



The Early Christian Monuments of Cheshire and Lancashire

BY J. ROMILLY ALLEN, F.S.A., SCOT.

(Read December, 1893.)



IT is the province of archæology to extend and correct the knowledge of the history of man in past ages which is derived from written documents, printed books, and oral tradition, by a study of the structures, monuments, and other works of art he has left behind him. But archæology cannot stand alone, since all investigations in which the question of time is involved must start from the present, and go backwards as far as history will carry us. It will be well, therefore, before turning our attention to the story which the Early Christian monuments of Cheshire and Lancashire have to tell, to take a glance at the condition of this particular area at the time when the monuments were erected, as revealed by history.

In the following paper the term "Early Christian" is used to denote the period between the introduction of Christianity into England at the beginning of the 7th century and the Norman Conquest in A.D. 1066.

In the late Professor E. A. Freeman's *Old English History* three maps are given showing the different divisions of Britain (1) at the beginning of the 7th century; (2) in the 9th and 10th centuries; and (3) at the time of the death of Edward the Confessor in A.D. 1066. Looking at the first of these maps it will be seen that the portions of England and Scotland lying between latitude 52 deg. and 56 deg. were occupied on the west by the Celts of

Strathclyde, and on the east by the Angles of Bernicia, the Deira, the kingdom of the Middle Angles and East Anglia, the dividing line running approximately from Bedford to Stirling in a north-easterly direction. At the beginning of the 7th century, then, Cheshire and Lancashire formed part of the British kingdom of Strathclyde, and any Christian monuments, if such existed at this period, would be similar to those of Wales. With the exception of the rude pillar stones at Whithorn and at Kirkmadrine in Wigtonshire, no Christian monuments of the very early Welsh type, with inscriptions in debased Latin capitals or in ogams, have been found within the area of Strathclyde, so that all those now remaining in Cheshire and Lancashire must belong to a later type.

Looking next at the map of Britain in the 9th and 10th centuries, it will be noticed that the part of Strathclyde south of Morecambe Bay has disappeared altogether, and in its place we have the Deira extending right across England from sea to sea and Mercia occupying the whole of central England. The whole of Cheshire and the district of Lancashire south of the river Ribble then belonged to Mercia, and the remainder of Lancashire north of the Ribble to the Deira (as the southern division of the great kingdom of Northumbria was called). We must expect, therefore, to find the Early Christian Monuments of North Lancashire of Northumbrian or purely Anglian type, whilst those of South Lancashire and Cheshire will have more affinity with the Mercian or Anglo-Saxon type.

Although Paulinus first introduced Christianity into Northumbria in A.D. 627 during the reign of King Edwin, and his successor Oswald was also a Christian, it was not until after the death of Penda in A.D. 655 that

the new religion became firmly established in Northumbria and Mercia. The earliest date, therefore, that can possibly be assigned to any Christian monument in Cheshire and Lancashire is in the second half of the 7th century, and in all probability most of them are much later. Cheshire and Lancashire are singularly devoid of great religious centres whence Christianity spread in all directions, the nearest in the neighbouring counties being Lichfield, founded by St. Chad in A.D. 607, and York, founded by Paulinus in A.D. 627. Bangor Iscoed, the Welsh seat of learning, was destroyed by Ethelred, king of Northumbria, in A.D. 607, and, unlike the Scots, the Welsh Christians took no part in the conversion of the pagans around them. The earliest monastic foundations in Cheshire and Lancashire of which historical notices are preserved are as follows:— Chester A.D. 670; Chester, St. John's, 906; Chester, St. Werburgh's, 875; Runcorn, *temp.* Elfreda; Brimesburgh, *c.* 912; Hilbre.

Early Christian monuments, indicating the existence of a church in Saxon times, have been found at the following places:—

<i>Cheshire.</i>		<i>Lancashire.</i>	
	No. of Stones		No. of Stones
Bromborough	6	Bolton	5
Bruera, near Chester	...	Burnley	1
Cheadle	1	Halton	5
Chester, St. John's	4	Heysham	2
" Grosvenor Museum	1	Lancaster	5
Clulow	...	Manchester Ship Canal,	
Disley (now at Lyme Hall)	2	Barton Section	1
Hilbre Island	1	Stiperden Cross	1
Kirkby (West)	5	Whalley	7
Ludworth	2	Winwick	1
Lyme Park	2		
Macclesfield	3		
Neston	3		
Overchurch	1		
Prestbury	2		
Sandbach	3		
Upton Hall	1		

The number of complete monuments and fragments at each place varies from 1 to 7, the largest groups being at Whalley, Bolton, and Halton, in Lancashire; and at Bromborough, St. John's Chester, West Kirkby, and Sandbach, in Cheshire. The total number of monuments in Lancashire is nearly 30, and the total number in Cheshire is nearly 40.

At Overchurch is another small and very much worn fragment of a Saxon cross. There is a tradition of a cross at Wallasey, 12ft. high, covered with curious cutting. This cross was lost about the beginning of this century. At Harkirk, near Crosby, there is the base of a cross with an oblong socket. The form of the cross and the socket resemble early work, but there is no early detail. Harkirk is a Saxon site.

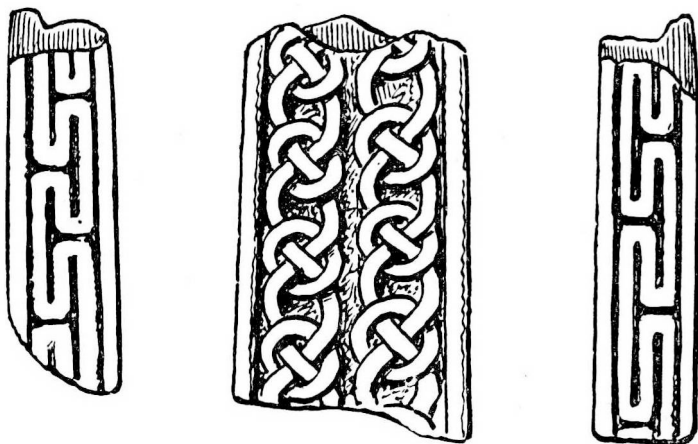
These, then, are the materials with which we have to deal, and as it would be quite impossible within the limits of a short paper to describe so many stones in detail, I propose to confine myself to the consideration of the general results arrived at from a critical examination of the whole.

It would, however, be hardly fair to do so without first making a brief reference to the labours of other workers who have preceded me in this particular field of archæological research. Up to the present time no book has been written exclusively upon the Early Christian monuments of England as a whole, or upon those of any county except Cornwall.¹ Such knowledge as we possess is to be gathered from stray notices in works on local history and topography, and from papers published in the proceedings of archæological societies.²

¹ Blight's *Crosses of Cornwall*.

² Since this paper was read, Mr. E. W. Cox has called my attention to several fragments of undescribed crosses at Neston and Bromborough, in Cheshire. The existence of a cross-shaft, found during the excavation of the

Camden's *Britannia* is naturally the first authority that we turn to for information on the subject, but neither in the original edition, nor in the subsequent ones of



Scale $\frac{1}{12}$ natural size. Cross Shaft found during the excavation of the Barton Section of Manchester Ship Canal.

Gibson and of Gough do we find any mention of the early crosses of Cheshire or Lancashire. The principal works to which the student must be referred for accounts of these monuments are as follows:—

CHESHIRE.

- S. Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, vol. ii., pt. 2 (Cheshire), p. 459, Sandbach.
 J. P. Earwaker's *East Cheshire*, vol. i., p. 186, Cheadle; vol. ii., p. 101, Disley; p. 285, Lyme Park; p. 286, Macclesfield; p. 345, Upton; p. 435, Clulow.
 J. P. Earwaker's *History of Sandbach*.
 H. Ecroyd Smith's *Reliques of the Anglo-Saxon Churches of St. Bridget's and St. Hildeburga, West Kirkby, Cheshire, West Kirkby*.

Manchester Ship Canal, Barton section, only came to my knowledge quite recently. It is now in the Owen's College Museum, Manchester, and has not, so far as I am aware, been described.

The Reliquary, vol. xxv., p. 1, Prestbury.

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society
vol. vii. (1891), p. 86, Upton.

Palatine Note Book, edited by the late J. E. Bailey,
F.S.A., vol. iv., pp. 1, 181, Prestbury.

LANCASHIRE.

Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*, vol. ii., p. 229,
Lancaster; p. 241, Halton; p. 318, Heysham.

Whitaker's *History of the Parish of Whalley*, vol. ii.,
p. 15, Whalley.

Archæologia, vol. xxix., p. 76, Lancaster.

Journal of the British Archæological Association,
vol. xxxvii., p. 92, Winwick; vol. xlii., p. 334, Halton
and Heysham.

Ilam Anastatic Drawing Society, annual volume for 1879,
pl. 20, Bolton.

Ashby-de-la-Zouche Anastatic Drawing Society, annual
volume for 1859, pl. 15, Heysham.

J. A. Waddington's *Crosses in and around Burnley* (a
paper read before the Burnley Literary and Scientific
Club, Oct. 25, 1881), p. 2, Burnley, Godly Lane; p. 14,
Stiperden or Mount's Cross, on the Long Causeway
between Mereclough and Hebden Bridge.

*Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian
Society*, vol. v., p. 1, "The Pre-Norman Sculptured
Stones of Lancashire," by the Rev. G. F. Browne,
B.D.; vol. ix., p. 1, "The Pagan-Christian Overlap in
the North," by H. Colley Marsh, M.D.; vol. ix., p. 31,
"The Sculptured Stones at Heysham," by J. Holme
Nicholson and the Rev. Thomas Lees, F.S.A.

The work of preparing a descriptive catalogue of the
Early Christian monuments of Lancashire and Cheshire,
with full illustrations, still remains to be done, and this
is a favourable opportunity of impressing upon the
members of the Chester and Liverpool and Manchester

Societies the importance of such an undertaking for the districts under their control. At the same time photographs of the whole series should be taken and casts of some of the best specimens procured for the museums at these places. The Sandbach crosses are specially deserving of attention.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE MONUMENTS ACCORDING TO
THEIR POSITION, SHAPE, AND USE.

A greater variety of form is to be found amongst the Early Christian monuments of Lancashire and Cheshire than amongst those of any other area in Great Britain, a fact probably to be accounted for by the peculiar geographical position of these counties, which would subject them to such different influences as those of the Norse population of the Isle of Man on the N.W., of the Anglians of Northumbria on the N.E., of the Anglo-Saxons of Mercia on the S.E., and the Celts of Wales on the S.W.

The monuments may, in the first instance, be classified according to the position in which they were intended to be placed, *i.e.*, whether vertical or horizontal. In the former case they consist almost exclusively of erect crosses, and in the latter of recumbent body stones. In classifying the erect crosses according to their shapes two principal kinds will be distinguished, (1) those with rectangular shafts; and (2) those with shafts that are partly or wholly cylindrical. In classifying the monuments according to the purpose for which they were intended, there are (1) the sepulchral (*i.e.*, marking a place of burial), and (2) the non-sepulchral.

The erect crosses of small dimensions (say under four feet in height) were probably used as head-stones to be placed over a grave. The broken rune-inscribed cross of Cynibalth Cuthbertson from Lancaster now in the

British Museum, and some of the crosses at St. John's Chester, possibly belong to this class.

During the recent restoration of Peterborough Cathedral¹ a Saxon grave was found *in situ*, showing



Cross of Cynibalth Cuthbertson

Found at Lancaster.

From a Drawing by SIR HENRY DRYDEN, BART.

Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ th natural size.

exactly how such crosses were used. The grave was covered by a horizontal cross slab, ornamented with

¹ *The Builder*, August 25, 1888.

interlaced work, with a small erect cross at both the head and the foot. Several similar graves, but of 12th century date, were uncovered not long ago at Strata Florida Abbey.¹ The tomb of Acca, fifth Bishop of Hexham (who died in A.D. 740) had crosses at both the head and foot, being described thus by Symeon of Durham in his *Historia Regum*,² (written *circa* A.D. 1164):—"Duæ cruces lapideæ mirabili celatura decoratæ positæ sunt, una ad caput, alia ad pedes ejus, in quarum una, quæ silicet ad caput est, literis insculptum est, quod in eodem loco sepultus sit."

The larger crosses of this period do not appear to have been sepulchral, but were either erected to encourage devotion in public places by the religious subjects sculptured upon them, as in the case of those in the street at Sandbach and in the churchyards at Halton, Heysham, Whalley, and Winwick; or were way-side crosses, intended partly for purposes of prayer, and partly to act as guide posts over the moors, like those along the line of the Long Causeway (as the Roman road between Mereclough and Hebden Bridge is called), and those at Clulow and the Bow Stones in Lyme Park.

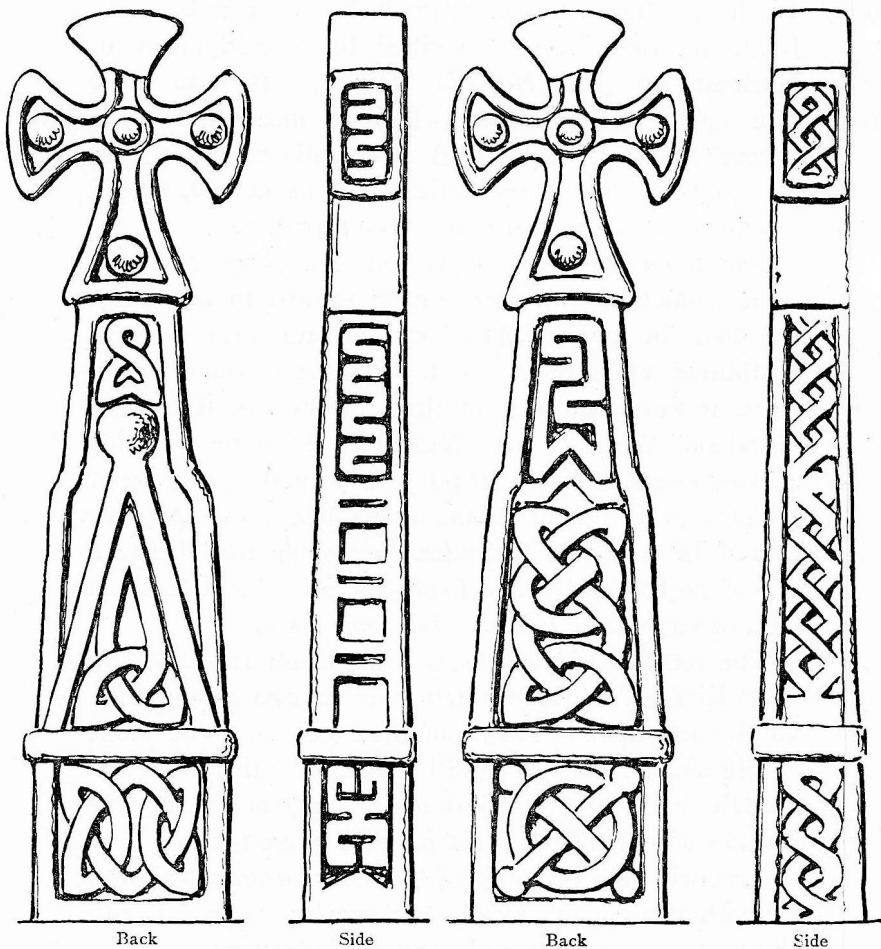
The recumbent monuments, like those at Heysham, West Kirkby, and Overchurch, were obviously sepulchral, and lay flat upon the grave of the deceased. The stone at Heysham is probably still *in situ*, and that at Overchurch bears an inscription in Anglian runes, the purport of which shows that it was a gravestone.

In considering the *forms* of the monuments we will deal (1) with the crosses having *rectangular* shafts (2) with the *cylindrical* pillars, and (3) with the *recumbent* stones.

The cross at Winwick must, when perfect, have been, if not the tallest, at least the broadest in either Cheshire or Lancashire. It is quite different in shape from

¹*Archæologia Cambrensis*, 5th series, vol. vi., p. 32. ² Sec. 36.

any other with which I am acquainted in England or Wales, being of distinctly Irish type, like those at Monasterboice and elsewhere. Only the centre of the head and the two side arms now remain, but this is



Cross in Bolton Parish Church

Scale $\frac{1}{16}$ natural size

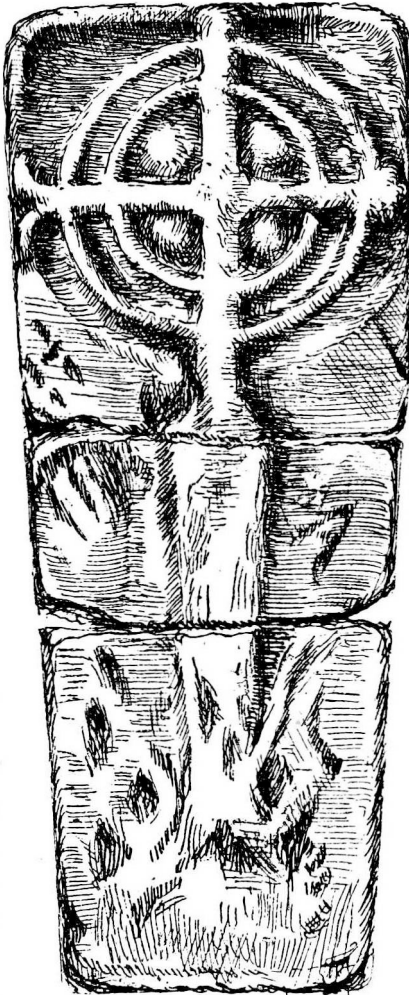
sufficient to show that the diameter across the arms was five feet, and therefore that if the cross was properly proportioned its height must have been from 12 to 15

feet. The arms are connected by four quadrants of a circular ring. The ends of the arms are square, and there are round hollows in the angles where they intersect.

Two of the crosses at Whalley and those at Bolton and Cheadle have their heads sufficiently perfect to enable them to be restored, and to show that they were of a type which is Anglo-Saxon, rather than Celtic, having the ends of the arms expanded and rounded, with round hollows in the angles, but without the circular ring.

The small cross from Lancaster, now in the British Museum, differs from these in having the ends of the arms square.

The head-stones at St. John's, Chester, and a fragment from Hilbre Island, now in the Grosvenor Museum, have circular wheel heads with three projections, a type of cross



ENC May/94

Hilbre Cross

Size, 5-feet 6-inches × 2-feet

which is common to North Wales and Cornwall, but does not appear to be known elsewhere.

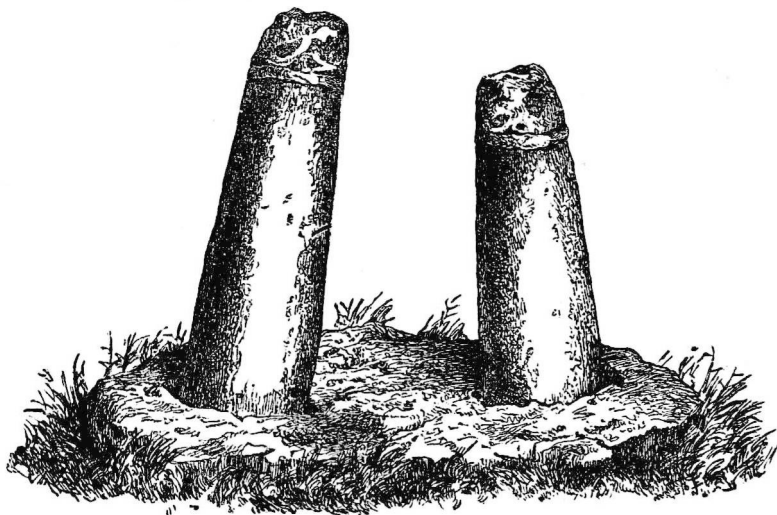
The majority of the crosses throughout Great Britain have shafts of rectangular cross-section, with one face much broader than the other, the reason for this being that the width of the shaft upon the face where the cross is carved has to bear a certain proportion to the diameter across the arms of the head, whereas the thickness of the slab of stone in the other direction need only be sufficient for constructional strength. There are, however, a certain number of crosses in different parts of England and Wales which are exceptions to the above rule, some having square shafts, others round shafts, and others shafts square at the top and round at the bottom. There are examples of crosses with square shafts at Checkley and at Ilam in Staffordshire; and of crosses with round shafts at Wilne in Derbyshire (now used as a font), at Wolverhampton, at Masham in Yorkshire, and at Llantwit Major in Glamorganshire.

Several of the crosses in Cheshire belong to the third kind, with shafts square at the top and round at the bottom, there being nine altogether—three in the Public Park at Macclesfield, two at Ludworth, two in Lyme Park, one at Clulow, and one at Upton Hall. The geographical distribution of this type of monument will be seen from the following table, which gives the instances existing elsewhere:—

<i>Cumberland</i>	<i>Staffordshire</i>
Beckermest St. Bridget's	Chebsey
Gosforth	Ilam
Penrith	Leek
<i>Derbyshire</i>	<i>Denbighshire</i>
Bakewell	Eliseg's Pillar, Valle
<i>Nottinghamshire</i>	Crucis
Stapleford	

Judging from the relative number of monuments of this class in each county, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the type had its origin in Cheshire or Staffordshire, and it is therefore Mercian rather than Northumbrian.

A curious peculiarity of these crosses, with partly round and partly square shafts, is that they so often



The How Stones

By permission of MR. EARWAKER, from "East Cheshire"

occur in pairs, as at Beckermet St. Bridget's, Gosforth,¹ and Penrith, in Cumberland; and at Ludworth and Lyme Park, in Cheshire. The crosses at Penrith are 15ft. apart, and have between them a long narrow rectangular enclosure, like a giant's grave, bounded on each side by two slabs of stone with hog-backed tops. Those at Beckermet St. Bridget's are only 2ft. 5in. apart, and

¹ The second cross at Gosforth is no longer in existence, but a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1799, pt. 2, p. 883) states that it stood at a distance of 7ft. from the one now in the churchyard there, with a horizontal stone between the two, and that it was cut down to make the pedestal for a sundial.

have separate stone bases, but those at Ludworth and Lyme Park are still closer together and have a socket stone common to both.

The junction of the square shaft at the top with the round shaft at the bottom admits of certain variations as regards its architectural treatment. On the Gosforth cross the four flat faces of the upper part of the shaft gradually die off into the round surface of the lower part of the shaft, giving a semi-circular line of intersection, which is emphasised by a roll moulding forming a continuation of the mouldings on the four square angles. Most of the other crosses of this type are treated in a similar way, but have, in addition, one or more mouldings below the point of junction of the square with the round, in the shape of a fillet or band. Another method of treatment is to be seen on the crosses at Ilam and Macclesfield, where the square part of the shaft terminates abruptly upon the fillet, instead of dying off gradually into the round. The round part of the shaft is generally devoid of ornament, although there are exceptions to this rule at Gosforth and Stapleford, and at Valle Crucis the inscription is on the round part.

Most of these monuments have lost their heads, but they were in all probability surmounted by crosses, as in the case of those at Gosforth, Penrith, Ilam, Leek, and Clulow.

We now come to the recumbent monuments, of which there is one example in Lancashire—at Heysham; and two in Cheshire—at West Kirkby and at Overchurch. The stone at Heysham is a very fine typical specimen of a kind of monument the shape of which seems to have been suggested by that of a small church, or perhaps a dwelling-house, in the same way that the early Irish metal relic-shrines were evidently made to imitate the

form of a building of some kind. Bede,¹ in describing the tomb of St. Chad (who died A.D. 672), at Lichfield, states that it was "a wooden monument made like a small dwelling-house." The idea thus symbolised may have been that the grave was the home of the dead, or more probably that it was a holy place or shrine, and was, therefore, made a model of an ecclesiastical building.²

Monuments of the kind referred to are sometimes called coped stones, because the roof-like top forms a coping, and sometimes hog-backed stones, because the ridge of the roof is generally higher in the middle than at the two ends and has a curved outline like a hog's back. The architectural origin of the coped stones is clearly shown by the frequency with which the sloping sides of the top are ornamented with conventionalised roofing tiles, and the vertical faces with arcading. On a coped stone from Botkyrka, Södermandland, now in the Stockholm Museum, and of which a cast is to be seen in the South Kensington Museum, the imitation of a church is carried so far as to add an apse at one end. The resemblance to a building is, however, very much disguised in many of the English and Scotch examples by the excess to which the hog-backing of the ridge of the roof is carried, and by the introduction of a beast (generally a muzzled bear) at each end, grasping the stone between its paws. In a few cases, as at Durham Cathedral and Ramsbury in Wiltshire, and Meigle in Perthshire, the ridge of the roof has zoömorphical terminations. On some of the stones the beasts at each end are

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. 4, ch. 3.

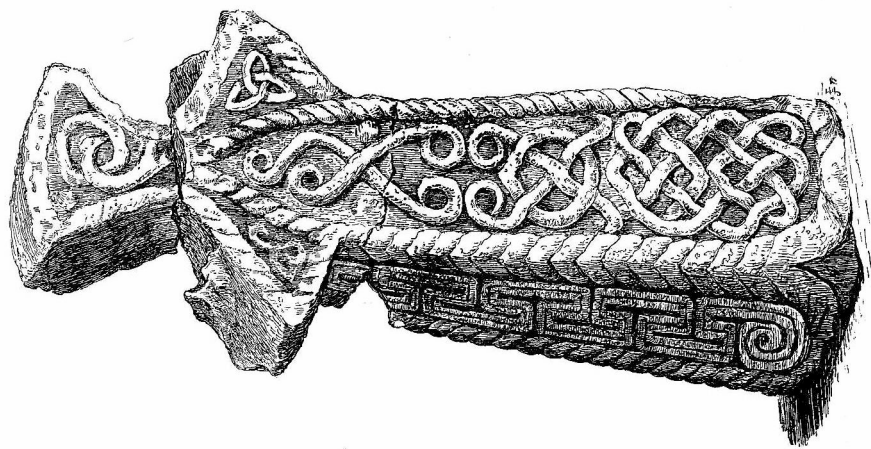
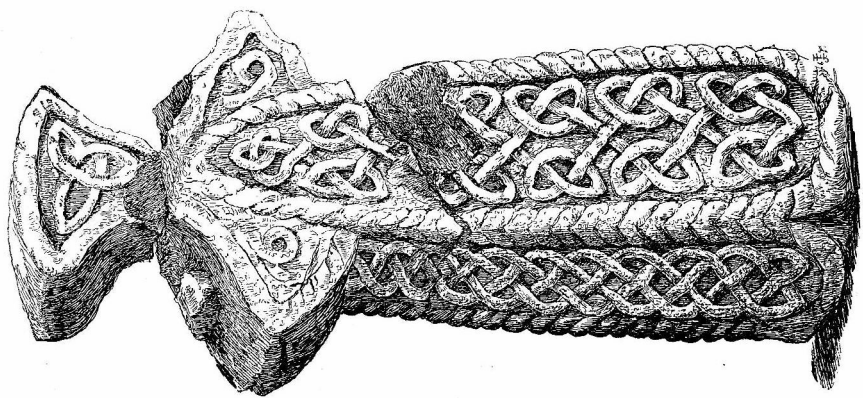
² Roman tombs were sometimes roofed with tiles, and the idea of the tomb being the dwelling place of the dead is carried out in the hut-urns found in Italy. (See Rev. W. S. Calverley's paper on "Coped Pre-Norman Tombstones at Aspatria, &c." in *Trans. Cumberland and Westmoreland Ant. Soc.*, vol. ix., p. 46).

made very large in proportion to the rest of the monument, as at Brompton and Arnelcliffe Hall in Yorkshire; whilst on others the zoömorphie idea becomes hardly more than a survival, as at Hickling in Nottinghamshire, and Lanivet in Cornwall.

The hog-backed monuments show a great amount of variety both in their form and in the details of their ornamentation, so much so that it would be quite out of the question to go into the whole matter exhaustively here. Their geographical range is shown in the following table:—

ENGLAND

<i>Cheshire</i>	<i>Lancashire</i>
West Kirkby	Heysham
<i>Cornwall</i>	<i>Northamptonshire</i>
Lanivet	Peterborough
St. Buryan	<i>Nottinghamshire</i>
St. Tudy	Hickling
Phillack	Shelton (2)
<i>Cumberland</i>	<i>Northumberland</i>
Aspatia	Falstone
Bridekirk	Hexham
Cross Canonby	Simonburn
Lowther Castle (3)	Warden
Plumbland (2)	<i>Sussex</i>
<i>Derbyshire</i>	Bexhill
Bakewell	<i>Yorkshire</i>
Darley Dale	Arnelcliffe Hall
Repton	Bedale
Sheffield	Brompton (5)
<i>Durham</i>	Burnsall
Dinsdale, Lower	Crathorne (3)
Durham	Croft
Sockburn (5)	Dewsbury
Stainton-le-Street	Easington
<i>Kent</i>	Helmsley
Canterbury	Ingleby Arnelcliffe
Fordwich	Kirkby Moorside
	Sockburn (5)
	York



Cross found at Disley, Cheshire
(From Earwaker's "*East Cheshire*")

ENGLAND— <i>Continued</i>	SCOTLAND— <i>Continued</i>
<i>Westmoreland</i>	<i>Lanark</i>
Appleby	Govan
Kirkby Stephen	<i>Linlithgow</i>
<i>Wilts</i>	Abercorn
Cricklade	<i>Perth</i>
Ramsbury	Meigle
SCOTLAND	
<i>Dumbarton</i>	
Luss	WALES
<i>Fife</i>	<i>Glamorganshire</i>
Inchcolm	Newcastle, Bridgend

The deduction to be drawn from this table is, that the type originated in Northumbria (*i.e.*, Yorkshire and Durham), and spread thence to other parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. In Ireland hog-backed monuments are unknown.

It is difficult to date any individual monument of this class, but the earlier ones have characteristics in common with the pre-Norman crosses, such as the interlaced work, key-patterns, and scroll-foliage used in their decoration, whilst the later ones have details which link them with the work of the 12th century, such as the arcading on the sides.

The recumbent monument at Overchurch in Cheshire is not coped but has a flat upper surface, on which are two interlaced dragons. (*See page 168.*)

Early cross-slabs do not seem to be common in Cheshire or Lancashire, the only one I have come across being at West Kirkby.

THE ORNAMENT, FIGURE SUBJECTS, AND INSCRIPTIONS ON THE MONUMENTS.

We now pass on to consider the decorative features on the monuments. Instances are to be found upon the

stones of Cheshire and Lancashire of all the different varieties of ornament that characterise the Hiberno-Saxon works of art of the pre-Norman period, namely, interlaced work, key patterns, spirals, zoömorphic designs, and foliageous scroll work. The best specimens of interlaced work are to be seen on the crosses at Winwick,



Disley Cross

By permission of Mr. EARWAKER, from "East Cheshire"

West Kirkby, Neston, and Disley (now at Lyme Hall); of key patterns at Winwick, St. John's Chester, and Disley; of spirals at Winwick; of zoömorphic designs at Lancaster (now in the British Museum) and Sandbach; and of foliageous scrollwork at Heysham, Halton, and Sandbach.

The following is an analysis of the various patterns, with the localities where they occur:—

Interlaced Work

PATTERN

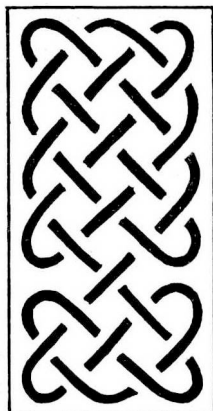
- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| No. | 1. | Looped band—Chester, Grosvenor Museum |
| | „ | 2. Twisted bands—Bolton |
| | „ | 3. Ditto, with angular bends—Bolton, Whalley |

PATTERN

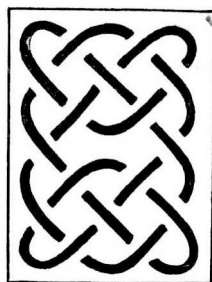
- No. 4. Plait of three cords—West Kirkby, Disley, Bromborough
 „ 5. Plait of four cords—Whalley, Disley
 „ 6. Plait of eight cords—Chester (St. John's), Whalley
 „ 7. Plait of nine cords—Chester, Grosvenor Museum



No. 1.



No. 8.



No. 9

PATTERN

- No. 8. Broken plait of six cords—Heysham
 „ 9. Broken plait of six cords—Disley
 „ 10. Broken plait of four cords, terminating in a Stafford knot—Bolton
 „ 11. Knots derived from a three-cord plait—Sandbach
 „ 12. Figure of eight knots—Sandbach, Bolton
 „ 13. Ditto, placed sideways—Lancaster



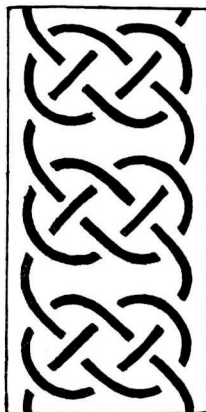
No. 10.



No. 11.



No. 12.



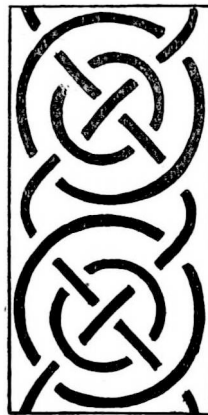
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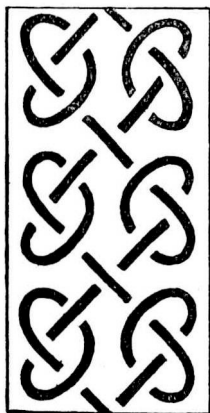
PATTERN

- No. 14. Twist and ring—Whalley, Macclesfield, Manchester Ship Canal (Barton Section), Neston
- „ 15. Rings and cross-bars—Whalley, Prestbury
- „ 16. Twist and double ring—Chester, St. John's
- „ 17. Pattern derived from a four-cord Plait¹—Sandbach
- „ 18. Stafford knot, used as the termination of a pattern composed of other knots—Bolton, Whalley
- „ 19. Stafford knot, used in the convolutions of the body of a serpentine creature—Lancaster
- „ 20. Pair of Stafford knots terminating pattern at both ends—Bolton, Lancaster
- „ 21. Double row of Stafford knots—Winwick, Disley.
- „ 22. Derived from a four-cord plait, the knots facing opposite ways—Sandbach
- „ 23. Derived from an eight-cord plait, the knots being the same as in preceding, but in a double row facing towards each other—Sandbach
- „ 24. Derived from a four-cord plait—Halton
- „ 25. Spiral knots—Halton
- „ 26. Ditto, with extra convolutions—West Kirkby



No. 20.

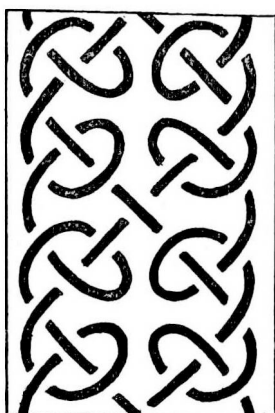
¹ This pattern is one of extreme rarity in this country, there being no other instance of its occurrence elsewhere, as far as I know. It is, however, to be seen on a splendid sword of the Viking period, found at Ultuna, in Sweden. (See Dr. J. Anderson's *Scotland in Pagan Times.—The Iron Age*, p. 52.)



No. 21.



No. 22.



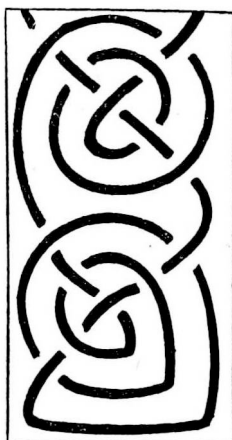
No. 23.



No. 24.



No. 25.



No. 26.

PATTERN

- No. 27. Spiral knots in pairs, or knot, composing patterns Nos. 22 and 23 with extra convolutions¹—West Kirkby
 „ 28. Pair of oval rings, crossed and interlaced—West Kirkby
 „ 29. Circular ring and figure-of-eight ring interlaced—Halton

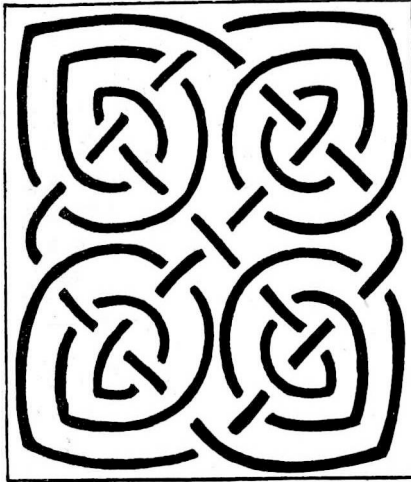


No. 30.

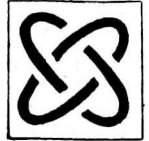
¹ A very fine example of this pattern occurs on the erect cross-slab at Dunfallandy, in Perthshire.

PATTERN

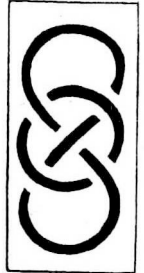
- No. 30. "Triquetra" or three-cornered knot—Bolton, Winwick,
Chester (St. John's), Neston, West Kirkby
,, 31. Derived from a six-cord plait¹—Heysham



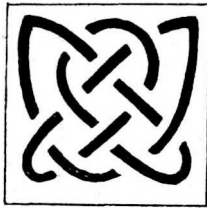
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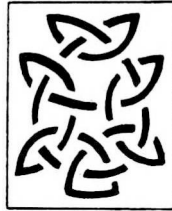
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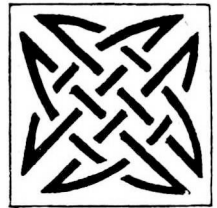
No. 29.



No. 31.



No. 32.



No. 33.

PATTERN

- No. 32. Stafford knot and pointed loops interlaced—Neston
,, 33. Stafford knots adapted to fill in four triangular spaces—
Winwick

Key Patterns

- No. 34. Composed of I-strokes opposite each other—Bolton
,, 35. Ditto, with a zigzag line along the centre—Bolton
,, 36. Composed of Z-shaped strokes—Bromborough

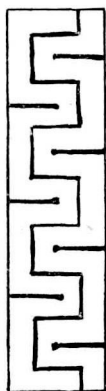
¹ This occurs on some of the stones in Co. Durham and Northumberland.

PATTERN

- No. 37. Composed of T-shaped strokes—Neston, Chester (St. John's), Hilbre Island, Manchester Ship Canal (Barton Section)
 „ 38. The preceding pattern doubled—Chester, Grosvenor Museum.



No. 34.



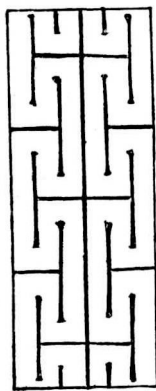
No. 35.



No. 36.



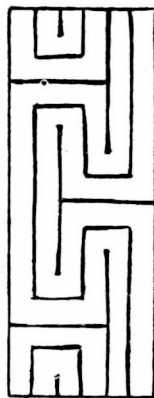
No. 37.



No. 38.

PATTERN

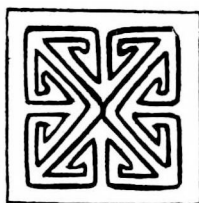
- No. 39. The same as No. 37, but with a zigzag line along the centre—Disley
 „ 40. The same as the preceding, but with the ends of the zigzag line extended—Chester, St. John's
 „ 41. Founded on a square divided into four triangles by two diagonals—Winwick
 „ 42. Four squares divided diaper fashion—Winwick



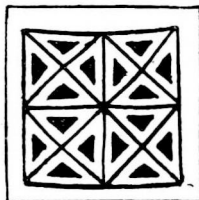
No. 39.



No. 40.



No. 41.



No. 42.

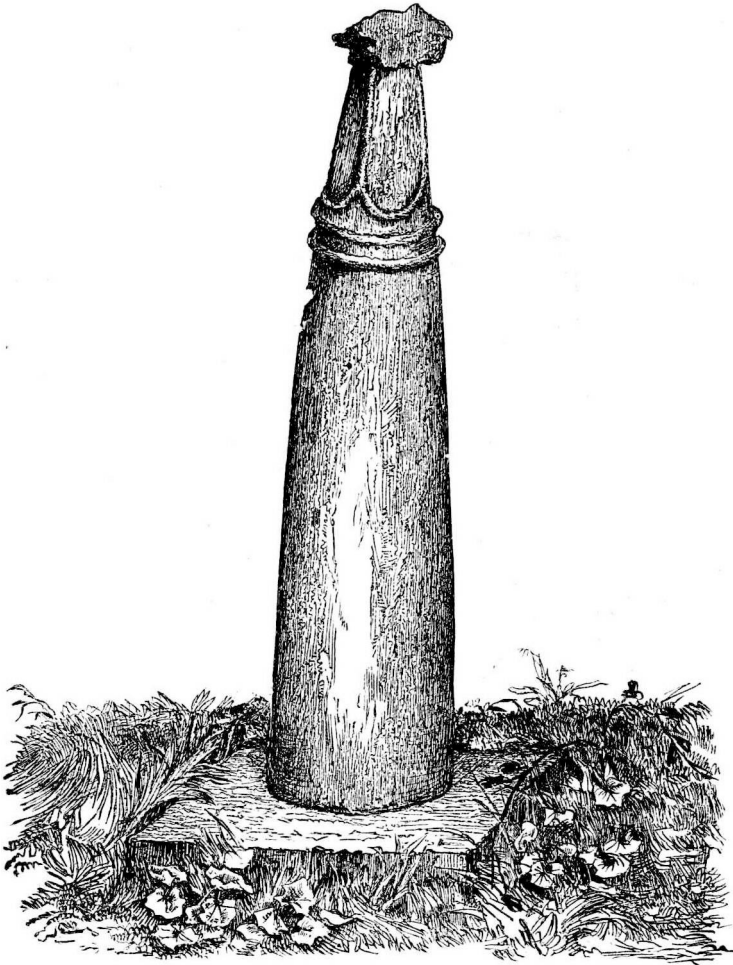
Spirals.—Winwick

Scroll Foliage.—Heysham, Halton, Lancaster, Whalley, Sandbach

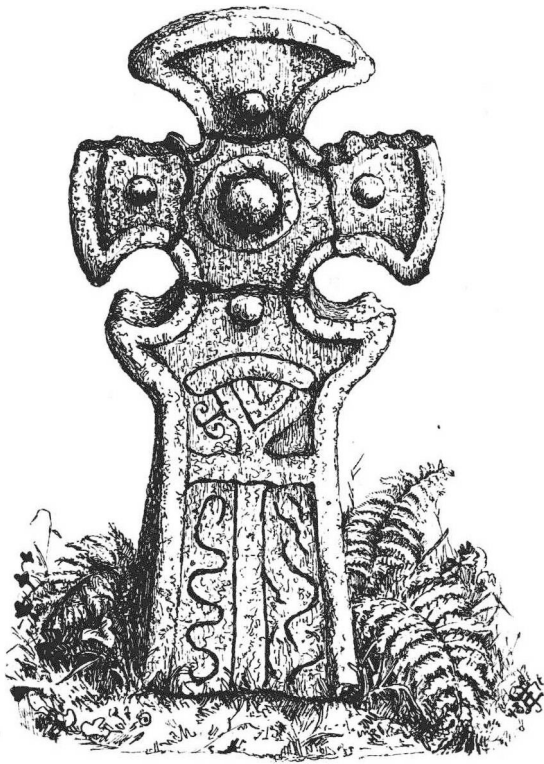
Zoomorphic Designs.—Heysham, Lancaster, Winwick, Overchurch, Prestbury.

The most interesting figure-subjects are to be found upon the monuments at Heysham, Halton, Whalley, Winwick, Prestbury, and Neston. The meaning of the subjects represented upon the two sides of the recumbent hog-backed stone at Heysham has been interpreted in various ways by the different authorities who have written about it; and when doctors fall out who shall decide? The Rev. Canon Browne, F.S.A., in an address to the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society on the *Pre-Norman Sculptured Stones in Lancashire*, said:—“The scene on this side of the stone can scarcely be anything but an animal hunt; it is not like the hunts which have reference to the Christian soul on its passage through the world.” Dr. H. Colley March, F.S.A., in a very valuable paper upon the *Pagan-Christian Overlap in the North*, read before the same society,¹ contends that the sculptor of the Heysham hog-backed stone intended to portray the Scandinavian Raganrok, or Twilight of the Gods, which corresponds to the Christian Day of Doom. The Rev. Thomas Lees, F.S.A.,² on the other hand, believes that the subjects are taken from the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. For my own part, I am inclined to take the simplest and most obvious explanation, that the scene is a stag hunt, and that the sculptor placed it on this sepulchral monument because hunting was one of the chief occupations of the deceased, or more probably in order to symbolise certain Christian doctrines by the well-understood emblem of the chase.

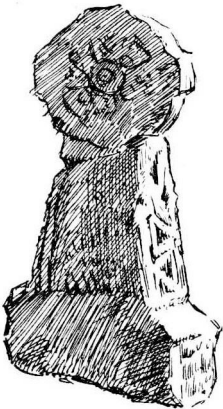
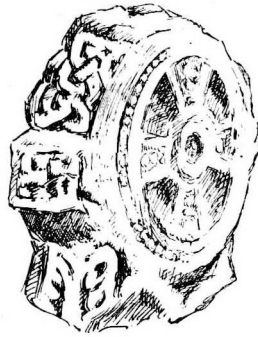
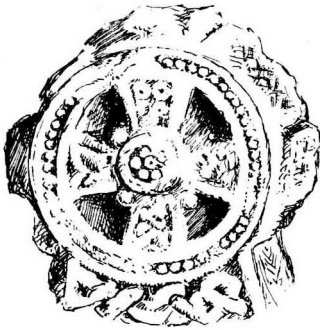
¹ *Trans. Lancashire and Cheshire Ant. Soc.* vol. ix. ² *Ibid.*



Clulow Cross, near Wincle, Cheshire
(From Earwaker's "*East Cheshire*")



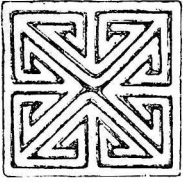
Cross found at Cheadle in 1875
By Mr. Earwaker's kind permission from "*East Cheshire*"



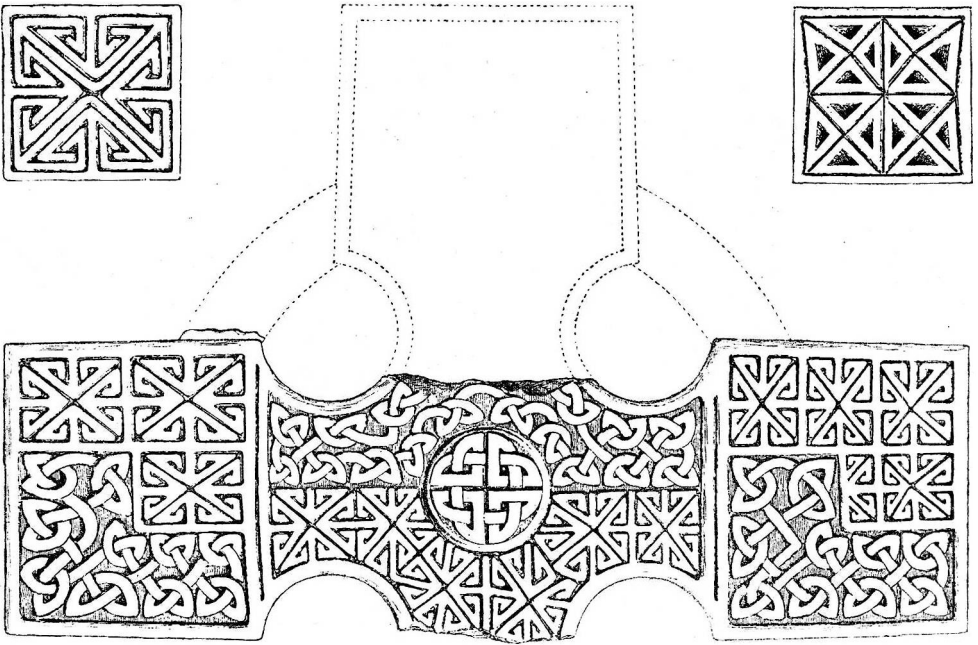
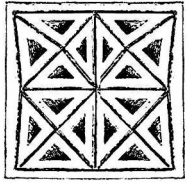
BRITISH CROSSES
IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

Pre-Norman Crosses
Preserved in the Chapter House

Top of Arm



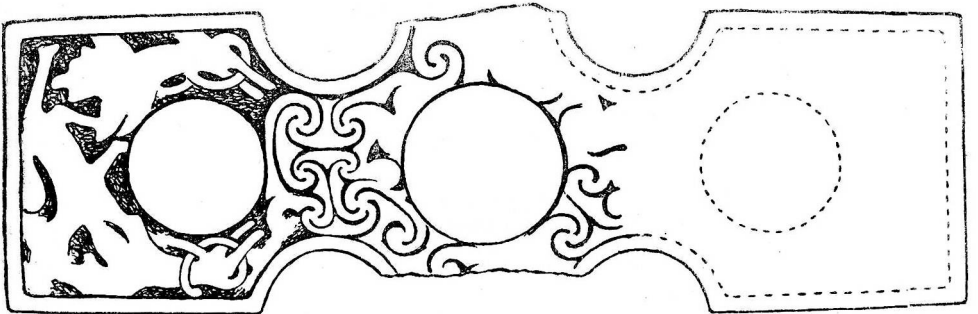
Top of Arm



Winwick Cross
End of Arm



Winwick Cross
End of Arm



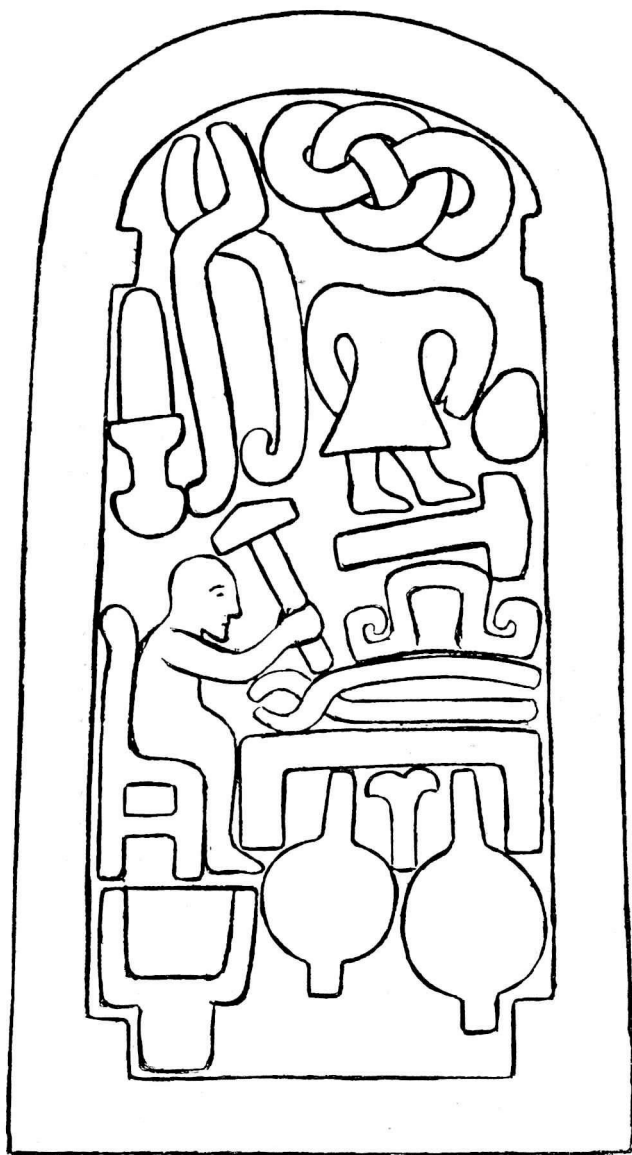
Fragments of Cross Head at Winwick, Lancashire
Scale $1/12$ th natural size

On the stump of a small cross-shaft in Heysham churchyard, not far from the hog-backed stone, is the representation (which has also sadly puzzled antiquaries) of the gable-end of a church surmounted by crosses. In the upper storey are three small round-headed windows with splayed jambs, like those in some Saxon and Irish ecclesiastical buildings, and below is a large round-headed archway with two arcades on each side. Peeping out of the three windows are human heads, and in the archway below is what looks like a corpse swathed round with grave clothes. I am inclined to agree with Canon Browne that this subject is the "Raising of Lazarus," and not one taken from the "Acts of Philip," as suggested by the Rev. T. Lees.

Upon the much-weathered cross-shaft at Halton, Dr. H. Colley March¹ has been able to make out a series of scenes from the Scandinavian Edda, side by side with what are evidently Christian subjects. The scenes from the Edda are Sigurd roasting the heart of the Dragon Fafni on a spit (on the middle panel of the E. face); Regin, the Dwarf-smith, working at his forge (on the bottom panel of the same face); and Sigurd's horse Grani returning home riderless after his master's death (on the third panel from the top of the N. face). The two Christian subjects are on the W. face, that on the upper panel being an enthroned figure, with two smaller figures seated, and grasping the feet of the larger figure; and that on the lower panel two figures standing on pedestals, and placed one on each side of a tall cross.

There are some very remarkable sculptures on the ends of the arms of the Winwick cross, one representing

¹ "The Pagan-Christian Overlap in the North," in *Trans. Lanc. and Chesh. Ant. Soc.*, vol. ix.; see also my paper on the "Pre-Norman Crosses at Halton and Heysham," in the *Journ. Brit. Archæol. Assoc.*, vol. 42, p. 328.



Sculptured Panel on the Cross at Halton, Lancashire,
Showing either Wayland Smith or Regin the Dwarf working at his forge.

Scale $\frac{1}{2}$ natural size.

a man carrying two objects shaped like buckets, or, as some think, like quadrangular Celtic ecclesiastical bells; and the other a man being held in an inverted position by two others, who are sawing him in half. Canon Browne considers that both these subjects refer to St. Oswald, to whom the church at Winwick is dedicated, and that one represents the Saint's dismemberment after his defeat by Penda, King of Mercia, whilst the other shows water being carried from his well, which is situated about three-quarters of a mile from the church. The Rev. J. Ellacombe, in his *Bells of the Church*, considers the objects carried by the man to be bells and not buckets.

The sculptures on the cross-shaft at Whalley are much defaced, but on one of the faces a panel contains a nimbed saint with his hands upraised in the ancient attitude of prayer, and having a serpent on each side of him. In the panel immediately above is a bird, and in the panel below a beast.

On one side of one of the cross-shafts at Neston are represented two men fighting (intended, perhaps, as Mr. E. W. Cox suggests, for Cain and Abel), and on the other an angel and an ecclesiastic (*see page 169*).

Much the finest series of figure subjects, not only in Lancashire and Cheshire, but probably in all England, is to be seen on the mutilated crosses at Sandbach. In fact, a monograph might be written on these monuments alone, and it is a matter of surprise to me that no competent person has undertaken the task already. In the present paper it will only be possible to point out that the symbolism of the whole is clearly scriptural, and includes the following scenes:—The Crucifixion, with Sol and Luna above and St. Mary and St. John below, surrounded by the symbols of the four Evangelists; the

Nativity; the Virgin enthroned, holding the Holy Infant, with a Saint on each side and the Holy Dove above; Christ in Glory, with an angel on the left side and St. Peter holding his key on the right side; Christ led bound before Pilate; Christ carrying the cross.

Most probably a good deal more of the symbolism of the Sandbach crosses might be made out if good casts or large photographs were available for purposes of study. I commend this work to the attention of the Chester Archaeological Society, and suggest that a fund should be raised for carrying it out.

The way in which the designs on the Sandbach crosses are arranged in several different kinds of panels is worthy of notice. Some of the panels have square tops, others round



Panel of Sandbach Cross
(Enlarged)

Edw. W. Cox
7/2/1914

tops, others are diamond-shaped, and others triangular. They are also, in some cases, placed in double rows, and are not always opposite each other. On one of the shafts the panels are shaped like a thimble, and aggregated in twos and threes in an extraordinary way. The associating the symbols of the four Evangelists with the Crucifixion is somewhat unusual, as well as the form of the symbols, which resembles those on one of the crosses at Ilkley in Yorkshire, and on a small fragment of a cross-shaft at Halton in Lancashire.

The following is an analysis of the figure-subjects occurring on the monuments of Lancashire and Cheshire:—

Scriptural Subjects—

Nativity	Sandbach
Virgin and Child	„
Christ led bound before Pilate	„
Crucifixion	„
Christ in Glory	„
St Peter	„
Angel	{ „
	{ Neston
Symbols of the four Evangelists	{ Sandbach
	{ Halton

Ecclesiastical Subjects—

Nimbed Saint holding book	Heysham
„ „ „ „	Halton
„ „ „ cross and book	„
„ „ „ book with two hands, and kneeling figure at his feet	„
Nimbed Saint in the ancient attitude of prayer between two serpents	Whalley
Enthroned figure, with two seated figures grasping his feet	Halton
Cross, with a figure on a pedestal at each side Church, with swathed corpse under archway, and three heads looking out of windows ..	„
	Heysham
Priest	Neston

Secular Subject—

Stag hunt	Heysham
-----------------	---------

Subjects taken from Northern Mythology—

Sigurd roasting Fafni's heart	Halton
Sigurd's horse, Grani, riderless	„
The Dwarf-smith Regin at work at his forge	„

Subjects of doubtful meaning—

Man carrying two buckets or hand-bells	Winwick
Two men sawing a third man in half; probably a martyrdom	„
Men	Whalley, Sandbach, Prestbury
Two men fighting	Neston

THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE MONUMENTS.

Only two inscribed monuments from Lancashire and Cheshire are at present known to exist. One was found at Lancaster and is now in the British Museum. It is a cross-head, inscribed with three lines of Anglian runes.

XIBIÐÆTHFO
RÆCÛNIBAL
ÞHNBÆRM

G I B I D Æ T H F O

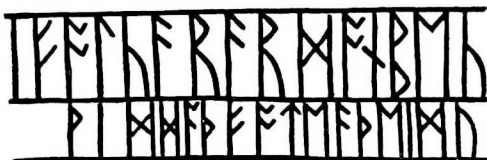
R Æ C Û N I B A L

T H C U T H B Æ R E [H T I N G]

Pray for Cynibalth Cuthbert's son.

The other was found at Overchurch, near Upton, and is now in the possession of Mr. Webster of Leasowe. It

is a fragment of a recumbent body-stone, inscribed with two lines of Anglian runes.



I F O L K Æ R Æ R D O N B E K
B I D D A T H F O T Æ T H E L M U

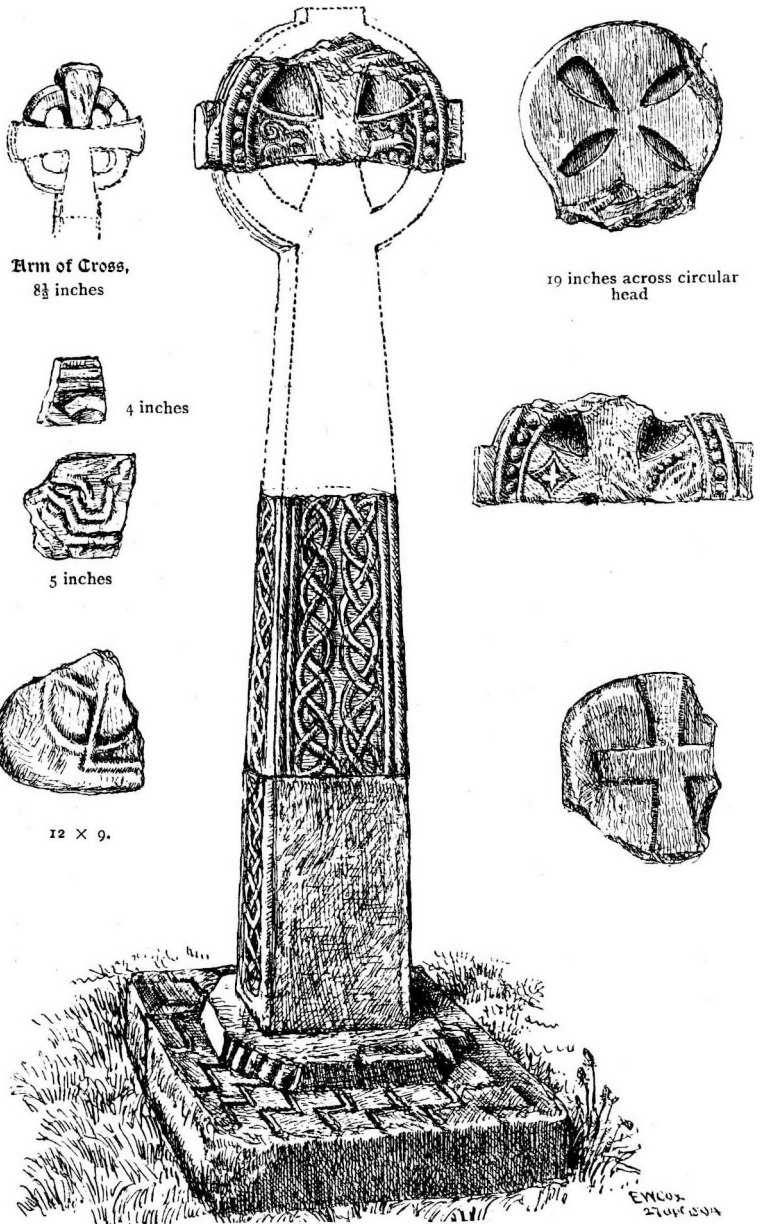
. . . . People reared this monument.
. . . . Pray for Æthelmund.

I have now placed before you, to the best of my ability, the main facts connected with the Early Christian Monuments of Cheshire and Lancashire, and I shall be more than satisfied if this paper succeeds in arousing sufficient interest in the subject to induce the Chester Archæological Society and the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire to form a collection of photographs and casts of the more important examples, and to publish a descriptive catalogue of the whole of those in Cheshire.

The following additional notes on this subject have been supplied by Mr. E. W. Cox.

BROMBOROUGH.

Among the many fragments of Pre-Norman crosses at Bromborough, three fragments of a recumbent stone, the largest about 20 inches long, may have formed one slab, which has been all much and evenly worn by footsteps, and may have been on the floor of the earliest church. All these are covered with interlaced knot-work, of rude and uneven design; although the relieved portion of the pattern is worn down, the incised lines still show the characteristic Saxon method of working.



Arm of Cross,
8½ inches

19 inches across circular
head

4 inches

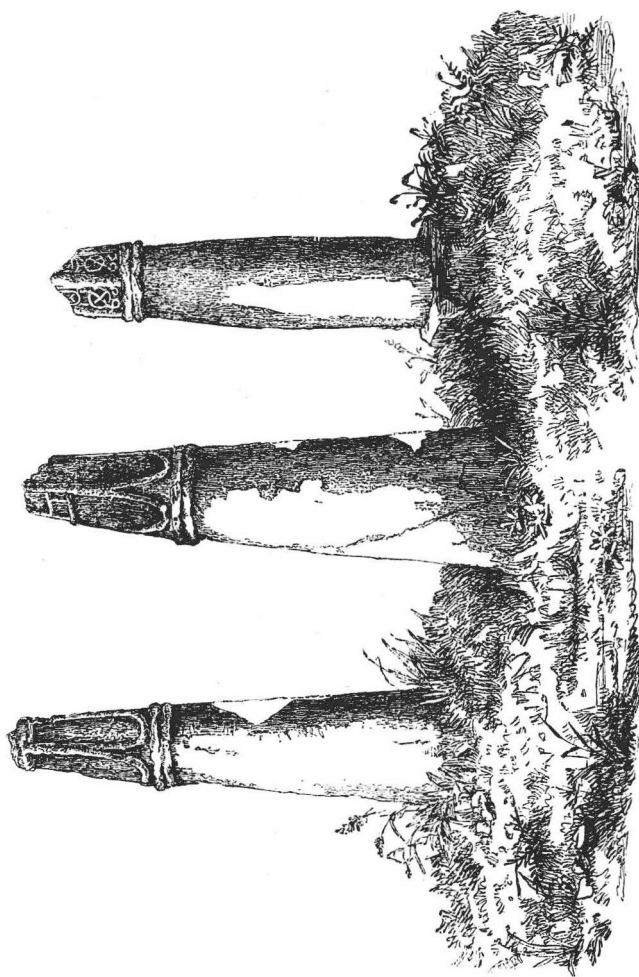
5 inches

12 × 9.

Bromborough Cross and Fragments.

Height of Cross Shaft from top of pedestal to remaining portion, two joints, 4ft. 7in.

EMCO.
27/4/50/4



Stone Pillars in the Public Hall, Macclesfield
By Mr. Earwaker's permission from "*East Cheshire*"

A second slab, of small size, 22 inches by 11 inches, is almost entire, though broken in half. It is surrounded by a border of four unevenly-wrought lines, and the centre bears a cross, the longer limb of which is horned or crescent-shaped, and on each side of the upright limb is placed an ornament, resembling the Greek scroll or wave moulding, which on one side curves downwards, and on the right upwards, four waves below and three above the cross (if the crescent forms, as possibly it does, the base). Five fragments possibly constitute portions of one large erect churchyard-cross. They consist of the upper half of a circular head, encircled with a bead moulding, on which is placed a Maltese cross, with sunk spandrels, the cross ornamented with foliated knotwork, and the sides formed by a succession of cable-mouldings; the width is 21 inches. A portion of a shaft of oblong section, 27 inches long and 9 inches thick, is covered on the edge with a double undulating plaiting; two other fragments, about the same size, together form a further portion of the shaft, with the same ornaments on the edge and duplicated vertically on the front. The back of these fragments is defaced. Three pieces of the base, two of which show the socket for the cross, 9 inches by 16 inches, which was set on a raised platform about an inch and a half deep cut on the stone, and the rest of the upper side of the base is worked into a rude key or fret pattern; the stone is about $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick, and must have stood on a base or on steps. The remains of the shaft seem to show by their measurement that they belong to the base and socket, of which we have remains. There are the heads, or portions of heads, of several other early crosses preserved, which do not show interlaced or figure ornament, although, from their character, it is quite possible that such was once to be found on

their shafts. There are, in all, 14 fragments that show such traces.

Several additional Pre-Norman crosses are to be found in Wirral, which are more or less ornamented, although they do not show interlaced work. At Bromborough there are, in addition to two mediæval crosses of later date, the heads of four early ones in a more or less injured condition. One of these is formed of relieved bands, in which a pattern formed of segments of circles, probably once a trefoil, is inter-twined. The form of the cross seems to have been an irregular Maltese shape, one arm and the fragment of the springing of another only remain:



Bromborough Fragment.
16½ × 18 inches.

this is cut on a round-headed ledger stone. The second has been cut in relief on the circular head of a stone, 13 inches by 8, that appears to have formed an upright cross: the cross is plain, and the cross arms are rectangular in form, but the lower and upper limbs expand slightly from the centre to the extremities. The third is one arm of a cross, 9 inches by 6, which expands both in breadth and thickness from the centre to the extremity; the end is slightly rounded. On each side of the limb are attached the broken segments of two circles, which show that the cross was one of those pierced with four round holes in the spandrels, in the fashion of some early crosses in the Isle of Man and Ireland. A fourth cross is the round head of an upright grave cross, broken off, so as to just indicate that it had a shaft with inclined sides. The cross is formed by four pear-shaped ovate-sunk panels, pointed at the lower end, round at the other. Although the carving is not distinctive, the form is that of the Saxon crosses. One of similar character is built

into one of the tower turrets of St. Helen's, Sefton, too far out of reach to be carefully examined, and probably of later date.

WEST KIRKBY.

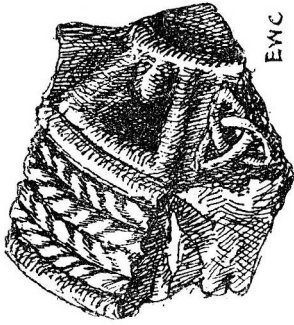
The piece of a shaft, found in a grave in the summer of 1893 in the added portion of the churchyard, has apparently been wrought in panels. On one face a



Grave Slab, West Kirkby.

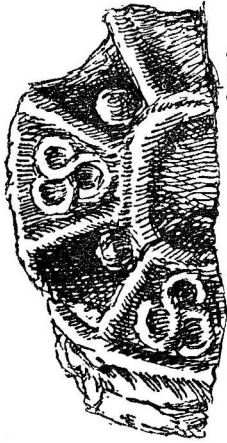
square or quatre-foil interlaced knot stands above what appears to have been a key pattern. The other face seems to have been carved with close knotwork, but it is now too much weathered for the pattern to be made out. The side of the cross is ornamented with incised lines, forming lattice work set diagonally. A drawing of this appears in the last issue of the *Chester Archæological Society's Journal*.

The hog-backed stone at West Kirkby resembles a shrine or building, having a tegulated pattern on the top, imitated from Roman work. It has most likely stood between a head and a foot cross, the ends being plain and flat, and the rest of the stone sculptured.



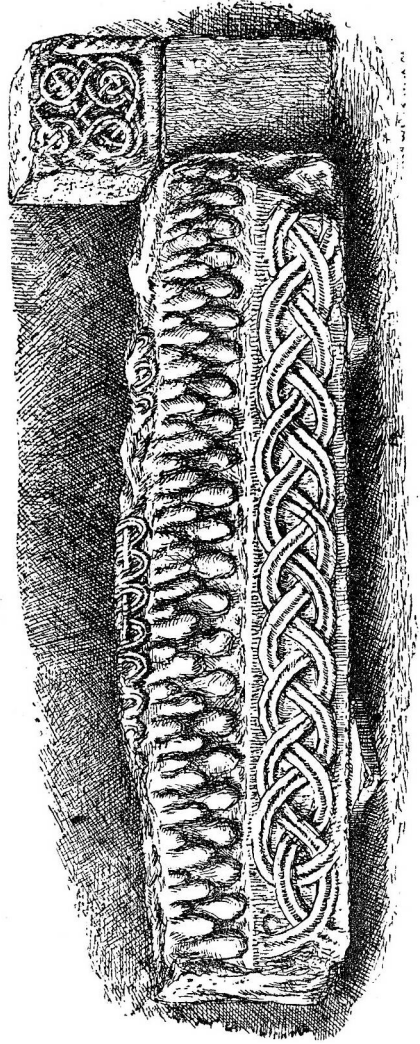
EWC

West Kirby.



EWC

West Kirby.



Bope-back Gravestone, West Kirby.

HILBRE.

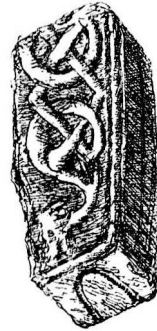
On Hilbre Island is a large slab built upright in the wall of a shed. Although late in style, it has on it a cross that probably is Pre-Norman; the head is encircled by a double nimbus, and roughly-worked chevrons are just distinguishable on each side of the shaft. A very similar slab is in the West Kirkby Museum.

UPTON.

A fragment of the head of a cross, apparently Saxon, was found among the stones of Upton Church, built partly from the ruins of that of Overchurch in 1813. It has been preserved by Mr. Webster, but it is so much defaced as to be nearly indistinguishable.

OVERCHURCH.

The upper side of the inscribed Saxon stone from Overchurch has been ornamented with two dragons, with their tails interlaced with a circle. This part of the stone is greatly worn and weathered, while the inscription is clear, showing that the carving was on the face of the stone and the inscription on the bed when used as a building stone in the Norman Church. At the end of the same stone is a rudely-cut incised semi-circular arch.



Fragment found at
Overchurch.

NESTON.

About the third of a circular head of a cross is found here. It has been encircled by a large cable-moulding, and the cross, of Maltese form, is defined upon it in relieved lines of cable-moulding, the arms of the cross and the spandrels are both filled with triangular knots. The next fragment is part of a shaft, the lower portion

of which is rough as if intended to be set in the ground, the upper, which diminishes rapidly in breadth towards

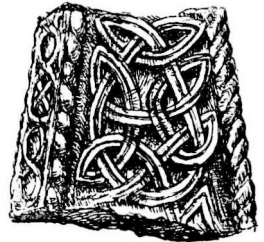


Acston.

the upper part, has at the angles a large cable moulding, and the face is filled with interlaced bands. The workmanship of both these pieces

is rough and coarse, and the stone an inferior red sandstone. From the workmanship I think both these formed part of the same cross. Two other fragments have formed portions of the shaft of another cross of superior workmanship, and of good white sandstone. One face shows the top panel, from which the cross was broken off, a portion of the outer circular rim remaining, which has

been ornamented with a key pattern. This panel represents two nearly nude figures in violent conflict, but unarmed, and possibly is meant for the death of Abel. Below this the shaft is filled with a finely-wrought double band of interlaced work, formed of semi-circles in a slightly irregular quatrefoiled interlacing. The other face has on the top panel a curious winged figure with a large round face, large wings, legs, and feet, but no body. It is set sideways, as if falling, and may represent the fall of Lucifer. Below



Acston, (Back).

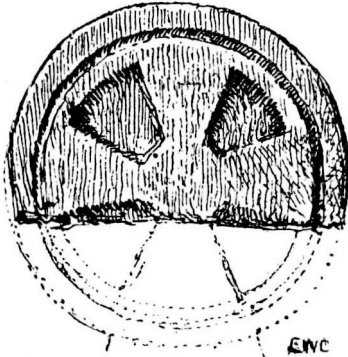
this a second panel shows the figure of an ecclesiastic in his vestments. The cope is triangular, and has a

large wide border and a central vertical band. Both hands are raised in the attitude of prayer used in the early ages of Christianity, and from the left hand depends a double cord, from which is suspended an object, now damaged, which may be a bell, or perhaps a censer, or, as in other similar figures, a bucket. This latter vessel is a probable one to be represented on crosses, inasmuch as in many cases crosses were set up by wells and springs used for baptism, and they often preceded the erection of churches; the wells preceded also the use of fonts in the Saxon period. It appears to have been nearly globular. The remainder of the shaft is filled with knot-work. The angles have bold cable-mouldings and the edge a kind of guilloche pattern, with a ring interlaced every third fold. These crosses were dug up at the "restoration" of the church, near the west end of the north aisle inside. The original church, then destroyed, was late Norman in date. A much-weathered fragment of the shaft of a third cross has been used as a building stone in the belfry. It shows traces of interlaced work on the face that is visible.



Reston, (Front, enlarged).

Of these crosses, and those of Bromborough and the last find at West Kirkby, I have very carefully made drawings. The Bromborough remains were taken from the foundation of the church rebuilt about 80 years ago, and since rebuilt.



Woodchurch
(In Chancel, 15 inches across.)

In the MS. history of Wallasey, by Robinson, written early in the seventeenth century, he describes the churchyard cross, which was twelve feet high and covered with curious cutting. This, probably, was a fine Saxon cross. It was

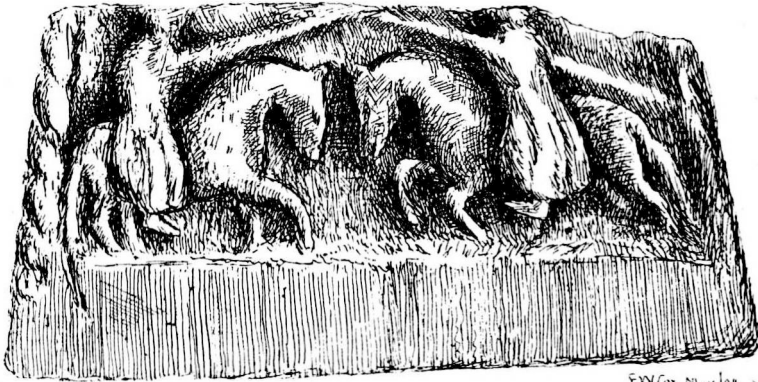
broken in three pieces by the soldiers of William III. and afterwards used for steps to the churchyard stile.

Since writing the above description of Neston crosses, that built up in the belfry, which is in a dark room, has been more carefully examined, and proves to be sculptured with two mounted warriors fighting with spears. The horses are small and short in the legs, with arched necks and flowing tails. None of their caparison is indicated. The men are clothed alike in long hauberks reaching to the ankle, presumably representing chain or ring mail; but this is only indicated by the form of the folds, shown by coarse lines. The upper parts of the heads are built into the wall, so that it cannot be ascertained whether



Part of Grave Slab, Bromborough
(enlarged).

they are helmed. The carving has a rather full relief, the ground being deeply cut, but the figures are flat and little rounded, and the few details are shown by strongly incised lines. The form of the stone has been the usual pyramidal shaft of a grave cross, and one side retains its cable-moulding. This representation of armour and costume is considered by Mr. Romilly Allen to be very rare and curious. This stone measures two feet wide at foot by 1 foot 7 in. at upper part; 14 inches of its height is visible, of which $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches is the plain band below the figures.



Reston. (2 feet 2 inches × 19 inches.)

FINCK May 14

A closer examination recently made of the figure of the priest, shows that the right hand carries a chalice—the bowl and foot are hemispheres, with a knob between, but no stem, and the hand of the figure seems to be placed within the hollow foot. The object suspended from the left hand may be a book—it is divided down the centre by a rudely-cut vertical groove. The orphreys of the vestment are cut into a kind of undulated circlets, evidently intended to represent embroidery.

It will be noticed that the arms of the cross remaining on Hilbre Island differ; that to the left of the spectator being forked, and that to his right terminating in a kind

of trefoil. These forms, I think, are meant to represent the head and tail of a fish. The fish was an early Christian symbol.

The following are the measurements of—

(1) *The Neston Crosses*:—The cross with priest, 2 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long; breadth at foot, 1 foot 7 inches. The upper fragment, 1 foot, by 11 inches at top, and 13 inches at bottom; an intervening fragment seems missing. The cross with interlaced work is 2 feet 6 inches long by 1 foot 9 inches at broadest part.

(2) *The West Kirkby remains (page 168)*:—5 feet $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches long by 1 foot $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, and about 10 inches thickness. The fragment of shaft, same plan, is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches square. The cross head $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches—it seems to have been 15 inches across the arms when complete. The second cross head is $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and this also seems to have been 15 inches. The fragment of a shaft found in 1893 is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches—the original width may have been 10 inches. The large grave cross on the slab (page 167) is 2 feet 11 inches long by 19 inches wide.

(3) *The Bromborough Crosses*:—Great cross: base $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches by probably 40 inches; socket of cross 8 inches by 12 inches; two portions of shaft, 2 feet and 2 feet 7 inches; width 12 inches at foot by 8 inches, the upper part diminishing to 10 inches by 8 inches; width across arms of cross 20 inches. The shaft and cross were probably 8 feet high when complete, and the base 2 feet more. The Saxon grave slab (page 166) is $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 18 inches.

Another fragment of a cross shaft has been identified at West Kirkby; it is ornamented with chevron and lattice patterns incised upon it. Incised work has commonly been thought to belong mainly to the 14th and 15th centuries, but the fact that another Saxon fragment shows both work in relief and incised work on the same stone, proves that its origin was very much anterior to these dates.

