

ART. XXXVI.—*Red Sandstone Cross Shaft at Cross-Cannonby.* By Rev. W. S. CALVERLEY, F.S.A., Vicar of Aspatria.

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THIS fragment of the shaft of a red sandstone cross was taken from the walls of Cross-Cannonby Church during the restoration in 1880. It is 21 inches high, 12 inches broad at the bottom, and 10 inches broad at the

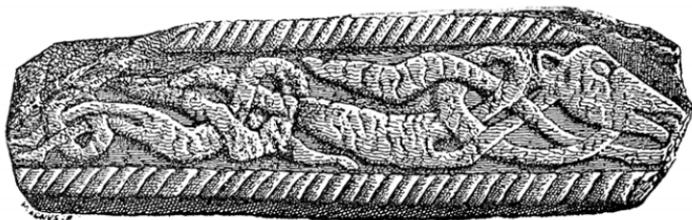


top, 6 inches thick at the bottom and about 5 inches thick at the top. The engravings are by Prof. Magnus Petersen of Copenhagen, from my drawings and photographs kindly taken for me by Mr. W. L. Fletcher, Stoneleigh, Workington.

The

The face of the stone has sculptured, in relief, in a recessed panel, bordered on each side by a raised plain fillet and a moulding which leads our minds to the many Roman altars found in this neighbourhood—a series of vigorously drawn animal figures, each having only three legs, and apparently spinning round and grasping their bodies in their jaws. The action of the creatures is wonderfully full of life, especially as it is seen in the fore leg and paw pressed against the edge of the panel as the beast throws its body and hind legs high over in the air and seizes it with powerful jaws. Here are Fenrir's progeny* sporting themselves.

The obverse has—enclosed in a similar recessed panel—a flat fret or plaitwork pattern in low relief, figured Vol. v. p. 152. One edge of this fragment has—sculptured



in the same fashion—a representation of one of the offspring of the Evil One, the treacherous deceiver, the old serpent, Loki. His head is that of a ravenous wolf, and a

* East Sat the crone,
in Jarnvidir,
and there reared up
Fenrir's progeny:
of all shall be
one especially
the moon's devourer,
in a troll's semblance.

He is sated with the last breath of dying men, &c. Voluspa Strophe 32.

wolf's

wolf's tail * is flourished by him, but the continuous body forms itself into a coiling knotted worm with another tail, that of a snake; and still continuing this body further takes human shape and divides below the loins into the legs of a man bound at the ankles with a ring, shewing the binding of the incarnations of evil by the faith of the cross of Christ.

I at first took this figure to be intended for the Managarm of the Edda (*Voluspa*, *Strophe* 32), but I find that the head of the monster is downwards, at the lower and thicker part of the stone, and probably near the bottom of the cross, so that he is not here attacking the "God's seat," or the heavenly bodies, or the holy signs—as the cross or the Triquetra—but he is the Hell-wolf Fenris. Professor Dr. George Stephens says that this is the first time we see a local tradition that Fenrer, though a kind of wolf-snake, still had a man's legs and feet, for--his father was Loke! The fetter with which his nether limbs are bound is Gleipnir. This fetter with two interlacing bands ornaments the opposite edge. Vol. v. p. 152.

The stone has been properly squared and worked with a broad chisel, and looks like such work as would be done by men imbued with the Northern thought but having the art of their Roman predecessors.

* The wolf on the Dearham Font carries such a tail.