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**Monumental Effigies in Bristol and
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MONUMENTAL EFFIGIES IN BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

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IF we except the memorial of Edward II. with its sumptuous canopy in Gloucester cathedral, and the canopied tombs of the Despencers and Sir Guy de Bryan beneath the stately vaults of Tewkesbury, we perceive no superiority in the Gloucestershire effigies over those of other districts. Indeed, it must be confessed that, generally speaking, the county takes a moderate position when compared, for example, with the monuments of Northamptonshire, Yorkshire, or Devon, both in number and in consequence. And while it is somewhat disappointing to the casual observer to find but two abbatial and one episcopal effigy of the Reformed Church in Gloucester Cathedral—a state of affairs greatly differing from that at Wells, York, Salisbury, Worcester, or Peterborough, other figures of considerable interest are enshrined in the Romanesque fane, with its astonishing veil of Perpendicular and its architectural *tours de force*. And although there are in the long series of Berkeley effigies at Bristol representations of the course of armour during a period of three centuries and a half, they do not appear as the striking examples one would have been justified in expecting in memorials of so great a mediæval family. Moreover, some of them suffered both from “restoration” (restoration of an effigy!) and assignation, about a century and a half ago.

In taking a cursory survey of the effigies of the county, by way of a general introduction to their fuller study in a Classified List, it need hardly be premised that they offer

precisely the same reliable evidence of the course of armour and costume as may be found in any other district of England, the Purbeck effigies of the thirteenth century being naturally the oldest; and the effigies proper in the county during the early years of the fifteenth century are affected as to their number by the fashion for brasses, exactly as elsewhere. It is to be regretted that the studies of Stothard in Gloucestershire carried him no further than to the Cathedral and to Tewkesbury, and that the representations of effigies in the histories both of Rudder and Atkyns have no more merit than those in Dugdale's *Warwickshire* and "Halstead's" *Genealogies* of the seventeenth century, and are as unreliable as the engravings in Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, in Lipscombe's *Buckinghamshire*, and other county histories of the eighteenth, and the early part of the nineteenth centuries.

A noteworthy feature of the Gloucestershire effigies is that, with the exception of the effigy of Edward II., and those of Hugh Despencer, died 1349, son of Hugh "the younger" (who was slaughtered with such shocking barbarity at Hereford in 1326), and his wife at Tewkesbury, not a single alabaster figure appears until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. If this condition can only be accounted for by the long distance of the Derbyshire quarries from Gloucestershire, it is the more remarkable from the fact that alabaster effigies found their way during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to much greater distances in England, and even as far as Brittany, so highly was the material valued which surrendered with such ease to the chisel. But probably many alabaster effigies have been destroyed. The wholesale system of monumental sculpture in alabaster, with purely conventional countenances, does not therefore apply now to Gloucestershire, as it does to Northamptonshire and elsewhere, and we are consequently thrown back upon a long and somewhat inferior series of effigies, executed in the abounding local stones, those only of the middle portion of the fourteenth century being sculptured with anything like

attractive artistic skill. Many of the effigies of the later period exhibit great rudeness; all are, however, of high value as original productions of numerous local schools of sculpture, or mediæval stoneyards, of which there is no recorded information; numbers, indeed, must be from the hands of mere village masons.

The stone effigies extending thus late, almost, in fact, up to the middle of the seventeenth century, one is not surprised to find the serious deterioration that became manifest in them. It was the natural result of circumstances, well known to all students of history and archaeology in England; and it is only here and there that monumental effigial art in Gloucestershire, of the later days, is redeemed by such memorials as those of Sir William Sandys and his consort, in alabaster, of 1644, evidently the work of Nicholas Stone, and by those of Alderman Blackleach and his wife, of 1639 the works of an unknown hand. It is by a pure guess, gathered apparently from a perusal of Walpole's *Anecdotes*, that these excellent figures have been assigned to Le Sœur, or Fanelli, and though the latter is rather a tempting attribution, there seems little reason why Stone should not be considered their author.

The importance of monumental effigies as authentic examples of armour and costume has been so long and so fully recognised that the point need only be alluded to here, in order to say that such stony records are naturally only valuable in these respects up to a certain point, on account partly of the nature of the material used in their production, and partly owing to the absence of the painted decorations with which the figure, particularly during the early half of the fourteenth century, was embellished. This branch of the study has therefore to be supplemented by minute attention to illuminated manuscripts, it being further premised that the enquirer has made drawings to scale with painful care of the subjects, and noted in colours on the spot the remnants, if any, of the tinted gesso ornaments and other decorative features of the effigies. The *Memoirs*

of C. A. Stothard indicate the amount of time and labour that is essential for such efforts.

Another and perhaps more important question than those of armour and costume, arising out of the general subject, is that of portraiture. That verisimilitude was occasionally carried out with minute care is revealed by the royal memorials at Fontevraud, so admirably decyphered and illustrated by Stothard. No one can doubt the accuracy of the likeness of Henry II. in his effigy, and of his son Cœur de Lion, both as regards the sculpture and the painting; indeed, the two countenances exhibit the family resemblance that might be expected between father and son. And, similarly, portraiture may be claimed for the effigies of Eleanor of Guienne, Isabella of Angoulême, also at Fontevraud, and Berengeria of Navarre, formerly at the Abbey of L'Espain, and now in the Cathedral of Le Mans, the three figures being also so greatly unlike each other as to preclude the idea of representations of regal personages *quelconques*. The effigy of King John at Worcester—ruined by deplorable ignorance some years ago—is doubtless a fair likeness of that able monarch. That the latten effigy of Henry III. in the Abbey is a portrait, is shown by the countenance of the King at different periods, from youth to age, on his Great Seals. The figure of Queen Eleanor, also in the Abbey, and in latten, is purely conventional, but valuable as a mediæval standard of feminine grace and beauty. The effigy of Edward II. at Gloucester is again a conventional bearded statue with regal attributes, bearing no doubt only a general likeness to the original. The circumstances of the barbarous murder and restrained burial must have precluded any cast from the royal face for the use of a sculptor, established though the practice already was at the time, as we know from the writings of Cennino Cennini.

To touch now upon ordinary military memorials of the early period,—the Purbeck effigies,—such as remain in the Temple church, at Bristol, and elsewhere. We find a counterpart of one of the Temple effigies, lying on his

sword, at Stowe-nine-churches, Northamptonshire. That at Castle Ashby in the same county is so close a replica of the figure of William Longespee the younger at Salisbury that the one might almost be mistaken for the other, and it is apparent that the effigies of Maurice de Gaunt and Robert de Gournay at Bristol come from the same school of sculpture; and it can hardly be doubted that all those mentioned, and many others, are purely routine figures which were kept in stock. Moreover, all have the peculiar long straight limbs and dignified martial bearing observable in thirteenth-century military figures in Purbeck, referable to a common and closely-contemporary origin. The Purbeck and freestone effigies with the mail laboriously carved link by link, as in the Gaunt and Gournay figures, led shortly before the end of the thirteenth century to an easier method of treatment, and one that lent itself more readily to the efforts of the painter and decorator. This was the employment of *gesso*, which, being laid in varying thicknesses upon the stone surface, could be impressed with matrices of different patterns, or delicately worked in designs with a brush, to be afterwards painted or gilded. Thus links of mail were stamped, and decorative patterns produced of the most exquisite delicacy, protected sometimes by glass. A cross-legged effigy at Cleeve gives an example of the method of treatment. The gessoed figures are hardly likely to be portraits, save under special circumstances. The effigy of Sir Guy de Bryan at Tewkesbury is a notable and a late example of the gesso process, representing him of middle age. He died at the age of ninety, in 1390; the beautiful canopied monument is of that date, and the figure consequently not a portrait. Some of the mail and splints of his interesting and much-perished suit have been gilded and some silvered.

Wooden effigies, so rare in the county, offer important examples of the gesso treatment. That attributed to Robert Courthose,—but long after his time,—in Gloucester Cathedral, has been so dealt with. In evil times it has been coated over and over again with oil paint. It would be a

legitimate and meritorious act of the Dean and Chapter to have these noxious shrouds removed, to rescue this neglected relic from its seventeenth-century iron cage and to place it in a better position. In all probability, a rare example of early mediæval art might thus be revealed.

The two Crupes effigies at Whittington are excellent instances of heraldry and military costume of the beginning of the fourteenth century. The voluminous surcotes are of the kind which entangled the legs of men suddenly called upon to fight on foot, and made them an easy prey to the enemy. These untoward attributes caused the curtailment of the picturesque vestment which, changing to the cyclas, finally resulted in the jupon three-quarters of a century later.

One of the most remarkable effigies in the county is that at Leckhampton—honoured in a coloured plate as “Ritter Johann Gifford, starb 1327,” in Hefner’s beautiful “Trachten.” The mammelières, the sword-belt, the fringed camail, haketon and genouillères, or any of the delicate details of the armour will repay the most careful study. In like manner the effigy said to be of Sir Thomas Berkeley at Cubberley, of the same period, is an excellent example of armour and costume. Both are by the same sculptor.

Of the Berkeley effigies at Bristol none of them, save the two latest, of the seventeenth century, appear to indicate even an attempt at portraiture. They have unfortunately suffered somewhat, as has been intimated, from “restoration.” The details of the sword-belt of Maurice III., Lord Berkeley, died 1326, are rather odd than practicable, and like those of the more interesting figure of Maurice IV., died 1368, have endured too much from Lady Betty Germaine’s antiquarian experiments to give the figures high position among the effigies of the county. The three military statues at Winterbourne St. Michael, though rude, have both merit and value: the earliest, cross-legged and wearing a cyclas—apparently the only example in the county,—greatly resembles the delicately-sculptured alabaster figure of Hugh Despencer, son of Hugh “the younger,” at Tewkesbury; the latest, that of Sir Thomas

Bradeston, is of the end of the reign of Edward III. With this series must be included the effigy at Tewkesbury, of just before the middle of the fourteenth century, long attributed to a Lord Wenlock, who was killed at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. Thanks to the ready acumen of Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, we now know that a member of the Burley family is here represented. Besides wearing a camail of "banded mail," other remarkable details of armour are manifest, in spite of damage by whitewash, plaster, and denudation.

Reverting for a moment to the subject of portraiture, we may draw as follows from a printed source (with the full permission of the writer):—"It may be recalled that Isabella, Countess of Warwick, widow of Richard Beauchamp, died July, 1439, and who sleeps beneath the stately vaults of Tewkesbury, left the remarkable instructions in her Will that a statue of herself should be made all naked, with the hair cast backwards, and according to the design and model which Thomas Porchalion had for that purpose. We know—and from no other source—to what extent the fifteenth and early sixteenth century sculptors in England had cultivated the study of the male nude, from the 'lively picture of death,' which so frequently occurs in large churches, stretched on the substructure of the tomb bearing the effigy proper above; and we are, unfortunately, too familiar with the silly legends in relation to each of these striking works of art. That beneath the fine portrait statue of Bishop Beckett at Wells is a notable example. But we have in England no sculptured instances in churches, in life-size, of the mediæval nude figure such as Thomas Porchalion should have had in contemplation. Doubtless the clerics would have opposed their introduction, though they certainly allowed, and probably themselves executed, such representations to a smaller scale; as, for instance, in the graphic wall-paintings of the Seven Deadly Sins, and in the carvings of the Misericordes."

At Tewkesbury, again, we have the figure of Edward Despencer kneeling upon a tasselled cushion, towards the

high altar, under a charming open canopy, on the top of the Trinity Chapel. From its elevated position, this remarkable monument has escaped both destruction and "restoration," and remains to the present day a most valuable example of an effigy in armour painted to the life, doubtless a true portrait of Edward Despencer, who died in 1375.

A satisfactory type of female effigy—though devoid of artistic merit—is one of two of the same period at English Bicknor, represented with the front of the long flowing gown caught up under both arms, and with the mantle fastened by a cord across the breast. This is the very usual disposition of drapery at the latter end of the thirteenth and the early part of the fourteenth century, and examples may be found throughout the kingdom. To this period, and later, also belongs the characteristic conventionality of the straight under eyelid, so universally associated with effigies during so lengthy a period as alone to indicate to how small an extent portraiture was then attempted. Other effigies of ladies in the county, such as those at Newland, Bristol, Winterbourne, Leckhampton, and Cubberley, besides offering little that is remarkable in costume, exhibit the coarseness and want of artistic quality so frequently noticeable with such memorials made in the county. From these must be excepted the alabaster figure of Elizabeth, wife of Hugh Despencer, son of Hugh "the younger," under the delicate canopy at Tewkesbury, evidently deriving from Derbyshire.

Civil costume is well exemplified by the effigies of Gloucestershire. The late fourteenth-century Franklin in St. Mark's, Bristol; Canynge in duplicate at St. Mary's, Redcliff, in fifteenth-century civic and in civil habits; and the rare figure of Junk Wyrall, 1457, at Newland, in the garb of a Forester of Fee, are well-known instances. Less familiar and more remarkable is the incised figure of a Bow Bearer of the time of Elizabeth, and the still rarer brass of a Free Miner. Both the latter are at Newland; and though not effigies proper are too good to pass over.

Of ecclesiastical figures, Gloucestershire offers numerous

and excellent examples. Perhaps their artistic superiority may be attributed here and there to clerical instruction and supervision, and implying to a certain extent portraiture, and in a larger degree than it appears to have obtained in connection with military and civil figures. The Purbeck effigy of Abbot Foliet in the cathedral, died 1242, has interest of a different kind. But the artistic character of the canopied head is not so evident in the abbatial figure. At Cowley is a well executed effigy of a priest of the early part of the fourteenth century. There are sundry ill-shaped clerkly figures, both in church and churchyard, scattered about the country, and two small fourteenth-century effigies of canons at Bitton have great value as examples of costume.

The effigies of the sixteenth century are few and of very moderate merit, while those of the seventeenth century, with the exceptions already noticed, and possibly certain others, call for no special remark.
