

ART XV.—*Masons' Marks, from the Abbey, Carlisle.* By WILLIAM THOMAS CREED, *Clerk of the Works at Carlisle Cathedral, in a letter to the Editor of the Society's Transactions : with an Appendix by the Editor.*

Communicated at Kirkby Stephen, August 18th, 1880.

Carlisle Cathedral, August 14th, 1880.

SIR,—I beg to enclose copies of my sketches from the masons' marks taken from the Cathedral and the Abbey buildings. I have not had time to write down my thoughts about them, but I have no doubt that at some time the matter will be taken up, and more will be known about them than any of us know at present. Most people have a theory of their own about masons' marks, but all who know anything about the matter must agree that the builders of the very earliest times have made use of marks much like those found on the walls of Carlisle Cathedral; and no doubt it would be a most interesting thing to find out why these marks are so general in all parts of the world, and in most parts so very similar in form and size. The very slight information I have upon the matter suggests to me the propriety of not reading a paper at the time noted. With many thanks for the pamphlets you so kindly sent me,

I am, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

WILLIAM THOMAS CREED.

R. S. Ferguson, Esq.

APPENDIX.

It is very desirable that those who have the opportunity should follow the laudable example set by Mr. Creed, and help this Society to record the masons' marks on the buildings within its district. A collection of those, which probably exist at Lanercost, Holme Cultram, Calder Abbey, and Shap; at Caldbeck, Dearham, Crosthwaite, and other

other churches; and on military and other secular buildings, might tend to the development of some general law as to these little understood marks.

Attention was first drawn to them by Mr. G. Godwin, F.R.S. and F.S.A., the editor of the *Builder*, in his letters to Sir Henry Ellis, K.H., F.R.S., secretary S.A., dated December 11th, 1841, and February 2nd, 1843, and printed in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxx., p. 113, with five plates of marks, to the number of 158, taken from Gloucester and Bristol Cathedrals, Furness and Malmesbury Abbeys, St. Mary's Redcliffe, Cheetham College, Manchester, from churches at Poitiers and at Cologne, including the Cathedral at that place.

Mr. Godwin suggested that—

“These marks, if extensively examined and compared, might serve to aid in connecting, and perhaps discriminating, the various bands of operatives who, under the protection of the Church, mystically united, spread themselves over Europe during the middle ages, and are known as Freemasons.”

At the meeting of the British Archæological Association, held at Canterbury in 1844, Mr. Godwin read a paper on the marks on Canterbury Cathedral. He said:—

“These marks appear to have been made simply to distinguish the work of different individuals, (the same is done at this time in all large works), but the circumstance that although found in different countries, and on works of very different ages, they are in numerous cases the same, and that many are religious and symbolical, and are still used in modern freemasonry, led him to infer that they were used by system, and that the system was the same in England, Germany, and France.” *Archæological Journal*, vol. I., p. 382.

Mr. Godwin continued the subject in the *Builder*, vol. 27 (1869) p. 237, and at pages 245, 246, he gave between 500 and 600 marks taken from England, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, France, the Tyrol, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and the Holy Land.

From the Cathedral at Carlisle, and from the buildings in its precincts, Mr. Creed has collected the following examples:—

Nave walls, (date 1101 to 1133)	
Outside	39
Inside	42
Choir walls outside	45
Choir walls inside and main Piers of Arcades	43
Triforium, Tower, Stairs, and Passages	34
Tithe Barn. (End of 15th century.)	19
Fratry. (Mainly end of 15th century)	65
Abbey Gates. (Beginning 16th century.)	14
The Deanery outside	11
Canon Chalker's house. (End of 17th century.)	5

316

If

If we exclude four of the number as being the initials of Prior Thomas Gondibour (T. G. or G. alone), and make also an allowance for the same mark occurring in more than one of the above divisions, we get nearly 300 masons' marks from Carlisle Cathedral and its precincts.

It would occupy too much space to go in detail through the Carlisle marks, but a few of them may be mentioned.

The hour-glass form, X or closed X, occurs in nearly twenty different variations, from the simple saltire or S. Andrew's Cross to more complicated forms. An instance of the pure hour-glass will be found in No. 7 in the examples from the Deanery, Plate iv. The hour-glass is found on the stones of Carthage, and Mr. Godwin gives examples from all quarters from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. Laid on its side with its ends curved, it is the letter M, as seen in many inscriptions in the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*. It is a well-known Freemasonic sign.

An eminent antiquary, visiting Carlisle Cathedral, thought he had found the Labarum or sacred monogram on a Roman stone on the outside of the nave. Careful scrutiny has convinced Canon Chalker, Mr. Creed, and myself, that the supposed Labarum is only a variation of the hour-glass. It is laid on its side, and a perpendicular line drawn through it. What appears to be the top of the P is a flaw in the stone.*

The universal N form, as Mr. Godwin calls it, occurs in about as many variations, including therein the Z forms. It occurs from Carlisle to the Holy Land; from the eleventh to the sixteenth century.

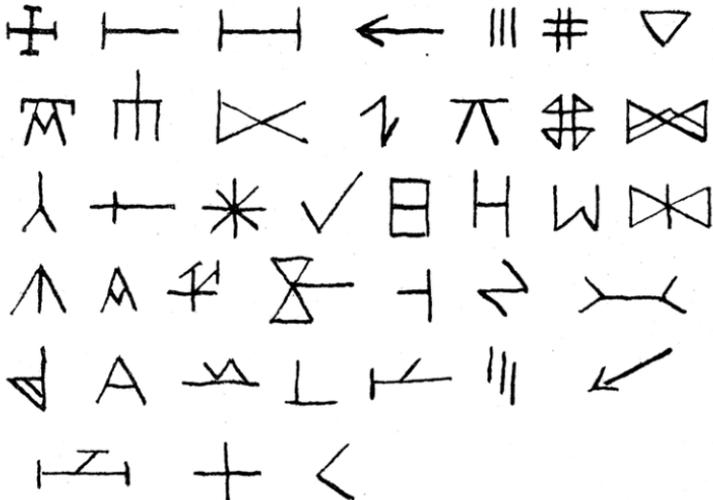
The pentacle, or Seal of Solomon, a five-pointed star, formed by a continuous line, occurs twice. This is a widely-spread sign, and is found on a Saxon fibula of the seventh century. It is a Freemasonic sign. The hexapla does not occur in the Carlisle marks.

The A, both topped and plain, occurs in several varieties, the shape of the cross stroke being differenced. Topped, it is found in Samaria, and over Europe. So is the double V, the V's overlapping, which also occurs as W. Two V's also occur in several combinations; a single one inverted is said to be the "*flabellum*;" also the masculine principle; upright the feminine. But the mason who cut these marks probably regarded them as mere signatures, whatever their origin may have been.

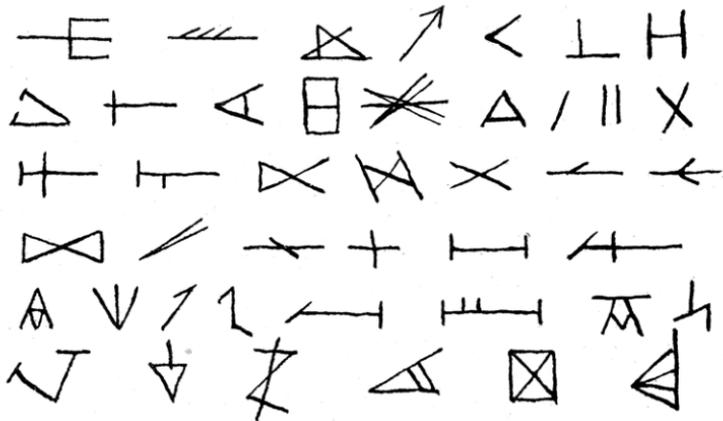
The cross with stopped ends occurs at Carlisle, as at Furness, Gloucester, Fountains, York, &c. It is the first mark on Plate I. One

* The masons' marks on the Roman stones in the nave of the Cathedral seem later than the Roman tooling. Mr. Creed thinks, and so do I, that these marks were put on by the mason, who quarried the stones out of the Roman wall.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL ANCIENT
 MASON MARKS. FOUND ON =
 NAVE WALLS OUTSIDE —

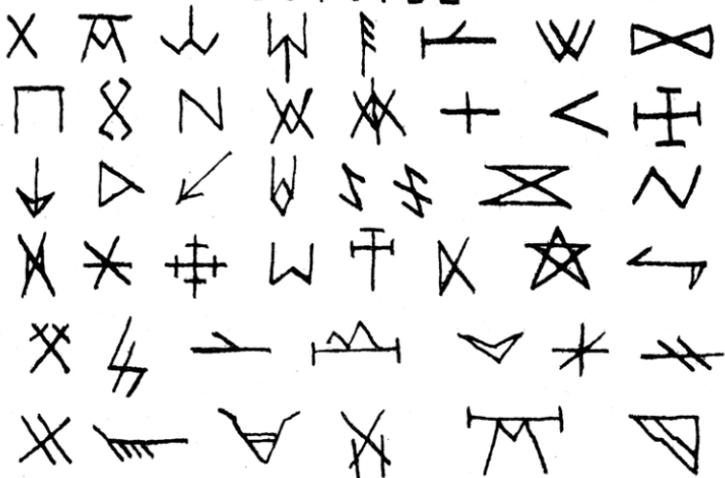


MARKS. ON INSIDE WALLS.

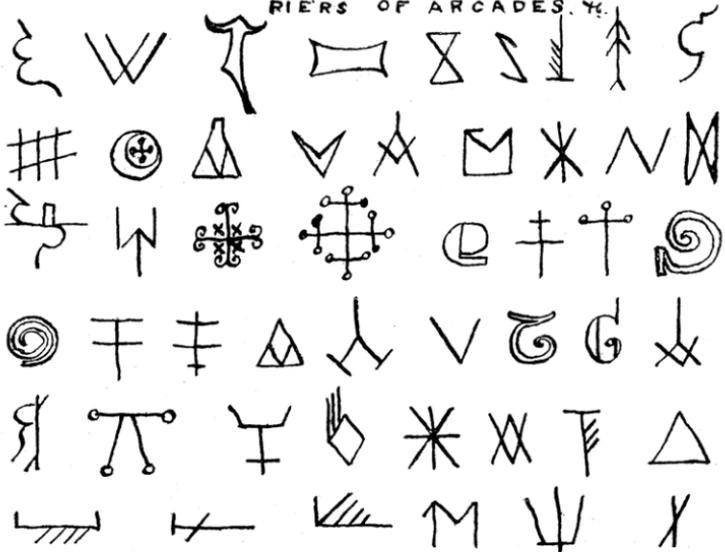


MASONS' MARKS FROM ABBEY, CARLISLE.
 PLATE I.

MARKS FROM CHOIR WALLS
OUTSIDE



FROM INSIDE WALLS
PIERS OF ARCADES, Y.



MASONS' MARKS FROM ABBEY, CARLISLE.
PLATE II.

variety of it is *fitchèè* or pointed at the foot. The cross-crosslet also occurs. Very ornate crosses occur in the choir at Carlisle.

The pheon appears at Carlisle. The horizontal 卐 does not, but it appears erect, and also turned round.

Several of the marks apparently originated in Runic letters. Of nine other Mr. Godwin has shewn the similarity to letters of the Lycian alphabet. The most curious of the Carlisle marks are evidently those from inside the Cathedral in Mr. Creed's fourth and fifth divisions, Plates II. and III. More than one would appear to be monograms or initial letters. There is one very curious one which resembles a stocking. At Strasburg and at Norwich the outline of a human leg occurs.

The *Archæologia*, vol. xxxiv. p. 33, contains a plate of masons' marks from Scotland, and also a plate of masons' marks from the cash book of St. Ninian's Lodge of Freemasons, Brechin. The *Builder* for 1863 contains a series of papers by Mr. J. E. Dove, in which he attributes very recondite meanings to many of the forms used as marks, but the masons used them as mere signatures, and attached no other meaning to them.

Since writing the above remarks, I find that the fourth volume, *Proceedings Antiq. Soc. Scotland*, contains a large collection of mason-marks copied from Melrose Abbey, Dryburgh, Jedburgh, Elgin, and several other places. There is also a short paper by John Alex. Smith, M.D., sec. S.A. Scot., who divides the marks into two classes—the False or Blind Mark of the apprentice, displaying an equal number of points; and the True Mark of the fellow-craft or passed mason, which always consists of an unequal number of points.

