

ART. III.—*The Waberthwaite Crosses.* By W. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

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NOT much notice has been taken of the two cross-shafts at Waberthwaite church, though the late Canon Knowles (these *Transactions*, o.s. iii, 95) tried to draw the second (*defg* on page 83) in 1876, before it was set up by Lord Muncaster on what was reasonably supposed to be its own base in the churchyard. In Calverley's *Early Sculptured Crosses* there are two excellent photographs of this by Mr. W. L. Fletcher, and drawings of the other fragment (*abc* opposite) by Mr. Calverley. Each of the shafts is unusual in design, but perhaps they throw some light on the early history of the place.

The shaft *abc* was for a long while used as threshold to the church door and has been much worn down on one face; the other (*b*) is difficult to make out, owing to previous weathering. Side *c* bears a rather late Anglian leaf-scroll; the stems are rounded with neat chiselling and its sinuous lines recall the design of the Lancaster school. Side *a* has an ingenious symmetrical interlacing, made of one strand plaited upon itself, which therefore is in the best Anglian tradition. The arrises of the shaft are rounded. To restore it, we ought to repeat the three groups of knotwork, reversed, which gives its height if we add a knot to make it finish off simultaneously with side *a*, making a shaft of about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. The head would be about 18 inches high, and probably like that of Irton cross which resembles heads at Lancaster and Heysham.

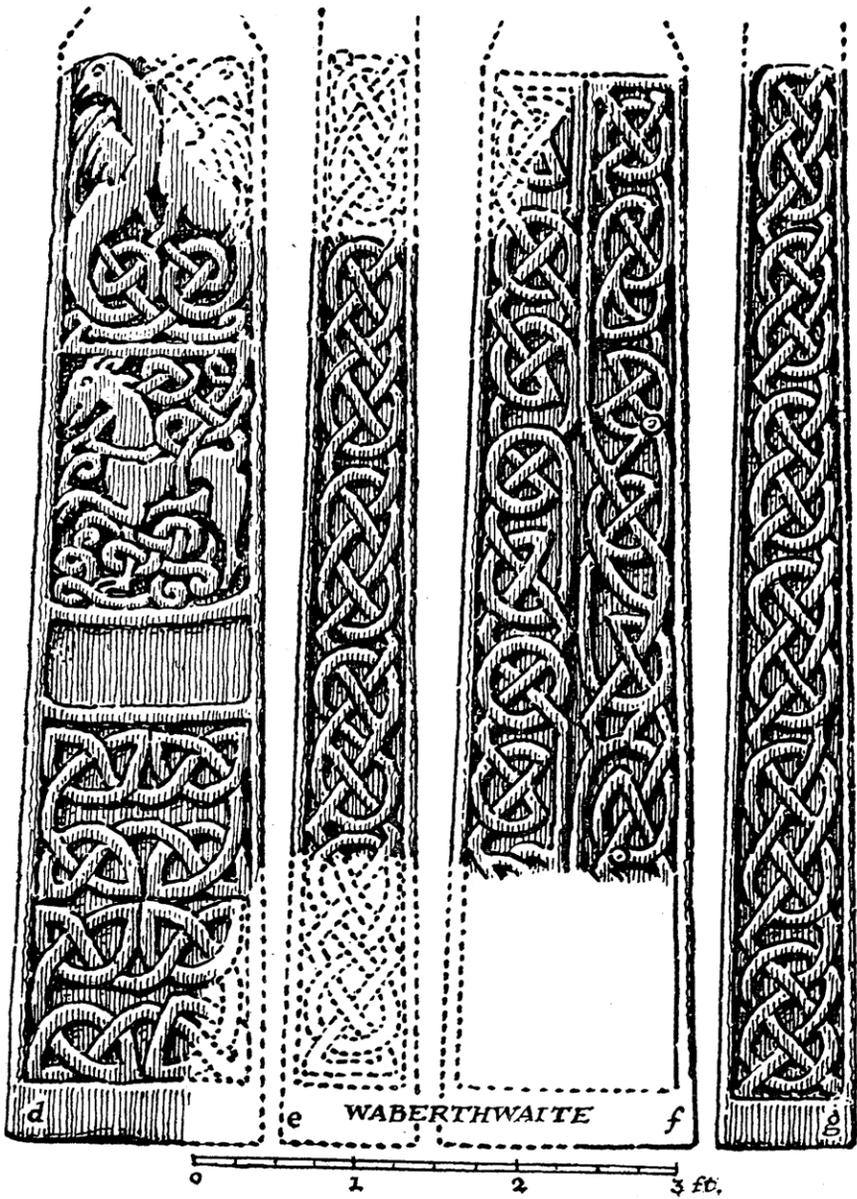
Such a monument could not be earlier than the middle of the 9th century, nor later than about 925 when the Norse began to settle on this coast. The great Danish

invasion did not affect West Cumberland, and pretty certainly there was a survival of Anglian traditions here, as at Heversham, until the Norse came. This cross therefore, may be roughly dated towards the end of the ninth century.

Of Waberthwaite at that period we know nothing beyond what this monument tells, and possibly the dedication. St James was also patron saint of Hutton-in-the-Forest, with a 10-11 century stone; Ormside, with the famous Cup and other relics of the tenth century; and Burton-in-Kendal, which may be Norman but has monuments of pre-Norman type. It is not certain that the dedication was Anglian; but we see that there was an Anglian church here, and that it was continued in use after the Norse came—a fact supplied by the second shaft.

The second shaft (*defg*) is complete, only wanting its cross-head. With the base, one foot three inches high, the shaft six feet eight inches high, and a head to suit, rather less than two feet high, the whole monument must have stood over nine feet from the turf. It is distinctly post-Anglian in design, but with a good deal of Anglian tradition; that is to say, it is like tenth century work at Hexham and elsewhere, in which a continuity of style is traceable, varied by the fashions of succeeding periods but not totally different from the pre-Danish art, as are the late tenth century crosses in the greater part of Yorkshire. In other words, when the Norse came they did not destroy all previous art and traditions but learnt from them and carried them on.

The horse (*d*) has much of the Anglian character of graceful animal-drawing, and the Anglian hoofs, like dog's paws; but the plait in which it is entangled is of the tenth century. Above it are two conventional birds, also of Anglian tradition in their symmetry, and like the pairs of fanciful creatures on Anglian stones at Ilkley and elsewhere. Below the horse is a blank panel which, as at



Irton, held (or was intended to hold) an inscription. Under that is a common Anglian plait, varied clumsily, as in the tenth century.

Side *e* bears a running plait based on the Anglian Carrick bend, but with a closed figure-of-8 in it; and lower down the strands bifurcate, which marks the tenth century. Side *f* also shows bifurcation and irregularities impossible before the tenth century. The curious buttons here and there on the straps are unique, as far as I know. Side *g* is more regular with its series of Carrick bends, but does not terminate as an Anglian plait would, and has angularities on the dexter side, opposed to the curves on the sinister. It is amply clear that this cross was put up no earlier than the middle of the tenth century, and it must be the monument of one of the Norse settlement; but it is as evident that—in this district—it cannot be much later or it would show more definite Norse character like crosses at Beckermeth, St. Bees, Aspatria and in West Cumberland generally. Here at Waberthwaite the Anglian tradition was strong, and as crosses are a church art, not secular, it means that there was some more than ordinary strength of influence, in the shape of an ecclesiastical establishment which was not suddenly overthrown at the Norse settlement.

The affinities of the earlier cross (*abc*) to Lancaster work suggest that in the ninth century there may have been a cell of Lancaster at St. James' on the Esk. The name of Waberthwaite is later, from a hunting or fishing "booth" of the Norse landowner, perhaps of Muncaster, for there is no sign, in the place-names, of a capital message near the church. A little to south is Langley, the shieling of the Norse dairymaid Langlif (Langlifar-erg). To east is Birkby (Breta-byr) where the Norse found aboriginal Britons still surviving at their arrival: and when we compare the circumstances at Cartmel (these *Transactions*, N.S. xxiv, 291-2) where the Britons lived on, under

clerical rule, it strengthens the idea that Waberthwaite was an Anglian cell. The first cross may have been put up to the memory of some ecclesiastic of note who perhaps had retired to end his days there.

When the Norse came, their headquarters seem to have been at Muncaster. Waberthwaite church was adopted by them, though probably its monastic character disappeared, as in other cases. About 950 they put up the second cross to some important person; but a little later the private chapel at Muncaster became their burying-place, and about A.D. 1000 one or more small crosses were set up there of distinctly Norse design.

Canon James Wilson thought (*St. Bees*, 285, 474) that the family owning Waberthwaite in the thirteenth century descended from an Ulf (*ibid.* 290) of the twelfth century. He may have represented the pre-Pennington lords of Muncaster, who perhaps bought Copeland (Kaupaland, the 'bought land') from the first settlers. But though we get glimpses of local history up to about 1000, and then in the twelfth century, the mist still hangs over the intervening space.