

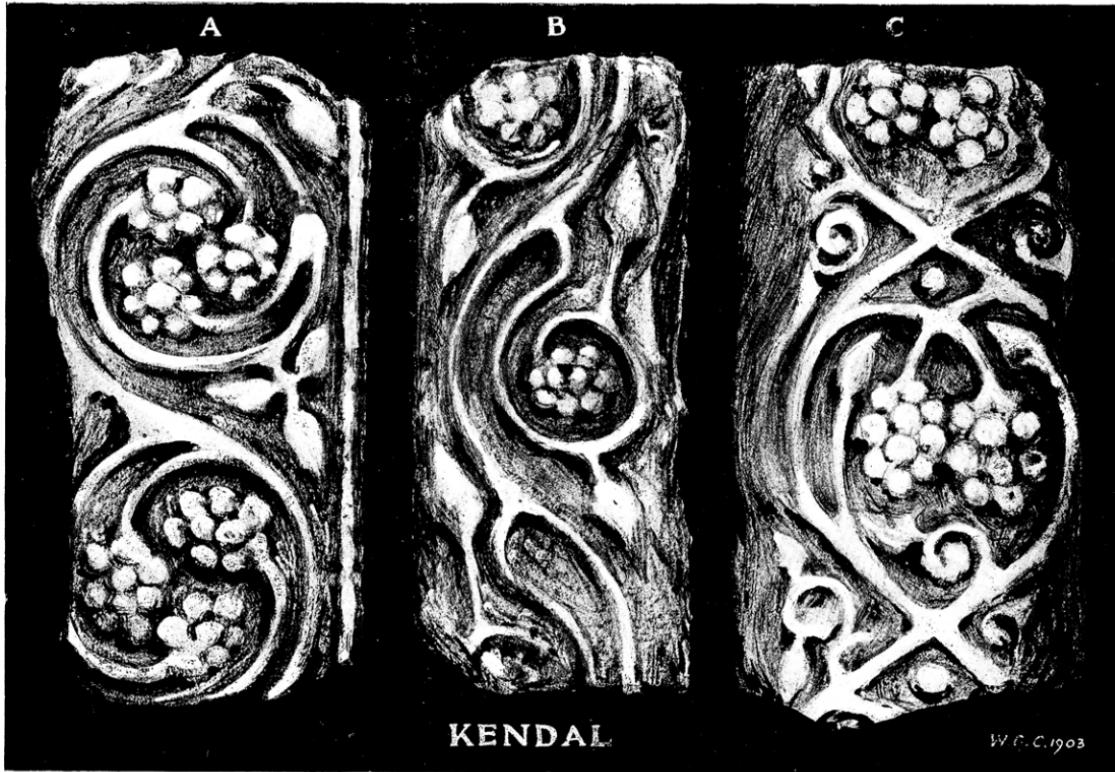
ART. XXV.—*An Anglian Cross-fragment at Kendal.* By  
W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

*Read at Kendal, June 25th, 1903.*

TO Mr. Titus Wilson belongs the credit of noticing this stone among a number of old carved fragments, placed for preservation behind railings against the east wall of Kendal Parish Church. They were removed at the restoration in 1850 and given by a churchwarden of the time to the Unitarian minister, who kept them as ornaments for a rockery in the burial ground at the Market Place. In 1901 the trustees of the chapel gave them back to the church. The particular stone in question, though it seems to have been buried for a while under the soil of the cemetery, has been identified by the person who set up the relics there in 1850 as certainly one of the number; so that it must be considered as having come originally from the site of the Parish Church. If this be so, we have every reason to believe that a church existed on the present site at the time when this stone was carved.

The block opposite, from my sketch, is reprinted by the courtesy of the editor and publisher of *The Reliquary*, and represents all the sculpture now visible on the stone.

It is of whitish-grey sandstone, 7 inches thick and under 18 inches long, representing a shaft originally about 12 inches broad. One edge has been cut away, leaving only three carved sides, all showing scroll-patterns, without ordinary interlacing. In A each loop holds three bunches of fruit, set in the plan of a *triskele* or three legs of Man. On B there is a scroll with fruit, and single leaves, which stand straight out from the flowing curves of the stem. The pattern of C is a somewhat debased copy of



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ANGLIAN CROSS-SHAFT AT KENDAL.

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the usual Hexham and Bewcastle Vine, connecting this sculpture with the great series of Anglian crosses carved in Northumbria before the coming of the Danes.

The fact that this vine-pattern is debased, that is, a copy of a copy, several times removed from the original, shows that it is not of the earliest period; and indeed on historical grounds we can hardly suppose that a church would be planted at Kendal so early as the seventh century. The curious *triskele* arrangement of the fruit-bunches, not elsewhere seen, but recalling the frequent motive of late-Celtic ornament, suggests that the artist was feeling after new ideas; another sign of late period. Possibly the hint was taken from Celtic art then in vogue in a district still largely inhabited by the Cymric British. But the design is English, of the school created by Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop and their Continental artists, and neither Celtic nor Scandinavian in origin. There is no trace of Viking style or subject, and consequently the date of the work must be earlier than the Danish invasions. We may perhaps put it at 800 A.D. with a margin of some decades before or after. About that time there must have been a church at the place afterwards called Kirk-by-in-Kent-dale; and this is by many centuries the earliest record we have of Kendal as an inhabited site, the Roman camp at Watercrook hardly counting as the true parent of the present town.

The Anglian village in the Kent valley, near the old Roman road, naturally connects with Lancaster; and some of the fragments recently extricated from the wall of Lancaster Parish Church are strikingly like this shaft. One especially with similar scrolls, flowing stem and stiff-set leaf, and debased Hexham vine, is so like that it is hard to believe it to be the work of another hand. In this Lancaster piece the vine-loops hold only two bunches of fruit each, but they are set opposite, and great invention is shown in the way the tendrils are brought into place to produce the effect. The man who carved this

was just the inventive designer who would introduce the daring triplets of the Kendal stone, and the handling is very like, also. This man seems to be of later date than the carver of some more regularly designed work at Lancaster, in which however the same trick of the stiff-set leaf appears, together with an early Anglian inscription in Latin. It seems as though our Kendal carver might have been the pupil of the older Lancaster man, and that we have traces of a local school of itinerant sculptors, deriving originally from Hexham, but developing their art in the Lonsdale and Kent-dale district. The interesting and symbolic Heversham shaft with "foxes that spoil the vines," the graceful patterns of the fragments in Halton Church, and the ingenious work on the Anglian standing shaft at Heysham, are all of this type; while the splendid morsel of figure-carving and interlacing at Hornby Castle seems to be by a still more skilful hand, nearer to the fountain-head of the art in the Northumbrian school of St. Wilfrid.

Turning over the pages of Westwood's "Miniatures and ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS." one finds nothing analogous to these scrolls. Westwood's examples (some of them, it must be remembered, antedated) are all of a later period. The Boulogne Psalter (about 1000 A.D.) has scrolls with animals, as in some late Northumbrian crosses of debased Anglian type, but these scrolls have no leaves or grapes. In the tenth century a new kind of leaf-pattern came into fashion, based on the same motives as the "Byzantine" acanthus capitals; but these Lonsdale sculptures belong to an earlier stratum of art-history, the bed-rock of English art, of which the detritus was worked up into the conglomerates of Irish, Scottish and Scandinavian decoration. We are, I think, approaching a time when our pre-Norman art can be distinguished into periods and schools, no longer thrown together into the condemned rubbish-heap of barbarism; and the result of the study

cannot but afford much light upon an age hitherto considered as one of the darkest in our local history.

Since the visit of our Society it has been decided to remove this Kendal Anglian cross-shaft into the church, and to set it upon a base, with the inscription :—

This fragment of an ancient grave  
Is all we have to show  
Of Kendal Church and Kendal town  
A thousand years ago.

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