

CHAPTER III
THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SCULPTURE
by Michael Hare and Richard Bryant

LACUNAE IN THE SCULPTURAL RECORD
(M.H.)

The only significant sites in the area to have produced sculpture in any quantity are Deerhurst and Gloucester St Oswald's; these two sites seem to have had relatively limited *floruits*, in the case of Deerhurst during the first half of the ninth century and in the case of St Oswald's from *c.* 890 to perhaps 940. Both sites had clearly lost their significance by the middle of the eleventh century.

The historical overview indicates that there are some major *lacunae* in the record of surviving sculpture. Most striking is the absence of any sculpture from the cathedral church at Hereford and of only a meagre quantity from Worcester. There are also some important minsters from which no sculpture is known: Leominster and Much Wenlock in the diocese of Hereford, Cirencester, Fladbury and Winchcombe in the diocese of Worcester to name but a few. The list could be greatly extended if minor minsters were included.

Another striking *lacuna* is the shortage of sculpture associated with the Benedictine monasteries established in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. At Worcester it is possible that the capitals and bases now built into the slype (Worcester Cathedral 3a–x), together with a fragment of interlace (Worcester Cathedral 2) may derive from the monks' church (as suggested in the catalogue entries, pp. 368, 369), but it cannot be excluded that these pieces might equally derive from a project sponsored by the secular clerks or by the bishop. There is nothing at all of this date from St Peter's Abbey in Gloucester, from Pershore and from Winchcombe, while from Evesham there is a small fragment and a seal matrix, one of which may antedate the Benedictine presence, while the other is in all likelihood post-Conquest in date (pp. 357, 373). The haul from the Benedictine monasteries — which

so dominate the historical record — is thus extremely meagre. It seems likely that the lack of sculpture from these sites is primarily a reflection of the extent of later rebuilding. The recent discovery of the Lichfield angel, Staffordshire (Rodwell *et al.* 2008) is a reminder of how quickly a single significant find may change perceptions of a site.

PATTERNS OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROVISION
AND PATRONAGE (M.H.)

Sculpture may provide some evidence of value in the ongoing debate about the nature of early ecclesiastical provision and the development of parochial structure (see most recently Blair 2005; Foot 2006, 283–336). In a few cases it is also possible to say something about patronage. The following comments are concerned with the Mercian evidence; the material of Welsh origin in southern and western Herefordshire is not discussed.

EIGHTH- AND NINTH-CENTURY SCULPTURE

Much of the surviving sculpture of eighth- and ninth-century date from the western Midlands can be shown to be associated with minster churches. Thus there is good evidence that Berkeley and Deerhurst, both with significant collections of early sculpture, were important minster churches in the diocese of Worcester (pp. 129–33, 161–90). In the case of Deerhurst the sculpture belongs mainly to the first half of the ninth century and is probably to be associated with the recorded patronage of the family of Æthelmund and his son Æthelric (p. 180); Æthelmund is in all likelihood to be identified with the ealdorman of that name who was killed in battle in 802. The same family had links to Berkeley, though the exact nature of the relationship is obscure (p. 131). Another major



FIGURE 4 Sites with Anglo-Saxon sculpture in the western Midlands, with topography

minster with an important collection of early sculpture is Bath (Somerset), outside the present study area but in the territory of the Hwicce until *c.* 900 (Cramp 2006, 139–44). The half-figure from Pershore seems likely to derive from an early minster complex (p. 361). At Gloucester there are a number of early pieces with different provenances (Gloucester Cathedral 1; Gloucester St Mary de Lode 1–2; Gloucester St Oswald 1–4; Gloucester London Road 1; Gloucester Tanners' Hall 1: see pp. 203–28). Gloucester Abbey (the 'old minster') certainly had an early origin, probably in the late seventh century (p. 205). None of the early sculpture can be associated with certainty with Gloucester's 'old minster', though it is probable that Gloucester Cathedral 1 came from it. St Mary de Lode had a close relationship with the early minster, though the exact nature of this relationship is uncertain (p. 206). It is also possible that there was a second early minster in Gloucester on or near the site of St Oswald's (p. 208). Although the details are unclear, the collection of early sculpture from Gloucester seems likely to reflect the presence of at least one important minster there. Acton Beauchamp by contrast is a rare example of a documented minor minster with early sculpture, perhaps originally in the diocese of Hereford (p. 282).

Undocumented early minster churches probably existed at a number of other places which have produced early sculpture. Thus early minsters have been suggested at Avening, Cropthorne, Tenbury Wells and Wroxeter (pp. 128, 316, 356, 367), and a similar case can be advanced for Newent (p. 236). The early sculptures from Coventry and Warwick do not have a provenance from church buildings, but in both cases it seems likely that the pre-900 sculptures should be associated with the existence of early minsters there (pp. 337, 341). Similarly the original contexts of Bisley Lypiatt 1 and Bisley Parish 1 are uncertain, but both pieces should in all likelihood be associated with the probable existence of a minster church at Bisley (p. 142). The Lechmere Stone (Hanley Castle 1) is a carving of very high quality that is presumably a reflection of the status of whoever commissioned it, but the provenance is so uncertain that it cannot usefully be brought into the debate (p. 359).

There remains a number of sites with early sculpture, which cannot be readily seen as minster churches: Abson, Edgeworth, Elmstone Hardwicke, Prestbury, South Cerney (all Gloucestershire), Rugby (Warwickshire) and Upton Bishop (Herefordshire). It should, however, be recognised that some or even all of these sites could have been minor minster churches

in origin; Sarah Foot (2006, 135) has recently emphasised that we may be in danger of overlooking small and relatively ill-endowed establishments. Acton Beauchamp (Herefordshire), attested as a minster in the eighth century and provided with a fine cross-shaft in the ninth century (p. 281), serves as a warning case. Acton Beauchamp has none of the characteristics usually associated with minsters. The later church served a parish of modest size with no dependent chapelries and was of modest value; the church building is small and does not occupy a site of the kind usually considered as characteristic of minster churches (Page and Willis-Bund 1924, 224–7). Daylesford and Dowdeswell (both Gloucestershire) are further examples of documented minor minsters in the area, both with no surviving sculptural remains (Sims-Williams 1990, 150–2, 155–6).

John Blair (2005, 215) has commented that reading 'the sculptural evidence depends on the extent to which early pieces on small sites are held to reflect direct links between monastic estates and peripheries'. A case in point is Edgeworth, which has a fragment of a ninth-century cross-shaft and also a grave-cover perhaps of the same date (p. 197). Edgeworth is sited on a high bluff above the upper reaches of the River Frome, on the eastern side of a plateau in a remote part of the Cotswolds. Edgeworth could perhaps be a small minster of independent status, but it may be more likely that the church had its origins as a dependency of a minster church at nearby Bisley (see the map in Bryant 1990, 47). In the case of Elmstone Hardwicke there are clear artistic links with nearby Deerhurst, and a case has been made that the Elmstone Hardwicke cross-shaft was erected on an isolated spot to commemorate Æthelmund, who has already been mentioned as a patron of Deerhurst (Hare 2010; see also p. 201). The name of Prestbury, first recorded *c.* 900, might conceivably indicate the presence of a religious community there, but seems more likely to indicate associations with a minster community elsewhere (p. 241; Hare 2010, 146–7).

South Cerney might possibly have originated as a dependency of Cirencester to the north. However, it is first recorded in the hands of the ealdorman of Mercia in the tenth century (p. 247). South Cerney is strategically located on the Thames boundary between Mercia and Wessex and might long have been a comital estate. Upton Bishop's place-name indicates that it was named in relation to another nearby centre, though its early links are hard to disentangle from the later evidence; one possibility might be that it was an early hunting lodge of the bishops of Hereford in whose

possession it appears at the time of the Domesday Survey (p. 293).

The case of Abson, with remains of a cross of the 'Colerne School', presents special difficulties which are discussed in more detail below (p. 125); Abson was no more than a chapel-of-ease to nearby Pucklechurch in later centuries. The provenance of the cross-shaft from Rugby is not as secure as one would wish; it is first recorded in a garden rockery, but is believed to come from the church of St Andrew at Rugby. Rugby was a place of no great importance when first recorded and its church was originally a chapel-of-ease to Clifton-upon-Dunsmore (p. 341).

This brief survey of sites with pre-900 sculpture which are not self-evidently minsters has not produced any very conclusive results. However, the range of sites suggests that it is unlikely that a simple explanation exists which will embrace all the material. The evidence from the western Midlands adds to a growing body of material which suggests that, at least by the ninth century, sculpture (most particularly in the form of crosses) was employed not just at central minster sites, but at monastic dependencies and in all likelihood at other sites.

TENTH- AND ELEVENTH-CENTURY SCULPTURE

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, sculpture is found at a wider range of sites, at least in part of the study area. Only an overview can be given here; the following discussion does not include all sites which have produced sculpture of tenth- and eleventh-century date.

The minster churches remain prominent in the sculptural record, including several of those already mentioned. There is comparatively little at Deerhurst (p. 161), though there was evidently a campaign of work involving alterations to the upper levels, probably in the tenth century (Deerhurst St Mary 6, 7, 8, 23); two fragments of string-course reused in Priory Farm may also be of tenth-century date (Deerhurst St Mary 21, 22). At Berkeley there is only a panel of uncertain function, perhaps of tenth-century date (Berkeley Castle 3, p. 132). At Bisley there are a number of fragments of Late Saxon date (Bisley All Saints 1-4, p. 141); the provenance of many of the Bisley sculptures is more than usually complicated, but most of these items are more securely connected to the parish church than the two pre-900 pieces. Sculpture of tenth- and eleventh-century date also exists at Avening, Coventry and Newent (pp. 128, 236, 338).

Several early minsters first produce sculpture in

the tenth and eleventh centuries. The cathedral at Worcester was established in the late seventh century (p. 9), but has to date produced only two small fragments of late Saxon date, plus an important series of capitals and bases reused in the Norman slype (p. 367). Bibury is documented as an episcopal minster from an early date (p. 138). The chancel-arch wall has capitals with close manuscript parallels and the remains of a rood; it is perhaps the best example in the study area of work likely to have resulted from episcopal patronage (Bibury 6-9, p. 138). The important series of grave-covers and -markers from the same site (Bibury 1-5) is more likely to reflect the interests of local landholders (p. 14). The presence of a stone with ornament in the Ringerike style (no. 1, p. 134) is of interest, as there was a tenant known as Balki 'the Dane' recorded in Domesday Book as holding land within Bibury's minster parish before the Conquest (Moore 1982, no. 78, 11; Balki's soubriquet 'the Dane' comes from a twelfth-century source: Moore 1989, 124); it would, however, be a mistake to press the point too far. Bromyard, Evesham, Ripple and Wootton Wawen, which have each produced a small quantity of late sculpture, are also documented as early minsters (pp. 283, 344, 357, 361).

A number of other churches which have produced tenth- and eleventh-century sculpture seem likely to have been minster churches. In Gloucestershire Bitton, Frocester and Hawkesbury seem to have been minsters (pp. 148, 202, 230); the occurrence of Coln St Aldwyns in a list of saints' resting places of c. 1180-1230 suggests that it too is likely to have been a minster church before the Conquest (p. 154). In Shropshire the churches of St Mary and St Chad in Shrewsbury have both been argued to be minsters of Middle Saxon date (the sculpture at 50 Mardol seems likely to have come from St Chad's: pp. 309, 312); the churches of Diddlebury, Stottesdon and Westbury have all been suggested as minsters (pp. 307, 314, 325). Bromfield and Stanton Lacy, only a couple of miles apart, also seem to have been minster churches (pp. 306, 323).

Some minsters were of late origin (perhaps including some of those mentioned in the previous paragraph). The clearest example is St Oswald's, Gloucester, probably established not long before 900 (pp. 13, 207). This site has produced a large quantity of tenth-century sculpture, and some of the material of early tenth-century date is of very high quality (Gloucester St Oswald 5-8, 15). It seems likely that these carvings reflect the patronage of Æthelred and Æthelflæd of Mercia and/or of their West Saxon successors; King

Æthelstan (924–39) is known to have issued a charter in favour of St Oswald's, Daglingworth, with its series of panels, is another possible example of a late minster (pp. 155–9); it was perhaps founded not far north of Cirencester to serve the Duntisbourne valley. The status of the site (later St Augustine's Abbey) which produced the fine Harrowing of Hell carving at Bristol is not clear (p. 151) and must await a better understanding of Bristol's origins; the town must have had at least one important church by the time that Bristol possessed a mint in the early eleventh century (see above, p. 16).

There is also a certain amount of tenth- and eleventh-century sculpture which seems likely to reflect the development of local churches on sites which were not minsters (Blair 2005, 368–425). This development is, however, largely confined to the diocese of Worcester, and is most noticeable in the Cotswolds, where sculpture may be noted at sites such as Ampney St Mary, Aston Blank, Beverstone, Broadwell, Coln Rogers, Lower Swell, Somerford Keynes¹ and Temple Guiting (all Gloucestershire), together with Barton-on-the-Heath (Warwickshire). Between the Cotswold scarp and the River Severn, sculpture is found at Iron Acton and at the small urban church of All Saints, Gloucester (the Gloucester Tolsey beast-head, p. 227), and there are also two inscriptions from Odda's Chapel, Deerhurst (p. 190).

A small amount of sculpture from local sites is also found in and around the Avon Valley. In the lower Avon valley in Worcestershire, both Rous Lench and Wyre Piddle seem to have originated as chapelries of the important episcopal minster at Fladbury (pp. 364, 371). The interesting carvings from these two sites presumably reflect developments at sites like Fladbury and the nearby abbeys of Evesham and Pershore. Moving up the Avon valley into Warwickshire, sculpture from three local sites may be noted, Billesley, Kinwarton and Whitchurch. In northern Worcestershire, the churches of Belbroughton and Stoke Prior have produced sculpture.²

Away from the diocese of Worcester, there is much less material of tenth- and eleventh-century date which can be considered in the context of the developing local church; the reasons underlying the geographical distribution are discussed more fully below. There is no material to be considered in northern and eastern Warwickshire (in the diocese of Lichfield) and in

Gloucestershire west of the Severn (in the diocese of Hereford). In Shropshire and Herefordshire, there is a thin scatter of material, but only a little of it can be assigned to a pre-1066 date with any confidence. In general the small amount of sculpture from local churches in the western Midlands would tend to support the hypothesis that in this area, local churches were not constructed in any number until around the middle of the eleventh century (see above, p. 18).

Only in the case of the inscriptions from Odda's Chapel at Deerhurst is it possible to identify a specific patron. Odda was a kinsman of Edward the Confessor and one of his earls from 1051 until his death in 1056. The chapel does not seem to have had any parochial function and was presumably a private chapel with a commemorative function (p. 191). The fine figure of Christ at Beverstone is another possible example of comital patronage; Beverstone makes a brief appearance in Anglo-Saxon history as the place where Earl Godwine assembled his forces in 1051 during his confrontation with Edward the Confessor (p. 134). The small fragment of a cross-head at Belbroughton, Worcestershire, a place associated with the family of Earl Leofric, might also represent an example of comital patronage (p. 353). South Cerney has a well-documented late-Saxon history. When first recorded in the 980s South Cerney was in the hands of the ealdorman of Mercia; in 999 it was granted to Abingdon Abbey and subsequently came into the hands of Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury (p. 247). Any of these would be suitable patrons for the fine panel now above the south doorway (South Cerney 2, p. 247).

THE REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ANGLO-SAXON SCULPTURE (R.M.B.)

There is a marked imbalance in the quantity of Anglo-Saxon stone carving from the five counties included in the study area. Of the 271 pieces recorded (excluding Appendix B items and the fonts in Appendix K), 164 come from Gloucestershire, 43 from Worcestershire, 28 from Shropshire, 24 from Herefordshire, and only 12 from Warwickshire. The number of sites (again excluding Appendices B and K) shows an equal imbalance with 54 in Gloucestershire, 14 in Herefordshire, 13 in Shropshire, 13 in Worcestershire,

1. Somerford Keynes was in Wiltshire until 1897 and should thus be seen in a West Saxon rather than a Mercian context.

2. Steven Bassett (pers. comm. dated 6 January 2010) comments that the churches of Billesley, Kinwarton, Belbroughton and Stoke Prior all show many of the characteristics of lesser minster/parochial chapel status.

and 9 in Warwickshire. In terms of ecclesiastical organization, a little over 75% of the pieces recorded comes from the medieval diocese of Worcester, while less than 10% comes from the diocese of Hereford which is of broadly comparable size to Worcester; the remainder comes mostly from the diocese of Lichfield (only partially covered in this volume) with a few pieces in the dioceses of St Asaph (Oswestry, Shropshire), St David's (sites in the Ewyas area of Herefordshire) and Salisbury (Somerset, Gloucestershire).

Gloucestershire east of the River Severn and parts of Worcestershire and Warwickshire have access to abundant, readily workable stone from the oolitic limestone quarries in the Cotswolds (see Chapter IV below, p. 38). The sandstone beds of northern Worcestershire also provide good stone for carving and building, but the surface weathers far more quickly and thus a significant amount of carving has probably been lost. The harder sandstone beds of western Herefordshire provide large, but flat and sometimes rather narrow stones which tended to be used as monolithic monuments. Shropshire has access to some good stone suitable for building and carving, and the Roman city of *Viriconium* at Wroxeter provides evidence of this.

The small number of stone carvings from Warwickshire is more difficult to understand given the availability of stone. It is striking that three of the sites in south-east Warwickshire (Billesley, Kinwarton and Whitchurch) show substantial elements of desertion (Bond 1974). If sculpture survives from settlements which subsequently failed, perhaps it has simply not yet been recovered from more successful sites. In western Warwickshire, together with northern and western Worcestershire and Gloucestershire west of the Severn, place-name and charter evidence indicates that much of the area was thickly wooded in the Anglo-Saxon period (Hooke 1985, 47, 63, 165–72, figs. 10, 39). There are still large tracts of woodland in these regions with an abundance of medieval timber buildings, and it seems reasonable to assume that, in such areas, wood would have been the more natural medium for carving. This could be equally true of parts of central Herefordshire and southern Shropshire.

There is, however, another factor that needs to be considered and that is the relative amounts of time spent on this project visiting church sites and gathering the basic data for each county. In this respect it must be acknowledged that Gloucestershire, and to a slightly lesser degree Worcestershire, have been subject to more extensive study for a much longer period than have the other counties. Gloucestershire in particular has been studied over a period of more

than twenty years and previously unrecorded items have been found as a result. There have also been major archaeological projects in the county (notably at St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester and St Mary's, Deerhurst) that have added significantly to the corpus of material and our understanding of it. For the other counties the authors are confident that no major item of sculpture has been omitted, many sites have been visited, and that all previously recorded items have been checked and included or rejected, but there will, almost certainly, be pieces of sculpture still out there desperately trying to catch the eye. One such example is the section of cross-shaft at St Mary's, Westbury (Shropshire) that was not recorded until May 2010 (p. 313).

As well as freshly-quarried stone, carvers could also make use of the abundant supply of stone to be found in the ruins of the region's Roman towns and villas. The Cunorix inscription from Wroxeter provides an early example from Shropshire of a reused carving (Wroxeter Roman Town 1, p. 318), while a small eleventh-century piece from Chedworth (Gloucestershire) was cut onto the back of what is probably a Roman pewter mould (p. 257). In Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire there are examples of fonts and stoups that have been carved into reused Roman column bases, capitals and altars (see Appendix K, p. 381). Other pieces may have been carved on Roman 'ashlar' blocks, but it is difficult to see how these could now be identified unless they retain Roman features or tooling. Certainly Roman dressed stone was extensively used as building material, as has been noted above in the churches at Atcham and Wroxeter (Shropshire), and as was demonstrated in the excavation and analysis of the foundations and standing wall of the tenth-century church at St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester (Heighway and Bryant 1999). There is, however, a later example of reuse and this is on a cross-shaft from Billesley, Warwickshire (p. 335). Here a tenth-century cross has had one face recut in the twelfth century with a Harrowing-of-Hell, and there is a marked difference in quality between the earlier and later carving. This is partially the result of weathering, but it may also show the difference in the level of finish that can be obtained on a newly-quarried stone as opposed to a 'dead' reused stone.

THE MOVEMENT OF STONE

In the later medieval period the two major rivers of the area, the River Severn and the River Avon, were used to transport worked stone and it is a reasonable assumption that this was true in the later Anglo-

Saxon period as well (see also Chapter IV, p. 44). The cross-shafts at Acton Beauchamp (Herefordshire) and Wroxeter (Shropshire) that are both carved in oolitic limestone (see below) were almost certainly carried to or quite close to their destinations by boat up the Severn. Some of the larger subsidiary rivers might also have offered the potential to move stone in this way, for example the cross-shaft at Tenbury Wells (Worcestershire) could have been carried up the River Teme. However, the majority of the smaller rivers and the streams in the area are too shallow, especially those running down from the quarries along the Cotswold scarp. It must, therefore, be assumed that most stone was moved by ox carts or sledges, for all or at least part of its journey, and the network of Roman roads throughout the region, many of which still survive today, would have served to encourage road transport over fairly long distances.

THE EVIDENCE FOR REGIONAL CRAFT CENTRES

There is one group of early ninth-century sculptures from the western Midlands that betray such close similarities in technique and decorative repertoire that the carvings have long been seen as the products of a single centre or group of carvers. Examples can be found in four of the five counties in this volume, and include the magnificent cross-head from Cropthorne (Worcestershire), and cross-shafts from Gloucester (Gloucester St Oswald 3), Acton Beauchamp (Herefordshire) and Wroxeter (Shropshire) (see Chapter VI, pp. 67, 73, Figs. 25, 27; and catalogue discussions). All four of the stones were carved in oolitic limestone from the Cotswolds (Chapter IV, p. 39, Fig. 12), and this suggests that production was probably based in Gloucestershire or Worcestershire. As the seat of the bishop, Worcester would seem to be the most likely centre for carving of this quality, although Gloucester should also be considered because of the continuing sculptural tradition that is apparent in the six or seven late eighth- or ninth-century crosses that have been found in the city.

The 'Cropthorne' group was very influential and lies at the centre of many of the west Mercian sculptural traditions. On these carvings we find animals and birds which combine liveliness of movement with dramatic body texturing or more naturalistic body treatment to create impressively dynamic compositions. The plant-scrolls and tree-scrolls that accompany these creatures are similarly treated, sometimes naturalistically and sometimes in a highly stylised manner.

The Cropthorne cross-head (Cropthorne 1, p. 353,

Ills. 621–33) shows a range of animals, with bodies and necks outlined with incised lines and covered with zones of contoured hatching. The creatures have huge, clawed feet, and their tongues and tails are pulled out into interlace. There are also more naturalistically treated birds, a creature of heraldic type — perhaps a griffin — with a 'leaf-tail' and dramatic curving crest, and a disembodied animal-head that acts as the terminal for a plant-scroll. All the creatures have drilled pupils, with the rest of the eye outlined with incised lines. Median-incised, lobe-leaved plant stems climb up in curving sweeps from hatched, horseshoe-shaped mounds to surround and enmesh the birds and animals.

Two similar animals and a bird appear in a stylised plant-scroll on the Acton Beauchamp shaft (Acton Beauchamp 1, p. 281, Ills. 496–501). Of the two animals, one has a body filled with textured hatching and the other with swags of fur. The bird is again treated more naturalistically. All the creatures' bodies are outlined; the eyes are drilled and the feet are large. The plant-scroll, which like Cropthorne grows from a hatched, horseshoe-shaped mound, is median-incised with the wider sections outlined and hatched, as are the larger of the lobed leaves.

At Wroxeter (Wroxeter St Andrew 1, p. 314, Ills. 562–4) the visible face of the shaft is split into two. In the upper panel there is a median-incised plant-scroll which grows from a small, hatched, horseshoe-shaped mound very similar to those at Cropthorne and Acton Beauchamp. In the lower panel there is a graceful, long-necked and long-legged creature, whose tail is pulled out into a rather irregular panel of median-incised interlace. The body and neck are covered with zones of contoured hatching, and the shoulder-joint is marked with a large spiral. The jaw, carved as though seen from above, is rounded with fine inscribed muzzle lines down either side. The eyes are large and round, and set on the front of the forehead. The ears are small and rounded, and stick out on either side of the head. The creature has small, rather dainty hooves.

On the Gloucester cross-shaft (Gloucester St Oswald 3, p. 209, Ills. 278–86) there is a great beast enmeshed in knots of interlace. The body is outlined and hatched, with curls of fur falling down the neck and across the back. The beast's eye is set beneath a heavy brow-ridge and the tail swings down across the back legs. Beneath the beast's front feet is a second enmeshed beast, with a very similar head, hatching on its upper forelegs and a spiral shoulder-joint. On the other faces of this cross there is a bird, with stylised but naturalistic feathers and a curving shoulder joint, caught in a chain of interlace; a pair of salamander-like

creatures with outlined and hatched bodies and spiral hip-joints; a spiral-hipped, bipedal creature, with a long tail that splits in two and an outlined body that is filled with a simple meander; a pair of facing beasts which have forelegs only and bodies that have been treated in a more naturalistic manner before being drawn out into interlace; and a bifurcated tree-scroll, the branches of which become a tangle of interlace.

In this part of Mercia, never part of the Danelaw and therefore not subject to the different taste and traditions of Scandinavian patrons, the influence of the 'Crophthorne' carvers can be seen to continue throughout the ninth century and the early part of the tenth century, and to spread beyond western Mercia to inspire separate developments in Wessex (for example the 'Colerne' style) and to a lesser degree, the adjacent parts of 'English' Mercia. As the ninth century progresses, the carvings become harsher, and serpentine and lacertine forms begin to appear (see Chapter VI, p. 69).

The twenty-four tenth-century capitals and bases reused in the slype at Worcester Cathedral are all lathe-turned and betray a consistency of treatment that indicates that they are the product of a single workshop. The capitals range in height from 16–21 cm, and in profile they are conical or slightly bow-sided with a sharp in-turn above the collar. The surface of each of the capitals is covered with wide horizontal bands separated by narrow, sometimes raised mouldings. In one case two of the wide bands are further decorated with median-incised double lines, while on another the lowest band carries close-set vertically inscribed lines. The bases are bulbous, either round or sagging in profile, and the surfaces are either plain or carry single or double inscribed horizontal lines. The catalogue discussion of this group (Worcester Cathedral 3a–x, p. 369, Ills. 677–701) draws parallels with the reused tenth-century baluster shafts with integral capitals and bases at St Albans (Hertfordshire), with some of the lathe-turned late tenth-century fragments recovered during the Old Minster excavations in Winchester, and with a capital from Lancaster. The discussion also notes that manuscript illustrations sometimes show similar capitals and bases used the other way round, with bulbous capitals and conical bases.

In the first half of the eleventh century, in the area around Cirencester in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, there is a group of grave-markers and -covers that are very similar and may be the work of a single craft centre, perhaps attached to the important abbey in Cirencester itself. Geological analysis has shown that this group worked stone from the Taynton Limestone

and White Limestone beds of the Great Oolite Group (Chapter IV, pp. 42–3). The most dramatic carvings in this group are two with Ringerike-style carving, clearly showing the influence of Scandinavian taste. One of these carvings comes from Bibury (no. 1, p. 134) and one comes from Somerford Keynes (no. 1, p. 243). It may not be entirely coincidental that Aldsworth (which was a chapelry of Bibury and adjoined it to the north-east) was held in 1066 by one Balki 'the Dane' (see above, p. 22). The Somerford Keynes carving takes the form of two opposed beasts, their necks covered with 'buds' set in nests of leaves, spirals and lobed or clawed tendrils (Ills. 426–8). The creatures' mouths touch and hold a round ball between them. Unusually the stone is carved actually to the shape of the creatures and pierced completely below the mouths. On the top of the more complete head there are indications that the creature probably bore a crest or comb. The eyes are emphasised by fans of bold, lobed eyelashes. These beasts are very similar to the lower heads on the larger grave-marker from Bibury (no. 1), but here the other end of each creature twists through a figure-of-eight to end in a humanoid head with pointed ears and luxuriant moustaches (Ills. 27–8). A smaller grave-marker in this group, Bibury 2, shows the same figure-of-eight design around a spiral plant form on one face, and linked circles and arcs of circles on the other, all covered with pelleting (p. 136, Ills. 29–32). Various elements of these designs — the figure-of-eight knots and designs, chains of circles or rounded lozenges, and pelleting — are found used together or separately on two other stones from Bibury (nos. 4–5), and also at Bisley All Saints 1, Broadwell and Ampney St Mary.

THE WORK OF INDIVIDUAL CARVERS

Three ninth-century carvings, the font bowl and stem from Deerhurst in Gloucestershire (Deerhurst St Mary 3a–b, p. 163) and part of a cross-shaft from nearby Elmstone Hardwicke (no. 1, p. 198), are so distinctive in the style of carving and the scheme of decoration employed that they are almost certainly the work of a single carver.

The eight panels of the font bowl contain grids of interlocking, opposed 'C-curve spirals' (Ills. 132–44, upper). The spirals and straight linking lines are carved in relief to an even width and the term 'bracketed-spiral' has been used in the catalogue because it offers a clearer description of the motif. Around the top and bottom of the bowl there are spiral plant-scrolls, carved with sinuous, sweeping stems and loose simple spirals

ending in a berry bunch or a fruit-and-leaf motif. Side shoots with lobed leaves grow from the outer curves of the volutes, while the junctions between the volutes and the main stems are marked by oval node buds or buds with flanking leaves.

There are seven panels around the present stem of the font, perhaps originally part of a round-shaft cross (Ills. 132–44, lower). Three of the panels contain 'bracket-spirals' exactly like those on the font bowl and three contain ribbon-bodied creatures, while the seventh panel contains amorphous shapes in which nothing specific can be discerned. The heads of the ribbon-animals point downwards and it seems probable that, when installed, the stem stone may have been set upside down.

At Elmstone Hardwicke there is a section of cross-shaft cut down to a rather irregular octagon in plan and chamfered off around a socket at the top, probably to form a later cross-base (Ills. 242–7, and Fig. 42, p. 201). The central parts of three of the original faces survive and carry the same interlocking 'bracket-spiral' motif as the font. The fourth face has been cut back but it was probably also carved. This would mean that the original shaft was rectangular in plan (see catalogue entry, p. 199, in which the base-grids of the carving are also described).

To these carvings might be added the Lechmere Stone, Worcestershire (Hanley Castle 1, p. 357, Ills. 635–45) where the delicately carved plant-scrolls around the sides of the stone are exactly like those on the top and bottom bands around the bowl of the Deerhurst font.

In the catalogue discussions for the Deerhurst font and the Elmstone Hardwicke cross-shaft, the opposed 'C-curve bracketed-spirals' are compared to eighth-century Hiberno-Saxon manuscripts and to several ninth-century Irish High Crosses, and it is tempting to suggest that the carver of these most unusual designs might have been Irish or that he had trained in Ireland. A panel from Bradford-on-Avon in neighbouring Wiltshire also carries a similar 'bracket-spiral' motif (Cramp 2006, 205, ill. 408–9).

Within the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, there are five figure carvings in which aspects of each figure appear to be awkward or out of scale. A carving from Inglesham in north Wiltshire displays similar features (Cramp 2006, 217–19, ill. 453–4). At Daglingworth (Gloucestershire), there are two crucifixion panels on

which the hands of the crucified Christ are rather large (nos. 1–2, pp. 155–7, Ills. 100–2). Also at Daglingworth there are two more panels, depicting Christ Enthroned and St Peter, on which the upper parts of the bodies are larger than the lower parts, and the arms of both of these figures are awkwardly positioned (nos. 3–4, pp. 157–9, Ills. 103–6). St Peter's shoulders are very broad. The crucifixion from Wormington (Gloucestershire) has huge feet. His head is turned to the right, but his forked-beard is depicted as full frontal (no. 1, p. 251, Ills. 447–8). Similarly, at Inglesham (Wiltshire), on the panel depicting the Virgin and Christ child, Mary's veiled head seem to be carved in profile, but her face is turned towards the viewer (Cramp 2006, ill. 453). Mary's body is carved with very little detail, a solid, cocooning presence around her child. Seated on her knee, the body of the Christ child is rather hunched, while his right hand and arm are twisted at an extremely awkward angle in the act of offering a blessing.

It seems possible that all of these carvings are the work of one hand. They are powerful pieces and, while the exaggeration and awkwardness may indicate that the carver was at the limit of his technical skill, they also serve to imbue these pieces with a remarkable degree of character. The Daglingworth Crucified Christ is, in both cases, powerful and strong. The Daglingworth figure of Christ Enthroned is calm and dignified, while St Peter is a rock personified. The Wormington Christ seems to rise high above the viewer, because we read the large feet as being much nearer than the rest of the body. It is as though the carver was trying to create perspective, and perhaps seeking to combine the images of the Crucifixion with the Ascension. The Inglesham Mary and the Child Jesus is a subtle combination of the solid, protective power of Mary, the nascent power of the Christ child, and the warmth and affection of the bond between mother and child.

A similar distortion in the size of the right hand of what is probably the Virgin Mary on a carved panel from Breedon-on-the-Hill (Leicestershire) strongly emphasises the act of blessing (Cramp 1977, 210, 214, fig. 58), while on the Ruthwell cross (Dumfriesshire) the enlarged right arm of Mary, depicted in the act of drying Christ's feet with her hair, may be a symbol both of Mary's willingness to serve and her desire to protect her Lord (Cassidy 1992, 73, 110–12, pl. 16).