

*A message from the Chair of CRSBI*

This summer I spent a very enjoyable time with three students from my department of Art History at Warwick on fieldwork in Derbyshire for CRSBI. The students had spent the first part of the vacation identifying the sites and compiling lists of places to visit and then we sat down together and planned the fieldwork trips as a series of days. Coordinating the access churches in a daily schedule proved to be quite a challenge, particularly for visits on Sundays, and some days ended up being quite long, but the students' enthusiasm for the project made it all work very well. One church had a timer on its door, and we arrived with ten minutes to spare before it self-locked for the evening, but we'd been warned about this and were able to spend as long as we needed there, just as long as we didn't close the door.

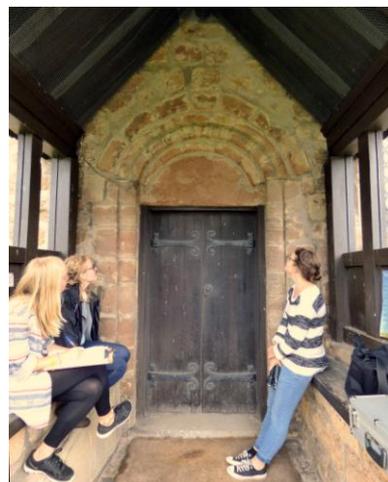
We found some extraordinary things, such as the collection of Romanesque fragments built into the walls at Wirksworth, and those piled up in the porch at Bakewell. There was also rather more Romanesque sculpture in the churches than the antiquarian records had led us to expect. For the students, it was a chance to get out of the lecture-room and to apply what they'd learned, and for me it was the opportunity to discover the range and variety of sculpture in one region. Derbyshire has two of the most interesting Romanesque churches in the region, Steetley, which is tiny but covered in sculpture, and Melbourne which

approaches cathedral-size and has more than a hundred carved capitals, and a whole number of other sites where sculpture of less sophisticated but fascinating form can be found. Writing up the sites will take place over the winter and the sites will then be ready for the website, so that the people who helped us in the county will be able to see for themselves what the project is all about.

*Dr. Jenny Alexander FSA*

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## *Fieldworkers Needed in Wales*

We are very grateful to the new fieldworkers who have started work recently in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Kent and Cornwall. It is inspiring to see the enthusiasm among the new volunteers to get our project completed.

This issue of the newsletter highlights the different situations to be experienced when recording Romanesque sites in Ireland and Scotland. Our survey has been well served in Ireland and Scotland, where nearly all sites have been completed, but for Wales there is a shortage of help. We also need help in the north of England. If you could help, please contact Nora Courtney at [nora.romanesque@gmail.com](mailto:nora.romanesque@gmail.com), and you will be sent instructions and site lists for the areas you volunteer for.

## *Instructions for Fieldworkers*

At present the instructions for fieldworkers are being revised and we would like to hear from fieldworkers who have suggestions or amendments which we should include in the new handbook. In particular we would like to have suggestions of books or references which are helpful for the history of Romanesque sites, which could be recommended to all researchers. Again contact Nora at the above email address if you have any suggestions.

## *Romanesque Scotland: Not what it seems*

*Jim King*

For those presently working on the Scottish Romanesque sites (Richard Fawcett, Iain Anderson and James King), the complexities of history have made references to the various sites challenging. Scotland as we know it today didn't exist until the Western Isles joined it in 1266, and the islands of Orkney and Shetland (previously controlled by Norway) became part of the Scottish nation in the late 15th century. More confusing still is the actual period when Romanesque sculpture was created north of England. From 1138/9 until 1157 parts of northern England were controlled by the Scottish king. Further north, Morayshire was only annexed to the Scottish Crown in the 1130s and as for diocesan controls, most cathedrals were re-established and diocesan borders determined after David I became king in 1124. Early bishops of



Orkney seem to have been appointed by the archbishop of Bremen/Hamburg. With the foundation of new archdiocese in 1154 based in Trondheim (Norway), the Western and Northern Islands became part of it. Although the archbishop of York tried to extend control over Orkney during the first half of the 12th century by consecrating Ralph Novell bishop of Orkney, Ralph probably never went to the islands and lived out his life in northern England.

Surprisingly, the whole region north of the Great Glen seems devoid of any Romanesque building constructed with sculpted stone except for the cathedral church at Kirkwall, begun in 1137. 'Romanesque' churches in the north do

survive but these, though often elegant, are plainly built. What little sculpture survives in regions outside Kirkwall seems to be primarily on grave covers. Remarkably, too, the Romanesque parts of the cathedral of Kirkwall Cathedral would appear not to have had any influence elsewhere, any sculptural forms giving way to the newer 'gothic'.

With the fluidity of borders, dioceses and architectural forms confronting the team, it was decided that the best way forward for listing sites in Scotland with Romanesque carving was to use the late medieval boundaries. And with the elimination of dioceses after the Reformation and the changes in administrative boundaries which have occurred several times, the team has had much to think about.

## *Fun and games in the west of Ireland*

*Roger Stalley*

**M**ost medieval churches in Ireland survive only as ruins, which means that Romanesque carvings have often been exposed to the elements for several centuries. Lack of documentation adds to the difficulties: the



history of individual buildings is frequently obscure and chronologies are not what one would expect in an English context, with Romanesque surviving well beyond 1200 west of the Shannon. In some instances Romanesque features have been reconstructed or cannibalized, which is exactly what happened to some remarkable sculpture at Annaghdown in County Galway.

There are several ruined churches at Annaghdown, one often described as 'the cathedral'. In fact this was the local

Protestant church built around 1800, the chief attraction of which is a stunning re-used window in the east gable, carved from grey limestone. At first sight the window looks orthodox enough, surrounded as it is by a keeled moulding



flanked by chevrons; but in this case each chevron is furnished with delicately incised foliage patterns and, in a couple of cases, a small animal. Further scrutiny reveals that the moulding forms the body of a giant serpent, its head to the left, its 'feet' to the right, a witty treatment that has precedents far back in Irish art (in early gospel books the frames of illuminated pages are treated in a similar way, though with lion heads and clawed feet). But where did the window come from? A few hundred yards to the west lie the ruins of a small Augustinian

church, where there is a gap in the east gable; the wall has exactly the same depth as the Romanesque window, suggesting this was the original location. Around 1800 the local parishioners evidently wanted to give their new church a dose of historical authenticity by recycling the ancient window, a trick exploited elsewhere in 19th century Ireland by Protestant and Catholic congregations alike. The sculptor of the window also worked at



Ballintober Abbey (c. 1216), which likewise belonged to Augustinian canons.

It seems that the canons of Connacht had a taste for Romanesque sculpture.

*For more detail about the sculpture at Annaghdown, see the entry in the Corpus by Hazel Gardner.*

## *Quarries and Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture*

*Eric Fernie*

**B**arbarian invasions and overwhelming changes in rulership and social status from the fifth century to the eighth prompted a major decline in the economy of the western Roman Empire. From the ninth century, with the Carolingian Empire, it increased again. While there are arguments over the relative importance of the ninth and tenth centuries, this is not just some blip in the medieval economy. It can be argued that it is the beginning of the modern economy. One of the clearest indications of this is the number of techniques and aids invented at the time. Indeed it has been claimed that there were more inventions in the ninth to the thirteenth centuries than at any time before the industrial revolution.

Of these, that of greatest relevance to Romanesque architecture and sculpture is the horse collar, which enabled horses to pull at least a five times greater load than previously. While the biggest impact was in agriculture, it also had an astonishing effect on quarrying. The growth of the stone industry is evident in the increase in

the numbers and types of masonry buildings. Before the ninth century, stone buildings, especially outside Italy, were almost exclusively the preserve of the super-elite, of emperors, kings, queens and the most powerful magnates, both clerical and lay. By the late eleventh century, by contrast, almost every parish church outside Scandinavia was built of stone, as were many dwellings and even shops.

This expansion coincides with the development of the Romanesque style in architecture. It is not clear why master masons and patrons chose the specific qualities of Romanesque articulation. It might have led to, for instance, greater variety. Whatever the explanation, by the eleventh century the preference for the Romanesque style was established across almost all of the Latin Church.

The importance of quarries in this development can be illustrated by the design of masonry coursing. Transporting stone over more than the shortest distances doubled the cost, so it made

sense to prepare as much as possible at the quarry. Stone beds vary in height and courses containing differing size stones would create complications, so ideally long continuous courses ran the whole length of a building phase. Jean Bony has demonstrated this at Durham, where there is a building break a few bays west of the crossing, as is common in large church projects. The original courses run unbroken from the westernmost end of the south aisle wall to the equivalent point in the north aisle. These differing courses allow for details such as needing a narrow one for the capitals of the windows. As argued, they would have been cut in the quarry, so it is almost as if the cathedral was prefabricated there. This procedure is almost as clear at Romsey Abbey.

The growth in quarrying could also have been relevant to the design of architectural sculpture. The Romanesque approach involves a close relationship between the forms of the building and those of the sculpture, as, for example, with the early twelfth-century figure of St Peter on the left jamb of the portal at Moissac.

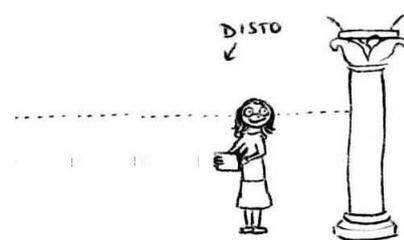
Equivalent figures on portals of a century later, such as at Reims and Amiens, are free-standing, meaning they are almost unconnected with the building's masonry and use far more stone. I am not arguing that economic constraint determined the Romanesque sculptural solution, only that the new style was developed within the context of what was possible and/or sensible. Indeed, the rich decorative elements indicate that, at least in the major buildings, minimising cost was not an important controlling factor.

Explanations for the development of Romanesque sculpture are many and varied, but among the most significant are the close relationship between its forms and the buildings it adorns, and the ways in which the carved stones were prepared in the stone quarries.

*(This note is based on the relevant section of the annual lecture, with extra material from Fernie, Romanesque Architecture, Yale, 2014.)*



Wirksworth fragments





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