ART. XXIV.—*A Rune-inscribed Anglian Cross-shaft at Urswick Church.* By W. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

Read at Carlisle, April 27th, 1911.

IN 1909 we were able to announce the find of a cross-fragment at Urswick, the first relic of Anglo-Saxon age discovered in Furness. This, by its Scandinavian character, showed evidence of the Viking settlement. The name however ("Vrswic" 1157-8: Farrer's *Lancs. Pipe Rolls*, p. 308: possibly for *ures-wic*, bison's * village?) was certainly Anglo-Saxon, not Norse; the early importance of the place as centre of the original manors of the district, and traditions, more or less noteworthy, of its great antiquity, all point to a pre-Viking origin. Which being the case, we hoped sooner or later to find a pre-Viking monument.

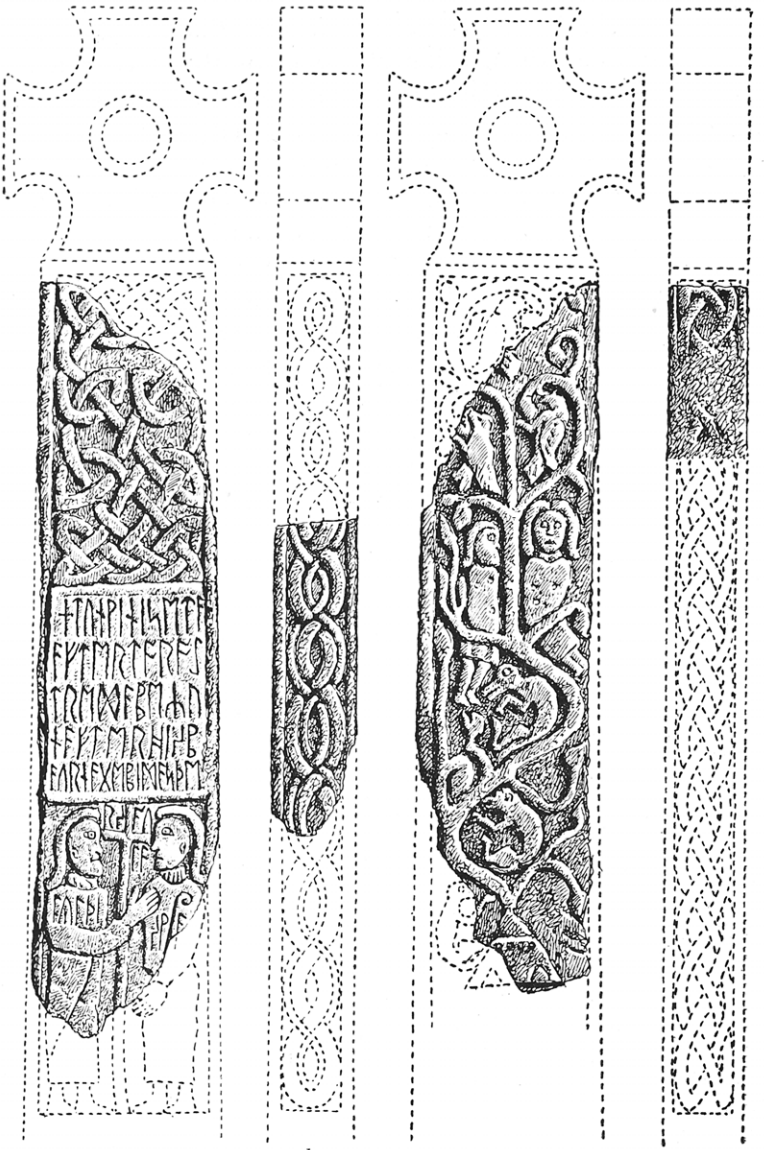
Early in April, 1911, the Rev. T. N. Postlethwaite wrote to me that another carved stone, with runes, had been found in stripping the plaster from the walls. His attention had been called to it by Mr. Afflick, the builder, but he had left it untouched until, as he kindly said, I should have seen it just as it was found. I went over at once with my son, whose help throughout has been valuable. We saw the stone in its place as lintel to the easternmost window in the south wall of the nave, high over the Gale pew, and as it carried no weight and was of no importance to the structure we had it taken down in the presence of the vicar, his churchwarden, clerk, and others, and tried to clean and read it. Enough was visible to show that it was an earlier monument than the stone found in 1909, but for further study Mr. Postle-

* i.e. *Bos primigenius*, not Aurochs, but ancestor of Chillingham cattle.

Photo. by R. G. Collingwood.

THE TUNWINI CROSS-SHAFT, URSWICK.

TO FACE P. 462.



THE TUNWINI CROSS AT URSWICK.

thwaite kindly let us take it home. Careful cleaning showed that, though the stripping of the plaster had slightly damaged the surface here and there, it was in very good preservation. One edge had been dressed down when it was used as a lintel, but the considerate iconoclast had left a bit of pattern at one end, so that the whole can be restored without much doubt.

The fragment is of red Furness Abbey sandstone (Permian) measuring 47 inches long, 12½ to 11 on the broader side, and 5⅞ to 5¼ on the narrower. On sides *a* and *d* of the drawing herewith the interlaced straps show a re-entering angle at the " dexter chief," indicating that the panel terminated there, giving us the top of the shaft. Above this must have been an Anglian free-armed head (I have used the form at Irton as possible from the point of view of period and district) and at the foot of the shaft, the completion of the two figures, with a little blank space below, as is not uncommon, gives a cross somewhat over six feet high—quite a large enough stone to be won at that period and carried four or five miles from the nearest outcrop of Permian.

The carving is chiselled throughout, though in some places chiselled in broken touches, which I take to be a transition to the picked or hacked work characteristic of the tenth century. The upper panel in *a* has two closed members or " rings " in the plait—a feature of late design, though this panel is otherwise very like that above the Igilsuith runes of Thornhill, West Riding. The pattern of *b* is seen in a rather late Anglian shaft at Leeds Museum, and the interlacing of double strands is also seen in the late Anglian cross at Irton, though in another pattern. The irregular scroll of *c* is more distorted than any such work I know in the North of England, but it is obviously derived from such late Anglian work as the cross-base at Rastrick. The open plait of *d* is also of late Anglian character; there is no Scandinavian ornament on this cross and it must be pre-Viking.

The figures are very rude indeed. The two on *a*, with a cross between them, suggest at first sight the SS. Mary and John at Burton in Kendal, Kirkby Wharfe, etc., but neither looks like a female. I am not sure whether they have beards under their chins, or whether the forms are meant to represent collars such as is seen in the latish Anglian shaft from St. Mary, Bishophill junior (York Museum, Hospitium, No. 9). As one person is putting his hand upon the side of the other, the Incredulity of St. Thomas comes to mind; but that other figure has no nimbus, and is not at all like the usual representations of Christ. The forms above the heads appear to be meant for long hair. Perhaps the runes on the figures are intended to explain them.

On side *c* there are two persons in the boughs of a tree, one sitting; above them are two birds, the tail of a third suggests the restoration; below them are beasts, indeterminable as to species but not dragons, and the paw of a third again suggests the restoration. Adam and Eve in the Garden are sometimes found on early Christian monuments, but usually with the serpent; and if these are intended (as some indications suggest) for semi-nude figures, the drawing is unbelievably infantile. At the same time the design is effective, well proportioned, and adapted to the space: the tradition of decorative art in decadent schools outlasts the power of naturalistic drawing.

The inscription is quite plain to read:—

+ TUNWINI SETÆ
ÆFTER TOROœO–
TREDÆ BECV–
N ÆFTER HIS B–
ÆURNÆ GEBIDÆS THE–
R SAU–
LÆ
LYLTHI SWÆ–

The first part follows the formula of the well known Dewsbury cross-head, but the spelling is irregular (perhaps dialectic) ; *e.g.* " bæurn " for *beorn*, and " gebidæs ther saulæ " for *gebiddath thære saule*. Tunwini is a name found recently (as " Tundwini ") by Mr. J. P. Gibson, F.S.A., on a cross at Hexham. Torhtred (" bright counsel ") is a possible Anglian name, like Torhtmund (not connected with the Thor—— of the Vikings), and the spelling " Toroeotred " is not unlike the " Eadberehct " of the Wensley slab for *Eadbercht* ; that is to say, a vowel is inserted to represent the burr of the R and the aspirate following it. We have then :—" This cross Tunwini erected in memory of Torhtred, a monument to his lord. Pray for the (his) soul."

The last line, written on the figures of the two men, is plain as far as it goes ; there is room for another letter, and we might possibly read " Lyl this wæs," meaning (with " this " for *thes* if referring to a male person) " This was Lyl " or " Lül." Lull(us), the Anglian bishop of Mainz, and Lilla, the " minister " of King Eadwine, may suggest parallels for the name ; but the subject of the picture is still obscure.

The monument, however, is distinctly Anglian, though very late ; it has no Scandinavian character, though the spiral at the shoulder of the sinister figure on *a* has a touch of Celtic style, if it means the termination of a limb and is not—as it hardly can be, since it is only an incised line and not a form in relief—intended for a crozier. With this slight Celtic affinity we can compare the similar indications on the Irton cross, which is obviously Anglian in general character ; and indeed it is not certain that this spiral and such minor points of style show direct relations with Ireland, so much as a general modification of taste, prevalent at the period, and not racial. It seems probable, however, that our coast was by no means unacquainted with the opposite shore of the Irish sea,

even after the synod of Whitby drove the Irish missionaries away. But the ornament and formula of this cross connect it very strongly with the West Riding, and suggest that Furness and Craven then were one country, part of the decaying kingdom of Deira under Osberht and Ælla; for the date of this monument to Torhtred, lord of Urswick, must be about 850–870 A.D. or shortly before the Viking invasion which stamped upon Furness the Scandinavian character it bore until the time of Gamel's tympanum at Pennington, three hundred years later.