

STONE CROSSES OF THE PEAK AND THE 'SONS OF EADWULF'

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the stone crosses erected in the Peak District of Derbyshire, during the Anglo-Saxon period, have their closest iconographic parallels in the north-east of England. They show no affinity to monuments elsewhere in the north Midlands and, using historical and archaeological evidence, this paper attempts to provide an alternative explanation as to why such 'Bernician-styled' monuments came into existence. It also investigates their dating and provides a context for them to the years immediately following the conquest by the West Saxon English over the Vikings, and other groups, of the North.

The traditional dating methods for Anglo-Saxon stone monuments are far from reliable relying, in almost all cases, solely on an art-historical method devised by W. G. Collingwood around the turn of the century. Collingwood's notion of a ubiquitous and gradual evolution of style can now be challenged. Recent research into regional groupings of Anglo-Saxon stone monuments in the north Midlands shows that the selection of design elements for the monuments corresponds with secular land units. This work is reviewed briefly in this paper, which also provides an alternative explanation for the rationale behind their erection.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in the year 920 the West Saxon English, under King Edward, established a fortification near Bakewell in the Peak District as part of their offensive against the Vikings of the North. Two years prior to the submission of the North, one such group — the Vikings of Mercia — had already capitulated to the English Mercian and West Saxon alliance. After the fortification was established in the Peak, the *Chronicle* goes on to say:

Then the king of the Scots and the whole Scottish nation accepted him as 'father and lord': so also did Raegnald and the sons of Eadwulf and all the inhabitants of Northumbria, both English and Danish, Norwegians and others; together with the king of the Strathclyde Welsh and all his subjects (Garmonsway 1953, 104).

This submission by the peoples of northern Britain shows two things. First it illustrates how many different interest groups were still being recognised by the early 10th century, and second, the inclusion of 'father', as well as 'lord', as a description of the West Saxon king, may have been highly significant and will be returned to, later.

Interestingly, only Raegnald and Eadwulf (or rather his successors after his death in c. 912) are specifically mentioned in the *Chronicle* by name. Raegnald was the Viking

leader in York and likely to have been the overlord of all groups mentioned in the submission. But it seems that power in Northumbria had been shared (perhaps not entirely on an equal basis) with English kings in Bernicia, based at Bamburgh, of whom Eadwulf was the last (Sawyer 1975, 33). This English control in Bernicia appears to have been temporarily extinguished by Raegnald after Eadwulf's death but, as we see from the *Chronicle*, it was certainly restored to his successors by the time of the northern submission. Higham argues that the support of the Bernician English became necessary when Viking Mercia was attacked by the English during the second decade of the 10th century. With their attentions focused on the north Midlands, the York Vikings may well have been willing to allow the English dynasty in Bernicia to regain control over their lands. During the period of Viking occupation, the Bernician dynasty remained in contact (perhaps even in some form of loose alliance) with other English leaders in Mercia and Wessex (Higham 1993, 181–88).

After their submission at Bakewell, retaining control over their lands was paramount for the northern leaders and, by and large, they succeeded in keeping this control but now under Edward's overlordship. The identity of the 'sons of Eadwulf' is obscure. We know that two English aristocrats, Elstan and his brother Esbrid, were given land in the region of Hadrian's Wall after giving military support to Raegnald in 918 (Smyth 1975, 109; 1978, 9). Both Elstan and Esbrid were attached to the Bernician English dynasty and were, indeed, likely to have been 'sons of Eadwulf'. After the submission of the northern Vikings, the Northumbrian English aristocracy obtained lands in Mercia in an attempt by the West Saxons to dilute Scandinavian control in the north Midlands. Amongst these were Wulfrum, founder of the nunnery at Wolverhampton; Aelfhelm, first thegn of the Mercians; and Wulfric, founder of Burton Abbey (Smyth 1979, 91).

The Peak District is largely the former land unit of the *Pecsaetna* (Fig. 1) and it appears to have been regarded as border territory in 920 (Stafford 1985, 114). This same borderland status appears to have been respected also during the earlier submission of the Northumbrians to the West Saxons in 829, and again it was still seen as a border area after the Viking submission in 942 (Garmonsway 1953, 60, 110). The author has argued elsewhere, that this unit retained some degree of semi-independence until finally extinguished by the fragmentation of its large estates, the new foci of towns, and the effects of shirring (Sidebottom 1994). It is also argued that the fortification built near Bakewell in 920, which immediately followed a similar establishment near Nottingham, was significant in that both fortifications were built in territories under the overall control of the Vikings of York and were not, as often assumed, parts of Viking Mercia. It is noteworthy in this respect that the frontier of Viking Mercia is described by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as between Whitwell and Dore (Garmonsway 1953, 110) with the implication that land to the west of Dore was outside the jurisdiction of Viking Mercia. The invasion of these territories, as much as two years after Viking Mercia had fallen to the English (Garmonsway 1953, 104), demonstrated the military superiority of the West Saxons and was enough to precipitate the submission of the North.

STONE MONUMENTS AS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The relatively isolated position of the Peak is illustrated by its unique group of carved stone monuments. Large stone crosses stand in the churchyards at Eyam, Bradbourne



Fig. 1: Britain during the early 10th century.

and Bakewell; each has similar characteristics. Of the same group are a fragment of vinescroll carving, rebuilt into the wall of Wirksworth church, and the more famous Wirksworth slab attached to the nave wall. An unprovenanced example also of the same group is now housed in the British Museum with a replica in Sheffield City museum. This shaft of local Millstone Grit was found hollowed-out and reused as a grinder's trough in Sheffield but is said to have been brought from an unknown location in Derbyshire (Collingwood 1927, 75). The writer's analysis of Anglo-Saxon monuments in the north Midlands has shown that they can all be identified to regional groupings through their iconographic repertoire (Fig. 2). These groupings correspond with land divisions which were likely to have been inherited by the Vikings during their settlement of the north Midlands and essentially reflect units expressed by the *Tribal Hidage*, give or take some minor modifications as a result of the Viking occupation (Sidebottom 1994).

The dating of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture has previously relied on a notion of developing art styles from the mid-8th century to the Norman Conquest. This method of dating is based on the archaic belief that social evolution and subsequent moral decadence should manifest itself through the styles of the carvings. Thus, early carvings were well executed whereas later ones showed social degeneration and were less accomplished. Although this method was developed around the turn of the last century, regrettably it still forms the basis for stylistic dates ascribed to the monuments. At best such a dating technique is difficult to defend.

The monuments within each group of the north Midlands share a common repertoire of design elements which gives them their group characteristics and geographical integrity. It is clear that each group is more likely to have been the product of a single phase of monumentation, rather than part of a chronological sequence, because if the monuments had been produced over a relatively long period of time, and subject to a continuing style evolution, this would have produced an array of loosely-defined, differently-styled monuments. Such monuments would have been difficult to allocate a specific group identity, let alone any precise geographical region. So it appears likely that stylistic differences in the north Midlands are due not to temporal disparity, but to regional variation. Furthermore, these style groupings can be related to various secular divisions that existed largely before, and certainly after, the Viking settlement.

These monument groupings, which indicate the parameters of ancient land units, may be termed *Primary* groups. Their distribution (Fig. 2) suggests that all were put in place during the Viking period and before the mid-10th century but a more precise dating horizon for their production, of between *c.* 920 and 950, is offered (Sidebottom 1994). Interestingly, this is the same dating horizon suggested by Smyth for the majority of similar monuments in Ireland (Smyth 1979, 290). These remarks do not apply, however, to other forms of pre-Conquest sculpture (e.g. ecclesiastical decoration) which are a separate issue as far as dating is concerned (Sidebottom 1994). The reason for this relatively narrow dating horizon is detailed below and the investigation of the Peak crosses discussed in this paper is used to compliment the proposal.

By the time of the English conquest over the Vikings of the north, the West Saxon kings had developed their administration on Frankish lines where king and Church, in tandem, became the dominant power (Loyn 1984, 82, 89) and to submit to one, necessitated submission to the other. This is clearly seen in Guthrum's submission to Alfred where baptism (i.e. the acceptance of the Roman Church) was a condition of Guthrum's

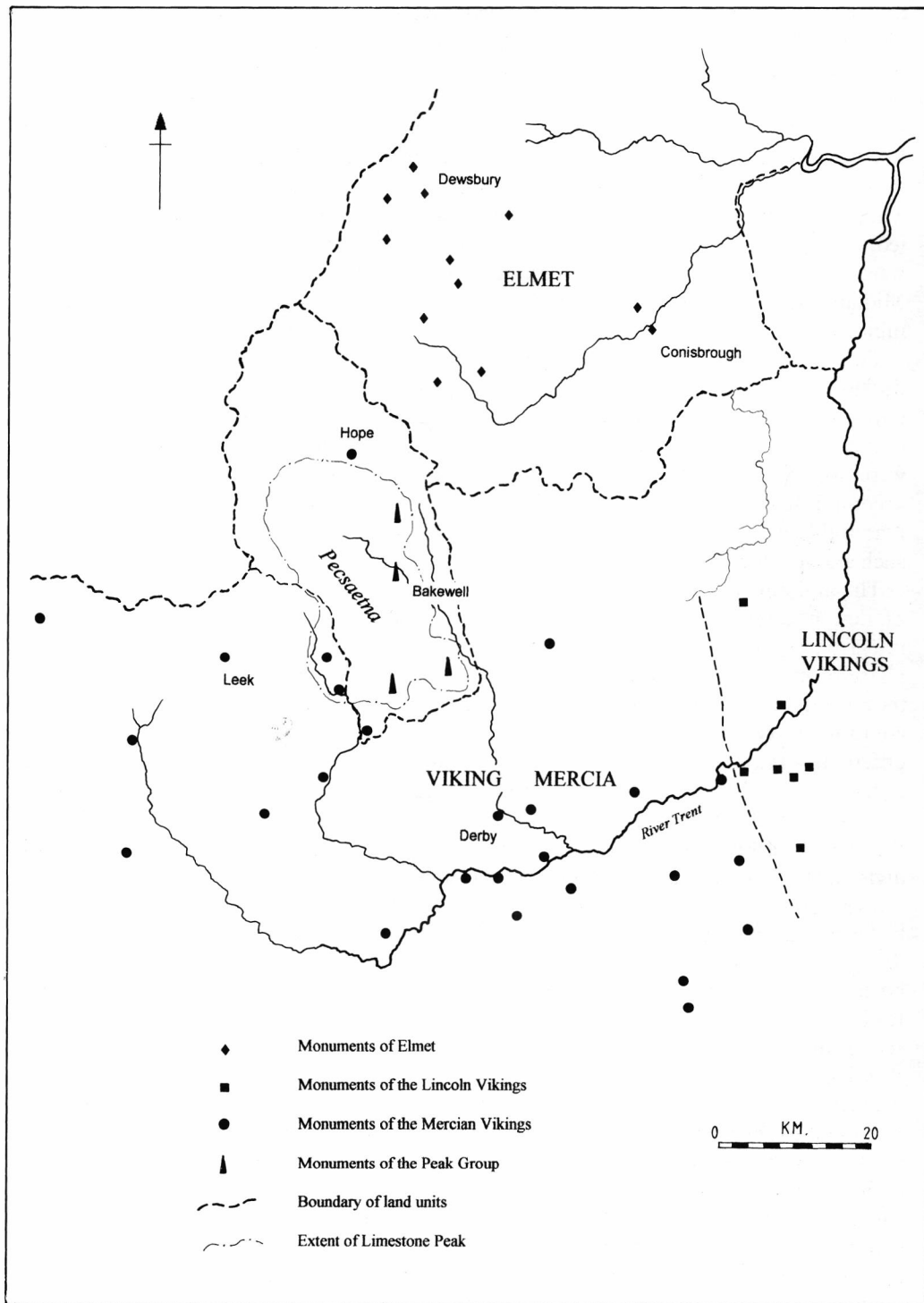


Fig. 2: Primary groups of monuments.

continuing rule of East Anglia under Wessex overlordship (Loyn 1984, 62). The words 'father and lord', contained within the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, suggest that Edward was bestowing the condition that he was to be regarded as religious overlord as well as their king. Similar conditions of enforced Christianity appear to have been imposed on Welsh and northern groups when they reaffirmed Athelstan's overlordship in c. 927, when they were again required to renounce 'idolatrous practices' (Garmonsway 1953, 107). Although the *Chronicle* is silent on the mechanism by which the Vikings were supposed to have demonstrated acceptance of their West Saxon overlord, the erection of stone crosses would seem highly appropriate. The fact that they were erected in stone — a medium less than familiar to 10th-century Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians — also suggests an acknowledgement of the Roman Church. To suggest that the Vikings were previously promoting the proliferation of Christian monuments during their early settlement of the North, is hard to accept. A much more appropriate time for the introduction of such icons of the Roman Church is when Christianity was imposed upon them.

Most of the monuments are likely to have been erected during the Viking occupation of north-eastern Mercia, for several reasons. The distribution of all of the stone monuments in the region respects the boundary of Viking Mercia with none found to the immediate west of the so-called *Danelaw* division, and most bear decorative features associated with Anglo-Scandinavian design. However, the monuments do not appear to have been erected after c. 950. Their distribution shows that the polity based on Lincoln was regarded as separate from the Mercian Vikings and the iconography of this group owes more to the slabs and crosses of York than it does to the rest of the north Midlands. It was not until the Lincoln polity was incorporated into the 'Five Boroughs', sometime after the West Saxon conquest, that it assumed a Mercian identity (Stafford 1985, 139). The distribution of the monuments also fails to respond to changes in land divisions after the mid-10th century, and to the effects of later shirring. Significantly, of all of the estates created by charter in Derbyshire after c. 940, as the result of fragmentation following the West Saxon conquest, none contains a stone monument. These are restricted to the old centres. Typical is the old sub-division of the Peak based on Bradbourne. A monument of the Peak Group (described below) stands in the churchyard but in those parts of the old estate fragmented away after the West Saxon conquest — for example, at Parwich or Ballidon — no monuments were erected. This same pattern is repeated throughout the region.

The distribution of Anglo-Scandinavian monuments shows that the enlarged polity of Lincoln (Smyth 1975, 1979) extended halfway across the piece of land that was to become Nottinghamshire. In 918, it is recorded in the *Chronicle*, that the English met with major resistance in the vicinity of Nottingham. It took two years for any further advancement although it is clear that the River Trent was not the main obstacle, since the earlier fortification was on the north side of the river. Instead, it was because the new challenge was against the Lincoln Vikings who apparently proved a more formidable opponent to the English forces than the Vikings of Mercia. The reason for this was that the Lincoln Vikings were then under the control of the Vikings of York, not the Vikings of Mercia, and the invasion of this province would have had more serious consequences for the North. Similarly, it was after the successful attempts by the English to occupy Lincoln territory in 920 that the fortification was built in the Peak near Bakewell, suggesting that this region too was under the control of the North, and not of the Vikings of Mercia. If the stone monuments were indeed erected in response to the reconquest of

the North, then it is likely that many, if not all, were erected during a relatively short period of time during the first half of the 10th century.

There is also a specific group of monuments around the Peak District which does not correspond with any former land divisions identified during the pre-shire days of the north Midlands. This group has previously confused the identification of regional groupings and almost certainly has helped to sustain the belief that these were much later monuments, for reasons given below. However, when this group is isolated from the rest, it is found to have a topographical distinction, rather than political, in as much as its monuments are found on the more 'marginal' areas around the Peak. In contrast with the Primary group monuments, these are smaller, less well-executed stones occupying sites peripheral to the limestone 'dome' in areas typified by steep river valleys, rising to the boggy moorland landscape of the so-called 'Dark Peak'. Examples can be found at Macclesfield, Darley Dale, Leek and several sites in eastern Cheshire and north-western Derbyshire (Fig. 3). Those responsible for their erection appear to have been the 'poor relations' of those who secured the more amenable landscapes. This suggests that they were not in a position to negotiate land from a position of strength, nor were they able to declare a pre-existing land-unit as their own. Their monuments reflect the relative lack of wealth of such groups and as smaller, less well-executed sculptures fuel the old notion of 'decadent' (and, therefore, later) iconography. This group is, however, easily reconciled to a distinctive pattern of secondary settlement which occurred during the 10th century. Through place-name evidence, historical evidence and iconography, these monuments can be linked undoubtedly to a group of Hiberno-Norse people known to have settled somewhere to the east of Manchester (Gelling 1992, 130; Hodges 1991, 116). A similar distribution of so-called hogback monuments in Yorkshire has also been found to be synonymous with an area settled by Norwegians and Gaelic-Norse (Bailey 1980, 91; Lang 1984, 89). Groups of monuments such as these, which do not identify established land divisions, may be termed *Secondary* groups.

Leaving aside monuments identified as 'Hiberno-Norse', the Peak District also contains a Primary group of carved stones which can be identified easily to a known land unit. The relationship between these monuments and the former sub-division of the *Pecsaetna* is quite remarkable. Not only are they contained within this unit, as far as it can be reconstructed, they also show a distinct relationship with 'early' sub-divisions of the territory (Fig. 4). According to Roffe, reconstruction of the old wapentake of *Hamenstan* from the *Domesday* survey, suggests that four large estates can be traced (Roffe 1986) and each contains monuments of the Peak Group (Sidebottom 1994).

Traditionally, since the Peak Group of monuments are devoid of any iconography which can be identified as Anglo-Scandinavian, a pre-Viking date has been suggested for their erection. In fact, the Peak group of crosses, as free-standing monuments, have been identified as having primacy in Mercia (Kendrick 1938, 164; Cramp 1977, 192). This argument presupposes that, in areas not subject to direct Viking occupation, they would, nevertheless, have assumed Scandinavian design elements as part of a universal period-fashion which was oblivious to political boundaries. The writer's recent research (Sidebottom 1994) shows that this is far from the case and that each political unit displayed iconographic elements on its monuments which were unique to that polity. There are also further difficulties in accepting the primacy of Peak District stone crosses as Mercian first attempts.

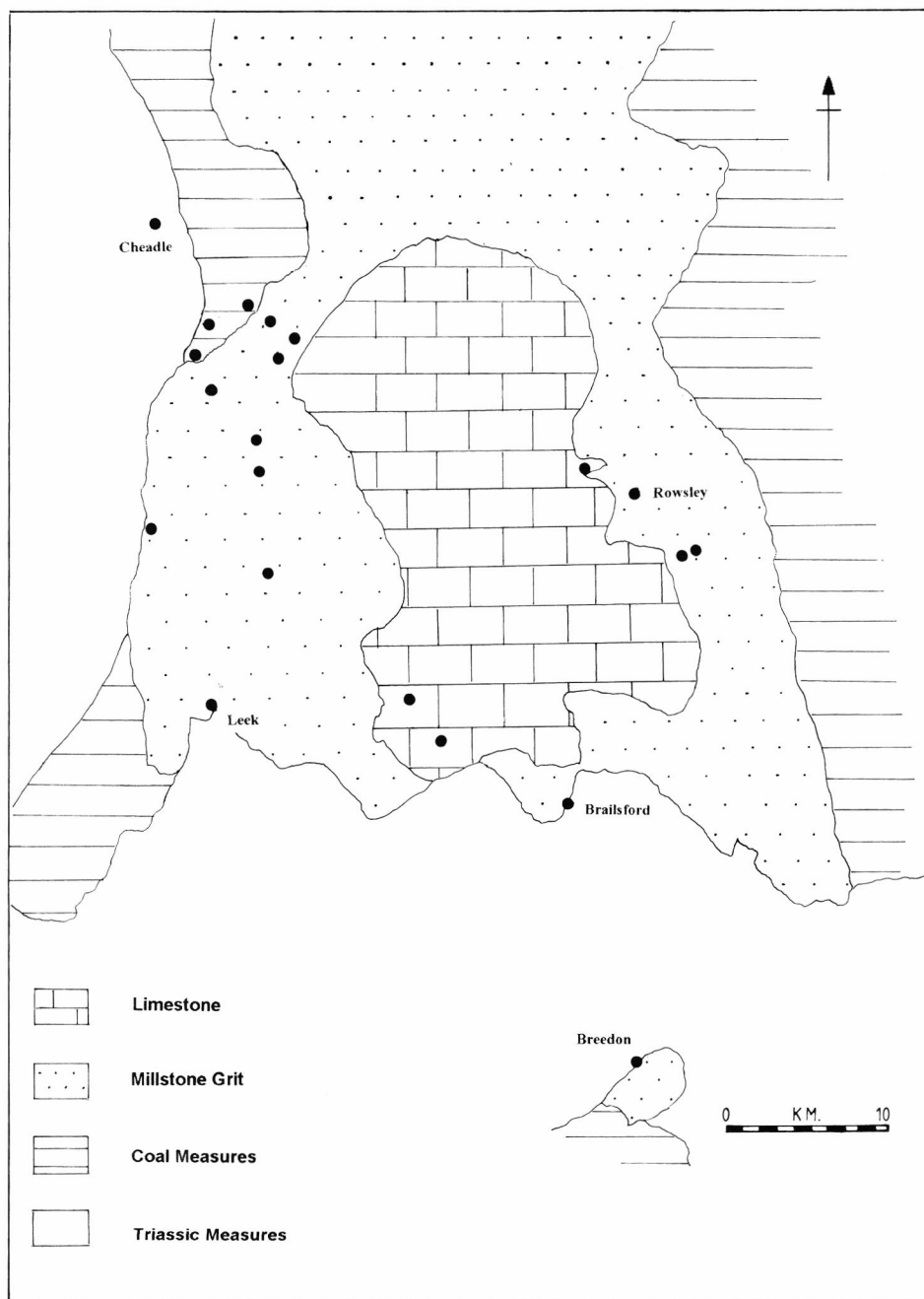


Fig. 3: Secondary groups of monuments.

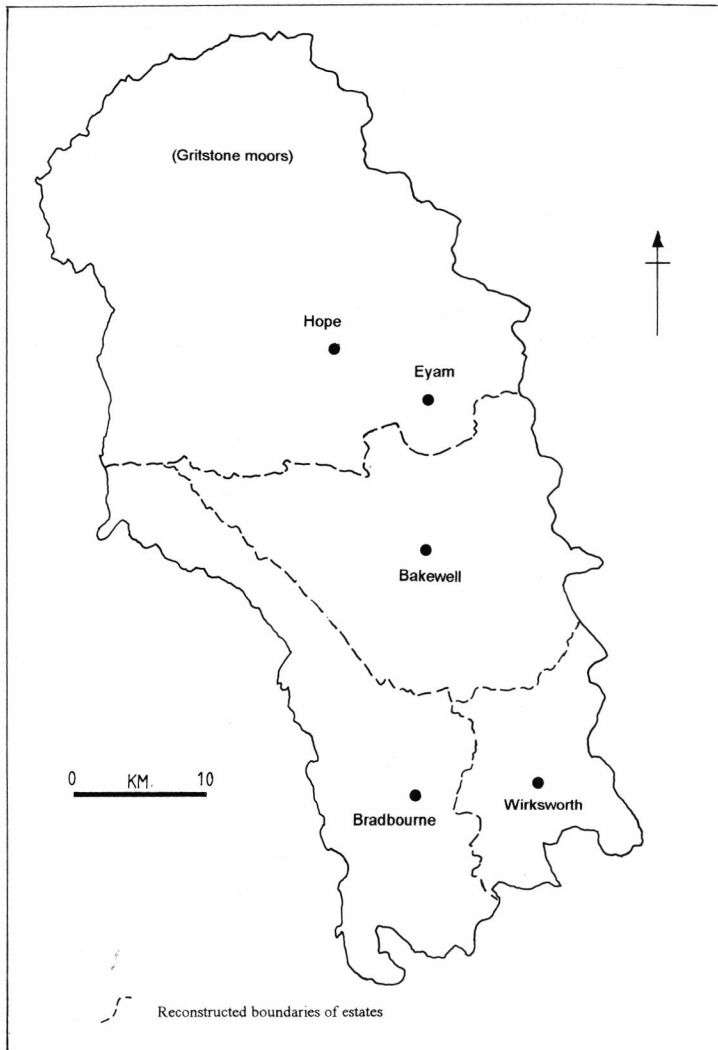


Fig. 4: The Wapentake of Hamenstan (after Roffe 1986).

There is no evidence that the lands of the *Pecsaetna* were ever a permanent Mercian satellite, but we do know that the 'loyalties' of border-states were likely to reflect the political balance between Mercia and Northumbria: whichever was the more dominant was likely to have included the *Pecsaetna* amongst their tribute payers. Secondly, if the Peak was under Mercian control at the time when the monuments were erected, then why would they follow a strictly Northumbrian design, when the two kingdoms were, allegedly, in a state of constant rivalry? Thirdly, why would the first Mercian monuments be confined to the relatively marginal region of the Peak? Surely, these would have been displayed at major Mercian centres, such as Repton, Tamworth, Lichfield, *Northworthig* (Derby), or Breedon, not to mention the many other satellite territories to the south of their heartlands. Lastly, and by no means least, the distribution of regional groupings of monuments in the north Midlands shows that each respects the others in terms of their

geographical coherence. If the monuments were a product of continuing stylistic evolution, then such strict regional coherence, as illustrated by Fig. 2, would not present itself. This argument applies equally to all groups whether 'Anglian' or Anglo-Scandinavian in design.

It appears that when the sculpture was erected, the Peak may still have held some form of autonomy from the rest of Viking controlled Mercia, hence the presence of this unique regional group. The design attributes of the group combine to produce a unique repertoire that shows little affinity with neighbouring groups, but with a strong Northumbrian bias in styling, especially through the dominant use of a naturalistic vine-scroll (Cramp 1977, 224–25). However, it is difficult to explain why copies were made of monuments in Bernicia, north of the Tyne, when more convenient stones should have been on display, for example, in Elmet in southern Yorkshire, Lindsey, or the Vale of York. It seems more reasonable to see the stylistic attributes of the Peak crosses as evidence of Bernician overlordship at the time that they were erected. This view is reinforced when it is considered that the Peak, along with the lands east of Nottingham, were almost certainly controlled from the North.

The design elements of the large Peak crosses at Eyam, Bakewell and Bradbourne, together with other fragments of similar style again at Bakewell and at Wirksworth and the example now in the British Museum collection, can be paralleled in the northern Northumbrian polity of Bernicia, for example, at Hexham, Bewcastle, or Ruthwell. These monuments are, like the Peak Group, characterised by a naturalistic vinescroll (Fig. 5), illustrative panels with figures, and a clear Christian content to their iconography. This style of decoration has always been regarded as pre-Viking (cf. Collingwood 1927, 29–33) since there is no trace of Anglo-Scandinavian design elements (remember, however, that when Northumbria submitted to the English, Bernicia was under English control, and not Viking). If the Bernician monuments were erected before the Viking occupation, as the traditional dating methods suggest, then they would have provided models for similar crosses and kindred monuments to be erected elsewhere in later times.

Standing in Hexham cathedral is a large cross of the same style built up from fragments and known as 'Acca's cross'. Collingwood (1927, 29–32) believed (without substantiation) that the monument was erected over the tomb of Bishop Acca in the mid-8th century. However, the largest section of this cross shaft was found, during the 19th century, not at Hexham but at Dilston, near Corbridge, where it was reused as a lintel in a cottage (Cramp 1984, 174). Corbridge was a significant centre for the Bernician English dynasty and, no doubt, was an appropriate site for a prestigious monument either before, or during, the Viking occupation of the North. These stylistically 'Anglian' monuments in Bernicia must, therefore, be related to the land unit which was, eventually, succeeded to by Eadwulf and, at the time of the submission of the North to the West Saxons, by his sons. The question now is whether this seemingly anomalous group of Bernician-styled monuments in the Peak District of Derbyshire can be linked to the English aristocrats of Bernicia?

There are, in fact, two problems in respect of the Peak District stone monuments. The first is outlined above but the second concerns a seemingly renegade monument located at Hope (Fig. 6). It is a problem, however, that can be resolved. There are very few monuments which have any form of dating horizon attached to them, other than by the

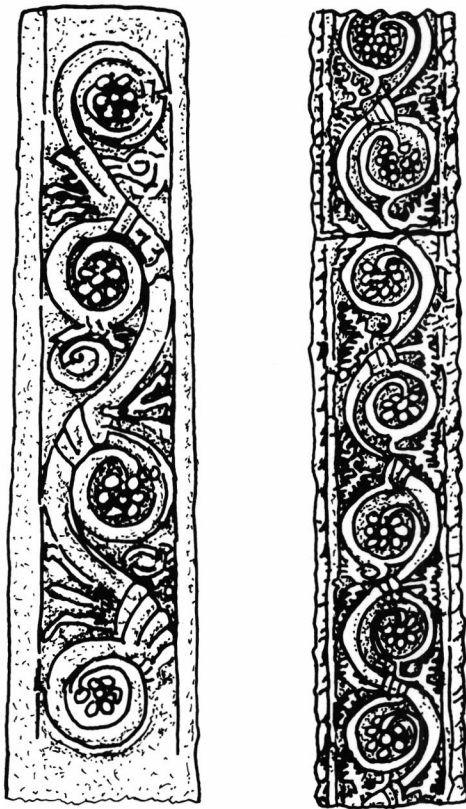


Fig. 5: Bernician and Peak vinescrolls: *Left* Peak group cross-shaft (now in British Museum), *Right* Bernician cross-shaft (Hexham) (after Collingwood 1927).



Fig. 6: Photograph of the Hope cross.

incredulous stylistic method. One fragment only, found in Viking-period remains at Coppergate in York, can be dated by archaeological context to 'pre-960' (Lang 1991, 104) which is in line with the dating horizon suggested here. Fortunately, the monument at Hope can also be linked — this time historically as well as stylistically — to the period of reconquest by the English. The Hope cross shaft belongs to a large group of monuments synonymous with Viking Mercia and (except for that at Hope) restricted to the former Mercian heartlands (Fig. 2). The Hope shaft is well out of geographical context with the rest of this group.

There is no evidence to suggest that the shaft had been brought to Hope from elsewhere. It is made from local sandstone and was found during the 19th century buried in old building fabric close to the church, the latter having pre-Conquest origins. Its location at Hope can, however, be explained by way of a rather interesting acquisition of land recorded in the early 10th century. Although there are a few other examples of estates being 'bought' by the English from Viking settlers (Davies 1982, 803–04), Hope is the only example in the north Midlands. A charter of 926, concerning the Hope and Ashford estates in the Peak, specifically records that it was previously 'purchased' by

king Edward and ealdorman Aethelred of Mercia from its 'pagan' owner. The transaction must have taken place *c.* 910 before Viking Mercia formally submitted to the English (Hart 1875, 103; Sawyer 1975, 31). Hope was located close to the border between English Mercia, Northumbria and Viking Mercia in the northern part of the lands of the *Pecsaetna*, which may have held a semi-independent status. It may have been this ambiguous position of the Peak that enabled the transaction to take place before the formal submission by the Mercian and York Vikings. In any case, the rather unusual transaction implies that the English regarded it as separate from lands in Viking Mercia, shortly afterwards to be taken by military campaign.

The value of Hope, as a strategic centre for the English, is apparent from its Roman ancestry. The fort of *Navio* lies at the estate centre and vital Roman land routes, not only from Manchester and the north-west, but also from southern Yorkshire and the east Midlands, converge at this point. The result of the agreement was that Hope came under English jurisdiction and, by the time of the formal reconquest of the North in 920, it would have been assumed into the conquered Mercian polity which submitted to the West Saxons. The Hope estate may still have retained its previous owner, now as a thegn of the English, who displayed acceptance of his new Mercian overlord with the erection of a cross. This would explain satisfactorily why a monument of a regional group, otherwise confined to, and identified with the Mercian heartlands, appears in the northern Peak District.

STONE MONUMENTS AND THE 'SONS OF EADWULF'

This transaction, prior to 926, not only explains why there is a stylistically 'Mercian' monument at Hope, but also confirms a dating context to the early part of the 10th century. The charter in which this transaction was recorded was part of the collection of documents held at Burton Abbey, founded by Wulfric Spot in 1004. Wulfric, as discussed above, was a Northumbrian aristocrat and, therefore, likely to have been attached to the Bernician dynasty which survived as landholders during the Viking occupation of the North. The Hope charter was written before the foundation of Burton Abbey, as were others relating to the acquisition of land by Uhtred, who appears to have controlled the estates around Bakewell during the first half of the 10th century. The Burton Abbey holdings do not appear to have ever included the Hope estate and it may be that the charters fell into the Abbey collection because of the relationship between the landholder, Uhtred, and Wulfric. According to Sawyer, it was likely to have been Uhtred who negotiated the sale of the Hope estate with the English after he had acknowledged the overlordship of the West Saxon king, and before the fall of Viking Mercia (Sawyer 1975, 33).

After the West Saxon conquest over the Vikings, Uhtred benefited by receiving the grant of the Hope and Ashford estates and, later in 949, land in the region of Bakewell to endow a religious community. This parcel of land was no doubt an extension to his existing holdings in the Peak (Sawyer 1975, 31) and it has always been supposed that the later grant of land was at Bakewell itself. However, Sawyer argues that Bakewell is likely to have been included already in the Hope and Ashford holding (*ibid.* 32). The religious community, the *coenubium* of the 949 charter, could, therefore, have been at Bradbourne or (more probably) at Wirksworth where, in all likelihood, a religious house, previously

attached to Repton monastery, stood before the Viking occupation. It may be that the name *Bakewell* was used at this time as a generic term for the Peak holdings since it is likely that it was the primary centre of the Peak as a whole (Roffe 1986, 27). Clearly the discreet group of Peak Primary monuments, Bakewell, Eyam, Bradbourne and Wirksworth were part of the same land holding when they were erected. Earlier during the 9th century, Wirksworth became detached from the *Pecsaetna*, when Repton monastery claimed part of this land to satisfy a demand for lead, and it may be that Uhtred was simply reclaiming land lost to the *Pecsaetna* in earlier times. By 930 Uhtred had become an ealdorman and attended the West Saxon court for 20 years. It was towards the end of his life when he obtained this grant for church lands in the Peak 'on the estate that had been so important to both him and his kings' (Sawyer 1975, 34). Uhtred was indeed a Northumbrian and Sawyer reminds us that he was not only part of the Bernician English dynasty but was, in fact, also one of the 'sons of Eadwulf' (*ibid.* 34).

CONCLUSION

We now have a reasonable framework of information to enable a better understanding of the Peak crosses and, what is more, a plausible framework for their date. We know that the Peak group of Primary monuments owes its geographical coherence to the former land unit of the *Pecsaetna*. The distribution of Trent valley Primary monuments is consistent with lands formerly in Viking Mercia. The monument at Hope is also of the Mercian Primary group due to the transaction which took place shortly before 911 (Sawyer 1975, 31), when Hope became temporarily attached to Mercia. Therefore, the date of the Hope stone could not be before c. 910. The iconography of the Peak crosses is Northumbrian in origin and shows no trace of Scandinavian design because, like their Bernician counterparts, they were not erected in areas under direct Scandinavian control. The iconographic content of the Peak crosses shows a direct affinity to those monuments erected on the Northumbrian landholdings of the 'sons of Eadwulf' and that connection between Bernicia and the Peak existed sometime during the early 10th century. Since Uhtred obtained the Hope estate in 926, after the submission of the North, it is reasonable to assume that the Hope monument was already in place. Had the Hope cross been erected in, or after, 926 then a monument bearing the iconographic content of the Peak crosses (symbolising Uhtred's holding) would have been erected instead. Since it is argued that the monuments symbolised the acceptance of the overlordship of the West Saxon king, it is unlikely that any monuments were erected before 920. We therefore have a dating horizon of 920 to 926 for the erection of the Primary Peak crosses and for that at Hope.

Along with the 'sons of Eadwulf', Raegnald and the others, groups of Hiberno-Norse were also required to submit to the West Saxon king. Their arrival in the north Midlands appears to have coincided with all the political upheavals of reconquest (Gelling 1992, 130) and, as newcomers, their claims to tenancy of the land needed to be particularly reinforced in the face of change. As farmers of the more peripheral areas of the old estates, their presence may not only have been tolerated by the West Saxon overlords but was actively encouraged by confirmation of their tenancy. After all, their activities would only increase the wealth of the land and eventually enhance the tribute to be paid. To mark their agreement to West Saxon overlordship they, too, erected monuments on their

holdings. As groups still unsure of their relationship with the surrounding polities, their monuments display a sense of separatism through their iconography, whilst conforming to the same conditions imposed on others. Thus, Secondary monuments show a distribution pattern corresponding to the expansion onto marginal land around the Peak which is attributable, again, to the earlier part of the 10th century.

The rationale behind the crosses appears to have been political. In order to stake their claim over land, now under threat of acquisition by the West Saxons, the 10th century landholders of the North and Midlands erected stone monuments at the centres of their estates. Outwardly, the monuments show the acceptance of the Roman Church and the West Saxon king by the symbol of the Crucifixion — a stone cross. At the same time, the iconography contained on the monuments displayed a more subtle message of collective cohesion and territorial jurisdiction.

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