

ART. XVIII.—*Anglian Cross-shafts at Dacre and Kirkby Stephen.* By W. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

SHORTLY after our Society's meeting at Penrith in July, 1911, Miss K. S. Hodgson of Newby Grange sent me a description of a carved stone at Dacre Castle. I took the earliest opportunity of seeing it, and venture to insert my sketch and notes, though not communicated at the meeting, among the papers relating to that neighbourhood.

The stone is now (November, 1911) cemented into the rockery at the castle door. Mrs. David Nicholson at the castle tells me that it was found by her son, about a dozen years ago, close to the church and deep in the clay, while he was digging in the course of operations for laying on water to the cottage which the family then inhabited. In the summer of 1910 it was brought to the castle and fixed as it stands. Our very hearty thanks are owing to those who have preserved this interesting relic.

The sketch represents all that can be seen of it in its present position, and I understand that it has never been photographed. The fourth side, now hidden, is said to bear similar carving, though not the same pattern.

The fragment, evidently part of a cross-shaft as indicated by the dotted lines added to suggest the original shape, is of red sandstone, measuring about 15 inches in height by about 10 inches in breadth (the full size not ascertained because part is sunk in the cement) by 5½ inches thick. Side A is rather deeply chiselled in strong relief with a leaf-and-flower scroll in which the hind legs of a beast are seen; the fore part of the beast is lost, but

I do not think that the little circle with a dot in it was meant for an eye, though the eyes on side C are drawn in that style. Side B seems to have been worn down a trifle ; its surface is smoothed away as if, at one time, the stone had been used for a paving-stone with this face uppermost ; but it must always have been more flat in its treatment than the other sides, which are remarkably strong and crisp in their details. A conventional scroll, with berries in the volutes, and leaves set stiffly as on Anglian shafts at Lancaster and Heysham, etc., passes into a diagonal key-pattern. The key-pattern is seen on the Anglian cross at Irton, but the transition from one kind of ornament to another is very rare. Late Anglian shafts at Lastingham and Aberford, Yorkshire, show the  $\top \perp \top$  pattern joined up with plait-work ; two instances of key-pattern passing into other forms are found in Scotland (see Romilly Allen's *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, Forteviot, Inchbrayock) ; but there are no others, I think, in Cumberland beside this at Dacre.

Another unusual motive is the splitting of the arris between sides B and C, with pellets inserted in the groove. How this was managed at the junction cannot be seen, as the stone is unfortunately broken at that point. Something like it occurs in the fine Anglian "Apostles" shaft at Collingham, where the arris is splayed off in the lower part, and a scroll inserted between the two mouldings. Here, the two pellets to the right of B and those to the left of C are the same, seen from different points of view.

Side C bears a leaf-and-berry scroll with figures. In the only complete volute is a creature which I take to be the winged lion of St. Mark, for the evangelist symbols were often carved on Anglian crosses. Though the ears are meant for a lion's—notice the tiny serrations which make the right ear hairy—and though the curly mane and circular eyes are conventional, the face is ludicrously

human and portrait-like. The tail ends in a bristly tassel, differentiated from the leaves of the scroll, and the forms are not without naturalism. Still more feeling for nature appears in the two pairs of human feet above, and this makes us regret the mutilation of a stone which possibly contained some figure-drawing better than the average. Below the lion is the head of a scaly snake, of which the body is lost. The cutting of this side is very skilful and minute, and wonderfully preserved, without any sign of weathering. The design is a little over-elaborated, compared with the fine breadth and simplicity of the best Anglian monuments, but it is still of the "classic" period of Anglian art, fully developed but not in decadence.

Taking these points into consideration, we may pretty safely date it to the later half of the eighth century, and see in it a document of great interest as connected with the place where it was found. Bede, who died May 26th, 735, mentions "the monastery which, built by the river of Dacore, has taken its name from the same," as the scene of a cure wrought by a relic of St. Cuthbert; the date given to this event is 698 (*Ecclesiastical History*, iv., 32). This Dacore has been supposed to be our Dacre, but without more evidence than the resemblance of the names. The shaft in the church shows that it was an Anglian foundation, but that shaft is about two centuries later than the event of which Bede wrote. This stone, however, was carved not later, perhaps, than half a century after Bede's death, and it adds very materially to the argument that Dacre was in existence during his lifetime.

At Kirkby Stephen, after the visit on which I made the drawings and notes on the Redman House cross-shaft (Article II. in this volume) Mrs. Mason noticed a carved fragment placed on the wall in front of the house of Mr. John Harrison. I revisited the town and made drawings

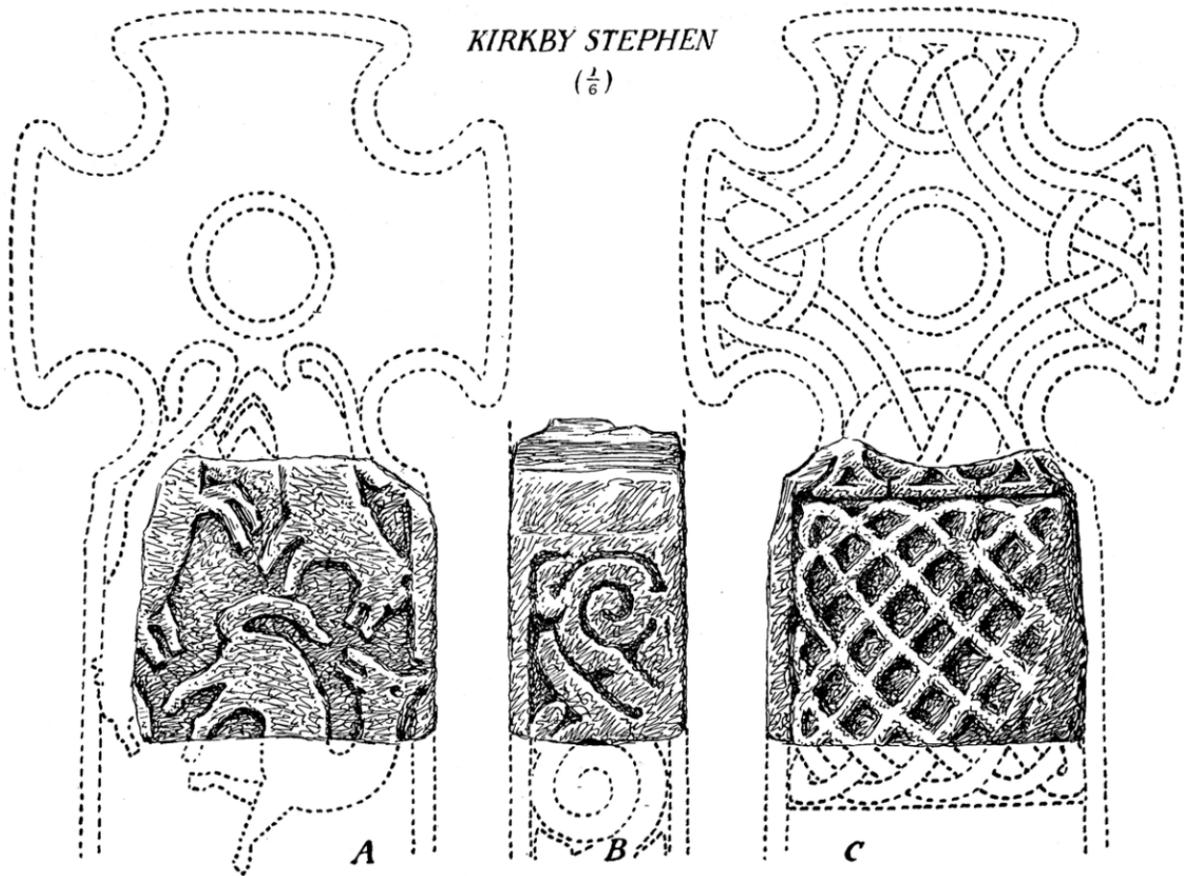
from which the figure opposite is taken ; the shaded parts represent the three remaining faces of the stone and the dotted lines are my attempt at restoration so far as the data suggest it.

Side A bears three rudely hacked animals, the ground merely cleared away with the hammer-point on the roughly-shaped and very hard grit stone. Beasts of this type occur at Kirkby Hill and Wath (North Riding) and three together on a cross-neck at Forcett (North Riding), all in work of debased Anglian style ; a similar beast is on a stone of the same character from Lasswade in the National Museum of Antiquities at Edinburgh. In these *Transactions*, N.S., iii., I have figured the rude Hart and Hound on one of the late Anglian crosses of the "Giant's Grave" at Penrith, the Hart with its head turned over its back like the lower figure on side A here. On Gosforth great cross, and on the stone in Dacre church, are groups of the same motive, the Gosforth example being on an Anglo-Scandinavian shaft, like the Hart and Hound at Lancaster, on the St. Paul's stone in the Guildhall Museum, London, and in many other instances. But the Dacre church shaft is late Anglian, and there are enough cases to show that the motive came into use before the Norse or Danish style of design was fully developed. Though the animal on side A has no horns and possesses a long tail, the group as a whole has many resemblances to that well known Viking Age symbol of the Christian in persecution. There was probably interlacing above and below the beasts, but as the head of the cross is broken off, any further restoration would be imaginary. The general shape of the head, however, is given by a part of the curve of the "armpit," and this shows that it was free-armed and not wheel-headed, therefore of Anglian type, though very late.

Side B gives a further proof of this in its debased and ill-designed scroll, rudely hacked out.

KIRKBY STEPHEN

( $\frac{1}{6}$ )



M

A

B

C



Side C bears a very roughly hacked basket-plait, in which the overlap of the strands is shown at one or two crossings only, though the carving is not at all rubbed and but little weathered, owing to the hardness of the material. It is fairly obvious from the curvature of the lines that the panel of plait must have terminated as shown in the restoration, and that the breadth of the shaft was as given by the dotted lines, making it a little over 10 inches at the point where it begins to taper towards the head. The fragment measures 10 by 9 by 6 inches over all; the faces are—A,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by 8 inches; B, 8 by  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches; and C,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  by 9 inches. The head I have attempted to restore from the row of triangles at the neck on side C, giving a breadth of about 15 inches across the arms. These triangles are unfamiliar to me in monumental design, but there are several examples of open-work pattern such as I have sketched; some, like the shaft at Lancaster, are very late Anglian, and some, as at Kirk-Levington (Cleveland), are tenth-century Danish.

The evidence, then, of design and workmanship here points to Anglian survival into the tenth century, and makes this stone interesting as a specimen of the work done before the Anglo-Norse and Anglo-Danish styles were developed, though after the fall of the great Anglian school. In a word, I suggest a date of A.D. 900 at earliest and probably a little later.

Mr. John Harrison, whose experience as a stonemason and builder qualifies him to speak with authority, thinks the stone came from a very ancient quarry on Hartley fell, from which came also the stones for other early monuments at Kirkby Stephen church. He believes the stone of the shaft at Redman House came from Smardale gill. Mr. Harrison found this fragment in repairing an old building in the Market Square, then occupied by Mr. Thomas Preston, solicitor, and close to the church. There can be no doubt that it came from the churchyard.