

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Gloucester: The Cathedral Monuments

by M. H. Bloxam
1888-89, Vol. 13, 252-259

© The Society and the Author(s)

GLOUCESTER :

THE CATHEDRAL MONUMENTS.

BY THE LATE MATTHEW HOLBECHE BLOXAM, F.S.A.

Read at Gloucester, 19th July, 1888. By MRS. BAGNALL-OAKLEY

AMONGST the monumental remains in Gloucester Cathedral, prior to the 18th century, we have but one episcopal effigy, and not a single effigy of a dean or of one of canonical rank. Of the sepulchral monuments of the cathedral, when simply a conventual church, we have the effigies and monuments of dates long posterior to the times in which those thus represented passed away. The monuments in this Cathedral, though not numerous, are not wanting in interest, one, indeed—if we except the tomb and its accessories in Westminster Abbey of Henry VII.—may fairly be considered as the most chaste and beautiful of its class in the kingdom. The earliest specimen of a wooden sepulchral effigy existing, is that now placed in the apsidal chapel, north-east of the choir, commemorative of Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the Conqueror, through his own indiscretion disinherited of his claim of succession to the crown of England, and who died in incarceration in Cardiff Castle, A.D. 1134, aged 80 years.

The effigy does not represent him in the armour of the period in which he lived, but rather that of the reign of Henry III., to which era the execution of this effigy, one of the most singular of its kind, may be referred. The high tomb, however, on which it is placed, though also of wood, is of a still later period, and may be referred to the fifteenth century. Leland, writing of this monument, saith : “Robtus Curthoise sonne to K. William the Conquerour, lyeth in the middle of the Presbitery. There is on his Tombe an Image of wood paynted, made long since his death.” This image, carved in oak, represents him in the *camisia ferrea* or

hooded hawberk of mail, over which is worn the long sleeveless surcoat of linen, open in front from the loins downwards; chausses or stockings of mail cover the feet and legs, and tight-fitting breeches, apparently of cloth, the knees and thighs; the sword-belt crosses the body diagonally from the hip to the left thigh, and to this the sheath of the sword is affixed. The gigue for supporting the shield crosses over the right shoulder and under the left arm, but there are no indications apparent of any shield having been affixed, an omission most unusual at the period when this effigy was carved. The Duke is represented, not in repose but in action, either drawing or sheathing the sword which, with its long cross bar, is partly out of the scabbard, the latter being held by the left hand. The right thigh and leg are crossed over the left, but raised in a singular manner so as to shew a space between. On the heels are spurs fastened by a single leather each, but the rowels now affixed are insertions of the seventeenth century. The *coif de mailles*, or hood of the hawberk, is fastened by a strap across the forehead and open on one side of the face. On the head a low coronet is worn. The tomb on which this effigy is placed is one of the few wooden tombs we have; another, on which reposes the wooden effigy of William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who died A.D. 1296, is in St. Edmund's Chapel, Westminster Abbey. The surcoat, or linen frock, worn over the hawberk, or iron shirt, does not appear on sepulchral effigies earlier than the thirteenth century, and the effigy of William Earl of Flanders, son of this Robert Duke of Normandy, who died A.D. 1128, six years before the death of his father, represents him in *ferrea amisia* and chausses of mail, without any surcoat over, but with a long kite-shaped shield. He was buried at St. Omer, and a representation of his sepulchral effigy, sculptured in grey marble, is given in Sandford's *Genealogical History*.

On the south side of the choir is a recumbent effigy of the thirteenth century, placed on an ornamental bracket or high tomb of later date, apparently of the fifteenth century. This effigy represents an ecclesiastic of rank vested with the amice, alb and chesible, holding in the right hand a building. On the left side of the body appears the pastoral staff, the head is tonsured, and

the short crisp beard covers the chin. Over the head of the effigy is a horizontally-placed canopy, shaped pedimentally. The effigy and canopy are of grey marble. This effigy has been ascribed to Aldred, Archbishop of York in the latter part of the eleventh century, and to Serlo, Abbot here from A.D. 1072 to A.D. 1104. "Serlo, abbot of Gloucester," saith Leland, "lyeth under a fayer marble Tombe, on the south syde of the Presbitery." I am, however, inclined to consider this effigy as that of Henry Foliet, abbot of the Monastery of Gloucester from A.D. 1228 to A.D. 1243. Considerable reparations were executed in his time and the church was re-dedicated. This effigy is undoubtedly of his period.

The effigy of King Edward II., who was murdered at Berkeley Castle, A.D. 1327, and whose body was removed to, and interred in, the Abbey Church of Gloucester, is the third, in point of date, of the sepulchral effigies of our English monarchs existing in this country. It is simply but gracefully treated. The King is represented in his regal attire, a long tunic with pocket-holes at the sides, over which is worn the pall or mantle. On his head is placed the royal crown; his neck is bare. He holds in his right hand a sceptre, and in his left a *mundus*, or globe. The high tomb on which this recumbent effigy reposes is of most beautiful workmanship; a series of ogee-headed arched recesses, cinque-foiled with the heads, and richly crocketed above, formerly containing statuettes. Above this tomb the canopy is formed of two stages of open ogee-headed arches, richly foliated and crocketed and surmounted with finials, with buttresses between, terminating with rich finials. A projecting bracket in the middle compartment of the tomb on the north side appears to be an adjunct of the fifteenth century. Altogether, this monument may be considered to be, if not the most costly, the most graceful and beautiful in the kingdom. The effigy appears to be of alabaster, an early instance in which that material was used.

The effigy of Thomas Seabroke, abbot of the monastery of Gloucester from A.D. 1450 to A.D. 1457, has evidently been removed from its original position, as it is now (A.D. 1866) placed north and south, on a high tomb, faced with what appears to be

a portion of stone screen work. This monument is placed in a small sepulchral chapel at the south-west corner of the choir. The effigy is of alabaster, somewhat mutilated, but well executed. It represents the abbot vested in the amice, alb, stole, tunic, dalmatic and chesible. On the head is worn the mitre, *mitra pretiosa*, granted to this abbey by Pope Urban the 6th, in the early part of the fifteenth century. The abbatial bordon, or pastoral staff, covered with the veil, the extremities of which are so designed as to flow gracefully over the staff, is placed on the *right* side of the body, herein differing from episcopal effigies, where the pastoral staff, with rare exceptions—as that on Bishop Veasey's tomb, Coldfield Church, Warwickshire—is placed on the left side of the effigy, and is generally held in the left hand.

The commemorative effigy of Osric, King of Northumbria, one of the reputed founders of this monastery, who died A.D. 729, is somewhat coarsely executed in stone, and shews a change in the regal habiliments from those of King Edward, in accordance with the period in which it was sculptured, apparently during the abbacy of Abbot Parker in the early part of the sixteenth century. It is placed on a high tomb at the north-east of the choir under an obtuse arched canopy of good but late design, the horizontal cornice of which is finished with the Tudor flower. The effigy represents this monarch clad in the tunic and mantle, the laces connecting the latter hang down in front over the tunic. Over the shoulders and in front of the breast is worn the hood, resembling the *aumasse*, or furred tippet, of a canon. I do not find the hood on the effigies of our English monarchs earlier than the reign of Rich. II. It does not appear in the effigy of Edw. III., but it does on those of Rich. II. and Hen. IV. Amongst the articles ordained by King Henry VII. for the regulation of his household, is the following relating to his regal apparel:—"Item, the day when the Kinge is crowned he ought to go to the mattens the which arraye langeth his kirtle surcote and tabard with his *furred hood* slwen over his head and rolled about his necke, and on his head his cappe of estate and his sword before him. Item, at evensonge hee must goe in his kirtle and sircote and his *hudd laid about his shoulders*, and claspe the hudd and tippet together

before his breast with a great awche and a rich, and his hatt of estate upon his head. Alsoe as for the twelfth day, the king ought to go crowned and in his robes royall, kirtle, sircote, *his furred hudd* about his necke, and his mantle with a long train, and his lace before him.....Hee must have his sceptor in his right hand, the ball with the cross in his lefte hand, and the crowne on his head." The feet of this effigy are represented in the broad-toed shoes or boots of the fashion of King Henry VIII.'s time, and on the head is worn the high-bowed crown which does not appear till the latter part of the fifteenth century.

On the incised brass in Wimborne Minster, representing the demi-effigy of a King and commemorative of one of the Anglo-Saxon Kings, the regal attire plainly bespeaks the century in which this brass was executed, the shoulders and breast being covered by the furred hood.

Within a small sepulchral chapel of open screen and panel work on the north side of the choir is the monument of Abbot Parker,* elected A.D. 1514, the last abbot of this monastery who died soon after the suppression, and is said not to have been buried here, this costly monument having been erected by him during his lifetime. The high tomb on which his effigy lies recumbent is decorated on each side with three pannelled recesses, cinquefoiled within the heads. At the back of each recess is an escutcheon, one is charged with the five wounds, another with the instruments of the passion, ladder, pillar, reed and hyssop and cross. The effigy, which is well, carefully and elaborately executed, is of alabaster, and represented the abbot in his full vestments—amice, alb, tunic, dalmatic, and chesible, with the maniple over the left arm, on the head is worn the mitre, *mitra pretiosa*. The abbatial bordon, or staff, partly enveloped with the veil, appears on the right side of the body. On the feet the broad-toed shoes of the period are worn. The extremities of the stole are not apparent. The practice of erecting a monument with a sculptured effigy in the lifetime of the person commemorated was a very frequent one.

In the south side of the nave, near the east end, on a high tomb, are two recumbent effigies,* representing a warrior and his

lady, probably persons of distinction, but the names of whom are unknown. The effigy of the male represents him armed in a breast-plate and skirt of taces, with a horizontal bawdrick, or belt, encircling it; on the head is a basinet surrounded by a torse, or wreath, and the neck, shoulders and breast are protected by a camail, or tippet of mail; the arms are encased in rere and vambracs, with coutes, or elbow plates, and the thighs, knees, legs, and feet in cuisses, genouillères, jambs, and sollerets, all of plate, excepting the portions covering the insteps, which are of mail. The lady is habited in a close-bodied robe or gown with full skirts, over which is worn a mantle attached in front by a cordon. The head-dress is rich. Round the neck of each of these effigies is the collar of SS. This monument, which cannot be anterior to the reign of Henry IV., is, apparently, of the early part of the fifteenth century.

We now come to the period when this fine monastic church was converted into a cathedral. But it contains only one recumbent effigy of a bishop of the Reformed Church. This is that of Godfrey Goldsborough,* bishop of this see from A.D. 1598 to A.D. 1604, who was buried in a little chapel on the north side of the Lady Chapel. His monument consists of a high tomb, with three divisions on each side, the middlemost of which contains an escutcheon surrounded with scroll-work. On this tomb the effigy represents the bishop attired in the episcopal vestments used in the Church of England at this period, viz., the rochet over which is worn the black chimere with full-lawn sleeves; on the head is the coif, or scull cap, and round the neck is the short ruff, whilst the tippet—that bone of contention in the vestiarium controversy in the reign of Elizabeth—which was also called the scarf, by which name it is better known at the present day, worn over the shoulders and hangs down in front on each side.

In the Lady Chapel, on the north side, is the monument and effigy of Elizabeth Williams,* wife of John Williams, Esquire; she died A.D. 1622. The base of this monument is plain, relieved by shallow sunk panels, without any kind of ornamentation. On this, beneath a semi-circular covered canopy, surmounted by a horizontal cornice, supported at each end by a Corinthian column,

lies the effigy of the lady reposing on her right side, her head supported by her right hand and arm. She appears clad in a bodiced gown or robe, with a falling ruff worn round the neck, a mantle at the back of the body covers also the head. Beneath her is the representation of an infant child in swathing clothes.

In the south transept, against the south wall, is the well-known monument of Alderman Blackleach, who died A.D. 1639, with the effigies recumbent thereon of marble, of himself and his wife. This has been executed by one of those sculptors of the seventeenth century of more than ordinary merit, whose works we occasionally meet with, but whose name as yet remains unknown. The effigy of the alderman represents him bareheaded, with a peaked beard and moustache, habited in a doublet, with slashed sleeves, breeches, boots, and a falling vandyke collar; across the body is worn a scarf, and to the left side is attached a basket-hilted sword. His wife appears in a bodiced gown with full sleeves and mantle over. These effigies are evidently portraits; and sculptured monumental effigies in stone, apparently by the same hand, are to be found in the Church of St. Nicholas, Gloucester. Not equal, I think, in execution to the works of our celebrated English sculptor of the seventeenth century, Nicholas Stone, they yet partake of that better school of art in which he excelled. By Dallaway, this monument has been conjectured to be the work of Le Sueur or Fanelli.

The effigy on the north side of the Lady Chapel, of Sir John Powell,* Knight, one of Judges of the Court of King's Bench, who died A.D. 1713, represents him in a standing attitude—a custom which gradually crept in in the latter half of the seventeenth century, but became more frequent in the eighteenth century. He appears attired in his judicial robes, the gown, casting hood, and mantle faced with fur or miniver; on his head is worn the coif, and under his chin are the plain falling bands, which, subsequent to the Restoration, succeeded the ruff. The cuffs of the sleeves of the gown are furred, and in the right hand is held a scroll. In 1635 certain rules were made with respect to the robes of the Judges, in accordance with which this effigy is

represented. It is placed on a circular pedestal within or beneath a semi-circular scalloped cove, surmounted by a segmental-shaped pediment, supported on each side by a Corinthian pilaster, with architrave, frieze and cornice.

There are other monuments in this Cathedral of later date and of interest, but which I do not purpose to describe. A monumental painting of many figures in the north transept¹ may fitly be compared with the curious monumental painting of the Baron of Burford, in Burford Church, Salop, and with the series of portraits on panel at Stanford Court, Worcestershire, and would almost seem to indicate that so soon as the early half of the seventeenth century limners of the school of portraiture, then prevalent, as well as sculpture, traversed the country, ready to execute any commissions which might fall into their hands.

¹This monument which is to the memory of Richard Pates and his family, is now almost illegible, and must soon become entirely obliterated, unless steps are speedily taken to prevent it.

The monuments marked with * are beautifully engraved in Fosbrooke's History of the City of Gloucester.—Ed.