

CHAPTER VII

ORNAMENTAL REPERTOIRE (AD 900–1100)

INTERLACE AND GEOMETRIC ORNAMENT

Both free and grid-based (geometric) interlace continue to be major elements in the decoration of carved surfaces throughout this period, although by the eleventh century new forms of geometric ornament begin to appear.

Tenth-century examples of dense panels of grid-based, median-incised interlace can be found at Evesham, Worcestershire (no. 1, Ill. 634) and on a grave-cover from Whitchurch, Warwickshire (no. 2, Ill. 608). A second, newly discovered stone from Whitchurch (no. 3, Ills. 609–14) has a panel of interlace down one side of the stone. This ornament is unusual and consists of at least five broad, concentric, curving strands of plain interlace crossing four strands that are fanning out slightly. The scale of the interlace suggests that it was part of a large design, perhaps also from a grave-cover. At Shrewsbury, Shropshire, there is a fine grave-cover carved with a wheel-head cross in low relief (Shrewsbury St Mary 3, Ills. 553–5). The shaft of the cross consists of a narrow vertical panel of tight, possibly grid-based interlace with long diagonal strands. To one side of the shaft there is a simple plant form with two buds at the top of the main stem and pairs of downward-curving side stems. On the other side of the shaft there is a heavy, flat-bodied, serpentine creature biting its own tail (see below, *Animal and Plant Motifs*, pp. 79, 85). The Shrewsbury grave-cover is very similar to some of the early slabs from the Isle of Man and, as such, offers a rare example of possible Scandinavian influence in tenth-century west Mercian sculpture.

Sections of string-course with dense, grid-based, four-strand interlace occur at Bisley, Gloucestershire (Bisley All Saints 2 and 3, Ills. 51–2), together with two joining fragments carved with looser free interlace patterns of running loops and a focal knot (Bisley All Saints 4, Ill. 53). Similar interlocking loops and knots can be found on fragments from Shrewsbury

(Shrewsbury Mardol 1–3, Ills. 557–9) that probably came originally from Old St Chad's in the town.

The surface of a small coped grave-cover from Gloucestershire, Avening 2 (Ill. 5), is divided into panels that are filled with median-incised interlace, and the triangular end panel contains an interlace triquetra. A small trial-piece or graffito, Somerford Keynes 3, Gloucestershire (Ills. 429–30), is interesting because it seems to shed a rare light on a carver in training. The design consists of two interlocking ellipses, carved in incised lines on the door jamb. The ellipses are sharply pointed at one end and have curling, rounded terminals at the other. Taylor suggested that the carving might have been an attempt to form two superimposed triquetra, abandoned because it did not work out as planned (Taylor 1969, 71).

At Hawkesbury, Gloucestershire, the stem of the pulpit is a reused and cut-down cross-shaft, with the remains of interlace on two faces (no. 1, Ills. 382–3). On one face there is a mass of rather unruly median-incised free interlace, while on the other face there is what appears to be part of a turned and possibly encircled design constructed on a grid that runs diagonally across the fragment.

The flat plain interlace found on a grave-cover from Gloucestershire, Bibury 3 (Ill. 33), seems to consist of a rather crudely executed, mirror-image, free interlace design. There is a short, pointed 'spur' on the lower right-hand U-bend and the remains of a matching 'spur' on the left of the stone. These 'spurs' might be seen as vestigial limbs, but they are more likely to be loose ends that have not been doubled-back into the interlace. A panel of interlace from Stoke Prior, Worcestershire (no. 1, Ills. 658–9), the plain end of which has been reused for a twelfth-century capital on the south doorway, is even more crudely executed and is probably a late (eleventh-century) locally carved piece. It is laid out on a diagonal grid of drilled holes, but the incised carving contains several errors.

In a barn wall in Clifford, Herefordshire, there are two fragments (nos. 1 and 2, Ills. 503–5) that are



FIGURE 28
Sites with sculpture later than c. AD 900

probably part of a panel-cross similar to those found in south-east Wales. One fragment is heavily weathered but the other retains two linked closed-circuits of median-incised, free interlace, with cross-over strands which pass through loops and knots, and mirror-image box points just above the bottom edge of the carved area. At the extreme western edge of the region covered by this volume, the Clifford fragments act as an important link between the sculpture of western Mercia and Wales.

The south face of the heavily weathered sandstone cross-shaft at Kinwarton, Warwickshire (no. 1, Ills. 592–6), carries fairly heavy interlace laid out in two, rather irregular, columns with occasional diagonal linking strands. This face of the shaft has a double border that curves slightly inwards towards the top of the stone (Ill. 596). The opposite face also carries fragments of a double border, within which there are traces of loose, broad, median-incised, free interlace (Ill. 593). In the top right corner of this face there is a section of interlace that turns at a sharp angle, and there is a similar surviving section of sharply angled interlace in the upper left corner of the western face (Ill. 595). The carving on the final face of this shaft (the north face) was initially interpreted as a form of interlocking ring-chain, but night photography has established that the design actually consists of heavy, probably median-incised interlace in a casually laid-out design based on long interwoven diagonal stands (Ill. 592). The interlace is set within a double border consisting of a narrow moulding inside a broad moulding. This cross probably belongs to the late tenth century. The interlace-decorated piece that was found in the River Morda, Shropshire (Oswestry River Morda 1, Ills. 545–7), is also probably part of a tenth-century or perhaps early eleventh-century cross.

By the early eleventh century interlocking geometric shapes were also being widely used, sometimes in conjunctions with simple interlace and sometimes with pelleting and other new design forms. The heavily worn fragment of a cross from Belbroughton, Worcestershire (no. 1, Ills. 618–20), has interlace on one face and an encircled cross-head design on the front face. The horizontal ‘arms’ and the fragment of ‘stem’ of this cross-head carry wide, median-incised grooves. A grave-cover from Gloucestershire, Bisley All Saints 1 (Ills. 45–9), has chamfered narrow edges carved with simple, two-strand, median-incised, free interlace, while the upper face carries a linked chain of interlocking, figure-of-eight, lozenge-shaped loops. Enmeshed in the figure-of-eight loops, just below the centre point of the stone, is a separate ‘free-

ring’ lozenge with rounded corners. Similar closed-circuit lozenge shapes are found on a cross-head or shaft fragment from Warwickshire, Whitchurch 1 (Ills. 603–7). Here there are also pairs of interlocking diagonal, straight-sided, box-point loops that are laid across the lozenges or used by themselves to form a design that looks rather like a Stafford knot.

Four carvings from the Gloucestershire Cotswolds near Cirencester (Bibury 2, 4, 5, and Broadwell 1) are associated with two Ringerike-style carvings (Bibury 1 and Somerford Keynes 1, see *Animal Motifs* below, p. 81) and belong to the first half of the eleventh century. Bibury 4 (Ill. 35) is carved with a loose-looped, closed-circuit, free interlace within a border of round-headed pellets. Bibury 5 and Broadwell 1 (Ills. 40, 87–8) have interlocking chains of rings with round-headed pelleting within and around the circles. One face of Bibury 2 (a double-sided grave-marker, broken at both ends) is covered with median-incised interlace in a pattern of intersecting arcs and circles surrounded and filled with round-headed pellets (Ill. 30) (for the plant design on the other face see *Plant Motifs* below, p. 85).

A small fragment from St Oswald’s Priory (Gloucester St Oswald 11, Ills. 308–9) carries a similar pattern of two- and three-strand interlace, part of which consists of interlocking circles. At Temple Guiting, Gloucestershire (no. 1, Ill. 446), there is a small stone on which there is a pattern consisting of looped strands piled on top of one another and linked by a central vertical strand. This is probably a rather ‘rustic’ contemporary attempt to copy the interlocking circles found on Bibury 5 and Broadwell 1.

One motif seems to continue in use through the eleventh century and on into the twelfth century. This is a type of square-knot, sometimes ringed, that is found on Lower Swell 1, Gloucestershire (Ill. 477), and Barton-on-the-Heath 1, Warwickshire (Ill. 617), and also at Bisley, Gloucestershire (Bisley Parish 2 and 3, Ills. 453, 455), Llangarron 1, Herefordshire (Ill. 536), and Diddlebury 2, Shropshire (Ill. 576). The Barton-on-the-Heath and Lower Swell carvings are probably eleventh century in date, while arcading on the narrow face of the Bisley Parish stones (Ills. 452, 454) that can be paralleled on Bibury 4 (Ill. 38) might suggest that these Bisley Parish pieces belong to the eleventh-century Cotswold group mentioned above. Similar designs together with an extravagant use of pelleting are found on other carvings from Bisley as well as on the eleventh-century stones from Bibury and Broadwell. The Llangarron 1 carving is a simple incised square-knot motif without the encircling ring,

while the Diddlebury 2 piece consists of a square-knot with looped corners interlaced with a small diamond-shaped knot, very similar to two eleventh- or twelfth-century carvings from Ewenni and Merthyr Mawr in Glamorgan (Redknap and Lewis 2007, 295–6, 483–4, ill. G19, G110).

A second carving from Diddlebury (no. 3, Ills. 577–8) has a small, ringed cross in low-relief and is eleventh or twelfth century in date. In the tower of St Lawrence's church, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, there are several sections from a string-course or perhaps the edge of a grave-cover, which carry intersecting arcading (Bridgnorth 1–3, Ills. 572–4). This is not quite the same as the Bisley Parish pieces mentioned above and probably belongs in the later eleventh or twelfth century.

It remains to mention the geometric shapes on two eleventh-/twelfth-century fonts from Bucknell and Edgmond in Shropshire (Appendix K, pp. 384, 390). Bucknell font (Ills. 764–7) is decorated in shallow relief with triquetra knots, T-fret, debased flat interlace, and a small, bearded head. Edgmond font (Ills. 744–6) is entirely covered with four rows of large motifs — close-set vertical rectangles; squares and rectangles consisting of a pair of jointed triangles; angular median-incised interlace; panels with diagonal hatching; and an angular plant-scroll with detached leaves. On what is probably the front of the Edgmond font this scheme of decoration is replaced with a panel that is the full height of the font and covered with median-incised, mirror-image interlace that rises through three tiers of angular, opposed knots. All of these design motifs are pre-Conquest in nature and these two fonts should probably be seen as examples of Saxo-Norman overlap carving.

ANIMAL MOTIFS

The developments first seen in the later part of the ninth century, whereby the creatures on west Mercian sculpture became more sharp-edged and serpentine or lacertine, continue in the tenth century and give rise to the even more exaggerated and abstract 'ribbon-creatures' that have a widespread distribution, with examples coming from as far apart as Durham and Aycliffe in Co. Durham, and Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire (Cramp 1984; Tweddle *et al.* 1995). Just such an animal can be seen on one face of a cross-fragment from Aston Blank, Gloucestershire (Fig. 29A, Ills. 6–7), where there is a creature which has no definable body or head, but there are what seem

to be rudimentary clasped 'hands' at the bottom of the central loop of the tangle of interlace, and, to one side, a broad single strand of interlace terminates in a two-toed 'foot'.

However, beside this move to greater and greater abstraction there is evidence for other trends and influences. The grave-cover from Shrewsbury (Shrewsbury St Mary 3), already mentioned above as being a rare example of possible tenth-century Scandinavian influence in west Mercian sculpture, has a more realistic serpentine creature rising up beside the stem of the wheel-headed cross and biting its own tail (Fig. 29D, Ills. 553–4), while in Gloucester there is a continuing tradition of realistic three-dimensional carving exemplified by animal-head label stops from St Oswald's Priory (Gloucester St Oswald 18, 27–29, Ills. 326–7, 470–6) and a bear's head *prokrossos* from Westgate Street (Gloucester Tolsey 1, Fig. 29K, Ills. 371–8).

The bear's head is muzzled rather like the animals on tenth-century northern hogback monuments (Lang 2001), but the Gloucester bear has a complete harness rather than a simple nose-band, and the treatment of the eyes is much more like the animal heads from Deerhurst (Deerhurst St Mary 13–14, 16–19, Ills. 175–87, 191–210). On the Gloucester bear the eyes are rounded at one end and pointed at the other, with circular, concave-centred pupils. Both eyes are outlined with continuous mouldings that are drawn out into a point at the back of the undamaged right eye before being turned down into a small, tight spiral terminal.

A small, animal-head label stop (Gloucester St Oswald 18, Fig. 29J, Ills. 326–7) is also closely related in type to the ninth-century Deerhurst animal heads and to a similar animal head from St Mary de Lode in Gloucester (Gloucester St Mary de Lode 2, Ills. 259–60). Gloucester St Oswald 18 could therefore belong to the first phase of building at St Oswald's in the early tenth century. The head has very bulbous eyes that are drawn out around the sides of the head, and the muzzle is heavily grooved to simulate a snarl that exposes a mouthful of sharp, triangular-shaped teeth.

The other animal heads from St Oswald's (Gloucester St Oswald 27, together with the fragments of a second similar head, nos. 28–9) are very different. The face of the complete animal has a long, pointed muzzle of triangular cross-section accentuated by curving U-shaped grooves that sweep up to meet on the nasal ridge (Fig. 29H, Ills. 470–2). The eyes are elliptical with drilled pupils, and the ears are pointed and laid flat back along each side of the head. The neck muscles

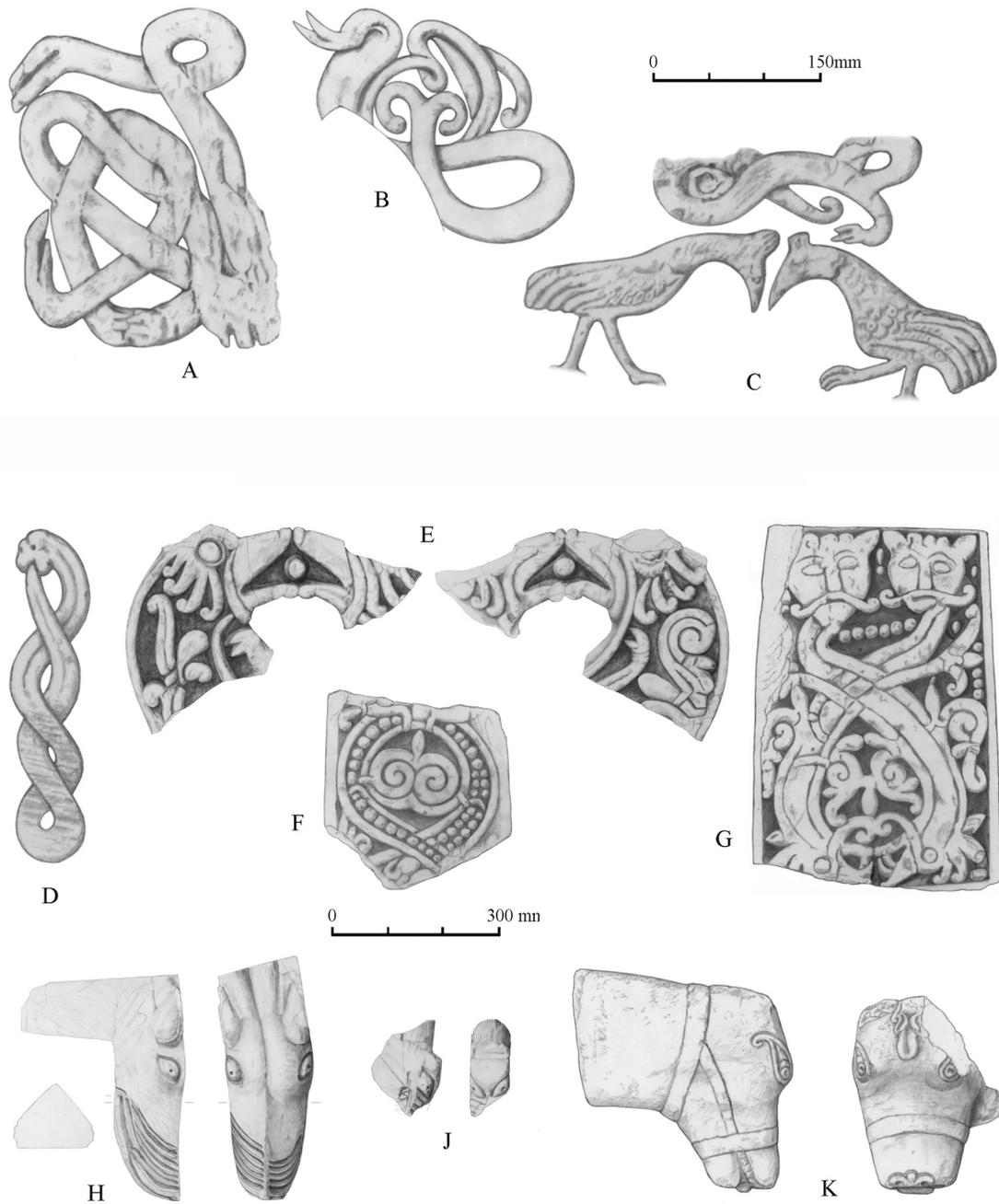


FIGURE 29

Animals and birds. (*Tenth century*): A – Aston Blank 1; D – Shrewsbury St Mary 3; J – Gloucester St Oswald 18; K – Gloucester Tolsey 1. (*First half eleventh century*): B – Barton-on-the-Heath 1; C – Rous Lench 1; E – Somerford Keynes 1; G – Bibury 1, with F – Bibury 2 for comparison, although whether this design is a plant or an animal is difficult to establish. (*Late tenth or possibly twelfth century*): H – Gloucester St Oswald 27

may have been carried onto the hood-moulding as a double roll. The animal is almost certainly a rather placid dog rather than the more common dragon. When first published (Bryant 1999, 178-80) these animal-head label stops were assigned to the early twelfth, but further research for this volume has encouraged the present author to suggest that a wider date-range of late tenth to early twelfth century would be more appropriate (see catalogue, p. 261).

There are also animal-head label stops, of late tenth- or eleventh-century date, at Ripple and Wyre Piddle (both Worcestershire). At Ripple the two heads have been reset on either side of the thirteenth-century west door (nos. 1-2, Ills. 648-51). The creatures' heads are fairly square with slightly rounded jaws and sharply angled foreheads. Large circular eyes are set on the front of the forehead. The eyes are dished with concave pupils and they are surrounded by concentric grooves. These grooves are continuous across the head, joining together along a centre line which becomes a ridge as it continues down across the muzzle. The muzzles are also covered with shallow grooves that follow the outlines of the open, teeth-filled jaws. The ears are laid back flat along the side of the head. At Wyre Piddle the two animal-head label stops (nos. 1-2, Ills. 702-12) are very crudely carved and form a rather ill-matched pair. The 'necks' of the creatures were clearly designed to be built into the wall so that the heads hung down flush with the wall face. The open, rather square jaws are full of square teeth clenched onto the tip of the creature's tongues. A tapering nasal ridge runs up the centre of the front face of Wyre Piddle 2 towards the top of the head where there are two small round eyes. On either side of the nasal ridge the top of the jaws is covered with inscribed diagonal lines in a rather simplistic imitation of the muzzles of other animal heads.

Another animal head that is of similar date to those above (late tenth or mid-eleventh century) is the tiny lion's head found in excavations at Worcester Cathedral (no. 1, Ills. 668-71). The creature has incised outlining on the eyebrows and around the eyes and nostrils. The pupils are drilled. The mouth is wide with traces of red paint. There are faint ridges carved in the snout. This fragment is clearly no more than a small part of a much larger carving. Sally Crawford (2000) has noted the close similarity of the Worcester creature's face with its 'snub nose, elongated mouth and lack of chin' to that of one of a pair of creatures on an eleventh-century cross-shaft fragment from Southampton, and also to similar creatures in eleventh-century manuscripts (see catalogue discussion, p. 367).

One final carving, which includes birds and a snake (together with a small human figure), should be mentioned here and that is the large stone (possibly an altar plinth) from Worcestershire, Rous Lench 1 (Ills. 652-7). On the front face the small figure, wearing a short tunic, is depicted walking through a lush tangle of plant stems. In his right hand he holds a reaping hook, while in his left hand he holds up a fruiting stem that is being pecked by two large birds (Fig. 29C). The birds have raised crests and broad tails and are probably a pair of peacocks. They have rounded, hollow-centred feathers and their long tails are hatched with close-set incised lines. Across the top of the panel there is a snake, one end of which curves back across its body to end in a three-pronged tail or perhaps a very small head with a protruding tongue. The leaves of the plants are large and varied in shape, and many have hollowed centres like the birds' feathers. The fruiting stems seem small in comparison and may be berry bunches or ears of wheat. The hollow-centred leaves and feathers and the variety of leaf forms would support a date in the ninth or tenth century for this carving, but the rather stiff little figure and the wide, simple interlace on the end face of the stone suggests a rather later date, perhaps in the early eleventh century. The Rous Lench figure seems to be completely at one with his surroundings and could be a depiction of Adam before the Fall, or perhaps Christ the Harvester gathering the wheat from among the weeds and sharing the harvest with the elect. Either would be appropriate for the front of an altar plinth.

Two stones from near Cirencester in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, Bibury 1 and Somerford Keynes 1, are carved in the Ringerike style and represent some of the very few sculptures in western Mercia that display unambiguous signs of Scandinavian influence. These carvings are dated to the first half of the eleventh century, and are thus broadly contemporary with the period of rule by Danish kings (1016-24). There is indeed evidence for at least one Danish-named landholder in the Bibury area (see Chapter III, Regional Craft Centres, p. 22).

Bibury 1 (Fig. 29G, Ills. 27-8) is a grave-marker, on the front face of which there is a pair of interlaced, double-ended creatures in a figure-of-eight design. The edge mouldings of the creatures' bodies curve outwards and inwards to become tendrils, buds and lobed leaves. At the top the creatures have heart-shaped humanoid faces with wide, curling moustaches, while the lower heads are dragons which oppose one another face to face with open jaws full of large teeth. Their faces are outlined, and a lappet with a curling

tip hangs down below each head. The tips of the creatures' lower jaws touch one another, the ears are leaf-shaped and point backwards, and the heads carry elaborate combs or crests. These lower beast-heads are very similar to the fragment from Somerford Keynes (no. 1, Fig. 29E, Ills. 426–8) which also takes the form of two opposed beasts, although in this case they hold a small ball between them in their touching jaws. Unusually the Somerford Keynes stone is actually carved to the shape of the creatures and pierced completely below the mouths. The mouths of both creatures have curling tips to the upper and lower lips, and the junction between jaws and face is outlined by a lappet. There are no teeth, so the mouths could be beaks. The eyes are emphasised by fans of bold, lobed eyelashes. Only one of the creatures has any surviving body and this is outlined by a plain simple moulding and covered by plant tendrils, 'buds' set in nests, and a spiral. This stone is probably part of a head- or foot-stone, like the Bibury 1 slab, and both may have been carved by the same hand.

There are one more animal carvings that probably belongs to the mid to late eleventh century. This is at Barton-on-the-Heath in Warwickshire (no. 1, Fig. 29B, Ill. 617) and consists of a strange, apparently headless, serpentine or lacertine creature, with what appears to be a two-toed foot at the top left and a tail that sweeps up across the body before splitting in two to end in two tight, downward-curving tips. Above this are disjointed loops that curve around a crescent-shape. This creature is awkwardly placed on the stone and cuts the edge of the eleventh-century square-knot design described above (see *Interlace and Geometric Ornament*, p. 78). It is therefore almost certainly a slightly later addition, and probably indicates a change of use that predates the stone's reuse as a thirteenth-century window-head.

PLANT MOTIFS (including contributions from J.W.)

A group of high quality grave-covers which are dated to the first half of the tenth century were found during the St Oswald's Priory excavation (Heighway and Bryant 1999). The most complete was Gloucester St Oswald 5 (Fig. 30A, Ills. 292–8), with its small associated fragment no. 6 (Fig. 30B, Ills. 299–300). The decorated surfaces of the upper face and chamfered narrow faces of no. 5 are almost entirely covered with foliate ornament carved in relief. On the upper face the ornament consists of a central stem which is broken at two points. From both break points side-

shoots emerge whose stems and foliate terminals cover the rest of the surface. The chamfered narrow faces carry two-strand running scrolls ornamented with side-shoots which curl back to overlies the main stems. The similarity of detail on nos. 5 and 6, and the close correspondence of measurement, suggests that they are from the same object or from two closely similar objects carved in the same workshop. Jeffrey West compared the ornament to the Cuthbert embroideries and the Alfred jewel, and dates the Gloucester pieces to the early tenth century, most likely to the 930s (West 1983, 50).

Gloucester St Oswald 7 (Fig. 30D, Ills. 301–3) was also part of a decorated, chamfered grave slab with the remains of a median-incised edge-moulding between the front and the side face. The main face is divided into at least two zones by a horizontal border. The upper panel contains the base of what may be a 'bush' scroll, while the lower panel contains an opposed pair of leaf-flowers that survive as little more than 'outline' shapes. The chamfered narrow face is carved with a running, plain-stem scroll which contains very regular circular berry clusters or rosettes. The opposed pair of leaf-flowers on the main face are very similar in outline to the leaf-flowers on the upper face of no. 5. The berry clusters on the chamfered face are similar to those found within the volute of a plant scroll on the border of the *frontispiece* to Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert* which is dated to c. 934 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183, fol. 1v: Backhouse *et al.* 1984, 26; Cramp 2006, ill. 529–34). Indeed the border of the illustration, which is in effect the painted equivalent of a chamfer, contains all the elements used on this stone. Jeffrey West has noted this illustration as a parallel for nos. 5 and 6 (West 1983, 49–50) and it seems reasonable to suggest that no. 7 is contemporary with them.

Gloucester St Oswald 8 (Fig. 30C, Ills. 304–5) is part of another decorated, chamfered grave slab that belongs to the same 'family' of grave-covers. The lobed leaf collars, on the running two-strand scroll of the chamfer, are, however, more stylised and complex, and the quality of the carving is of very high quality.

Gloucester St Oswald 15 (Ills. 316–20) is a decorated fragment of an engaged half-round shaft covered with enmeshed median-incised tendrils, one of which finishes in a volute. The surviving edge carries a broad moulding, and the adjacent carved face is dominated by a broad triangular leaf-flower from the hollow calyx of which issues a tightly scrolled tendril. Similar motifs occur in the Cuthbert *frontispiece* borders, and in initials of the Junius Psalter, which is also dated

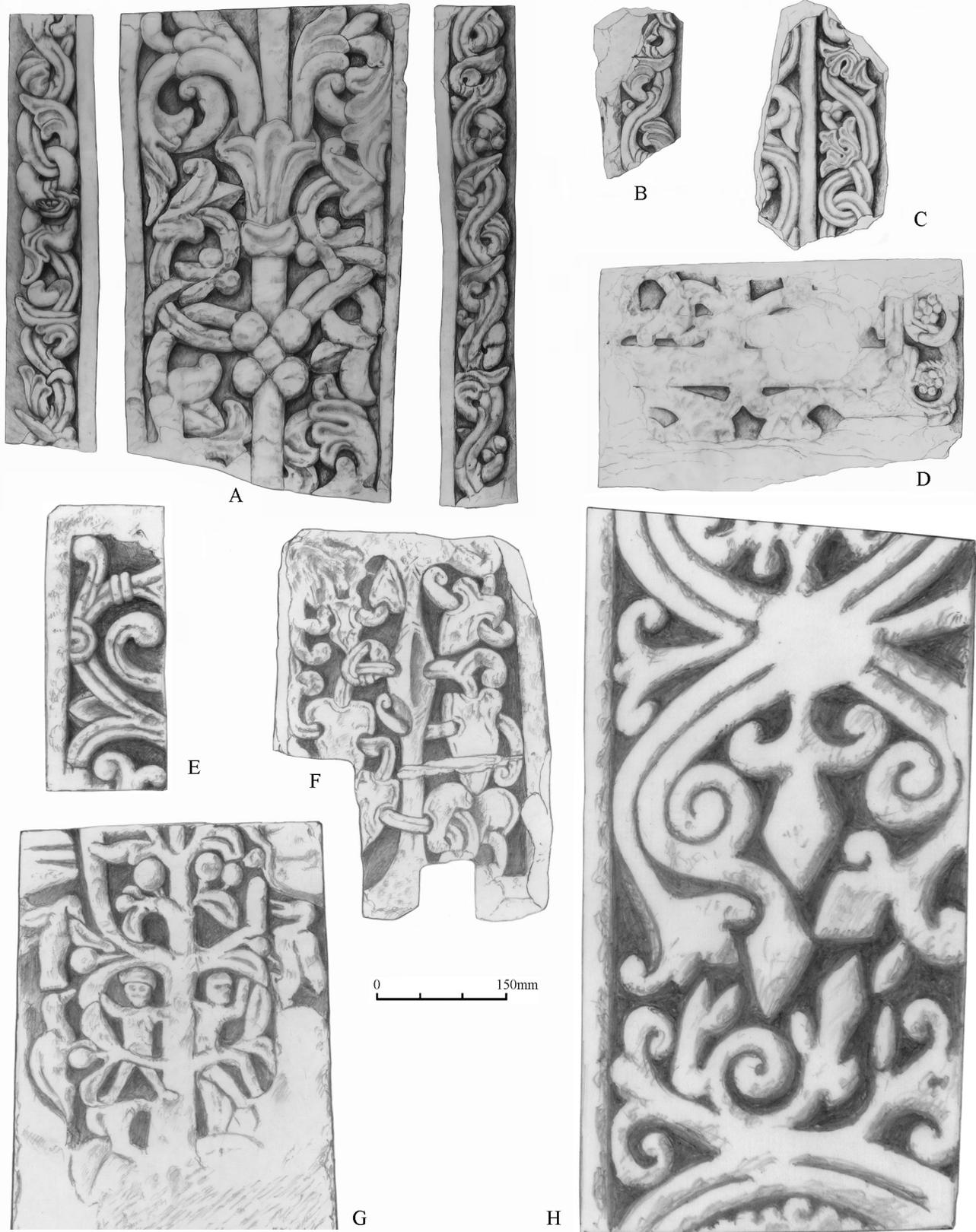


FIGURE 30

Grave-covers and cross-shafts. (*Tenth century*): A, B, C, D – Gloucester St Oswald ‘Royal tombs’ 5, 6, 8, 7; E – Iron Acton 1 (cross-shaft); F – Billesley 1 (cross-shaft); G – Diddlebury 1 (cross-shaft). (*Eleventh century*): H – Ampney St Mary 1 (grave-cover)

to the second quarter of the tenth century (Temple 1976, 38–9, no. 7, ills. 1, 20–4).

Closely related motifs can also be found on a cross-shaft of similar date from Billesley, Warwickshire (no. 1, Fig. 30F, Ill. 582). This shaft has been reused several times (see catalogue description and discussion, p. 335), but one face is carved with a tree-scroll in fairly high relief. The straight central stem curves up from a plain edge-moulding at the base of the stone and branches into two at the top. The central portion of the stem is split open and peeled back as if to expose the inside. Median-incised side-shoots pierce the peeled-back walls and curve across the face of the stone to end in curving tendrils and large, flat, heart-shaped leaves. Further side-shoots, which also end in large leaves, cross over or under the central stem and curve down from the two branches at the top of the stone. The leaves themselves are outlined with fine incised lines and are pierced with further curling-tipped tendrils.

Another cross-shaft, from Diddlebury, Shropshire (no. 1, Fig. 30G, Ills. 453–4), is carved with an inhabited tree motif. Branches sprout from either side of the straight central stem or trunk. The leaves are lush and heavy and some have hollowed centres. From the leaves grow rounded, straight-stalked fruit. Two human figures are caught in the act of climbing the tree for the fruit. They are probably Adam and Eve. Above the head of the figure on the tree's right is a bird with flapping wings, also trying to eat the fruit. The liveliness of this carving is reminiscent of earlier west Mercian carvings, for example the late eighth-century shaft from St Oswald's (Gloucester St Oswald 1) but the detailing, especially of the rather stilted figures, is more like tenth-century work.

A voussoir excavated from a twelfth-century rubbish pit in Gloucester (Gloucester Westgate Street 1, Ills. 363–4) is decorated with interlace and foliate carving in relief. The carved face is divided into two zones, the outer zone consisting of running, median-incised interlace in a series of 'loop-knots' and the inner zone of thick curving plant stems with small, fleshy, backward-curving side leaves. The voussoir was quite heavily weathered and must have been part of an elaborately decorated arch set externally above a principal doorway, probably that of nearby All Saints' church. The loop-knot decoration is very similar to tenth-century interlace on a section of string-course from Bisley (Bisley All Saints 4, see above, p. 76) and the plant-scroll decoration would also fit most comfortably into the tenth century.

At Iron Acton, Gloucestershire, the top of a late tenth-century cross-shaft decorated with a loose,

median-incised plant-scroll has been reused in the east jamb of the north doorway (no. 1, Fig. 30E, Ills. 384–5). Part of the side and top frames survive and one volute of the scroll is attached to the side frame by a rounded, U-shaped or 'domed' clip. A triangular bud grows from the separation point of two volutes on the plant-scroll, while the volute terminals, and a side-shoot that fills the top corner of the shaft, have lobed tips. Plunkett included the Iron Acton piece in his 'Colyton School' of late tenth-century sculpture (Plunkett 1984, 1, 202–12), and, despite the small size of this fragment, all the design features that appear on face 1A of the 'Colyton School' cross-shaft from Nunney, Somerset (Cramp 2006, 173–4, ill. 316) also appear on the Iron Acton shaft. Where the inspiration for this group of sculptures comes from is a more difficult matter to decide, but Iron Acton is in the extreme south of Gloucestershire and it seems probable that this was a Wessex style moving northward into Mercia in a reversal of the earlier flow of influence.

Part of an attached shaft was found during archaeological excavations in 1984, reused as foundation material under a column in the south aisle of the crypt of Worcester Cathedral (no. 2, Ills. 672–6). The shaft fragment has a central V-shaped slot that divides two quarter-round zones of decoration. To one side of the slot the quarter-round surface is decorated with a tangle of interlacing plant stems and a long, triangular berry bunch which terminates in a hooked-tipped shoot. To the other side of the slot the quarter-round surface is covered with median-incised interlace. The carved decoration of this piece would support a date in the tenth century and it is, therefore, possible that it came from the cathedral church of St Mary built in the 960s by Bishop (Saint) Oswald and finished by 983. This fragment was probably part of the support for a screen (J. West in Guy 1994, 24, fig. 21). There is a tall tenth-/eleventh-century cylindrical column from St Illtud's in Llantwit Major in south-east Wales, the surface of which is completely covered with panels of interlace carving except for a vertical slot in one face. The remains of a second column also survive at the same site, and Rednap and Lewis have acknowledged (with some reservations) that they might have fulfilled a similar function to that proposed for the Worcester fragment (Rednap and Lewis 2007, 390–4, cat. and ills. G67 and G68).

A beautifully carved, cone-shaped capital from Gloucestershire, Wyre Piddle 3, is decorated with an alternating composition of acanthine leaves (Ills. 713–20). Although this type of acanthine ornament remained in sporadic use until the turn of the twelfth

century (e.g. the belfry capitals at Langford, Oxfordshire (West 1993, figs. 15, 16; Tweddle *et al.* 1995, 215, ills. 298–305), the deep eyelets and rather fleshy leaves are more like the acanthine ornament of the tenth century, such as the imposts from Avebury (Cramp 2006, 201, ills. 395–6) and Peterborough (West 1993, fig. 6), or the nielloed base of the Canterbury censer-cover (Backhouse *et al.* 1984, 89, 130–1, cats. 73, 137). In manuscripts, examples occur in initial letter and frame fillers such as that in the hoop of the initial 'P' of the Cambridge, Corpus Christi, Lives of St Cuthbert MS 183 (fol. 6), or the frames of the early folios of the Benedictinal of St Aethelwold (London, British Library MS Add. 49598) (Temple 1976, 37–8, cat. 6, ill. 18; West 1993, 258–61; Deshman 1995, 236–7, col. pls. 1–3, figs. 169–76).

A similar composition of acanthine foliage can be suggested for two small fragments at St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester (Gloucester St Oswald 13 and 14, Ills. 313–15), which might once have formed part of decorative friezes, imposts or capitals. Period II rebuilding at St Oswald's of the first half of the tenth century offers a possible context for both these and another carved stone from the site (no. 16, Ills. 321–3). Gloucester St Oswald 16 consists of part of a rectangular block on which is carved a semi-circular arch that spanned an opening about 55 cm wide. The arch is decorated with scallops and pelleting, while the triangular spandrel above and to the right of the arch carries a great swirl of foliate decoration in which the remaining leaf-tip has fine drill-holes between individual lobes (for parallels see catalogue discussion, p. 217).

Mention has already been made of the snake carved beside the shaft of the wheel-head cross on the tenth-century grave-cover from Shrewsbury, Shropshire (Shrewsbury St Mary 3, Ills. 553–4), but on the other side of the shaft there is also a very simple tree-scroll with two leaf-buds at the top of the straight main stem and two pairs of downward-curving side stems.

The front face of a carved panel from Berkeley, Gloucestershire (Berkeley Castle 3, Ills. 19–20) bears three and a half pointed-oval recesses, surmounted by circular recesses. Between the lower recesses are panels of loosely twisted cable ornament, and above each of these panels of decoration there are palmate fans of broad leaves with side-shoots that curve downwards into tight spirals. The main elements of this design all appear in the Pentecost scene from a late tenth-century manuscript illumination from Winchester, the Rouen Benedictinal and Pontifical, fol. 21v (Temple 1976, 53–4, cat. 24, colour *frontispiece*). The

parallels are such that a late tenth-century date for the carving would seem reasonable (although a twelfth-century date has also been proposed — see catalogue discussion, p. 132). The partially incomplete nature of the carving indicates that the decorative scheme continued onto at least one more stone. If the second stone was of similar size, this would make the overall panel 1.5m wide, with seven recessed oval and circle motifs representing, perhaps, the seven days of Creation. Such a scheme would be appropriate for the front of an altar or for a panel from a chancel screen. Alternatively this could be part of a shrine base, with the recessed oval and circles forming false 'access' holes to the relics within (J. West, pers. comm. 2006).

A carving from Rous Lench, Worcestershire, belongs to the early eleventh century (Ills. 647–57). The front face of Rous Lench 1, which shows a small figure and two large birds in a dense profusion of plants, has already been discussed (see Animal Motifs above, p. 81), but the end face is also covered by a wild swirl of interlaced plant stems which terminate in curling tips and lobed leaves (Ill. 654).

Two Ringerike-style carvings that are associated with a small group of other carvings from the Cirencester area of Gloucestershire, dated to the first half of the eleventh century (see above under Interlace and Geometric Ornament, p. 78, and Animal Motifs, p. 81), display a new approach to foliate ornamentation. These carvings include Bibury 1 and 2, Somerford Keynes 1, and also a carved panel from Ampney St Mary. Face A of the double-sided grave-marker, Bibury 2 (Fig. 29F, Ill. 29), is dominated by two broad, curving bands of decoration in a figure-of-eight design. Lobed leaves fill the background, while inside the curving bands there is a pair of spiral volutes, from the centre of which springs a single leaf. At what is probably the upper end of the stone there is a badly damaged, almost horizontal area of interlocking curves linked by two straps that cross the main bands of decoration. On Bibury 1 the edge mouldings of the bodies of the double-ended creatures are drawn out into tendrils, buds and lobed leaves (Fig. 29G, Ill. 27), while at Somerford Keynes the outlined bodies of the creatures are completely filled with plant tendrils, 'buds' set in nests of leaves or sprouting from lobed tendrils, a spiral, and claw-like terminals (Fig. 29E, Ills. 426–8). The foliate decoration on the Ampney St Mary 1 slab (Fig. 30H, Ill. 3) consists of broad sweeping tendrils which terminate in lobed leaves, spirals and diamond leaf-shapes.

The trapezoidal capitals of the chancel arch at Bibury (nos. 8 and 9) are carved with bold foliate decoration.

The southern capital (Bibury 8, Ill. 43) bears a fleshy, acanthus-style palmette of hollow-centred leaves flanked by broad plant stems. The plant form on the northern capital (Bibury 9, Ill. 44) has a central, fleshy vertical leaf flanked by small shoots and long curving shoots that become twisting tendrils near the top of the stone. Parallels for the decoration on both capitals can be found in the Cambridge Psalter (previously known as the Winchcombe Psalter — Cambridge, University Library MS Ff. 1. 23: Temple 1976, 97–8, cat. 80), most recently dated to the late tenth century (see catalogue discussion, p. 140).

Two small capitals of similar date from Frocester, Gloucestershire (nos. 1 and 2, Ills. 248–9, 251) carry foliate panels carved in fairly high relief. The decoration consists of an acanthus-like fan of broad, fleshy leaves springing from two trailing loops that curve up on either side of the central fan of leaves.

These trailing strands originally continued onto the sides of the capital and just enough carving survives to suggest that they probably terminated in spirals. At Syde, Gloucestershire, there is an even smaller capital, Syde 1 (Ills. 441–5), that is carved in one with a column-shaft and now set upside down outside the north doorway. The capital is square tapering to octagonal above a simple roll moulding. The alternate faces of the octagonal section are carved with tall, curving-topped and slightly out-curving leaves, with taller leaves growing up behind them on the other faces. The Syde leaf forms are rather similar to those on a Carolingian-inspired ninth-century capital from Canterbury, but they are also similar to the later acanthus-style palmettes from St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester (see above and catalogue discussion, p. 250, for more detail).