

## PREFACE

The ninth volume of the British Academy's Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture investigates one of the most diverse and least-known of the groups of early stone-carving in the country. Encompassing all the eighth- to eleventh-century stone sculpture in Lancashire and Cheshire, it ranges from the sophisticated tall cross-shafts in the middle of the square at Sandbach, to the abraded red sandstone fragments from the Anglo-Saxon minster of St John at Chester (the cathedral of the diocese from 1075 to the Dissolution), to the puzzling iconography of the cross-head from Winwick, and the almost comically incompetently-carved cross-shaft at Prestbury. No attempt has previously been made to study this important group of stones in depth and the Corpus committee is deeply grateful that one of its senior members, Richard Bailey, one of the leading specialists in the field of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, has taken on a task that would have daunted a less experienced scholar — and has triumphantly completed it.

Once again we must pay tribute to the work of Rosemary Cramp, the General Editor of the Corpus, and her assistants, Derek Craig and Ken Jukes. Between them, Derek and Ken have taken many of the photographs of the Cheshire stones used in this volume, having refined their techniques to produce images of such high quality that it is difficult to see how they could have achieved any image at all of stones placed with faces close to walls or surrounded by ecclesiastical clutter. The editorial specialisms which they have developed once again enabled the volume to be delivered directly to the printer, with a consequent fall in price to the purchaser. Most of the photographs of the Lancashire stones have been taken especially for the Corpus by Ross Trench-Jellicoe, who has also delved into his own vast photographic archive for images; the committee is greatly indebted to the patience and hard work he has put into this project. Roger Bristow has given generously of his time and experience to produce the geological information essential to the volume's completeness, and David Parsons has provided much needed interpretation and commentary on the epigraphic evidence. To all these scholars we express our very best thanks.

Finally, we must once again emphasise our deep gratitude to our three sponsors. First, to Durham University, which has throughout this whole project been a staunch supporter of our work, providing us with space and many services; second, to the British Academy, a sheet anchor in all the tribulations — mainly financial — which we have had to overcome since the beginning of this project; without their unstinting support the Corpus could not have survived. Finally, to the Arts and Humanities Research Council which funded us generously over a number of years; our thanks to them cannot be too deeply emphasised.

The AHRC to our great regret ceased funding the project in 2009, as this volume was nearing completion. This has caused an unfortunate delay in the publication of the book, as our two Research Fellows were then made redundant. Ken Jukes is now employed elsewhere in Durham University, but Derek Craig has continued to work on the volume, at times without pay, but at others supported by the generosity of the British Academy, the Pilgrim Trust and Caroline Higgitt. We are deeply indebted to all four of them, and also to the British Academy for the support of Christina Unwin who undertook at short notice the setting of the plates as well as the page make-up and jacket. We continue to look forward to the completion of this unique project which has added great lustre to the academic study of one of the most significant periods in England's history.

DAVID M. WILSON

*Chairman, the British Academy Committee for  
the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, 2010*