

CHAPTER I

EARLIER RESEARCH

Few pre-Norman sculptures in England received such an early notice of their existence as the crosses at Whalley in Lancashire, which were invoked in an early fourteenth-century document, *De Statu Blagborneshire*, as part of a claim to the antiquity of the foundation (Whitaker 1800–1, 31–2; Baines 1831–6, III, 172–5). Later, but still at a very early date for record of an Anglo-Saxon carving, the Sandbach crosses in Cheshire caught the attention of the Elizabethan herald William Smith, though his informants' advice to read the images whilst suspended upside down — and their dating of the monuments to the pre-Christian period — offered him interesting physical and intellectual challenges (Smith and Webb 1656, 46). In general however, notice of these stones is rare until the nineteenth century.

Early nineteenth-century historians such as Whitaker (1800–1; 1823), the Lysons (1810), Ormerod (1819) and Baines (1831–6) recorded some of the major monuments but, understandably at this stage in the development of the subject, they could make little of them. With the increasing pace of Victorian church restoration in the second half of the century, however, the pages of the local antiquarian journals began to carry illustrations and discussions of smaller sculptural finds; the Overchurch runic inscription, for example, attracted a wide variety of interpretations, whilst H. Ecroyd Smith devoted a complete monograph to discoveries of carvings from West Kirby and Hilbre Island (Smith, H. E. 1871c). These individual notices paved the way for the fuller surveys which followed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century from Bishop G. F. Browne and J. Romilly Allen, two of the major archaeologists of the period who were both active in arguing the need to preserve and study these early examples of British art (Browne 1887a; id. 1887b; Allen 1894; id. 1895). Both worked from detailed rubbings; some of Allen's original papers, which include other correspondence, survive as BL Add. MSS 37547–37551. Alongside the contributions of these two scholars it is appropriate to acknowledge work by the Revd. W. S. Calverley, for, though his main

achievements lay in Cumbria, he first recognised the presence of the Sigurd legend on the Halton cross and encouraged the rescue and re-assembly of the monuments there (Calverley 1899a, 183–97).

A full catalogue of crosses and slabs from Lancashire was assiduously assembled, along with much antiquarian lore, in the first decade of the twentieth century by Henry Taylor. This work appeared initially in a series of articles (Taylor, H. 1898–1903) but was finally gathered together in his monumental 1906 volume, *The Ancient Crosses and Holy Wells of Lancashire*. Admittedly there is little dating of the material in this book, but it is an invaluable source of information both on carvings which are now lost and on such issues as the circumstances of first discovery. In the same year as Taylor's work appeared, the first Lancashire volume of the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* was published, containing a chapter on pre-Norman remains which included descriptions and illustrations of sculpture; it drew heavily on earlier surveys but again offered little discussion of date (Garstang 1906).

A chronological approach to the carvings was, however, beginning to emerge in these early years of the twentieth century. This owed much to W. G. Collingwood who, though his work was mainly focused in Cumbria and to the east of the Pennines, also wrote in detail on sculpture from Lancaster, Hornby and Melling and, in one of his final publications, produced a survey of the crosses and slabs from the Wirral (Collingwood 1901–3; 1902; 1903b, 1904b; 1912a; 1928). Carvings from a wide area of Cheshire and Lancashire were also illustrated and discussed in his major synthetic work, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (1927a).

Through most of the twentieth century there were new discoveries of stone sculpture from Lancashire and Cheshire. Some emerged from planned excavations like those at Heysham and Lancaster (Edwards, B. 1988a; Potter and Andrews 1994); others were chance discoveries like the find of a miniature hogback from Bidston (Bailey

and Whalley 2006). Carvings from the area also figured in national surveys, notably in the work of T. D. Kendrick (1938; 1941b; 1949) who first drew attention to the great interest of the Cheshire round-shafted group of crosses and perceptively commented on the cultural relationships of the Sandbach monuments. At a more local level, in the 1950s and 1960s, J. D. Bu'lock wrote on Viking-age carvings from Chester and the Wirral, and also published thoughtful observations on the undecorated round-shafts in the eastern part of Cheshire (Bu'lock 1959; 1960b; 1972).

By the last quarter of the twentieth century the gazetteers written by Browne, Allen and Taylor were clearly in need of replacement. Ben Edwards responded to this need by assembling a catalogue of the Lancashire

stones (Edwards, B. 1978a) and then produced an invaluable series of studies of individual carvings from the same county (Edwards, B. 1978b–1989c). Edwards' work was matched further south by Alan Thacker who supplied a complete gazetteer of the county's pre-Conquest material in the first Cheshire volume of the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* (Thacker 1987, 286–92). In the same period, in preparation for the present volume, various papers and general books were published by Bailey which attempted to locate the region's sculpture in a wider context (1980; 1984; 1996a/b; 2007). Finally, the great potential interest of the iconography of these carvings has recently been highlighted by the full-length study of the Sandbach carvings by Hawkes (2002).

TABLE 1

Sites with sculpture in the pre-1974 counties of Cheshire (Ch.) and Lancashire (La.),
divided into modern counties and unitary authorities

KEY Modern county in capitals Metropolitan or unitary authority in bold Additional Appendix A items in italics

CHESHIRE (post 1974)

Adlington, Ch.
Alderley Edge, Ch.
Astbury, Ch.
Bruera, Ch.
Chester, Ch.
 Chester (St John)
 Chester (City Walls)
 Chester (Roman Amphitheatre)
 Chester (Unknown Provenance)
Disley (Church Field), Ch.
Disley (Lyme Hall), Ch.
Disley (Lyme Handley), Ch.
Frodsham, Ch.
Great Neston (Ashfield Hall Farm), Ch.
Macclesfield (St Michael), Ch.
Neston, Ch.
Over, Ch.
Prestbury, Ch.
Rainow (Blue Boar Farm), Ch.
Sandbach (Market Square), Ch.
Sandbach (St Mary), Ch.
Shocklach, Ch.
Sutton (Ridge Hall Farm), Ch.
Sutton (Greenway Cross), Ch.
Swettenham, Ch.
Tarvin, Ch.
Thornton le Moors, Ch.
Upton, Ch.
Wincle (Cleulow), Ch.
Wincle (Grange), Ch.
Winwick, La.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Bolton
Bolton le Moors, La.
Bury
Prestwich, La.
Manchester
Manchester (Cathedral), La.
Oldham
Middleton, La.
Rochdale
Rochdale, La.
Salford
Eccles (Barton Ship Canal), La.
Stockport
Cheadle, Ch.
Trafford
Bowdon, Ch.
Stretford, La.

LANCASHIRE (post 1974)

Accrington, La.
Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley, La.
Altham, La.
Anderton (Headless Cross), La.
Aughton, La.
Bolton le Sands, La.
Burnley (Godley Lane), La.
Capernwray Hall, La.
Colne (Sewage Works), La.
Eccleston, La.
Foulridge (Tailor's Cross), La.
Gressingham, La.
Halton (St Wilfrid), La.
Halton (Field Cottage Farm), La.
Halton Green (East Farm), La.
Haslingden, La.
Heysham (St Peter / St Patrick), La.
Hornby, La.
Lancaster, La.
Lancaster (St Mary)
Lancaster (Castle)
Lancaster (Vicarage Field)
Melling, La.
Ribchester, La.
Whalley, La.

MERSEYSIDE

Liverpool

Childwall, La.
Liverpool (Old Swan), La.
Walton on the Hill, La.

Wirral

Bidston, Ch.
Bromborough, Ch.
Hilbre Island, Ch.
Overchurch, Ch.
West Kirby, Ch.
Woodchurch, Ch.