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Anglo-Saxon Buildings and Sculpture in Gloucestershire

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ANGLO-SAXON BUILDINGS AND SCULPTURE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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GLOUCESTERSHIRE is comparatively rich in the remains of Anglo-Saxon architecture and sculpture, notably more so than Somerset.

The churches that retain a high proportion of early work are Deerhurst—the priory church and the building known as Odda's chapel—Coln Rogers, Daglingworth and Bibury. Papers and notes on these have been published in our *Transactions*, and within the compass of this article it is only possible to enumerate the chief architectural features now extant in scattered parishes, and to make a few comments on the sculpture. A comparative study of the buildings is a task that must be postponed at present.

Certain characteristic features of Anglo-Saxon work of pre-Norman date have been summarized by Mr A. W. Clapham, F.S.A. in his *English Romanesque Architecture before the Conquest* (Clarendon Press, 1930), to which the writer of this paper is deeply indebted, and some of these can be found in a number of churches, sometimes where all other traces of early work have vanished. The following lists include, it is hoped, the greater number of such survivals.

QUOINS. In a county so rich in good building stone quoins were naturally widely used, and two early types can be differentiated—megalithic and long and short work.

Examples of the former may be seen at Duntisbourne Rouse, Miserden and Tibberton, and long and short quoins at Coln Rogers, Deerhurst (Odda's chapel), and Winson.

The same arrangement can be seen in the door jambs at Ampney Crucis¹ and Somerford Keynes,² and in blind openings at Mickleton and Bitton.

STRIPS. A decorative feature is the pilaster strip. There are examples at Coln Rogers and Bibury, both within and without the church, while a third example there, on the north side of the external wall, is enriched with an ornament in low relief, of interlacing circles and pellets, the whole bordered with pellets.

ARCADING. Another decorative feature is blind arcading, which remains in the chancel at Deerhurst, where a series of high pitched pediments adorn the walls, and possibly at Dymock, where there is a semicircular headed arcading round part of the south side of the external chancel wall. It is evident from the stones at the east end that this arcading originally continued round an apse, but whether the work is really pre-conquest as it is claimed to be or not it is difficult to determine from a superficial view.

ARCHES. Pre-conquest arches were generally semi-circular in form, and the chancel arches of churches were probably wide when the church was served by a body of clergy and narrow in the simple village church. Wide arches remain at Deerhurst and Bibury, narrow at Coln Rogers, Daglingworth, Odda's chapel, Winson, and at Lower Lemington, where the work may be Norman. At Bitton there are the vestiges of an early chancel arch.

The chancel arch at Winstone has long and short work on the south side, and the stones run straight through the thickness of the arch, while the north side jamb is composed of a single stone. The arch is about 8 feet 6 inches wide. The chancel arch at Coln Rogers has enriched imposts, and voussoirs and jamb stones also going through

¹ Illus. by C. E. Keyser in *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, 1914, N.S. xx, fig. 15 (after p. 10).

² *Illus. Archaeologist*, 1894, I, 46-9.

the thickness of the walls. In the tower arch at Ampney St. Peter the voussoirs are very irregular, and also run through the thickness of the wall, and the arch has no keystone.

DOORWAYS. Saxon doorways were generally square-headed, or finished with an open round arch. The rarer triangular headed opening is seen at Deerhurst, but not elsewhere in the county. But in the period immediately preceding the Norman Conquest, Professor Baldwin Brown has pointed out that doorways with jambs of Saxon character occur with filled-in (though never decorated) tympana.³ The doorway at Ampney Crucis has megalithic stones forming the jambs, while each of the jambs at Winstone is made of a single big stone, but both have flat lintels chamfered on the upper edge, rounded heads, and the tympanum filled with simple stone work. At Miserden there is characteristic Anglo-Saxon ornament of strips round an arch broken, in this case, by a stone with stepped horizontal mouldings at the impost level both on the north and south doors, while the same feature of strips is seen in a more decorative form at Somerford Keynes, where the doorway is wider at the bottom than at the top, and in a simpler form at Deerhurst. At Somerford Keynes the jambs are composed of large stones arranged to form long and short work.

Chamfered lintels and jambs of long and short work also occur as part of a blocked north door at Edgeworth, so that these features are considered by Professor Baldwin Brown⁴ to form a Cotswold type of Saxon doorway.

On the north wall of Bitton church there is a blocked-up Saxon doorway, which probably led into the transept. The sides of the opening have the stones arranged to form

³ Baldwin Brown, *Arts in Early England*; vol. II, Anglo-Saxon Architecture (new edition, 1926), pp. 395-6.

⁴ Baldwin Brown, *op. cit.*, 395.

long and short work. The same arrangement can be seen in the blocked opening on the north side of the internal wall at the west end at Mickleton. This vestige is now hidden under the covering of the gallery stair, and is easy to overlook.

At Stanley St. Leonard there is a barn near the west end of the church which the late Rev. Charles Swynnerton, F.S.A., considered to be a pre-Norman chapel.⁵ He discovered, by excavation, an apse at the east end of this building, and under a modern pent-house roof the springing of the old arch of the north entrance door can still be seen. Professor Baldwin Brown, and Mr St. Clair Baddeley, who saw the apse uncovered, consider however that there is no work there earlier in date than Norman times. At the east end of the south aisle of Cirencester church there is part of an arch built into the wall, said to be of Saxon origin, and a similar piece of work exists at Coln St. Denys.

Herring-bone masonry is now generally considered to be Norman in origin, but it remains in company with undoubted Saxon features in the masonry of the churches at Deerhurst, Duntisbourne Rouse and Tibberton.

WINDOWS. Windows cut from a single stone are sometimes a feature of Saxon work, and such may be seen at Coln Rogers, Bagendon, Daglingworth, Alveston old church (fig. 2) and Barnsley. At Barnsley the two-light window forms the external opening of a reliquary. The double-splayed window, characteristic of post-Viking work, exists at Deerhurst chapel and at Bibury, where the opening is circular, and is reminiscent of those at Avebury, Wilts. This feature comes from the Rhineland,⁶ and is probably one of the traces of Carolingian influence to be seen in Gloucestershire.

TOWERS. The bases of the towers at Bagendon and

⁵ *Archaeologia*, 1921-2, LXXI, 222.

⁶ Baldwin Brown, *op. cit.*, 250 f.

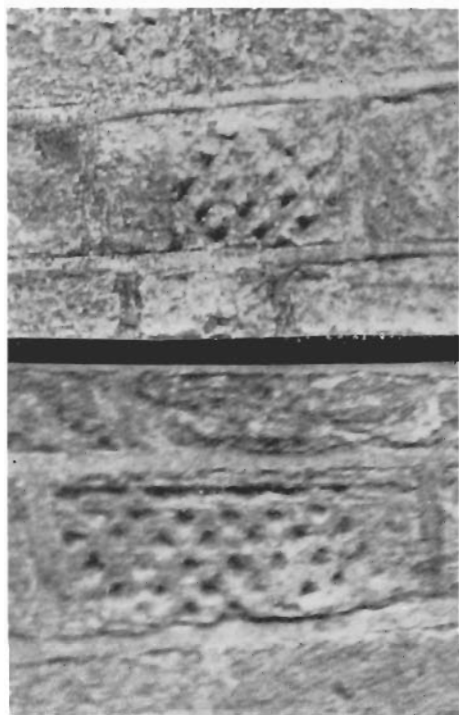


FIG. 1. BISLEY
(See p. 266)



FIG. 2. ALVESTON OLD CHURCH
(See p. 264)



FIG. 3. ABSON
(See p. 266)



FIG. 4. BISLEY
(See p. 266)



FIG. 5. EDGEWORTH
(See p. 266)



FIG. 6. SOUTH CERNEY
(See p. 266)



FIG. 7. ELMSTONE HARDWICKE
(See p. 269)



FIG. 8. IRON ACTON
(See p. 269)



FIG. 9. AMPNEY ST. PETER
(See p. 269)



FIG. 10. SAINTBURY
(See p. 270)



FIG. 11. DAGLINGWORTH
(See p. 270)



FIG. 12. BISHOP'S PALACE,
GLOUCESTER. (See p. 271)



FIG. 13. BERKELEY CASTLE
(See p. 271)



FIG. 14. BISLEY
(See p. 272)



FIG. 15. NEWENT
(See p. 272)



FIG. 16. NEWENT
(See p. 272)

Lassington have been described as Saxon, but for this it is difficult to see any architectural justification. An impost and the remains of a Saxon font are said to be built into the north wall of the chancel at Churchdown. The stones are certainly there, and it is quite possible that they are the remains of early work.

SHAFTS. An undoubted baluster-shaft of early date is built into the wall of the ruined St. Oswald's priory church at Gloucester, and at Hawkesbury there is a bulbous base of a shaft, now utilized in the Norman north door, and obviously adapted to its present use from a former composition, for it does not match its fellow. It, again, may be a relic of an earlier building.

SUNDIALS. There are Anglo-Saxon sundials, dividing the day into 4 tides, over the south doors at Daglingworth and Saintbury. An extra ray has been cut on the one at Daglingworth, as though it had been used as a mass, or scratch dial in the later Middle Ages.

ANGLO-SAXON SCULPTURE

CROSS-SHAFTS. There are in the county fragments of almost a dozen cross-shafts, or allied monuments dating from various periods. Perhaps the earliest, and certainly the finest, is that at Newent.⁷ This is interesting because it is executed in the pure Northumbrian style, with human figures and an Anglian beast. It is said to date from the early 8th century, and provides evidence that by that time Mercia was converted to Christianity. It is an example of a type rare in the Midlands. With this may probably be classed the much mutilated cross that stands by the wayside at Lypiatt, near Bisley, which has been described and illustrated in *Transactions*⁸ by Mr St. Clair

⁷ Illustrated, with notes by J. Romilly Allen, in *The Reliquary*, July 1907, N.S. XII, 197-200, and in Clapham, *op. cit.*, pl. 19.

⁸ *Trans. B.G.A.S.* 1929, LI, 103-7. The cross will also be illustrated in vol. VI, pt. 2, of the late Prof. Baldwin Brown's *Arts in Early England*, which is announced for publication by Mr John Murray.—EDITOR.

Baddeley. Photographs are also published in the *Antiquaries Journal*, July 1933, p. 301. The only figure that is at all clear is that of an ecclesiastic, with tunic and super-tunic and upraised arms. It stands under a circular-headed canopy. The shaft is tapering. It also belongs to the northern group of crosses, and has been dated as early as A.D. 700.

Fragments of interlaced work are to be seen built into the walls at various churches, for instance on the east external wall at Bisley (fig. 1), where there are two pieces of stone bearing a close plait, while there are two fragments of a loose knot at Abson (fig. 3), again on the east external wall. The one in the porch at Aston Blank is so roughly executed that it may possibly prove not to be Saxon at all. At Bisley (fig. 4) there are two pieces of stone decorated with a two-strand weave that might belong to the same monument, as the fragment to be seen outside the church at Edgeworth (fig. 5), which is not far away. These two appear, from their double contour-line, to belong to the post-Viking period. The scrap of plait-work at Hawkesbury is on a stone which has been recut and used as a pedestal for the excellent 15th century stone pulpit.

A piece of a cross ornamented with a circular knot is in the porch at South Cerney (fig. 6), and is of late pre-conquest date.

Two most interesting stones, once forming part of crosses, are in Gloucester Museum. One is from Wotton under Edge, and is said to belong to the 9th or 10th centuries. It is divided into panels by a cable-moulding, and the double contour-line again makes it certain that it is post-Viking in date. On one face there is a ribbon-like beast, suggestive of the Jellinge style, and not unlike that at West Camel in Somerset, which is held to exhibit Irish influence. Two other faces are adorned with interlaced patterns, in one case with the diagonal strand

accentuated; the fourth bears a human figure clad certainly in a long tunic, but too badly defaced for an accurate description to be possible. Below the figure is a circular knot that is particularly interesting because the design is the same as one found by Father Horne at Glastonbury, and dated by him as 8th century. The Gloucester stone is certainly later than that.

The second stone at Gloucester⁹ is probably from St. Oswald's priory, which was founded by Ethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians in 909. Dr Brøndsted considers that this belongs to the close of the 9th century, for it shows traces of the Anglian Beast, treated, however, in the southern English style, characterized by the close interlacing.¹⁰ Mr Reginald Smith¹¹ has pointed out that in some ways it bears a close resemblance to the Bibury stones, and he cites it as an example of the Jellinge style, and so belonging to the close of the 10th century. Between these alternatives it is hard to choose, the more so as yet a third presents itself, which is that the cross is an English work produced as late as the 11th century, by an artist familiar with the Ringerike style. This is made possible by the acanthus-like terminals that ornament the cross, and the claw or crest on the back of the beast on the front panel. The row of pellets on the right panel¹² and the boldness of the animals also on the face, suggest the Great Beast, or the Scandinavian 11th century version of the Anglian beast. A prolonged examination of the carvings on the Oseberg ship,¹³ combined with Dr Cyril Fox's note on eyes,¹⁴ seems to settle the matter, for the upstanding

⁹ *Trans. B.G.A.S.* 1888-9, XIII, 121-2, 4 plates.

¹⁰ J. Brøndsted, *Early English Ornament* (London, 1924), 230; the stone is illustrated pp. 141 and 218.

¹¹ *Procs. Society of Antiquaries*, ser 2, xxvi, 67.

¹² See plates in *Transactions*, XIII.

¹³ *Oseberg Fundet*, vols. II and III.

¹⁴ *Antiquaries Journal*, 1933, XIII, 304-5.

beasts on the front panel of the Gloucester stone have round eyes with v-shaped extensions typical of the work of the 9th century, while the close feather-work on the bird on the left side, and even the volutes and pellets, can be matched from the Oseberg carvings, so that we may assume that the Gloucester stone was made somewhere in the second half of the 9th century, and that the apparent ivy leaves are, as Dr Brøndsted says, vestigial grape clusters.

On the back of the stone only half of the pattern is left, as the rest has scaled off. The part left is adorned with a double vine growing from a pedestal, and bearing a grape cluster. This is almost exactly paralleled by the fragment now at Kelston church in Somerset, and not far from the Gloucestershire border.

The Ringerike style is well represented in the county, first by the series of stones at Bibury described by Mr Reginald Smith¹⁵ who points out that one is an example of the native art of England during the Viking period, while the others are of more definitely Scandinavian work ; secondly by the charming foliage which adorns the capitals of the responds to the chancel arch at Bibury, and thirdly by the stone at Somerford Keynes, on which is depicted the heads of two animals with a ball in their mouths, and with crests in the true Ringerike style.

The font at Deerhurst is decorated with a broad band of the trumpet spiral, with the trumpet ends omitted and also with two narrow bands of foliage. These bands of the vine-pattern are matched by a pendant from the type hoard at Trewiddle, near Winchester, which is dated A.D. 875, so it is evident that Gloucestershire had important connexions with the South of England, at that time influenced by the Carolingian culture, as well as with the Vikings and the North. It is interesting to find the comparatively rare trumpet spiral again, this

¹⁵ *Procs. Soc. Antiq.* ser. 2, xxvi, 61-7.

time in two different sizes, on a stone at Elmstone-Hardwicke church (fig. 7), not so very far from Deerhurst. This stone was obviously rectangular, but has been made octagonal by the cutting off of the corners. It has a rectangular opening in the top which might have held the base of a cross.

There is an isolated scrap of carved foliage, said to be of Anglo-Saxon date by no less an authority than the late Bishop Forrest Brown, just inside the north door of Iron Acton church (fig. 8). The stone is fixed upside down.

Finally, there is a considerable amount of figure-sculpture surviving. There are terminals in the form of animal heads at Deerhurst, of a type derived from Scandinavia, and there is also a fine bear's head, carved in the round, in the museum at Gloucester. It is 14 inches high and 14 inches from tongue to the back of the neck. This was found on the site of the Tolsey, in Westgate street, by Gloucester Cross, and is made of the local freestone.¹⁶ The animal is wearing a muzzle, and is suggestive of the beasts that adorn the ends of the hog-back tombs. However, there is one feature that is sufficient to date it more precisely. The eye is pear-shaped, and the eyebrow is finished off with a scroll. Exactly the same treatment exists in the later sculptures found in the Oseberg ship, so that the head must belong to the middle of the 9th century.¹⁷

There are in the county three, and possibly four, of the carvings of the human form known as fertility figures. One at Ampney St. Peter (fig. 9) is of a female, where its association with the Saxon work already mentioned is fortunate.¹⁸ It has been moved from its original position,

¹⁶ See the account of the finds by M. H. Medland, *Transactions*, XIX, 142-58; the head is illustrated on pl. VIII.—EDITOR.

¹⁷ *Oseberg Fundet*, II, figs. 44, 45.

¹⁸ *Man*, Jan. 1931, XXXI, no. 3, p. 4.

wherever that was, and is now inside the church. It is a crude and partially mutilated figure, and wears a kind of cap. Of the male figures far the most significant is the one at Abson,¹⁹ for the horizontal position is reminiscent of the Saxon angels at Bradford on Avon and Winterbourne Steepleton. The figure is obviously that of a demon, and he may have had a tail that is now missing. He wears no clothes. A second male figure, badly defaced, is built into the internal splay of the window at Saintbury (fig. 10), and is remarkable for its small size, only $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. The third is at the south-west end of Haresfield church, and forms a quoin.²⁰ It represents a vigorous male figure with his right hand resting on a club, which is held in a vertical position. It is about 10 feet from the ground.

Three panels of rude sculpture in Daglingworth church are already described in our *Transactions*,²¹ but there is also a crucifixion high up on the outside of the east wall which seems to have escaped publication (fig. 11). This, like the other figures, reveals Byzantine influence in the large moustaches worn and by the fact that the crucified figure is obviously alive, and has the eyes open. It has the typical Saxon support for the feet. As revealed by Professor Fawcett's telephoto-lens, the figure is dignified and fine, in spite of its crudity. The Wormington crucifix shows the same artistic origin, again no doubt brought to England through Carolingian influence. The loin cloth is Byzantine in form, and the *Dextera Dci*, the hand from the cloud giving the blessing, resembles that on one of the coins of Edward the Elder. It has been described and figured by Mr Stanley Casson, who dates it as 9th century.²²

¹⁹ *Man*, Jan. 1930, xxx, no. 8, p. 10.

²⁰ *Trans. B.G.A.S.* xix, 338.

²¹ *Trans. B.G.A.S.* xvii, p. 260-7, 4 plates.

²² *Burlington Magazine*, Jan. 1933, pp. 31-2.

In the wall at the east end of the garden of the Bishop's Palace at Gloucester²³ there is a panel representing the head and shoulders of Christ, framed in a roundel (fig. 12). This is much defaced, but the border is formed of the caulicula, a voluted crocket which Mr A. W. Clapham (*op. cit.* p. 131) says is a well known Carolingian motive, only represented in this country at Gloucester, and possibly at Hexham.

At Berkeley Castle there is the fragment of a cross-head (fig. 13) not in itself of a distinctively Saxon pattern, but on the reverse there is carved a human head which is very suggestive of pre-conquest work. It has been described by Mr St. Clair Baddeley,²⁴ and is here figured by permission of the Earl of Berkeley. The stone is 7 inches wide and 8½ inches long.

At Deerhurst, at the end of the apse, high up on the external wall there is the head and one wing of an angel probably belonging to the original church, and so to the middle of the 10th century. The wing is outstretched and the hair curled, and the face, foreshortened as it inevitably is because of its height, is grave and lovely.²⁵ Above the south door, within the porch, there is a figure which has been described by Mr Casson²⁶ as possessing the form of a Byzantine icon, and to have had the features of the face, and also of the oval object which it holds, painted, for now they present a blank smoothed surface. The flowing draperies of the figure which Mr Casson calls streamers are explained by a Saxon Virgin at Shelford, Notts, where similar streamers can be seen to form a long scarf which the Virgin wears crossed upon her breast,

²³ Illustrated by C. E. Keyser in *Norman Tympana and Lintels* (2nd ed. 1927), fig. 85A and *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, 1912, n.s. xviii, 162.

²⁴ *Trans. B.G.A.S.* XLVIII, 140-1.

²⁵ Illustrated in Baldwin Brown's *Arts in Early England*, vol. II, Anglo-Saxon Architecture (new edition, 1925), fig. 87, p. 218.—EDITOR.

²⁶ *Burlington Magazine*, January 1933, pp. 32, 35, fig. A.

and held in place by a large annular brooch. This other figure has also the features left blank, and so may have provided a further example of the same type of sculpture.²⁷

In the porch at Bisley there is a fragment of stone decorated with arcading which frames figures (fig. 14). Only one, and part of a second figure is left, but the arrangement of the pellet between two strips to form the arches and the treatment of the capitals, are certainly suggestive of early work.

The Northumbrian cross at Newent was found in 1907, but in 1912 workmen digging the foundations for a new vestry on the north side of the church came upon two skeletons, and the skull of one was lying upon a stone. This measures 8 inches by $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and the edges as well as both back and front are carved.

On one face there is a crucifixion with the *Dextera Dei* above it (fig. 15). The figure on the cross is clothed in a loose tunic, and the head, nimbed, is inclined to the right shoulder. Above the head are doves. At the feet are two large human figures, and the space between the broad ends of the cross are also filled with small human figures. One of them is lying in a coffin, so an attempt may have been made to portray the events between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. On the cross are four small raised circles, which look as though they were meant to hold stones. Probably the whole design was adapted from a book-cover or some such object of metal or ivory, which was adorned with gems. The nearest prototype to the design of the Newent stone is an ivory pectoral cross, of Anglo-Saxon date, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and illustrated by Mr Stanley Casson in the *Burlington Magazine* for December 1932. This also has circular settings for stones.

On the other face there is an ecclesiastic clothed in

²⁷ *Archaeological Journal*, 1916, LXXIII, p. 203, pl. II.

alb and chasuble, with a cross on the breast (fig. 16). He holds a pastoral staff in his right hand and in his left a cross of an unusual design, for the ends of the arms are bent round to form four complete circles like the wheel-headed crosses in stone. A similar cross is held by one of the figures on the other side of the stone. Small figures again fill in all the available space round the bishop, one holding a large sword with a Saxon type of pommel. Fitted into a corner at the top is the name Edred. Round the edge of the stone are carved the names of the four Evangelists, Matheu, Marcus, Lucas, Johannes, and again the name Edred.

The stone is obviously a pillow stone, later in date, but having the same purpose as those found at Hartlepool and Lindisfarne. It is to be presumed that the skeleton associated with the stone belonged to one Edred, but it is not possible to trace an Edred of importance who lived at Newent at the time when the carving was done, probably at the end of the 10th—or the beginning of the 11th century.

There remain to be noticed three examples of late sculpture, all at present in ecclesiastical buildings. Bristol Cathedral possesses a coffin top dug up from under the floor of the Chapter House. It is adorned with a figure of Christ carved in fairly high relief. The figure is nimbed and has long hair, a beard and moustache. He is clothed in a long tunic girdled with a wide sash, and holds a staff with a small cross on its top, to which are clinging small human figures, while more lie beneath the feet of the central figure. It clearly represents the Harrowing of Hell, as do the other two specimens. There was undoubtedly a Saxon town on the site of Bristol before the Conquest, for coins were struck there from the reign of Ethelred the Redeless, but this is the only pre-conquest stone in Bristol so far recognized.

At Quenington an alien stone has been made to serve

as a tympanum to the north doorway.²⁸ The group of figures is enclosed in a round arch supported by responds with capitals. These capitals are the most interesting part of the whole piece of sculpture, for they are of precisely the same design as those of the responds to the chancel arch at Deerhurst priory, which belongs to the 10th century.²⁹ This parallel should be sufficient to establish the date of the whole composition, which gives a rather different presentation of the Harrowing of Hell. The figure of our Lord here wears a cruciform nimbus, and holds a cross on which he leans, and is, again, clothed in a long tunic. The figures of the departed are rising in suppliant attitudes, and some are still prone on the ground. In the sky the sun, or a star, with rays and a jocund countenance, looks on.

At South Cerney the tympanum of the south doorway is obviously of earlier work than the doorway of which it now forms a part.³⁰ Here the composition is double, the upper part consisting of a Majesty enclosed in the mandorla, with the right hand upraised in blessing, and the whole supported by figures at the sides. Below there is another representation of the Harrowing of Hell, again with a stooping figure of Our Lord, wearing a cruciform nimbus and holding the staff of the Resurrection Banner. There is again a star, and though the capitals of the responds at the sides are too much defaced to be clearly defined, the general form is not unlike those at Quenington, and it seems probable that the two pieces of sculpture came from the same school.

From this list it will be obvious that Gloucestershire was influenced in Saxon times from many directions. She was heir to the culture of Northumbria in the early 8th century, was overrun by, and succeeded in absorbing, the Danes in the 9th. She did not escape the eastern

²⁸ Illus. by C. E. Keyser, *Norman Tympana* (2nd ed. 1927, fig. 97).

²⁹ Illustrated *Trans. B.G.A.S.* 1929, XLIX, 239.

³⁰ Illustrated *Trans. B.G.A.S.* 1931, LIII, 56.

influence which spread through and from the Carolingian Empire in the 10th century, while the art of the later

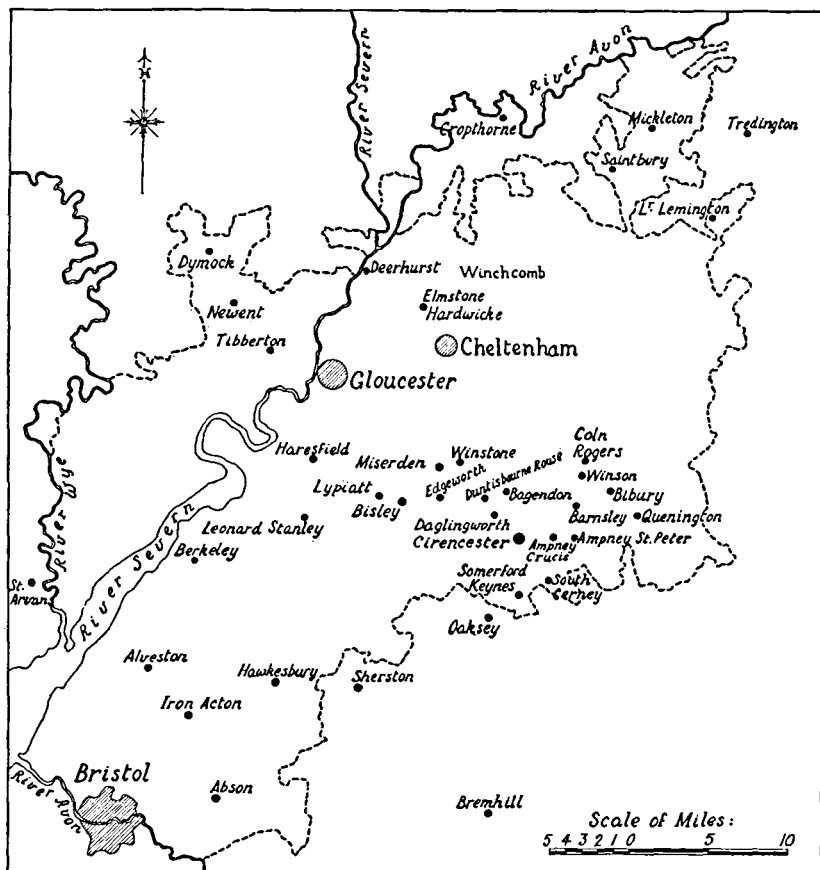


Fig. 17. Distribution-map showing places with Anglo-Saxon stonework. A few towns are shown for relative positions

10th and 11th centuries again shows a strong Viking admixture. Undoubtedly the greater part of the existing buildings belong to these latter centuries.

A distribution map is generally tantalizing because,

perforce, it shows what remains, and not what originally existed. In the present case (fig. 17) a certain number of places possessing Saxon stonework outside the county boundary are included. One or two towns are also given to indicate the localities of the villages. It is obvious that there must have been flourishing Saxon communities on the high ground round Cirencester; a district that was, perhaps, less rich than some others during the Middle Ages, though it might have been expected that the woollen trade would have flourished there. At any rate there the old churches seem to have survived, while in other districts they were displaced by the handsome buildings of the 15th century. In some places the Saxon buildings were obviously those of a religious house. It may not be by chance that it is in the Cotswold district where good building stone was easily available that most of the Saxon remains are to be found. Without doubt wood must have been used in the villages where stone was not available, so that it is partly to its building stone that Gloucestershire owes its abundant pre-conquest vestiges.