

Two Effigies in the Churches of Asthall and Cogges in Oxfordshire

By MISS E. R. PRICE

THE two recumbent effigies of ladies that are the subject of this article belong to the latest series of the earliest group of such monuments. They are the female counterparts of the knights in chain armour and surcoat—before the *cyclas* period—of which there are many in Oxfordshire, for example, in the churches of Chinnor, Great Haseley, Hampton Poyle, Great Tew and Dorchester—some earlier than others. These two effigies, from the architectural details of the tombs, can be assigned to the late thirteenth century or to the first quarter of the fourteenth. Where the knight and his lady lie side by side, the one, especially the knight, helps to date the other. Sometimes a coat of arms on the tomb or in a window, or a record of the same, gives a clue to identity, but often there is only tradition to help, and this must be accepted with caution.

The more interesting, historically, of these two effigies is the lady of Asthall, near Burford, but artistically the lady of Cogges, near Witney. Both tombs are made of freestone: they differ in type.

THE LADY OF ASTHALL

The lady of Asthall (PLATE X, A) lies on a low stone slab on the north side of the north chapel, in the church of St. Nicholas, under a rich Decorated canopy, which must be of the same date as the effigy; it shows traces of restoration. It has crockets and cusps and a foliated finial which rises in front of the stained glass window above the tomb: the cusps are enriched with naturalistic foliage of ivy, oak and vine with clusters of grapes. In the restored grisaille of the east window of the chapel the same motives appear.

The lady wears a long, flowing dress that covers all but the tip of her right foot: it is cut round in the neck with sleeves tight to the wrist: over this she has a long, loose mantle falling in folds, bunched into a tight knot on the right arm and held by a narrow cord or band passing from one edge to the other: round her throat is a wimple that encloses her chin and both sides of her face: on her head is the *couvrechef*, a kerchief, that completely conceals her hair and falls to her shoulders: a narrow band across the forehead seems to hold the wimple

in place : her feet rest on a couchant lion with its tail curled in a knot over its back : her hands are raised and joined in prayer : under her head are two cushions, the upper set diagonally to the lower, a common device of the period, perhaps for producing variety of line.

A clue to her identity is given by the coats of arms in the three quatrefoil lights of the window (PLATE IX) above the tomb. All three shields have been re-leaded. The upper (centre) one is now composed of re-used pieces which heraldically mean nothing in their present form. The upper part of the shield consists of one piece of glass, having an etched and decorated strip in black and white below and a black band above, on which are roundels. It is possible that this piece may have formed the border of a much larger light. The lower part of the shield consists of two pieces of silver glass. The lower, left-hand shield, the westernmost, appears to be of contemporary glass and bears *Silver a lion gules crowned gold with a bend sable charged with three bezants*. From contemporary Rolls of Arms,¹ the Parliamentary or Great Roll (1308-1314) and the Boroughbridge Roll (1322), we find that this coat was borne by Sire Edmond de Cornewaile of Oxfordshire.

Further, in the Stepney Roll² the arms of Sir Edmond de Cornwaile are *Silver a lion gules crowned gold with a bend sable charged with five bezants*.

The lower, right-hand shield, the easternmost, also appears to be contemporary and bears *Silver a lion gules crowned gold with a bend sable charged with three molets gold*. This coat we find to have been borne by Jeffrey de Cornwall according to the Boroughbridge Roll (1322).

The shield borne by Plantagenet Earls of Cornwall is *Silver a lion gules crowned gold in a border sable bezanty*. Richard, Earl of Cornwall and Poitou (1209-1272), being the younger son of King John, did not bear the leopards of England with a label or border, as afterwards became the custom of the King's sons, but took the arms *Silver a lion crowned gold* (for Poitou) *within a border sable bezanty* (for Cornwall) by which he included the ensigns of both the Earldoms in one shield.³ This shield is to be seen on the south wall of the south aisle of the nave in Westminster Abbey.

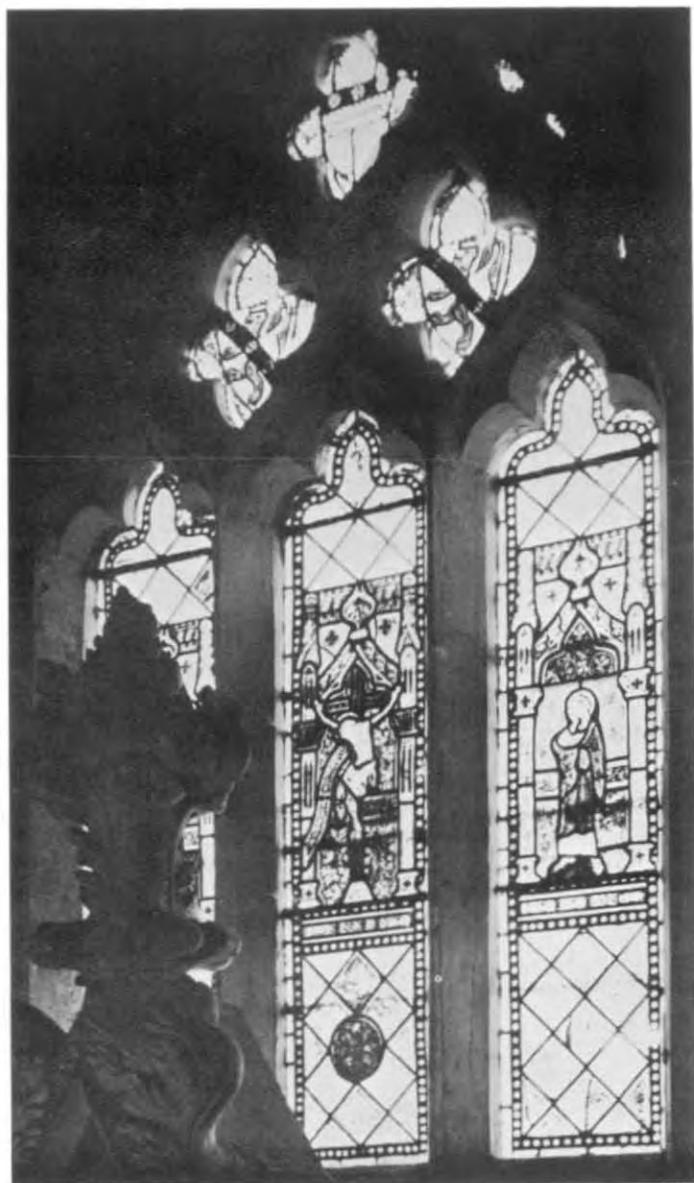
The arms, then, in the north window of the Chapel of Asthall are the arms of the Cornwalls. Though the border sable bezanty is missing in the shields, it is to be noted that the lower lights of the window, in which there is the Crucifixion, have a black border set with yellow roundels or bezants.

¹ I am indebted to Mr. P. S. Spokes for information concerning Rolls of Arms.

² *Coll. Top. et Gen.*, iv, 71, no. 211 : 'the English nobility meeting on February 28, 1308, in the Refectory at Westminster Abbey, proclaimed a tournament at Stevenhithe (Stepney) in honour of his Majesty's coronation.'

³ Sandford, *Geneal. Hist. of Kings and Queens of England* (1707), p. 95.

PLATE IX

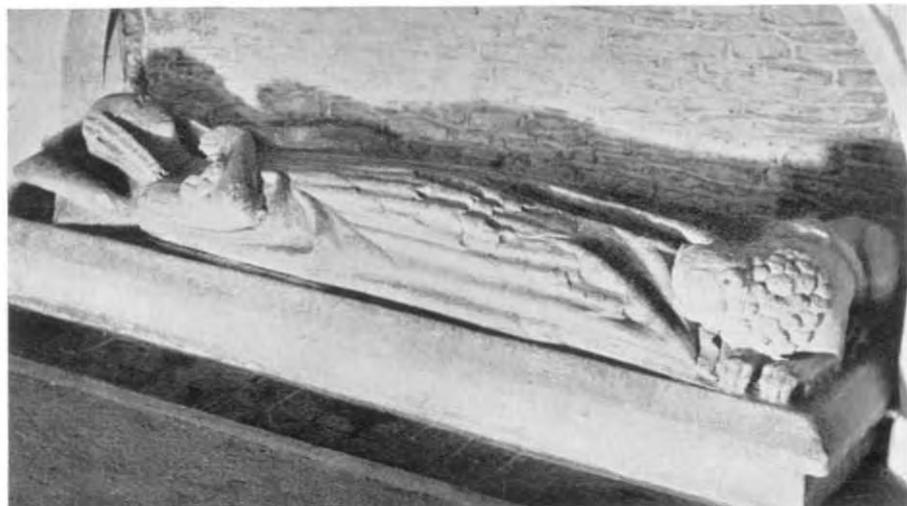


EAST WINDOW OF THE NORTH CHAPEL IN ASTHALL CHURCH, OXON.

In the quatrefoil lights are coats of arms of the Cornwall family.

Ph. R. Rose

PLATE X



A. Recumbent Effigy of a Lady, XIV Century, Asthall Church, Oxon.

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B. Recumbent Effigy of a Lady, XIV Century, Cogges Church, Oxon.

Ph. the late F. E. Howard

TOMBS AT ASTHALL AND COGGES, OXON.

The connexion of Asthall with the Cornwalls is a matter of history and is well documented. At the time of the Domesday Survey¹ Asthall (Esthale) was held of the King by Roger d'Ivery. It was included in the Barony held by Roger and, on his death, by his sons. The Barony on the death of the last son passed to the Walerys and was known as the Barony or Honour of St. Walery: through the marriage of Alianora St. Walery, sole heiress, to Robert, Comte de Dreux, the Barony passed to him, but, owing to his treachery in conspiring against the King in France in 1227, the Barony was forfeited to the Crown and Henry III gave it to his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, later King of the Romans. Richard left it at his death in 1272 to his only surviving legitimate son, Edmund, who died in 1300 without legitimate issue, leaving it to his cousin and heir, Edward I. Hence the connexion of Asthall, Beckley, Ambrosden and other places in Oxfordshire, which were in the Barony of St. Walery, with the Earls of Cornwall.

But apart from its inclusion in the Barony, Asthall had connexions with the Cornwall family both before and after the death of Earl Edmund in 1300. I quote only the following. In a MS. in the possession of The Queen's College, Oxford (4 E 22, No. 1781) we find:—

' 1270-1290. William, son of William Gayland of Asthale grants to Sir Richard de Cornwall and Joan his wife his tenement in Asthall and Asthallinglye.'

Again, in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (October 23, 1303, p. 197):—

' A commission to Walter de Aylesbury . . . to make an extent by jury of the following lands of which Margaret late the wife of Edmund, sometime Earl of Cornwall, prays to have the third part as dower, to wit (1) v. Edmund, Son of Richard de Cornubia of two parts of the manor of Esthale with the advowson of the church. (2) v. Joan, late the wife of the said Richard $\frac{1}{3}$ of $\frac{1}{3}$ part of the said manor and advowson.'

The genealogy of the Cornwall family starting from Richard, Earl of Cornwall, King of the Romans, has long been a matter of controversy. What we are concerned with is to find out if possible, by documentary evidence, the place of Richard and Joan, his wife, in the Cornwall family, and anything relevant about them and their sons, Edmund and Geoffrey. In the list of the 'Knights of Edward I'² are:—

1. *Richard, Earl of Cornwall.* King of the Romans (d. 1272) with his shield of arms, his marriage, descendants and incidents of his life.

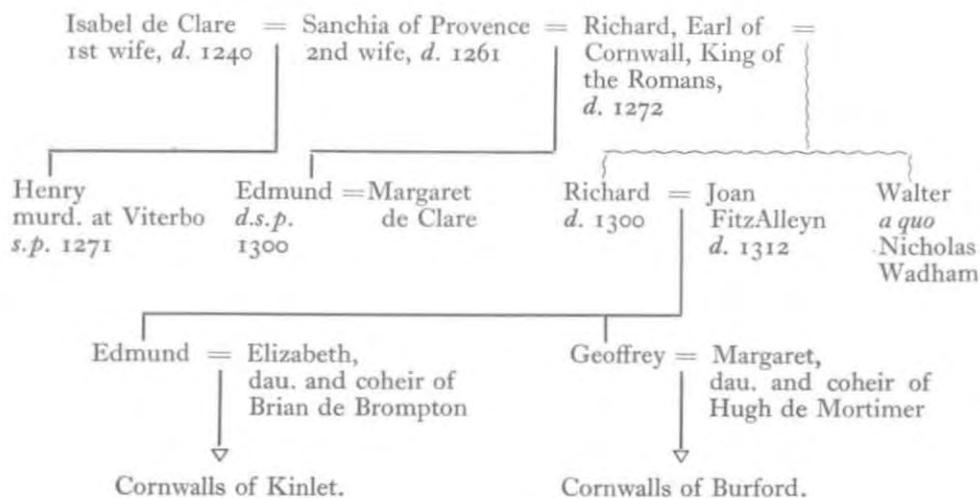
2. *Edmund, Earl of Cornwall,* his son (d. 1300 *s.p.*).

¹ *D.B.*, i, 158 b.

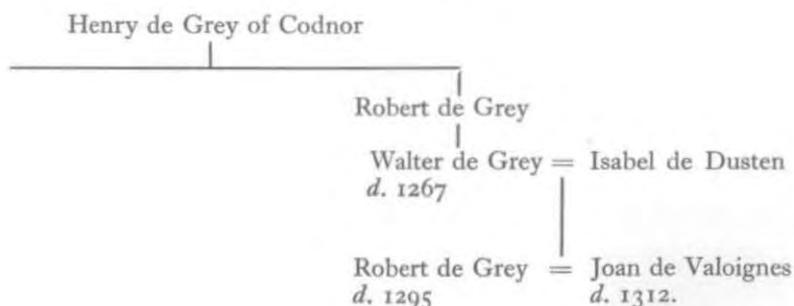
² *Harl. Soc.*, LXXX (1929), i, 238 ff.

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KEY PEDIGREE OF CORNWALL



KEY PEDIGREE OF GREY



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3. *Sir Richard de Cornewayle*, Kt. with his shield of arms 'arg. on a fesse sab. 3 bezants.' Base son of Richard, King of the Romans, a knight serving for Edmund, Earl of Cornwall 1 July 1277 . . . Dead 3 Dec. 1300, leaving a widow, Joan, son and heir Edmund and younger son Geoffrey. His will was proved at Lincoln, 1300, in the Register of Bishop Sutton (1280-1300).¹

4. *Sir Edmund de Cornewayle*, Kt. with shield of arms as noted (p. 104):— 'had a suit against Joan, widow of his father, re tenement at Thonayk and against the Abbot of Hailes re tenement at Esthall (8 Mar. 1303). His wife, Elizabeth, a minor, is daughter and coheir of Brian de Brompton . . . he holds Kinlet Manor in her right. 21 Dec. 1309. As his widow she sealed 1355 with his arms impaling two lions passant.' [Thonak, Lincs., had been granted to Sir Richard Cornwall by his 'brother' Edmund, Earl of Cornwall.² Hailes Abbey was founded by Earl Richard, King of the Romans: he was buried there, as were also the bones of his son Edmund.]

We learn from the 'Visitation of Shropshire,'³ that Joan the wife of Sir Richard and mother of Edmund and Geoffrey was the daughter and heiress of John FitzAlleyn, Lord of Clun and Oswestrie.

The illegitimacy of Sir Richard was fiercely contested in 1623 by the then Baron of Burford, descendant of Geoffrey. The two Heralds, Vincent and Milles, who investigated the pedigree, could arrive at no certain conclusion and the authors of 'The House of Cornwall' left the matter *sub judice* with a bias in favour of illegitimacy.⁴ The question was complicated by the fact that Earl Richard had by his second wife, Sanchia of Provence, besides Earl Edmund, another son, also Richard, who died childless.

With a younger brother of Sir Richard, Sir Walter Cornwayle, also a 'Knight of Edward I,' we are not here concerned, but it is of interest to note that from him was descended Nicholas Wadham.⁵

There is documentary evidence⁶ that the chapel in which the effigy lies was specially connected with the Cornwall family '1319 . . . in the next year license was obtained from the King by Joan, widow of Richard de Cornewaile, to give to the Prior and Hospital (of Burford) lands and rent in Asthall: the gift was completed in 1322 and in return 'Brother John, Master of the Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, and his fellow brothers bind themselves to find for ever a priest from among the brethren to celebrate divine service daily in the

¹ Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills*, p. 1, fo. 167.

² *Journ. R. Inst. Cornwall*, xvii, 414.

³ 'Visitation of Shropshire,' *Harl. Soc.*, xxviii-xxix (1889), 146.

⁴ Liverpool and Compton Reade, *The House of Cornwall*, p. vi.

⁵ *Journ. R. Inst. Cornwall*, xvii, 42.

⁶ *V.C.H. Oxon.*, II, 154: *Linc. Episc. Reg.* (Burghersh Inst.), fo. 261.

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chapel of St. Mary and St. Katherine in the church of Asthall for the soul of Richard de Cornwaile and for the souls of Joan and his children after death.¹

With such evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Lady Joan Cornwall, not the Countess of Cornwall,² was laid in her family chapel in Asthall, with her effigy above her. At the same time, too, the Decorated elements were probably added to the existing early English or even earlier chapel by her sons Edmund and Geoffrey, who placed their shields in the glass above her tomb. The date cannot be earlier than 1322.

THE LADY OF COGGES

This effigy (PLATE X, B) is of a lady recumbent on a table-tomb of freestone and, like the effigy of Asthall, is in the Decorated style of the early fourteenth century. The tomb stands close to the Blake chapel under an archway on the north side of the chancel. A bench is set so close against the tomb that the south side is almost hidden. The sides have deeply recessed panels set with sexafoils: two panels contain heraldic shields, now empty, but probably once painted: in the other four are the symbols of the Evangelists in high relief: a row of ball-flower ornament is inset in the cornice.

Like the Lady Joan Cornwall, this lady wears the dress of the period, but the execution is different; the long dress and the cloak fall in heavy, complicated folds, concealing the figure: the kerchief head-dress is finely folded and allows the waved hair to be seen on either side of the forehead. Her feet rest on a couchant lion with straight, tasselled tail: her hands are broken off but were evidently joined and raised in prayer. Instead of the double pillow a lovely and at this time not uncommon motive is introduced—her head rests on a cushion which is supported by two kneeling angels with drooping wings; the head of one angel is broken but the head of the other is thrown back with upturned face.³

This effigy, if my suggested identification is correct, is earlier than that of the Lady Joan Cornwall, but the execution is finer, the features are more delicately modelled and more individual. At the same time it must be remembered that at this date effigies were not, as a rule, intended to be portraits and any figure could be ordered from stock with accessories or details as desired. In view of the very fine and characteristic sculpture, more particularly of the Decorated period, which is to be found in many churches in Oxfordshire, it

¹ 'Church of St. Nicholas' is added in *Patent Rolls*, 14 Edw. II, pt. 1, m. 22.

² Rawlinson, describing the effigy adds 'said to be the Countess of Cornwall': *Davis, Parochial Collections* 1 (O.R.S. II), 9.

³ Angels are holding up the pillow of the knight in the church of Hampton Poyle, and it is to be noted that at this time the imagers of Westminster in particular were using this motive.

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would seem to be not improbable that there were local workshops in the neighbourhood.

For the identification of the Lady of Cogges we have no clue as good as the coats of arms in the window of Asthall, but we can get some help towards a possible identification from the history of Cogges. At the Domesday Survey,¹ Cogges was held of the King by Wadard under Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the tenant in chief. On Odo's downfall, Wadard was dispossessed and Cogges was given to Manasseh Arsic and became the head of the Barony of Arsic. Six barons in succession held it from 1103-1230. The last, Robert Arsic, left two daughters co-heiresses, Joan and Alexandra. These two daughters passed over much of the Arsic property to Walter de Grey, Archbishop of York. The Archbishop gave his Rotherfield property to his brother Robert and some part of the Arsic lands to his nephew Walter, son of Robert, but a considerable part of the property in Cogges was retained by Alexandra Arsic.² It is evident therefore that both Arsics and Greys had close connexion with Cogges, and the lady of the effigy might belong to either family. Antony Wood, who visited Cogges in 1652, described the tomb.³ 'In ye chancell betwixt it and ye north isle is an ancient monument of freestone erected and thereon is the portraiture of a lady lying, two angells supporting her head : it is out of remembrance there. All I can guess is that perhaps it was for some of the Arsickes who were founders of ye priory there and that she built ye aforesaid north isle for her mass to be celebrated there.'

Much the same description of the tomb is given by Rawlinson,⁴ but he says, 'it may be noted that this manor having for several generations belonged to the Greys of Rotherfield, their wives had this and other manors settled upon them for joyntures. If I am not mistaken this north isle was built by one of them and perhaps the present fabric of the church.'

Lastly, Lee, writing in 1574, gives a list of the coats of arms 'In Cogges church. Sometyme the Lady Grays of Rotherfeld.' He notes that the arms of Grey of Rotherfield occurred three times, and *Barry of eight arg. and az. on a bend gu. three martlets or* [Grey] occurred twice; the latter two shields were in windows, and over one shield he wrote 'the Lady Greye.'⁵

If Rawlinson is right in his conjecture, and this is strengthened by Lee's description of the coats of arms, it would seem possible and consistent with the date of the tomb that the lady of the effigy is Joan, wife of Robert de Grey, son of Walter de Grey to whom the Archbishop gave some of the property of the

¹ *D.B.*, 1, 156.

² Moriarty, *Oxfordsh. Arch. Soc. Report*, 1930, pp. 309 ff.

³ Davis, *Parochial Collections* 1 (O.R.S. 11), 8, citing Ant. Wood, B. 15, 1652.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 9 citing Rawlinson, B, 400 F. fo. 40.

⁵ 'Visitation of Oxford,' *Harl. Soc.*, v (1871), 47.

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Arsics in Cogges. Robert de Grey is mentioned in 'Knights of Edward I.'¹ He bore *Barry of six arg. and az. a bend gu.* He is called 'Lord of Coges.'² He married Joan, daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas de Valoignes of Shabbington, Oxon.³ Robert de Grey was dead in 1295, for as his widow she alienated Shabbington Manor in free alms to the Knights Hospitallers.⁴ On her death in 1312 there is an 'order to take into the King's hands the lands late of Joan de Grey deceased.'⁵ For a key pedigree see p. 106.

The death of Joan de Grey being thus documented at a date which falls in the middle years of the Decorated period, it may well be that her descendants placed her effigy on this table-tomb and their coats of arms in the windows of the church of Cogges—part of their inheritance.

If Antony Wood's suggestion that it was the effigy of an Arsic lady be examined, it will be found that it might, so far as date is concerned, be Alexandra de Gardinis—daughter and heiress of Alexandra Arsic, wife of Thomas de la Haye,⁶ who, with her sister and co-heiress Joan, gave part of their property to Walter, Archbishop of York. William de Gardinis⁷ husband of Alexandra is mentioned in 'The Knights of Edward I.' He held . . . a messuage in Somerton and Coges . . . and by his wife Alexandra de Arsyk left a son Thomas as heir.⁸ Both William and Thomas de Gardinis were buried in the north aisle of the church of Somerton, but Alexandra his wife may have chosen to be buried or at any rate have her effigy in the church of Cogges.

¹ *Harl. Soc.*, LXXX (1929), II, 47.

² *Cal. Inq. Edw.* I, II, 188.

³ *Feudal Aids*, I, 85: H. E. Salter, *Boarstall Cartulary* (O.H.S. LXXXVIII), p. 327.

⁴ *Cal. Close Rolls 1307-1313*, p. 491: *V.C.H. Bucks*, IV, 102.

⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1312, p. 151.

⁶ *Cal. Geneal.*, I, 125.

⁷ *Harl. Soc.*, LXXX (1929), II, 97.

⁸ Writ for Inq. for W. de G., 12 November, 1288: *Cal. Geneal.*, I, 389.