

# Anglo-Saxon Sculpture and Roods.

All pictures viewed clockwise from top left.

1. Inside the tower (ground floor) at St. Mary, Deerhurst, Glos. Carved stone of the Virgin and child which would originally have the detail painted on. I presume this type of style preceded that which would be more conventional where all detail was carved. Note the feet which show the figure standing on a balustrade with pillars identical to those seen in the elevated tower archway in this church.
2. A carved animal head as a hood stop, inside Deerhurst church.
3. Carving of an angel at Winterbourne Steepleton church. Compare the very different technique of the Deerhurst Virgin with this example. Taylor notes how it is generally similar in form to the well known pair at Bradford on Avon, but this is carved in higher relief and is seen full face. The carving is dated by Talbot Rice to the first half of the tenth century, 'nearer 910 than 950' or possibly even to the reign of Alfred.
4. Shows a more oblique view to more readily give a better understanding of the relief of the carving.



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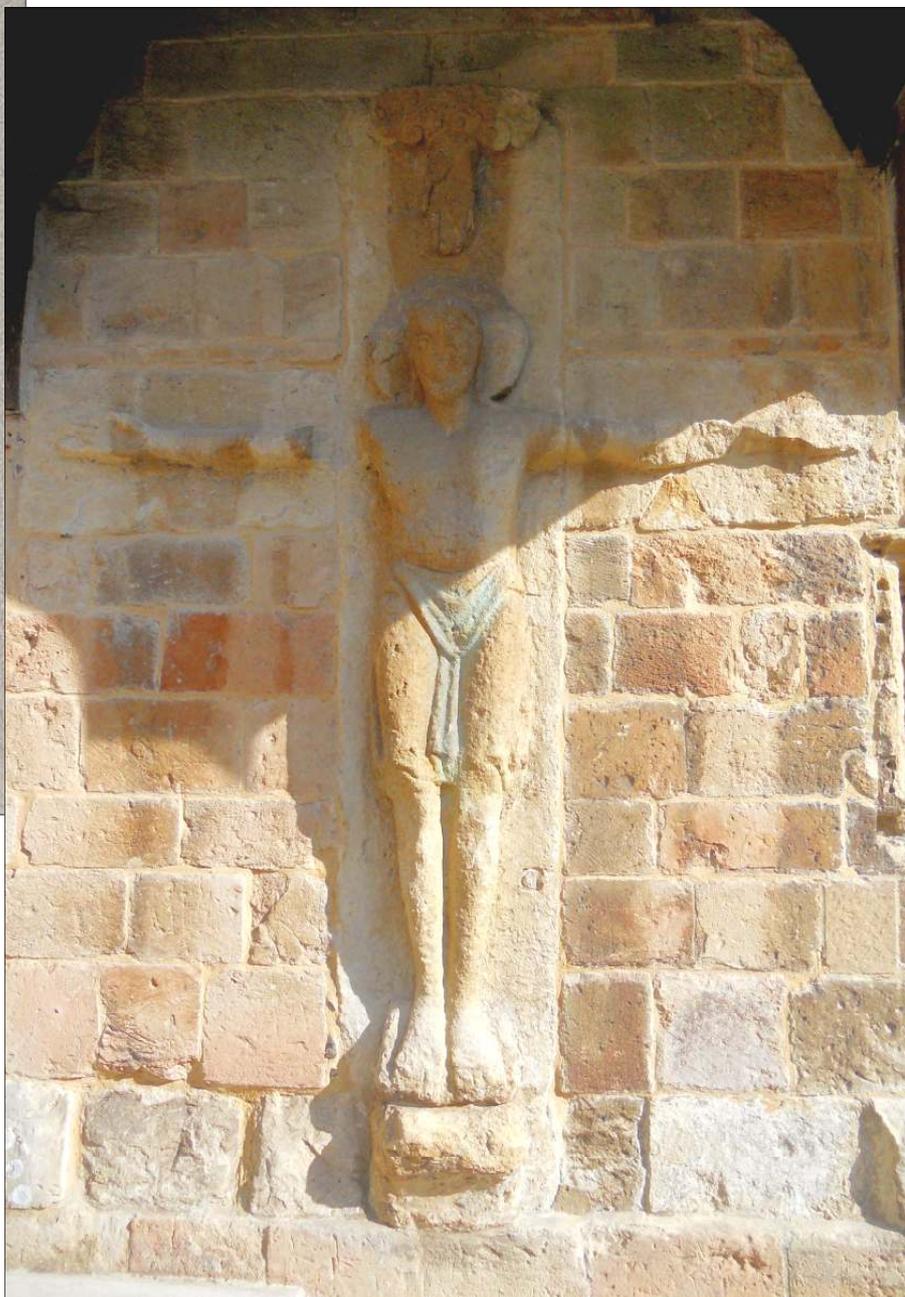
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5. At Walkern church, Herts. The carved figure is situated centrally above the (vanished) south doorway, so we may safely assume that it is in its original position. However, at a later date the doorway was partly destroyed (only its eastern impost survives) by an archway of the south arcade so that this carving is now seen from the south aisle. This enhanced photo shows the figure which is partly defaced, a section about a foot in height across the upper part of the body has been cut back to the surface of the wall. The head is in high relief with well defined features including a moustache. The removal of the area where the arms would be makes it difficult to say with certainty how the figure was portrayed but Taylor states that the draped part of the lower body suggests the same general treatment as that of the large rood at Langford.



The high relief of the head contrasts with the flat form of the lower body with lightly incised lines indicating folds of the drapery and knotted belt. The feet are shown below the skirt a few inches apart as was usual in Anglo-Saxon times, and in contrast to the crossed feet usually shown in later medieval representations of the Crucifixion.

6. At Romsey Abbey there are two roods, the larger has been moved to a position outside on the west facing wall of the Norman south transept. The figure of Christ is carved on



a massive stone of which at the head is the hand of God descending from a cloud, as at Breamore and Headbourne Worthy. The importance of this feature in settling a pre-Conquest date was first pointed out by Casson and was subsequently emphasised by Clapham. Talbot Rice dates the Rood circa 1010. Due to its lengthy exposure to the elements it has suffered from weathering, especially the face which has lost much of its detail.

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7. At Romsey Abbey, the hand of God descending from the clouds, seen in the previous picture.
8. Inside Romsey Abbey, the smaller Crucifixion, measuring about 2ft 6in in height, dating from about the year 960. The Anglo-Saxon Abbey dates from the mid nine hundreds, although a possible earlier foundation as was claimed by a spurious charter attributed to Edgar. St. Elflaeda was abbess here in the 10th century. The foundations of the Anglo-Saxon Abbey remain under the later Norman building. Thus the two sculptures were removed from the earlier church at some time when the Norman Abbey was in building.



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9. First picture is of the Rood at the church of St. Swithun, Headbourne Worthy, Hants. It sits directly above an Anglo-Saxon doorway and upon the west face of the west wall of the nave. It has been severely cut back to the wall face. Doubtless mutilated in the time of Bishop Horne (1560-80) who is recorded as ordering the destruction of all Crucifixes in the Diocese of Winchester. This Rood, like that at Breamore now sits inside a later 'porch' - except here it is accessed only from within only. However, the hand of God descending from the clouds has in great part escaped mutilation.



10. The Rood at St. Marys church, Breamore, Hants and which sits above a doorway of late Anglo-Saxon date and protected by the Norman south porch. The small inset picture shows the hand of God descending from the clouds. Here the hand has not escaped mutilation but the magnificently represented clouds are intact.



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11. Here we see two pictures of carved stones at the church of St Mary, Sompting, Sussex. H. Taylor mentions them in Vol II of his Anglo-Saxon Architecture, page 562. He mentions Talbot Rice and Clapham as dating them to the early part of the eleventh century. This picture is of a nimbed abbot. The way in which the figure is carved shows a great maturity of technique and must rate high on the list of known Anglo-Saxon carvings.



12. This stone is a fragment of scrolled ornament and is beautifully carved. Taylor mentions four carved stones in total however. Clapham gave reasons why he assigned them to the same early eleventh-century date as the main fabric of the tower.



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13 & 14. At Bradford on Avon, Wilts, on rising ground above the River Avon stands a high status pre-conquest chapel, the original building being dedicated by St. Aldhelm to St. Laurence in the early 8th century. High up on the east wall of the nave are two sculptures which may well have been a part of a crucifixion. These sculptures, of angels, are not now in their original position. To appreciate their size go to the photo file on the church (and see picture 13 on page 4).



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15-20. At the church dedicated to The Holy Cross in the village of Daglingworth some 3 miles distant from Cirencester, and not far from a Roman road, stands a church exhibiting cut back quoins and an interesting Anglo-Saxon chancel arch. Inside there are various Anglo-Saxon sculptures now set into the nave walls.



H. Taylor describes these sculptures in some detail, and gives a date at the beginning of the 11th century. It will be noticed that photo 19 is of a sundial, in a similar style to that at Corhampton, Warnford, and Winchester, but being sheltered inside a later porch it is in a very good state of preservation. Taylor states: "The circular dial is outlined by a raised roll-moulding. The horizontal diameter is marked by an incised line, and the lower half-circle contains four incised radii of which three divide it into four equal 45 degree spaces while the fourth radius divides the first into two."



It appears that in those times the day was divided into periods for prayer, and church devotions were marked, long before hours had any meaning. If you increase the size of this file you will see that three of these incised lines (and at their bottom end) there are elaborate little crosses, or more like tied raffia crosses with the uprights both being split in two at their ends.

