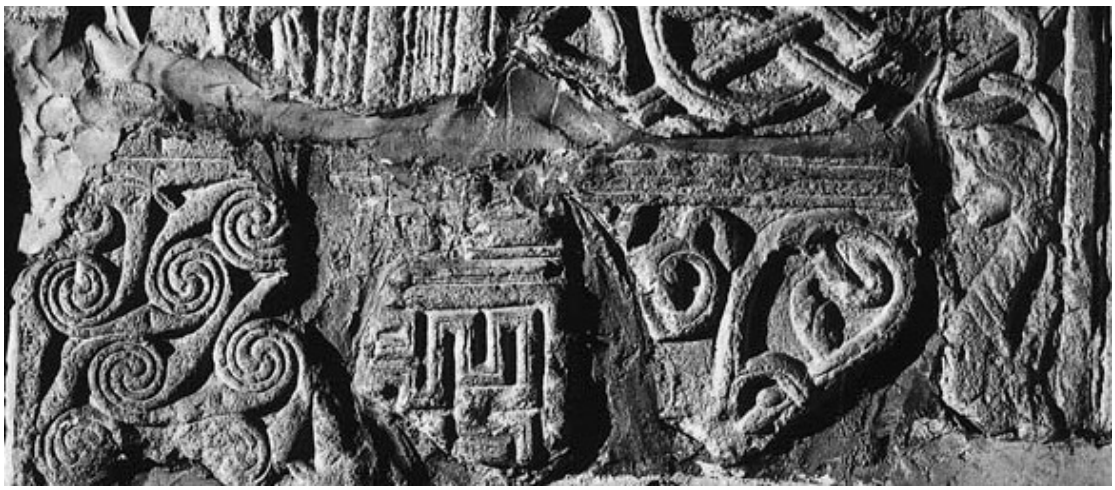
Early Medieval Sculpture in its International Context



Wednesday 31st August- Sunday 4th September 2022,
Durham University, UK

Programme

Wednesday 31st August

Lecture Theatre CG85, Science Site, Durham University

17.00 pm **Welcome, opening words and introduction to the event**
Sir David Wilson

17.15 pm **Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture: inception, progress and legacy**
Professor Dame Rosemary Cramp, Dr Derek Craig and Professor Sarah Semple, Durham University

17.45 pm **Keynote 1**
Tales of sculptures and scholarships
Jane Hawkes, University of York

18.30 pm Opening drinks reception & poster presentation
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

Thursday 1st September

Lecture Theatre CG85, Science Site, Durham University

9.30 am Session 1

Acca's cross at Hexham, Northumberland
Richard Bailey, Newcastle

Cross-slab to high-cross: understanding the early medieval sculptural remains at Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, Ireland
Megan Henvey, University of York

Rocks, pebbles and mountains: meta-imagery at Monasterboice, Ireland
Heather Pulliam, University of Edinburgh

11,00 am Tea and coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

11.30 am Session 2

The St Andrews Sarcophagus: the tomb for Onuist, an anointed Pictish king?
Jane Geddes, University of Aberdeen

Of life and death: sculpture and identity in early medieval Venice, 8th–10th century
S. Gelichi, Y.A. Marano, M. Secci, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

The early middle ages: decorated stone sarcophagi in Poitou, France
Anne Flammin, Daniel Morleghem and Guillaume Rougé, CNRS, UMR 5138 Archéologie et Archéométrie

1.00 pm Lunch
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

1.45 pm Session 3

The Virgin with the Book at Breedon-on-the Hill, Leicestershire
Francesca Dell'Acqua, Università degli studi di Salerno

Icons in stone: image, worship and controversy in early medieval England, c. 700–850
Teresa Porciani, University of Leicester

Having the dead in hand: inscription, movement and display in early medieval Northumbria
Jill Hamilton Clements, University of Alabama at Birmingham

"Living in a material world": considering a phenomenology of ornament in early medieval stone sculpture.
Meg Boulton, University of Edinburgh

3.45 pm Tea and Coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

4.15 pm Session 4

The production and distribution of early medieval stone sculpture in south-east Ireland: variations in the expression of ecclesiastical power, identity, and commemorative practices
Kate Colbert, University College Cork, Ireland

Considering the Govan School and its neighbours through a digital lens
Megan Kasten, University of Glasgow

Crossing Britain: the transnational high cross, AD 700-1100
Christina Cowart Smith, Durham University

Friday 2nd September

Lecture Theatre CG85, Science Site, Durham University

9.00 am **Keynote 2**
Carved stone monuments as political actors in early medieval Britain
Martin Carver, University of York

9.45 am Session 5

Rune stones, picture stones, and other erected stones in Scandinavia c. AD 200–1100
Anders Andrén, Stockholm University

Crafting Christian landscapes: carved stones and sacred places in early medieval north-western Europe
Anouk Busset, University of Glasgow

Identity beyond empire: Pictish symbols on carved stones
Gordon Noble, University of Aberdeen, and Martin Goldberg, National Museum of Scotland

11.15 am Tea and Coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

11.45 am Session 6

Why include an inscription on an Anglo-Saxon sculptured stone monument?
Elisabeth Okasha, University College Cork

Northumbrian lapidary inscriptions and the Vikings
David N. Parsons, University of Aberystwyth, Wales

Naming, forgetting, remembering, imagining: the namescape of Iona's stone sculpture
Prof Katherine Forsyth, University of Glasgow

1.15 pm onwards *Opportunity to explore Durham*

Saturday the 3rd September

Lecture Theatre CG85, Science Site, Durham University

9.00 am **Keynote 3**
Stone sculpture in a wooden world
John Blair, The Queen's College, Oxford University

9.45 am Session 7

Delving and distributing: where does the stone come from?
Paul Everson, University of Keele, and David Stocker, University of Leeds

Life in stone
Catherine E. Karkov, University of Leeds

Pictish naturalism?
Luke A. Fidler, Department of Art History, University of Chicago

11.15 am Tea and Coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

11.45 am Session 8

Words and no pictures: design and influence in early inscribed stones in Britain and Ireland
David Petts, Durham University

Place, space and monumentality in early medieval Wales
Nancy Edwards, Bangor University

Lords of the dance: materialising sacral leadership in early medieval Scotland
Mark A Hall, Perth Museum & Art Gallery

1.15 pm Lunch
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

2.00 pm Session 9
Monuments and merchants
Paul Everson, University of Keele, and David Stocker, University of Leeds

Sculpture workshops in early medieval Iberia: a new methodological approach
Alejandro Villa del Castillo, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Sculpture on Man and the Isles: an iconographic examination of regions, kingdoms and church networks
Heidi Stoner, Durham University

3.30 pm Tea and Coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

4.00 pm *PRESENTATION AND LAUNCH OF NEW C.A.S.S.S. WEBSITE WITH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA SERVICE*

7.30 pm Conference Dinner
Grey College Dining Hall

Sunday 4th September

Lecture Theatre CG85, Science Site, Durham University

9.00 am **Keynote 4**
Travels with carved stones: in search of new meanings and values
Sally Foster, University of Stirling

9.45 am Session 10

Beyond a grammar of ornament: the language of visual narratives in stone
Lilla Kopar, Centre for Medieval and Byzantine Studies, Catholic University of America

At cross purposes? Investigating the sacred and secular in Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture
Amanda Doviak, University of York

10.45 am Tea and Coffee
The Scarborough Suite & Chemistry Atrium

11.15 am Session 11

Exploring the vibrancy of stone: an experimental-digital approach
Marta Diaz Guardamino, Durham University

Miracles of Christ on the panels at Aquileia, Barbana and Udine
Magdalena Skoblar, Independent Scholar.

Ritual and reuse: early baptismal fonts of the medieval West
Carolyn Twomey, Visiting Professor of European History, St Lawrence University

12.45 pm Closing Remarks. Conference Ends.

Tales of sculptures and scholarships

Jane Hawkes, Department of History of Art, University of York

The study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture occupies a somewhat unique position in relation to that of the early medieval material elsewhere in Britain, Ireland and the European continent. While these all share a long history of antiquarian enquiry, the Anglo-Saxon carvings entered the academic arena nearly150 years ago, with George Forrest Browne taking them as his subject for the annual Disney Lectures in art and archaeology in the archaeology department at the University of Cambridge in the 1880s. This paper will explore the divergent trends in the scholarly explorations that have since been undertaken, which have encompassed enquiries into aspects of the sculptures as divergent as archaeological and art-historical typologies, linguistic epigraphy, inter-textuality, geology and spoliation, chemical analysis, literary enquiries of vernacular and Latin texts of ecclesiastical and secular prose and poetry, iconology (or a variant thereof), in search of symbolic significances of the figural and non-figural carvings, and perhaps most recently phenomenological approaches. Most of these will be addressed during the course of the conference; here, tasters and contexts will be offered.

Acca's Cross at Hexham

Richard Bailey, Newcastle

The so-called 'Acca's cross' at Hexham occupied a pivotal position in the scholarly chronologies of Northumbrian sculpture which were developed in the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequent scepticism, indeed rejection, of its association with Bishop Acca (d. c.740) resulted in its more recent academic neglect. Yet the details and function of its apparent credal inscription, the continental links of its ornament and its decorative links to metalwork suggest that it merits further examination.

Cross-slab to high-cross: understanding the early medieval sculptural remains at Carndonagh, County Donegal, Ireland

Megan Henvey, University of York

It has long been said that Ireland's free-standing high crosses developed in form from earlier stone-incised monuments. As such, the Crucifixion-incised, cruciform cross-slab at Carndonagh has been adjudged an early example of the monument type, produced mid-'burst'. Influenced by the thorough multi-disciplinary methodological approach of the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture project, this paper explores the historical, iconographic and theological contexts of the Carndonagh Cross, alongside new geological evidence. This approach will demonstrate the broad geographic sphere of influence – encompassing regions in Northern Britain – within which the early medieval community at Carndonagh existed. Furthermore, the geological evidence prompts a reconsideration of the rationale for the dating of the monument; the ramifications of which, for our understanding of the development of the form of the high cross both in Ireland and further afield in Britain, will be set out.

Rocks, pebbles and mountains: meta-imagery at Monasterboice, Ireland

Heather Pulliam, University of Edinburgh

In Numbers 20:9, Moses strikes a rock twice, producing water in the desert. According to Peter Harbison, the scene is depicted on only three of the Irish high crosses, two of which—the Tall Cross and Muiredach's Cross—are located at Monasterboice. While questioning Harbison's interpretation of the Tall Cross panel, this paper focuses on the lithic imagery of pebbles, rocks, and mountains on both crosses. Did the decoration of the two crosses 'speak' to one another? Is this one iconographic program or two? This paper delineates the highly sophisticated way the monuments incorporated the crosses' material, scale, form and nature (as a graven image) into their iconographic programs, breaking the 'fourth wall' between

spectator and representation. In so doing, it demonstrates how themes of ascent and descent proclaim Christ's cross as an axis between heaven and hell.

The St Andrews Sarcophagus: the tomb for Onuist, an anointed Pictish king?
Jane Geddes, University of Aberdeen
The consecration of Pepin III in 751 by his bishops at Soissons marked a turning point in the evolution of European kingship. Harking back to Old Testament ritual, it set up a bond of mutual obligations between the king and the church, whereby each party hoped to gain additional legitimacy and support. Pepin's ceremony was followed by his descendants and other rulers, mentioned in documentary sources but not for Pictland. A close iconographic reading of the St Andrews Sarcophagus, which features David as hero, suggests it was carved for an anointed Pictish king; a political innovation demanding a unique commemoration. The visual evidence is supported by Psalm 44 and early Frankish inauguration liturgies. These texts bind the same biblical sources to the occasion, in word rather than sculpture. Clues begin with the prominent sword on David's thigh, which Augustine explains represents making a solemn vow, an image which even relates to the playful thigh-touching cats.

Of life and death: sculpture and identity in early medieval Venice, 8th–10th century
Sauro Gelichi, Yuri A. Marano, Martina Secci, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
The production of stone artefacts played a central role in the self-representation strategies of the early Venetian elites: sarcophagi and well-heads are some of the most distinctive features of material culture evidence of eight-to-tenth century Venice. Often re-carved from late-antique chests, these sarcophagi were inspired to the sarcophagi used for the burial of the archbishops of Ravenna in the late 8th and 9th centuries, and should be placed on the background of an "Italo-Byzantine" tradition. Well-heads, which share with sarcophagi the same style and decorative repertoire, accomplished both a practical and ostentatious function: they allowed the drawing of water, a rare and precious resource in Venice, and decorated private and public buildings. Sarcophagi and well-heads attest to the attempt of a communal identity which found expression both in the funerary sphere and in everyday life. The paper examines the economic, organizational, and cultural aspects of early Medieval Venetian sculptural production.

The early middle ages: decorated stone sarcophagi in Poitou, France
Anne Flammin, CNRS, UMR 5138 Archéologie et Archéométrie, Daniel Morleghem, UMR 7324 Citeres-LAT, Guillaume Rougé, UMR 5607 Ausonius
If the stone sarcophagi of the Frankish Gaul are for the most part devoid of ornamentation, several regional "schools" shared part of the territory. In Poitou, almost a third of the 2,000 or so lids listed are decorated with three crosswise strips. They were crafted in several quarrying districts located in or around the distribution area of this type, whereas their decoration has been made mainly on the funerary site. This motif results from the simplification and flattening of the acroters in the 5th and in the first half of the 6th century; this double process continued until they are, in the 8th century, just suggested by a incision. This region also retains a small group of sarcophagi with a richer decor whose iconographic and symbolic study has made it possible to demonstrate their dependence on models of the art of late Antiquity. By analysing technological and iconographic questions, we will try to understand how this production was born and developed in Poitou, and to define its place in the broader context of funerary art in Gaul and in Europe.

The Virgin with the Book at Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire
Francesca Dell'Acqua, Università degli studi di Salerno

Immured in the Priory Church of St Mary and St Hardulph at Breedon-on-the-Hill (Leicestershire) with other sculpted reliefs of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, is a stone relief with a half-length representation of the Virgin Mary holding a book in her left

hand, while she points at it with her right hand. In the Christian thought, the book can be a manifestation of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos or 'word of God' (cf. John 1, 1), descended on earth through Mary for the dispensation of humankind. Thus, she seems to invite the beholder to look at the book as means of Salvation. The book can also be seen as the manifestation of doctrine. Its significance in association with Mary needs to be clarified. In fact, the book is a very unusual feature in Mary's hand. In the conventional Byzantine half-length representation of the Virgin known as *Hodegetria* ('She who shows the Way'), she holds Christ Child in one arm while pointing at him, the Saviour, with the other hand. The book at Breedon takes the place of the Child. However, the *Hodegetria* type is not attested before the tenth century. Therefore, is the relief in Breedon a variation of the *Hodegetria* and as such needs to be dated to after the tenth century? Or is it an Anglo-Saxon rendition of a lost eastern model? Or is it an exceptional invention of Anglo-Saxon England? What does the history of its present location suggest?

Icons in stone: image, worship and controversy in early medieval England, c. 700–850

Teresa Porciani, University of Leicester

The image controversy that arose in Byzantium (VIII s.) had already reached England by the time of Bede, and pre-eminent scholars, like Alcuin, later took part in this debate. The reception and participation in the dispute had an impact on art, which is evident in figural stone sculpture preserved across England. This paper explores this material, focussing on sculptures with 'icon-like' features, to demonstrate the awareness of the religious and political implications of iconoclasm in early medieval England. The veiled Virgin in Breedon-on-the-Hill (Leicestershire) is a familiar example of awareness of Byzantine and Roman iconographies (e.g. the 'Ecclesiae' in Santa Sabina), but it may also provide evidence of the veneration of images at a time when figural art was a controversial topic. The style and iconography of similar sculptures, together with Continental comparative material, will be examined to illustrate early English understanding of icons and iconoclasm before 850.

Having the dead in hand: inscription, movement and display in early medieval Northumbria

Jill Hamilton Clements, University of Alabama at Birmingham

This paper comes from my current research on the approximately three dozen extant Northumbrian name-stones, which were long understood as having the fixed function of grave markers. My work explores new schemata for their display and use, particularly their portability as votive objects, and draws connections to roughly contemporary examples from other early medieval European contexts (including Clonmacnoise, Inis Cealtra, and Visigothic Ronda). The Northumbrian name-stones' mobility—perhaps being moved and displayed for particular services for the dead and post-mortem prayer—has significant implications for our understanding of the role of memorial writing in these religious communities. By considering how the name-stones' physical size and weight affect how they could be carried, displayed, and read, this project seeks to better understand the dynamic interactions of smaller stone objects with the eyes and hands of living readers.

"Living in a material world": considering a phenomenology of ornament in early medieval stone sculpture.

Meg Boulton, University of Edinburgh

The study of early medieval sculpture entails occupying an in-between space, identifying forms and figures that operate in and between the tangible and intangible worlds, decoding a series of complex sculpted motifs. This condition of inbetween is replicated conceptually, visually, and spatially, through both centralised and marginalised iconographic programmes. These carved monuments are intimately linked to spaces at once part of and set apart from the world, placed in the role of peripheral witnesses to scriptural narratives, in a manner that manipulates time and space for viewers. This paper considers a series of sculpted monuments and fragments from early medieval England, including those from Easby, Northallerton and Lindisfarne. Using these, it considers the role and nature of carved stone in constructing and

witnessing Christian scenes and stories across space and time, both as they are placed in these visual narratives, and as they emplace and (dis)embody viewers.

The production and distribution of early medieval stone sculpture in south-east Ireland: variations in the expression of ecclesiastical power, identity, and commemorative practices

Kate Colbert, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork

South-east Ireland has a rich and varied sculpture tradition, reflecting both the presence of a well-educated Christian elite, as well as the continuum of artistic exchange that existed between Ireland, Britain, and the wider early medieval world. However, there is a striking disparity between the distribution of early medieval sculpture in the region and the importance of the ecclesiastical sites at which they are found. Such lacunae are significant, as they do not fit with patterns seen at many major sites elsewhere, in which sculpture plays a key role in expressing hierarchies of power. While undoubtedly important, the patronage of powerful elites was not the primary factor driving the production of stone sculpture in this region. Using a combination of historical sources and archaeological evidence, this paper examines why some sites invested in sculpture while others did not, why sculpture was produced at certain times during the life of a site and not others, and what the stone sculptures of south-east Ireland can tell us about the priorities and socio-political identities of their communities.

Considering the Govan School and its neighbours through a digital lens

Megan Kasten, University of Glasgow

The Govan School refers to a group of art-historically similar carved stones that attest to the prominence of the kingdom of Strathclyde. As demonstrated in my PhD thesis, increasingly accessible digital imaging methods, like photogrammetry, are flexible research tools that have a great deal to contribute to the study of early medieval sculpture. They facilitate easier comparison between stone monuments 'side-by-side,' scaled in digital space, and more direct comparison of their decorative elements (especially the form of crosses and their proportions). This approach has already highlighted intriguing similarities in the design of the recumbent cross-slabs from Govan and Inchinnan, but it has further potential if the other monument types from the wider Strathclyde region are also considered. This paper will use 3D models of monuments from Glasgow, the isle of Bute, and surrounding regions to better understand the similarities and differences in how these carvers approached their craft.

Crossing Britain: the transnational high cross, AD 700-1100

Christina Cowart Smith, Durham University

The high cross—a monumental, free-standing, cruciform stone sculpture—is a phenomenon unique to Britain and Ireland in the early medieval period. Though transnational in their distribution and development, high crosses have rarely been studied as a cross-border form owing to a range of historiographical reasons. To this end, this paper examines a selection of high crosses from across Wales, Scotland, and England to illuminate both the varied forms which high crosses took across early medieval Britain, as well as the diverse communities that commissioned, made, used, and re-used these sculptures. Of particular interest are the relatively small percentage of British high cross fragments actually found within primary archaeological contexts, and what these pieces reveal about the original function of the sculpture type across time and space. Moreover, the paper focuses most of its attention on non-figural examples, given that the overwhelming majority of extant high cross fragments in Britain are non-representational—that is, without human, anthropomorphic, or animal iconography. In all, through its transnational lens and multidisciplinary methodology, this project reflects the broad-sweeping, cross-border analytical work that can and indeed *must* now be pursued with the completion of *The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture.*

Carved stone monuments as political actors in early medieval Britain
Martin Carver, University of York
There were great differences between the stone monuments erected in England, Scotland and Wales over the period 400–1100 CE, differences in their numbers, their size, form and locations and consequently in their message and meaning. What prompted such diversity, and such change through time? This talk investigates the way that stone monuments were deployed to mark landscape, signal belief and link agendas in Britain over seven centuries. Large or small, the monuments not only defined territories, routes or sacred places, but proclaimed the changing political affiliations of the different regions. In this sense, stone sculpture writes history. Any profit in this research is owed to the volumes of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, the *Corpus for Wales*, the Hendersons' *Art of the Picts*, Ian Fisher's review of the *West Highlands and Islands*, the work of Katherine Forsyth, and numerous other studies all bound by the golden thread of Rosemary Cramp's inspiration.

Rune stones, picture stones, and other erected stones in Scandinavia c. AD 200–1100
Anders Andrén, Stockholm University
Scandinavia is famous for its many rune stones and picture stones from the third to the early twelfth centuries. These carved monuments, however, seem to be only the tip of the iceberg, with many more uncarved erected stones from the same period. In this paper, I will give a general overview of the complex interplay between carved and uncarved monuments, regarding issues such as space, memory and gender.

Crafting Christian landscapes: carved stones and sacred places in early medieval north-western Europe
Anouk Busset, University of Glasgow
Carved stones are a prominent part for the Christianisation process. They embody and express the Christian identity chosen by elites and convey power in the landscape. These monuments were used within memorial practices, and symbolised the sacred for the people through the landscapes they experienced, inhabited, traversed, and assembled throughout their lives. This presentation will focus on the theme of movement and examine how stone monuments create nodal points in liturgical landscapes during the early medieval period. Through case studies from Scotland, Sweden and Brittany, this comparative analysis centres on the transformative essence of carved stones, through their inscriptions and imagery, and their situation in the geographical landscape. Carved stones located alongside routeways participated in the creation of sacred movement experienced by their audience. While carved or inscribed stones delineated the wider journey, they also formed nodal points throughout the sacred paths to focalise devotional practices.

Identity beyond empire: Pictish symbols on carved stones
Gordon Noble, University of Aberdeen, and Martin Goldberg, National Museum of Scotland
Abstract TBC

Naming, forgetting, remembering, imagining: the namescape of Iona's stone sculpture
Katherine Forsyth, University of Glasgow
More early medieval carved stone monuments survive on Iona than anywhere else in Britain. The island is blessed, not only in the quality and quantity of these archaeological remains, but also in the richness and chronological depth of surviving texts about them. References to stone monuments start in Adomnán's 7th century hagiography of Columba, continue via later medieval and early modern texts, to the antiquarian writings of travellers from the 18th century onwards, and to modern archaeological scholarship. Iona thus presents a uniquely detailed body of material with which to explore dynamic practices of naming carved stone monuments and naming places with reference to sculptured stones, in Latin, Gaelic, and

English: e.g. St Columba's Pillow, St Oran's Cross, *Lapis Echodi* 'Eochaid's stone', *Crois Mhairtin* '(St) Martin's Cross', *Na Crossan Mòr* 'The great crosses, *Clach bràth* 'the stone of Judgement', The Cradle of the North Wind, *Uamh a' Chroisein* 'Cave of the little cross', The Black Stones.

Such names throw fresh light on various issues including object biography, collective memory, and place-making. Care is needed, however, in using this resource as not all monument names are ancient or authoritative. Names are human artefacts. Often fragile (especially, as here, in multilingual contexts), they need careful curation. They are coined, passed on, forgotten, preserved or erased as a result of human action. Scholars have a responsibility to face up to their role in these processes. The paper reports on the author's research as part of the University of Glasgow's AHRC-funded research project *Iona's Namescape: Place-Names and their Dynamics in Iona and its Environs*

Why include an inscription on an Anglo-Saxon sculptured stone monument?
Elisabeth Okasha, University College Cork
Perhaps surprisingly, only a relatively small proportion, around 10%, of the carved monuments and architectural stones included in the *Corpus* volumes are inscribed. Why would one inscribe a sculptured monument or a piece of architecture? Some reasons are clear: a memorial or gravestone is clearly more useful if it gives the name of the deceased (for example the series of name-stones from Hartlepool and Lindisfarne). There are other reasons which may include: to explicate the sculpture (Ruthwell non-runic texts); to add a further level of understanding (Potterne font); to advertise the sculptor's skill (Alnmouth cross) or the benefactor's generosity (Kirkdale); to give information about the church's dedication (Jarrow, Kirkdale); to display literacy (many examples). One common factor may be the culturally important wish of people to be remembered and prayed for by future generations. So why are not more of the Anglo-Saxon sculptured and architectural stones inscribed?

Northumbrian lapidary inscriptions and the Vikings
David N. Parsons, University of Aberystwyth
This paper will briefly describe the corpus of Anglo-Saxon inscriptions in stone, drawing particular attention to a clear division into two periods. Before *c.* 900 practically all of the surviving texts belong to the territory of pre-Viking Northumbria, and nearly all fall into some well-defined types. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the tradition underwent a marked change in terms of both content and geographical distribution. It seems natural to suspect that the demise of the earlier Northumbrian tradition can be attributed to the Scandinavian conquests and settlements of northern and eastern England. The aim of this paper is to examine several matters touching on the hypothesis. It will look at the significance of (i) a number of ninth- or early tenth-century inscriptions and inscribed stones that have been thought to show Scandinavian linguistic and stylistic influence, and (ii) a handful of inscriptions which seem to continue the Northumbrian tradition rather later than most – these chronological exceptions prove to have a very interesting distribution. Finally, on a related theme, some consideration will also be given to the question of how far contact with pre-existing Northumbrian traditions may have had an influence on Scandinavian Viking-Age epigraphy.

Stone sculpture in a wooden world
John Blair, The Queen's Colllege, Oxford
For obvious physical reasons, large-scale sculptural works that survive from Anglo-Saxon England are all made of stone. It is unlikely that this reflects the contemporary reality; in fact, there must be a strong presumption that much if not most sculpture was wooden. Except in a few very exceptional (mainly ecclesiastical) contexts, the early medieval English inhabited a transitory environment in which buildings were constructed of timber and embellished

with textile. Timber was the material that came naturally to hand, both for monuments and for domestic embellishments; the unique survival of St Cuthbert's coffin attests to a tradition of incising on wooden planks, also suggested indirectly by a group of two-dimensional grave monuments. But wooden carvings, like wooden buildings, had virtually no chance of surviving except in waterlogged deposits that (beside two or three commercial and industrial urban contexts) rarely occur in England.

This paper will suggest some approaches to comprehending the lost tradition of monumental and decorative carvings, within which the stone monuments that we still have today may have been exotic and exceptional. One avenue is through excavation of ritual sites both Christian and pre-Christian, despite the severe limits on what can be inferred from post-holes. Another is through skeuomorphs: for instance fonts copying the forms of tubs; the jointing systems of corner-post shrines and some Irish high crosses; and the likelihood that some stereotyped series of grave monuments followed wooden prototypes. The question needs to be asked whether the ornamental repertoire of stone sculpture was distinctive to it, or just one manifestation of more widespread decorative modes that are otherwise lost. We cannot recover what no longer exists, but we can perhaps get some way towards envisaging the broader cultural contexts of what does exist.

Delving and distributing: where does the stone come from?
Paul Everson, University of Keele, and David Stocker, University of Leeds
The paper looks at the different sources of the raw material for pre-Conquest stone sculpture. It notes that the sculptures themselves offer good evidence that systematic quarrying came late in the period. Detailed studies reveal the importance of Roman *spolia* as a source, especially earlier in the period, and raise a question about the extent of contemporary winning of new stone. In some parts of the country, quarry sources – properly quarry zones – developed and produced readily-identifiable standard products in considerable numbers. A complete national Corpus, uniform in its scope across the country, allows an appreciation of regions where those developments boomed and where they did not. It also affords a respectable insight into the routes and means of distribution.

Life in stone
Catherine E. Karkov, University of Leeds
Between the late eighth and the tenth century a change in the approach to stone as a sculptural material is evident particularly across the North of England. Early medieval English sculptors recognised stone as a living material early on, as is evident from the vine-scrolls at Ruthwell and Bewcastle which appear to grow from roots buried in the earth; at some point in the late eight or early ninth century a change takes place in which stone is represented as having a generative ability of its own as, for example, on cross-shafts at Leeds, Ilkley, and Dearham. The same period sees the development of monuments in which figures inhabit spaces that seem to be concealed within the stone rather than niche-like panels carved out of it (Heysham 1 is one example, hogbacks provide others). This paper examines these changes in the context of the increasing visibility of the hands of the sculptors as well as the increasing presence of scenes of human rather than divine judgment discussed recently by Luke Fidler.

Pictish naturalism?
Luke A. Fidler, Department of Art History, University of Chicago
In 2004, George and Isabel Henderson polemically re-described Pictish symbols, arguing that Pictish sculptors selectively combined 'fantastic' and 'naturalistic' strategies to render figures on monumental carved stones and cross slabs. This approach, meant as a kind of *apologia* for art historical reading, advanced the conversation but presumed straightforward definitions of fantasy and naturalism. Carefully re-reading their arguments in *The Art of the Picts*, this paper tries to work out what a properly historicized 'Pictish naturalism' might comprise; did sculptors work with such a concept, either in theory or practice? Did 'naturalism' look

different for Pictish artists and beholders than for (say) early-medieval Lombards or Merovingians? Noting that art historians have recently theorized medieval naturalisms more generally, and drawing on arguments about depiction made by Whitney Davis and Richard Wollheim, I examine a pair of eighth-century cross slabs from Angus in order to give an account of the art of Pictish observation.

Words and no pictures: design and influence in early inscribed stones in Britain and Ireland

David Petts, Durham University

The earliest strata of post-Roman stone sculpture in Britain and Ireland consist of a simple stone inscriptions in Latin and Ogham. Unlike later stone monuments from these regions, these earlier stones have a minimum of additional decoration or design elements beyond the text itself. As a result, study of such stones has primarily focused on the value of the inscriptions for insights into language, social structure and palaeography. Such work has shown that the Latin stones in particular are clearly part of a wider Late Antique tradition of funerary inscriptions present throughout the Western Roman Empire and beyond. However, whilst these Insular stones may have clear epigraphic similarities with this wider corpus of monuments, they have largely not drawn on the accompanying design elements that are found on the Continental inscriptions, such as crosses, alpha/omega and confronted birds, as well as a range of other imagery. This paper explores the tensions between epigraphic similarity and visual difference between the Insular and Continental traditions and considers what this might mean in terms of patterns of influence and relationships between British and Continental Christianity in the 5th/6th centuries AD.

Place, space and monumentality in early medieval Wales

Nancy Edwards, Bangor University

In Wales during the eighth to tenth centuries there was a hierarchy of sites with Christian carved stones, ranging from major monasteries to community cemeteries. Large crosses, such as those at Nevern and Merthyr Mawr, were public monuments and rarely survive *in situ*, but inscriptions and other evidence allow us to reconstruct their locations within the wider sacred space of the cemetery, or recording ownership of church land. Cross-carved stones were, however, primarily burial monuments marking graves or, in some cases, placed within them, hidden from view. They range from the sophisticated inscribed monuments recalling the Crucifixion, the Last Judgement and the concept of eternity at St Davids carved by professional sculptors, to the simplest of memorials expressing the Christian beliefs and aspirations of grieving families as at St Patrick's Chapel nearby. Using examples, including new discoveries from well-dated archaeological contexts, this paper will examine the relationship between location, monumentality and expressions of belief

Lords of the dance: materialising sacral leadership in early medieval Scotland

Mark A Hall, Collections Officer, Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Perth

This contribution will focus on two case studies of stone sculpture: the single monolith from Tulloch and the Forteviot corpus (currently suggested to comprise the remains of five free-standing crosses and cross-slabs, including the Cross of Constantine [formerly the Dupplin Cross] and the Gask slab) to explore tangible and intangible aspects of 'kingship' across the fifth and ninth centuries within Pictland. The limits of the evidence encourages journeys beyond Pictland into the contemporary kingdoms of Europe, particularly for the earlier episode, and a range of parallel archaeological evidence for complex social practices, including ritual dance. Emphasis will be laid on how monumentalising authority in and through the landscape was part of a wider rhetoric of performance that blended the tangible and the intangible in a sensory overload of sacralised power-politics.

Monuments and merchants

Paul Everson, University of Keele, and David Stocker, University of Leeds

In the later pre-Conquest period, large collections of stone funerary monuments occur in a limited number of locations. Far from being the signature of senior or 'early' church foundations in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as was once anticipated, the incidence of such exceptional collections relates to trading sites: to strands – on the coast or on, usually tidal, rivers – where a gently shelving foreshore could be used for beaching boats. Studies of a series of Danelaw towns of eastern and northern England have shown that the burials belong to communities of resident alien merchants, served by their own parish church and operating under royal protection. Integrating the sculptural evidence with archaeological and topographical studies can reveal how such communities contributed permanently to the layout, growth and character of those urban centres; or, in instances where the trading activity failed or was superseded, left a recognisable marker.

Sculpture workshops in early medieval Iberia: a new methodological approach

Alejandro Villa del Castillo, History of Art PhD, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Until recently, both late antique and early medieval sculpture research in Iberia has been carried out within the frame of History of Art, where analysis of isolated pieces and stylistic perspectives have prevailed. Now, we propose a new methodological strategy, based on the study of the sculptural workshop through Archaeology of Architecture and Archeology of Production. Archaeology of Architecture incorporates stratigraphy and typology to the study of the buildings, and it informs us about when the sculptures were placed there. Archeology of Production allows us to analyse how the process was carried out by the workshop. The application of this strategy has provided us an alternative explanatory model that partly solves some contradictions that appeared in the previous one, supported only by stylistic arguments. The group of Mozarabic Leonese churches (10th century), where a great part of its sculpture is still preserved, represents an exemplary laboratory to explain our proposal.

Sculpture on Man and the Isles: an iconographic examination of regions, kingdoms and church networks

Heidi Stoner, Durham University

This paper will seek to outline the place of early medieval Manx sculpture within the context of both in the Irish Sea Region and in the broader Insular traditions. This will be approached by discussing the notion of church building, rebuilding, dedications and the patronage of sculpture around the Irish Sea region, with a particular focus on how Manx sculpture fits into the scholarly narrative of the study of early medieval sculpture. Building on current discussions of church networks, the ecclesiastical sites and sculpture will be examined to demonstrate how they might shed light on a narrative of maintenance and rebuilding in the Viking age. Taking into account a complex understanding of exegetical themes and an active interpretation of the intellectual culture of the church, it will be posited that iconographic programmes of sculpture in the Irish Sea region allows for an examination of the processes of multi-faceted acculturation, which is not a smooth transition from different, to hybrid, to homogenous. This paper will be both an introduction to the variety of sculpture on Man as well as a reflection on its place within the historiography and scholarship.

Travels with carved stones: in search of new meanings and values

Sally Foster, University of Stirling

Travelling with early medieval carved stones for nearly forty years now, my perspectives on the questions we might ask of them, the stories we might tell, and how society might engage with them have changed. Indeed, they have been the lens through which I have interrogated and transformed most of my approaches to questions of authenticity, value, significance, and heritage practices more widely. My talk will reflect critically on what can be learnt from looking at the 'composite cultural biographies' of carved stones and their replicas. I will draw on my Scottish experience of working with the 1,200-plus-year biographies of the Hilton of

Cadboll Pictish cross-slab (published 2008) and more recently the St John's Cross on Iona (published 2020), both interdisciplinary studies undertaken with Professor Siân Jones. Where do corpora of sculpture fit into this picture and what new approaches to early medieval sculpture might we envisage in the future?

Beyond a grammar of ornaments: the language of visual narratives in stone
Lilla Kopar, Centre for Medieval and Byzantine Studies, Catholic University of America
Narrative images play an important part in the preservation and transmission of stories across space and time. Stone carvings from early medieval northern Europe provide us with a storehouse of visual narratives, some of which can be linked to stories we know from other media, while others remain but ornaments to the modern eye. Going beyond the identification or "reading" of narrative carvings, the present paper proposes to offer a structural analysis of visual narratives in order to better understand the visual language and literacy of the communities that created them. Based on modern theories of comics and sequential art, I will discuss modes of visual storytelling, techniques of paneling, sequentiality, and the capturing of narrative time and space. Lastly, I will address the role of narrative images in the context of stone sculptures as multimodal story-tellers.

At cross purposes? Investigating the sacred and secular in Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture
Amanda Doviak, University of York
Late nineteenth- and twentieth-century art-historical scholarship invoked the term 'pagan' to discuss the mid-ninth- to tenth-century Anglo-Scandinavian stone monuments produced in northern England and their cultural context. This inevitably created perceived religious distinctions between Christian and 'pagan' monuments, their figural carvings, and the Anglian and (Anglo-)Scandinavia patrons responsible for their production. Yet, it is now apparent, historically and archaeologically, that the Church continued to participate in, if not oversee, the production of such monuments and the selection of their visual repertoire.

This paper will address the validity of the binaries constructed (and still generally maintained), by reconciling the apparently secular, legendary figural imagery of the Halton cross (Lancs.) with its monumental form – the high cross, a form unequivocally associated with Christianity and the institution of the Church – and the contemporary phenomena of conversion and Christianisation. By considering the monument in this way, it will be demonstrated that the iconographic programme presents complex Christian commentaries within multivalent frames of reference. It will be argued that the images invoked contemporary understandings of the significances/s of vernacular poetry and legend, Christian exegetical texts and liturgical practices. Moreover, it will be shown that the Halton carvings not only emerged within ninth- and tenth-century Scandinavian art-networks of the north Atlantic region, but drew extensively on local Anglian models, and those from as far afield as Byzantium, in order to express complex theological concerns primarily focussing on the adoration of the cross.

Exploring the vibrancy of stone: an experimental-digital approach
Marta Diaz Guardamino, Durham University
Research on prehistoric traditions of stone sculpture in Europe is typically focused on meaning and representation. During the last decade, the application of biographical approaches has produced ample evidence for the reuse and transformation of prehistoric sculptures, opening new exciting venues for interpretation. Yet, standing stones, stelae and statue-menhirs are still conceptualized within a Western ontology that renders then as inanimate objects, as passive repositories of human work and symbolic meanings.
The so-called 'material/ontological turn' developed within the humanities and the social sciences has exposed that other worlds where Western dualisms do not hold are also possible. This paper aims to illustrate how a focus on materials (i.e. stone) and their vibrancy, in this case through the application of experimental archaeology and digital imaging techniques, may help us overcome Western dualisms and make knowledge of those past worlds possible.

Miracles of Christ on the panels at Aquileia, Barbana and Udine

Magdalena Skoblar, Independent Scholar

This paper focuses on five early medieval relief carvings from a single monument which can today be seen at different locations in the Italian province of Friuli Venezia Giulia. Three fragments are at the Museo Cristiano in Aquileia and they depict partially preserved scenes involving Christ, which have not been identified with certainty. The panel at the Marian sanctuary on the island of Barbana shows Christ addressing two men while that at the Diocesan Museum in Udine illustrates two consecutive scenes which have been interpreted as Christ's meeting with Mary and Martha. There is uncertainty about the date of the panels with Carlo Gaberscek opting for the tenth century at the latest and Maurizio Buora arguing for the eleventh. This paper will re-examine the scenes on the panels in order to establish if they make a narrative cycle. It will also present comparative visual models, address the issue of the panels' date and investigate where they had originally stood.

Ritual and reuse: early baptismal fonts of the medieval West

Carolyn Twomey, Visiting Assistant Professor of European History, St Lawrence University

The material culture of Christian baptism has influenced the performance and interpretation of the rite of initiation since the days of the late antique Church. In early medieval England, a group of ninth- to eleventh-century baptismal fonts has often defined the experience of baptism prior to the proliferation of fonts in the twelfth-century parish system. Some fonts (e.g. Wilne, Melbury Bubb, Dolton, etc) bear figural and zoomorphic decoration from their former lives as standing crosses, a recycling that has challenged both church and art historians. This paper reconsiders these early fonts by integrating them into the broader history of baptismal sculpture and iconography from Wales, Scandinavia, and Frankia to elucidate the local and European contexts for font production at this time. Focusing on the act of reuse, I show how standing cross fragments were purposefully adapted for baptism due to the monumental and sacramental meanings of their original 'living stones.'

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

The Gotlandic picture stones

Sigmund Oehrl, Stockholm University

The Gotlandic picture stones are among the internationally most famous historical monuments from Sweden. These exceptional memorial stones dating to about AD 400–1100, are covered with images and represent a unique source for studies of dress, weapons, riding techniques, wagons and ships as well as Pre-Christian religion. Although much research on the stones has been carried out, most of this research, by necessity, has been based on S. Lindqvist's edition *Gotlands Bildsteine*. However, 75 years after its publication it is quite clear that this edition is outdated. Firstly, it contains only half of the stones known today. Secondly, the book edition is based on photos, showing the primitive and heavily weathered carvings traced with paint, which is highly interpretative. A new project has been started, with three major aims: 1.) Digitization of the entire corpus, applying the most advanced 2.5D and 3D recording methods available. 2.) Collecting literature, reports, photographs, drawings, letters and other information kept in the archives. 3.) Creating an online edition and searchable database including 3D models of each stone, detailed texts with all information about find contexts, object biography, material, ornamentation, interpretations, inscriptions and references.

OG(H)AM: Harnessing digital technologies to transform understanding of ogham writing, from the 4th century to the 21st

Katherine Forsyth and Megan Kasten, University of Glasgow

Overview of a major new collaborative project (2021-24) by scholars from the University of Glasgow and Maynooth University which is harnessing digital tools from different fields to transform scholarly and popular understanding of ogham—an ancient script unique to Ireland and Britain. The project is documenting digitally all c.640 examples of ogham writing in all media, from the script's origin in the fourth century CE until the dawn of the modern revival c.1850. The overwhelming majority of these are on carved stone monuments, predominantly otherwise unworked pillars of 5th-7th century date, but also Pictish symbol stones, outcrops, cross-slabs, and miscellaneous stones, from the 8th-12th century.
The project provides the long-awaited opportunity to complete the corpus of ogham-inscribed Irish stones begun by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies *Ogham in 3D* project (2012-15, 2016-17). This database, which conforms to Epidocs standards covers c.25% of surviving ogham and provides detailed supporting information, photographs, and 3D models. The project will upgrade its data and metadata, enhance its searchability, and greatly expand its thematic, chronological, and geographical scope by including oghams from the whole island of Ireland (i.e. including Northern Ireland) and from outside Ireland. The latter—from Scotland, Wales, Man, England, and Continental libraries—comprise almost a third of the total surviving. The project will also move beyond stone monuments to include portable objects, graffiti, and manuscripts.

The scapegoat capital of Stavanger Cathedral – a technological study

Sólveig Jónsdóttir and Bettina Ebert, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger

Conservators at the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger, western Norway, are currently involved in a multi-year conservation project for Stavanger cathedral (circa 1125), due to be completed in 2025, in time for its 900-year anniversary. The current technological study involves a capital commonly referred to as the scapegoat capital (syndebukkapitelet). While the capital has previously been discussed by art historians, with a resultant range of varying iconographic interpretations, technological investigations have never before been undertaken. The capital is unique in its richly carved scenes and the possible presence of pigment remnants. Our aim is to highlight its production, possible surface treatment and relationship to the other soapstone capitals in the cathedral, none of which evoke as many questions. It stands out due to its intricate carvings, shape and type of stone material. This study will provide a much-needed update to current knowledge of the capital and Stavanger Cathedral.

Writing off the page: non-manuscript inscriptions in early medieval England

Beth Newman Ooi, Ph.D., Lecturer, Department of English, The Catholic University of America (CUA), Washington, DC

This project seeks to expand the traditional canon of early medieval English writing by drawing attention to the varied uses and surviving examples of writing on non-parchment objects in England's early medieval period (c. 450 – c. 1100). While the value of inscriptions on stone and other materials has long been recognized in the field of Classical literatures and languages, early medieval England's inscriptions are often downplayed in the study and teaching of Old English and Anglo-Latin language and literature. Building on my doctoral work (dissertation: "The Speaking Objects of Anglo-Saxon England," CUA, 2018), I am currently researching a monograph that will feature case studies of both typical and not-so-typical inscribed objects from early medieval England, considering these objects and their inscriptions from social, historical, art historical, linguistic, and literary perspectives. My poster will present the current state of this project, especially foregrounding my work on the way inscriptions shape how we see and what we see in England's early medieval stone sculpture.

The spaces and places of early medieval sculpture: using GIS to contextualise the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* in the landscapes of northern England

Brian Buchanan, Eastern Washington State University, Spokane

Recently there have been a number of archaeological projects using GIS to analyse the distribution of archaeological sites and monument records in comparison to their regional and/or national landscapes. Projects like the *English Landscapes and Identity Project* have demonstrated the utility of investigating these 'big datasets' by analysing the spatial location of sites using innovative geospatial techniques. This paper uses similar methods to investigate the distribution of sculpture in the landscapes of northern England as recorded in the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*. Although the Corpus is a smaller dataset, it presents unique challenges compared to many of the 'big data' research projects due to the limited provenience of much of the sculpture. These challenges present unique opportunities to investigate the Corpus using new techniques to contextualise the spatial location of sculpture compared to the spaces and places of early medieval Britain.