turrets, from a drawing of details, into the wrong place.

The last Baron Hilton was much more mischievous. He blocked the elegant window in the centre of the western front, and destroying or hiding the great doorway, he made a new west entrance, quasi-Gothic, in its place, adding a tall porch surmounted by a gallery between the buttresses, thus ruining the design which carried the eye from the massive and suitable gateway arch up the banner staff of the Hiltons which seemed to spring from it, thence to the handsome surmounting canopy, thence, by the pretty central window which rested on the canopy, up another banner staff, that of France and England, to another canopy and the grand machicolated arch full of ornament, which spanned from buttress to buttress. Above this again were two gigantic figures on the battlements, engaged in the defeat of winged and fiery dragons or "worms," possibly in allusion to the local legend attached to the Worm Hill on the Hilton estate of North Biddick. It must be confessed that for modern use some shelter for a visitor was requisite, but there were three modes open. One was to bring the great archway forward. This would have preserved the baronial aspect. Another was to have had a comely wooden porch, close or open, like those of some of the south-country churches, and sufficiently low to have shown the very bottom of the Hilton banner staff and its springing. To show both arch and banner with an outer porch was impracticable. The third and best plan was to have had an internal porch, merely converting the square doorway, in the blocking which old John had left, into a shape more consonant with the outer arch, which it must be admitted, was too large an entrance. This low outer arch remains. After all, notwithstanding the beauty of the west design, as it appears in the plate of Buck, illustrated by the engravings in the works of Surtees and Billings, I am by no means certain that the banner of the Hiltons was always *under* the old west window. It might, very well, be near the Royal banner, and be removed when the square mullioned window was broken through the wall at that place. The old west window, by the way, according to Buck's *drawing* (which I have), had a transom.

John the last Baron, moreover, removed his father's front door, covered its passage and the window above with a buttress, raised and castellated

³ It is presumed to be ancient, but the figure on the side next to the leads is modern?

the north wing, added a south wing, with Italian windows,⁴ added bowed rooms with screens between them in pseudo-Gothic to the east front, made a fine banquetting or ball room with stucco ornaments possibly in imitation of the better ones at Lumley, and covered all the vaulted passage on the ground floor with arabesque adornments in the same substance, not much to the detriment of the older work and much adding to its appearance of comfort.

“All the defacement it has undergone,” says Billings, “cannot destroy the simple grandeur of its composition.” “It is a remarkable specimen of castellated architecture, both in size and decorations.” “When we have reached the lead covered roof a scene presents itself of which few castles can now boast. There are the turrets, with their staircases, and the bold broad machicolations; even the guard’s room (surmounting the projection of its eastern front) remains perfectly entire, and nothing but a few armed men is wanted to complete the picture of by-gone baronial power.”

It is not easy to describe either the architecture or the arrangements without the aid of engravings. The angular turrets on one side, the corbelled circular ones on the other, and the great square projection from the east front, with the picturesque battlements, form a fine assemblage. There are the usual domestic conveniences inside. The idea on the summit, where the turrets are machicolated and ornamented to the leads as much as to the exterior, and are much isolated, seems to have been to enable a defence from every turret independently.⁵

It remains to give some account of the heraldry on the two fronts.

West Front. Centre.

The banner of France modern and England.

First row of shields below, four coats.

1. A Saltire. Neville. [Alexander Hilton served in the Scotch wars, 7 Edw. III., with Ralph Lord Neville.]
2. A plain cross. This cross is moulded exactly like the saltire: the mouldings do not interlace, but Surtees mistook the coat for that of Bishop Skirlaw. It may either be the arms of Vesey of Alnwick, under whom the Hiltons had held their estates in Northumberland derived from Tyson, or the coat ascribed to S. George, the founder’s cotemporary being Ralph

⁴ Tradition says that the architect, one Frankini, an Italian, induced the Baron to do this because his castle looked like a sow with one lug. The north wing, on its recent removal, was in great decay. Indeed I remember that it was in that condition twenty years ago.

⁵ While the alterations by the present owner were in progress I ventured to remark that if the Italian windows gave way to the originals restored and a few quiet imitations of the existing originals at Hilton and Lumley were introduced; the old place might be none the less the finest thing in the county of its sort.

Neville, the Great Earl of Westmerland, K.G., and the same company of crosses being found at Raby and Gainford. Or it may have reference to the see of Durham, a subject which I am treating elsewhere.

3. A Lion rampant, quartering three Lucies or Pikes, Percy and Lucy. This coat was worn by the Percies, successors to the Vescies, from 1384, and the plain cross is found in company with it in the Eastern chapel of Tynemouth.

The three important shields above are larger than the rest, which, irregular in size, are alike as style and time.

4. A Lion rampant, differenced by a label of three points. "Perhaps the heir of Percy."

Second row, five shields.

1. A Lion rampant. Qu. Brus, connected with Hilton of Swine through Thwenge.
2. Two bars (Hilton), quartering three chaplets (Lascelles). Hilton of Swine (the difference of that house, a fleurs de lis, being omitted) representing Lascelles. The founder of the building married his kinswoman Dionysia Hilton of Swine. The line of descent is not drawn from her in the received pedigrees, but the inquest after her death and an early settlement by her husband are contrary to them.
3. A fess between three popinjays. Lumley modern, alias Thwenge. The arms of this Baron Hilton are also on Lumley Castle, and there was a connection with Thwenge through his wife's family.
4. A Lion rampant, within an engrailed border. Grey of Northumberland, also on Lumley Castle. [The founder of this fabric William de Hilton, knt. and Tho. Grey held an acre at North Bedick in 1380, called Stanhers.]
5. Quarterly, a bend charged with three escallops now very obscure. Eure of Witton.⁶

Third Row. Four shields.

1. A chief dancette, Fitz-Randolph of Spennithorne connected with Hilton of Swine through Lascelles, or Campaigne the Baroness's mother.
2. Two bars and three mullets in chief. Washington, or perhaps Yeland, families connected with the Hilton estates at Bid-dick and Usworth.
3. A fess between three crescents. Boynton? See the Felton pedigree, and that of the Daldens.
4. Three water-bougets. Ros? or Lilburne?

Left hand Buttress. Three shields.

1. A Lion rampant debriused by a bendlet. Eshe through Yeland? or Tilliol or Sutton, see pedigree of Hilton of Swine.

⁶ The following evidence appears to be too late to explain this shield.—1483, June 4, Radulphus Eure, armiger—Mariæ Helton sorori meæ 20 marcas.

2. Two Lions passant within a tressure. Felton. The founder's mother was a Felton, and he was coheir of the whole blood of her family.
3. Heron. Three herons [looking to the sinister?] Some Herons were connected with Usworth, and Robert de Dalden married a coheir of Heron of Chilton.

Right Hand Buttress. Three shields.

1. Ermine, in the dexter point an orle. Surtees.
2. Effaced. Probably Dalden.
3. Ermine, three bows. Bowes of Dalden, holding Clowcroft manor under the Hiltons.

Under the window, a banner of the Arms of Hilton, the bars being raised and overlapping the flag-staff. Buck in his plate gives two small lions holding it, in the drawing they are more like griffins.⁷

On the east front is a noble sculpture of the Roebuck of the Hiltons, collared with a coronet and chained. Below are the arms under a helmet covered with a mantle quarried with slipped trefoils, and crested, on a wreath, with Moses' Head in profile, horned with triple rays. The engraving of this in Surtees's Durham is exceedingly inaccurate.

On the corbels inside of the west front are the arms of the Baron and those of his son (differenced by a label), borne by angels, with some other designs which there is no need to particularize. Those who are curious in such matters are referred to the subject of Jack of Hilton in another county.

A Chapel of the vill of Helton existed in or before 1157, and the licence to the lords for the burial of themselves, their wives, their freemen, and the freemen of their freemen, in that chapel or its cemetery, is printed in Surtées's History of Durham, ii. 380. It is plain that, like the abbey church of Tynemouth, the collegiate church of Darlington, and many another ecclesiastical edifice, this chapel had a double debt to pay, partly for the souls of the Lords, with chantry accommodation, partly for those of their tenants without it, leaving the eventual adjustment to sentences in the region of Dives and Lazarus. The dedication was to S. Catherine, but, before 1322, a chantry within the chapel dedicated to the Virgin, had arisen. In 1370 there were three chaplains or sub-chaplains or chantry priests on the establishment.

Sir Thomas Hylton by will dated 1558 says: "I bequeath my body to be buried in the midst of my Chapel of Hilton, whereas my grandfather lieth buried." This grandfather was Sir William who died in 1505.

⁷ No such ornaments appeared when the removal of the battlement of the porch disclosed the bottom of the staff. But it does not follow that they were absent before the last baron's time.

The Chapel does not present any features much older than that period. In Buck's time it appears to have had a considerable nave with two stories of small square side windows, and with strings resembling but not corresponding with those of the transepts, which end semi-hexagonally, and are well lighted in both stories with plainly-headed triplets. The chancel is not divided into stories. On its south side it has square lights divided in two by a mullion, and on its north side similar ones have supplanted larger windows which came nearly to the ground. The strings of the transepts are not continued in the chancel. The east window has five lights, and Buck's view shows a west window of six lights. Through it we see [only in the engraving, not in the drawing] an empty window (it seems too small for an arch and it has a sill) apparently in a gable [distinct both in drawing and engraving] which separates the nave from the chancel and transepts. On the south side of the nave he shows a round turret in which is one of the slits usually employed in lighting newel staircases. There was a large western doorway. The impression left upon the mind is that the nave was used separately from the chancel. I offer no opinion as to what part of the edifice was the chantry of S. Mary.⁸ The arrangements of the transepts, which look later than the body of the building,⁹ their two stories, the newel turret, and marks of eastern doorways in the upper stories of both transepts (approached, I presume, by wooden steps) suggest that we have a modification of the common arrangement of the oriole or overstory, looking into the chancel which was the height of both stories. The oriole was for the lord's and his family's use, or often for the ladies only. There is now only a very small nave, unlighted and unadorned by strings on the sides, ending in a wall containing the foot of an old window of three lights, apparently formed of the two sides of the old one of six lights, some of the centre being omitted. Across this window is thrown externally a circular arch composed perhaps of old mouldings and possibly part of the old division between nave and chancel. Beneath the window is an Italian doorway of the last Baron's style.

At each side of the window sill are the only two coats which are given by Buck, viz.

1. Hilton, Vipont, and Stapleton quarterly on a pendant shield, with mantling and the crest of Moses' head affrontee (engraved badly in Surtees.)
2. The same quarterings on a shield in the usual direction, as are all the other shields on the chapel. Supporters, two lions.

⁸ There are no traces of chantry arrangements in the transepts, or elsewhere.

⁹ There is no foiling in them or in the side windows of the chancel; unlike the east and west windows. The north and south walls of the chancel have manifestly been disturbed, but no pre-perpendicular details exist.

Above the arch are three other coats which must have been on the divisional wall between nave and chancel, viz.

1. Same coat and supporters as the last.
2. (Apex). Same coat, with crest and mantling, no supporters.
3. Same coat. Supporters, two roebucks.

On the north transept is the same coat with crest and mantling, without supporters. On the south transept the same arms are accompanied by the roebucks, of different drawing to those on the west front, and in the cornice above is the nebulee badge of the Hiltons which appeared in their standard and above their crest in drawings of the Tudor period.

The chapel was in ruins in Buck's time, and, after two vain restorations, is now in ruins again. As soon as their nonsenses went out of fashion, so much as was left of original truthful work on which they operated, reasserted sole claims to consideration, and "then they fell, so perish all"—restorations.

W. HYLTON DYER L.

LEGENDS CONNECTED WITH HYLTON CASTLE.

HAVING, in other papers,¹⁰ attempted to trace the true beginnings of the Hyltons, their castle, and their title of Baron, and having found that, after all, their myths have as much interest, or more, than the truth, I propose to say something on the beginnings of the legends also, and to collect some details respecting them.

It is somewhat remarkable that no story has been invented to account for the extraordinary crest of the house, Moses' Head. The first legendary evidence seems to be composed of the two gigantic groups of warriors and fiery dragons on the battlements of the west front of Hylton, erected in the fifteenth century. These doubtless have some reference to the tradition attaching to the Worm Hill in the estate of North Biddick, which had been acquired by the Hyltons. The story is now known as that of the Lambton Worm.

The estate of Hylton was of ancient feoffment, and therefore created before the death of Henry I., and the ascent in blood of its barons reaches to Romanus de Helton, who was living in the time of Henry II. The fictitious pedigrees which ignore this ancient gentleman were at least in progress before 1625. In 1526 and 1558, some strange

¹⁰ See p. 143, and the references in the note there.