

ruined within a century of its erection, but the rebuilt cylindrical "keep" was still occupied as the vicarage until the eighteen eighties. Here also the fireplaces of local stones—magnesian limestone, Derbyshire marbles and alabasters—are noteworthy as perhaps also are the curious and rather crude paintings and panelling.

#### DERBYSHIRE PRE-CONQUEST CARVED STONES.

By T. E. Routh.

On the 2nd December, Mr. T. E. Routh addressed a well attended meeting at the Assembly Rooms, Brigadier-General Meynell, C.M.G., in the chair, on the Derbyshire pre-Conquest carved stones and the places they occupy in the sequence of Northern Anglian decorative work," to set the title out in full.

Mr. Routh evidently has acquainted himself with all of authority that has been published on the subject and has applied this knowledge most efficiently to our local examples.

He opened by setting these examples in their place in the long sequence of Anglian art from the seventh to the eleventh century. Space forbids details of his discussion of the past dating controversies of this art and we will accept the seventh century beginnings posited by Professors Bronsted, Baldwin Brown, etc., and anticipated nearly half a century ago by Bishop G. F. Browne, whose early studies of our local examples were dealt with in our *Journal*.

"The Seventh century is the meridian of Northumberland's glory . . . . Edwin had accepted baptism in 627 from Rome, and it was the introduction of Christianity from the south that brought new culture, new civilization, new art." The far travelled churchmen Wilfred and Benedict Biscop and the wide influence of Theodore of Tarsus and Abbot Adrian, bringing art and scholarship

from the East, all affected the new spirit centred at Jarrow and York with Oriental tendencies, and we know the two first named brought art objects and craftsmen. It is not assuming over much to hold that craftsmen of the famous Syrian school, possibly actual Syrians disturbed by the newly risen Mahomeddan movements, were among these. Maximian's ivory chair at Ravenna (slide shown) illustrates this Hellenised ornament. The vine scroll from this work compared with the fragment of the Otley cross (slides) seems to show a common source and so significant does professor Bronsted consider this that he figures the two patterns side by side, believing this cross and its fellows are the source of all later Anglian art. Easby, a little more Anglianised (slide) may be by an English pupil of the foreign artist. The beautiful Croft fragment (shown) is yet more Anglicised, bird and beast differ in attitude from their Eastern types, and the vine leaves are round-lobed trefoils with long midribs, while contemporary Anglian work now often replaces the genuine vine by an ivy leaf, tho' this is not unknown at Ravenna, etc. The supreme Anglian example—the Ruthwell cross (illustrated)—was now discussed and its date argued (late seventh century), numerous illustrations following of its equally noble contemporary, that of Bewcastle. The dignity of the figures with the grace and refinement of the ornaments in both these great survivals was brought out. Of the latter the lecturer said "The beautiful figure of Christ on its principal face with its suggestion of Classic grace and refinement seen against the background of the rolling fells is very impressive, especially when one remembers it has weathered the storn of 1300 winters in its bleak moorland house." Much of its inscription is doubtful but not the name of a king Alchfrith and his wife Cunniberga a daughter of the last grand old heathen Penda King of Mercia, whose "hall" may have been at Repton. This suggests a date c. 680.

The development of the "Anglian beasts" from the Christian doves of the sacred vine was next dealt with "an extraordinary compound of mammal and fowl, a graceful tripping creature" of which good early examples survive at Breedon. It generally has a convoluted and foliated tail, ceases to be necessarily associated with the vine and becomes an exclusive motive in a delimited field, so persisting, variously rendered to the Norman Conquest. (Ilkley and Hackness cross shown). Here we reach the stage of our earliest Derbyshire examples.

The Bradbourn fragment is perhaps our highest attainment. Note the indication at its base of the archer shooting upwards, also found in the slightly later Sheffield fragment, Bakewell and several others beyond our county perhaps a relic of the "chase motive" of Syrian art. The vine is now shown in great spirals to cover wide spaces differing much from the early two wreathes intertwining in figure 8's (Sheffield, Eyam, Lancaster and Bakewell fragments shown). At Eyam is a beautiful early interlace, repeating, which the earlier examples cannot do, and the head is of pure Anglian form but the figure work showing a century's degeneration from Bewcastle. Some fragments in Bakewell porch with vine scroll may be our earliest examples, but are difficult to see. The great cross here ranges with Bradbourn and Eyam, but has much figure work and no interlace. It has the archer at the base. Late eighth century, a safe date for them, "The appearance of the vine is unreal compared with the earlier work, but not yet withered into a mere play of geometrical lines." The decayed figure work at Bradbourn was originally good. The Wirksworth coped stone (shown) was discussed and Mr. Tudor's conclusions approved. Probably shows Arian influence—compares with the famous Franks Casket—eighth century. A coped stone at the west end of Bakewell church with interlace and vine scroll compared with another at Sheffield from same region was

dated late Anglian (late ninth century). This led to a glance at a "hogback" in the Derby Museum, a Danish type in which the ends are supported by stooping bears, these latter cut away in this example when reused as a building stone. The Wilne font carved from an Anglian cross of decadent character was next studied. Mr. Routh did not agree with Romilly Allen that it was of Danish type but it might be of the Danish era. The "Anglian beast" was next discussed and its successor the Jellinge creature, knotted and interlaced and contorted into mere lines and ribbons, a Danish motive derived from Irish ornament. The double outline (rare though not quite unknown earlier i.e. Hackness) and the spiral joint are also elements in this Danish work. "These styles are radically different, the first showing the time-old ability of Classic folk in the portrayal of Nature compared with the Germanic and Celtic soul, whose distinguishing feature is inability to copy nature but mastery in abstract conventionalization." The Derby Museum fragments were dwelt on, one, with animal decoration in one side only, he thinks is not Scandinavian and earlier than the great Alkmund's fragment which is praised as a splendid example of the coalescence of the Anglian and Scandinavian styles. The Norbury crosses were described and shown. One has the figure of a warrior, over whom it doubtless was set up, and a similar motive occurs at Brailsford. (Both Danish). The beautiful interlace on the Norbury example with intertwined circles is of the "ring-twist" character, a late sign, say later tenth century. Hope and a fragment at Ashbourne are of the same type and may have had "wheel heads." Among the Bakewell porch fragments is a "vertebral" or chain pattern unique in our region. Norse such as the Isle of Man examples and remarkable in occurring so far from a Norse centre. A curious twisted knob at Blackwell is late as also the fragment at Aston. The badly weathered

examples from Chapel-en-le-Frith and Burbage (Buxton) have the basket plait, the latter a massive example first noted last summer by Mr. Walton. A unique fragment (head) at Rowsley, to which Mr. Tudor had called his attention has no parallel to his knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up: Anglian art is of Eastern origin introduced when its influence was strongly exerted at Constantinople and Ravenna. This Anglian art was not autochthonous and it soon became influenced by Germanic motives and degenerated. To the capture of York 867, it is unaffected by Irish art, its strong Oriental naturalism securing it from the doctrinaire fantastic conventionalism of that style. In decadence it came (late ninth century) in contact with Scandinavian motives but these failed to dominate it entirely and it survived to Norman times. The Derbyshire craftsmen shared these qualities.

W.H.W.

<sup>1</sup> The Burbage and Rowsley fragments are the subjects of separate notes in this volume.—Ed.