

## I.

### THE HARTLEPOOL TOMBSTONES, AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CELTIC AND TEUTONIC ART IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD. BY PROFESSOR G. BALDWIN BROWN, F.S.A. SCOT.

Three interesting groups of Early Christian monuments occur within the limits of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. The group that is earliest and from the archæological point of view most important is located in Galloway, and is pre-Northumbrian in that it belongs to the period of the mission established in that region by Ninian at the beginning of the fifth century. These Galloway monuments, situated at Kirkmadrine and Whithorn, are of course very well known to readers of the *Proceedings*. The group that is most important artistically is that formed by the famous cross-shafts at Bewcastle in Cumberland and Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, with some other pieces at Jedburgh and elsewhere that are affiliated to them. The third group, which is the subject of this paper, is of less intrinsic worth but possesses great incidental value in that it is connected with archæological questions of wide-reaching interest. It consists in a series of small stone monuments found for the most part at Hartlepool in Durham, and commonly known as the Hartlepool Tombstones. They strongly resemble certain monuments of similar character in Ireland. The monuments are Northumbrian in date and location, and on the ground that at the time they were made Northumbria included eastern Scotland up to the Forth, the attention of the members of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland may fairly be claimed for them.

We are informed by Bede<sup>1</sup> that the royally-born and devoted Hild, two years after she had embraced the religious life, was made abbess

*Hist. Eccl.*, iv, 23.

in the monastery called Heruteu (or, as a correction in one of the MSS. gives it, Heortesig), explained by Bede as 'insula cervi,'<sup>1</sup> and undoubtedly Hartlepool. The settlement had been founded not long before by the pious handmaid of Christ, Heiu, who was said to be the first woman in the province of Northumbria to take upon her the vows and habit of a nun. This foundation would be about 640 A.D. Exactly where the settlement was placed we are not told, and there was no consistent local tradition as to its situation at the time when, in 1816, Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, F.S.A., published his *History of Hartlepool*.<sup>2</sup> The Map reproduced, fig. 1, from this work<sup>3</sup> shows the peninsula on which Hartlepool stands at a time when the modern growth of the town had not yet begun. This followed on the inception of an extensive scheme for the improvement of the docks, for which an Act was obtained in 1832. Provision had to be made for a large influx of workmen, and ground for new houses was broken up in the part known as Wells's Field to the south-east of the church. Here in the month of July 1833 there was made a discovery of much archæological interest.<sup>4</sup> The workmen broke in upon an ancient burying-ground in which, we are told, the bodies had evidently been disposed with no little care. With the bones there came to light a number of shaped stones some of which were plain while on others there were ornamental crosses and inscriptions. Most unfortunately no supervision was exercised by the local authorities. No plans or drawings were made nor were accurate descriptions drawn up showing the relative positions of the objects brought to light. The bones, we are told, were 'carefully removed . . . and deposited in the churchyard,' though without proper osteological examination, but the other objects in the graves were dispersed, and either appropriated on the spot or sold to strangers. In view of certain archæological questions which might easily have been solved at the moment of discovery but must always now remain uncertain, it will be well to quote here, verbatim, portions of the original notices of the find. The more important statements are printed in italics, and the passages are lettered for convenience of reference.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iii, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Republished, with a *Supplemental History to 1851* from the pen of the publisher, by John Procter, Hartlepool, in the year just noted. The copy kindly lent to the present writer by a Hartlepool friend had bound up with it at the end the *Notes* by Father Haigh referred to *postea*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> The writer is indebted for permission to make use of the Map to the kindness of Mr F. W. Mason, publisher, Hartlepool, who succeeded to the rights of Mr Procter. Some names have been written into the Map as now reproduced, while others have been erased. The situation of the cemetery, as determined by local inquiries which have kindly been made, is shown by the cross and the letters CEM at the bottom of the Map.

<sup>4</sup> *Supplemental History*, p. 25.

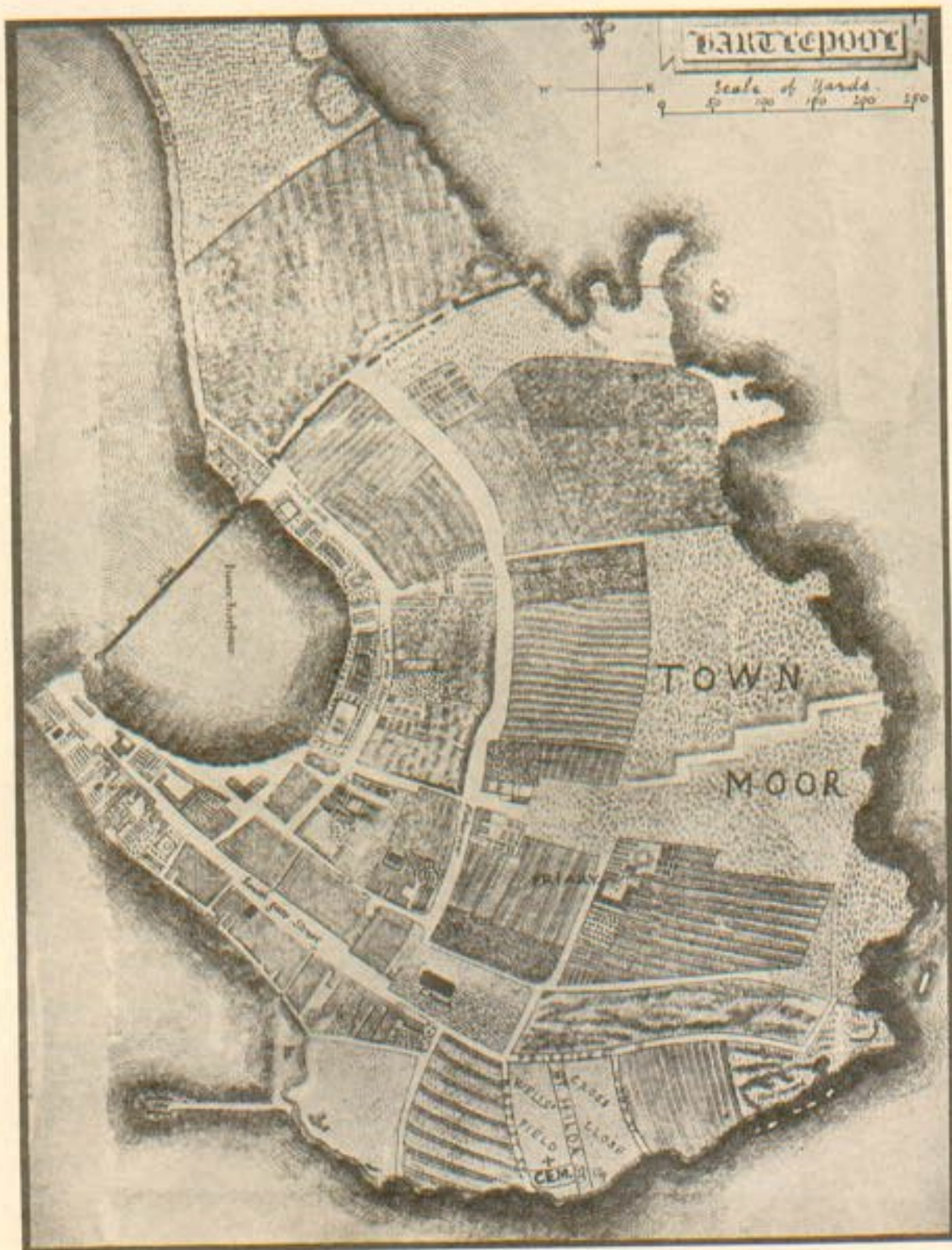


Fig. 1. Old Map of Hartlepool, from Sharpe's *History of Hartlepool*, 1810, with the addition of some modern names.

In the *Durham Advertiser* of July 12, 1833, appeared the following communication, (a), 'Within the last few days a great number of human skulls and other remains of mortality have been discovered in a field adjoining Hartlepool Moor, by the men employed there in digging the foundations for a house. The bones in some instances remained in a great degree united, though no perfect skeleton was found. *The heads of the deceased seemed to have been all placed, when interred, either on or against a square or oblong flagstone, ornamented with some device, and apparently bearing an inscription in Saxon or other characters.* It is conjectured that the field in which these interesting remains have been discovered had at some distant period been used as a burial-ground to the ancient Friary which is near the spot.' The Friary, marked on the Map, fig. 1, to the north of Wells's Field, was a Franciscan house founded in the thirteenth century. A further notice on July 26, (a<sup>1</sup>) mentions that '*the bodies lay north and south,*' and on August 2 the same journal published an article on the stones, inscriptions, etc., that was ascribed to the pen of the historian of St Cuthbert, the antiquary James Raine.

In September of this same year 1833 a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, p. 219, claiming to give a 'correct account,' says, (b), 'In the month of July last, in digging the foundations of a house belonging to Mr John Bulmer, *in a field called Cross Close*, at a distance of about 135 yards from the present churchyard, in a south-easterly direction, at the depth of three feet and a half, and immediately on the limestone, the workmen discovered several skeletons *lying in a position nearly north and south. . . . A large number of the skulls were resting on small flat plain stones, varying from 4 to 5 inches square, and under a few were discovered stones bearing inscriptions, and marked with the cross. . . .* By the discovery of so many skeletons lying in nearly the same position, it may fairly be presumed that the burial-place of the monastery has been disturbed. . . . For my part, I am strongly inclined to consider them' (the skeletons) '*principally of the feminine gender.*' The antiquary John Gage communicated a notice of the find to vol. xxv. of *Archæologia*, published in 1834, and states with regard to the inscribed and figured stones, (c), '*upon each of them rested the skull of a human skeleton which lay extended in a direction nearly north and south; a long brass pin or brooch with an oblong head, was the only other thing found, as a relic of the dead.*' He records too the statement of an eye-witness that '*the heads lay upon the stones, as upon pillows.*'

A few years later, in 1838, fresh finds of the same kind came to light, and in the *Gateshead Observer* of Oct. 20 in that year we read, (d), 'A stone was found on Monday last at Hartlepool by some workmen while

digging a cellar in the South Terrace. . . . Last week the same men had found several human bones, *each skeleton having a flat stone beneath the head*. . . . Several stones were found about four or five years ago, within a few yards of the same place. . . . The burial-place in which these stones have been found, appears, as far as can be ascertained, to have been *not more than 15 or 20 yards long, and the bodies placed in two lengths only, north and south, the stones about a foot and a half from the surface.*' The *Gentleman's Magazine* of November 1838, p. 536, refers to the above article and states, (e), '*under each skull was a flat stone, as during the former excavations.*' Again in February 1844 the *Gentleman's Magazine*, p. 187, writes of still later discoveries, (f), '*Underneath this stone (No. 8 of the series, see postea, p. 202) was a skeleton with the head resting on a small square stone; and shortly after, another skeleton was taken up very perfect. It was lying with the head towards the west, and it appeared to be that of a female. Underneath the head was another small stone, measuring 5¼ inches square: but neither of these pillow stones had any inscription.*' Shortly after two more skeletons were taken up. They must have belonged to very tall men, as the thigh bones of both of them measured 21½ inches. They were lying one over the other.'

Soon after this, in 1845, appeared the first formal illustrated account of the find, in the shape of a paper by Daniel Haigh in the first volume of the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*. After mentioning 'Cross Close' and its position, he continues, (g), 'There, at the depth of 3½ feet from the surface, and immediately on the limestone rock, several skeletons, *apparently of females*, were found in two rows, in a position nearly north and south. Their heads were resting on small flat stones as upon pillows, and *above them* there were others of a larger size, marked with crosses and inscriptions in Saxon and Runic letters. *Most of these were dispersed immediately after the discovery: a few only, with some fragments, became available to antiquarian research.* . . . Some bone pins were the only other relics found on this occasion. But no systematic researches were made, either then or since.' . . .

Haigh was an authority on ancient Hartlepool, on which he published two papers besides the above.<sup>1</sup> In the first, (h), (p. 17), he writes of 'several skeletons, *both male and female*, apparently of a tall race, and remarkable for the thickness of the forepart of their skulls . . . *over them* were other stones,' etc. In the second paper, published in 1875, he repeats what is quoted above, with the difference that he now adds, (i), 'it is said that stones marked with crosses and inscribed *were placed under some of them*; but this I cannot believe; indeed, the very nature of the inscriptions

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the History of S. Begu and S. Hild*, Hartlepool, J. Procter, 185—. 'The Monasteries of S. Heiu and S. Hild,' in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, vol. III, 1875.

contradicts it.' Finally there may be quoted the notice of the find, in the *Supplemental History*, of 1851, p. 25, (j), 'The skeletons were laid in order, side by side, *the head apparently to the north*; and under each head was placed a small stone, worked with some degree of care, to a uniform shape, about seven or eight inches square, some bearing characters which were evidently northern, or Runic, as many supposed.'

A comparison of the various accounts which have now been quoted shows that there is some difficulty in knowing the relation between the plain and the figured stones, and in determining exactly what position the memorial slabs occupied in connection with the burials. Were they really as they are commonly termed 'pillow stones,' on which the heads

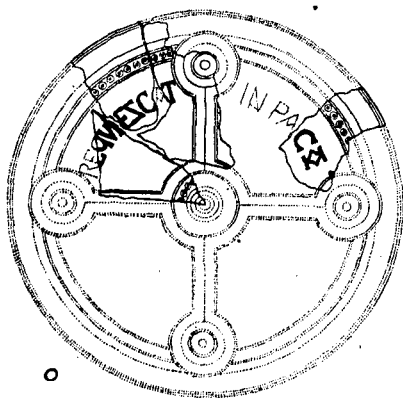


Fig. 2. Hartlepool Slab, now lost.

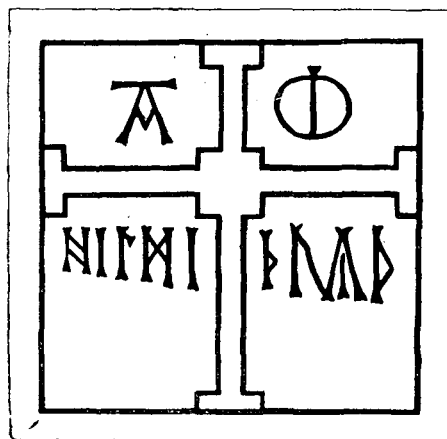


Fig. 3. Hartlepool Slab, now lost.

of the deceased were actually laid, or did they stand or lie over or beside the interred bodies and not actually under their heads? This question cannot be discussed until the stones have been fully described.

Haigh numbers the stones 1 to 8, and it is best to follow his enumeration. Nos. 1 to 5, with an extra stone of a different type that may be numbered 0, are the outcome of the original discovery of 1833, but they were apparently only the survivors of a much larger number of stones enriched or plain, of which Haigh writes in passage (g). No. 6 was found in 1838, and 7 and 8 in 1843. Of these nine stones Nos. 0 and 1 are now missing, 2 and 4 are in the Black Gate Museum at Newcastle, 3, 5, 7 and 8 in the British Museum, and No. 6 in the Durham Cathedral Library. No. 0, given from Haigh's engraving in fig. 2, was of circular form marked with an equal-armed cross with the arms ending in circles, and an inscription *REQUIESCAT IN PACE* 'very beautifully executed.' The diameter





Fig. 4. Hartlepool Tombstones now existing.



was about 13 inches. No. 1 was a square slab measuring rather less than a foot on each side. A cross was incised upon it with A and  $\omega$  on the two sides of the upper arm and running irregularly across the lower half of the stone a woman's name HILDITHRYTH inscribed in runic characters. This lost piece is given from Haigh's engraving in fig. 3. Nos. 2 to 8 are still in existence and fig. 4 shows them together in a series of photographs all to the same scale. As reproduced they are one-third the natural size.

No. 2, at Newcastle, measures  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in., and is  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. thick. The edges and back are dressed quite smooth but not in any way ornamented. Across the lower part is written in runes the female name HILDDIGYTH. The G was left out by the cutter and has been added above, a dot showing where it was to be inserted.

No. 3, in the British Museum, is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in., with a thickness from  $1\frac{3}{8}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. The back is dressed smooth but in places it has been scored into and damaged. The name, that of a male, in Hiberno-Saxon characters is EDILUINI.

No. 4, at Newcastle, has a height of  $8\frac{3}{4}$  in. and a breadth of  $6\frac{3}{8}$  in., with a thickness above of  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. and below of  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. It is smooth on the back and sides but not so neatly dressed or even as is No. 2. The inscription, in three lines, asks for prayers for two persons, one male and one female, ORA PRO UERMIND 7 TORHTSUID. These three slabs have upon them, within borders, crosses of the same form, but in 2 the cross is incised, in 3 and 4 in relief.

No. 5, in the national collection, has the surface a good deal abraded; it is neatly squared and finished, the back quite smooth and dressed as if for show. The dimensions are  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $6\frac{7}{8}$  in., with a thickness of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. The cross here is of remarkable form with steps in the place of the curves at the centre and the ends of the arms. One inscription, in five lines, is the longest of all and asks for prayers on behalf of the three persons mentioned on Nos. 3 and 4, ORATE PRO EDILUINI ORATE PRO UERMUND ET TORHTSUID. The letters here and on 3 and 4 are a mixture of majuscules and minuscules partly Roman partly Hiberno-Saxon in form.

No. 6, found in 1838 and now in Durham Cathedral Library, is the largest and best-preserved specimen of all. It is very truly cut, measuring in height from  $11\frac{1}{4}$  in. to  $11\frac{3}{8}$  in. by a breadth of 10 in. to  $10\frac{1}{4}$  in., the thickness varying from  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. to 3 in. Carefully squared it is dressed smooth on back and edges. Two square sinkings in the back look modern as if intended to facilitate the mounting of the piece for exhibition. The cross is incised in the same technique as the inscription which gives the name BERCHTGYD in Hiberno-Saxon minuscules. Above, on each side of the upper arm of the cross, are the letters A  $\omega$  which also appeared upon the



lost stone No. 1 (fig. 3). The  $\omega$  takes a curious form due to the carver mixing up the capital and the minuscule Omega with some reminiscence of the Omicron. It is evidently by the upright stroke an Omega, for this stroke is the central one of the minuscule form of that letter. The incised lines are sharply cut to the depth of about  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. as by a knife scoring a V-shaped groove in wood, and there is not the smallest sign of weathering so that the work might have been cut yesterday. The vertical and horizontal lines scratched on the face as a guide for the incised lines marking the cross are visible even in the small photograph, and so is the little depression in the centre where one point of the dividers was placed. The material is an easily worked but a very compact and even-grained magnesian limestone closely resembling that of the turned baluster shafts from Monkwearmouth, specimens of which are in the Durham Cathedral Library. These Monkwearmouth shafts, four of which are still *in situ* in the church porch wonderfully preserved, show that the stone was an excellent one for resisting the ravages of time. The writer is kindly informed by Mr S. F. Sainty of West Hartlepool, who as hydraulic engineer is familiar with the local geological formations, that the magnesian limestone of the place has just the same qualities as the material of the small slabs, being in some places very hard and in others so soft as to yield to the finger-nail. This last is the case with the stone of Nos. 5 and 8.

Nos. 7 and 8 came to light in 1843, and are both in the British Museum. No. 7 is 9 in. high by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  by 2 in. The back is dressed fairly smooth but is not finished for show. It is not very well preserved and the name, in Hiberno-Saxon characters with a use of ligatures which occur also on Nos. 4 and 5 but not on the other stones of the series, has been read HANEGNEVB.

No. 8 differs from the rest in the ornate character of the cross, but of the inscription, in minuscules, only the last letters -UGUID can be read. It measures in height 11 in., in breadth  $8\frac{3}{4}$  in. below and 9 in. above, and is the thickest of all—from  $4\frac{1}{4}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. The back is roughly hewn by axe strokes. The material is a quite soft limestone.

The Hartlepool slabs are not the only ones of their kind that have been found in the north. Three others, closely resembling them but with one striking difference, have come to light between 1888 and 1915 at Lindisfarne, in or near the Abbey Church, but evidently in no case in their original position. They are shown in fig. 5 all on the same scale and one-third the natural size, just as is the case with the Hartlepool examples in fig. 4. They are numbered here Lindisfarne 9, 10, 11, and were figured and described by Mr C. R. Peers in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2 Ser., XXVII, 1915, p. 132. No. 9 was found in 1888 in



Fig. 5. Stones of the Hartlepool type found at Lindisfarne.

the burial-ground attached to the parish church a little way from the Priory, but no bones were discovered with it; it was published in *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, 2 Ser., XII, p. 412. The material is like that of the other Lindisfarne specimens a hard sandstone, and the surface is considerably abraded, so that in the present position of the piece under glass and built into the wall of the church porch it is not easy to make out what is on it. The dimensions are  $8\frac{1}{4}$  in. by  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in., with a thickness of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. The back is rough. Earlier photographs however show that it had incised upon it a cross with complete rounds at the ends of the arms and a male name that appears to be AEDBERECHT. Nos. 10 and 11 made their appearance in 1915 in the course of excavations carried on by H.M. Office of Works in the nave of the Priory church. No bones were found near them and they are supposed not to have been *in situ*. No. 10 is comparatively well preserved though in parts broken. It measures in height  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in., with a width of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. below, tapering to  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in. where the curve of the head begins. It is 2 in. thick and the back, like those of Nos. 9 and 11, is rough. The form of the cross resembles what we find on most of the Hartlepool slabs, but the inscription is of special interest in that it is biliteral, the name OSGYTH being written above in runes and below in Hiberno-Saxon characters. Osyth being a female name may be taken as evidence that at Lindisfarne, as on other early monastic sites in the north, there was a double community of men and women. A peculiarity is the circular depression at the intersection of the arms.

No. 11 differs from all the others in the two series save Hartlepool No. 8 in the presence of ornament in the form of plait work filling the rounds at the intersection of the arms and at their terminations. The slab has unfortunately been broken. It is about 6 in. wide, and is rough at the back. There are remains of an inscription.

The peculiarity of the rounded head, in which the Lindisfarne slabs differ from those found at Hartlepool, seems to have no direct bearing on the question whether or not the stones were supports for the skulls of the deceased, but in another connection it is important as proving in each case the local character of the work. The Hartlepool stones are cut in the local magnesian limestone and are all rectangular. (The stone Hartlepool 0 is exceptional.) At Lindisfarne the material is the local sandstone and all the pieces have rounded heads, and moreover the edges of the face are rounded off and not left square as at Hartlepool. The Lindisfarne stones not being found *in situ* are no help in the discussion of the question of the original disposition of the slabs.

There remain the two questions, (1) of the original disposition of the



slabs, (2) of the date of the interments and of the slabs. The first is of some antiquarian interest but little depends on it, whereas the answer we give to the second question involves important considerations affecting our whole view of art in the British Isles during the Early Christian and early mediæval periods.

The reader who has perused the passages quoted (pp. 198-200) will have noted that the position of the skulls is given in (a) as 'either on or against,' in (b) (c) (i) as *above*, and in (f) (g) (h) as *underneath* the inscribed and figured stones, while accounts (b) (d) (e) (f) (g) agree that the heads rested on small plain flat stones as upon pillows. None of these last, unfortunately, has been preserved. The use of such pillow stones is inherited from the funeral arrangements of Anglo-Saxon pagandom,<sup>1</sup> and Bede expressly mentions an instance of its survival in the burial of Sebbi, King of the East Saxons, who was laid in a stone sarcophagus with a pillow stone (cervical) under his head.<sup>2</sup> The pillow stone is thus a pagan trait, and may be taken with another pagan peculiarity in the burials, their orientation. The *Durham Advertiser* of July 26, 1833, stated distinctly (a<sup>1</sup>) that in the first find all the skeletons lay north and south, and the same is said in (d). The exceptional interment with head to the west found in 1844, (f), is specially noted. Passage (j) states that in the north and south interments the head was to the north instead of, as one would expect, to the south. On this, as upon the pagan character of north and south orientation, see the passage referred to in note below. What has just been said is of course in favour of an early date for the burials.

Returning to the inscribed stones, we have first to inquire whether their original position was above ground like ordinary tombstones or with the bodies in the graves. They were certainly recumbent slabs, for there is no tenon or prolongation at the bottom edge by which they could have been fixed in an upright position. The slabs might conceivably have been laid *above* the graves, just sunk in the ground to a depth corresponding with their thickness, and have found their way down in the course of the ages to the level of the actual interment. The condition of them however, and their location when found, really preclude this possibility. The slabs are on the whole in very good, in one case, No. 6, almost perfect preservation, although they are of comparatively soft magnesian limestone and would have been scored or broken had they been trodden on or knocked about. Furthermore, they were evidently all found face upwards and in every case so near to a skull that this seemed to be upon, against, or under it.

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, Lond., 1903 etc., III, p. 155 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iv, 11.

This would not have been the case if they had found their way casually into the graves, but they would have come to light in a fragmentary condition and disposed irregularly at different levels and in all kinds of positions among the bones. Haigh<sup>1</sup> suggests that the stones with inscribed names were put beside the bodies to serve as identification discs in case at any after time there were a question of the translation of the remains. The practice is observable elsewhere, for de Rossi<sup>2</sup> notices certain cases of stone tablets inscribed with the name of a defunct that were found *inside* closed sarcophagi. The stones inscribed with a petition for prayer for the defunct present of course a difficulty, for this petition was addressed to the living, and it would seem senseless to bury underground the stone which bore it. This objection may however be countered if we reflect that in those times the grave was in a sense an inhabited place, not one merely for the decent disposal of waste products. Tomb furniture bears witness to this vague belief, and the deceased may have been equipped with an appeal for prayers in the same spirit in which the corpse was furnished with the arms and ornaments carried and worn in life. Exactly how the inscribed stones were placed will probably always remain uncertain, and the present writer believes that they were not under but beside or beyond the heads. The general impression among the bystanders at the excavation may well have been that plain pillow stones and inscribed stones were all alike, and were all intended for the heads of the bodies to rest upon them. As a fact the skulls may have been *on* the plain stones but *against* the figured ones, though the distinction was not at the time fully realized.

A more important question is that of the date of the stones. The first idea, an obviously absurd one, was that the graveyard belonged to the Friary of the thirteenth century, the second that it was to be referred to the early monastic settlement of the seventh century, and this has remained the prevailing opinion up to the present time. The orientation of the graves and their equipment with pillow stones are early symptoms, and the early Anglian character of the names<sup>3</sup> with the fact that they are partly in runes produces the same impression. The fact that both male and female names occur is of great significance, for the primitive monastery is known to have been of the double type.<sup>4</sup>

As regards the palæography of the inscriptions, the writing was noticed by Sir Hercules Read as excellent and of early character.<sup>5</sup> If the

<sup>1</sup> *Notes*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Rom. Sott.*, I, 95, 96; III, 406.

<sup>3</sup> Haigh remarks in his *Notes*, p. 24, on the similarity of the names to those found in Bede and in the Bonifacian Epistles.

<sup>4</sup> Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv, 23, with Mr Plummer's note.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, XXVII, 1914-15, p. 133.

graveyard were, as is always assumed, a monastic one, the date of the interments cannot in any case be later than 800 A.D. We have no information about the settlement after the period of the rule of Hild,<sup>1</sup> who left Herutu for Whitby in 657, but there is an entry in the *Flores Historiarum* of Roger of Wendover, which runs:—‘Anno Domini DCCC<sup>o</sup>. Exercitus paganorum nefandissimus ecclesias de Hercenes et de Tinemutha crudeliter spoliavit et cum spoliis ad naves recurrit,’ and this Danish raid no doubt put an end to the establishment. There is no record of any re-foundation. It is true that the antiquary Lambarde, in his *Alphabetical Description of the Chief Places in England and Wales*, published in 1730, prints on his p. 145 the following entry:—‘HEORTNESSE. A Towne in the North Partes, which Egred, byshop of the holy Ile, buylded, and gave to the Sea (see) for ever together with another called Wycliffe, somewhat before Eardulf fled the Ile,’ and this has been taken as evidence that Hartlepool, and presumably with it the monastery, was restored by the Lindisfarne bishop about the middle of the ninth century, thus rendering possible a later date for the little cemetery. Lambarde has however misread his authority, Symeon of Durham, who in a passage celebrating the benefactions of Egred to his see, states ‘duas quoque villas Ilecliff & Wigeclif sed et Billingham in Heortnesse, quarum ipse conditor fuerat, locis superioribus quæ prædicto Confessori (St Cuthbert) donaverat perpetuo. possidenda adjicit.’ ‘Heortnesse’ here means the district where Billingham, a few miles inland, is situated, not Hartlepool itself, and the passage contains not a shadow of evidence for a ninth-century restoration of Herutu. In any case the year 875 closed the record entirely, for in that year the monkish community abandoned Lindisfarne, and monastic life in all that region, so open to the Viking attacks, practically came to an end.

If the suggestion be offered that the graveyard may not have been monastic at all but secular, and may therefore have been of any date, the answer is ready to the hand. As a fact we know really nothing about the primitive history of graveyards attached to secular churches, and how early there can have existed such a graveyard in this district it is impossible to say. One thing is however quite certain. The district cemetery would not have been at Hartlepool, for St Hilda’s church at Hartlepool has not been, till quite recently, an independent parish church but only a chapel dependent on the mother church of Hart some miles inland. As explained in the writer’s previous work *The Arts in Early England*, I, p. 318 f., the burial-ground and the burial fees

<sup>1</sup> The notice in Bede’s *Life of Cuthbert*, referred to *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, XXVII, 1914–15, p. 132, does not apply to Herutu, but to Hild’s first monastery between the mouths of the Wear and Tyne, perhaps at South Shields.



appertained to the mother church, and a dependent chapel would not have the right of interment. Hence even if Hartlepool church had been built as early as the ninth or tenth century it would not have had a graveyard.

On the whole the evidence for the monastic character and early date of the Hartlepool cemetery seems fairly conclusive, and some surprise may be felt that this chronological question has been so closely examined. The truth is however that there exists a piece of evidence which is *prima*

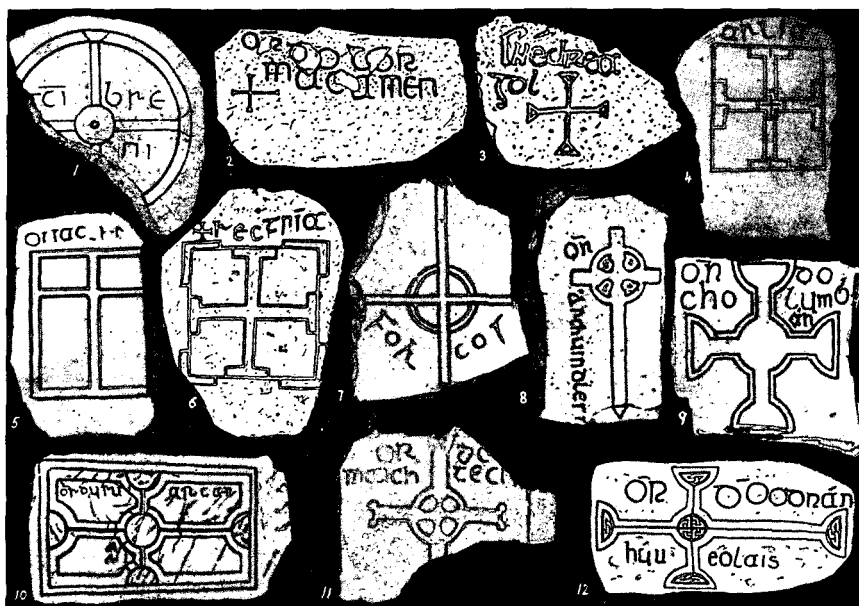


Fig. 6. Irish Inscribed Slabs.

*facie* of considerable weight and which, if established, would relegate the Hartlepool burials to a period at least two centuries later than the provisional date now arrived at.

That there is a resemblance between the Hartlepool stones and slabs of a similar type in Ireland has already been noted. The latter are found in abundance at Clonmacnois, Monasterboice, and other early ecclesiastical sites, and George Petrie's two volumes entitled *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*<sup>1</sup> contain numerous examples, a selection from which will be found in fig. 6. Petrie's classical work must however be used in connection with the recent study by Professor R. A. Stewart Macalister, F.S.A., *The Memorial Slabs of Clonmacnois*,

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Miss Margaret Stokes, Dublin, 1872-8.

published at Dublin in 1909 by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, which corrects Petrie in many details and adds a good many fresh examples. In fig. 6 the drawings reproduced from Petrie are corrected in details from the outlines in Prof. Macalister's work, and reproductions of several of the latter have been added to the illustration. It must be noted that Petrie's volumes will always retain their worth, for he described and figured many stones, some of outstanding value, that are now lost. Indeed, Prof. Macalister says, p. vii, 'when Dr. Petrie visited Clonmacnois in 1822, he must have found nearly twice as many slabs as I was able to discover.'

A glance at fig. 6 will show that the Irish slabs resemble the Northumbrian ones in the use and in some of the forms of the cross, and in the style of the inscriptions, the formula OR DO or OR AR or OROIT AR corresponding to the Northumbrian OR or ORATE PRO, in each case followed by a name or names. There are at the same time marked differences in that the Irish slabs are much larger than the Hartlepool ones and are of very irregular outlines. That the fractures which are the cause of this irregularity were not all made after the stones were inscribed is shown by the fact that the inscriptions are sometimes seen to conform to the broken contours, proving that the stones were not squared before they were worked. This rough treatment of the edges, compared with the accurate shaping and finish of the Hartlepool and Lindisfarne examples, constitutes a very marked difference. Another may be found in the fact that whereas the Irish stones are only incised the Northumbrian carvers worked at times in relief, *e.g.*, fig. 4, Nos. 3, 4, 5. Again, while the majority were intended, like the Anglian stones, to occupy a recumbent position, some were evidently designed to stand erect. There is no suggestion in the case of the Irish slabs that they were pillow stones, or were interred with the bodies in the grave. Like the early Hereberecht tombstone from Monkwearmouth, they were meant to be placed over or at the head of the graves so as to keep before the eyes of the living the names of the departed.

In face of these marked differences it may be questioned whether a reference to Ireland is really called for, and this opens up the general subject of the relations in Early Christian times between the ecclesiastical forms and the art of Celtic Ireland and those of our own country. On this a word or two may be said.

When the Hartlepool stones are called 'Irish' in type there is a tacit assumption that there were in the sister island examples of the same kind of work but of earlier origin. A justification for this assumption may be found in the following considerations.

Ireland received Christianity at an early date and the Celtic church in the island developed in freedom on its own independent lines till Irish ecclesiastics in the sixth and seventh centuries were famed all over western Christendom for their learning and sanctity.<sup>1</sup> They sent missionaries to the Continent and they attracted students and votaries of the ascetic life to their own monastic cells. Reference is often made to the stream of Saxon students setting to Ireland in the latter part of the seventh century to drink in learning at the fountain-head, and there is a letter of Aldhelm in which he is inclined to reproach his correspondent, one Eafrid, for having spent as much as six years in Erin 'uber sophiæ sugens.' He there uses an expression signifying that Ireland enjoyed at the time a sort of tacitly recognized precedence in these matters of learning and religion.<sup>2</sup> Now there are obvious reasons why we should recognize for Ireland a somewhat similar precedence in matters of construction and art, at least in comparison with the northern parts of Britain. It is true of course that the Romanized West offered a repertory of models still more abundant and varied, but Northumbria in the seventh century was in touch with Ireland far more intimately than with the Romanized West. Ireland possessed a tradition of stone construction and of decoration going back to pagan times, and Irish Christians in matters of technique and ornamental forms continued this tradition with the addition of fresh motives introduced from Romanized lands in the wake of the new religious movement. Hence the assumption is fairly justified that the Christianized Irish Celts built oratories and cells in traditional methods of construction, and ornamented the simple apparatus of ecclesiastical ritual, from the very first days of the conversion of the land. The earlier examples in these styles of work may all have perished and what remains may be of comparatively advanced date, but this need not necessarily point to a hiatus in the practice of the arts in Ireland during the first Christian centuries, when the new interest in life would on the contrary furnish to that practice a natural stimulus.

As bearing on the assumption of Irish prototypes for the Northumbrian slabs, it must be noted that the Irish works are infinitely more numerous. Prof. Macalister catalogued more than 200 examples now at Clonmacnois, and believed that Petrie saw double that number in 1822. Clonmacnois was founded in 547 A.D. and soon became a hallowed place where burial was sought, so that the cemetery, which

<sup>1</sup> See, amongst other works, H. Zimmer, *The Irish Element in Medieval Culture*, translated by J. L. Edmands, New York and London, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cur, inquam, Hibernia, quo catervatim istinc lectores classibus advecti conflunt, ineffabili quodam privilegio efferatur'—*S. Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Giles, Oxonii, 1844, p. 94.



has continued in use till modern times, is crowded with monuments of different dates and kinds. The view, fig. 7, gives some general idea of the site, which overlooks the Shannon, and is furnished forth with the oratories, round towers, carved crosses, and the like, that mark the Irish monastic settlement. That there were inscribed memorials of the dead already in the cemetery in the latter part of the sixth and in the seventh century does not admit of any reasonable doubt, and they



Fig. 7. View of Clonmacnois.

may safely be assumed to have been of the same general type as the earliest datable ones now on the spot. One of the poems in the Irish language about the burials at Clonmacnois printed in the first volume of Petrie's *Christian Inscriptions* supplies incidental evidence of this. The verse runs

‘Nobles of the children of Conn  
Are under the flaggy, brown-sloped cemetery ;  
A knot, or a craebh, over each body,  
And a fair, just, Ogham name,’

and implies that inscriptions in the Ogham character were in evidence in the cemetery at the time the poem was written, and these would be presumably of comparatively early date. Now at present Prof. Macalister could only find at Clonmacnois one example of the use of the Ogham script, and this looks as if a good many early slabs had perished.

There is accordingly some *à priori* justification for connecting the

Hartlepool slabs with Ireland and in assuming that they had their prototypes in that country. The next point is to ascertain what light is thrown on the Northumbrian monuments and their date by a comparison with the Irish examples. Prof. Macalister arranged the Clonmacnois slabs in groups according to a chronological scheme based on considerations of morphology. First would come those with an inscription alone, as this is the essential part of the memorial. The introduction of a cross may be reckoned a later addition, and slabs on which the cross is small and just an adjunct to the name and prayer formula would be early. Later on the cross increases in size and becomes more prominent than the inscription. It is often enclosed in a square or circular panel. The cross itself, at first simple, becomes more elaborate in its form, and finally ornament of less or greater complexity is added to or connected with it. The hypothetical chronology thus indicated can be tested by a certain amount of direct evidence derived from the names upon the stones. It needs hardly to be said that great caution is here necessary, for rash inferences have too often been drawn from the casual occurrence on a slab of a name that is historically known as connected in early times with the site of the graveyard. Many of these names are quite common ones, and it does not follow that the Colman or Cormac commemorated on a monument is some particular personage of the name of whom we have an early record. Some further identification is needed and this in some cases is secured when the name of the father of the personage is also given. The most conspicuous example is that of a slab figured by Petrie but now lost, that is given fig. 8, 1. It is inscribed SUIBINE M'MAILAE HUMAI, and is without doubt the tombstone of Suibhne son of Mael-Umha, 'anchorite and scribe of Clonmacnois, the most learned Irishman of his day,' who died about 890 A.D. There are other examples in which the identification is not quite so certain, but about which there is no very strong element of doubt, while others again only justify a reasonable hypothesis. The last chapter in Prof. Macalister's study, 'Historical Contents of the Inscriptions,' is taken here as a guide.

Taking the examples in fig. 6, No. 1 was found by Petrie at Tempul Breacain in the island of Aran Mor. It seems to have on it the name *SCI BRECANI*,<sup>1</sup> but there is no evidence of its date. It is useful for comparison with No. 0 in the Hartlepool series in fig. 4. No. 2 is from Macalister (No. 22, Petrie's No. 49). It bears a small cross patty as an adjunct to the inscription *OR DO CORMAC AMEN*, and Macalister, who reckons it early, writes,<sup>2</sup> 'It is just conceivable that this may

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clearness the inscriptions on the stones are given in the text in Roman letters, though the actual lettering is in great part in Irish minuscules.

<sup>2</sup> Macalister, p. 103.

commemorate Abbot Cormac I, 757 A.D.' The name is however a common one. On the other hand the name on No. 3, Snedreaghail, accompanied by a similar cross though of Greek not Latin form, is so rare that it 'is found but once in the Annals, as the name of an Abbot of Clonmacnois who died in 781,'<sup>1</sup> and it is a very plausible hypothesis that we have here an identification. Nos. 2 and 3 are on the Macalister chronological scheme of early type. No. 4, from Petrie's 27 corrected from Macalister's 41, gives us an instance of the cross inscribed in a rectangular panel, after the Hartlepool fashion. No. 5 has a simpler cross of the Latin form in a



FIG. 8, 1, THE SLAB OF SUINNNE (from Petrie).

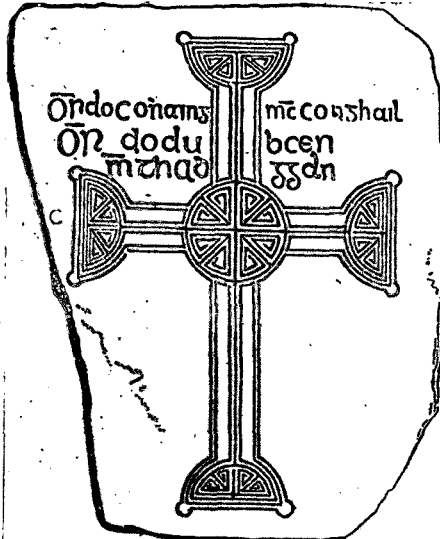


FIG. 8, 2, THE SLAB OF DUBCERN AND CONAING (from Petrie).

Fig. 8. Two datable Slabs at Clonmacnois.

panel, and No. 6 is a variation on No. 4, with the name RECTNIA preceded by a small initial cross, which it must be noticed is a very rare feature on these Irish slabs,<sup>2</sup> while in Anglo-Saxon religious inscriptions it is so common as to be almost universal. Prof. Macalister is disposed to equate the Rectnia of this slab with an abbot of that name who died in 779 and remarks, 'the name is uncommon, and the style of art and the lettering seem to favour an early date.'<sup>3</sup> The next slab, Petrie's No. 5 now lost, with the name FORCOS gives us a circle surrounding the intersection of the limbs of a plain cross. The same circle, in a form that will at once be recognized as 'Celtic,' appears in Nos. 8 and 11. The name on No. 8, CUINDLESS, a rare one, makes the Irish scholar think naturally

<sup>1</sup> Macalister, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.



of Cuindles who died abbot of Clonmacnois in 720, but the identification is by no means certain. The Greek cross on No. 9 has the central circle and the semicircles at the four ends of the limbs which is the commonest form of the device on the Hartlepool stones, occurring on Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10 (Lindisfarne). We have seen it already on the undated stone No. 1 in fig. 6, and it appears on a large number of Irish examples of which our Nos. 10, Petrie's 77 at Monasterboice, and 12, Macalister 145 Petrie 131, are specimens. No. 12 bears the inscription  $\overline{O}R \overline{D}O \overline{O}DR\overline{A}N$   $\overline{H}A\overline{U} \overline{E}OL\overline{A}IS$ , and Odrán hua Eolais was a scribe of Clonmacnois who died in 994.<sup>1</sup> Here there seems no doubt as to the identification. We obtain therefore at Clonmacnois two certain examples of this form of cross, so common at Hartlepool and Lindisfarne, one at each extremity of the 10th century, while one almost certain, a tombstone that may be dated about 950,<sup>2</sup> is shown in fig. 8, 2. The unidentified examples of the same type figured by Prof. Macalister and called by him 'perhaps, the most characteristic form of the Clonmacnois crosses,'<sup>3</sup> number over fifty. In point of style and ornamental details they correspond closely to the 'Suibine' and 'Odran' stones, thus seeming to establish this particular device as belonging in Ireland to the 10th century, a couple of centuries later than the epoch to which on historical grounds the Northumbrian slabs have been ascribed. Clonmacnois evidence points to the arrangement of the cross in a panel as an earlier indication, and we have seen that fig. 6, No. 6, is very likely the tombstone of an abbot who died in 779. Prof. Macalister locates the type in the eighth century. His earliest date, though only a hypothetical one, is about 720 for the 'Cuindless' slab No. 8. This bears an upright Latin cross of Celtic form with a spike below for fixing it into the ground, a form of the cross not represented in the Northumbrian series.

On the whole it appears that Irish evidence is against the provisional date which has been accepted above for the stones of the Hartlepool group, and if the use of the cross with semicircular terminations be taken as a criterion these stones would be two centuries later than English antiquaries have supposed. The earliest datable example at Clonmacnois is Suibine's of about 890, and if the Irish stones be really the prototypes the Anglian imitations should belong at the earliest to the tenth century. We are met here however by the difficulty that the date 875 closes the period at which the Hartlepool and Lindisfarne stones are historically possible (see *antea*, p. 207) and this makes it needful to reconsider the whole position. Everyone must agree that though this particular form of the cross was in fashion in Ireland in the tenth century, it may have been used elsewhere at a much earlier date. The

<sup>1</sup> Macalister, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

form itself requires analysis, and an attempt must be made (1) to fix its place from the typological point of view in the series of ornamental cross forms as they appear in Early Christian and early mediæval days in Christendom at large, and (2) to argue out from typological and historical data its probable chronology.

The results that follow from such an examination are somewhat surprising, and they may here be briefly indicated.

1. The particular form of cross under discussion though it occurs so frequently in Ireland is not in its origin Celtic but Teutonic, and occurs in Germanic tomb furniture in Britain and on the Continent centuries before it makes its appearance in Hibernian art.

2. In the case of British and continental examples of the form, the circle at the intersection of the arms of the cross is not a shrunken form of the large wheel of the 'Celtic' cross head, as is suggested by Professor Macalister for the Irish examples, but rather a decorative treatment of that important part of the cross where the arms meet in the centre. In the case of crosses of a certain kind, formed of precious metal, and borne on the person or employed for sacramental purposes, it was customary for this point of intersection to be utilized for the enshrinement of a relic, often a minute portion of the wood of the true cross, the receptacle being covered by a medallion. It would be quite natural for this covering medallion, at first of modest proportions, to increase in size and importance, till it extended beyond the general outline of the cross at the intersection, and we have here a plausible explanation of the ultimate appearance of a comparatively large circle embracing the central portion of the cross, while a feeling for decorative symmetry accounts easily for the corresponding semicircles at the ends of the arms. Evidence for this will be adduced in the sequel. The fact that the extended parts in the centre and at the ends of the arms take sometimes a square, rectangular, or stepped form, instead of one based on the circle, is probably due merely to decorative taste showing itself in a feeling for variety. There are sepulchral slabs in Northumbria of about the same date as those at Hartlepool that show crosses with rectangular centres and terminals. The early Hereberecht tombstone at Monkwearmouth is an example.

3. In regard to the ornamental handling of the cross form in general, it is noteworthy that in Teutonic and Celtic art there is considerable variety in the treatment and an abundant play of fancy, that contrast with the comparative monotony and dulness of similar work in classical lands. The cross forms on the Clonmacnois slabs are numerous and tastefully devised, but so also are those that occur in Germanic work that dates of course from a much earlier period, and this no doubt influenced Irish forms. On the other hand a decorative treatment of

the cross did not, it seems, appeal to the artistic sense of the classical peoples, including the Italians, the Byzantines, the Gallo- and Hispano-Roman populations of France and Spain, and the early Christians of Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, and Egypt. In the art of all these peoples and regions little or no tendency shows itself towards a fanciful treatment of the form of the cross, while its ornamental embellishment takes the shape of jewelling the interior without affecting the outline. The simple form of the cross patty,<sup>1</sup> fig. 9 (a), with the ends of the arms broadened out and sometimes bifurcated (b), or tri-lobed (c), seems as a rule to have satisfied all requirements, and these forms occur over and over again in Early Christian art, as in the catacombs; on Syrian door lintels, Coptic tombstones, sarcophagi from or in Asia Minor,

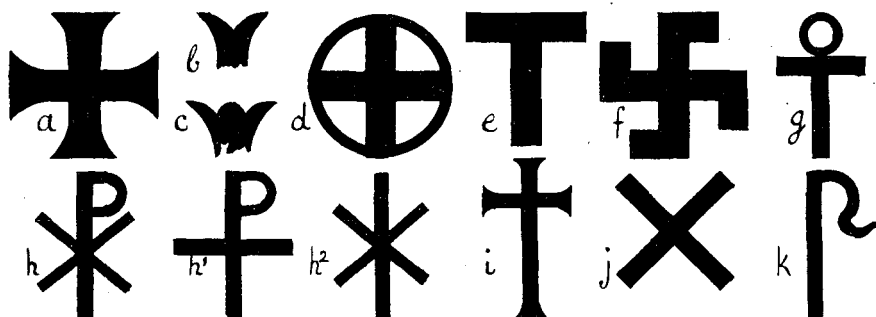



Fig. 9. Various forms of Crosses in classical art.

Rome, Ravenna, Arles; in mosaics in Italy and the Byzantine empire, manuscripts of the classical schools, Coptic textiles, and Alexandrine ivories, as well as in connection with other products of Mediterranean provenance. In these classical lands the early history of the cross form and of its embellishment is somewhat as follows.

Taking first the form, it must be noted that the cross in various shapes is pre-Christian, and was used by the pagan craftsman ornamentally as well as, at times, with religious significance. The simple four-armed cross, fitting into a circle (d), is an obvious motive of geometrical ornament, and occurs in pagan work, while in Christian times it is not necessarily always of religious intent. The same is true of the T form of the cross (e), while on the other hand the swastika, or *crux gammata* (f, an equal-armed cross with the ends of the limbs turned back in the form of the Greek majuscule gamma)

<sup>1</sup> The older heraldic term is 'cross pattée,' and the adjective is connected with the French 'patte' or paw, the reference being to the broadening out at the pad or claw of the leg of an animal like the fox or the cat. In fig. 9 various forms of crosses are given and are referred to in the text by the letters of the alphabet by which each is marked.

and the ancient Egyptian symbol of a T cross with a circle above it (g), were employed with mystical significance in ancient oriental religions. Pre-Christian also was that form of the cross associated with the sacred monogram (h, h<sup>1</sup>, h<sup>2</sup>) which is of special interest to Scottish antiquaries as it occurs on the early inscribed stones at Kirkmadrine and Whithorn in Galloway. It is sometimes called the XP (chi-rho) monogram, because in some of its forms it consists in these two initial letters of the Greek name of Christ, but the best term for it is 'chrism.' The combination of the Greek letters X and P, to which others might be joined, was a fairly common form of monogram before Christianity came into the world, and it occurs, for example, on ancient coins, as an abbreviated form of the Greek word APXONTOΣ, giving only the first three letters in the device . Naturally, again, the X or St Andrew's cross (j), is not specially Christian, as it is a motive ready to the hand of the ornamentalist, and is a letter of the Greek and Roman alphabets, as well as a Roman numeral.

An examination of the Christian use of these various forms of the cross yields the following results.

The T-shaped cross is apparently the first used with Christian significance. It was the form of the Roman instrument of capital punishment, or 'patibulum,' and is known as the Tau cross, or *cruce commissa*. It is to a cross of this kind that the figure with the ass's head is affixed in the famous burlesque drawing of the crucifixion found on the Palatine at Rome, one of the earliest known representations of the subject. Whether or not it was adopted by the Christians on account of its being the instrument of the Passion, this shape of the cross was that used by the early Christians for signing themselves,<sup>1</sup> and is in all probability referred to in the passage in the Book of Revelation, which speaks of the sealing of the servants of God on their foreheads. Proof of the above is afforded by passages in Early Christian literature, of which one may be quoted. In the *Stromateis*, Book vi, Chapter 11, Clement of Alexandria writes as follows:—'they say that the fashion of the sign of the Lord is according to the shape of the numeral three hundred,'<sup>2</sup> that is, a Tau or T. In catacomb inscriptions the T cross occurs early, and Wilpert dates examples such as that shown fig. 10, 1,<sup>3</sup> as early as the second century. Of the same date also occur examples of the four-armed cross of which fig. 10, 2<sup>4</sup> shows a specimen, and the

<sup>1</sup> This 'signing' must not be interpreted as a sort of brand or visible mark, but as effected merely by the gesture, as in the familiar modern act of crossing oneself. The sign was apparently made by the finger, not the whole hand, at any rate in the earlier times.

<sup>2</sup> φασιν ὄν εἶναι τοῦ μὲν κυριακοῦ σημείου τύπον, κατὰ τὸ σχῆμα τὸ τριακοσιοστὸν στοιχείον.

<sup>3</sup> De Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea*, II, pl. xlii, 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pl. xviii, 1.



origin of this form as used by Christians is not quite clear. It may have been adopted as an improvement in the ornamental sense on the T form, or deduced from the supposed form of the cross of Christ. If the ordinary instrument were T shaped, there must have been in this case some extension upwards of the vertical limb in order to support the tablet with the inscription over the head, and this would give the shape of the four-armed cross, or *crux immissa*. This was apparently always at first an equal-armed cross, but at a comparatively early date—in one instance in the catacombs in the third century<sup>1</sup>—there is found the elongation of the vertical or supporting limb which gives a cross of the so-called 'Latin' form, fig. 9 (i). Here again the form may have had a decorative origin, fitting better into certain spaces than the equal-

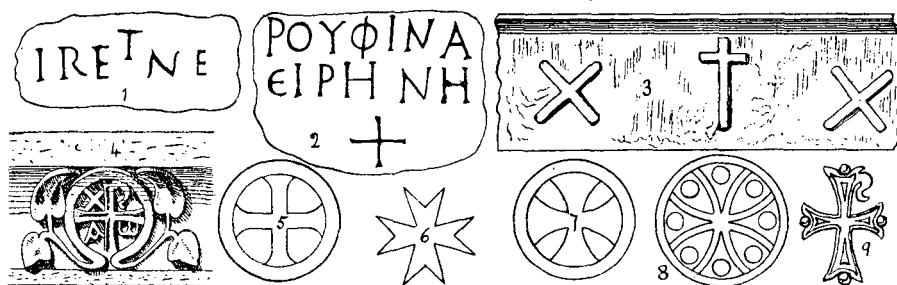


Fig. 10. Decorative Treatment of the Cross Form in classical art.

armed cross, or have been motivated historically. The words of Christ 'If I be lifted up,' and the necessity in the case of three crosses that the centre one should have a certain prominence, would naturally operate in favour of a lengthening of the supporting limb. As soon as the custom of carrying the cross as an attribute came into vogue as an artistic convention the form became the 'Latin' one. At first perhaps the real cross was an equal-armed one, and was fixed on the top of a staff to make it portable, but later on the mark of the junction disappears and the staff is just the supporting limb of the cross. For example, the cross held by John in the scene of the Baptism in the Baptistry at Ravenna, of about 450 A.D., is a jewelled cross patty with equal arms attached to a long staff, while in the rather earlier mosaic of Christ as the Good Shepherd in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia there is no break between cross and shaft. The long staff is sometimes a pointed stake, as in a figure in the early ciborium columns at St Mark's, Venice.

<sup>1</sup> *Nuovo Bullett. di Archeol. Crist.*, 1902, p. 6. It needs hardly to be said that in connection with Early Christian times there is no archaeological justification for the term 'Greek cross' and 'Latin cross,' any more than there is for the supposed 'eastern' and 'western' gestures in the act of benediction or allocution.

There are innumerable examples of portable crosses of this 'Latin' form carried by figures on Early Christian sarcophagi, and a general reference to the plates in Garrucci's *Storia dell' Arte Cristiana*, vol. V, is sufficient. De Vogué<sup>1</sup> signalizes an example of the fourth century at Chaqqa in Syria as very early. It is shown fig. 10, 3 as flanked by two St Andrew's crosses, and these crosses, with undoubtedly Christian significance, occur still earlier in a Palmyrene inscription of 134 A.D.<sup>2</sup> The St Andrew's cross (j) is called *crux decussata* from *decussis* 'ten,' with allusion to the Roman numeral X.

This employment of the X form as a cross leads on to the question of the chrismon or Christian monogram which we have just seen to possess a pre-Christian history. Monograms and similar devices were greatly in vogue in late Roman and primitive Christian times, and someone, apparently early in the third century, lighted on the discovery that this device contained constituent elements of the name of Christ. It appears at any rate in catacomb inscriptions that almost certainly date from this period, while a dated consular inscription of the year 269 A.D.<sup>3</sup> clearly exhibits it. Later on, especially after Constantine's victory over Maxentius followed by the Edict of Milan, it became exceedingly popular. Constantine had the device figured on the shields of the soldiers he led to the victory at the Milvian Bridge, and a few years afterwards, in 325, he placed it as the crowning feature upon his official standard, the so-called Labarum. Innumerable Christian monuments in almost all parts of the Roman empire testify to the general use of the motive in the centuries immediately succeeding the Peace of the Church.

The sacred monogram appears in different forms (h, h<sup>1</sup>, h<sup>2</sup>). It must be understood that the device was at first merely a monogram—an abbreviated mode of writing the sacred name—not a religious symbol. One of the earliest forms in which it occurs is in an inscription in the first area of the cemetery of S. Callisto which runs AUGURINE IN DOM ET ✠,<sup>4</sup> meaning 'in God the Father and in Jesus Christ.' Another catacomb inscription runs BICTORINA IN PACE ET IN ✠,<sup>5</sup> and Le Blaut gives one found at Toulouse in the form VIVAS IN ✠.<sup>6</sup> As a monogram the device took two shapes. I combined with X as above (h<sup>2</sup>), stood for Ἰησοῦς Χριστός; P with X in the more familiar form (h) for

<sup>1</sup> *Syrie Centrale, Architecture, etc.*, Paris, 1865 etc., I, pl. 10.

<sup>2</sup> De Vogué, *Syrie Centrale, Inscriptions, etc.*, Paris, 1868, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> De Rossi, *Inscript. Christ. Urbis Romæ*, Romæ, 1861, I, p. 16, No. 10.

<sup>4</sup> De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.*, II, pls. xxxix-xl, 30. The date is the first half of the third century.

<sup>5</sup> Perret, *Les Catacombes de Rome*, V, pl. xxii, 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*, No. 607.

*Χριστός* alone. There was however a third form of the device ( $h^1$ ) in which an upright cross, or the letter T recognized as we have seen as a form of the cross, surmounted by the P, took the place of the Greek X.<sup>1</sup> This stood for Christ as well as did the other forms, and it is in this shape, it may be noticed, that the device appears on the Kirkmadrine stones in Galloway. Its use there may serve to give an approximate date to the stones, for on Gallic monuments it occurs from the end of the fourth century to the middle of the sixth. The Christian monogram occurs frequently on Merovingian coins, figured in the work of M. Prou,<sup>2</sup> from the middle of the sixth through the seventh century, but always in the form with the X not the Tau cross. Gallic evidence would therefore favour a fifth or early sixth century date for the Galloway chrisim, for later than this we should expect the X.

The part of the monogram that stood for the Greek rho needs a word. The majuscule rho in Greek is of course P, whereas the corresponding letter in the Latin alphabet is R, and P stands for a different character. Hence it would be quite natural for unlettered stone carvers in the Latin-speaking countries to substitute the Roman for the Greek form of the character R. As a fact however, the substitution seems to have taken place in the East rather than the West. At any rate, among the stone houses of about the 5th century discovered and figured by de Vogué in his *Syrie Centrale* the chrisim with the supposed Latinized form of the rho is much in evidence, as in the example given fig. 10, 4. The P with open loop (k) occurs also on many Byzantine buildings, notably on the Golden Gate of Constantinople and on the Column of Arcadius in that city.<sup>3</sup> It is found too on many Coptic tombstones, as for example in the elegant form, fig. 10, 9, from a slab in the British Museum, of seventh or eighth century date. The evidence indeed seems to show that the modification was first made among Greek-speaking peoples who would not be likely to confuse the Greek and Latin signs for R. Hence it must be concluded that in these oriental instances what looks like a Latin R is only an ornamental open form of the Greek P. This detail of the device may have been carried from the East to Gaul and to North Italy where it is common, while it appears very seldom at Rome and in the south of the peninsula. In Gaul it is found as early as the end of the fourth century, when it surmounts an interesting sepulchral

<sup>1</sup> 'Il y eut une autre forme de chrisime composé de la lettre T surmonté de P, ce qui donna P, et bien que n'offrant pas les éléments du mot *Χριστός*, ce monogramme fit bon service avec les autres et eut la même signification. Impossible d'établir une chronologie rigoureuse entre ces trois types.' Dom. Leclercq in *Dict. d'Arch. Chrét.*, Paris, 1907 f., art. 'Chrisime,' col. 1486. This article supersedes earlier treatments of the theme.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Monnaies Mérovingiennes*, Paris, 1892, p. lxxxv, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Strzygowski, in *Jahrbuch des Instituts*, VIII, 1893, p. 234.

inscription<sup>1</sup> of a lady baptized by St Martin of Tours, and it is especially in vogue in the sixth century. Here in the west, as in Galloway, it would of course be interpreted as an R not a fanciful form of P.

It must be borne in mind that in no form of it does the chrisim appear on any monuments or works of art in Ireland, while in Wales, as Westwood remarks, it is 'of very unusual occurrence.' The most important Welsh example is that figured fig. 11, 1. It is an early sepulchral stone inscribed with the name of one Carausius who is said to be lying 'in this heap of stones.' This may be taken as proof that upright stones, like this one at Penmachno, North Wales, and those in Galloway, were originally bedded in cairns, and in this way is established—or confirmed for there is other evidence of it—the Christian use of this traditional pagan form of sepulchral monument.

The chrisim, as we have seen, was at first a mere abbreviation with a purely literary significance, but later on became a sacred symbol which stood alone or surmounted or was introduced into an inscription with which it had no grammatical connection. In this form it was brought into vogue through its use by Constantine, and it must be noted that it was all along regarded as a form of the cross, for Eusebius expressly tells us that what Constantine saw in the sky was a cross, though the device in which the vision materialized took the shape of the chrisim, and in later art we find sometimes the chrisim used instead of the more normal cross to mark the cruciferous nimbus.<sup>2</sup>

The Constantinian exaltation of the device led to its display with artistic setting and embellishment, and the after consequences of this for monumental art in Great Britain were of great importance. According to Eusebius the banner of Constantine was surmounted by the XP form of the monogram enclosed in a golden crown studded with precious stones, and a laurel crown or a simple or enriched circle round the device, embracing and setting it off, as on the Syrian lintel, fig. 10, 4, and on the Galloway stones, became so common as to be almost universal, and the monogram or the simple cross thus surrounded makes its appearance on innumerable Christian monuments subsequent to the Peace of the Church. There is no question that this is the origin of the familiar wheel of the Celtic cross head. It is called 'Celtic' because it is of very common use in the case of crosses in Ireland, but it is of course an importation from classical lands. Into the chronology of it, or the geographical route by which it reached the shores of Erin, no special inquiry seems to have been made. It is quite possible that the route was not a direct one and that, like other elements in Irish

<sup>1</sup> Le Blaut, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*, Paris, 1856, II, pl. 50.

<sup>2</sup> e.g., Garrucci, *Storia*, IV, Tav. 214, 224.



Christianity, it was transmitted through Wales. There is no space however here to enter on the difficult question of the absolute or



Fig. 11. (1) Early Tombstone of Carausius, at Penmachno, North Wales;  
(2) Stone at Whithorn, Galloway.

relative chronology of the sculptured crosses of Wales, nor to discuss the problem whether it was in Wales or other parts of Britain, or in Ireland, that was begun or accomplished the evolution of the wheel

cross head from the ornamental wreath round the cross or the Christian monogram, so common in Early Christian art on the Continent. Attention must however be called to the stone at Whithorn in Galloway, figured in the photograph fig. 11, 2. This is fortunately datable within comparatively narrow limits, and may be located somewhere about the year 600. Here the cross has assumed the form that is very general from the seventh century onwards where the outlines of the arms are arcs of circles, but it retains as a survival the loop of the P which belongs to the early chrismon device. What is most remarkable is the fact that the cross in its circle is shown as elevated on a stem, and this distinctly represents the normal arrangement in which the cross is not merely incised on a slab but stands free on its own stem detached all round. Here the ring still encircles the whole cross, but on a cross slab at Margam in Glamorganshire, with a somewhat similar device, the treatment has advanced so far that the stem is in one piece with the lower arm of the cross, and this as well as the other arms lies over or cuts through the ring which begins in this way to take a subordinate position in relation to the arms. Another Margam slab, more advanced because originally the cross head was partly shaped and not contained within the rectangle of the slab, shows the arms not only in relief upon the ring but extending beyond it after the regular fashion of the 'Celtic' cross head. There is nothing to fix the date of these Margam slabs but they are not specially early. They are shown together from *Lapidarium Wallie* in fig. 12. It is enough here to have indicated the early stages in the development of the 'Celtic' cross head, which need not be considered Irish in its origin. The Whithorn slab may be regarded as of special interest as a point of departure. The further development of cross heads, which assume in Great Britain and in the Isle of Man a great variety of forms, is a matter concerning mediæval art rather than the Early Christian art with which this paper deals.

With regard to the decorative treatment of the simple cross form as found in the catacombs, this may be seen in the early example

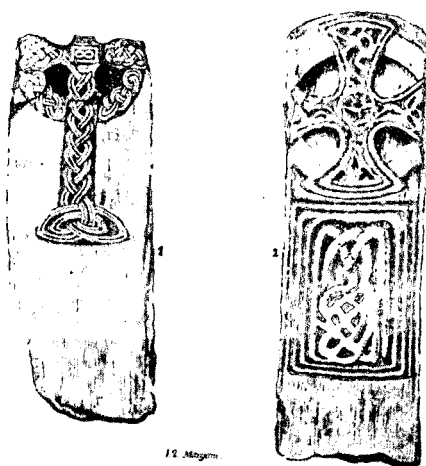


Fig. 12. Two Stones of uncertain date at Margam, South Wales.

figured fig. 10, 2, to begin with the same use of the serif that we find in the letters of the inscription with which the cross is connected; that is, the ends of the upright strokes are a little spread out as an ornamental finish. As a fact the treatment in the classical schools throughout is never more than an extension of this. A more elaborate serif, like that of the elegant characters of the well-known inscriptions of Pope Damasus, leads to a treatment of the cross terminals such as is shown in fig. 9, b and c. In the important fifth-century ivories in the British Museum, on one panel Christ carries a cross in the Latin form and on another is crucified on a Tau cross, the terminals in each case being spread out serif-fashion.<sup>1</sup> When the ends are bifurcated, as in the Galloway examples, there is ultimately formed the eight-pointed cross called 'Maltese.' This occurs in Syria in the fifth or sixth century, as in the example from de Vogué fig. 10, 6.<sup>2</sup> An extension of the outward curve down to the intersection of the arms leads naturally to the cross formed by the arcs of circles which becomes a normal form from about 600 onwards (see fig. 10, 7, 8).<sup>3</sup> Innumerable are the examples of crosses in these simple forms in which there is no special treatment or enlargement at the part where the arms intersect. Fig. 10, 5 is typical of what is found in profusion on the Syrian lintels and in the other works of art enumerated on p. 216.

On works however of one particular class, and in connection with one special phase of Early Christian art, we find emphasis laid on this central region of the cross and with that a more free and fanciful treatment of the cross motive in general. The particular class is that formed by crosses, generally in the precious metals, that enshrine relics and were carried by ecclesiastics or worn upon the person; and the phase of art is that exemplified by Christian, and also as we shall see apparently non-Christian, objects of Teutonic provenance that make their appearance in Germanic cemeteries here and on the Continent. As an example of the first may be taken the pectoral cross found on the body of St Cuthbert at Durham, figured fig. 13, 1. The shape of the cross exhibits an advance on the Roman forms previously noticed. The arc of a circle is still the generating form but this is now used to give a common outline to two adjacent arms instead of two opposite ones. The point specially to observe is the centre where there is a round garnet in a setting that covers the place where a relic could be enshrined, while four smaller garnets are disposed about it, one in each intersection of the arms. These affect the outline of the whole jewel, and it may be remarked that the same features occur in

<sup>1</sup> Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities*, Lond., 1901, pl. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Syrie Centrale*, II, pl. 83.

<sup>3</sup> No. 8 is from De Vogué, I, pl. 49.

some of the carved stone 'High Crosses' of Ireland, as for example at Monasterboice. According to the prevailing fashion of dating British work from Irish, these High Crosses, being of late origin, would be supposed to carry with them a corresponding date for the Durham jewel, but such an inference would be entirely wrong. There is no doubt

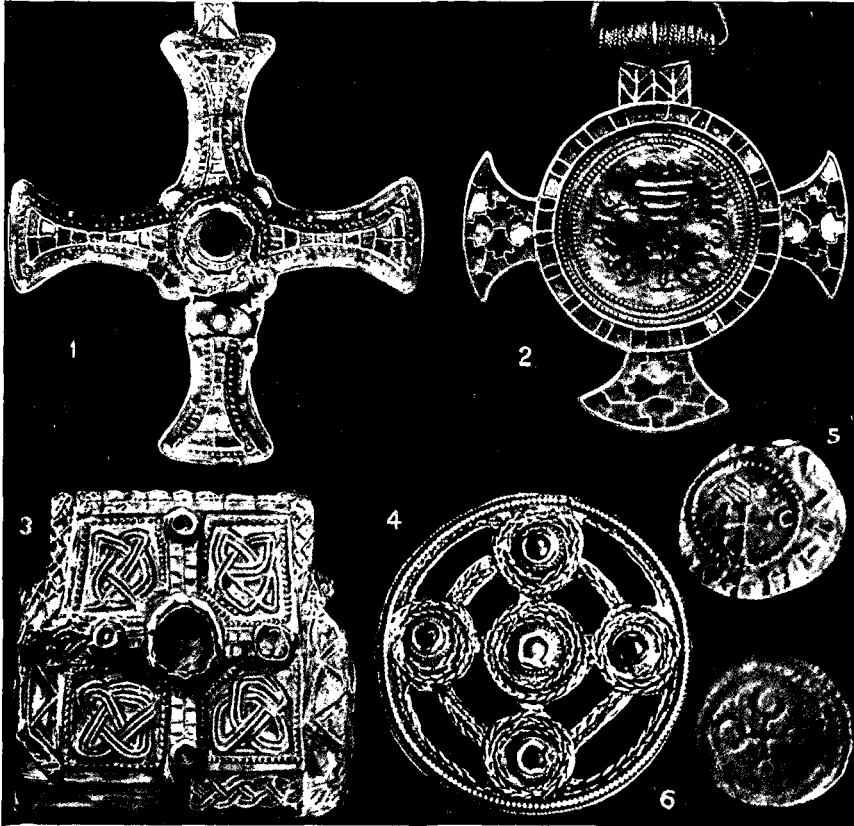


Fig. 13. The Cross in Teutonic tomb furniture, etc., and coins.

whatsoever that the pectoral cross is either Anglo-Saxon or Frankish work of the seventh century, and the detail in question may very likely have been carried to Ireland from Northumbria. In the St Cuthbert cross the central disc does not encroach on the general outline, but, as we have seen, if a relic or some object of special importance were enshrined in this part, the covering medallion might very well increase in size and a form be produced such as is offered by the cross on the 'Herford'

reliquary at Berlin, a Continental-Saxon work of the eighth century, or by the cross on a Merovingian reliquary given fig. 13, 3, and still more markedly by the so-called 'Wilton' pendant in the British Museum found in Norfolk and probably Kentish work of the seventh century, though the large central round here was not for a relic but for a coin of special significance. The piece will be seen fig. 13, 2. Venturi<sup>1</sup> notices that these metal crosses of Early Christian date are very rare, the large examples at Brescia and Ravenna where this encroachment is seen, being of mediæval origin. The famous Justin reliquary cross at St Peter's, Rome, a classical piece of the sixth century, does not show it, and on the whole this central enlargement seems rather a Teutonic feature. This impression will be strengthened by a glance at fig. 14, 1, copied from an illustration in Baudot's Report on the excavation of the Burgundian cemetery at Charnay, which shows a collection of crosses of fanciful shapes, evincing the barbaric taste to which this treatment of the cross form may be ascribed. Another Burgundian piece in the Museum at St Germain, fig. 14, 2, is marked with a cross of almost the exact pattern so much in evidence at Hartlepool and Clonmacnois, and is Christian work of about 500 A.D. It is an inlaid buckle plate. In our own country in some early Jutish fibulæ of the pagan period the cross with enlarged intersection and terminals is a common motive of ornament. Though probably used without Christian significance, the motive evidently existed in the repertory of the Anglo-Saxon craftsman, and would be ready to hand when cross motives were required in Christian times. Fig. 14, 3 and 4, give examples. The jewel found at Twickenham, of seventh-century Saxon origin, fig. 13, 4, gives, no doubt as a coincidence though the piece is of Christian date, a cross with circles on centre and arms and a wheel connecting the latter. See also *The Arts in Early England*, IV, pl. cxlv, for a Kentish example.

Coins are in this matter instructive. On the early Anglo-Saxon 'sceattas,' and on the Merovingian 'trientes' which preceded them, the cross is of constant occurrence, and there are sometimes circles and dots in the field which in some cases coalesce with the cross forming ornamental terminals to the arms. Fig. 13, 5 and 6, Anglo-Saxon sceattas of about the seventh century in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, illustrate what is here said. No. 5 shows the dots and circles, and in No. 6 the latter are seen affixed as terminals to the arms of a cross. We may find here the explanation of an ornamental cross form that occurs occasionally on Anglian carved stones in the north of England, and a somewhat rude example of which in a cross head at Carlisle is given fig. 14, 5. It has the central round and complete rounds on the ends of

<sup>1</sup> *Storia dell' Arte Italiana*, Milano, 1901 etc., vol. I, *ad fin.*



the arms, as on the slabs Hartlepool 8 and Lindisfarne 9, 11, and the sceat coin shows that the motive originates in early Teutonic art, whence it was taken over to serve a Christian purpose on Anglian sculptured stones, as well as in the pages of MSS.

The derivation of the form of the cross with which we have been

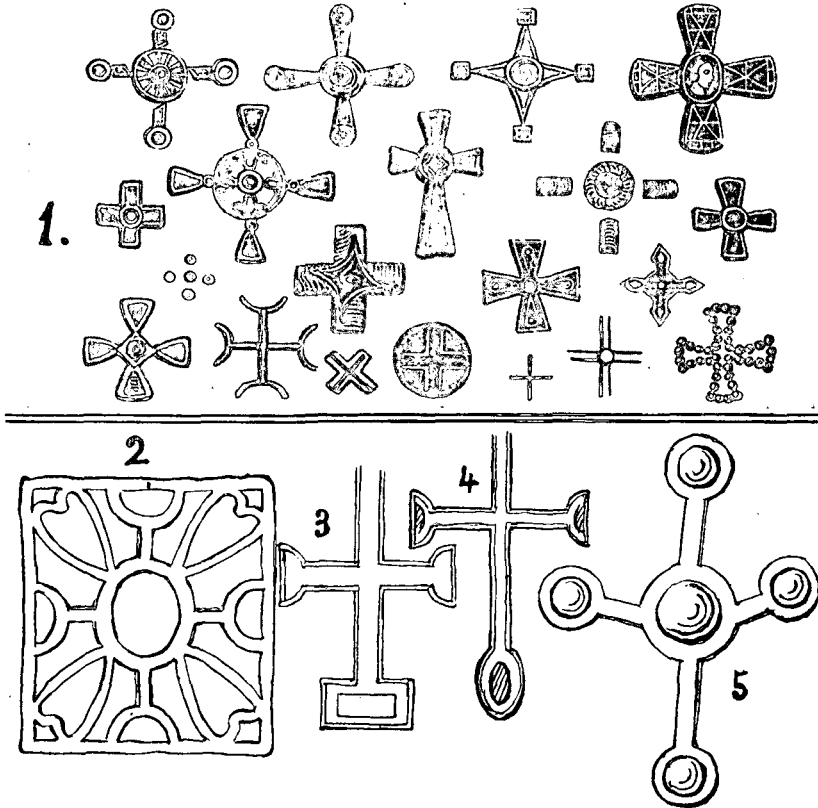


Fig. 14. Crosses in Teutonic tomb furniture, etc.

specially concerned has now been made sufficiently clear. Its appearance on the Hartlepool tombstones in the seventh or early eighth century is easily explained from Anglian sources, and Ireland may be left altogether out of the question. The intercourse between Great Britain and the sister island accounts for the transmission of the form to Erin, where it seems at one time to have possessed considerable vogue. That this time should be later than the time when the form was in use in England is all in accordance with the historical situation,

and is moreover a fact of considerable significance for the interpretation of the artistic phenomena of this whole period of British art.

The assumption of Celtic priority in all matters artistic, spoken of *antea*, p. 210, has had a considerable effect on students of Anglo-Saxon art. There is one question in the domain of that art which is fundamental, and this is the date of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, for on the answer we give to this depends the arrangement and chronological grouping of the almost innumerable fragments of carved stones of the pre-conquest period in the northern and midland parts of England, with which are connected examples in great profusion in Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. Until the two outstanding monuments just mentioned are located in a fixed chronological position the rest of the story cannot be told. Hence anything that has a bearing direct or indirect on this much discussed chronological problem is of value to archaeology, and this may explain, and if necessary excuse, the length to which this paper has been extended. The conclusions at which we have arrived, though in themselves of minor intrinsic importance, are related to the larger question. Among the arguments used by those who oppose an early date for the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses is one based on a comparison with Irish monuments. The highly decorated Irish crosses are comparatively late, of the tenth and two following centuries, and it has been assumed that similar work in England and Scotland must be of contemporary or of later date. This view is expressed by Miss Margaret Stokes in the following words<sup>1</sup>: 'The evidence for the age of the Irish inscribed crosses being such as we have stated, they may be considered as giving a key to that of monuments in Scotland and the North of England, which exhibit sculpture of a similar character, and we are therefore inclined to question the very early dates' proposed for some Northumbrian examples. Mr Romilly Allen, in his *Early Christian Symbolism*, p. 85, takes the same view. 'The evidence,' he writes, 'as to the age of the sculptured stones of Northumbria is rather unreliable. . . . The general result of the above investigation is to show that in Ireland, where Celtic art originated, none of the ornamented sculptured stones can be proved to be older than the ninth century, and therefore it is very improbable that those in England, Scotland, and Wales can be ascribed to an earlier period.' The demonstration in this paper that in one particular detail of the art called 'Celtic,' the cross with central circle and semicircular or circular terminals, the form did not 'originate in Ireland,' but was imported thither from the domain of Teutonic culture, is sufficient ground for a reconsideration of the current theories as to the relation of Irish and British artistic forms in the Early Christian centuries.

<sup>1</sup> *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, Dublin, 1911, p. 108.