

form of the rare name *Wor*. The other possible reading is: *stanþel v(a)rlet*, 'V(a)rlet set up (this) standing-stone'; however, added to the difficulty of *stanweall* in this sense, the name is unrecorded and difficult to explain.

The other point of linguistic interest is the use of (*of*)*er*. All extant Old English memorial formulae use *æfter*.¹⁹ Danish runic inscriptions generally use *eptir*, but a few examples are recorded with *yfir* (~OE *ofer*), one from the 11th to 12th century.²⁰ The runic inscription in ON on a stone from Iona reads, *+kali (b)uluis sunr lapi stan þinsi ubir fukl brupur*—.²¹ The usage on the All Hallows stone may shew Scandinavian influence.

This Scandinavian influence, seen possibly also in *stan* meaning 'grave-stone', in the element *-v(a)r* from ON *-vpr*, and in the wheel-head of the cross, suggests a late 10th- or 11th-century date for the stone. This is further borne out by the fact that all stones bearing traces of colour, with the exception of those from Kirk Maughold, are from this late period. Mr. R. Bailey suggests that this sort of cross-head was popular in the 10th and 11th centuries and is unlikely to be earlier.²² There is very little evidence for dating the text. Linguistically, if *-v(a)r* is not from ON *-vpr*, it may suggest a late date on analogy with the *DB* example. The epigraphic evidence is inconsistent: the early forms *Ǻ* and *Ǻ* for A, N are used beside the probably late rounded forms of S and Þ, and the typically late lack of insular forms. Such inconsistencies in script can occur in texts of any date. Mr. Cook and Dr. Radford both favoured a 10th- or 11th-century date, and this seems most probable.

Note

This article is based on personal examination of the stone in December 1963 and April 1964. I am grateful to the Rev. P. T. B. Clayton, formerly vicar of All Hallows, for permission to examine the stone and to reproduce the photograph in PL. XXIX, A. Dr. C. A. Raleigh Radford and Dr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, who examined the stone in 1951, have kindly agreed to my publishing it. My thanks are also due to Dr. R. I. Page for his help, and for his permission to reproduce PL. XXIX, B.

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A DECORATED AXE-HEAD OF VIKING TYPE FROM COVENTRY

(PL. XXX, A, B; FIG. 72)

An iron axe-head (museum acc. no. 49/227/280) was amongst a large miscellaneous collection of material—mostly medieval—discovered by the late Mr. John Shelton in foundation-trenches, bomb-sites, etc., over a long period in Coventry, and given to the Herbert Museum, Coventry, in 1949. Its precise provenience is not recorded.

When found it was in very bad condition. Little more than half of the original blade remains, but the socket which has two small wings on each side, is in better preservation. The maximum length of the axe-head (restored) is 17 cm., the breadth at the cutting edge is 18.2 cm. and the blade increases in thickness to 2 cm. where it meets the socket. It belongs to the 11th-century type Jan Petersen M,²³ Rygh 560,²⁴ and Wheeler VI.²⁵ Parallels have been found elsewhere in Britain at Loch of Doon, Kirkcudbrightshire,²⁶ in Dumfriesshire,²⁷ near Ely,²⁸ and in London.²⁹

¹⁹ Thornhill no. 2 ('eadred') has *æfte*.

²⁰ E.g. L. Jacobsen and E. Moltke, *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*, I (Copenhagen, 1942), nos. 74, 111, 354. The last is 11th to 12th century, the others 12th to 14th century.

²¹ A. C. Thomas, 'Iona', *Discovery and Exploration* (1962), pp. 10–11.

²² In a personal communication.

²³ J. Petersen, *De Norske Vikingesverd* (Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter, II, Hist.-Filos. Klasse, no. 1, Kristiania, 1919), p. 46.

²⁴ O. Rygh, *Antiquités Norvégiennes* (Kristiania, 1885).

²⁵ R. E. M. Wheeler, *London and the Vikings* (1927), fig. 6.

²⁶ H. Shetelig, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland* (1940), II, fig. 69.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* in note 26, II, fig. 70.

²⁸ *Op. cit.* in note 26, IV, fig. 34.

²⁹ *Op. cit.* in note 26, IV, figs. 44, 53, 55; *op. cit.* in note 25, figs. 3, 4, 9 no. 3, 10 no. 4, and 11.

The peculiar features of this specimen are the inlaid strips of bronze with herring-bone decoration, which can be seen running vertically across each side of the axe just below the socket. The bronze strips are not merely attached superficially; they have been bedded firmly in the iron, presumably by hammering or melting into prepared recesses. They do not, however, lie flush with the surface of the blade, being allowed to project to give the effect of a rounded moulding. The axe was X-rayed by the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, Coventry, and by Stirling Metals Ltd., Nuneaton, but no further traces of bronze were found.

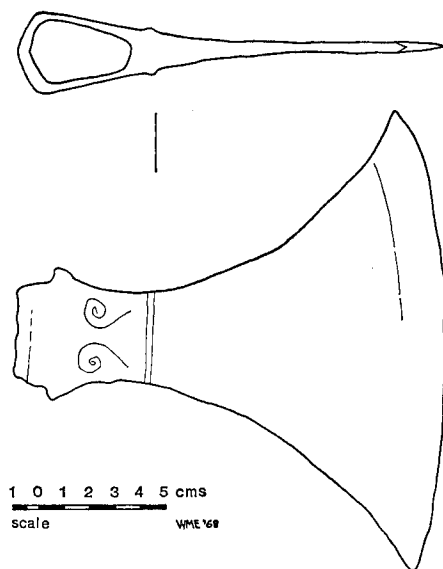


FIG. 72
COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE
Two views of decorated axe-head

A bronze inlay is found on British spear-heads of the period but not, apparently, otherwise on axe-heads. One may, however, compare the use of brass haft-binding inside the sockets of three of the London examples.³⁰

During the restoration of the axe-head further decoration was revealed in the form of two scroll designs faintly engraved on the socket. A distant parallel is the impressed dot decoration on the axe-head from the Thames at Battersea.³¹

In common with most of England, Coventry has produced little material dating from the middle and late Saxon periods. There is, however, a sceatta (museum acc. no. A/124) of EPA (late 7th- to mid 8th-century), a brooch (museum acc. no. 49/212) possibly 9th-century Carolingian, and a fragment of a 10th-century stone cross.

It is possible that the axe is a relic of the alleged Danish sack of St. Osburg's Nunnery in 1016, but it would be unwise to stress this point, since the type continued in use throughout the century at least. In the Bayeux 'tapestry' axes of this form are carried by armoured warriors on the English side.

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³⁰ *Op. cit.* in note 25, figs. 3, 4, and 10 no. 4.

³¹ *Op. cit.* in note 25, fig. 11.