Chapter 7
Early Monuments of West Kirby

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(Liverpool, 1928), pp. 14–26.

Collingwood discusses the Norse stone-work from West Kirby. His illustrations are particularly valuable, coming from the pen of a careful and knowledgeable scholar, and because some of the monuments have deteriorated since this article was written.

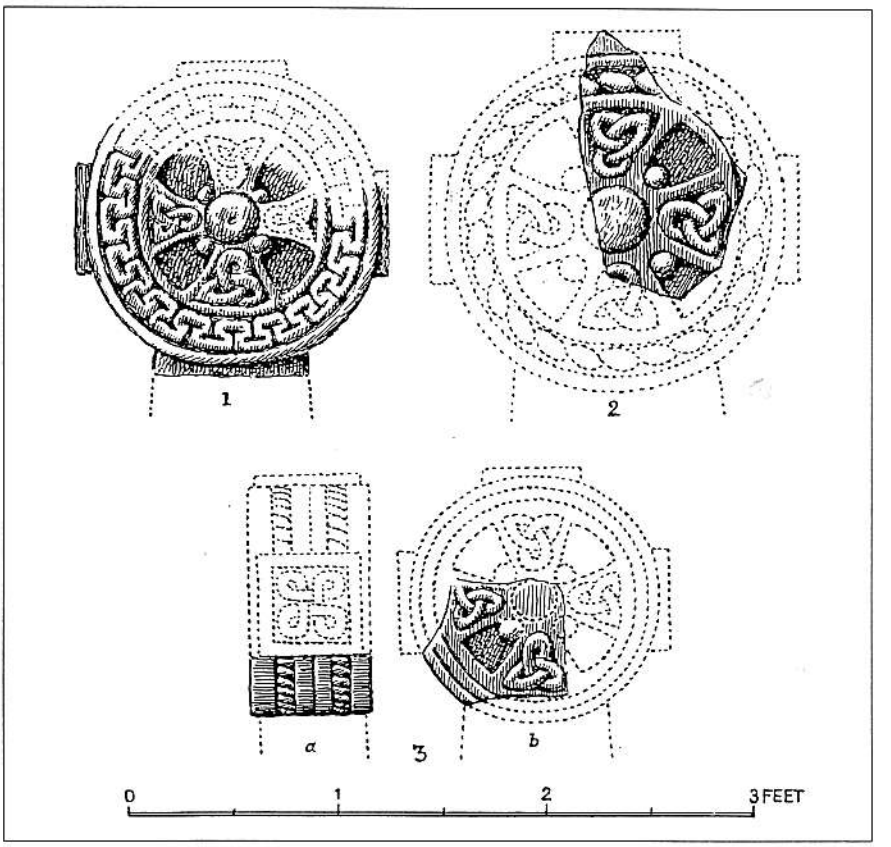
Norse Crosses

7.1. At the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, is the cross-head sketched as fig. 7.1. In the drawing, the existing parts of the fragment are put in with firm lines, and the dotted lines indicate restoration to complete the design. This head seems to be that which was found at Hilbre in 1852.[1] It is drawn in H. Ecroyd Smith's *Reliques of . . . St. Bridget and St. Hildeburga*,[2] though the sketch there given represents horse-shoe forms where the stone has triquetrae, worn but traceable, and the pattern on the wheel is made too open, losing its character as a T⊥T fret of the ordinary type, seen in tenth and eleventh-century crosses all over the north of England and south of Scotland. The material is red local sandstone and the radius of the head to the ends of the arms is 9". The thickness across the wheel is 4.75" and the boss in the centre stands another inch from the ground. The spandrels are not pierced through but sunk about an inch, and the four small bosses are not raised but lie in the hollows between the arms. The back of the stone is of the same design as the front, and the whole is rather roughly hacked, not smoothly chiselled. The small hole in the centre of the boss is fairly frequent in late crosses; it is supposed to have been intended to hold a jewel, a glass bead or coloured stone, which would add to the colour-effect when the cross was painted, as usual, in red, blue, and yellow, picking out the pattern as in the coloured illuminations of contemporary manuscripts. The shaft is lost, but it was probably short, like those of similar cross-heads at St John's Chester, which indeed must have been the work of the same carver or of his school.

7.2. In the museum at West Kirby are three fragments of cross-heads — strictly speaking, two fragments, of which one is broken. This last is fig. 7.2, the joint of its two parts neglected and the cross-head restored on the analogy of the series to which it obviously belongs. The combined fragment measures 15.25" by 8.5" by about 5" thick, giving a cross-head of 11" radius to the ends of the

[1] A. Hume, 'The Hilbre cross', *THSLC* 15 (1863), 232–3.
[2] Liverpool, 1870.

arms. The boss has been chiselled off, no doubt when the stone was used as building-material. It is of the same local red sandstone as 7.1, similarly carved with hacked touches; and the back of the cross-head shows traces of the same design as the front. The carver has bungled one of the triquetrae — an error not infrequent in late work. 7.2 differs from 7.1 chiefly in having round the wheel, instead of a fret, a row of pellets or bold cable; it is difficult to see which, in the very small fragment now left, but in the drawing to the paper by E. W. Cox,[3] which seems to have been made when there was rather more of the stone, it is given as a cable. The St John's cross-heads show both ways of ornamenting the wheel.



Figs 7.1–7.3.

7.3. The other piece here, fig. 7.3, is also red sandstone, 7.75" by 6.5" and 7" thick. This works out into a head of about 8" radius, but extremely thick for its size. The wheel seen frontwise bears only two incised moulding-lines, as also in crosses at St John's, and like those crosses it is ornamented on the edge. It is

[3] 'Fragment of a Saxon cross found at West Kirby', *Journal of the Architectural and Historical Society of Chester* N.S. 5 (1895), 108.

suggested in Cox's drawing that there were four cables alternately set, but at present it looks as here drawn. The bit of pattern on the end of the arm is given only to show how that part would be ornamented, for the fracture of the stone comes just where the arm-ends occur, leaving the arc of the wheel fairly complete.

We have then remains of three crosses from the parish (if 7.1 is really from Hilbre) in a style once common hereabouts. Besides these three, there are six of the same kind at St John's, Chester, and the Bromborough cross was of the same design in all except the four small bosses in the spandrels. That is to say, whereas the usual wheel-head has the cross-arms overlying the wheel, these have the wheel superimposed upon the cross-arms. This is also the character of the Penmon cross in Anglesey, which, however, has no small bosses; the Maen-y-chwyfan (Flintshire) has the small bosses but the cross-arms do not project beyond the wheel; the cross at Diserth (Flintshire) is like the Penmon head, but the spandrels are cusped, as in some Cornish examples, suggesting a thirteenth-century date and a late imitation of the type, which does not occur elsewhere in Wales or Cheshire. In Yorkshire there is a solitary instance at Gargrave-in-Craven,[4] like the Penmon cross; but there are none in the north of England besides, except a few in Cumberland, though round-headed crosses without projecting arms ae fairly well known.

In Cumberland, at Dearham, the churchyard cross, now in the church, is one of this small group; its chain-pattern connects it closely with the Gosforth cross, which must date about AD 1000. At Aspatria, the cross now also removed from the churchyard into the church has ornament of that period; the remnant of its head suggests the same type of wheel.[5]

At Rockcliff on the Solway is a cross with a head of this type — projecting arms, superimposed wheel, but no small bosses (i.e. it is like the Penmon cross) — with a shaft which has offsets or horizontal bands projecting from the general outline. The ornament is that of the period round about AD 1000. At Bromfield (Cumberland) or rather at the farm of High Aketon, to which it was removed in the eighteenth century from the church, is a cross-head of this kind; and at Bromfield church is a shaft almost exactly like that at Rockcliff. The head and shaft may not belong to one monument, but there can be no doubt that the same carver worked at the two places about the year 1000. And when we consider the infrequency of this type, and the fact that all examples occur within the areas held by Norse-descended settlers in the tenth and eleventh centuries, there is nothing against the inference that the same carver went to Gargrave and Penmon and Bromborough. The Chester and West Kirkby type, with the addition of four small bosses, looks like an elaboration of the simpler form, either by the same carver in his later life or by his pupil. This means a date somewhat later than 1000, and indeed the Penmon cross cannot, by its ornament, be so early; it and

[4] W. G. Collingwood, 'Anglian and Anglo-Danish sculpture in the West Riding, with addenda to the North and East Ridings and York, and a general review of the early Christian monuments of Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 23 (1915), 129–299, at p. 174.

[5] For illustrations of the examples here mentioned see the writer's *Northumbrian Crosses*, pp. 142 ff., 153, 157.

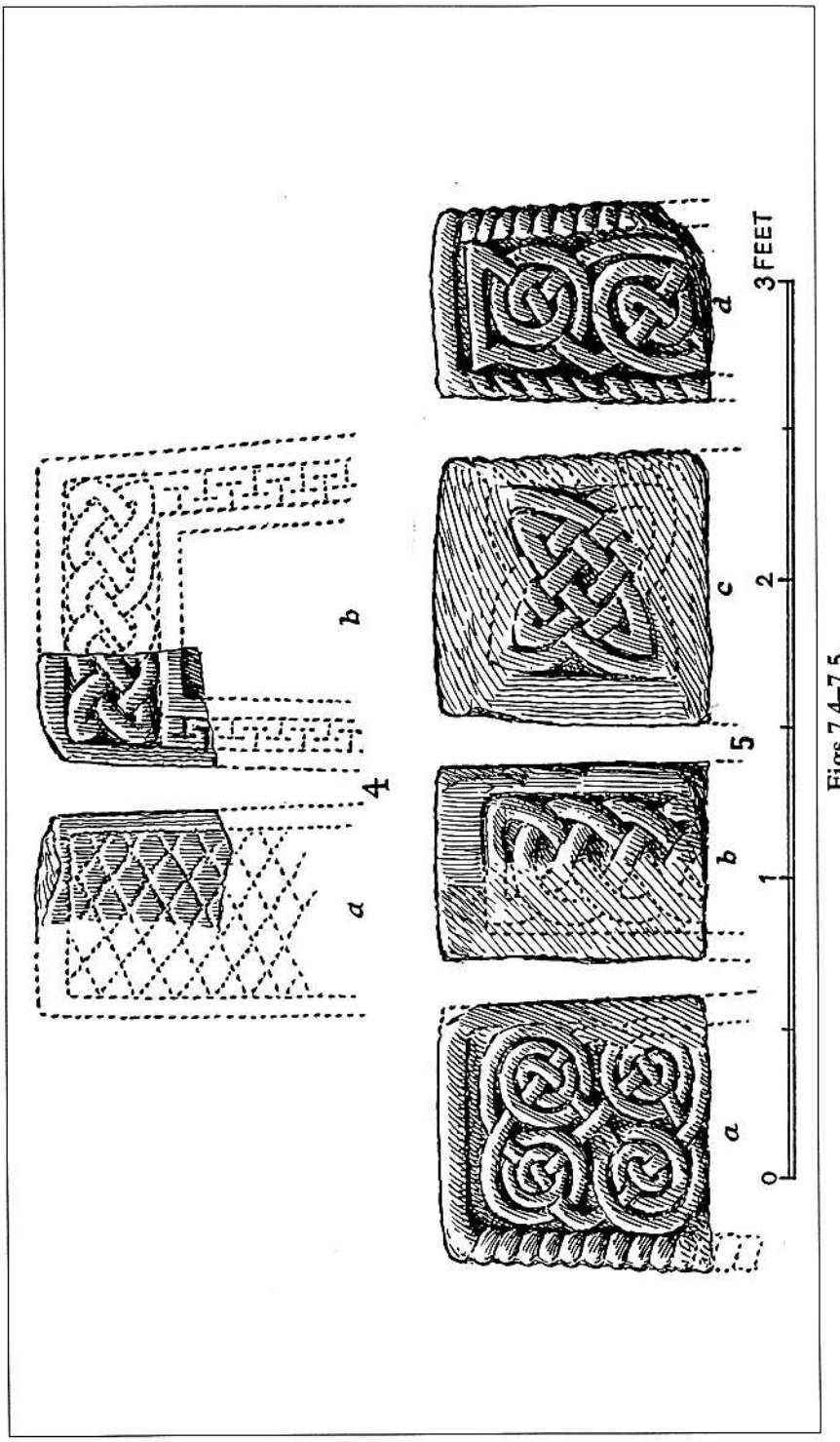
the Maen-y-chwyfan must be perhaps as much as a quarter of a century after the Cumberland examples. The Chester and West Kirby type therefore can hardly be placed otherwise than *temp.* King Knút, and late in his reign — say about 1030. Earlier than that the type could hardly have been developed; later, the traditional T⊥T pattern would have gone out of fashion in the north of England.

The cross shafts.

7.4. Of two fragments in the museum at West Kirby, being remnants of pre-Norman cross-shafts, one (found in 1893) is of red sandstone with rather deeply hacked carving. The stone measures 7.5" by 8" by 7". Figs 7.4a and b are two adjacent sides; the rest is broken away. As restored in dotted lines, it gives a shaft of about 12" by 8" section; the broader face may possibly have been not so broad, but then the panel enclosed would be extremely narrow. The depth of ground in the fragment remaining of this panel suggests that it was not intended for an inscription (which does not need deep sinking); but for either a figure or a boldly-relieved piece of ornament. Side a is simply cross-broached in hacked lines. In some cases, as at Ilkley museum, at Whithorn, and on the Nigg stone, there are unfinished panels with the medial line of a plait or its outline sketched in this way; but if this cross-broaching was intended for the medial lines of a double-bead basket-plait, one can only say that the carver has bungled it, and did not proceed any further. On the other hand, in some late crosses a reticulation takes the place of properly designed plait-work (see 7.8 *infra*); but that was not done as long as interlacing was in demand and in supply, and side b shows that this stone was carved by one who was quite able to execute the work as required in the late tenth or early eleventh century. There are cases in which it seems obvious that the master-carver chalked the lines on the stone and left his assistant to carry them out, and the assistant misunderstood the directions. This is what perhaps happened here; and as the stones were painted, no doubt mistakes were more or less concealed. The date of this shaft might be rather earlier than the cross-heads, but not necessarily so. It is too thick to fit any of them, if it is regarded as the neck of the cross; but if it is a section of the shaft, cut off lower down, it might belong to one of them.

7.5. The other fragment is also too bulky to fit the heads except as the lower part of a shaft, and it looks like the neck of a lost cross. It is a block of red sandstone, 11" high by 11" by 8", ornamented on all four sides (figs. 7.5a, b, c, d) with plaits made of neatly cut ropes or beads, and it has a cable on two of the arrises. It has been so well carved that at first sight it suggest the palmy days of Anglian craftsmanship. But if we compare the knots with known examples we see that it is not so early as it looks.

Side *a* has a pattern something like the motive of no. 662 in Romilly Allen's analysis of interlaced work (*Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*), though it is more elaborate and therefore probably later than the instances of this type, namely Lindisfarne, Nigg, Strathmartine, Barrochan, and Penally. None of these is pre-Danish; most of them are certainly eleventh century. Side *b* has a simple plait of four, common in the later crosses. Side *c* has Romilly Allen's no. 767, for which he refers to St Just-in-Penwith and St Neot, both of them late in the series of Cornish crosses, and probably not early in the eleventh century. Side *d* is an



Figs 7.4–7.5.

elaboration of his no. 661, which is found in the buttress of Ripon Cathedral — a ninth-century (?) stone built in there, at Chester-le-Street (late tenth or eleventh century), at Monifieth (*Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, fig. 275D), and at Meigle on the very late hogback with a gridiron pattern (*Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, fig. 318A). All these analogies tend to suggest that the West Kirby stone 7.5 is of the eleventh century, in spite of its good carving, which after all is not better than the work on the Chester-Wirral cross-heads.

These two shafts seem to be of that Chester school, *temp.* Knút, which produced the crosses at St John's and the three heads already noticed.

The hogback

7.6. The recumbent tombstone — 'hogback' for short — in the West Kirby museum is a late form of a type common in the north of England. It originates in the house-shaped Roman tombs with tiled roofs, as seen at York. The next stage was to carve the whole thing in stone as a kind of sarcophagus, as at Ravenna. Then in Anglo-Saxon England it was occasionally made as a solid model of a shrine, to cover the grave, as at Fordham in Kent; and in the ninth century it was used in Yorkshire with ornament of the pre-Danish kind, as at Dewsbury and York. In the tenth century the idea was accepted by Anglo-Danish carvers, who put their own style of ornament on the vertical walls, and continued to imitate the tiles on the sloping sides of the roof, with figures of bears on the gable-ends, as at Brampton near Northallerton. Later in the tenth century the Anglo-Norse modified the type to their taste; well-known examples are at the Giant's Grave, Penrith, and the curious stone at Heysham near Lancaster. At the end of the century and in the eleventh were carved the two remarkable hogbacks at Gosforth, Cumberland; one with a tiled roof and the two armies on the wall, and the other with snakes on the sides and a roof apparently imitating thatch held down with crossed bands. This brings us to the close of the pre-Norman period, when coped recumbent gravestones replaced the hogback with an arched ridge, though at Hexham is a belated example of about 1080–5.[6]

Now the West Kirby hogback is obviously later than most — so much later that the original meaning of the house-shape has been forgotten. Instead of bevelling off the top part of the stone to make a gable section, it is merely rounded a little, and the forms intended for tiles are carved on a vertical face, so that they do not tell their tale but look like big drops running down the wall. On the rounded shoulder above them is a row of what may be called 'cart-wheels' pattern — pairs of rings joined by a sort of axle, drawn as a child might draw it. Above these there is a simple ridge-moulding, 2" broad; the small bit still left shows that it was a plain bead. Beneath the tiles is a very rude plait incised with hacked lines, not following on in the true sequence of a plait which is meant to represent a real strap knotted together.

[6] W. G. Collingwood, 'Early carved stones at Hexham', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, 1 (1925), 65–92, at pp. 91–92.

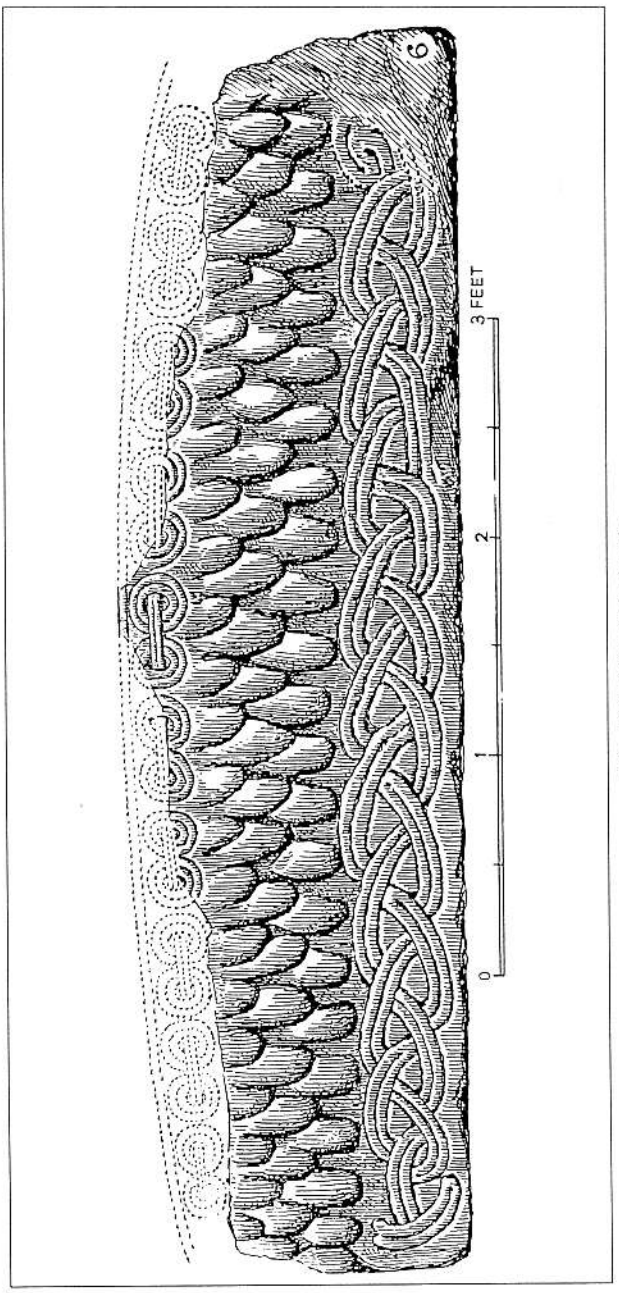


Fig. 7.6: The Hogback.

As to these patterns: all early plait is more or less naturalistic; it preserves some idea of a real set of entangled cords or straps. If the design loses that character it means that the work is of a late period when the original intention had passed out of mind. Moreover, if the medial line in three or four places in the dexter part of the design was meant to stop short of the crossing (and is not mere wear, or careless work) it is interesting because that was a trick of a carver in West Cumberland and of the same, or his pupil, in the Whithorn group of disk-faced crosses. This might suggest that the carver of the West Kirby hogback had seen such things in Cumberland. This is likely in view of the close connexion of Cumbria with the Viking settlements in Cheshire; and in Cumberland, examples of hogbacks from which this might have been hinted are fairly common.

The 'cart-wheels' pattern is unusual. A scrap of it occurs on the sinister arm of the 'Thor' cross at Bride, Isle of Man,[7] where it may be only a bungled ring-twist, though Mr Kermode (p. 180) remarks that it is like the forms of the dragon's heart on the spit, when Sigurd was roasting it. That cross is perhaps rather later than 1000, as it is of the style following the school of Gaut Bjarnarson; and Dr Haakon Shetelig[8] dates this school to the later half of the tenth century. In the north of England there is something like this pattern on a tenth-century cross from Gainford[9] and on a rounded-shaft cross at Gilling West[10] which is probably early eleventh century, and nearer still at Whalley. But as a running pattern it was not commonly used; Romilly Allen does not give it in *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, nor is it found in Wales. It can hardly be earlier than the middle of the eleventh century.

The back of the stone is like the front, except that all the patterns are pushed higher up by a plain band, like a plinth, filling 4" of the base. The lower parts of the ends seem to have been trimmed away, perhaps when the stone was used as a lintel; the whole length is now 5' 9", but was originally 6' or more, to fit a grave of that length. The thickness is 9" at the base, tapering to 7" a foot higher. In the middle it rises to about 19", falling to about 15" at the ends, as restored. But all the top of the stone has been broken away by weathering, because the carver did not understand his material and 'face-bedded' his stone — that is to say, turned it so that the bedding or cleavage was vertical, allowing rain in to soak into the cracks which the frost opened up and split away, while it lay in its original position over the grave.

It is noteworthy that the stone used is not of local origin. It has been supposed to have come from Storeton, but this is said by Mr E. B. Royden to be impossible.[11] H. Ecroyd Smith thought that it was from Halifax or Bradford, and

[7] P. M. C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (London, 1907), plate xlvii.

[8] 'Manx crosses—relating to Great Britain and Norway', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 9 (1925), 253–74.

[9] Durham Cathedral Library, no. xxxvii.

[10] W. G. Collingwood, 'Anglian and Anglo-Danish sculpture in the North Riding of Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 19 (1907), 267–413, at p. 322.

[11] Attempts to locate the source of this stone were made by E. B. Royden. Prof. Boswell of Liverpool University examined a fragment of the West Kirby hogback and found it to be not magnesian limestone but sandstone; and not local stone, but resembling sandstone from the

it is like the stone found in part of Yorkshire, but a poor piece. The carving is not Yorkshire work, however the stone was procured. An idea that it came from Ireland probably means that its patterns suggested to some antiquary of the past a resemblance to Irish ornament; but hogbacks were not made in Ireland. They are found rarely in Scotland, very rarely in Wales and Cornwall. They are not Celtic but characteristic of Anglo-Danish and Anglo-Norse monumental art as developed in England. This West Kirby hogback must belong to the time when the earlier tradition was passing out of mind, but not so wholly forgotten as in the Hexham design; and this suggests a date of about the middle of the eleventh century, rather than before 1050.

Grave Covers

7.7. The grey sandstone slab 7.7 was at one time at Hilbre. Ecroyd Smith says (p. 30) that is was found in September 1864 in the place supposed to have been the cemetery on the island; and he gives its size as 5' 4" by 21" at the head, 22" at the shoulder, and 17" at the foot. He drew it with eight bosses or pellets, four of which he placed between the inner and the outer circles. The sketch here given is from the stone in West Kirby museum. The carving is certainly much worn down and hard to see.

One point, however, emerges: that this is an example of the cross-slab series with swollen stems. Others are the slabs at Kirkclaugh, Minnigaff, and Anwoth in Galloway,[12] which can be dated about 1100. The argument, briefly, is that these three sites are associated with Norman mottes, and could not have been founded much before that date; and that the rusticated ornament on the Kirkclaugh and Minnigraf stones is matched by the debased reticulation which takes the place of true interlacing on stones at Cawthorne and Kirby Hill, south-west Yorkshire, and at Burton-in-Kendal, where history and typology combine to give the same period.

The four bosses in a circle tell us little. They are found in slabs, apparently late, at Meiford, Montgomery, and Llanwnnws, Cardigan,[13] but that is not enough to fix the design as particularly Celtic. It seems to be of the latest Viking style, common to all the Norse settlements on this seaboard.

7.8. Connected with this in a remarkable way is the small fragment at West Kirby museum with a frame of step-pattern, an inner row of zigzag, and on the panel upright lines crossed with diagonals. This is the motive of the back of the Kirkclaugh stone of which the front bears a swollen-stemmed cross; that is to say, it bears incised lines giving reticulation instead of interlacing. If one works

Upper Coal Measures near Ruabon and Cefn. As the ice-movement in the district was from NNW to SSE no blocks from Yorkshire, east Lancashire or the Ruabon country could be ice-borne to Wirral. Dr H. H. Thomas of H.M. Geological Survey agreed that the sample was probably Coal-Measure sandstone; Thomas and Boswell inclined to Upper Coal-Measure Age, and they thought the colour suggested the Cefn stone, near Ruabon; but north or north-east Lancashire as a possible source of similar material could not be ruled out.

[12] Illustrated in W. G. Collingwood, 'The early crosses of Galloway', *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3rd series, 10 (1925 for 1922-3), 205–31, at pp. 228 f.

[13] J. O. Westwood, *Lapidarium Walliae* (Oxford, 1876–9), plates 72, 68.

out the design, it suggests the foot of the cross, of which the stem is here made of four lines and the ground is filled with 'criss-cross' at random; which is the Kirkclaugh motive, except that the cross-stem there is made of two lines only. The Minnigaff stone is similar but even more rude and has a swollen stem. This group cannot be regarded as Celtic and of high antiquity; there are no parallels to support such an idea; but it seems to have been a fashion, found in Yorkshire, Westmorland, Galloway, and Cheshire, of the period when the old traditional interlaced design had died out, and was replaced with a careless, debased substitute for ornament.

This West Kirby fragment, found in 1893, is of red sandstone, 8" high, 10" wide and 6" thick; the lines are rudely hacked without any attempt to work out forms in relief.

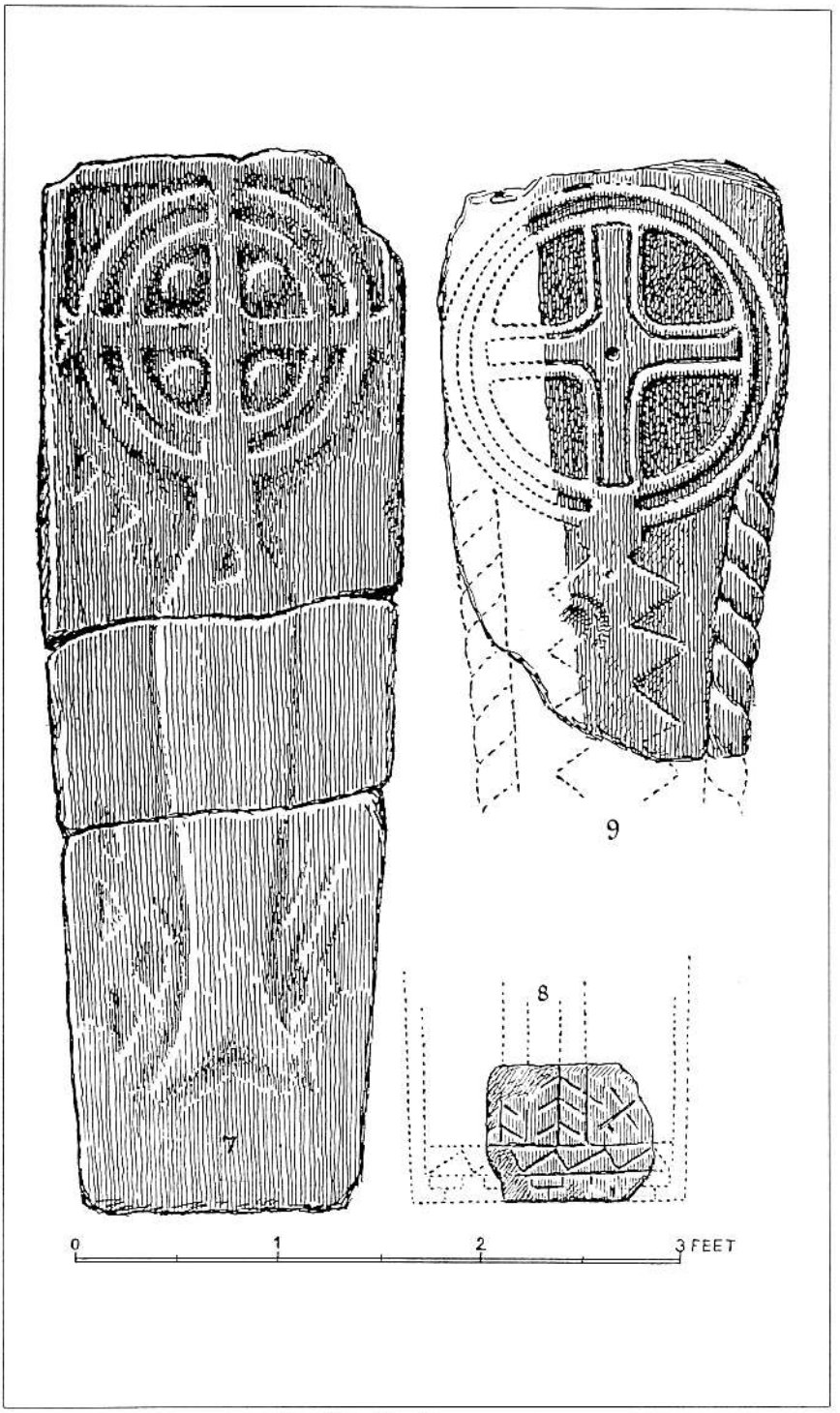
7.9. Part of a large grave-slab at the museum, of light reddish sandstone, 2' 11" in height, 20" wide, and about 6" thick. The face is hacked in relief; the sunk spandrels are pecked over, and so are the edges; the back is roughly chiselled. In the centre of the cross-head is a hole, perhaps for a jewel, and on the dexter side of the cross-stem are remains of a form which does not seem to be meant for ornament but possibly means that the stone, when less fragmentary, was used as a gatepost, as in many other instances. The stem has been outlined with a chevron, like the late Cornish headstones at Helston, Scorrier, and Clowance, Crowan.[14] There are chevrons of this sort, though more rudely done, in Cumberland, at Crosscanonby and Egremont[15] on slabs which seem to be rather early twelfth century. That the old traditions lasted well on into the century is now not to be doubted: the proof, in architectural matters, is given by Dr John Bilson in his papers on Weaverthorpe and Wharram-le-Street;[16] and in monumental ornament it is increasingly clear that the overlap-period, in the north of England and in various out-of-the-way districts, lasted long. This West Kirby slab, fig. 7.9, seems to be an instance, and though it cannot be dated closely it must be of the times, politically Norman but socially not quite Normanized, which here may have lasted well on into the twelfth century.

(No illustration). Standing in the re-entrant angle of the church wall next to the porch, outside, there is a massive grave-slab which needs no illustration. It bears a plain Latin cross, with the upper arm expanding very slightly, sketched with incised lines on a plain field. The stone measures 4' 8" long, and about 18.5" above the cross arms, by 7.5" thick at the foot to 8" at the head. In the absence of ornament there is little to fix its date except that a similar slab was found at York in association with pre-Norman remains and with another slab bearing a cross of the form seen in the leaden plaque found at St Austin's Abbey, Canterbury, and inscribed to Wulfmæg, sister of Abbot Wulfric, with the date of

[14] A. G. Langdon, *Old Cornish Crosses* (Truro, 1896), pp. 331, 333, 329.

[15] R. Bower, 'Grave slabs in the Diocese of Carlisle. Part II', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, New Series 9 (1909), 1–23, at p. 6; idem, '~. Part III', ibid, 12 (1912), 86–98, at pp. 94 f.

[16] 'Weaverthorpe church and its builder', *Archaeologia* 72 (1922), 51–70; 'Wharram-le-Street church, Yorkshire, and St. Rule's church, St. Andrews', *Archaeologia* 73 (1923), 55–72.



Figs 7.7–7.9: Grave covers.

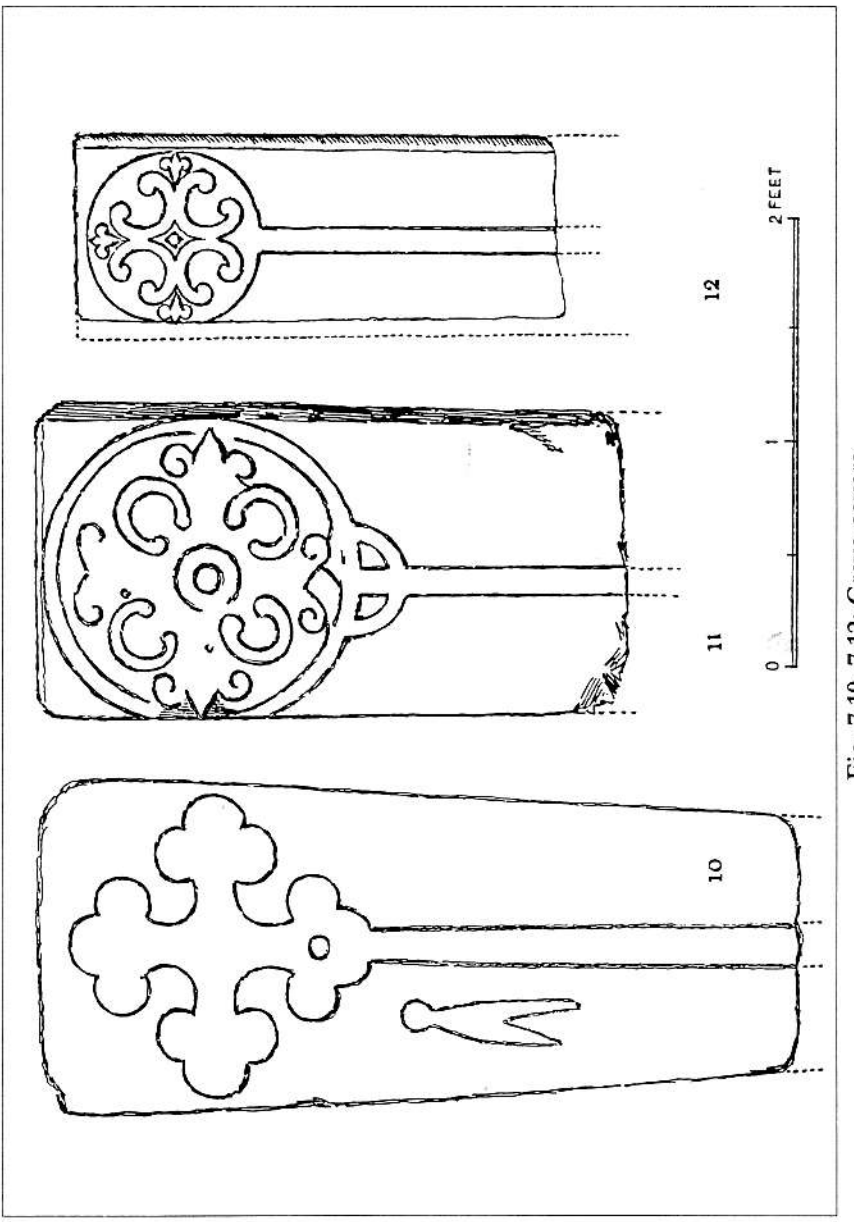


Fig. 7.10–7.12: Grave covers.

her death, 11 March 1063.[17] Such a grave-slab was therefore possible in the latter half of the eleventh century.

7.10. The grave-slab lying in the churchyard at West Kirby as a tombstone to some seventeenth (?) century burial is of red sandstone, 3' 6" long (but originally longer) and 18" to 14" wide. It is carved in low relief with the shears which perhaps indicate the tonsure of a person in holy orders.

7.11. In the museum is a slab of light reddish-grey freestone, 2' 7" long (originally more), 17.5" wide at the head and 6.5" thick. The surface is smooth, perhaps by wear, and the forms chiselled with incised lines, not very truly set out.

7.12. Also in the museum, and of the same stone as 7.11, is a slab now 26.5" long by 10.5" wide at the head. The arris which remains is rounded off; the other side has been cut away. These three slabs, 7.10–7.12, are of the type usually attributed to the thirteenth century. They have no traces of inscriptions except the late lettering (neglected in the drawing) on 7.10.

History from the Monuments

Looking back upon this series of monuments we find nothing at West Kirby or Hilbre quite so early as the runic stone from Overchurch, now in the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum in Birkenhead. In this the runes, language and personal name are Anglian, though the design on top of the stone makes it late in the Anglian period. Perhaps it may be dated about AD 900, or near the time when the first Norse began to settle in Wirral.

It is the popular belief that wherever the Norse came they destroyed the churches, and no doubt this was more or less true of their earlier raids. But by the time of their settlement — here about 900, in Cumberland about 925 — they had become Christianized to some extent. We have an instance of that in Orlyg, who went from the Hebrides about this time to Iceland, and built a church to St Columba as told in the *Landnámabók*; and when we find in Lancashire and Cumberland churches with dedications to Gaelic saints and with monuments of Anglo-Norse type dating from the middle of the tenth century onward — with Norse place-names and other hints of similar origin also involved — we can hardly doubt that these were the chapels of Christian 'Vikings' who had brought their religion with them from Ireland, Man, or the Hebrides.

In a few cases it seems that such settlers took over existing Anglian churches, and did not destroy but preserved them. At Urswick-in-Furness there is an Anglian stone of about 900, followed by a Norse stone of 950 or later, suggesting a community of the church under new owners. At Waberthwaite near Ravenglass there is an Anglian stone of the late ninth century, followed by an Anglo-Norse monument of the late tenth, which shows so much of the Anglian tradition together with later style as to make it certain that there was no violent disruption of the history of the place when the Norse came; and across the Esk, at Muncaster, there is at least one monument of the late tenth century in a purely Norse style. That seems to mean the continuance of the earlier church and the foundation, not far from it, of another, by the Norse settlers. And, what is

[17] R. U. Potts, 'A Saxon burial cross found at St. Austin's Abbey', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 37 (1925), 211–13.

interesting in our present study, we find dedications to St Bridget, as at West Kirby, in West Cumberland at Beckermet, Brigham, and Bridekirk, where the monuments and place-names — there is no other early history — suggest church-foundations of the later part of the tenth century. In a word, all the coast from the Dee to the Solway shows ninth-century Anglian churches and tenth-century churches attributable to Norse-descended settlers from Gaelic regions; and it is much more probable that the names of Gaelic saints were imported by the Norse than that they should have survived five hundred years of previous vicissitudes, through which there is no trace of such a continuity as would be required to keep the tradition alive.[18]

From the absence of any stones of the tenth century we may infer that the St Bridget's of the Norse was rather a poor church in rude surroundings. Stone monuments are not made until there is well-being and until circumstances permit the growth of artistic taste. This did not come about at West Kirby until King Knút's time, and then perhaps the demand was created by the supply. There was someone at Chester who was making fine crosses; his fame reached West Kirby and people there wished to be in the fashion. They sent for him and he made them examples of his best work (figs 7.1, 7.2, 7.3), and either he or another of the time executed the cross-shafts (figs 7.4, 7.5). Now, perhaps, one sees — or fancies — how the side a of 7.4 came to be bungled. The master was working away from home; he was rather in a hurry and left a less important part of his job to his man.

After that, no more monuments for a generation or so. Crosses had gone out of fashion and were replaced in England by headstones and hogbacks, though they were still made in Scotland and Ireland, Wales and Cornwall. Some important person had died and the memorial was put into the hands of an artificer who was hardly a professional monumental mason, but had seen hogbacks in Cumberland; and he did his best (fig. 7.6).

Fifty years or so later there was a fresh occasion for tombstones, and this time the West Kirby people had among them a 'smith' who could make the kind of thing which then satisfied their cousins in Galloway and elsewhere. To him may be attributed the Hilbre slab (fig. 7.7) and the 'rusticated' slab (fig. 7.8), with a date of about 1100. Later perhaps, but not much later, the West Kirby slab (fig. 7.9) was made. Then came the first stone church, from which fragments of architectural detail remain; and in the thirteenth century ordinary medieval grave-slabs (figs 7.10, 7.11, 7.12) take us out of the dark age into the light of history.

[18] For the parallel case of Heysham, with an Anglian St Peter's and a tenth-century St Patrick's, see W. G. Collingwood, 'The Angles in Furness and Cartmel', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* New Series 23 (1924), 288–94, at p. 288. See also idem, 'Christian Vikings', *Antiquity* 1 (1927), 172–80, at p. 172.