

Monumental Effigies in Somerset

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

EFFIGY OF SIR PHILIP DE ALBINI (*ob.* 1294)

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IN the early part of 1929 an excavation for a petrol tank was made in a piece of land at Pit Way, South Petherton, which had formerly been a dry pit filled in with soil at some later date. On March 7 the excavators came upon the effigy of a chain-mail knight lying on its side at some four feet below the surface of the surrounding land. The tenant, Mr. Pitfield, had it uncovered and carefully cleaned and the owner, Mr. F. Saunders, kindly presented it to the church of S^tS^t Peter and Paul, South Petherton, in which, at some earlier period it had, probably, rested as the covering of a stone coffin (Plate III).

It was at first conjectured that this effigy was made of Ham Hill stone, as that famous quarry is near South Petherton; but Mr. L. Richardson, F.R.S.(Edin.), F.G.S., examined a specimen and confirmed the view taken by the writer of this paper that the effigy was made of Doulting freestone. It would be interesting to know why those who ordered this effigy should select a quarry some twenty miles away from South Petherton as the crow flies, when Ham Hill quarries were so near at hand.

Three¹ of the Somerset knightly effigies made in Bristol ateliers of Dundry Hill freestone are sword-handling knights,

¹ St. Mary Redcliffe, Nettlecombe, and the later knight at Tickenham (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxi, 49-50).

nine¹ made of Ham Hill stone belong to the same interesting group, and now we must add the South Petherton effigy to these twelve military figures. The splendid effigy of a knight in St. Mark's Church,² Bristol, possesses such marvellous vigour that it must receive a high place in the category of thirteenth-century sculpture, and it vividly illustrates the English conception and shows how far it is removed from the Continental standard of that date. The sculpture of the golden age of English Gothic saw the statuesque value and the natural character of the living form with the artistic folds of the surcoat. In vain we seek this abroad, where effigies are sculptured as dead men, eyes closed, surcoat folded in front and hands raised in the attitude of prayer. The imager who sculptured this remarkable effigy, never again produced in the West of England a figure in quite such a lively attitude. Yet the influence of this Bristol 'knight' is distinctly traceable in many West Country sword-handling effigies.

The South Petherton effigy is well sculptured, with every link of the chain-mail carefully carved, and the only defect is the right hip, which is somewhat too prominent. The right arm, the bottom of the scabbard, and the animal on which they rested have been broken; the four paws alone remain. The face is slightly weather-worn, the eyes open, the head uncovered, and the hair is curled in a roll on either side of the head, while a parting from each side of the forehead meets above the forelock and runs as a straight parting to the back of the head. The arms of the hauberk are in parallel lines from shoulder to wrist, a West Country fashion first found on statues on the w. front of Wells Cathedral and on two chain-mail 'knights' at Shepton Mallet, and one in Salisbury Cathedral made of Douling Oolite, and effigies made in Bristol of Dundry Hill freestone. The coif of mail is unlaced and rests on the shoulders and neck, there are no knee-cops and the heater-shaped shield is blazoned with *4 fusils with 3 martlets for distinction*,

¹ Aller, Brympton d'Everey, Chilthorne Domer, Curry Rivel, Kingsdon, Limington, Pendomer, Porlock and Sampford Brett (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxi, 53-55).

² 'Monumental Effigies made by Bristol Craftsmen', by Alfred C. Fryer (*Archæologia*, lxxiv, 3-4, Pl. II, fig. 3).

Daubenev. The sword with its straight quillons and circular pommel has the hilt grasped by the right hand, and the blade is drawn two and a half inches out of the scabbard, while the left arm passes through the enarms under the shield (not visible) and the divided fingers are seen on its edge.

There are four knightly effigies in Somerset which have been more or less influenced by the Continental fashions. They are at Chelvey,¹ Paulton,² Limington,³ and the one now in South Petherton Church. From the following table it will be observed that all four effigies have the heads uncovered, the coif of mail unlaced and lying on the shoulders and neck, and all four probably followed the French fashion of the mail on the arms of the hauberk and as three are now smooth, the links of mail would be depicted in gesso on the surface of the stone. In the case of the Paulton 'knight' we feel sure that the effigy was made by some Norman craftsman, possibly from Jumièges, for Paulton was a chapel in the parish of Chewton Mendip, and in 1241 Jocelin, bishop of Bath and Wells, appropriated that Rectory to the Abbot and convent of the famous Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter on the river Seine. The 'knight' at Chelvey also shows foreign influence, and was sculptured at Corfe in the Isle of Purbeck from the shell-marble quarried there.

<i>Name of Place.</i>	<i>South Petherton.</i>	<i>Chelvey.</i>	<i>Paulton.</i>	<i>Limington.</i>
Date.	c. 1294.	c. 1260.	1290-1300.	1325.
Head.	Uncovered.	Uncovered.	Uncovered.	Uncovered.
Hands.	Handling sword.	R. holds spear. L. on scabbard.	Raised in prayer.	Raised in prayer.
Eyes.	Open.	Open ?	Closed ?	Closed ?
Legs.	Straight.	Straight.	Straight.	Crossed.
Surcoat.	Slit open.	Closed.	Closed.	Slit open.
Coif of mail.	On shoulders and neck.	On shoulders and neck.	On shoulders and neck.	On shoulders and neck.
Chain mail on armes of hauberk.	In parallel lines from shoulders to wrists.	Now worn smooth.	Now smooth (gesso ?)	Now smooth (gesso ?)
Stone of effigy.	Douling free-stone.	Purbeck marble.	Local Lias limestone.	Ham Hill stone.

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxi, 39-40, 51, Pl. VII, fig. 1.

² *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxii, 56-57, 80, Pl. V, figs. 1, 2.

³ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxii, 54-55, 77-78, Pl. IX, fig. 3.

The 'knight' at South Petherton gives us a curious mixture of French and English ideas for military effigies made in the thirteenth century. The straight-legged attitude,¹ the head uncovered and the coif of mail not drawn over the head, but unlaced and resting on the shoulders and neck, the surcoat folded in front and the foreign fashion of depicting the chain-mail on the arms of the hauberk,² are all features of French effigies of this period. The sword-handling attitude of a living warrior having his eyes open and his surcoat not folded in front, but revealing not only the legs but also the bottom of the gambeson and hauberk, are strongly marked peculiarities of English effigies which are well portrayed on this South Petherton figure.

This South Petherton 'knight' (Pl. III), sculptured out of Douling Oolite, appears to be unique in the south and south-west of England, as the imager has represented his coif of mail unlaced, revealing the hair curled in a roll on either side of the

¹ There are few examples of fourteenth-century straight-legged effigies in England and Wales. We have a 'knight' in Bristol Cathedral (1320) with the Berkeley arms emblazoned on his shield; the wooden effigy of Sir Richard du Bois at Fersfield, Norfolk; two Colvill figures at Ingleby Arncliffe (c. 1330-5), Sir Hugh Fitz-Henry (*ob.* 1304), Yorkshire; and effigy to Madoc ap Llewelyn ap Griffin (c. 1331) at Gresford, Denbigh. The 'knight' at Malvern Priory Church and the 'knight' at Paulton come, however, under French influence probably, and the first may be dated c. 1290 and the second 1290-1300.

² Armourers connected with the Royal Castle of Bristol during the Plantagenets must have been well acquainted with French styles of armour, as there was much intercourse between Bristol and the Duchy of Normandy. The late Dr. John Beddoe wrote a paper 'On the Medieval Population of Bristol' in *The Anthropological Transactions* in which he stated that even in the reign of Edward II this city had a large number of inhabitants who were French by birth or pedigree. This he found also applied to the ecclesiastics of certain religious houses, as when the burial ground of the Carmelite Friary, in Bristol, was excavated in September 1904 male skeletons were unearthed and Dr. Beddoe examined the skulls and found several that he considered were foreigners, as their crania indicated intellectual power and ability, and these were probably Frenchmen. The Carmelite Friary was founded by Prince Edward before he became Edward I, and new foundations for religious houses in England were at that time usually peopled with Frenchmen.

See 'Notes on Crania found on the site of the Carmelite Friary' by John Beddoe, M.D., F.R.S., in *Trans. Bristol and Glouc. Arch. Soc.* xxix, 142-146, illustrated.

face. There are, however, two similar instances in the south of England; one represents a 'knight' (c. 1300) made from magnesian limestone of Yorkshire, and is now on the s. side of the Temple Church, London,¹ and is said to have been brought about 1700 from Kirkham Abbey, Yorkshire. The other is not a stone effigy, but a brass in Chartham Church, Kent, of Sir Robert de Septvans² (c. 1300).

It will be seen from the illustration that the coif of mail lying on the shoulders of the South Petherton effigy has been modified evidently for artistic purposes, as an actual coif in this position would have many folds and would appear somewhat clumsy and unsymmetrical. Mr. J. G. Mann, M.A., B.LITT., F.S.A., of the Wallace Collection, has so wide a knowledge of medieval arms and armour that we ventured to consult him on the small appearance the coif of mail presented, and the interesting V-shape slit with the two laces on either side for fastening it together when drawn up on the head.³ Mr. Mann kindly replied that 'the sculptor has chosen to represent the coif by a modified convention which gives a neater appearance and does not make it unduly prominent in the composition. Your knight seems to bear this out, not only the presence of the laces, but from the fact that in the V-shaped gap in front there appears what I take to be the lower edge of the coif lying *over* the surcoat. If the mail was only a broad collar of the hauberk turned down round the neck, this underlying mail would be part of the hauberk itself, and therefore would appear from *under* the surcoat'. Mr. Mann adds that 'the clearness with which the padded collar worn under the mail is shown is an interesting feature. In the Pierpont Morgan MS., published in 1927 by the Roxburghe Club, knights are frequently shown in deshabelle wearing a large detachable padded collar covering the neck and chin, clearly intended to keep the mail away from

¹ Prior and Gardner's *Medieval Figure-Sculpture in England*, 634, fig. 709.

² Ashdown's *Arms and Armour*, 117-118, fig. 146; Prior and Gardner's *Medieval Figure-Sculpture in England*, 656, fig. 737. Both illustrations are made from the excellent drawings by J. G. Waller, now belonging to the Society of Antiquaries.

³ These slits are rarely seen on effigies when the coif is unlaced as the imagers conceal them under the folds of the coif.

the neck and face and prevent bruising from a blow in that part. This MS. is an invaluable one for details of thirteenth-century equipment, which the artist portrays with great skill and care, being clearly much more intimately cognisant of the details of military equipment than the average monkish illuminator whose knowledge was necessarily limited'.

There seems to be no doubt that this South Petherton effigy represents Sir Philip de Albini, and the fact that the shield is carved with the armorial bearings of that 'knight' is conclusive. The Rev. G. W. Saunders has placed on record his careful study of this subject, and we refer our readers to vol. xix (1929) of *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*.¹ The arms blazoned on the shield are 4 *fusils with 3 martlets for distinction*, and the crux of the problem lies in the 'three martlets'. The Rev. C. Moor, D.D., F.S.A., has collected together ten knights of this family enumerating their arms from ancient Rolls² and as Sir Philip de Albini is the only lord of the manor of South Petherton who carried these 'three martlets in chief' on his shield, we feel confident that the effigy was his memorial. He may have been no ornithologist, yet these three little birds have solved the puzzle as to whom this effigy represented.

The heir of Ralph de Albini was his eldest son William, and he died in 1285 during his father's lifetime and his younger brother Sir Philip became heir, and succeeded to his father's estates on his death in 1292. However, he did not live long to enjoy them, as his demise was on the 16 July 1294 in his fortieth year and Elias, his younger brother, came into possession of the manor of South Petherton and other property.³

About a quarter of a mile from the church is the pit in which the effigy was discovered, and why it was deposited there

¹ Part clxi (June 1929), No. 199, pp. 217-220.

² See Harleian Society, vol. lxxx, 'Knights of Edward I'. The ten knights bear the name of De Albini (De Albeniaco, De Aubeni, Daubeny, Daubein) are catalogued. Only two are recorded as bearing martlets on their shields. One was Sir William de Albini who died before his father, and the other was his brother, Sir Philip de Albini, who then became the heir.

³ Fawinton and Husse manors in Cornwall as one twelfth knight's fee, South Petherton, Barrington and Chelston as one knight's fee, and Kilmersdon as one half knight's fee in Somerset, and Engleby in Lincolnshire (*Inquisition post mortem*).

remains a mystery. It is possible that the family may have removed the effigy of their thirteenth-century ancestor to save it from destruction, or it may have been that their foes desecrated the stone coffin of Philip de Albini and also flung his effigy into a pit. Search has been made through the records of the South Petherton branch of the Daubeney family, and we find that Sir Giles Daubeney¹ who lived in the Wars of the Roses was a well-wisher of the Earl of Richmond. He concerted with the Duke of Buckingham, but on the failure of that rebellion he fled with many others to Richmond, who was in Brittany. He was attainted in Richard's Parliament,² the custody of his South Petherton manor was granted to Lord Fitzhugh, and his lands in Somerset, Lincolnshire and Cornwall were confiscated.³ His fortunes were retrieved, however, when Henry VII became king, his attainder was reversed in Henry's first parliament, his lands were restored and he was created Baron Daubeney. Here we have an incident in the family history when feelings for and against the former owner of the Daubeney manor at South Petherton must have run high, and it is not unlikely that while Richard III was still King of England the new owners and his friends removed the effigy of Sir Giles' ancestor, Sir Philip de Albini, and it is possible that other Daubeney effigies may have been destroyed, or removed, at the same time.

TOPOGRAPHICAL INDEX

PERSON REPRESENTED. Sir Philip de Albini, knt., son and heir of Ralph de Albini, does homage to King 3 February and has livery of his lands, 5 February 1292 (Close Rolls), brother of William de Albini and has livery of his lands 3 July 1285 (Fine Rolls). Grant of marriage of widow of David, Earl of Atholl, 7 November 1270. Died 16 July 1294 (Fine Rolls) and Elias de Albini, his younger brother was his heir. He held Fawinton and Husse manors in Cornwall as one twelfth knight's fee, manors of South Petherton, Barrington and Chelston, as one knight's fee, and Kilmerston as

¹ *Dic. Nat. Biog.* xiv, 90.

² Parl. Rolls, vi, 246.

³ Patents, 1 Rich. III, pt. 3, No. 200; 2 Rich. III, pt. 1, No. 101. and pt. 3, No. 37.



THE EFFIGY OF SIR PHILIP DE ALBINI (ob. 1294),
FOUND AT SOUTH PETHERTON, 1929

one half knight's fee in Somerset, and Engleby in Lincolnshire (*Inquisition post mortem*).

EFFIGY found at Pit Way, South Petherton, during excavation of an old rubbish pit for petrol-tank some four feet below present level of land, lying on side. Mr. Pitfield, the tenant, uncovered and cleaned it and Mr. Fred Saunders, the owner of the property, presented it to the church, and it is now placed in new wall-recess in s. wall of chapel of Our Lady. Feet, lion they rested on, right arm and lower part of scabbard are lost, but damage took place before effigy was found. Face, and some other parts of effigy are somewhat weatherworn, otherwise this well-executed figure is well preserved, but right hip is too prominent. The effigy (6 ft. 4 in.) is in suit of chain-mail, hauberk has arms showing parallel rows of mail from shoulder to wrist, and padded gambeson visible $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. below hauberk and $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. at neck, stockings of mail fastened with buckled straps ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.), sleeveless surcoat enclosed with cingulum falls to calves in graceful folds showing the legs which are straight lying slightly separated, guige ($1\frac{3}{4}$ in.) with buckle and tag of 12 in. with metal end, suspended from neck crosses breast from right to left holds heater-shaped shield (2 ft. 3 in. long, 1 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide at top) sculptured with knight's cognizance (4 *fusils* with 3 *martlets* for *distinction*), sword with short straight quillons, circular pommel, hangs from centre of waist inclining to left side, scabbard (broken at bottom $7\frac{1}{2}$ in., total length 2 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in.), hands in mail with fingers divided, right grasps handle of sword drawn out of scabbard ($2\frac{1}{4}$ in.), left holds enarnes (not visible) with fingers on edge of shield, sword-belt ($1\frac{7}{8}$ in.) passes round scabbard under shield, across right hip with end through buckle hangs loosely down 17 in. having metal end. Head uncovered and hair falls in curls below ears with partings on either side of forehead uniting above forelock ending in broad parting to neck. Face worn, right eye damaged, left carved well and wide open. The coil of mail is not drawn up over head, but rests on neck and shoulders. The imager has made a modified convention, small with no voluminous folds so that the V-shaped slit ($3\frac{1}{2}$ in.) in the bottom edge is visible with two laces on each side for fastening it when drawn up. Head rests on two pillows (bottom, rectangular = 1 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 1 ft. 2 in. by 3 in. top diagonal = 10 in. by 10 in. by 3 in.). Edge of bevelled slab (6 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 3 in. tapering to 1 ft. 9 in.) is damaged in places, probably by chains or ropes when removed to the dry pit and five circular holes ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter) are bored through the slab. The four paws of lion (lost) at feet remain on slab and portion of tail indicating that it curled over back and fell on lead plug still *in situ* in slab. Date 1292-1295. Plate III, figs. 1, 2, 3.

REFERENCES. *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, xix (June 1929), 217-220. Note 199 (Rev. G. W. Saunders); September, 244-247, Note 219 (Alfred Welby).