# CHAPTER I

## EDWARD I AND II. 1272–1327

THE study of monumental brasses is one for which Englishmen have special opportunities, for in England there are more brasses than in all the other countries of Europe put together. The English brasses moreover differ curiously from those of the Continent. On the Continent the early engravers, probably influenced by the Limoges plates and incised slabs which preceded them, engraved figures, inscriptions and other details on rectangular plates. The monument of Geoffrey Plantagenet, 1150, father of Henry II of England, which is now in the Museum at Le Mans is such a plate. The enamelled effigy rests on a diapered background. The earliest brass is that of Bishop Iso von Wilpe, 1231, at Verden. (See Ch. XIII.)

In England, as the engravers copied the stone figures without backgrounds, they took the gravestone itself for the groundwork, and figures, canopies, inscriptions, etc. are each set into separate casements. The earliest *matrix* (at St Paul's, Bedford) shows a large Latin cross and is believed to commemorate Sir Simon de Beauchamp, 1208. The earliest *brass* now extant is that of 1277 at Stoke d'Abernon. To the first period belong in all twenty brasses (see Appendix).

The figure of Sir John Daubernon (1) shows the armour which had been worn for the last three centuries. He is in chain mail with *coif de mailles*, hawberk and *chausses* complete, but the junctions of these are not distinct. Single-pointed prickspurs are buckled round the ankles. The only sign of the coming change to plate armour are the *genouillères*, which protect the knees and are adorned with a fine pattern. They were probably at first made of leather, but later were of plate.

Over the mail is a linen surcoat, drawn tight round the waist by a cord. Suspended upon his left shoulder is his shield, small and heater-shaped, charged with his arms: *azure*, a *chevron or*. The ground of

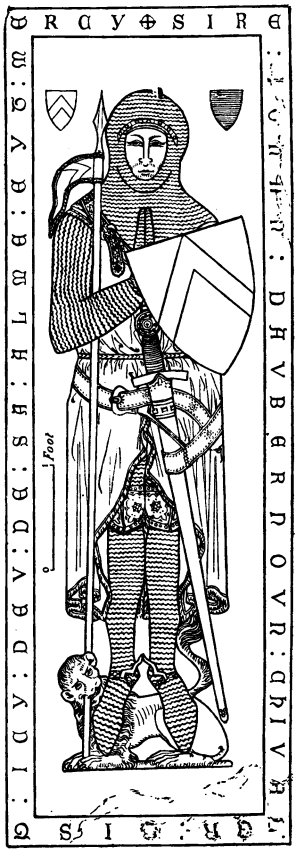


Fig. 1. Sir John Daubernon, 1277, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey

the shield is in actual enamel—an almost unique feature. The cross-handled sword is attached to a broad belt and hangs in front of the body. This is the only brass which shows the lance. His feet rest on a lion, which is said to signify that he fell in battle.

Sir Roger de Trumpington differs from Sir John in several points. He has *ailettes* on his shoulders charged with his arms—three trumpets—and his shield is long instead of heater-shaped. Further, the great tilting helmet is placed under his head and is secured to his waist by a chain, and his legs are crossed. In 1270 he went on the Seventh Crusade with Prince Edward. So far as can be discovered, this is the only brass extant of a Crusader, but several other brasses of the same date have their legs crossed. This does not prove that they were Crusaders, but only that in some way they were benefactors to the Church.

Sir Richard de Boselyngthorpe (a demi-figure) wears gloves of fish-scale plates and holds a heart. Sir Robert de Bures is considered to be the finest military figure among all the brasses of England.

Sir Robert de Setvans is bare-headed and his gloves hang loosely from the wrists, leaving his hands bare. His arms (winnowing fans, hence the name Setvans) are shown on his surcoat, *ailettes*, and long shield. Both he and Sir Robert de Bures are

cross-legged. There is probably French influence in this brass.

Next follow two transitional figures at Pebmarsh and Gorleston. Both originally had canopies, which have now entirely disappeared. In these the outsides of the upper and forearms are protected by steel plates strapped over the mail, small elbow-pieces are added, and round plates are fixed in front of the shoulders and at the bend of the arms. Shin plates may also be noticed.

Fig. 2. Sir John de Creke, c. 1325, Westley Waterless, Cambs.

Sir John de Creke is a fair example of a fourteenth century knight clad almost entirely in plate-armour, for we now pass definitely to the second type of armour known as the "cyclas." This garment is shown in the illustration and is also depicted in the brass of Sir John Daubernon II. It takes the place of the surcoat, is slit up the sides, and is shorter in front than behind.

It therefore shows beneath, first the gambeson, then the hawberk of mail, and, finally, the padded haqueton. The hands are bare and the hawberk sleeves short, thus showing the forearms entirely protected by vambraces of plate worn under, not over, the mail. The upper arms have pieces of

plate over the chain, as before. A steel bascinet is on the head, and the quatrefoil device on its apex was probably meant to hold a crest or a lady's favour.

Sir John (II) has the earliest ogee-arch canopy. There was a fine double one at Westley Waterless, but not a vestige of it remains.

Sir John de Northwode's effigy is almost certainly the work of a French craftsman. His shield hangs at his left hip instead of on his arm, which was a very usual method in France. The style of the engraving, too, points in the same direction. His helmet is secured by a chain, his head rests on a pillow and his forearms are protected by scale-armour. About 1510, the lower portion of the figure having been lost, new legs were engraved. Though an effort has been made to preserve the style of 1330, yet the new work is obviously Tudor. The altered shape of the feet and badly depicted lion readily show this. At the same time, a strip was cut out of the middle to make the knight of the same length as his wife! This removed the arm of the cross in his shield, as shown in the illustration, but the missing piece has recently been restored.

We must now consider the costume of the ladies, of whom the first is Margarete de Camoys, c. 1310. There was originally a canopy of the earlier, or straight-sided type, and a border inscription in Lombardic letters. Further, there were eight shields and thirty-one stars or other devices on the slab. The figure alone

Fig. 3. Sir John and Lady de Northwode, c. 1330, Minster-in-Sheppey, Kent

survives and has on it nine blank shields, probably the matrices of shields of enamel.

Joan de Cobham, c. 1320, is the next lady. Her straight-sided canopy is the only survivor of this early type. She wears a loose-fitting robe with short sleeves, below which can be seen the sleeves of her kirtle. Her head and neck are covered with a veil and wimple.

Lady de Creke wears a long mantle fastened across the breast by a cord and gathered up under the arm. The mark of the engraver is at her foot. This is almost unique.

Lady de Northwode has a mantle with side openings, through which the arms pass. It is turned back in front to show the lining of variegated fur. The head

Fig. 4. Lady Joan de Cobham, c. 1320, Cobham, Kent

is bare and the hair plaited; a stiff wimple covers the neck. Her head rests on a handsome cushion.

Maud de Bladigdone has a dress similar to Joan de Cobham's.

She and her husband are small demi-figures in the centre of an octofoil cross, most of which had to be restored in 1887. He wears a tunic buttoned down the front, with tight sleeves having long lappets from the elbows and a tippet over his shoulders. His beard is small and forked.

The remaining brasses are to priests in mass vestments, excepting Archbishop Wm. de Grenefeld. But we shall deal with the vestments of the clergy in a separate chapter.

The Chinnor, Merton College and Woodchurch brasses are in varying forms of crosses. Chinnor has only the head in the centre, Merton a fine demi-figure, and Woodchurch a small figure. Until 1857 there existed a fine, large brass to a priest Adam de Bacon (1310), at Oulton in Suffolk. Unfortunately in that year it was stolen (and probably melted down). The two remaining priests are simple demi-figures.

There was originally a fine canopy over Archbishop Grenefeld with side shafts containing saints. All this has long since perished and 18 inches of the lower portion of the figure were stolen in 1829.

These early figures all have very curly hair.

# CHAPTER II

## BRASSES DURING THE REIGNS OF EDWARD III AND RICHARD II

We now find brasses commemorating members of almost every class, but the first to claim our attention will be the military ones.

A small group of three transitional but mutilated brasses must be taken first:

Of these that of Sir Hugh Hastings (1347) at Elsing, in Norfolk, is the most interesting. His legs are now missing, but from an old rubbing in the British Museum we know they were enclosed in chain mail. The cyclas, worn shorter than hitherto, only reaches to the middle of the thighs. Upon it is the maunche or sleeve of the Hastings family, richly diapered, and differenced with a label of three points. This also appears on his small heater-shaped shield. A belt hangs over his hips with the sword on the left side, fastened in front. A hawberk of mail was worn beneath the cyclas and the haqueton shows at the wrists. A bascinet protects his head and a gorget of plate encircles his neck. Additional plates are attached to the arms, and roundels are placed at the elbows and below the shoulders. Cuisses of pourpoint appear for the first time upon the thighs. These

were of leather (*cuir-bouilli*) studded with small steel plates.

The canopy (now much mutilated) is very fine. Originally there were four canopied niches on either side with "weepers," or mourners, in the military costume of the day. Three were missing, though of these one, Lord Grey de Ruthyn, was preserved at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and has lately, we believe, been restored to its place. Those left are: Top dexter side, Edward III crowned, with the arms of England and France on his cyclas. Below him, Thos. de Beauchamp, holding a lance. Top sinister side, the Earl of Lancaster—Henry Plantagenet, the next is lost, then Lord Stafford, and then Almeric, Lord St Armand, who wears a ridged steel hat with a broad rim over his bascinet, which is almost unique.

Within a circle in the arch of the canopy is St George, and beneath him the soul is being borne upwards by two angels.

There are several other interesting details which it would take too long to describe. The brass at Wimbish, in Essex (1347), consists of a much mutilated cross, which contains within its head Sir John de Wantone and his lady. He greatly resembles Sir Hugh, save that his legs are partly clad in plate, as in the de Creke brass.

Sir John Giffard (1348) at Bowers Gifford in