

#### IV.—ON INSCRIPTIONS AT JARROW AND MONKWEAR- MOUTH.

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1.—The Jarrow inscription, *In hoc singular[ian]no vita redditur mundo*  
(Hübner\* 199):

THIS is an inscription in early letters 2 to 2½ inches long, on either side of the raised shaft of a cross on a stone now built into the north porch of Bede's Church at Jarrow. It is unlikely that such a statement should have been appended to a sepulchral inscription, and at the early date indicated by the character of the monument it is unlikely that a sepulchral inscription would state the year of death; nor would there be room in the upper angles of the cross (which are now lost, having been on another stone) for an inscription setting forth the name of a deceased person and the year of his death. The dedication stone of the Church† states that the dedication was in the 15th year of King Egfrid and the 4th of Abbat Ceolfrid (A.D. 684). The letters of the inscription are of exactly the same size as those on the dedication stone, and of the sixteen letters of the alphabet in the inscription fourteen are found on the dedication stone, and all in the same form, though three of them, A, E, and O, are found in two forms on the dedication stone. Thus a connection between the two is very probable, judging only from the two inscriptions. In assigning a meaning to the phrase "in this marked year life is restored to the world," after exhausting other suggestions, the idea of the cessation of some great devastation by plague or otherwise remains as the simplest and most probable. Bede (*Hist. Abb.* c. 8) says that Benedict Biscop made Eosterwini Abbat of Wearmouth, and then went for the fifth time to Rome. He returned to find sad news. Eosterwini and a crowd of his monks had died of a pestilence which raged through the whole country. Bede tells us further (c. 11) that Eosterwini had been four years Abbat, and (c. 8) that Ceolfrith was made Abbat of Jarrow

\* *Inscriptiones Britannia Christiana; Berolini*, 1876.

† See woodcut at page 199 of the *Archæologia Æliana*, Vol. X.

on the eve of Benedict's fifth visit to Rome, and (c. 11, c. 12) that three years after Eosterwini's death Ceolfrith had been seven years Abbat. Thus the fourth year of Ceolfrith was the fourth year of Eosterwini, and the dedication of Jarrow Church took place in the year in which Eosterwini and a crowd of his monks died in a general pestilence, which is not mentioned after that year. Hence, in pious memory of the deliverance from the pestilence, *in hoc singulari anno vita redditur mundo*. It is well known that a cross was a necessary part of the dedication of a Church; and William of Malmesbury, speaking of Aldhelm's dedication of Malmesbury Church a few years after this of Jarrow, says that it was usual to mark the occasion by some *honorificum epigramma*.

It is an interesting fact (or probability), first pointed out by the Rev. J. R. Boyle, that the stone, 2 feet square, with the inscription *Omnium Fil. . . . Hadr.*, taken from the wall of Jarrow Church and now in the Black Gate at Newcastle, seems to have been placed like an oven shelf next above the stone under discussion, for it has on its edge the arms of a cross which must at least closely resemble those of the cross whose shaft is on the stone in the porch. The gauge is almost exactly the same, though not quite, and the cable moulding observable on the porch stone is carried across the edge of the Roman stone. These arms of the cross are shewn in the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*.\*

2.—The Jarrow inscription: *...berhti: ...edveri: ...c cruce*  
(Hübner 200).



This inscription is on a rectangular stone found in the walls of Jarrow Church, and is now in the Museum at Newcastle. Though the stone appears to be one end of a rectangular slab, with an inscription in three lines ending as above, it is found on examination of the back of the stone that it has been the arm of a cross with the

\* Page 277, No. 539. And the *Archæologia Æliana*, Vol. X., page 196.

usual circular indentations at the angles. The arm has been broken off where the curve commences. Its dimensions are  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches horizontally, and about 9 vertically, so that the cross has been of a somewhat stunted form. Taking the head to be of the same dimensions as the arms, and making due allowance for the curvature of the circular openings, the whole width from arm to arm must have been about 25 inches, and deducting  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches for the bands and grooves which run round the arms, there would be  $23\frac{1}{2}$  inches for each line of the inscription. About an inch is occupied by the stops at the end of the first and third lines, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the end of the second. The letters which remain are of such a size (exclusive of the **M**) that six occupy about  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches, and thus there would be from 28 to 29 ordinary letters in each line; there is no gap between the *c* and *crucem*, so that the words ran on continuously, and spaces have not to be considered. Above the top line of the three there is a considerable blank space, just the same space as below the middle line, so that there would have been exactly room for another line of inscription above the present three. The conclusion is irresistible that there was a short line of letters occupying the central part of the cross above the three lines, and not reaching so far as the arms. For this short line there would be about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches, to the point where the present arm is broken off. There is at York, on a shaft of a cross, *ad memoriam sanctorum*. This suggests *ad memoriam* for the short line. The **M** in the Jarrow *crucem* occupies so much space that three such letters would be equivalent to five average letters, and thus *ad memoriam* would occupy about  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches. This just fits the space, and it accounts for the genitives ...*berhti...edveri*. Hübner (176) states with regard to the York inscription that it is impossible to determine what were the letters of which there are remains at the top of the fractured stone. After a close examination, I am satisfied that one was the base of a **D** and the other two of **II** or **IT**, with space for two more letters in the same line. This would give **DIT[VR]**, and the whole may have run *hæc crux conditur ad memoriam sanctorum*, the idea of *condere aram* being probably familiar to residents in York at a time when Alcuin boasted of the Roman remains in the midst of which they lived. Following this form, and taking it that the genitives at the end of two lines of the inscription indicate the commemoration of several persons, and that the cross was

erected by the brethren of Jarrow, the last line—which had room for from 28 to 29 ordinary letters, say 27 and an M—may have been *fratres condiderunt hanc crucem*, and the whole inscription to take names almost haphazard from the “*Liber Vitæ*” :—

[ADMEMORIAM]

[BADUMUNDICOENREDICYNI]BERCHTI :·

[BEORNHEARDIBAEDAEBRONI]EDVERI :

[FRATRESCONDIDERUNTHAN]CCRUCEM :·

If any one prefers it, *Sanctorum* may take the place of *Badumundi*. The party of monks thus commemorated on one cross may have died in the pestilence, or may have been the victims of some accident. The ungrammatical Welsh epitaph *Senacus Prsb hic jacit cum multitudinem fratrum* may have had a like origin. Bede relates how a whole boat-load of monks were almost drowned out at sea, off the mouth of the other Tyne. The formula suggested for the cross would be suitable for an accident where the sea refused to allow the survivors to use the words *Hic requiescunt in corpore*.

3.—The Monkwearmouth inscription, *Hic in sepulchro requiescit corpore Hereberecht Prb* (Hübner 197).

This is an inscription on a stone carrying a somewhat stiff cross, now in the vestry at Monkwearmouth. It was found at the time of the restoration of the church, below the floor of the west Porch, the spot where the earliest abbats were buried and whence they were removed by Eosterwini to be laid by the side of Benedict Biscop at the north side of the Sacarium. The first five words of the inscription are all of one style, the letters beautifully drawn and cut. The *Hereberecht Prb* is not so well cut. Below it are two faint parallel lines, the distance between them being exactly the same as the length of the original bold letters, shewing apparently that the first workman cut the formula and graved lines for carrying the name when the stone should come to be used. There have been smaller letters on the space now occupied by *Hereberecht Prb* and they have been erased by scraping away a considerable amount of the surface of the stone, forming a concave surface on which the *Hereberecht Prb* is incised.

In Wales, where Christianity did not die out after the Romans left Britain, the ordinary formula was *hic jacit*, rarely *jacet*. There seems

to be only one Welsh case of *requiescere* being used, and in that case it is the *anima* not the *corpus*, and the reading is more probably *requies[cat]* than (with Hübner 151) *requicit*. The Irish form seems to be "A prayer for so-and-so," or "Pray for so-and-so." When we come to the epitaphs preserved in Bede's writings we find that Hereberecht's epitaph followed the accepted form. It will be observed that the differences in the formulæ of the different churches is one not of form only but of principle. The first English case is naturally that of Augustine of Kent, who died in the year 604. His epitaph is given by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History* (II. 3). It is in prose, and commences with the words *Hic requiescit*, a well-known formula in the Catacombs. Coming nearer to Hereberecht's time, we find (V. 8) the epitaph of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, who died in 690. It is in verse, and Bede gives the first four and the last four of the thirty-four verses of which it consisted. The first verse is *Hic sacer in tumba pausat cum corpore præsul*. Coming down a little later, we find (V. 19) the epitaph of Wilfrith of Ripon, Hexham, and York. It, too, is in verse, and the first verse is *Vilfridus hic magnus requiescit corpore præsul*. It may be added that when Bede is writing of Whithern in Galloway, he says that there Ninian *corpore requiescit*. Thus there is every reason to suppose that *Hic in sepulchro requiescit corpore* was the form adopted in the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, where the influence of Bede's work in such matters must have been very great. At Whitchurch (Hants.) is a very interesting early monument with the bust of a woman and graceful interlacing decoration of the spiral character, with the inscription *Hic corpus Fri(g)burgae requiescit in pacem sepultum*. Hübner reads Friþburgae, and leaves space for a word after *pace*; in the latter case, there is only an *m*. It may be noted that William of Malmesbury (*Gesta Pont. Angl.* V. 191) gives a copy of the letter written to Aldhelm by an Irish exile in France, begging him to send some of his short sermons to the place *ubi dominus Furseus in sancto et integro pausat corpore*, i.e. Peronne (Bede, *H. E.* III. 19). The Christians of those times did not mean by this form of inscription that their departed friends were shut up in the sepulchre. The demands of metre drove the author of Theodore's epitaph into *cum corpore*, "here Theodore rests along with his body," but that was metre or bad Latin, and not doctrine. Wilfrith's epitaph

brings this out quite clearly, for after commencing with the statement "Here rests in the body Wilfrith," the concluding verses state that "he has joyfully gone to the heavenly realms." The use of *Presbyter*, not *Sacerdos*, was in accordance with custom, so much so, that in the very rare cases where *Sacerdos* is used on a stone it has been argued that *bishop* is meant. The *Liber Vitæ* knows nothing of *sacerdotes* or *episcopi* till a later date, as late as the Norman Conquest; of presbyters it has long lists, and all its anchorites are presbyters. Ecgberht's Pontifical used *sacerdos* for bishop and priest. The letters EPS have been read or imagined on a small cross at Hexham, and it is said that on an early stone dug up in 1761 at Peebles there was *Locus Sancti Nicholai Episcopi*. The word *Episcopus* almost certainly occurs once and perhaps twice on the inner wood of St. Cuthbert's coffin. The Yarm stone has —*mbercht sac.*, and in Wigtonshire there is a stone with *hic jacent sancti et præcipui sacerdotes id est Viventius et Maiorius*. *Sacerdos* or its Irish equivalent is found freely in Ireland. These differences of use no doubt point to real differences of idea which would have great interest for the student of ecclesiastical history, for whom there certainly are sermons in stones.

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NOTE.—The Rev. W. T. Southward, Fellow of St. Catharine's College, has suggested, since the meeting at which these remarks were made, that the gap after *singular* may be filled with *i sig*. This is very ingenious and interesting. *In hoc signo vinces* was probably known to the person who designed the inscription; but *singulare* as applied to the *signum crucis* has not sufficient passion, and it could scarcely be taken to mean "in this sign alone," or rather, *singulare* would scarcely have been the word selected for that purpose. And it is a great question whether there is room on the stone for ISIG, considering how large a letter G is on the other side of the shaft. The remarkable crowding of the letters does not begin till a later point of the inscription. The words *singulari signo* do not balance well, but there may have been an intentional play. It would be very rash to reject Mr. Southward's suggestion, which has the further merit of clearing away all complicated questions of connection with other inscriptions and with passing events.