

A SUNDIAL FROM STOW, LINCOLNSHIRE (Pl. VIII, A)

The stone illustrated in Plate VIII, A is a portion of a sundial.¹ It was found by the late Caspar Fleming in May 1972 (or perhaps in May 1971) in a pile of rubble in the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Stow, near the W. door. Since no rebuilding or repair work to the structure of the church was undertaken around that time, it is possible that the stone was already disturbed and it could have been dug up in the churchyard. At Fleming's death in 1975 the stone passed into the possession of Mr R. Falkiner. St Mary's Church contains Saxon work of the 10th/11th century or earlier and Norman work of the late 11th and 12th centuries. There were additions made in the 13th century and in the 14th/15th century (the tower). The church was extensively restored in the 19th century.² There are therefore several possible dates at which the stone could have been incised, later re-used and then disturbed.

The stone is now rectangular in shape, measuring *c.* 200 × *c.* 240 × *c.* 90 mm and has been roughly dressed on the back and sides. The back may be original; the remaining decoration and text on the face indicate, however, that none of the sides is original. The shape and size of the stone suggest that it was cut from a larger piece for reuse as building material.

The face of the stone contains incisions showing that it was part of a sundial. A portion of a double margin remains, the upper space left plain and the lower space inscribed; there are also parts of two radiating lines, both with crosses. The letters, which measure *c.* 30 mm in height, are clearly legible capitals facing inwards. Letters facing inwards around a segment of a circle are likely to be from an upper segment. Semi-circular dials are common, but they almost always consist of the lower half only. It therefore seems probable that the dial was circular. If the radiating lines are projected until they meet, the angle between them is around 40–45°. The dial when complete would then probably have contained eight radiating lines, that is, would have used the octaval system of time-division. The length of each radiating line when projected is *c.* 155 mm, giving a diameter for the complete dial, excluding the margins, of *c.* 310 mm.

The text reads — STTOLOVE7S —.³ This is probably to be read — ST TO LOVE 7 S —. It may have formed part of a text of the form — CRI]ST TO LOVE 7 S[CS —, '— to the glory of (? Christ) and (? St) —'. Similar texts are recorded amongst Anglo-Saxon inscriptions, for example 73 Lincoln I which reads — (*c*)riste to (*l*)o(*f*)e (*7*)sce m(*ar*)ie.⁴

The evidence for dating the stone falls into two parts, the evidence from the dial and the evidence from the text. The dial itself is carefully incised and inscribed. In this it resembles many Anglo-Saxon sundials considerably more than it resembles the mass-clocks and scratch dials typical of Norman and later times.⁵ There is a number of Anglo-Saxon inscribed sundials in existence, for example 41 Great Edstone, 64 Kirkdale and 99 Orpington.⁶ All these date from the 10th or 11th centuries, as does the dial most similar to the Stow dial, 1 Aldbrough. This dial is circular, uses an octaval system of time-division and reads, + *vlf* (*he*)t areran cyrice for h(a)num 7 for gvn(para) savla, '+ Vlf ordered the church to be erected for himself and for Gvn(waru)'s soul'.⁷ The latest dial known to me which is similar to the Stow dial in its careful work and in containing a text is the dial in Weaverthorpe Church, N. Yorkshire, which probably dates from the early 12th century.⁸

The linguistic evidence is slight but it does suggest that an early post-Conquest date is more likely than a pre-Conquest one. The spelling *love* for *lofe* is a late feature, most common after the Conquest. If the text did contain — *cri]st*, or a similar word, then the lack of grammatical inflexion would also be a late feature. With the Stow text can be compared the Peterborough Chronicle entry dating from *c.* 1121 *s.a.* 654: — 7 *sprecon þ hi wolden an mynstre areren criste to loue 7 sancte petre to wurðminte*, '— and they said that they intended to build a certain church to the glory of Christ and in honour of St Peter'.⁹ This contains the spelling *loue* for *lofe* but retains the inflexion on *criste*.

The Stow text also contains the sign 7 for *and*. This form 7 is common in Anglo-Saxon texts, manuscript and epigraphic, for both *and* and *et*. Its use continued after the Conquest.

The final continuation of the Peterborough Chronicle, dated *c.* 1155, uses 7 for *and*; 7 for *et* in manuscript texts continues into the 13th century. One of the latest examples known to me is 7 for *et* in MS. London, B.L. Royal 9 B. V, dated 1231.¹⁰

In conclusion it seems to me likely that the newly-found fragment from Stow dates from the 11th or 12th century. It may have been constructed during the Saxon rebuilding of the early 11th century or when Norman rebuilding was in progress. During one of the subsequent restorations it was presumably cut into its present shape for re-use in building. Although its recent history is entirely conjectural, it is possible that it was disturbed during the 19th-century restoration and left in the churchyard where it was subsequently found.

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NOTES

¹ I am most grateful to Richard Falkner for allowing me to examine the stone while it was in his possession and to Naomi Field, North Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit, for information about repair work at Stow.

² For a detailed account of the architectural history of the church, see: A. W. Clapham, 'Stow', in A. W. Clapham, *et al.*, 'Lincolnshire Priors, Abbeys, and Parish Churches', *Archaeol. J.*, 103 (1946), 168–70; N. Pevsner and J. Harris, *The Buildings of England. Lincolnshire* (Harmondsworth, 1964), 380–83; H. M. Taylor and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* I, II (Cambridge, 1965), 584–93.

³ The text is transliterated with spacing as on the stone, where A represents a clearly legible letter A and — indicates complete loss of text at beginning or end.

⁴ E. Okasha, *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon Non-runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1971), 92–93 and fig.

⁵ See A. R. Green, *Sundials, Incised Dials or Mass-Clocks . . .* (London, 1926).

⁶ Okasha, *op. cit.* in note 4, 73 and fig.; 87–88 and fig.; 105 and fig.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47 and fig.

⁸ J. Bilson, 'Weaverthorpe Church and its Builder', *Archaeologia*, 72 (1922), 51–70, esp. 57–69 and fig.

⁹ D. Whitelock (ed.), *The Peterborough Chronicle (The Bodleian Manuscript Laud Misc. 636). Early English MSS in Facsimile*, 4 (Copenhagen, 1954), folio 14a, p. 27. The translation is my own.

¹⁰ S. H. Thompson, *Latin Bookhands of the Later Middle Ages 1100–1500* (Cambridge, 1969), no. 90.

A NEW LANDSCAPE CONTEXT FOR HOUNDTOR, DEVON (Figs. 5 and 6)

The site of Houndtor, Devon, has figured prominently in the literature on medieval settlements in Britain and was recently published by Mr G. Beresford in the pages of this journal.¹ Some of the assumptions and conclusions have, however, been challenged by one of the present authors in an article which urges, among other things, more attention to environmental evidence.² In part the purpose of this note is to demonstrate the value of such evidence and in part to offer further comment on the Houndtor conclusions. The medieval hamlet lies at about 1,000 ft (*c.* 315 m) just below Hound Tor on the E. side of Dartmoor, and consists of a cluster of rectangular structures within an abandoned field system (Fig. 5). The complex is currently in the guardianship of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

Criticism of the conclusions in the original Houndtor report centred on a number of issues fundamental to the archaeological discussion of upland farming during the high Middle Ages including the validity of the dating, the nature of the field system, the circumstances of colonization and the context of the farming economy.³ It was suggested by Beresford that the settlement could have originated in the Anglo-Saxon period, but this has been challenged and a 12th- or 13th-century date proposed. It has also been pointed out that the field system around the deserted hamlet was likely to have been an extension of the enclosures on the lower land to the east. Although Beresford suggested that the colonization was a separate undertaking from the tenements to the east and that this led to the creation of a