



Fig. 1. Berwick Museum palm cup



Fig. 2. Name stone from Monkwearmouth (!)

NOTES

1.—A PALM CUP IN BERWICK UPON TWEED MUSEUM

The Berwick Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery has a small collection of glass vessels, said to come from Cyprus, but their real history is unknown. It consists of the palm cup¹ (pl. XVI, fig. 1), the hollow stem, decorated with prunts, of a roemer, a type of drinking vessel common in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century² and a number of unguent bottles of common Roman type.³

The palm cup is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches (6.5 cms.) high, rim diameter 3 inches (7.6 cms.), made of green glass, a rather poor metal with bubbles and striations in it. The vessel has been blown in a twelve-ribbed mould with a cruciform pattern on the base. The four ribs which meet the arms of the cross, end in a blob of metal: the others are linked in pairs. In the centre of the base is a blob which has a scar on it where the pontil, on which the vessel was held while the rim was being finished by re-heating and rounding off, was fixed. The ribs fade out towards the rim. The cup has been broken and mended but only two small chips of glass are missing. There is some iridescence on the surface.

This cup is probably of sixth-century date and it has close parallels in south-eastern Britain and in the Bonn-Andernach-Trier area where many examples have been found in pagan graves.⁴ Rademacher has shown that these cups are descended from small bowls or beakers of the late

¹ I am indebted to the Librarian and Curator, Miss M. H. Simpson, A.L.A., for allowing me to borrow it for study.

² E. B. Haynes, *Glass through the Ages* (Pelican Books, 1959), pl. 39, 6.

³ *Opuscula Arch.* vii (1952) O. Vessberg, *Roman glass in Cyprus*; C. Isings, *Roman glass from dated finds* (1957), form 82, pp. 97-8.

⁴ D. B. Harden, *Glass vessels in Britain and Ireland A.D. 400-1000 in Dark Age Britain*, studies presented to E. T. Leeds (1956); F. Rademacher, *Frankische Gläser aus dem Rheinland in Bonner Jahrbücher* 147 (1942).

Roman period, the end of the fourth and the first decade of the fifth century, but the early stages of the development are obscure and the round rimmed, ribbed variety which he places early in the series first occur in sixth-century graves.⁵ There is also an undecorated variety of the same early type and these give place in the seventh century to a palm cup with a heavy folded rim of which few ribbed examples are known and the plain form normal.

It seems unlikely that the Berwick cup was found in excavations in Cyprus. It is more probable that a dealer, not recognizing it, grouped it with the unguent bottles, which could well be from Cyprus, to make up a lot in an auction. There is no record of any palm cup in the island and only one other is said to come from the Mediterranean area. Again the provenance is unproved. This cup in the Ray Winfield Smith collection⁶ is similar to the Berwick cup. It is said to come from Kairouan in Tunisia and was formerly in the H.H. Abdul-Wahib collection, Tunis. Smith has pointed out a possible connection with the glass lamps of the eastern Mediterranean area, but in the face of the evidence from the Rhineland (40 palm cups in Bonn Museum alone)⁷ and Britain, his argument is not convincing. Moreover the Smith cup is remarkably like that, recorded by Douglas,⁸ found in Minster churchyard, Kent; in an inhumation grave, in November 1786. For a time it was in the possession of a bricklayer at Minster. Its later history is unknown. Both vessels are of green glass decorated with sixteen ribs, three short ones between each of the four long ones which form a cross on the base of the vessel. The Minster cup is recorded as 5 inches in both height and diameter. The Smith cup is 3 inches (7.6 cms.). If it were not for this discrepancy one would think that the two vessels were one and the same.

⁵ Rademacher, pp. 301-4; Harden's type X a i 1, p. 142, fig. 25.

⁶ *Glass from the Ancient World*, a special exhibition Corning (N.Y.), 1957, no. 399.

⁷ Rademacher, p. 301.

⁸ Douglas, *Nenia Britannica* (1793), p. 71, pl. xvii, 4.

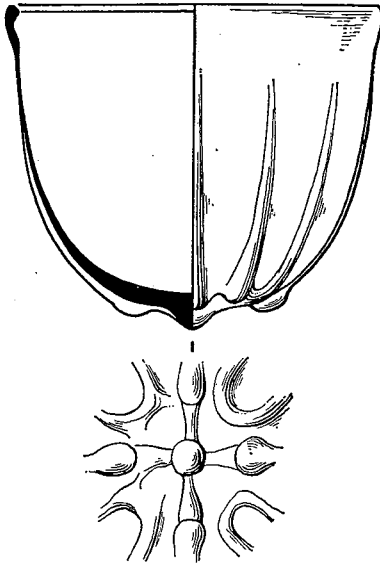


FIG. 1. BERWICK MUSEUM PALM CUP

It seems most probable that the Berwick cup was found in a grave somewhere in south-eastern England or in the middle Rhineland. It is not likely to be a local find. No glass of this period is known in Northumberland. A fine claw beaker from Castle Eden in Durham, now in the British Museum,⁹ is the nearest. Two vessels were found in graves in York, a fifth-century bowl and a 'baseless vessel' which Raine¹⁰ saw and was about to buy when it broke into a hundred pieces in the heat of a candle flame. There is in Sheffield Museum a plain thick-rimmed palm cup from Cowlow near Buxton.¹¹ In Kent, however, there are five palm cups, including the lost Minster example, and in Wiltshire one,¹² all of the same type as the Berwick cup.

⁹ British and Medieval Dept. 1947, 10-9. 1. Harden, p. 139.

¹⁰ J. Raine, *Cat. of Antiquities in Yorkshire Museum* (1891), p. 212; Harden, p. 167.

¹¹ Harden, pl. xviii, 0.

¹² Harden's list with references, p. 164. No additions are known to me.

Three of those illustrated by Rademacher¹³ from Bingerbrück, Engers and Saarbrücken are also close parallels, but the first two are in amber coloured glass. In the lower Rhineland this early type seems uncommon or even unknown, although the later types are widespread.¹⁴ It is clear that there are local variations which can only mean that several different glass houses were producing these vessels in the seventh century and perhaps earlier. So far there is no evidence of glass being made in Britain between the end of the Roman occupation and 675 when, Bede tells us, glass workers were brought from Gaul to Wearmouth, but as Harden has shown¹⁵ it is possible to make out a case for a seventh-century glass house at Faversham, Kent. This sixth-century cup at Berwick, however, is almost certainly a product of a glass house in the middle Rhineland.

Dorothy Charlesworth

2.—A NAME-STONE FROM MONKWEARMOUTH

The fragment of a name-stone, illustrated on Pl. XVI, 2, was discovered in the course of the 1961 excavations of the Saxon Monastic site at Monkwearmouth, Co. Durham. It was found about 44 ft. south of the seventh-century church, at a depth of 2' 9", and was lying face downwards among disturbed building debris, which included both Medieval and Saxon material. The smears of mortar on both sides of the stone indicate that it had been broken up and re-used in a wall, but although there is plenty of evidence from the site that the post-conquest rebuilders of the monastery disturbed pre-conquest graves, there is no conclusive evidence

¹³ pl. lv, 1-3.

¹⁴ *Antiquity and Survival* ii, C. Isings, *Merovingisch glas uit Nederland*, fig. 10. *Revue belg. d'arch. et d'hist. de l'art*, x (1940), G. Faider-Feytmans, *Les verreries . . . au musée de Mariemont*, pl. vii, 1-2; M. Vanderhoeven, *Verres romains tardifs et merovingiens du musée Curtius, Liège* (1958), pl. xix, 69, 70.

¹⁵ Harden, p. 146.

that this stone came from a grave. Small memorial stones such as this with inscriptions and cruciform ornament have been found on two other English monastic sites, at Hartlepool and at Lindisfarne; at Hartlepool they were discovered inside graves although there is some confusion in the descriptions¹ of the discovery as to what was their relation to the bodies.

Unfortunately, the circumstances of the Monkwearmouth discovery exactly parallel those at Lindisfarne, where the stones "all occurred among building rubbish and loose stones in disturbed ground, and were in no case in a position to give any evidence as to their original arrangement".²

The Hartlepool and Lindisfarne name-stones are of local stone, but the Monkwearmouth stone is not immediately local: it is a fine red calcareous silt-stone,³ the surface so well dressed that it has the appearance of tile. This type of stone was otherwise not found at Monkwearmouth where the Saxon builders used mainly the local permian limestone and the post-conquest rebuilders mainly carboniferous sandstone. This factor, together with the minute size of the memorial, leads one to wonder whether it was not made somewhere else than Monkwearmouth.

The dimensions of the fragment are—greatest present length, 10 cm., 4"; greatest present width, 5.4 cm., $2\frac{1}{8}$ "; thickness, 1.5 cm., $\frac{9}{16}$ ". It is not possible to reconstruct the length of this piece accurately since one does not know whether the cruciform device was like that of the Litchfield Gospels, fol. 220, with a lengthened foot to the cross and double boss, or whether each arm of the cross was the same length. However, one can reconstruct a width of 4", which makes it the smallest of the English name-stones. At Hartlepool, there was considerable difference between the

¹ See DURHAM, Vol. I, pp. 211-213, and G. Baldwin-Brown, *The Arts in Early England* V, 1921, pp. 58-71.

² C. Peers "Inscribed and Sculptured Stones of Lindisfarne", *Archæologia* LXXIV, 1923-4, p. 259.

³ I am grateful to Professor Dunham of the Geology Department, Durham University, for kindly identifying the stone.

stones in dimension and weight; the nearest approach to the Monkwearmouth dimensions is No. (3) Hartlepool, $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{3}{8}''$, which is itself a notable contrast to Hartlepool (1), $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11'' \times 4\frac{1}{2}''$ and (6) $11\frac{3}{4}'' \times 10'' \times 3''$.

At Lindisfarne, the dimensions of the stones varied from $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 6\frac{1}{2}''$ to $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$. The Monkwearmouth stone fits much better than this larger variety Lionard's suggestion that, like the small memorial stones from Clonmacnoise, Ireland, "They may parallel the stone tablets of Roman tombs, placed over some part of the body. Many graves of Merovingian Gaul show the same custom. In many cases the small Irish slabs may have protected the head of the buried person, covering it at the same time with the sign of the cross, and in many cases indicating the name of the deceased".⁴

Certainly the larger slabs would crush the skull if placed on the face of the deceased but they could have been placed by the head in the grave as at Cys-la-Commune (Aisne),⁵ and served any of the same functions as have been suggested: the equivalent of pagan tomb furniture, a buried prayer,⁶ or an identity disc in case of disinterment.

(There is, however, some possibility that the Monkwearmouth slab was originally set in a wall since it seems incredible that such a small fragment of stone should have been specially sought after for rebuilding.)

The design of the stone

The cruciform decoration, the borders and the inscription of the Monkwearmouth fragment, have all been incised with a small punch. The lay-out of the stone is most closely paralleled among other known examples by two of the round-headed name-stones from Lindisfarne—Peers no. ii,

⁴ P. Lionard, "Early Irish Grave-Slabs", *Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, LXI, sect. C. no. 5, 1961, pp. 99-100.

⁵ E. Salin, *La Civilisation Mérovingienne*, II. Paris 1952, fig. 59, and pp. 82-91.

⁶ For the latest and most thorough discussion of the English stones, see Forrest Scott, *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., XXXIV, 1956, pp. 196-212.

pp. 259-6, fig. 2, and Peers no. iv, pp. 260-1 and Plate LXXIV, fig. 1, where the cross divides the field with runic inscription in the upper quadrants and an inscription in Hiberno-Saxon capitals below. In the Lindisfarne stones, the two inscriptions appear to be the same. In other words only one person is commemorated. None of the Hartlepool name-stones show a bi-alphabetical inscription, but two of them bear the names of two or more people: number 4, Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne, *Ora pro Vermund and Torhtsuid*; and number 5, British Museum, which Forrest Scott (p. 201) reads as *Orate pro Ediluini, orate pro Vermund et Edilsuid*. Quite apart from the curious nominal links between these stones, their function seems to be rather different from those with a single name inscribed; here we have a request for prayer and not solely an identification of the body.

The runic inscription on the Monkwearmouth slab reads EO, and the Hiberno-Saxon capitals AID. I can find no parallels in other Northumbrian texts for an equivalence of the diphthongs EO, and AI. For example, the name of Saint Aidan is recorded in eighth-century manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* as Aedan and Aidan;⁷ the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle A, 651 records his death as Aidan, and the Genealogies of Northumbrian Bishops (Cotton Ms. Vespasian B.6, H. Sweet, *The Oldest English Texts*, p. 169, 1.52 and 1.65) record him as aeoan; likewise the name of Aidan, king of the Scots is recorded in MSS. D. & E. of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 603 as Ægoan.

Peers, in his discussion of the Lindisfarne stones, p. 264, suggested that stone V which has the runic inscription AYD, might be the beginning of St. Aidan's name, but it is impossible in these mutilated inscriptions to be dogmatic. The runic inscription EO on the Monkwearmouth piece could be the beginning of several Northumbrian names recorded as

⁷ I am indebted to Professor Dorothy Whitelock for providing references and for helpful discussion of this problem. Also to Mr. R. I. Page who suggested that the Monkwearmouth inscription need not refer to one person

beginning with the variant EO/EA, and it may be that the person commemorated here changed his name like Benedict Biscop of Monkwearmouth, when he entered the religious life, and both names are recorded on the slab.

The cross device on the Monkwearmouth slab is unique in the English name-stone series. But the cross-potent type in an angular frame can be paralleled at Clonmacnoise (Lionard fig. 10, 5). More relevantly, however, it is exactly like the cruciform device on the Carpet page of the Lindisfarne Gospels, fol. v. 2.

Relations between the decoration of other English name-stones and manuscripts have already been noted, for example, between the Edelhard slab from Lindisfarne (Peers, Plate L, fig. 2) and the Lindisfarne Gospels, fol. v. 26,⁸ and certainly the layout of these stones with linear decorations and careful lettering, is closely allied to the Hiberno-Saxon tradition of manuscript art. In these monastic centres the decorated page could have a direct influence on the slab carver, and there is no indication in the earliest English group of such independence of layout as one finds on Irish slabs, where the inscription can be found outside the frame or running vertically alongside the longest arm of the cross.

The Monkwearmouth piece is very closely allied to book ornament: its inscription is more carefully disposed and better cut than are most of those on the English name-stones, and the total design of this slab interestingly strengthens the links between the artistic traditions of Monkwearmouth/Jarrow and such Aidanic foundations as Hartlepool or Lindisfarne.

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⁸ See also Forrest Scott, *op. cit.* pp. 207-208, for relationships between the Hartlepool stones and manuscripts.