

## CHAPTER IX

# SCULPTURE RECOVERED FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AND DATEABLE EARLY STRUCTURAL CONTEXTS

### ST OSWALD'S PRIORY, GLOUCESTER

At St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester a major campaign of archaeological excavation from 1975 to 1983 resulted not only in the recovery of the complete plan and partial elevation of the tenth-century church, but also one of the most important collections of Anglo-Saxon sculpture and carving from stratified contexts to be found in southern Britain (the other significant collections being from Repton and Winchester). It has, therefore, been possible in many cases to cross-refer art-historical methods of dating stylistic developments with dates derived archaeologically for the contexts from which the material was retrieved. Sadly none was *in situ*, but the pieces can be divided into three groups: a group of cross-shafts that pre-date the Period I (early tenth-century) building; a group of grave-covers that were reused in Periods III and IVa (late tenth/eleventh century); and a large group of architectural and other fragments reused in Periods III, IVa, Va, and later (Heighway and Bryant 1999).

#### GROUP 1: THE CROSS-SHAFTS

There are four cross-shafts (Gloucester St Oswald 1–4, pp. 207–11) and, of these, two (nos. 2 and 4) were found during the excavations in the foundations of the north wall of the Period I church. The other two were found in the precinct wall around the site, no. 3 in 1890 and the two sections of no. 1 in 1955 and 1966. It is suggested above in Chapter V (p. 49, Fig. 17) that these four crosses form a typological sequence, with the earliest, Gloucester St Oswald 1, being dated to the late eighth century and the latest, Gloucester St Oswald 4, to the mid ninth century. The date proposed for Gloucester St Oswald 4 means that, like the nearby Gloucester St Mary de Lode 1 (see below), it stood for little more than a generation before it was broken

up and incorporated into the foundations of the new church. The destruction might perhaps be related to the presence of the Danish army that wintered in the town in 877–8 before being defeated by Alfred at the battle of Edington in 878.

It is relevant here to point out that another Anglo-Saxon cross from Gloucester was found in 1889 at Wotton Pitch, very close to a section of London Road that was repaired in 1655–6 with many hundreds of loads of stones and rubble taken from St Oswald's Priory (see Gloucester London Road 1, p. 221). This cross is very similar to Gloucester St Oswald 4, and it is suggested in the discussion for the London Road cross that these two sections of shaft might belong to one monument (see Fig. 35).

#### GROUP 2: THE GRAVE-COVERS

The broken and fragmentary remains of a group of high-status, early tenth-century grave-covers were found during the excavations (Gloucester St Oswald 5–10, pp. 211–15). The most significant find was a large part of a magnificent, foliate-decorated, tapered and chamfered grave-cover (West 1983). This grave-cover (Gloucester St Oswald 5) was reused, together with other carved fragments including part of a second grave-cover (Gloucester St Oswald 8), in the Period IVa (eleventh-century) foundation of W71, the northern jamb of a widened crossing-arch. The Period IV work involved the demolition of the narrower crossing-arch of the previous phase, Period III (late tenth century). In the strengthened foundations (W48 and W49) for the Period III crossing-arch, a third fragment was found (Gloucester St Oswald 6), probably from the same grave-cover as no. 5, together with four joining pieces from a plain, tapered and chamfered grave-cover and a small fragment from another plain grave-cover (Gloucester St Oswald 9–10). Another

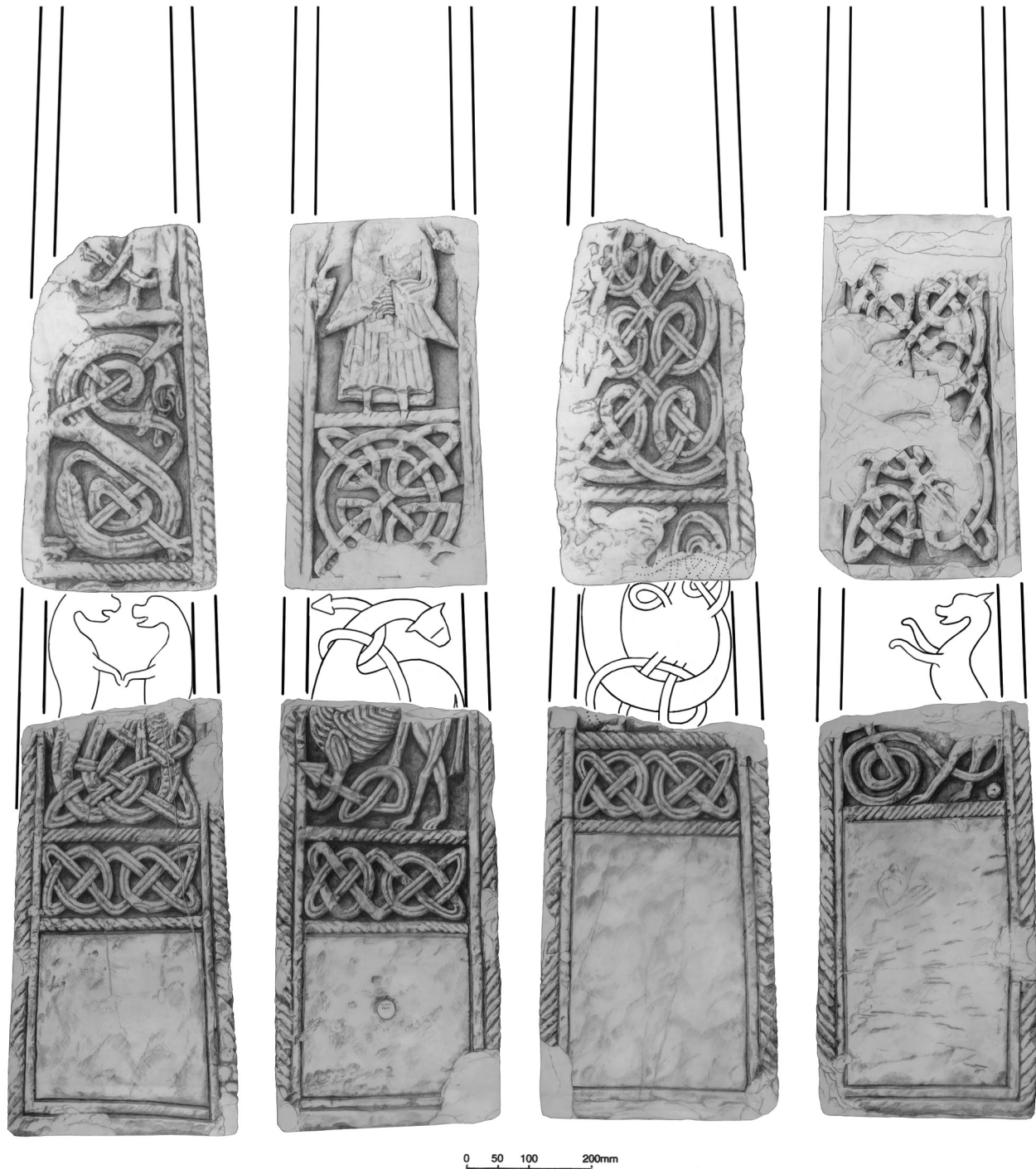


FIGURE 35

Partial reconstruction of a ninth-century cross-shaft from Gloucester, showing how one of the excavated fragments from St Oswald's Priory (Gloucester St Oswald 4) and the fragment found in 1889 at Wotton Pitch on the north side of the city (Gloucester London Road 1) can be fitted together to form the lower part of a single cross-shaft.

badly weathered decorated grave-cover (Gloucester St Oswald 7) came from the site, but was unstratified.

### GROUP 3: THE ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER FRAGMENTS

As well as the grave-covers, a significant amount of architectural sculpture and carving (Gloucester St Oswald 11–29, pp. 211–21) was recovered from the site, hinting at the level of decoration that would have been found in the early phases of the church.

An arch (Gloucester St Oswald 17), decorated with a continuous row of pelleting and a flat cable, had already been reused in W48/W49 (see above) by the later tenth century, together with a panel decorated with a roundel (Gloucester St Oswald 12), a fragment of complex moulding (Gloucester St Oswald 25), a moulded window frame (Gloucester St Oswald 26), a section of stilted hood-moulding, part of a window sill and a small panel with a frame moulding (Heighway and Bryant 1999, 171–6, cat. 47, 50, 63, figs. 4.24, 4.25). A small fragment (Gloucester St Oswald 22) with a very similar moulding-profile to the three tenth-century abaci from the site (see below) was recovered from mortar spreads associated with the widening of the north porticus arch in Period IVa. A section of an engaged round-shaft and the lower part of a round-shaft set in a sloping sill were found reused in the mid eleventh-century (Period Va) W65, one of the massive angle buttresses added at that time to Building A, the sunken-floor structure (crypt) that had been built in Period II immediately to the east of the original chancel. Also from this context came a fragment of ashlar with a wide, hollow chamfer (Heighway and Bryant 1999, 171–6, cat. 48, 55, 60, figs. 4.24, 4.25).

From later eleventh- and early twelfth-century stratified contexts came a tenth-century abacus (Gloucester St Oswald 20), a tenth-/eleventh-century fragment with interlacing incised circles (Gloucester St Oswald 11), a small fragment possibly from an impost with a right-angled rebate, both faces of which carry vestiges of what is probably early to mid tenth-century foliate mouldings (Gloucester St Oswald 24), another section of round shaft, a voussoir or keystone, and a piece with a hollow, stepped chamfer (Heighway and Bryant 1999, 176–8, cat. 59, 68, 69, fig. 4.25).

Part of an early tenth-century engaged half-round shaft with foliate decoration (Gloucester St Oswald 15) came from a nineteenth-century garden wall on the site (W58), as did a tenth-century abacus (Gloucester St Oswald 19). Another abacus fragment (Gloucester St Oswald 21), together with an early

to mid tenth-century decorated arch (Gloucester St Oswald 16), two similarly dated fragments of palmette (Gloucester St Oswald 13–14), and what is probably a cut-down abacus, also came from the site although from unstratified contexts.

In 1867, an engaged tenth-century baluster shaft (Gloucester St Oswald 23) was found at St Oswald's during the digging of the foundations for Medland's new church, to the north of the present ruins. This shaft was reset into the west face of the surviving wall of the north transept, but the shaft has completely weathered away leaving only the backing panel.

One complete animal-head label stop (Gloucester St Oswald 27) came from the site, together with the fragmentary remains of at least two more (Gloucester St Oswald 18, 28, 29). When first published this group, found reused in fourteenth-century or later contexts during the excavations, were assigned to the first quarter of the twelfth century (see discussion in this volume for Gloucester St Oswald 27, p. 260). However, further research, especially into the animal-head carvings from St Mary's, Deerhurst, Gloucestershire (this volume) has encouraged the present author to suggest that a wider date-range for the St Oswald's animals should be considered. Most of the Deerhurst St Mary animals are snarling, open-mouthed creatures (nos. 9–19, pp. 175–85), and the small animal-head (Gloucester St Oswald 18, p. 218) is closely related. It could, therefore, belong to the early tenth century (Period I) at St Oswald's. A rather later date is more likely for the large animal-head (Gloucester St Oswald 27), together with the two fragments that are probably from a matching head (Gloucester St Oswald 28 and 29, pp. 261–2). The pieces were all residual in their archaeological contexts, and, bearing in mind the continuing regional use of animal-head label-stops, it is difficult to date nos. 27–29 more precisely than late tenth to early twelfth century.

### ST MARY DE LODÉ, GLOUCESTER

In 1978 and 1979 excavations were conducted in the pew cavities (air-circulation spaces below the wooden floors upon which the pews stand) in the nave of St Mary de Lode church, in advance of a re-ordering of the west end of the nave. The excavation established that the church had its origins in a fifth-/sixth-century timber mausoleum containing three burials. The mausoleum had been built in the ruins of a Roman building, probably part of a baths complex. A sequence of buildings on the site, some associated

with generations of burials, was interpreted as a series of churches (Bryant and Heighway 2003).

Anglo-Saxon sculpture was found in two contexts. Gloucester St Mary de Lode 1 (p. 206) is a fragment of a later ninth-century cross which was found in Trench III [30], part of an extensive layer of burning (the destruction of the Period 5 building) from which a calibrated radiocarbon date was obtained of AD 890–1130 (to 1 $\sigma$ ) or AD 790–1160 (to 2 $\sigma$ ). Period 5 is probably ninth to tenth century and the cross was, therefore, newly carved when it was destroyed, perhaps in the fire. Gloucester St Mary de Lode 2 (p. 206), consisting of two joining fragments from an earlier ninth-century cross-shaft, was found in a later context, Trench IV [109] belonging to Period 9 (late twelfth–thirteenth century).

#### TANNERS' HALL, GLOUCESTER

Between November 1997 and March 1998 an archaeological excavation was undertaken near the site of the thirteenth-century Tanners' Guildhall in advance of work on the Inner Relief Road. The site is located about 500 metres north-west of Gloucester city centre and about 300–350 metres from the sites of St Peter's Abbey (now the Cathedral) and St Oswald's Priory. Deposits of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date were found over the entire site, except where removed by post-medieval truncation and twentieth-century intrusions, such as building footings and inspection pits (Vallender 2009).

A group of excavated postholes [893], [1000], [1071] and possibly [1109] and [1142] may have formed a structure dating to the late medieval period, although their alignment does not relate to Hare Lane or Tanners' Hall, both of which were in existence during this period. These postholes were the largest recorded on the site with an average diameter of *c.* 1 m. and an average depth of 0.20 m. No floors or internal features had survived, but posthole [893] was found to contain, as packing, a fragment of ninth-century Anglo-Saxon cross-shaft (Gloucester Tanners' Hall 1, p. 225). The rest of the fill of the posthole dated to between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The fragment of cross-shaft was almost certainly brought to the site as building rubble, already broken and probably previously reused. It may have come from either St Oswald's Priory or St Peter's Abbey. Both sites are only a short distance away from the Tanners' Hall site (see above). The style of the carving is more like a large panel depicting Christ from St Peter's

Abbey (Gloucester Cathedral 1, p. 203) than the four similarly dated cross-shafts from St Oswald's. It is, therefore, possible that the cross originally stood in the old minster (later Abbey).

#### THE DAGLINGWORTH PANELS (GLOUCESTERSHIRE)

Three of the Daglingworth panels (Daglingworth 2, 3 and 4, pp. 155–8) were found during the restoration of the chancel arch in 1850. The discovery was recorded at the time by the then rector. The panels had been turned face-inwards, and reused as some of the jamb-stones of the arch. The jambs were originally built Escomb-fashion, as can be seen on a water-colour drawing in the church of the pre-1850 archway as viewed from the east (see Ill. 790; Taylor and Taylor 1965, I, 188, fig. 81c is based upon this water-colour). This is an Anglo-Saxon building tradition, unused in Gloucestershire in the Romanesque buildings of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Anglo-Saxon date for the chancel arch is further supported by the irregularity of the voussoirs. Even the rather 'stilted' springers are different sizes, and one is cut from a reused Roman cornice block, some of the mouldings of which are still visible on the east face of the arch.

The programme of restoration in 1845 and 1850–1 was so extensive that it is now difficult to assess the precise evolution of the building as a whole, but some observations can nevertheless be made. The south doorway appears to be in its original position, and has non-radial voussoirs in the arched head which rises from eleventh-century chamfered impost, decorated with a band of 'wheat-ear' or flat double-cable ornament (Daglingworth 7 and 8, pp. 159–60). However, Michael Hare (pers. comm.) has pointed out that the south door is set significantly to the east of the centre point of the wall, and this might indicate that the nave was originally shorter and had been extended westwards at some stage. Two metres to the west of the south door the inner face of the south wall of the nave thickens abruptly. On the outside of this thicker section of wall there is a quirked and chamfered eaves-course which stops at the point where the wider wall meets the original narrower wall. A similar eaves-course can be seen at the north-west corner of the nave, but its full extent has been interrupted by the addition of the north aisle in 1845. There is also the evidence of a north-south wall which once stood across the nave just to the west of the point at which the south wall widens. A second pre-1850 water-



colour in the church shows a large arch in this wall, the full width of the nave and badly sagging in the centre. The arch and wall were removed as part of the restoration programme, together with a buttressing wall that had been built to the north. In the watercolour, a small Norman altar (now reset in the north wall of the chancel) is shown in the west face of the wall above the large arch, suggesting that the area to the west of the cross-wall was of two stories. Indeed, a 'loft' is mentioned as still existing in an inventory of 1677; this room contained a carpet and a number of books, perhaps indicating that it was used as a dwelling or vestry by the priest (Bazeley 1887–8, 64–5). Taylor and Taylor thought that the south wall might have been widened and strengthened so that it could be 'carried up high enough to make provision for a south window or windows in order to give good lighting in the priest's upper room' (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 1, 189–90).

It seems clear from the above that the west end of the nave was rebuilt as a two-storey structure, and the style of the first floor altar, together with the chamfered eaves course and the surviving window in the western part of the south wall, would support an early twelfth-century date for these changes. However, other architectural details are consistent with a late Anglo-Saxon date for the whole building, with pilaster-strips cut into the long-and-short quoins on the corners of the nave and the chancel. Therefore, if the western end of the nave is Norman, the original Anglo-Saxon quoins must have been reused, as is certainly the case with the quoins of the chancel rebuilt in 1845. This would mean that the eastern end of the nave is the only surviving Anglo-Saxon fabric, although the chancel was also probably Anglo-Saxon until 'restored'.

The doorway into the south porch also appears to be of Anglo-Saxon workmanship, with Escomb-fashion jambs built from huge stones and non-radial voussoirs in the shallow arch of the doorhead. However, the rest of the porch must be later. There is an Anglo-Saxon sundial (Daglingworth 11, p. 273) above the south door of the nave which would have been useless once the porch was built, and the western wall of the porch is butt-jointed against the rebuilt western half of the nave. If, as the present author now believes, the nave was rebuilt as a two-storey structure in the early twelfth century incorporating the original Anglo-Saxon south-west and north-west quoins, then it would be reasonable to accept the suggestion by Taylor and Taylor that the porch doorway was perhaps originally the west door — reused like the quoins in the Norman rebuild and moved when the tower was

built in the fifteenth century (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 1, 187). Alternatively the doorway may have originally been part of a western porch removed to make way for the building of the tower.

As already noted, three of the Daglingworth carved figure panels (nos. 2–4) were found when the jambs of the chancel arch were dismantled, and, by comparing the measurements of the stones with the drawings of the pre-1845/50 chancel arch, it is possible to suggest which stones they were. All three panels have been trimmed to 58 cm (22.7 inches) wide — almost exactly the same as the east–west measurement of the chancel jambs (2 feet or 24 inches) marked on the pre-restoration plan drawn by Buckler (British Library, Add. MS 36438, fol. 519). The stones must, therefore, have been reused upright, and, on the pre-restoration watercolour of the arch elevation (looking west), one stone in the south jamb and two in the north would fit the measured heights of the three figure panels (Ill. 790). If this is correct, the watercolour drawing (used in conjunction with Buckler's plan) also offers an indication of the thickness of the stone panels (now built into the wall and therefore un-measurable). They appear to be between 12 inches and 13 inches deep (between 30.5 and 33 cm).

It is possible that the chancel arch was also rebuilt as part of the twelfth-century alterations. However, as indicated above, the east end of the nave was not altered and it seems more probable that, like the south doorway and the south-east quoin (and probably the now obscured north-east quoin), the chancel arch survived in its original position and form until the jambs were rebuilt in the nineteenth century.

It is, of course, also possible that the carved panels were inserted at a date subsequent to the original construction of the chancel arch, as suggested by Taylor and Taylor (1965, 1, 188–9), and by Coatsworth (1988, 165–6), even that the stones were deliberately concealed for their safety (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 1, 189). The restoration has, however, removed any possible evidence to support this, and the fact that the stones have been cut down to fit into the responds and that parts of the sculptural image on all three panels have been trimmed away in the process, surely indicates that, when the stones were incorporated into the chancel-arch jambs, they were simply regarded as good building material.

The Anglo-Saxon jambs of the chancel arch were similar in constructional terms to the jambs of the porch doorway, while the pilaster-strip external decoration and the impostes of the chancel arch, south nave door and porch doorway are all consistent with

a mid eleventh-century date for the church, similar to St Andrew's at Coln Rogers (this volume, p. 152). The reused carved panels must, therefore, be of late tenth- or early eleventh-century date, or earlier. We do not know how they were originally used but they were clearly part of an earlier scheme. As indicated in the catalogue discussions for these panels (Daglingworth 1–4, pp. 155–8), there are parallels in the late tenth or early eleventh centuries for aspects of the iconography displayed on these carvings. Daglingworth 1 does not come from the same archaeological context, but is so similar in style and content to Daglingworth 2 that it must be contemporary. A date in the late tenth century or in the early years of the eleventh century for all four stones would, therefore, be consistent with the archaeological context in which they were found. The relatively short period of time between original use and reuse can be paralleled by the latest of the cross-shafts from St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester. This shaft (Gloucester St Oswald 4, p. 210) is dated to the first half of the ninth century, but stood for little more than fifty years before it was broken up and used as foundation material for the New Minster built *c.* 900.

#### THE DEERHURST CARVINGS (GLOUCESTERSHIRE)

The carvings from St Mary's, Deerhurst (pp. 161–90) are included here because so many are still *in situ* and can therefore be studied as an integral part of the constructional development of the church, which is now more fully understood as a result of the archaeological excavations and the detailed analysis of many of the elevations conducted during the 1970s and 80s (Rahtz 1976; Rahtz *et al.* 1997), and the recent studies by Bagshaw *et al.* (2006) and Hare (2009). Of the twenty-seven Anglo-Saxon carved stones from the church, eighteen are still in their original positions in the fabric of the building (see Chapter V, p. 54, Fig. 19), two more (Deerhurst St Mary 13 and 14) have been reset inside the western door (after being found in the later blocking of an Anglo-Saxon doorway) and another is the font (Deerhurst St Mary 3). The remainder consists of reused stones (Deerhurst St Mary 2, 21, 22, 27) and two stones recovered during the 1970s excavations (Deerhurst St Mary 1 and 26).

Rahtz *et al.* (1997, 179) proposed that all the Deerhurst carvings belonged to their Period V, which they dated to the late ninth century. However, Bagshaw's structural analysis of the church (Bagshaw

*et al.* 2006, 85–96) has shown that the polygonal apse and the south porticus, together with the lower part of the western porch, were built at the same time as the east wall of the nave, in what Rahtz defined as Period IV (late eighth or early ninth century), and that the chancel arch, with its integral beast-head label stops (Deerhurst St Mary 18 and 19), was also part of the Period IV church. Recent work by Hare (2009) has further refined the building sequence by showing that the porch up to and including the second-floor chapel with its high-level western door is of one build and bonded into the west end of the Period IV church.

There is very little doubt that the six 'ground floor' animal heads, so alike in many aspects of their carved and/or painted schemes of decoration, belong to the same phase of work. The high-level animal heads and *prokrossos* on the western face of the porch (Deerhurst St Mary 9–12) are treated in a more stylised manner, but this is very similar to the treatment of the southern beast head from the chancel arch (no. 19). Furthermore, there is no indication that they are inserted into what is almost certainly Period IV fabric, so they can be viewed as contemporary with the other animal heads. It is, therefore, suggested that the beast heads and *prokrossoi* should all be seen as part of the Period IV church, together with the Virgin and Child carving from the porch (Deerhurst St Mary 5) and the Archangel from the apse (Deerhurst St Mary 4) – both integral with walls now also shown to belong to Period IV, and that the whole ensemble should be dated to the first half of the ninth century. Such a date would also correspond with the recorded patronage of Æthelric son of Æthelmund, whose testament dated 804 bequeathed four estates to the community at Deerhurst (see fuller discussion under Deerhurst St Mary 13, p. 180, and the literature cited there).

The ornate, high-level, double triangular-headed opening (Deerhurst St Mary 23) is inserted into the Period IV fabric and probably belongs to the later ninth century (Rahtz *et al.* 1997, Period V). Two triangular-headed panels (Deerhurst St Mary 7, 8) set in the east wall high above the chancel arch are dated to the second half of the tenth century by the remarkable survival of a painted figure on the northern of the two panels (Bagshaw *et al.* 2006; see this volume, p. 93, Fig. 32F). A large rectangular panel (Deerhurst St Mary 6), above the double opening at the west end, is probably of similar date. Neither of the two excavated carvings is dateable by its context. One is a fragment of a painted ninth-century cross-head (Deerhurst St Mary 1), while the other is a capital or base of the eleventh century (Deerhurst St Mary 26).

## WHITCHURCH (WARWICKSHIRE)

In the west wall of St Mary the Virgin's church at Whitchurch is a large panel, probably a grave-cover, with tenth-century interlace carving (Whitchurch 2, p. 343). The west wall was probably rebuilt in the seventeenth century when the nave was shortened, and the carved stone was presumably found at that time. In 2004–5 a second piece of interlace-decorated stone (Whitchurch 3, p. 343) was recovered during the archaeological observation by P. Mason and G. C. Jones of a trench dug to take an electricity cable to the church. A substantial wall foundation was revealed in the trench, 10 metres to the west of the present west end of the church. This foundation was probably that of the original (Norman) west wall, and in the soil over the wall foundation was the carved oolitic block (no. 3), reused as a plinth. The second stone does not seem to be part of Whitchurch 2 (see above), but this discovery, together with the grave-cover and part of a small tenth-/eleventh-century cross-shaft (Whitchurch 1, p. 342) adds more weight to the suggestion that this small church is on or near the site of a later Anglo-Saxon church.

## WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

In 1991, a small animal head was found in an early Norman context during excavations outside the Chapter House (Worcester Cathedral 1, p. 367). This fragment is clearly no more than a small part

of a much larger carving and has been dated to the late tenth/ mid eleventh century (Crawford 2000). A second carving (Worcester Cathedral 2, p. 368) was found reused as foundation material under a free-standing column in the south aisle of the crypt during archaeological excavations in 1984 (Guy 1994, 6, 8–9, 24–6). The carving is part of an attached shaft with a central V-shaped slot dividing two zones of decoration, one foliate and one interlace. It may have been part of the support for a screen (West in Guy 1994, 24, fig. 21). The carving is tenth century and it is, therefore, possible that it came from the cathedral church of St Mary built in the 960s by Bishop Oswald and finished by 983 (see discussion, p. 368). Further Anglo-Saxon material has been identified at the Cathedral as a result of the archaeological analysis of the standing building. Philip Barker published the details of a group of twenty-four tenth-century capitals and bases (all of which are lathe-turned) that have been reused in the Norman slype (Worcester Cathedral 3a–x, pp. 369–71). In the north arcade all the capitals and bases are reused, while in the south arcade reused bases are utilised together with newly carved capitals that are very similar to those in Wulfstan's crypt. The attached shafts (14–15 cm in diameter) are also reused, and the arches of the blind arcading are 'made up of small re-used voussoirs crudely put together' (Barker and Romain 2001, 30–1). Like the screen support (no. 2) noted above, these reused capitals and bases presumably came from one of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral churches, St Mary's or St Peter's, demolished in or shortly after 1084 to make way for Wulfstan's new cathedral church.