An Insular perspective on the role of Foreign Influences in the development of Early Viking Art: The Gripping-Beast-Motif as a case Study

An exploration of the stylistic connections; and a heuristic approach to establishing the 'meaning' or 'belief context' behind the creation of this motif and its consequences as a reflection of contact between the regions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 SYNOPSIS 1

2 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 2

3 ABSTRACTS 3

4 INTRODUCTION 4

5 CHAPTER ONE - THE ORIGINS OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST 7

6 CHAPTER TWO - THE INSULAR VINE-SCROLL ORNAMENT : ITS ORIGIN AND MEANING 17

7 CHAPTER THREE - THE TREE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE 30

8 CHAPTER FOUR - SYMBOLISM OF THE HAND AND GESTURES 39

9 CHAPTER FIVE - THE GRIPPING TRIAD CONFIGURATION; AND THE ROLE OF TERPSICHOREAN GESTURES IN EARLY SOCIETY 46

10 CHAPTER SIX - THE SELF - GRIPPING FIGURE AND SHAMAN TRADITIONS 58

11 CHAPTER SEVEN - HUMAN INTERLACE FIGURES 66

12 CHAPTER EIGHT - THE STYLISTIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE INSULAR REGION AND THE BROA\OSEBERG STYLE 76

12.1 THE MEANING OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST 76

12.2 TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST ... 101

13 CONCLUSION 105

14 BIBLIOGRAPHY 111

15 CATALOGUE OF REFERENCED ARTEFACTS 121

16 MAPS 127

1 SYNOPSIS

This study illustrates the wider Insular contact with Viking Scandinavia by the examination of a primary feature of early Viking Art, the Gripping-Beast-Motif. It examines the various theories behind the 'genesis' of this motif in order to eliminate the most unlikely and assert the role of Insular impulses in this so-called 'parthenogenetic' development. To this end it provides an examination of the various roles and likely paradigms from the different regions of the British Isles and in particular reassesses the role of Ireland in these impulses, on the premise that Insular art was providing the influences which led to the creation of the motif that provide a heuristic overview of what these influences meant in their own context. The result of this is to establish a Scandinavian belief context to determine whether the motifs were being copied to fit into a similar or shared meaning context.

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3 ABSTRACTS

"*Thus I am interpreting your lived experiences from my own standpoint. Even if I had ideal knowledge of all your meaning - contexts at a given moment, and so were able to arrange your whole supply of experience, I should still not be able to determine whether the particular meaning - contexts of yours which I arranged your lived experiences were the same as those which you were using*" - Shultz, A., The Phenomenology of the Social World, 1972.

"*Art is a lie that makes us realise the truth*" - Pablo Picasso.

"*Myths are lies, even though lies breathed through silver*" - C.S. Lewis.

"*MYTHOLOGY, n. The body of a primitive people's beliefs concerning its origin, early history, heroes, deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true accounts which it invents later*" - Ambrose Bierce, 1881 - 1906.

"*To make truth sound probable you must always mix a lie with it. People have always done so*" - Dostoyevsky, The Devils, 1870.

4 INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this study to examine the influences which led to the creation of the Scandinavian Viking Age Motif known as the 'Gripping-Beast'. This motif is part of the Broa/Oseberg style which marks the beginning of the Viking era. As the perspective of this study is to investigate the Insular connections with Scandinavia during the 8th to mid - 9th Century, an investigation of this motif proves to be an apposite model to achieve this aim.

The Gripping-Beast-Motif marks a complete break with the preceding artistic traditions of the Vendel period. It is this factor, and the importance of the ship burial it decorated, which have made it a controversial phenomena in Scandinavian art, the reasoning being that in order to establish the integrity of Viking Art this motif has to be perceived as an indigenous development. The problem with this is that the motif shows similarities with other artistic traditions of this region, in particular that of the Insular region.

It is the intention of this study to use this situation to investigate the diffusion of culture between the two regions. In establishing the premise that there are clear similarities between the artistic traditions the consequences of this relationship shall be taken a step further. The attempt to construct a hermetic context for the development of Scandinavian Viking Art has led to these similarities being dismissed as parallel evolution from a base of similar artistic background (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966). In keeping the perspective of this study in mind one of the possible ways to illustrate the connections between the regions is to investigate the reasoning behind this motif and the belief context it was intended to be integrated with. That is, to investigate the similarities or differences associated with the symbolism behind the ornamental similarities.

The meaning of the symbolism of the Gripping-Beast has been passed by or largely limited to concluding remarks which commonly relate to its 'grotesque' features in comparison to its 'elegant' predecessor. Regardless of the imposition of this aesthetic judgement, this field of Viking Art research has received little discussion compared to the attention given to its stylistic aspects.

These similarities shall be explored by investigating the diachronic evolution of this artistic innovation in conjunction with relative developments in the Insular region within the same chronological period; it is from this that we can hope to establish a context from which the symbolism behind the motif can be investigated.

The obvious feature which links the artistic styles of the two regions is the characteristic which separates this style from the preceding tradition, that of the gripping gesture. Both in Insular and Scandinavian art there seems to be a wish to change the existing style. So instead of the weaving of the interlace patterns we find the contact of these lines broken by the gripping gesture. The end result of looking at the application of, or lack of, of this gesture in the art, and where possible the literary sources, is that it should be possible to show that these regions shared similar meanings behind their use.

One of the issues involving the investigation of this motif is where this sudden intrusion into the artistic vocabulary of both regions came from. Logically, in order to allow adequate time for this feature to diffuse from the Insular region into Scandinavian art, this had to permute and be established in the Insular region earlier than the creation of the Gripping-Beast-Motif.

During the 6th Century the Christian church established itself in Ireland and began to be a cultural epicentre for the region. One of the side effects of this, and later in England, was the 're-awakening' of contact with the east. The material result of this was the importation of relics and artefacts which were to have a powerful influence on Insular art in the following centuries. Furthermore this impulse was amplified when in 615 AD Egypt, Syria and Palestine were invaded by the Persians and Monophysites and again in 637 AD by the Arabs. The result of this was a suspected wave of eastern material and even some accounts of eastern artisans journeying west to avoid these disruptions.

The exact result of this is unclear. However, many ornamental designs from the east were assimilated into the existing Insular traditions during this time. One of the features in common between all three traditions stylistically, perhaps symbolically, is the way in which the animals grip their environment and each other. This proposes a few interesting possibilities. They could be examples of parallel evolution; they could be respectively descended from one another; or the applications of the gesture could be based on a shared or indigenous perception of the gesture in the similar contexts.

A heuristic approach in examining the gripping gesture will shed light on the 'meaning' of this enigmatic Viking zoomorphism by the comparative examination of the gesture in relation to its application in the ornament of both cultures. The end result of this study will provide another reason to expect contact between the two cultures and a likely region for the origin of the motif outside of Scandinavia.

5 CHAPTER ONE - THE ORIGINS OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST

It is the purpose of this study to examine the influences which led to the creation of the Gripping-Beast-Motif and discuss what the instigation, if any, was behind its creation. There has been very little discussion as to what the Gripping-Beast was or what it symbolised. The Oseberg/Broa figure is seen generally as, "ungainly, four-footed, zoologically indefinite, more like a dog or a cat than a lion. They are generally modelled in relief, with the head seen full-face, frequently with small, pointed ears, and sometimes with a crest and small, pointed beard. Also typical are the peculiar face with empty eyes almost like spectacles and the shaping of their body with its hour-glass waist" (Marstrander, 1965: 141), (see figs. 63, 64, 68, 69). Before any discussion of the significance of the gripping gesture, which is such a fundamental characteristic of this style, both the stylistic and chronological context of this style must be established.

The chronology of style is somewhat confused. This would seem to be due to a lack of consensus on whether the earlier Broa or later Oseberg find signify the start of this style. The dating of the Oseberg ship is usually thought to be roughly in the first half of the 9th Century (Carter, 1957: 150; Foote & Wilson, 1970: 290; Brogger, 1971: 60). Bruce-Mitford (1964: 220) in investigating similarities in Hiberno-Saxon mounts claims the depositing date would have to be before 800 AD, which is the earliest yet proposed, although he might be confusing the date of Oseberg/Broa style with that of the ship burial. The most recent discussion proposed by Fuglesang, (1992: 177) is that the Oseberg style itself stretches from c800-875 AD. This would fit in with Ettlinger (1976: 82) who dates the Oseberg wagon, part of the ship deposit, to 850 AD.

The Broa finds are generally assumed to have been created in the second half of the 8th Century (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 139; Marstrander, 1965: 141; Foote & Wilson, 1970: 295). Although, due to the obvious link

between the two finds, as shall be discussed, the more specific date of 775 - 800 AD is likely (Fuglesang, 1992: 177). From the Broa/Oseberg beginning the Gripping-Beast can be found in Scandinavian art, in the Borre style, until the end of the 9th Century (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 6; Fuglesang, 1992: 177).

This whole period of activity is encapsulated in what is known as the Early Viking Period (E.V.P.). It is this period of Scandinavian art history which is the focus of this study. The preceding artistic period was the Vendel (or Merovingian) Period which was during the 7th and 8th Century (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 6).

The Viking Age Art of the E.V.P. can be divided as chronologically into three main phases: Broa, Oseberg and Borre. These are named after the sites where the representative artefacts were found. Ornes (1968: 208-209) provides a summary of the place of 'Gripping-Beast' in the animal styles as formulated by Bernhard Salin, "the first genuine example of an animal-style was evidenced about the year 500, ... called Style I. The styles after this were II and III, or the modern style A to F, which lasted to 800 AD. They represent a continual changing of artistic intentions ... the curved animal figures, the so-called Gripping-Beast-Motifs correspond to Style F. All this occurs within a productive period of no more than 50 to 75 years". This is supported by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966) on whom Ornes bases his summary, "the art styles of the earlier periods - Styles C, D and E - were the ones out of which Viking Art grew". This proposal was continued in Foote & Wilson (1970: 227). They claim that the Broa/Oseberg developments belong to Salin Style III. This supports their continuing theme that the E.V.P. developments were part of and a continuation of the existing Scandinavian art history. Graham-Campbell (1980: 155) criticised this logic, "The motifs of what may, for convenience, be termed the Broa style are those of the Scandinavian 'Style E', with the addition of a new and lively motif, that of the 'Gripping-Beast', which was to play a major

part in the ensuing Borre style. Foote & Wilson (1970: 287) label this E.V.P. Style III, but this is imprecise since Salin's (1904) Style III is a Vendel Period development from his earlier Style I and II of animal ornament, and has required a sub-division." This is supported by Fuglesang (1992: 177) who saw part of the Broa styles as, 'animal en Style III: E', not just Style III.

We add to the confusion if we take Ornes' statement (1968: 209) that, "the so-called Gripping-Beast-Motif corresponds to Style F"; and compare it to Foote & Wilson's (1970) definition of Style F: "only one group of early Viking Age material is decorated with ornament influenced in any major fashion from the Continent. This ornament - sometimes known as Style F - occurs on a number of bronze mounts and brooches and is derived from an art developed on the Continent under Anglo-Saxon influence (e.g. Tassilo chalice)". Ornes (1968: 208) claims to be presenting a summary of the developments in the first chapter of Viking Art (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966). It is clear that the latter group of scholars are attempting to establish Viking Art as almost a hermetic development, in that, although a new style was produced this was only a continuation of the preceding Vendel period (Ornes, 1968: 206; Foote & Wilson, 1970: 228; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 69). The distinction between Style E and F is quite blurred in their argument.

However, the proposal that Gripping-Beast, as Style F or E, is the product of foreign influence has many adherents. It is not the purpose of this study to solely follow the development of the stylistic aspects of the 'Gripping-Beast'; so the discussion as to the source of these influences shall be limited to the exception of the Insular perspective which is the comparative focus of this study. The stylistic characteristics of the Gripping-Beast in relation to Insular art shall be dealt with in the final chapter.

Due to the large variety of different claims about the origins of the Gripping-Beast-Motif only an overview of these shall be presented in a regional chronological fashion. From this a clearer view of development of the theories can be observed. The first opinion was passed by Sophus Müller (1880, in Marstrander, 1965: 143) who argued that, "The prototype of the Gripping-Beast was alleged to be the naturalistic figures of lions and other animals in the Carlovingian renaissance". Marstrander (1965: 143) claims that this was further developed by Shetelig (1920; in Marstrander 1965: 143). However, Gjaeder (1964: 102) interprets Shetelig in a different way stating that the ornament while coming from the western part of Europe especially France, states this has little to do with Carolingian ornament. Dimuit (1964, in Gjaeder, 1964: 102) claims that it is possible that the influence could have come from missing Carolingian sculpture. The idea of the Gripping-Beast-Motif being a product of Carolingian influence was further developed by Gjaeder (1964: 102). He coined the term 'Nordic-Carolingian' to describe it. He maintained, "the style has incorporated entirely new elements and is consciously set in contrast to the late Vendel style which it succeeded. In the late Vendel style the animals are transformed into pure ornamental elements which are indissolubly tied to the background and make an elegantly drawn pattern of interlace ribbons. The Nordic-Carolingian animals are, on the contrary, plastically and organically formed as independent and clearly defined figures which are seizing themselves and each other". As is pointed out by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 75) it is highly unlikely the influence was coming from this quarter of Europe because of the lack of evidence of a Carolingian prototype.

The next earliest proposal was that the Gripping-Beast-Motif was the result of the wave of oriental influence during the 6th to 8th Century which inundated Europe. This was an idea brought forward by Appelgen-Kivalo (1913; in Gjaeder, 1964: 102) who claimed that the design was of Scythian origin; as Sythian art was undergoing similar plastic developments in metal

work at this time. However, as with the concept of a Carolingian influence, there is a lack of a clear prototype, just some shared characteristics. An eastern influence was proposed in an unrelated article by Bronsted (1924, in Marstrander, 1965: 144). In his discussion of the Mozarabic manuscripts from Spain, Guilmain (1960: 26) proposed that the motif was from the Insular region which was transmitting these influences in their own art, which was heavily permeated with Eastern zoomorphic designs. He also suggests that Spain was one possible route for these designs to reach the British Isles.

The proposal that there was some Mediterranean influence in the formation of this style has also been made. Carter (1957: 52) recognised, 'an occasional borrowing of Mediterranean art' in Scandinavian art. Gjaeder (1964: 104) also suggests a Romanesque influence especially from the designs which are found on the Romanesque capitals. Even contact with North African or the Mediterranean east has been suggested by Ellis-Davidson (1976: 273). This is in regards to the 'Gunnar' myths origin found on the Oseberg wagon. It is likely that most of these occurrences of Mediterranean similarities would have been transmitted alongside the oriental motifs.

It was Holger Arbman (1947, in Marstrander, 1965: 144) who maintained that the Gripping-Beast, 'did not derive from art of a central continental civilisation, but from more peripheral border zones such as "north eastern France or the British Isles"'. It is clear from the weight of evidence that these isles played a major role in the formation of the Viking Age Art.

This connection was first recognised by Forssander (1942-3; in Shetelig, 1948: 95; Marstrander, 1965: 144); who argued that the origin of the Gripping-Beast-Style can only be found in Irish and Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship. It was a result of "an amalgamation of oriental Christian lion figures (see fig. 19) in Anglo-Saxon style with an Irish motif with intertwined

human figures - what he calls "das Irishche Reigenmotiv" (see fig. 49)" (Marstrander, 1965: 144). Shetelig (1948: 95) disagreed with this polemical proposal, from a 'Nordic' scholar's point of view, "but in Oseberg (the Gripping-Beast-Motif) these are without doubt an inheritance from Scandinavian Vendel style in the 8th Century, not borrowed in the 9th Century direct from Irish art". While claiming that the Gripping-Beast-Style was the result of 'parthenogenesis' in Scandinavia, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 38) do admit that there were influences which are clearly Insular, e.g. basket hatching, which were present in E.V.P. art. The problem that they see, with the Hiberno-Saxon region in Northumbria producing works with both Irish and Anglo-Saxon characteristics, is that it is hard to differentiate the individual styles from the Insular region. Also that in, "this context whether the undoubted insular elements in 8th Century Scandinavian art came directly from the British Isles or indirectly through Anglo-Carolingian Art".

However, in a recent study, on the motif pieces in Ireland, Uaininn O'Meadhra (1987: 159-165) states that, "If motif pieces are a Celtic Insular phenomenon (most come from Ireland), then when they are found outside the Celtic Insular area they are an indication of cultural contact with that area". She reports that they were found in context in the colonial Viking world and monastic sites in Scandinavia. Moreover, none have been found in the Germanic world. If we consider this as well as the wealth of Insular Irish and English material found in Scandinavia we can conclude that at the very slightest some influence must have been exerted on E.V.P. Art.

Marstrander (1965: 144-145) while agreeing with an Insular basis of the origins of the motif argues that Ireland had very little or no part. He finds "das Irische Reigenmotiv" inconclusive, "it is after all only a plaited design, not a pattern where the figures grasp each other limbs or the framework". This assumption about Irish art is incorrect as shall be illustrated in the final chapter. His suggestion that Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon art developed

under the influence of Hellenistic and eastern inhabited Vine-Scroll ornament is very convincing (Marstrander, 1965: 147) e.g. compare figs. 76 & 77 with figs. 1 & 13). This conclusion is supported by Fuglesang (1992: 177) who saw, "L'origine de la bête agrippeuse est raisemblabement anglo-saxonne, ses pendents les plus proches sont les animaux à forme d'ecureuil figurant sur certaines croix sculpteés anglaises". However, as is suggested by Klingender (1971: 112), it is more than likely that both Irish and Anglo-Saxon influences were responsible for the development of the style.

It is hard to discern this influence on the Continent. The art of Anglo-Saxon England was in contact with the Continent during the late 8th Century or early 9th Century, e.g. Medieval textiles at Maaseik, Belgium with the inhabited Vine-Scroll-Motif were made in Anglo-Saxon England (fig. 14), (Budny, & Tweddle, 1985: 384). It is the presence of artistic evidence such as this which limits us from totally ignoring the possibility that art went through the Continent as well as directly from the British Isles. The idea of contact during the 8th Century can be further illustrated by Dunning and Evison (1961: 139) who discuss the passage and trade of swords. They identify two main trade routes, the one relevant to contact with England is shown by their Group 2; although Group 1 shows contact between the Upper Rhine and Norway. "Group 2 also appears on the Rhine, and connects the trading ports of London, Dorestad, Hedeby, and Birka with calls at coastal ports en route, as well as Kaupang, Gotland and the East Baltic. The spread of these swords is due to the peaceful movements of trade in the 8th Century just before the main Viking expeditions for plunder" (see maps 1 & 2). In her article about trade during the Viking Age, Charlotte Blindheim (1978) presents a convincing argument that the vast deposits of Insular and continental artefacts might be the result of trade and not the raiding practices of the 'Vikings'. This is also supported by Jesch (1991) who bases her conclusion more on the time that it would have taken for the Scandinavians and British Isles to establish a

language of communication. This would all make sense especially in light of the 'precision' with which the Vikings invaded the monasteries of Northumbria and Ireland at the end of the 9th Century (Maps 1 & 4).

However, even in light of the evidence of contact between the two regions within a time frame before and during the chronological extremes of the formulation of this style there is an equally adamant group of scholars who hold that the Gripping-Beast-Motif is an example of 'parthenogenesis' that is, that this style was merely a continuation of the preceding Vendel period. Some of the problems of this assumption have been discussed above in the stylistic classification of this motif.

The milestone work of Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966) was the first work entirely devoted to proving that the Viking Age art was an indigenous development. Although others earlier have tried to indicate some limitations on the implications of foreign influence on Scandinavia's ancient art, (e.g. Carter 1957: 166), it is this work which defined Viking Art. The problem of outside influences has not convinced these scholars. This is best admitted by Ornes (1968: 208). "[Although], Foreign influences are apparently at work, Continental, Irish, South English and finally, the Anglo-Carolingian style, archaeological evidence of the English mission in Western Europe". The idea that the style was the result of a more eclectic nature is also proposed by Kendrick (1968: 29). That is, that no one region held any absolute influence in the development of this motif. In other words the artist chose which factors he liked and employed them in his creation. In Ornes' opinion, Klindt-Jensen, "has apparently accepted the thesis that stylistic innovations in this period are affected by such foreign influences, although he simultaneously hints at native creative source". With the exception of a few elements Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 50) see most of the similarities as the parallel evolution of two very similar artistic traditions. This opinion is supported by the later work of Foote & Wilson (1970: 288).

Regardless of the role which foreign art played in the inception of Viking Art it is clear that this is all part of the one tradition. As is stated by Graham-Campbell (1980: 145) about this problem, "The study of Viking Art must be rooted in Scandinavia if it is to have any real meaning, so it seems self-evident that the 'purest' Viking Art can only be Scandinavian art ...". If we accept, as suggested by Graham-Campbell, that Viking Art should be viewed as a separate entity it is still evident that the most likely source of influence is the Insular region. This is not to imply that this necessarily indicates any exact copying. It is also from here that we can gain some insight into the symbolic background behind the motif.

The problem with examining this issue is summarised by Hillgarth (1961: 173), "In the past, one must admit, historians, in their picture of the transmission of culture in the early Middle Ages, tended to see Irish everywhere, the Anglo-Saxon and the Italians nowhere. There came a very natural reaction and of late we have had the picture rather drastically reversed." Scholars, in attempts to gain new perspective into their own regional focus, have tended to shun the Irish factor. This is not to say that there are deliberate attempts to ignore Irish evidence, but that scholars might chose to focus on particular sources to stay out of the Irish 'shadow'. Details of the Irish influence on Insular and continental have been summarised in both Hillgarth (1961) and Guilmain (1960) both of whom provide a diverse range of references.

This concept of Irish cultural domination is a dominant factor in Marstrander's (1965) discussion on the Gripping-Beast-Style and its origin. He fails to fully comprehend the full implications and variety of Forssander's "Irische Reigenmotiv". Where he claims that the figures do not grasp each other's limbs or the framework there is ample evidence that the figures in fact do grip each other (See figs. 49 & 56). Outside of this 'intertwined human figure' pattern it is clear that the gripping gesture enjoyed a lively and varied career in Irish art at this time, on the High crosses, manuscripts

and metal work. It is a thesis which he dismisses in order to try and more clearly deal with Anglo-Saxon influences in particular Northumbrian art. While this does not detract from his hypothesis of Anglo-Saxon influence this does leave the Insular Context undiscussed in its entirety.

As has been discussed above part of the dilemma is determining which regions within the Insular region are transmitting which impulses. This is because of the intrinsic similarities between the art styles in this region. Moreover, this problem is further compounded by the Hiberno-Saxon region. This region seems to share characteristics of Irish, Anglo-Saxon and Pictish art. It was summarised by Clapham (1934: 57), "We must conclude that Hiberno-Saxon art was in origin in no sense Irish but that the Irish perhaps welded its component parts into one style; that this welding probably took place in Northumbria in the second half of the 7th Century, and that it was transmitted thence to Ireland and over half of Europe". That has been vigorously opposed by Masai (1947: in Guilmain 1960: 32; Nordenfalk, 1947: 142-146) who favours an independently Northumbrian and English explanation for what is known as Hiberno-Saxon art. Guilmain (1960: 32) and Schapiro (1950: 225) both see this as an extremist negative view on the possibility of Irish influence in Northumbria. The majority of scholars hold that Northumbria in particular was subject to Irish influence.

6 CHAPTER TWO - THE INSULAR VINE-SCROLL ORNAMENT : ITS ORIGIN AND MEANING

"The most remarkable similarity between the Gripping-Beast-Motif and certain facets of contemporary Continental and Insular Art is the physical contact between the animal and its surroundings. Just as the Scandinavian creatures cling either to the border, or to each other, so, in Christian art, birds, animals and even human figures, clutch Vine-Scrolls with their claws and hands. It is clear, however, that even if the Scandinavian artists did copy such details, they did not take over the whole motif" (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966:75).

It is clear that there is a growing consensus that the role of Insular art in the formulation of the 'Gripping-Beast' style is somewhat greater in participation than that allowed by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (Fuglesang, 1992: 177). This has been discussed in the first chapter. However, as shall be demonstrated below, the role of these beings in the plant-scroll had a specialised and an apposite role in Insular religious art. The idea proposed by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, that "the physical contact between the animal and its surroundings" is the focus of the influence seems limiting. This is from an artistic perspective which assumes that Scandinavian and Insular artists shared a common aesthetic taste for filling space.

The other possibility is that it is not only a shared aesthetic taste but was adopted for some symbolic purpose. That is to say the Scandinavians and Insular artists either shared the same interpretation of these motifs, or that the former copied Insular art because it held some independent significance in their own culture. As has been discussed above, there is a marked departure in the art of this time from interlace, with its lines going under or over one and another, to this contact expressed by gripping. This is a progressive theme which followed through into the Scandinavian Broa/Oseberg and Borre styles. At this time in the Insular context there is

also a marked focus on physical contact in art. This is not to say that the characteristics of this physical contact was limited to this period, merely that it appears to occur in higher frequencies.

The investigation of the Insular Vine-Scroll motifs will have to be preceded by an overview of its origin and its impact on Insular art discussed before exploring the Insular 'meanings'. This has implications for the Insular use of this motif and ultimately the Scandinavian adaptations. It is necessary to illustrate where this plant-scroll ornament was distributed and where it was originating from, in order to establish a context for its symbolic significance.

It is not within the scope of this present study to examine the stylistic development in any great detail. It is evident from the archaeological record that the Vine-Scroll ornament was available in Northumbrian court and monastic circles as early as the late 7th Century. English craftsmen using ivory or metal could have been using the design earlier than that. There are few pieces surviving before the mid-8th Century (Henderson, 1983: 244). In Anglo-Saxon England this ornament is restricted largely to free standing sculpture but is also found in other media, the most famous pieces being the Ruthwell Cross and Bewcastle Cross from Cumberland, c750-850 AD (Wilson, 1984: 72). Both of these crosses are decorated with running plant-scrolls. The appearance of Vine-Scroll ornament is seen as primarily a Northumbrian motif (Edwards, 1986: 27). The Northumbrian foliage of the 8th Century was characterised by solid pointed leaves with two lobes at its base and a similar leaf without veining, and without lobes, e.g. Croft Cross (fig. 2), Ormside bowl (fig. 27), Bede Manuscript (Jewell, 1986: 98; Schapiro, 1958: 205).

This is different from the Anglo-Saxon friezes at Breedon-on-the Hill, Leicestershire whose depictions are more indicative of Mercian Sculpture, dating from the late 8th to early 9th Century (Tweddle, 1992: 241) characterised by single and double stemmed (spiral fern and medallion)

Vine-Scrolls, with cupped heart-shaped leaves. The leaf whorls found at Breedon are not found in any other Anglo-Saxon art (Jewell, 1986: 95-97).

The appearance of the Vine-Scroll in other Insular contexts such as in Pictish and Irish ornamental repertoires is later and much rarer (Edwards, 1986: 27). The "Scottish monuments with foliage were all made under the influence of the Northumbrian or Anglian school of sculptors; the foliage-designs can in every instance be regarded as Vine-Scroll; and they are derived from Vine-Scroll..." (Crawford, 1937: 469). Examples of the Pictish works would be the Slabs of Hilton of Cadboll and Tarbot. These are thought to be the results of experiments by Pictish artists to fill the deep borders of the slabs, under considerable influence from the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses (Henderson, 1983: 244-50).

Irish examples are considerably harder to find. It can be found on the Kells South Cross and the Clonmacnois South Cross. Also on three figural crosses: Monasterboice, South, Durrow and Clonmacnois West. As the Clonmacnois West Cross Vine-Scroll ornament resembles the Kells South and Clonmacnois South Crosses in a more stylised form it is suggested that this art remained static for half a century or more with no new impetus. Other examples of Irish Vine-Scroll ornament can be found on the 8th Century Birka and Hopperstad Pails (fig. 9) and in the Book of Kells (fol. 202R) (Edwards, N., 1986: 32). The connections between Irish developments and England shall be discussed in more detail further below.

The purpose of this brief analysis of Insular Vine-Scroll ornament is to highlight a number of factors. The first is that there is a wide distribution of this motif. Secondly, and most importantly, the regional varieties show little sign of homogeneity with the exception of the theme.

As was maintained by Kitzinger (1936:62), there had to be some reasoning behind such a wide acceptance of this motif in Anglo-Saxon art. He claims

that the reason for this was its popularity in Anglo-Saxon aesthetic tastes rather than symbolic associations. However, as Vine-Scroll is used almost always in religious contexts, this would indicate that the ornament was used for more than an aesthetic fancy. There is ample evidence that 7th Century England was heavily influenced by Ireland and Rome especially during the Northumbrian Renaissance' - c670-770 AD. The most significant break in the church at this time was in 663 AD at the Synod of Whitby (Stone, 1955: 7). It could be argued that after the Northumbrian church opted for the Roman 'patronage' the frequency of this motif might reflect this division in the artistic traditions.

There is also a more plausible explanation of the diversity of the Vine-Scroll and one which is vital to understanding the significance of its symbolism. That is in the form of eastern influence. In discussing the 'origins of types' in Anglo-Saxon art Joseph Strzygowski was one of the first to recognise the importance of this, "It is beyond question that much of this rich find of figures is Celtic-Irish and much also Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon in origin ... But there remains a considerable residue of motives as to which the problem arises whether they were borrowed as chance suggested from one or other of these sources, or whether they were all derived from some third common source" (1923: 239).

It is this third source which is necessary for us to focus upon. As has already been stated, Northumbria at this time was under Roman influence and this would have considerable impact on the 'meaning' behind this ornament. Baldwin-Brown's view was that half of this art, before the last half of the 9th Century in England, was derived from an 'admixture of elements called migration' (1937:150-151). It was his opinion that Hellenistic, Syrian or Coptic influences were present, as with the foliage ornament found at the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbec and Palmyrean tombs. This is supported by Marstrander (1965: 32), "Influences both from the Christian, Coptic art of Egypt and Early Christian art of Syria can be

traced back in the decoration of Northumbrian stone crosses." e.g. figs. 78 & 79 show the stylistic similarities.

Other examples are readily available. The Ruthwell Northumbrian group of sculpture (e.g. fig. 3) is often associated with Syrian work at mosaics in the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, stone reliefs of Mschatta and panels of the throne of Maxamillian at Ravenna, Italy (fig. 77) (Stone, 1955: 12; Strzygowski, 1923: 240-41). The leaves on the Northumbrian Ruthwell and Bewcastle are thought to be the same as Coptic and Sassanian examples. (Schapiro, 1958: 205). For comparison the Breedon foliage is thought to derive from 6th-7th Century silks from Egypt, e.g. Akhmun and in turn from Persia (Jewell, 1986: 97). There are still very close stylistic ties between the two schools of art. Gardner (1951) illustrates this eastern origin by showing thematic similarities between Syrian mosaics and the Ruthwell Cross with the scene of S.S. Paul and Anthony. Other examples can be found in Weitzmain's catalogue of ivories and steatites, in particular a fragment of rinceaux with animals of ivory, from Syria or Egypt dating to the early Umayyad period 7th-8th Century (fig. 15). The inhabited spiral Vine-Scroll would fit very easily into a Northumbrian context (Weitzman 1977: 106).

Both Crawford (1937: 469) and Henderson (1983: 266) accept that the background of the motif was based on oriental traditions. However, Henderson (1983: 267) suggests that Pictish art might have had its own direct source of eastern imports to provide influences. The same situation can be expected for Ireland and the other Insular regions.

There is however a remarkable lack of this style of ornament on the Continent. Gardner (1951) discusses this discrepancy. He suggests that as it is known there were foreign artists active in North Europe at this time, it would be logical to suspect a European evidence of similar ornament. The lack of this he argues is indicative of closer ties between Insular Britain and the East which go 'around' the Continent. Fulford (1989: 4) establishes a

trade route between c475 to c550 between Byzantium and Britain which circumvents the Continent. As Rosenthal (1967: 65) points out that this does not mean Coptic influences were only found in Insular contexts. Coptic motifs have been found in the Frankish kingdom, North Italy and Switzerland. The reason for emphasising this trade route is to show that the eastern 'artefacts' arrived first hand and not through some continental interpretation.

Rosenthal (1967: 74) also questions the sources for these Insular versions. The major stumbling block is that the chronology of the relevant Insular styles are usually centuries older than their Coptic prototypes. Rosenthal suggests that these pieces might have been copies, recopied through time and transported in the luggage of Coptic monks travelling to Ireland, with the assumption that a workshop was producing this work, of which she produces no evidence. Kitzinger (1936: 67) also tackled this enigma. While he admits that in the 7th-8th Century there was a strong classical tradition in England from the Mediterranean, "there are at least some points of stylistic relation between Coptic and English scroll-patterns, whereas very few were offered by the Gaulish and Italian examples". There is still an apparent chronological gap between English and Coptic art. His solution is an eastern non-Coptic group of monuments of a decisive period of the later part of the 7th Century and the early 8th Century from Asiatic or Syrian tradition, e.g. Mosaics of the Dome of Rocks in Jerusalem (691 AD) and the Great Mosque in Damascus (705 AD).

The point in digressing so far into the stylistic characteristics of the 'Vine-Scroll' in Insular Ornament is to illustrate a few factors vital to its symbolism. It is evident that there is little dispute about the origins of this motif being alien. The different artistic regions tend to have either differing versions of the motif or seem apathetic to using it. This might indicate either a discrepancy in aesthetic taste or that different regions were receiving differing influences, from different sources abroad. There is also

evidence that Northumbria influenced different regions with its 'own' version, e.g. the Breedon Sculptures. The question remains as to why there is such a difference in accepting the motif. By induction the most reasonable conclusion is that the 'meaning' of the motif held very important implications for the artist and audience.

What the motif means depends on whether the influence was directly from the east or from the Mediterranean. Although, as Kitzinger (1936) stated, there are more stylistic similarities between Insular and Eastern Vine-Scrolls there is still a strong Mediterranean influence in Northumbria which Schapiro defined as an Italo-Saxon current (Schapiro, 1958: 217). The Vine-Scrolls discussed above also occurs in inhabited forms: human figures and animals who are found in the scroll. The regions under 'Roman' influence provide more naturalistic inhabited Vine-Scrolls while the Northumbrian versions tend to be more 'barbaric'.

The Roman versions of the Vine-Scroll ornament which were also likely to have been under eastern influence were interpreted with a Dionysiac perspective. We also find Coptic examples which can be interpreted in a similar fashion (Jewell, 1986: 102). Other examples of the Harvesting scene in a more easily identifiable form can be found in Ettinghausen (1972: Plate V, 17 & 1) (fig. 100). Here on a Sassanian silver bottle from Iran, 6th Century, the figure is clearly harvesting grapes. There are also animals to be found in the foliage. The common interpretation is that in early Christian art the human figures gripping the vines are "naked putti participating in a harvest scene" (Jewell, 1986: 95). "The scroll-climbing figures, like the stem-clutching figures in the inhabited scroll, derive ultimately from the vintage motif. The vine-stem with harvesting and climbing figures appears in the Harley Gospels and the Soissons Gospels, where Carolingian artists' simplistic treatment of the figures is very close to that seen at Breedon" (Jewell, 1986: 105).

The figures might if coming from a Coptic source as Jewell states (1986:102) have a similar interpretation. Badawy (1978: 124 and 287) interpreted the scrolls as having nude dancing figures or Erotes hidden in them, e.g. on a lobed Sassanian silver bowl partially gilt from Iran in the 5th Century. Here the tree-scroll is inhabited by various animals accompanied with dancing Maenads in Bacchic fashion (also seen in fig. 100). As he opines about Coptic art, "Though paganism had not yet disappeared by the 6th or even 7th Century, it may be questioned whether any pagan symbolism was still attached to the motifs or if they were rather interpreted in the light of the new Christian symbolism" (Badawy 1978: 291). This is significant in view of claims about Coptic monks influencing the churches of both Ireland and Northumbria.

An illustration of this problem can be found on the Continent. In the vine columns on the Harley Gospels we can see the "naked putti harvesting" (Rosenbaum, 1965; Plate 1C Vine Columns on Harley Gospels) (fig. 4). At the very top of the picture we can see a star above the plant, which is a solar symbol. On the Bewcastle Cross from Northumbria above the Vine-Scroll we have a sundial (Wilson, 1984: 75). This could be interpreted in the context, although having a practical use, as a sophisticated solar symbol, and this could be representative, the sun and plant being part of a vegetation cult, as shall be discussed in more detail below, a characteristic shared by Dionysos who was a vegetation/fertility deity the traditional Hellenic basis for vine associations. Another interpretation of this inhabited vine is proposed by Cirlot (1990: 98) who refers to the scene as one of entanglement at which he states, "Entanglement-symbolism takes its place in legends, folklore and myths alongside primitive and Romanesque art". He quotes Jung's connections between entanglement and the sun and its rebirth. Cirlot suggests that on, "the plane of cosmic evolution, it is the collective dream which separates one cycle of life from the other". This proposal must be greeted with scepticism because Jung's reasoning is not universally accepted. Furthermore it is hard to apply to a 'dead' culture.

There are other scenes which are more complex and more difficult to interpret, such as scenes which depict hunters gripping within the foliage, e.g. St. Andrew Auckland Cross, Northumbria,; 8th Century (Klingender, 1971: 133, fig. 100a) and a panel from the Abbey Church, Andlau (Schapiro, 1963: 182) (fig. 11). Klingender's view was that at this time the Anglo-Saxon artists were using the influences such as the 6th Century mosaics in S. Vitale or of Bishop Maximian's Throne, Ravenna, except that in order to satisfy Saxon tastes they inserted, "Biting and ribbon-beasts of Saxon type" (Klingender, 1971: 132). He goes on to argue that the hunters or archers in the vines might, "symbolise, therefore, in one case, protectors of the Christian vine emblem against its enemies; in another, persecutors of the Faith" (Klingender, 1971: 133) (see fig. 12). This seems to be a remarkably ambivalent proposal. Schapiro (1963: 185) provides a much more plausible explanation. His suggestion is that the archer aiming at the bird had either secular and/or religious symbolic connotations. His argument is that the scene was depicted with secular interests at heart, in a scene that the aristocracy would relate too, that of a hunt, while on a symbolic level the archer or fowler would refer to a being of malevolent nature. The bird, especially the dove, is symbolic of the soul, especially in the vine (Sil. 1975:20: Onian, 1954: 500; Rosenthal, 1967: 73). Also in Daniel 4: 10-12 "the Fowls of Heaven", (Bober, 1967: 73). In Psalm 91: 3-5 the archer or fowler is referred to metaphorically to as being the devil and hunting the soul (bird) by archery (Schapiro, 1963: 185). The other animals present in the Vine-Scrolls also have Christian connotations. The appearance of the archer is usually within very Christian contexts.

The proposal by A. Alfodi (1931, in Carter, 1954: 12) was to link the hunting scene to man's desire to be hidden from a pursuing enemy. The idea involved the pursuer and the pursued, a secular theme. The swift movement indicated in the animal bodies and the backward-turned heads express the idea poignantly, as does the often depicted climax when the pursuer has succeeded in cornering his prey. Alfodi argued that man

deified the characteristics he admires and most desires; living in a primitive state, the world was one of fear. For this reason the scene of the hunt was significant because it symbolised the animal's ability to escape from danger, an ability which man himself would like to emulate.

Klingender (1971: 132) proposes that the vine itself could be a protective device. Whereas for example, the biting and ribbon beasts of 'Saxon type' in the Book of Durrow P.192V were not at all symbolic of any Christian virtue, here the thick non-zoomorphic interlace thicket protects the cross against them. This would be like the 'Airbe Druad' from Celtic lore. It was a magic hedge which no opponent could break. The problem with this theory is that it is not broadly applicable. There are numerous examples where the animals are doves and lambs who have close symbolic ties with Christ. Hence, their bestial nature against Christianity is an unlikely cause for their presence.

The vine itself in early Christian contexts was often thought of as a symbol of Christ (Klingender, 1971: 108). In John 15: 1-17 we find Christ stating, "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener". On the apse mosaic in S. Clemente, Rome there is a depiction of Mary with a child surrounded by vine (Fuglesang, 1981: 88). Fuglesang's opinion was that in a Christian context, "the Vine-Scroll itself was regarded as a symbol of many meanings, for instance of Christ, of the Church, and of members of the Church" (Fuglesang, 1981: 88). Christ himself was seen as the vine in a very concrete example in Northumbria. On the Ruthwell cross is a verse known from the "Vercelli Book" as "The Dream of the Rood" (Gordon, 1976: 235). In this Christ is seen as the cross. Raw (1990: 177) made the conclusion that Christ was the tree of life, as the cross itself is thought to have descended from the tree.

Eliade (1964: 285) in examining the significance of vegetation in his comparative religious study defined the vine as "the vegetal expression of

immortality - just as wine remained the symbol of youth and everlasting life in primitive traditions (of 'eau de vie', Gaelic 'uschabheagh' - 'H_2O of life'). The 'Mishna' declares the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, in Genesis, was a vine".

The idea of the vine being symbolic of one of the classic "cosmic trees" is an interpretation supported by Baldwin-Brown (1923: 205), "If there be considerable breadth in the surface a single central stem may be used to give off lateral scrolls on each side, like a tree with spreading branches, and this is sometimes called a "Tree of Life", e.g. Jedburgh Screen fragment - Anglo-Saxon (fig. 1), early 9th Century; Cross-Shaft Fragment, North York - Anglo-Saxon, 9th Century (fig. 2); Ormside Bowl, Anglo-Saxon - Second half of 8th Century (fig. 27) (Webster and Backhouse, 1992). "The dominance of the tree structure, with two pairs of branches from one stalk, recalls old Oriental types, like the 'tree of life' maintained in later Eastern art beside the classic rinceau" (Schapiro, 1958: 205).

What exactly the Tree of Life was is a vast topic so the discussion shall be limited to the present context. Bober (1967: 31) claimed that on the Tree of Life, in this context, the birds on branches were the souls of the dead. These birds were symbolic of salvation. This is supported by Rosenthal, (1967: 73). The birds as souls of the dead was a belief shared in other Northern European countries, especially Scandinavia (Davidson 1969: 174; Onians 1954: 500). The 'arbor vitae' was the tree of the immortals while the tree of knowledge was seen as the tree of mortals. In the medieval east and in Spain the palm tree was seen as the Tree of Life (Sil, 1975: 204-207)

If we accept the proposal that the vine could in fact represent the Tree of Life this might give added reason to the depictions of such fierce and barbaric animals found in the Vine-Scrolls. The Trees of Knowledge or Immortality were guarded by guardians, animals or human, e.g. the monster which Atlas defeated to steal the three apples for Heracles or the angel

Azrael who guarded the gates of Paradise. This myth usually finds expression in the triad of animals or anthropomorphic figures flanking left and right of the central tree (Cook, 1974: 25). This shall be discussed in greater detail below. It was O'hEailidhe's (1987: 105) view that this pre-Christian motif, which was frequently found in Mediterranean and eastern countries from the 6th-7th Century was transferred to the Vine-Scrolls. He references scenes where two birds peck at fruit. From here this imagery and symbology were integrated into the artistic repertoire and appears on 8th Century Northumbrian Vine-Scrolls. This theory seems unconvincing because of earlier pieces, e.g. Coptic 5th Century scrolls (Badawy, 1978: 124). Also that it assumes that the artists over such a wide distribution would have come to the same development. We can, however, make the assumption that, with the high frequency of the triad motif, it might be an influencing factor. Gripping is also a functional aspect of this depiction as will be discussed below. This supports the ideas proposed by Klingender (1971: 133) and Schapiro (1963: 185) that the vine was in need of protection.

Dinzelbacher (1986: 81) has an erudite explanation of the inhabited Vine-Scroll. He sees the animals on the path to the other world as different spiritual dangers. From this we must conclude that the Tree is the path and the animals in the vine are the spiritual messages and dangers. This theory is likely to be based on a knowledge of tree symbolism on a cross-cultural basis, to which the next chapter is devoted.

The purpose of investigating the Vine-Scroll ornament was to examine the significance of Vine-Scroll ornament in the development and evolution of the "Gripping-Beast" style. By examining this in the Insular context in a very brief manner, it is clear that there are a vast number of possibilities as to why the animals and humans grip the vines. The reason is in its quintessence the significance of the vine itself. Having established a variety

of possibilities within the Insular context it is necessary to see if the Scandinavians held the tree in equal regard, or if there was some indigenous significance to this ornament and hence their adaptation of the motif.

The evidence to what extent Vine-Scroll ornament was available to Scandinavian artists has been discussed by Bakka (1965: 33-35). There is a silver strap-tag from Ostebo, Rogaland, which belongs to a well known late Saxon type and is closely related to a bronze book-mount from Alstad, Trondelag, (fig. 6). Bakka claims it is related to Northumbrian stone art and the Lindisfarne manuscript style. Its vine appears in shorter form on bronze mounts from Hilleby and Kommes in Buskerud and from Kaupang. All these vines are small tree vines although they differ stylistically. He claims that the inhabited vine appears in Northumbrian metal work in three known examples, one of which is a bronze gilt truncated pyramid from Fure, Sogn og Fjordane; another a bronze gilt mount from Tessen, Trondelag. We can expect that the actual influx of Vine-Scroll-Motifs into Scandinavia at this time would have been considerably greater than what we have now.

7 CHAPTER THREE - THE TREE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

As has been discussed above, the creatures which inhabited the vine have been interpreted in a wide variety of different Christian contexts. However, there does seem to be some significance in the creatures and humans who grip the vines. The Vine-Scroll ornament was distributed in an early Christian time frame. It was adopted and assimilated into the artistic vocabulary of some regions and received with less enthusiasm in other areas of the Insular Isles. The broadest division made says that the 'vine' meant either: the harvesting scene or the tree of life. What does seem fundamental is the connection between the gripping action and the vegetal nature of the vine. If the proposal that the Vine-Scroll ornament was part of a larger tree symbolism is accepted then this allows us to formulate some interesting questions. If the 'Viking' artists were adopting this motif to their own tastes, did they have a knowledge of the Christian reasoning behind the motif? If not, did they have a 'tree tradition' in which this motif would have some significance? If there is any evidence for either, what is the implication for the Gripping-Beast?

If we recall Dinzelbacher's (1986: 81) explanation of the inhabited vine, he refers to it as the path to the other world with the animals being obstacles along the way. This idea was by no means alien to Christian art. "Christian symbolism and especially Romanesque art is fully aware of the primary significance of the tree as an axis linking different worlds" (Cirlot, 1990: 347). Although as Ellis-Davidson (1969,: 160) warns, the interpretation of the tree is hard to gauge, in Christian times due to its connection to the Christian cross, e.g. in the Dream of the Rood. In this the trials of Christ are seen from the perspective of the tree, that is the cross. Christ is reported to have loved the cross above all other trees (Raw, 1990:177). This cross equals tree symbolism was even extended to the lopped tree being symbolic of the temporal aspect of Christ's Kingship (Raw, 1990: 150).

In Christian symbology the tree was divided into three metaphorical regions: roots - underworld; branches - heaven; trunk - earthly realm (Sil, 1975:204). "As regards the symbolism of levels, it is possible to establish a vertical scale of analogies: dragons and snakes (primal forces) are associated with the roots, the lion, the unicorn, the stag and other animals expressing ideas of elevation, aggression and penetration, correspond to the trunk; and birds and heavenly bodies are brought into relation with the foliage" (Cirlot, 1990: 350). These characteristics would seem applicable outside of the Christian context also.

In a Scandinavian context we find a very similar version of the 'world tree'. This tree was called 'Yggdrasil' and it played a pivotal role in Scandinavian cosmology. Eliade (1964: 265) refers to it as being the ideogram of Scandinavian mythology. The descriptions which we have from Eddas show remarkable similarities to the 'Vine-Scroll' scenario in a version offered by Ellis-Davidson (1969: 160). Although as Ellis warns these were written under Christian influence much later (1943: 4). This might be due to a similar influx of Eastern material. Ellis-Davidson (1976: 271) claims that the 'Viking' fascination with the east could be shown, for example, by their adopting the world of Asgard from their experiences from Constantinople (see Map 2 & 3).

The classic description of the Tree also shows it inhabited by a variety of creatures. High on the branches we find the edge. On the very summit a cock who gave warnings to the gods. The Serpent Nidhogg was at the roots - sometimes this is interpreted as a host of serpents. Squirrels run up and down the trunk. Harts and goats feed upon the branches of the tree. From one of these hart's horns springs all the "Springs of the World". It should be noted that all of these animals, with exception of the squirrel, can be found in Vine-Scroll ornament (Ellis-Davidson, 1975: 179).

The Tree is described as in anguish, "a hart gnaws it on high, it rots at the side and Nidhogg devours it below". This was thought to embody the continual process of destruction and renewal, as with the life of man through several generations. "In its most general sense, the symbolism of the tree denotes the life of the cosmos: its consistent, growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes". In its broadest sense, "the tree represented the annual death and rebirth of all vegetation" (Eberly, 1989: 43). It is for this reason that we find the tree so readily used as a religious metaphor. Reno (1977: 78) saw it as one of mans most profound longings to be at the source of life and regeneration; "it embodies the principle of human and animal fertility". Reno defined this in terms of relating the basic preoccupations of Man, i.e. "concern for security, advancement and fulfilment, fear of failure and death, a desire to preserve life and recover it if lost" (1977: 78).

Cirlot (1992: 347) maintains there is evidence this was a common characteristic of the role of the tree in 'primitive religion'. In Coptic textiles, we find depictions of vines growing from vases (Rosenthal, 1967: 73). The vase is associated with the fountain of life, which also had Christian significance (Raw, 1990: 74). This was because of associations of the cycle of fruit falling to the ground and from these new plants growing which provided a natural metaphor for the renewal of life. As a result of this the sap or 'white fluid' (milk) of the plant was seen as the liquid of life (Levy, 1948: 120). This ties in the plant to the waters of life. Under each root of Yggdrasil are three springs. One of which belongs to Urd (fate) from which the Norns - three maidens of fate, water the world tree (Ellis-Davidson, 1975: 180).

In Celtic iconography it would appear the tree held a significant role, as is attested by Green (1992: 213), "Trees were especially associated with nature cults of vegetation and hunting". It is interesting that, if the Celtic focus was on cults and hunting, the inhabited vine never gained the same popularity in

Ireland that it did in Northumbria. This would indicate that the significance was less secular and perhaps more of a choice based on symbolism. By far the greater number of depictions involving the tree were in a triad/Heraldic scene which shall be discussed below.

The Tree was seen as some sort of portal between the dimensions. The role of the Tree within the practice of religion must stem from some common ground between different religions. By far the most extensive research into the early causes for humanity associating with trees has been undertaken by Claire Russell. Her conclusions, very briefly, were as follows:-

> In the transition of the early populations from subsistence nomadic life styles to that of the more arduous work of plough agriculture, the tree took on a new meaning. Firstly, it signified ownership, of the land and the food supply. As trees take time to mature this necessitates a temporal commitment in behaviour. This meant that marriages took on a greater significance to secure the bloodline to the trees for the next generation. This is a form of immortality, like vegetation; and linked the tree to kinship worship. In the Rig Vega we find a reference to sacrifices at a tree (Streit, 1977: 28). The Hanging of Victims to Odin was at trees (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 169). Russell claims the cross is symbolic of the tree because it originally symbolised cross-breeding which was important in the concept of fertility, the tree itself being a natural metaphor for a branching pedigree. The tree is often associated with graves of the dead kinspeople (Russell, 1979: 223).

If we accept this explanation it is clear that the Tree was a focus of primitive society. This "dendrocentricity" of society was reflected and found in later traditions. Irish traditions in the 6th-8th Century it would indicate a

role of the tree as a dimensional doorway. In the Eó Rossa, a poem in the Dindshenchas, which describes the Tree of Ross, we find a curious reference, the tree is called a 'door (?) of heaven' (Watson, 1981: 171). Watson (1981: 172) saw this as being a pagan nature quite juxtaposed to the Christian theme of the poem. Watson argues that the Eó Rossa was one of five sacred trees around which the sacred kingship of Ireland was based. The central tree, or world tree, was the inauguration site for the king. Watson (1981) provides a plausible argument for believing that this was because it was a mid-point between gods and men. Ellis-Davidson (1975: 177) claims that the "tree marked the place where the gods met to take council together and to frame laws". It is not surprising that inauguration should take place at the central tree. This is very much in the same vein as Russell (1979) in establishing the community around the tree based on ownership.

In Scandinavian traditions we can find a similar system of belief. The name 'Yggdrasil' by one interpretation means 'Horse of Yggr'. Yggr was one of many names of Odin. Odin is described as the 'hanging god'. He hung in Yggdrasil to gain wisdom and sacrifices to him were hung in trees to honour him. The gallows is known as the horse the hanged man rode. So in a way Odin rode the world Tree (Ellis-Davidson, 1975: 179). Odin as shaman, as shall be discussed below, was known to travel to the land of the dead to gain information. So he was a psychopomp as were animals he is associated with: raven, boar, horse and stag. It might be poetic license to describe his passage to the other world as riding a horse or merely a reference to horse symbolism (see fig. 95).

A less piecemeal example of the role of the tree can be found on the mythological relief on the Oseberg Wagon (fig. 100). This has been identified, although not conclusively, as Herakles fighting with the Hydra and wrestling with the Nemean lion (Ettlinger, 1976: 84). Ettlinger says that the feline beast in, "the indistinct left fore-paw holds a fantastic branch,

terminating in the heads of snakes. The branch forms the border between the two mythological scenes and the other half of the wooden panel filled with hideous creatures". Ettlinger goes on to explain, "The unearthly face of the snake which the Oseberg Herakles strangles with his left hand reminds that the bog of Lerna (scene of encounter with the Hydra) was supposed to be the entrance to the Otherworld" (Ettlinger, 1976: 85). It would appear that Ettlinger did not see the connection between the scenes as being focused on the branch and not the snakes. The presence of nature can be represented by a single object in this case a branch, or it could have been a tree with no change of meaning or significance (Eliade, 1964: 321). As has been presented, the branch, as a symbol of the tree and hence the portal between the worlds is more likely than the idea of the Lerna bog being transmitted to the artist. Perhaps the branch with the snake heads was the artist's idea of compromise between both meanings. Although the snake has many vegetal connotations, it lives at the roots of Yggdrasil (otherworld) and sheds its skin in order to grow in a vegetal fashion.

This is not the only symbolism which is connected to the tree and the passage of the otherworld. This cosmic axis is often likened to a Tree, Pillar or Pole or Mountain (Cook, 1974: 9). It is clear that the high pillar was, as the tree in others, the mid-point of the tribal world (Russell, 1979: 226). In Scandinavian society the high seats/pillars were highly venerated. It is from here the laws were judged (Du Chaillu, 1889: 361; Ellis-Davidson 1975: 178). Watson (1981: 172) claims that when Conn created order in Ireland with the establishment of the five provinces, only after the laws were established could the sacred trees be seen. The Seider, a Scandinavian ceremony associated with divining was performed on the high seat - 'hjallr'. It is suggested by Kiil (1960; in Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 288) that there is a seijr on the Oseberg Tapestry (fig. 92). This will be discussed in more detail below. The 9th Century pagan Saxons, had a cosmic pillar called 'Irminsul' (Eliade, 1964: 299). Ellis-Davidson (1969: 160) claims that this name was derived from an early sky god called 'Irmin'.

It is significant that the name of sky-god was utilised for the name of the cosmic pillar because it has been seen as a shared characteristic of all the 'dimensional portals', i.e. they all surge upwards (Sil, 1975: 204). Ellis-Davidson (1975: 178) questioned whether the Central Pillar or Cosmic mountain came earlier than the Tree. It could be difficult to speculate about the mountain due to the even greater lack of primary information. However, with the Tree if we remove the foliage then all we are left with is the axis around which the world of the Tree revolves (Cook, 1974). This would be plausible as both were seen as the centre of the society and world by early peoples.

Other examples of the 'portal' traditions are available, e.g. the ladder motif. In the Scandinavian high seats, sacred pegs were placed to help one climb. This also helps provide the metaphor of stratification, different phases or stages in life. In Christian writings we have evidence of allegorical ladders and the tree serving as a bridge over a river of fire on the way to heaven or hell (Dinzelbacher, 1986: 76).

It is hard to establish the exact role that the Tree had within Scandinavian religion. Scholars are divided over the religious significance of the Tree as a separate identity. Ellis-Davidson (1969: 59) while admitting that there was no evidence of an independent tree cult says there was ample evidence that sacred tree groves were used by the Celtic and Germanic Peoples (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 59) e.g. on the north bank of the Liffey, Dublin, the Viking settlers made their temple in the forest (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 275). The oak was sacred to the Celts, the ash to Scandinavians and the lime to Germanic peoples (Cirlot, 1990: 347). In this light, if the Tree is examined on a comparative basis through different religions the, "cult of the sacred tree is universal" (Russell, 1981: 57). The problem is the paucity of written sources for a Tree cult. From what evidence we do have the Tree is clearly an integral part of religious and social life. Perhaps one of the best examples of the significance of the Tree at this time are the actions of St.

Boniface who cut down the trees to the rage of the indigenous believers. In his opinion this was necessary in order to convert the pagans. He probably saw the tree as some sort of Idol.

However, this discussion has digressed from the original purpose of seeking some insight of gripping symbolism. As has been stated above, the pole or high seat had a tradition in Viking times called a 'Seidhjallr', from this seat one could see into the otherworld. The seat was climbed in order to reach the seat or platform at the top. This contact with the central axis whether tree, pillar, pole, ladder or mountain indicates a contact with the otherworld. This can be seen in all of the triad scenes which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The idea for this would have been the desire to be in contact with the cosmic axis - the centre of regeneration. The idea of death at this time was merely a process of rebirth into the otherworld. A good example of this can be found in Scandinavian practices: children and sick adults were placed in the hollow of the tree to be cured (Eliade, 1964: 307). There was also a tradition of grasping the "Guardian trees" of tribes for good luck, e.g. Leto grasped two trees while delivering Apollo and Artemis, and Buddha's mother was delivered clasping a branch of the sacred tree (Russell, 1978: 223). More significantly, depictions of Artemis showed her often in a tree. The Latin meaning of Artemis is goddess of gate or birth (Levy, 1948: 120).

It is important to note that there seem to be points of comparison between the Celtic and Germanic/Scandinavian belief systems. There, "seems to have been little difference in the cult practices of the two peoples" (Meaney, 1981: 235). It is this which makes it hard to differentiate in Viking times, just what was believed in common or was an indigenous development, e.g. the Viking practice of 'Seidhjallr' seems to have been only found in Scandinavia. It is obvious that the full implications of gripping symbolism cannot be covered in a study of this size. However, those examples relevant

to the development of the 'Gripping-Beast' style which are found in the British Isles can be discussed in a hope this will shed some light on the meaning of the motif.

8 CHAPTER FOUR - SYMBOLISM OF THE HAND AND GESTURES

If we accept the premise that figures shown in a gripping gesture are more than mere ornamental fancy, although this in itself is hard to substantiate, we are left wondering why the artists chose to focus on this particular part of human interaction.

Obviously there is a very large risk in any study of symbolism from the archaeological record, regardless from where, of imposing ideas and interpretations on these symbols. For example a man gripping an object of any description might have been depicted to illustrate any of a wide variety of reasons; secular, religious or cultural. Hence, if we are to examine the importance of the gesture of gripping we must first examine the components of the image.

The hands are one of the most recognisable characteristics of a human. Simplistically it divides us from the rest of the denizens of the Earth. It is not surprising then to find a common emphasis on their importance through all cultures. The extent to which this has been recognised permeates all aspects of human interaction and beliefs. The human hands are perfectly equal in resemblance, however, they are very marked by their striking inequality in dexterity. This inequality is part of natural dualism. Hertz who propounds this view states that, "Dualism; which is essential to the thought of primitives, dominates their social organisation ... Social polarity is still a reflection and a consequence of religious polarity" (1973: 8). This is shown in religious contexts by the classic opposition between sky and cthonic deities or male and female powers.

This connection is found to be more static in what left and right actually represent. "The right represents what is high, the upperworld, and the sky; while the left is connected to the underworld and the earth" (Hertz, 1973: 13). This is shown as well, in the death and life trees found in 'Paradise'

garden trees. The tree on the left is the female tree and associated with death and the right is the tree of life and is male (Russell, 1981: 56). This dualism can be found within Christianism with Eve being made from Adam's left rib, the female side being the left.

Hertz suggests that "hands are used only incidentally for the expression of ideas; they are primarily instruments with which man acts on beings and things that surround him" (1973: 14-15). From examining the regularity of gestures associated with the left and right hands Hertz concludes that they have distinctly different associations in meaning. The right hand usually means 'me' and the left 'not me'. As is mentioned above, the right hand is associated with power and virility while the left with death and destruction. In the superstitions which survive there is a long tradition of the left hand being associated with bad luck and misfortune in Britain (Opie, & Tatum, 1992: 231). A move towards the left hand in a sunwise motion was supposed to restrain fairy activities, which led to misfortune (Menefree, 1985: 9). The hand was also used to bring good luck. For example the tradition of making St. John's lucky hand, constructed on the 23rd of June out of five fern fronds to keep away fire and misfortune. This is not restricted to just Britain but extends to the older eastern traditions. Evidence of this was observed by Russell, (1981) on Mesopotamian seals where the mould was cut so that the impression has the figures depicted right-handed. The same can be observed on the Togherstown brooch (figs. 49 & 51).

We also find a common association of the right hand with fertility. In the Eastern world, this was in a variety of different ways. The Egyptians used the 'Ka' symbol to mean the transfer of life, which was a pair of hands outstretched. In early Egyptian depictions the sun's rays sometimes end in hands (Bates, 1975: 176). This shows the hands as the means of bestowing the fertility aspects of the sun on the land. Onians, (1954: 578) found a similar association of generative powers among the Greeks, Romans,

Hebrews, Indians and Hindus. In Northern India hands were set up in the fields to ensure good crops. In Greek mythology Zeus begat Io with the touch of his hand. The Anglo-Saxons "used the middle finger 'digitus impericus' to greet or bless with life and health" (Onians, 1954: 491).

The association of the hand in myth and religion in the North European region can be found in a more established tradition. While not so common in the later heathen period votive offerings including hands and arms have been found in the later Roman period, e.g. votives found at Nodens temple, Lydney park. Nodens was a god of healing associated with the solar cult. Nodens is thought to be Nuadu the king ancestor, who, like Tyr, a sky-god, was one of an antique tradition of one handed gods in Northern traditions. (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 158-159). We also find Beowulf setting up the hand of the slain monster for all to see. The theme of the hand of a monster and a child is also found in the Mabinogion. In Saxo's story of Hadingus (Saxo I, 20, 24ff) we have a giant hand being cut off by the hero (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 297). Although there is no evidence for a 'hand-cult' it is clear that the hand/arm played an important role in myth and religion.

There is evidence that the importance of the hand followed on into the early Christian period. We find Christ always at the right hand of God as in Psalm CIX. In late Anglo-Saxon pictures it is almost universal that Christ is crowned by the hand of God (Raw, 1990: 147). Sil in discussing Christian symbolism states that the hand is sometimes shown holding tiny bodies which he defines as being the souls of the righteous (1975: 63). The importance within Christian art shall be made clearer further below.

The evidence above points to fixed symbolic meanings with the hand. This is not exclusive. Human thought has also focused on other parts of the human anatomy. It is only because of the hand/arms' 'incidental' use as an expressive vehicle that the role of the hand as a symbol in its own right must

be explored. This will in many ways help to show the difficulties of trying to interpret or pinpoint gripping gestures.

Bates (1975: 190) best explains the difficulties involved. In reference to the symbolism of the hand he states, "A special finger posture can become a sign as soon as it occurs consistently in the same context". However, this meaning is by no means static for, "there is abundant evidence of the change in meaning of a gesture with passing time, and of different meanings at different places at the same time". For a large part it is presumptuous to assume that the wealth of Eastern imagery appearing in the 6th-8th Century was copied for the same reason. It is more likely that the scenes had some indigenous significance, although this is not to say the meanings were definitely not related. "One obvious similarity between speech and gesture is that the 'meaning' of an item of each may be greatly affected by its context" (Bates, 1975: 175). The idea of assessing the 'meaning' of a gesture has been further examined by Poole (1975: 77) who attempts to establish some order to this uncertainty. "It is assumed, then, that human expressivity is 'meaningful' in so far as it is derivable from, related to, or comparable to animal instinctive behaviour and 'communication patterns', or that it is 'meaningful' according to its deployment and variation within merely 'cultural' or 'cross-cultural' set of structures, and that these can and should be compared and interrelated indefinitely; or, that is 'meaningful' in so far as it can be formalised in terms of some pre-existent linguistic assumptions and grids, including the assumptions and grids of Information Theory". Poole works from the assumption that, "there is a world of space and spatial reality which is a common reference point for us all" (1975: 89). It is from this 'common reference point' that we can get the repetition of 'signs' which become 'meaningful' as proposed by Bates (1975: 175). However, it should be emphasised that these opinions were not entirely focused on artistic depictions. There is no reason why a gesture cannot encapsulate a contemporary 'meaning' as long as the temporal nature of this 'meaning' is accounted for.

To illustrate this in a Insular context an example of a gripping gesture can be found on Anglo-Saxon coins. In Kent we find a gold Anglo-Saxon shilling struck c650-660. This shows two hands 'shaking', (fig. 98) A Roman prototype for this coin was also found in the Hollingbourne hoard, Kent. This a coin of Marius (Usurper, 286) Concordia, fig. 97. It is a *militum* type, struck at Trier. Backhouse (1990: 105-107, fig. 73a & b) claims that the hands clasped indicate the proclaiming of military concord, stemming from the Anglo-Saxon respect for Roman traditions. This interpretation assumes that the significance of these gestures remains the same in the 400 years roughly separating these coins. It was Sil's view that in Christian art the clasped hand meant a marriage of some sort (1975: 63). While Jobes (1961) thought that the 'shaking hands' gesture was derived by the desire to show goodwill by effectively making oneself harmless by offering the right hand/the weapon hand in good will. Offering the hand shows that no weapon is being hidden in garments this would be another reason for left handed people being treated with mistrust. The idea of gripping is also reflected by the practice of wrestling where the chance of shedding blood was reduced to a minimum.

This is only a limited analysis of the meaning of shaking hands. It does, however, show the difficulty of clearly discerning 'meanings'. The gesture does generally seem to have been associated with good will. The reason for motivating this can not be determined. As is summarised by Poole, (1975: 101) "Context gives a specific content (meaning) to the expressive body activity, but this specific meaning is only diacritically significant: in different historical and ethical contexts the specific content (meanings) will be different". Another example of this difference of meanings can be found on the Stele of Drumhallagh, County of Donegal. Here we have a figure sucking his thumb. Streit (1977: 152) interpreted this as being a sign of meditation. In Mediterranean regions this same gesture is a base insult. If we accept both Streit's meaning and that this region was subject to

Mediterranean influences then this is an example where the indigenous meaning outweighs the foreign influence.

The other important aspect of 'gripping' is whether this infers a transfer of energy or meaning of any sort. In the Insular region at this time the cult of relics had a high influence especially in 7th-8th Century Northumbria. This involved the power of 'virtue', was the healing or divine power of god. It resides in 'persons' and was transferable to objects. Thomas (1973: 4) saw this as an aspect of sympathetic magic. It was, as in Christ's miracles, healing by touch. "Healing takes place by contact, when **virtues** flows readily by Divine grace from the healer to the afflicted" (Thomas, 1973: 6). This would be similar to the fertility nature of the hand discussed above, e.g. where Zeus impregnates Io with the wave of his hand. Thomas (1973: 6) quotes an example from Aethewulf's poem where, "the hand-bones of Ultan cured a sick brother's head complaint".

The idea that gripping an object that it bestowed upon the participant some 'effect' was not limited to early Christian practices. Gelling/Davidson (1969: 165) reports that in the Hervarar Saga when the men took an oath they laid their hands on the mane of a boar. The significance being that the boar was a psychopomp; hence, the men were in effect bound by death. In Irish kingship traditions the tribal poet gave the king a hazel wand at his inauguration, the hazel tree being traditionally associated with wisdom, so from this the king gained the wisdom to rule. Hence, the depictions of king in court always with a rod of kingship. This evolved in Christian times to the priest giving a sceptre to the king (Watson, 1981: 176). The implication being that the wand or sceptre gave the king the right of power by associating power with him. The question of the significance of sympathetic magic was tackled by Dagney Carter: "From earliest time, and to this day among primitive peoples, man's first approach to a vaguely comprehended spiritual world appears to have been based, at least in part, on the fundamental principle known as sympathetic magic; that is, the belief that

objects that are in contact with each other continue to exert an influence even after the physical connection has been disrupted" (Carter, 1957: 9). If we consider the Christian ideal of 'virtue' it is very similar to this principle of 'sympathetic magic'. The only difficulty with this sort of characterisation is that it is more easily applied in an anthropological study. However, we must be able to some extent be able to apply this to art.

In investigating the importance of the gripping gesture in the North European area we are left with two important factors which must be identified. The first of these is the establishment of the context for the depiction by examining the associated symbology. Secondly, the function of the gesture itself and its role in the space of the scene. This can by no means be an exact science. We can, however, establish common groups of images which are shown with similar or relative associations.

9 CHAPTER FIVE - THE GRIPPING TRIAD CONFIGURATION; AND THE ROLE OF TERPSICHOREAN GESTURES IN EARLY SOCIETY

One of the most consistent motifs found in the North Western European art of this period of the trio of figures characterised by the two flanking figures gripping the central, "It is of extraordinary antiquity and of an amazing continued fidelity of representation" (Roe, 1945: 5). There can be little doubt in these depictions that the emphasis and consistency of these images in this region is based on the physical contact between the figures.

In the Insular context there is a wide variety or adaptations of this motif. However, there is no consensus on what exactly this arrangement is supposed to be; and even less on why there is physical contact between the participants.

On Irish sculpture Roe (1945: 2) identified three groups into which this motif can be divided: (i) a male flanked by two animals; (ii) a man gripped by two animal/man figures; (iii) a man gripped by human figures with marked animal characteristics (figs. 38 & 39). There would seem to be a general consensus that this is not an indigenous development but the product of foreign influence. Rosenthal said that, "it should be remembered that the theme of a deity standing or sitting and accompanied by two protecting attendants, or any figures of minor rank, has its origin in the Asiatic East (1967: 56)". O'hEailidhe (1987: 102) expanded on Roe (1945: 5) by stating 'that many of the animals were derived from decorative motives used on textiles of Persian and mid-eastern originally, and from the (Byzantine) Bestiary'. Lucas (1987: 92) is a little more specific, offering Alexandria as the origin for Insular influence.

The interpretation of what this 'theme' means is a little more diverse. Most scholars have tried to interpret the meaning of the lions flanking a man (?) found frequently on the Irish high crosses, the earliest being

Crawford (1926: 57-60) who claims that the cross depictions are just variations on the older and widely distributed theme: "that the intention is not, as some have supposed, to represent Christ or Daniel", though he does support individual identifications of this theme for the purpose of comparison. Lucas (1987: 94) reports on a depiction of lions and a man from the Royal cemetery at UR, dating 2550 BC (also see fig. 78), which Nancy Sandars called the 'Gilgamesh Motif'.

O'hEailidhe (1987: 105) in his study of the Cross base at Oldcourt, which dated to c800 AD, identified the east face scene, "confidently ... as Daniel in the lions' den". This scene is very similar in construction to other 'Daniel' depictions. On a cross of this period it is not too improbable that these biblical scenes were intended to be Daniel as a development on the older thematic template. Roe (1945: 6) reports that Holmqvist believes that the Daniel figures are sometimes two warped birds drinking from a vase, although it is more likely that, as with the 'Gilgamesh' motif, these were the ancestral models of the cross representations. Ryan (1989: 144) (fig. 40) claims that there were developments from the Daniel theme on the Killau Shrine, from the 8th-9th Century. On the shrine a bearded lozenge shape headed figure is flanked by two beasts: "Iconographic parallels suggest that it is intended to represent Christ between two living things as described by the prophet Habakkuk". In his discussion on this topic Lucas (1987: 96) goes on to be more specific arguing that it is more likely that it is Christ between the two robbers at his crucifixion. Rosenthal (1967: 57) saw this triad motif as Christ between two apostles. Crawford (1926: 57) also discusses other religious figures being depicted in early Christian art, citing St. Menas as one example, although he points out that there are no Irish examples of this. Edwards (1986: 23-26) talks about the two figures on the South cross, Clonmacnois or the Kells south cross as being the spear bearer - Longinus and Stephanus the sponge bearer but cites Roe as saying that the Kells figures represent Sol and Luna, although these associations,

common with crosses as early as c600 AD are a more Carolingian feature derived from Roman models.

Apart from the high crosses we also have an occurrence of this 'heraldic design' on Irish metal ornament. Lucas (1987: 94) discusses O'Kelly's opinion that animals snapping at decorative studs might be part of the same theme as can be seen on the Moylough Belt Shrine and as on a bronze (crozier?) mostly of Irish work from Ekero, Sweden. Here we have a human head between the fangs of a gaping animal. This has been interpreted as Jonah emerging from the Whale by Allen in Roe (1945: 14); and Henry, (in Lucas,1987: 94). Henry (1964: 35-36) sees it as, "a sequence of subject, Noah's ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, Daniel in the lions' den, the three children in the fiery furnace, Jonah and the whale, etc ... descended from the traditions of the 4th and 5th Century Italian and Arles marble sarcophagi and ivories of the same date". Richardson & Scarry (1990: 18) saw that on the Scripture crosses as an "emphasis on the 'Help of God' in adversity".

However, this arrangement was not exclusive to the Insular region or the Continent and we also find its expression in Scandinavian regions. On a 6th Century plaque from Torslunda, Oland (fig. 46) we find a warrior gripped by two sheep/bear figures. In particular we find an affinity of a central man between two birds. A pendant from Risely, Kent, Grave 56 (fig. 44) (Hawkes, 1965: 122 fig. 3) shows a man gripping two birds. This is very similar to the figures found on a gilt silver from Grave 791 and bronze pendant, Grave 762, from Birka in Sweden (fig. 41) (Lundstrom, 1960: 194-195). The meanings of these will be explained below.

In this 'heraldic placement' we notice that the central figure is not always exclusively anthropomorphic. "The arbor vitae" is found frequently, in a variety of forms, in Eastern art. "The apparently purely decorative motif of Lom [the central tree] placed between two fabulous being or two animals

facing each other ... [is from the east] (Cirlot, 1990: 267)". Examples of this can be seen on the Durrow Abbey Cross - each lion grips the tree with one paw - and the North Cross, Duleek a winged lion holds a pole or staff (fig. 34), which Crawford viewed as being, "incomplete or abbreviated copies of the same subject (1926: 65 plate VCI - Nos. 121 & 122)". The North Cross, Ahenny shows Adam naming the animals while holding the tree (Crawford, 1926: 68, fig. 126). There is ample evidence of animals and birds at either side of the tree/column in Mediterranean countries in the 6th to 7th Century. From here we get the birds which peck at the fruit and their development into a steady fixture on 8th Century Northumbrian Vines as discussed above (O'hEailidhe, 1987: 104-5). There does not seem to be any conceptual difficulty in the switching of an animal/man figure for a tree or shrub .

As on the Oldcourt cross base discussed by O'hEailidhe (1987: 104), Adam and Eve are frequently depicted flanking a central tree in a heraldic pose, e.g. Drumcliffe Cross (fig. 35), Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice (fig. 36) (Crawford, 1926: 68). There is little doubt as to the accuracy of this identification of the tree or snake or apple and modestly covered private parts tell the 'deed' well enough. On the figural cross shaft from Jedburgh, which is Anglian in construction there are some confronted figures which have been interpreted as Adam and Eve or as Abraham preparing for the sacrifice of Isaac (Cramp, 1983: 280). Regardless of the theme the Jedburgh figures are remarkably similar in construction to the figures in the bracteate tradition.

This positioning of a man and woman around a central plant is not unique to Early Christian Art. We also find this formula depicted on the bracteates preceding and during this period, figures embracing which Ellis-Davidson (1969: 161) identified as a marriage scene. This view has led to varied polemical responses e.g. in Graham-Campbell and Kidd (1980: 86; fig. 41). Clearly above the gripping figures we can see a floating central plant frond:

"The presence of nature is indicated by a single object, a symbol (such as a branch or tree)" (Eliade, 1954: 321). This is supported by Ellis-Davidson (1969: 59) who states that any part of a tree branch, bud or leaf were readily associated with the spring time fertility ceremonies.

Phillpot supports Ellis-Davidson reaching a similar conclusion in her study of the bracteates in the St. Ninian's treasure claiming that these are scenes depicting the gods Frey and Gerd (1988). These gods are common to fertility rites where Frey represented the light or sky and Gerd the earth. Their union is known as the 'hieros-gamos' which was the ceremony of the holy marriage between the earth mother and her son/lover, the god of vegetation, e.g. Adonis or Osiris & Isis, Cybele & Attis or in this case Frey & Gerd (Cook, 1975: 11). Eliade saw this marriage more as a re-enactment of the cosmic hierogamy between the sky and earth, with the wife being the moon and earth and the husband the sky and rain (1964: 314). Which brings to mind the depictions of the cross - a symbol of cosmic or life tree [see above] flanked by Sol & Luna. Although it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this except that the same ancient template is being used with possibly a different topic.

Eliade saw the re-enactment of the scenes as a part of societal marriage. This idea was supported by Russell (1979: 217-221) on a socially oriented train of thought. In that as the tree was the first real estate a cause or product of sedentary life, the tree symbolises food and money, general status. The tree is present at the marriage because the marriage ensures the tenure of the next generation over the trees and the security of the bloodline. She quotes an example of Frazer, (1979: 226) about a tradition in Germany and India of marrying the two trees in a similar ceremony.

Ellis-Davidson (1969: 50) suggested that the tree in scenes, "might be a focal point of certain religious feelings rather than a mere adjunct to fertility rites". This is in reference to the appearance of a central figure in between

two trees on a boat. A scene, as has been discussed above, that might somewhat question the validity of this scene being 'hieros-gamos'. This scene occurs in Sumerian times where a man stands in between plant boughs on the goddesses boat; identified as Nintugga - she who gives life to the dead (Levy, 1948: 96-102).

The ship in Scandinavia at this time was symbolic of a vessel to the otherworld. It should be said that while on the bracteates the figures grip each other, the plant frond usually floats between them. Why these figures grip is still in question. This differs greatly from the depictions of Adam and Eve in gesture and meaning. Adam and Eve usually grip the central tree and the interpretation would have to be the fall of man in the garden of Eden. So the reason why we find at the same time components so abundantly in the North European region might be due to the influx of oriental models depicting this scene.

However, this still does not leave a satisfactory answer for why or what the bracteates are depicting, and specifically why the central figures are gripping each other. The most definitive view against the 'hieros-gamos' interpretation is that of Holmqvist (1960: 106-108) who agrees that male and female figures together generally are associated with fertility, saying that these figures were buried in the earth to bring good luck. Davidson (1969: 161) saw the bracteates as being similar to 'dolarpenninger' which were the clothes of the bride, who purpose was to invoke the blessing of the fertility deities, the Vanir.

Holmqvist compared the images on the bracteates with those on the Torslunda plates (fig. 46), Sutton Hoo plates (fig. 48) and on the Valsgärde Helmets (1960: 102). He saw these figures as being part of a larger tradition of depicting dancing scenes rather than that of a marriage scene. This was because of a large number of single figure bracteates that have been found and the dependence of the 'sacred marriage' on the heraldic

placement of the figures is undermined by these finds. These single figure bracteates form two distinct chronological divisions: with single male figures dominant from the 6th to 7th Century and female figures from the 9th to 10th Century. Holmqvist provides no explanation for this division. They are, however, found in the same contexts as the other bracteates. He recognises that there is little mention of dancing in Scandinavian literature. In treating this occurrence of single figures and the 'dancing couple' as one homogenous group involved with dancing scenes, Holmqvist is unable to present a convincing argument. While the assumption that the style and composition of the bracteates are similar there is no reason that they should all represent the one theme. Furthermore he makes no mention of the floating fronds or similarities to other heraldic scenes. While his argument is unconvincing Holmqvist provides a rare attempt to understand the gripping gesture in this context. There is no reason to dismiss the proposal that gripping scenes could represent a form of dance.

While we have no written sources about dancing in the society at this time it is realistic to expect that it played an important part in the ritual of this time. As it is a context in which we would expect, as does Holmqvist, gripping gestures to occur it deserves further examination.

Dance is, "in its more primitive sense, a religious act or ceremony by the aid of which men co-operate with the gods for their own advantage or for the mutual benefit of both ... In short, a pantomime or imitation of these magical processes is engaged in by the dancers and this is regarded by them as either as a strong hint to the gods to take the necessary magical action to ensure rain or growth, or as assisting them in the process ... It does not explain the rite or give any reason for it, it narrates or describes it only" (Spence 1979: 2). The question in this case is: if the scene is mimetic then what do the bracteate scenes represent?

C & W Russell, (1991: 82-84) in one of their series of studies on hereditary

symbols discuss that of the maze, "Mazes would naturally be associated with the initiated, and they would often be trodden or danced through; both initiation and treading, dancing or riding are, as we have seen, regularly associated with mazes". They propose the idea that due to the importance of topography for a people living off the land or geography for settled people, the learning of this could be incorporated into a maze symbol. The initiation into a particular 'dance' would mean learning the path to their dead kinsfolk. It is in this way that Streit, (1977: 51) in explaining the purpose of chain spiral dancers hand-in-hand, says that the direction of the dancers' spiral had different meanings. A spiral to the right meant life and to the left, death. Under the Russells' theorem this would reinforce the trial and error factor in learning the right path through symbolism. This differs greatly from Spence (1979: 8) who opined that, "ritual dance was performed by primitive communities [in trying to inspire the gods or powers that be] before it became standardised and unalterably fixed in its gestures and symbolism". While the views on why a set dance ritual is created differ it is clear that both groups of scholars are in concord that the ritual becomes a standardised routine.

As was mentioned above Holmqvist compared the Torslunda plates with the scenes on the bracteates. Ellis-Davidson (1965: 26) agrees with this, "On the helmet-plates men are taking part in what seem to be mythological or symbolic rather than realist combats ... these men in head dresses appear to be leaping or dancing" and compares it to the figure on the buckle from the 7th Century Kentish grave (1965: 23). The bird ending horns on the helmet have close affinities with Sutton Hoo and 7th Century Swedish graves (see fig. 84) Roe, (1945: 7-8) in discussing a figure on the Kells Market Cross flanked by two animals (fig. 38) identifies the figures as being men in animal-like costumes like the bear/sheep figures in the Torslunda figures. Interestingly Roe also points out that on the Irish crosses human figures marked or disguised in animal skins have no similar expressions in continental or eastern material, with the exception of one Welsh and two

Scottish examples. Ellis-Davidson (1965: 26) identified three possible explanations for this scene. They might be possessed warriors in the ecstasy of battle, typical of Odin's warriors; or, rejoicing beings in the kingdom of the otherworld, maybe Einhejar; or some other unidentifiable ritual, pointing out that there are still surviving sword dancing traditions from both Anglo-Saxon and Viking regions.

It is relevant to note that a common pre-Indo-European myth that is relevant to these dancing warriors is that of the Lord of the Dead. The first priest, Manu sacrificed his twin brother the first king, who then became lord of the dead. The Irish perception of the otherworld as the realm of the dead was different: "the first king [Conn], he is also the first to die, upon his death he established the realm of death to which all descendants venture when their time comes" (Lincoln, 1991: 34). This is very similar to the idea C & W Russell propose about going to meet ancestors in an arranged location.

The Irish reinterpreted this pre-Indo-European cosmogonic myth (Lincoln 1991: 35). They changed the myth of creation through sacrifice to one through combat. Donn fought 'Findbennach Ai - white horned bull of Ai'. The bulls' defeated body created the Irish landscape, as in Scandinavian tradition Ymir's body was used by Odin. Ymir also means twin which would the myth of Manu.

So when we have the two sheep? (both humans in disguise) attacked by the central figure do we have a creation scene, as with the Sutton Hoo figures who look like twins in combat? With the central or cosmic tree (as above) being the focus of the bracteates one can't help wondering if scenes might depict to some extent a creation scene related to the otherworld. As Odin is often associated with both creation not as the 'twin', but as the ancestral father whom Caesar identified as *Dis Pater* common to Celts and the Germanic Peoples, and also has close relations with the rituals of sacral

kingship (Ellis-Davidson 1976: 214) and the otherworld it is not surprising that Odin the shaman and the traditions of shamanism have strong practices in terpsichorean ritual. A lot of Odin's roles were associated with appeasing nature and the unknown, e.g. one of his abilities was that he could calm the seas for sailors (Du Chaillu, 1889: 61). The helmets worn by the Sutton Hoo dancers are also possibly theoretically related to the boar helmets worn by worshippers of the Vanir and Odin, as the boar is a known psychopomp. e.g. figs. 82 and 83.

"Shamans of Siberia and Mongolia dance widely in the hope of frightening away those devils who afflict their tribesmen" (Spence 1979: 95). Ellis-Davidson (1976: 283-284) in discussing Odin's ability take, "the essential quality of the shaman ability to enter a state of ecstasy". She also argues that in a passage in the 'Loksenna' we find Odin beating a lid to perform seidr. Hatto (1970: 3-4) provides evidence for the "widespread Siberian tradition that the frames of the shaman drums come from the world tree". The implications are that the otherworld are reached by this virtue. This was a ceremony not associated with Germanic Shamanism. This beating of the lid is likened to the beating of shields, possibly shown by the Sutton Hoo figures. The Seidr itself involved the high seat, scaffold or platform, called the 'hjallr'. She references Kiil (1960) who suggests that seijr was a platform upon which the dead were placed, as on the Oseberg Tapestry (fig. 92). From this Seidhjallr Odin was able to see all worlds (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 288-291).

Makarius (1983: 199) makes it clear that there is a long tradition in primitive society connecting ecstatic states and masks. "The violation of Taboo is sometimes associated with a state of trance, as in the Dionysiac dances and behaviour ... established a relation between the use of masks and frenzy". He also states that "the association of masks (is often) with the blacksmiths who are the violators of taboos" (1983: 197). Ellis-Davidson (1965: 7-14) pointed out the connection between the anvil hammer being

beaten and the resultant sparks being likened to the sky god resembling lightening. "The beating of drums was a religious ceremony to assist the Lappish shaman to fall into an ecstatic trance". Doubtless the connection of thunder with the hammer on the anvil is not lost here.

Even in establishing the connection of the 'shaman' traditions, incorporating the worship of Woden or Odin, the reason why the figures grip is still not clarified. It is clear from the variety of views on the Torslunda pieces that they are human figures wearing costumes rather than anthropomorphic or theriomorphic figures. To a lesser extent the bird-head-horned helmets can in this context be considered as 'masks' as they would be received from the participant as a symbol or sign. If we accept from the other associated pieces of this period that they were a ritual or dance of some sort, the focus of the dance scenes here seems to be 'mock combat' possibly to mimic the act of creation. If we look at this situation the obvious difference between a 'mock' situation and reality is that in a rehearsed 'dance' there is no danger of drawing blood. Makarius (1983: 196) states that, "the fear of blood is common to all primitive societies ... the function of masks is precisely to afford protection against death". It is clear that if the mask protects the wearer then the wearer needs protection. Dagney Carter (1957: 11-13) saw the primitive dances involving masks as having a different source although a similar function. He claims that primitive man through the aid of magic could be transformed into animal shapes. Through (a process of) "sympathetic magic, and the symbolism that expressed the idea, animals were also believed to be able to transmit their peculiar characteristics to human beings". This can be related to Alfodi's proposal of the reasoning behind the secular hunt scenes found in the Vine-Scrolls. In this way the wearer of the animal mask at the dancing ceremony would hope to gain attributes of the animal he/she was mimicking.

So if a combination of the mask - which protects the wearer against the loss of blood - and the mock combat dance is performed, this might shed light on why the figures are gripping. Spence (1979: 6) claims that the origins of wrestling was in the desire not to draw blood. We can expect that mimetic and the standardised practice of dance in the 'telling' of the myth of creation did not warrant the shedding of human life. This 'pantomime' involves a very important functional aspect of gripping. The scenes on the bracteates are a further development where the figures, being either marriage or dancing couples, followed this technique of dance in gripping the partner from combat pantomime.

10 CHAPTER SIX - THE SELF - GRIPPING FIGURE AND SHAMAN TRADITIONS

In Insular art, a unique and undoubtably unusual figure in gripping pose is the bird-headed figure on the North Cross, Castledermot in Ireland. This figure is immediately similar to some Scandinavian figurines of gripping beasts in jet (figs. 70 & 71) (Fuglesang, 1991: 246). The only other self gripping figure on Irish crosses is the self-gripping beast on the North cross at Duleek (Crawford, 1926: 48).

It is however, the anthropomorphic nature of the Castledermot figure which is the more interesting. The figure is found at the base of the shaft of the north face of the cross (fig. 72). It is bound by cords or bandages, has a bird's head, with an ornamental crest or long tail - a 'lappet' - and grips itself around the knees in a tuck or foetal position.

This figure has attracted a fair amount of attention over the years. The first opinions saw the figure as representing death, a pagan burial due to its foetal position. Stokes (1894) also saw the crouched depiction as indicative of the power of the church overcoming paganism. Mason (1942: 133) associated the depiction with evil due to this 'prehistoric look' on a Christian monument of the 8th or 9th Century. It was the "devil, dead, bound in grave bonds in prehistoric burial" which was symbolic of the triumph of Christ over Satan. Mason also reports that Porter, called it "a curious and peculiar grotesque". While Henry, (1964) strangely chose to pretermit the figure. However, the problem with this explanation is that it views this depiction as exclusive, primarily because of Mason interpreting the figure as being 'the fall of man' due to its Christian context (Mason 1942: 133).

The different elements which go into making the figure are a lot more common as is the theme itself. The first connection with other depictions

that we have is the bird head and 'lappet' of the creature. This was taken up by Roe (1945: 13-18) in finding other examples of animal-headed figures in scenes of 'punishment' or sacrifice. On the Inchbrayock Slab No. 1 a tall figure with a horses' head seizes the long hair of a man which is coiled into a sort of rope. She offers another example of the horse-headed figure in a 'ritual' role on an 8th Century whalebone fragment depicting Germanic mythical scenes. The horse-headed figure bears leafy branches and he wears a knee-length pleated garment with cloak and cape of feathers. The question is whether the 'lappet' of the Castledermot figure is intentionally symbolic or was it merely an ornamental device to fill in space: "The Irish artist had a great dislike of empty spaces and many examples can be seen of fantastic prolongation of natural features ending in ornament and filling up spaces which would otherwise offend the artistic eye by their emptiness" Mason (1942: 134).

The bird headed-figure involved in a religious ceremony of some sort can be said to have some connection to the Castledermot figure. Other bird-headed figures may have been available in Ireland at this time. As stated above with the influx of Coptic art it was likely that the sculptor would have depictions from the Egyptian pantheon; Anubis, Horus and Osiris all being depicted with birds' heads. Closer to the region Odin and Woden were known as 'Arnhofthi' - the eagle-headed. In the Volsunga Saga the bird-headed figure is Odin. Odin is also known as the God of the Gallows.

As God of the Gallows the usual way of sacrifice to him was by hanging. Deedes, (1935: 235) pointed out the similarity of the hanging of sacrificial victims in trees and the means of his own death in the search for wisdom. It is in his search for wisdom and sacrifice that Odin is associated with the role of Shaman. "He took as the essential quality of the Shaman ability to enter a state of ecstasy quality to journey in spirit to other regions. He compares the myth of Odin hanging on a tree to gain knowledge with tales

of Shamans enduring the torments of initiation before gaining full powers" (Ellis-Davidson 1976: 283). The Shamans' cloak was usually designed with an emphasis on the animal world, and had bird feathers. Another example of figures wearing bird garments or having wings can be found on the West side of the base of St. Tolas Cross, Dysert O'Dea. Here two figures grip a central pole in Heraldic fashion. MacNamara (1899: 248) defines these as being angels' wings. They could just as well fit in to some shaman role. In Scandinavian religion the 'volva' or seers, whose role, as with shamans, was to see into the future, sat on cushions which were stuffed with feathers.

The process by which this group saw the future was to go into a trance. While the body was in a trance the disembodied spirit was in an animal or more commonly a bird form (Ellis-Davidson 1975: 183). Onians (1954: 500) claims that the spirit outside of the body was commonly thought of as a bird, usually a dove in Palestine, Syrian, Germanic and Slavic myth. Eagles are also associated with the flight of souls, the resurrection of the dead and as a symbol of immortality (Lundstrom, 1960: 196). While Mason (1942: 133) claims the Castledermot figure is a cock's head we can not be so sure. In the Christian era the cock was evil. The cock on the Scandinavian world tree - Yggdrasil - gives warning to the gods (Ellis-Davidson 1975: 179). This to some extent involved the concept of clairvoyance. From this association one possible reason for the self-gripping tuck is that he/she could be in a trance.

The assumption is made by Mason (1942: 134) that this represents a pagan burial. It should be noted as can be seen in figure 72, that the Castledermot figure looks quite lively and the suspended 'lappet' gives an impression of vitality or action as do the open eye and eyebrow. However, as Eliade, (1964: 264) said, it is probable that the crouched burial was supposed to resemble the shape of an embryo. Odin in his journeys, and other shamans, traverse this world and go into the otherworld. The Scandinavian conception of death was that death was just rebirth - a process

of regeneration. So it would only be natural that if going to the otherworld the shaman would assume a pose similar to rebirth for his return. Interestingly it was the practice among the Finns, to put hands to knees as a symbol of creation or regeneration.

The last feature on this gripping figure is the crossed bonds or bandages. Although it is not so pronounced the segmentation of the hatching on the Oseberg sledge forms a cross on the beasts' chest (fig. 57). If we think of this as a pagan interment, Fuglesang (1981: 789) quotes Salin on the tradition shared by pagan and Roman cultures of tying someone in crucifixion to the cross. Figure 7 (Fuglesang 1981: 78) shows a bronze cross with 'Jesus' with a noticeable cross of cords on his chest.

One can assume that the cross on the figures must be deliberate 'garments'. As with the artisans knowledge of interlace, the cross under of the 'bonds' is different from, or as symbolic directly of the pre-Christian cross, tree of life or Christian cross as is discussed above. This is not to say that the cross of bonds on the Castledermot figure is not symbolic but that it primarily had some practical function.

In a Christian context the people who strayed from the cross in the early Christian societies were brought back to it by lashing them to it (Streit 1977: 108). These bonds on Christ symbolise the encumbrance of humanity. Braids were also seen as the symbols of death. This association of body bonds with death is by no means unique. This association of the two goes all the way back into the older Indo-European theme of the 'bonds of death', e.g. the Indic Yama, 'the foot fetter of Yama' (Lincoln 1991: 32) and Varuna the 'master of bonds' (Streit, 1977: 136). General Irish depictions show Christ bound to the cross. The later Jelling style, as on the Jelling stone, are said to depict Christ as bound because of Irish Influence (Streit, 1977: 136; Fuglesang, 1981: 73).

However, the acceptance of this goes a lot deeper than just ornamental fashion. In the Germanic traditions Odin was mighty and wise in riddles (Du Chaillu, 1889: 28) and had the power to bind. That is to "lay fetters of panic upon warriors..." (Cook, 1974, fig. 50). Odin was already seen as a deity involved with the otherworld - the realm of the dead. He was the leader of the wild hunt. In this role he was a psychopomp similar to Charon or Hermes in the Greek traditions (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 306). In a battle his power to make foes fear and panic earned him the name of the entangler: "Odin had power to cause his foes to grow blind or deaf or full of fear, and to make their weapons bite no more than wands" (Du Chaillu, 1889: 56). To a warrior the loss of will to fight was likely to result in defeat or death. Ellis-Davidson claims that this power to befuddle came from the east: "Receiving magic of this kind is associated with Eastern people in Scandinavian Literature" (1976: 293). It is likely that Odin's Shaman traditions were from closer to Siberia than the west.

It is interesting in Ellis-Davidson's description of the Shamans' costume having emphasis on the animal world and its connections with Odin that she can find no precise explanation for the name of the Cloak which was 'tuglanqtlul' - 'Cloak with straps' (1976: 287). It is possible that the cross-bound garment worn by the Castledermot figure could be conceived as a 'cloak with straps'.

So in summary we have the possibility of the Castledermot figure being a depiction of Woden, Odin or an Irish shamanistic equivalent or as a figure or representative of Christian triumph over paganism. The gesture of gripping one's knees might have been symbolic of some meditative position as the pentagram form is emphasised with Yoga meditation.

This is not the only use we have of the 'cross' garment appearing on early Christian works. The other example is that on the left hand side of the Lindau book cover. This Anglo-Carolingian work is dated to c825 AD (fig.

99) and is thought to be the product of a workshop of the southern Rhine region of Germany. It is decorated with silver chip-carved plates decorated in zoomorphic ornament which is either a developed or degenerate version of the Tassilo chalice ornament (Webster and Backhouse 1991: 168-170, fig. 132). The unusual feature of the work is that two medallions on the cover contain the only 'distinct Gripping-Beast type' outside of Scandinavia (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 75). Webster and Backhouse (1991: 168-70) seem to favour the view that the Gripping-Beast roundels are derived from the Anglo-Saxon inhabited Vine-Scroll ornament with no reference to direct Scandinavian influence as proposed by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 75). These figures seem, at least superficially, to resemble the ornament on figures 63 and 66; this same gesture is repeated in the Anglo-Saxon figure 101. Neither of these groups of scholars pay any attention to the two small figures who inhabit the areas directly at the ends right and left of the cross short arms.

The figures are small figures whose arms seem to phase or meld into vegetable ornament; somewhat similar to the tail of the animal in figure 17. While these figures do not directly resemble the figures of the Gripping-Beast roundels they do a remarkable resemblance to the anthropomorphic figures on the Oseberg sledge (Humble, 1989: 7). As can be seen in figure 57 the facial features; droplet eyes, down-turned mouth are striking. Both figures have horns of a vegetative nature as with the arms. The only feature that distinguishes the two figures one from the other is the cross-garment on the left one. This is mirrored by the 'Saint' directly below and not by the other three saints.

Before exploring this, the apparent uniqueness of the Gripping-Beast being found on a Christian relic must be emphasised. Most scholars would agree with Shetelig (1938: 91), though Shetelig did not seem to know of the Lindau find: "The reason certainly was that, to the pagan mind, these animal forms were some thing more than ornaments. The frowning monsters

created by the Oseberg and Borre artists were involved in pagan conceptions, with the significance of pagan protection against evil powers, and were subsequently banished from Christian monuments". Hence, Lindau is a bit of a conundrum. Did the Lindau artist include the Gripping-Beast as an aesthetic decision; was it his own development; or did he know of or have his own symbolic understanding of the motif?

We can examine the two winged figures on the book cover. If we accept that it is unlikely that there was a parallel evolution of the Gripping-Beast after the latter's development in Scandinavian art and that the artist to some extent copied the models available at that time from Scandinavia, it is likely that the artisan visited the Scandinavian region, as he had to get the template from somewhere. If he had contact with Scandinavia he might also understand the meaning behind the motif.

The representation of two opposing figures, one with a cross-garment, is not unique to Scandinavian art. Meaney (1981: 233) shows two in her work on amulets. In one are double interlocked figures gripping a circular border (fig. 52). More relevant is the other (fig. 53) from Niederbreisig, Northern district. On a mirrored effect of the figures we find cross-garment on one and not on the other.

Usually with the presence of two anthropomorphic figures, identical but for their clothes, it might be safe to assume that they are twins of some sort. Gelling/Davidson (1969: 178-180) report that the divine twins did not die out in the Viking period or continued from its pre-Indo-European roots. "Belief in different versions of the divine twins covers all parts of the world". (Gjaeder 1964: 114) Gjaeder also holds the view that the pairing was done for artistic symmetry or to depict the divine twin brothers.

This was dealt with by Lincoln (1991: 32) in his impressive account on the cosmogonic myth of proto Indo-European first priest Manu (man). In this

myth the first priest Manu (man) sacrificed his twin brother the first king who from this act became the king of the dead. However, the meaning of this myth is a lot more significant, "It established an aetiology for the physical world, a system of macrocosmic and microcosmic homologies, a charter for the organisation of society, a foundation for the central ritual action, and a depiction of the proper interrelation of the human, animal and physical worlds" (Lincoln 1991: 32). Furthermore, "Yemo [is] the first king, also the last king, ruling over the souls of the departed ... (death is) ... a reunion with the totality of one's lineage". In Celtic and Germanic traditions the traditional king was Dis Pater. Dis Pater has frequently been associated with Odin.

Let us assume that the two opposing figures are the 'divine twins' who obviously held an important place in Scandinavian Cosmology. This might be an explanation of the depiction of the scene on the Lindau Book. The only dilemma is which twin is which. The cross garment is more likely to represent the first dead king or dying king, the cross being symbolic in pre-Christian times of fatality. In Scandinavian thought death was a stage of or development from life. This might explain the presence of the cross-garment on Christ as well.

11 CHAPTER SEVEN - HUMAN INTERLACE FIGURES

With the exception of the pieces which are modelled on the 'heraldic template' discussed in Chapter Five the next most obvious examples of 'gripping figures' are what is known as the 'human interlace' style.

This is not to ignore the other examples of non-'ornamental' gripping figures: the scenes showing Jacob and an Angel on the Durrow Cross, north face and Kells Market Cross north face; or the two beard gripping 'Coptic' figures found at the base of the north face, Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice. This study has not had the intent of examining all of the occurrences of this gesture, just those with a relevance to the E.V.P. art styles.

According to Streit (1977: 125) there are four different types of twisted braid ornaments; which correspond to the four realms of nature:

(i) Geometric design - designed to represent 'mineral shapes'.

(ii) Vegetative Kingdom - spiral and braid shapes incorporating vegetative design.

(iii) Animal Kingdom - Dragon and snake like twisted braids, with animal bodies and heads.

(iv) Twisted braids with human shapes and heads.

It is the last of these which is the most relevant to this study (fig. 56). Streit fails to make the distinction between the interlacing figures and those which grip each other within his last category. It is reasonable to expect that such a dramatic departure from such a diverse array of interlace to direct contact between these 'ornamental' lines must have had some purpose. The

artisan had the technique to create interlace figures of an almost entirely 'decorative' design. The sudden incorporation of the 'gripping gesture' must have had some symbolic ramification.

Henry (1964: 58-58) has found eastern examples of this arrangement, four figures in a combined 'wheel pattern' inside a 'square frame', on Chaldean seals; which probably reached Europe in the Early Christian period on textiles or wares. She also claims that it is, "just a possibility that it may have been given a definite significance and that it would be intended for the four winds of heaven which are represented in such wheel compositions in some manuscripts of the Early Christian period". She cites the Book of Kells and the Togherstown 'Medallion' (fig. 54) as examples. This is a highly unlikely explanation of the figures as the Togherstown figures number only three as do other examples from the Book of Kells (f130r; f29r), which would make it difficult for the four winds of heaven to be adequately represented. Henry also fails to explain the change from interlace to gripping figures.

On the Irish crosses examples of the 'pattern' discussed by Henry are found on the Market Cross, Kells; North Cross, Ahenny; and Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice. Other examples can be found on the Lismore Crozier (Crawford, 1926: 50) in metal work as well as on the Togherstown Medallion. We also have an incomplete gilt bronze mount from Halsan, Trondelag showing rare human interlace, which is though to come from Ireland (fig. 54) (Bakka, 1965: 38-39). It has been linked stylistically and in the techniques used to manufacture it to a rectangular bronze ornament found at Kaupang, Vestfold. While the latter piece has "animal as its subject both share a chip carved technique with a rather deep relief effect". Importantly the bodies on both ornaments are decorated with a cross-hatched pattern. The men's heads, underneath the animal heads, are fitted with an open interlace knot (Blindheim, 1973: 15-16).

While the figures on the Halsan mount do not grip each other the interlace knots provide us with wider context for its placement in Irish art. The most striking example can be found on the first page of Luke's Gospel in the Book of Kells. In this scene we find braids emerge from the monks heads and dragons appear to bite them. Streit (1977: 136) saw the braids as symbolic of thought: "Here man is living in the world of the dragon, in the world of eclipse". Thought can defeat the dragon. In this struggle against evil, "he is fraternally linked with the other who strive after the same goal". This was also proposed by Crawford (1926: 50) who sees this "close interlacing of human figures to symbolise the brotherhood and interdependence of Mankind".

Streit goes on to link this to the idea discussed above of a 'master of the bonds' connected to the Castledermot bird figure. However, Streit fails to mention the bird-headed man and its 'lappet' which fills up space very similar to the interlace knot and develops from the head. Here we have a 'beast' with a thought braid. This significance will be explained on further below in discussing other 'head appendage' gripping figures.

If we dismiss the idea presented by Henry, the most common denominator is that these images give an impression of man being connected to man in life. As has been discussed above this is probably due more to the idea of bonding and closeness in these images. We are still, however, not left with any explanation for images of the Togherstown piece.

The Togherstown medallion was found at Co. Westmeath, Ireland. It has been identified at different times as a movable flat ring head (Macalister & Praeger, 1931: 80) or as a mount for a shrine (Henry, 1964: 58) although it seems more likely to be a flat ring head because of its construction, its similarities to saucer brooches of Anglo-Saxon England (Young, 1989: 63, fig. 57) and fibulae found in East England and a limited number found on the Continent (Macalister & Praeger, 1931: 79-80). Due to its particularly

Irish ornament it is dated to the 8th Century (Henry, 1964: 58; Young, 1989: 63) or to the late 8th and into the 9th Century (Ryan and Cahill, 1988: 27, fig. 59). An earlier date is more plausible due to its ornamental connections to the Ahenny group of High Crosses which date to the 8th Century (Henry 1964: 58).

As is clear from figures 49 and 51 the figures instead of being part of an interlace have their gripping posture as the dominant image of brooch. There has not been any significant or direct discussion of this piece to date. Investigating the symbolism behind this piece might help to shed light on other similar pieces.

In this type of 'triad' of figures there are main types "(one) where part of the human or animal form is multiplied, and where the whole form of a deity is repeated three times". This is a common feature of societies which is reflected in their social division: warriors, priests and cultivators (Green, 1991: 214). Richardson (1984: 29-30) in discussing number symbolism in early Irish art pointed out that most art had a hidden agenda in this regard, e.g. the cross of Moone was constructed on number proportions. It is reasonable to expect that, if this technology also occurs in the manuscript art it is likely that there is some meaning behind this, the number three being one of five numbers commonly associated with magic and the supernatural at this and later times (Menefee, 1986: 6).

In discussing the pre-Christian application of this symbolism, Green (1991: 214-216) states, "in vernacular literature, the repetition of number had the dual effect of exaggeration and intensification, but this is in addition to the symbolism encapsulated within 'threeness' itself. Three was sacred and magical, and multiplication was often constrained by this sanctity. Three may have symbolised totality: in time, past, present and future, may be reflected in space, behind, before and here or sky, earth and underworld".

It is clear that the artist who designed this piece would have been working in the Early Christian Period. The symbolism of three, "in its highest sense ... concerns the Trinity" (Cirlot 1990: 351). Raw (1990: 153) saw triad imagery as placing an emphasis on the inseparability of the three persons of the Trinity, through each of the participants gripping each other. Similar images of three figures in a circle are also thought to be representational of the Trinity, e.g. three fish linked head to tail (Ellingwood Post, 1974).

The figures are thought to have 'elaborate ribbed hair styles' (Young, 1989: 63). This might just be a crown of thorns, as in Matthew 27: 29 "... and plaited a crown of thorns (coronam de spinis) and put it about his head ..." The hawthorn bush had an established tradition at this time in this region as the plant used to create this crown, being one of a sacred trilogy of plants, oak, ash and the thorn: "the thorn being symbolic of man's alienation from god" (Eberly, 1989: 41-50).

The design of the motif can be seen in figure 51. If we use the legs as a 'spoke' from the centre to the perimeter the circle can be divided up into three segments. If we assume a break in between each figure this creates a standard triskele which already has a tradition in the North-west European region. If it is an acceptable promise that the artist divided this image and used a basic triskelion as a 'skeleton' pattern then it is likely that further divisions aid the design of this motif. If we trace the underside length of the arm, of each figure, until they intersect, what we find is that these intersection points are at the lower torso/hip region of each figure. Together these form what must be a rough attempt to construct an equilateral triangle. It is the natural progression from using a circle sub-divided to have three segments with equal angles, hence with three equal sides we have an easy geometric progression to an equilateral triangle.

Sil (1975: 207) holds the view that one of the earliest symbols of the Trinity was the equilateral triangle. Furthermore a triangle within a circle was

symbolic of the eternity of the Trinity, with the points of the triangle corresponding to the father, son and Holy Spirit. This would tie in with Raw's (1990) view, discussed above, about the inseparability of the Trinity.

The triangle can only be constructed realistically if we accept that the design was based on the triskele motif. Gelling (1969: 140-42) discusses the connection of this motif to the solar/fertility cults in the bronze age in Scandinavia and England. Ellis-Davidson (1965: 25) shows that in the Merovingian period eagle heads were at the ends of the arms of triskeles used to decorate shields. A similar artistic development can be seen on the Dromiskin Cross-head, east face (Richardson & Scarry, 1992: 102; Plate 104) also on a stone at Tybroughney (fig. 90). MacKenzie (1926: 55-56) in his study of the triskelion design from a cross-cultural perspective states that this superimposing of designs upon triskeles showed that these designs have a specific meaning, in that they were intentional developments on the base designs. He provides similar developments from Japan of a floral nature. He saw this development as being symbolic of the three seasons or the three gods of the sun: dawn, noon and dusk.

So we find is that we have marked Christian symbolism being portrayed on an older template which was familiar to the pre-Christian population. Hence, we find the existence of earlier motifs co-existing with or assimilated by Christian artists. The triskele is thought to have originated in the Near East and to have a solar or related symbolic meaning (MacKenzie, 1926: 155). The Scandinavian version of this motif was closely related to the Spiral, which depicts the way to the otherworld. As with plants which grow spirally towards the sunlight this movement to the right is seen as a path to life (Streit 1977: 51). The triskelion as the swastika a solar symbol, implies, a wheel moving across the sky. The Togherstown medallion certainly seems to be vertiginous in character. This process of circling was a general element and ritual to gain entrance to the otherworld: "circling was the

unscrewing of the barrier between the natural and supernatural ..." (Menefee, 1985: 9-14). Hence, it played a symbolic role in religious ritual for a variety of different reasons, which Menefee details.

If we follow this train of thought, if the gripping figures are 'circling' this might be similar to the process to the dances discussed above. In particular the dancing of a maze to reach the kinsfolk (Russell & Russell, 1991: 84). The pose of the Togherstown figures are reminiscent of the Castledermot figure discussed above, with the marked 'embryo/foetal' shape and the emphasis on crouched legs being gripped either individually or by a partner, a scene also found on the jet 'Gripping-Beast figures' found in the early Viking Period (see figs. 71 & 72).

In the 4th Century a grave at Saetrang, Norway was dug in a starfish design very similar to the solar triskele and swastika motifs. Any linking of these two motifs is only on the understanding that both are general solar symbols, not that they have the same specific meaning. This design can be supposed to be associated with death (Gelling/Davidson,1969: 140). Green (1989: 167) finds a connection between the solar deities and the underworld. The solar light illuminating the way of the dead through the darkness. An idea which gives credence to these figures 'dancing' towards their dead kin. MacCana (1977: 50) points out that the rebirth of the Sun diurnally symbolised the immortality of the soul to the Celts. This might have been a connection that early Christians would have been keen to emphasise in trying to convert the 'Pagans'.

Another image, that of the equilateral triangle, also has earlier meaning in the east. The way to the otherworld is often thought have been through a portal of some kind. The idea is found in present Christianity with St. Peter's gates 'guarding' the entrance to heaven. In the earlier religions there is little evidence of specialised regions in the afterlife. The tree, a pillar or a mountain usually were thought to be these portals: in one

tradition the 'Dread Goddess Nintugga' - she who gives life to the dead. These 'portals' had the purpose of being a gate to the other world, symbolically this gate was of triangular shape (Levy, 1948: 96). Levy also draws the connection to the shape formed by the bulls horns, a triangle. The bull is a well known psychopomp in Indo-European myth.

Religious thought put the emphasis on the afterlife as being a rebirth. In the older Near Eastern traditions the King was seen as the magical centre of the community, also of religion (Engnell, 1967: 87). The fertility and future of the community depended on his health (Deedes, 1935: 195). The Ri (King) who was head of his tuath was married off to a goddess who was the personification of the sovereignty of Ireland (Watson, 1981: 169-70). In Indo-European religion the goddess 'Eru' was known also as 'Taillu' divine nurse and consort to the Solar deity on high (Puhvel, 1979: 160-172). The principles behind this changed very little into early Christian times. Christ was seen as having had temporal kingship on earth. Green tells of "a tradition of a threefold killing of the (Irish) king, by wounding, burning and drowning" (1991: 214). This probably linked to the pre-Indo-European idea of the king dying to mark the path for his kinsfolk (Lincoln, 1991: 34)

It may not be a coincidence that the Togherstown piece was found at Westmeath. Meath was the kingship centre of Ireland. Here the centre was focused on a sacred tree. There were four other districts placed around Meath, each with a tree as well; according to the Eò Rossa those trees were in Meath (Watson, 1981: 175). These trees could not be seen until Conn (?) created order in Ireland. Irish king names were associated with trees up until 763 AD (Watson, 1981: 170). The tree was known as the 'axis mundi' and was the focal point between the different dimensions of existence. It is here that the gods came to make the first laws, also where the king came to be inaugurated. In Scandinavian traditions Odin was linked to the sacral kingship. This was ruled from the hjallr - high seat; a pillar which also an 'axis mundi' (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 284). The king was

given a rod or sceptre by a poet or priest, respectively, before and after Christianity to symbolise his being the centre as the tree (Cook, 1974: 21; Watson, 1981: 176).

In Germanic and Scandinavians kingship was signified by the sword. Passed from generation to generation it strengthened kingship (Ellis-Davidson 1969: 149) (for Scandinavian swords see figs. 63 & 66). The sword is also a basic cross, a symbol of the tree. The later development was the Royal orb. The small cross was the 'axis mundi' on the earth to be held in the hand of the sovereign (Cook, 1974: 21).

The Togherstown figures have pronounced belts, but no other clear clothing. This is interesting because in the myths of North Europe the hero or king is often depicted in possession of a magical belt, e.g. Gunnar in the Snake pit 'scene', from on the Oseberg wagon. Odin was known to wear a belt of strength which doubled his Asâ - strength (Du Chaillu, 1889: 47). In Nordic myth, "the hero puts on an impenetrable garment and a magical belt, but he fights without any weapons" (Ettlinger, 1976: 85). This is very similar to the Herakles/Samson/Conn type of hero. Conn in Irish myth were a belt made from a living snake. The point has already been made above that by wrestling without any weapons there is no possibility of drawing blood. So an 'impenetrable' aspect of these garments might be intended.

What we have in this piece is a range of symbols which hold significance either from a Christian or pre-Christian point of view. Another possibility is that these were shared, a 'symbolic hybrid' of sorts, and that it was the intention of the artist to exploit similarities between the two cultures to familiarise the non-Christian peoples with the Christian myths.

This placement of Christian with 'pagan' ideas was not entirely rare. In the Dindsenchas poem on the Eò Rossa, we find direct references in the poem to the Tree of Ross about kingship 'a prince's right' and more

notably 'a kings wheel', although we have no exact way of knowing the meaning of the latter (Watson, 1981:127). The Tree is also addressed at times as if it were King which would mean as King and tree were both 'centres' so they would in many respects be seen as interchangeable. There are also, "two Christian allusions to Christ as King: the Trinity's mighty one and Mary's Son. However, in the same poem we have the tree referred to as, "'a firm-strong god' and 'door (?) of heaven'". These references, "are rather remarkable for their blatantly pagan character. They give a small insight into what must originally have been a cult of trees presided over by the Druids" Watson, (1981: 172) .

The Togherstown pin therefore provides us with a possible example of a transitionary period where the distinction between the indigenous and Christian religious boundaries were blurred. In this respect there is no exact possible meaning for the gripping figures except that this would clearly have had profound meaning to all viewers in early Christian times.

12 CHAPTER EIGHT - THE STYLISTIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE INSULAR REGION AND THE BROA\OSEBERG STYLE

12.1 THE MEANING OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST

It is clear from any investigation into the symbolic background of different regions that a fair amount of assumption is taken for granted. However, in investigating the possible meanings behind the gripping gesture and the different ways and styles in which this is utilised within the North Sea region, the ramifications of the Broa/Oseberg Gripping-Beast are apparent. If we accept that the style was the product most likely of Northumbrian and Irish elements then we are a step closer to solving the meaning. Whether we accept Insular parallels of the contextual gesture as having the same or similar meaning, or if we reject this explanation, it will give us a closer understanding as to why this motif made such a dramatic and relatively short-lived appearance.

Clearly the connection between the Anglo-Saxon and Irish works with the Gripping-Beast-Style has to be discussed in more detail. This will help in the investigation of the motif in establishing a symbolic context for the work.

The Viking Age Art is without a doubt established by the presence of the unparalleled Oseberg Ship burial. Discovered in 1904, on the west coast of the Oslo Fjord it is generally thought to be the burial of Norwegian royalty. Buried in the grave are two women, one dressed in clearly richer clothes. This is not unusual and it is reported to have been the custom of the Scandinavians to inter a second person with the royal dead (Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 258). The dead lady is thought to have been Queen Asâ, the wife of Gudrod and mother of Halidan Svarte, (Ornes, 1968: 29; Carter, 1957: 151) although

Callmer (1988: 265) claims in reference to some Swedish boat graves that, "In these areas it is most likely that society comprised several strata. The rich burials in the boat graves do not represent the highest level of society of the period. The graves of the kingly families are better sought among very rich cremation...". Ellis-Davidson because of the associations of the Vanir fertility deities with ship burials, saw as being more likely to have been the burial of a priestess of the cult (1969: 157). Regardless of who these personages were it is clear that the wealth and splendour of the find indicates their high station. This can also be shown by the number of pieces of Irish work found in the deposit, e.g. "horsetrappings from Oseberg (which) are the finest Irish work of the 8th Century" (Haseloff, 1987: 52; Bruce-Mitford, 1964: 220).

It was for this burial that a group of artists, called the 'Vestfold school' by Shetelig joined together to make a product which was to mark the 'start' of 'pure' Viking Art. Some ten artists have been identified as working on the vessel. The style of a number of individual artists stand out: the old Vendel style 'Academician' - the animal/head post and sledge craft; the 'Master of the Prow'; and the 'Baroque Master' (fig. 58) (Arbman 1947: 118-127): a group of the most competent craftsmen who appear to be creating a new art; as they experiment; they influence each other (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 69).

The work that is most often associated with the Oseberg find is that of the bronze mounts found at Broa, Gotland. There would seem to be a lack of consensus on which actually was developed first. The most detailed analysis of the Broa mounts is provided by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 70-74); however, nowhere they discuss the chronology of the two pieces. In their opinion, "the Broa mounts display a varied stylistic treatment but their rhythmic qualities and

related peculiarities show that they were all made by one man. The imagination and creative genius of this artist is demonstrated by his use of animal heads in low relief, semi-naturalistic creatures and Gripping-Beasts, as well as by his skilful use of his own brand of Style E animals." This would seem to indicate that both artistic styles developed independently of each other. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen also leave their investigation of these pieces until after the main discussion of the Oseberg art.

Other such as Arbman (1947: 122-126) have been even more definite in their classification. He states that the pieces from Broa, Gotland, "are not as dependent upon earlier tradition as the 'Academician' of the Vestfold school, but resemble more the Master of the Prow". He goes on to say that, "the new Gripping-Beast-Style - the earlier Oseberg style - appears in their work taken over as a direct loan from Oseberg. The Gotland artists made no new contribution to it and did not develop it ..." (Arbman, 1947: 126). It is clear Arbman saw the Gotland pieces as being dependent upon the Oseberg innovations.

Contrary to this opinion, Marstrander (1965: 142-143) argues that the finds from Gotland which date as early as the early 700's are clearly related stylistically to the Oseberg find: "the woodcarvings in the Oseberg find, on the other hand, seem to represent a more advanced stage in the development of the Gripping-Beast-Style. A single figure on the animal-head post is far-removed in its traits from the earliest Gripping-Beasts of the latter part of the 8th Century. And the motif has been somewhat changed, it seems coarser, with larger limbs and a more sculptural effect". Marstrander also points out that there are more motifs which are not found in the Gotland pieces, which indicates a development in the repertoire of elements over time.

This relationship between the two styles is also recognised by Graham-Campbell (1980: 138-139): "the wood carvings of the Oseberg ship-burial in Norway closely parallel the Broa mounts in their choice and use of motifs, although the range of treatment is more varied and elaborate". In his discussion of the motifs (1980: 142-143) he also provides a breakdown of the different styles which go into making this style.

In the first chapter of this thesis several problems in isolating this Style were discussed. The lack of consensus on when or what Style E or F are seems to stem from the confusion over the Broa/Oseberg styles. Fuglesang's (1992: 177) recent contribution to the Viking Exhibition catalogue provides the most sensible dating, that the Broa style dates to a possible 25 years before the Oseberg ship. This would give adequate time for the process of diffusion of the Style from Gotland to Norway.

There is a very clear danger in any attempt such as that of Klindt-Jensen and Wilson (1966) in trying to limit the chance of foreign influence. Even though Gotland is technically in the Scandinavian region, "as an island in the Baltic that was a meeting point for travellers from all over the region, Gotland had its own culture that was not always the same as elsewhere in Viking Age Scandinavia" (Jesch, 1991: 209). The evidence of the mounts from Broa indicates that, a "whole complex of foreign motifs ... became significant in the metal-work of Gotland as early as the late 700's. In neither Norwegian nor Danish finds can these elements be discovered at so early a date; not until half a century later do the first instances of the Gripping-Beasts and the designs associated with them make their first appearance in Norwegian metal-and-wood working" (Marstrander, 1965: 142). In summary, Marstrander claims, "altogether, it can be said that the Gripping-Beasts and the

accompanying motifs appear in Gotland in the latter part of the 700's, establish themselves thoroughly in Scandinavian ornamentation in the first decades of the 800's and constitute a living and productive style-complex throughout the entire 9th Century" (1965: 143).

It is hard to agree outright with Marstrander because his purpose is to establish a window through which the full extent of similarities with Anglo-Saxon art can be seen and is he single minded in his purpose, as can be seen by his exclusion of Irish material. With the exception of a lack of distinction between the chronology of Broa and Oseberg, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen might be right that this was convergent evolution from a common artistic style, the Vendel Style E animal. However, regardless of the connection between the two regions the presence of Insular influence is obvious.

It is not within the scope of this study to examine all of the connections and evidence. The preceding two chapters have discussed aspects of the inhabited Vine-Scrolls and gripping anthropomorphic figures. The evidence of this can be found in the work of Gotland and the earlier pieces of the Oseberg find. This would include the Broa bronze mounts, the prow and stem post of the Ship as well as panels from what is called the 'Shetelig' wagon (figs. 50, 55, 57). Although Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 70) warn that it is difficult to relate the different pieces, the Oseberg style utilises an anthropomorphic pattern which is peculiar to this find and to the Lindau book cover.

If we are to look to the British Isles for the source of this style the implications of eastern influence should be first mentioned. There is ample evidence that the Scandinavian region was subjected to contact with the east at this time. Herbert Jankuhn (1982: 32) gives a detailed account by using the archaeological record; he also points

out that we have Slavic, Byzantine and Arabic literary accounts of these encounters. Greater detail of these encounters is provided by Jesch (1991). Levedev & Nazarenko (1987: 5-9) and Ellis-Davidson (1976) provide a discussion of Scandinavian contact with the Russian region at this time. The reason for emphasising the oriental contact with Scandinavia is firstly that Scandinavia was very likely to be receiving similar eastern impulses as the Isles. From this we can conclude that, as Klindt-Jensen and Wilson point out, the Vine-Scroll ornament Scandinavians were receiving did not appeal to their tastes: "Animal art was the only art which really satisfied the Viking mind" (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen 1966: 83). This is an important feature to bear in mind when looking for stylistic similarities in England.

This might also be indicated by the short life span of the Gripping-Beast design in Sweden. Foote and Wilson state (1970: 295), "the rarity of Style III ornament in the Birka graves which start c800, suggest it was not a very long lived style in Sweden". It is also known that there is very little evidence of Swedish contact with England; the evidence points to the Swedes having more contact with Russia and the east (Baldwin-Brown 1937: 153; Ellis-Davidson, 1976: 269). Norway, it seems, had considerably more contact with the west and as a result of this its art shows a greater influence of western art, Norway of course being where the Oseberg style was created.

The most recognised and least disputed Insular influences on Scandinavian Viking art has been the assimilation and use of Insular techniques in using spatial frameworks. These usually took the form of oval fields or rectangular subdivisions.

The Broa mounts show a pronounced change from the preceding Vendel period in their use of ornamental fields. The importance of this choice was indicated by Graham-Campbell & Kidd (1980: 155):

"whatever the approach chosen by the Broa master the framework was carefully designed by him to be more than just a border, it was intricately related to the variety and composition of the animal-ornament itself". This use of the border would appear to have been governed by some artistic purpose or meaning. As described by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 72), "the oval acts as windows through which the animal ornament can be seen: some animals stretch from one field to the next, but other are contained within a single oval". The three rectangular mounts from Broa are also divided by a cross springing from a central circular field; in each of the four sections is a Gripping-Beast in a circular sub-field (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen 1966: 74).

The idea of the framework being either continental or Insular is accepted Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 76, 57) although they do not concede the force behind the use of this was not indigenous: "Although the Oseberg artist may have used the general outline of insular ornament as the basis of his designs, it was not essential for him to have done so in order to create these carvings, for all the elements could have been derived from the native art of Scandinavia", e.g. the prow of the ship. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966: 50-72) also detail the use of the framework, regardless from where, by the 'Academician', 'Baroque master' and 'Carolingian' master.

However, the clutching form of the figures is accepted as an Insular innovation (Kendrick 1968: 29; Guilman, 1960: 24). This characteristic was also recognised by Forssander (1942). The manipulation of space in order to accommodate a design peculiar to Insular sources is maintained by many Insular scholars (Edwards, 1986: 27; Roe, 1945: 9; Hawkes, 1965: 18; Baldwin-Brown, 1937: 209).

Marstrander (1965) has presented the most detailed argument in favour of an Anglo-Saxon connection. However, although the economy of space would appear to be an insular feature, the characteristics of the Broa mounts and Oseberg designs share the most details with the Vine-Scroll ornament which was a product of this artistic technique. His point of departure along this line of thought are the two medallions on the Lindau book cover already discussed. He states, using Haseloff (1951) as a reference, that, "the plaited motif surrounding the animal-motif can hardly be other than a deformed version of what was originally a grape vine pattern". He goes on to illustrate that the most likely source of these would have been the north English and some southern examples of inhabited Vine-Scroll. This has also been suggested as a possibility in Webster & Backhouse (1991: 168-170).

Even from Wilson and Klindt-Jensen's description of use of fields it is clear that if we take the inverse of the fields, that is assume the 'stencil' is the focus, we have a design very similar in features to an inhabited Vine-Scroll. It is stated by Rosenthal (1967: 73) that the "branches and leaves make large oval and round compositions", e.g. the tree-scrolls on the fragments from England in Belgium (fig. 14) (Budney & Tweddle, 1985: 353). Another example is discussed by Bakka (1961: 34-35), a bronze book-mount from Alstad, Trondelag (fig. 6). It shows a tree-scroll and in Bakka's opinion because of the Hiberno-Saxon ribbon animals it is likely to have been of Northumbrian production. This use of the framework was clarified by Graham-Campbell & Kidd (1980: 155): "in some cases these frameworks divide the surface so that one animal fills each of the fields; alternatively a framework may be superimposed over an animal which appears to be behind an open-work scene." The identity of this 'framework' is fundamental to this motif.

Another more curious feature of the Broa mounts are those which have a larger moon-faced being gripping the top of the tree stencil. This being is not common to all of the mounts nor does it appear to have any immediate significance. However, as the Insular region has been proposed as the source for these derivations we should be able to find some similar depictions in the Insular archaeological record. The example with the nearest similarities would be: the figure at middle of the top border of the Vine-Scroll ornament on the late 8th Century Anglo-Saxon Ascension Ivory. He too grips the plant from the top. A similar design is found on a panel from the Dysert O'Dea Cross (fig. 37), we find on serpentine creatures instead of the Vine-Scroll; this effect in reverse is also found on the Rothbury Shaft (fig. 29).

The animals which are found as part of the Scandinavian Gripping-Beast-Motif have been also been derived from the English inhabited Vine-Scroll design by Marstrander (1965: 147-149), although as he points out, the source of these designs were more likely to have been metalwork items than the stonework of England. His first example is the work on the Breedon-on-the-Hill architectural fragments whose animals quite resemble the Gripping-Beasts, although he sees the Northumbrian Vine-Scroll ornament as providing the more likely source. He sees the animals found on the Ormside bowl as, "the prototype which developed into the Gripping-Beast designs". The problem for hunting for a 'prototype' is that it is very unlikely with the percentages of art available from this period that we can establish anything so definite; however, it is likely that Northumbrian figures acted as a paradigm.

While there is a strong basis for the characteristics of the Gripping-Beast being the result of Northumbrian paradigms, the discussion of these pieces was left untouched by Marstrander who provides only a

few possible 'prototypes'. A brief examination of art from Britain will show however, that the influence exerted from the Insular region is likely to have included Ireland.

As Marstrander's (1965) point of departure was the Ormside bowl from Cumbria (fig. 27), this would be the appropriate place to start this discussion. Webster & Backhouse (1991: 173; fig. 134) maintained that "the bush-vine and its eccentric inhabitants reflect the high fondness of the bush-vine type characteristic of metalwork of the second half of the 8th Century". Schapiro (1958: 205) dismissed Kendrick's 9th Century dating of this piece, preferring an early date of the first half of the 8th Century, if not 700 AD. He links, through similarities in the leaves, the bowl with other Northumbrian works such as the Croft Cross (fig. 2) and the Bede Manuscript. Bakka (1965: 32) saw the ornamentation reflecting more strong Mediterranean or oriental impulses but also dates it to 700 AD Webster & Backhouse (1991: 173) find the closest parallel to the Bischofshofen cross, made for a 'mad' episcopate of Virgil (746/7-84) which would put a more definite date to the bowl. Webster & Backhouse also finds similarities to the Barberini Gospels and the Breedon-on-the-Hill figures.

Breedon-on-the-Hill animals have been established as being in the same period as showing Northumbrian characteristics. Jewell (1986: 95-115) provides excellent descriptions and connections of these inhabited vines. The Barberini Gospels (fig. 30) dates to the late 8th Century and is thought to be Mercian or Northumbrian. It is also thought to show influence form an Italo-Byzantine connection (Webster & Backhouse, 1991: 205 & 207; fig. 160). Of particular interest is the gripping and biting animal shown on the letter 'E' on the second animal from the top. Several similar 'gripping-animals'

can be found on other Insular works, e.g. the Tiberius Bede manuscript, from Mercia/Kent dating to the first half of the 9th Century (Webster & Backhouse, 1991: 215; fig. 170).

Another example of this gripping-animal is seen on the Witham Pins (fig. 31), Anglo-Saxon manufacture dating to the 8th Century. The right hand pin is a replacement and the animals are arranged around a cross pattern (Webster & Backhouse, 1991: 227-228). The origin of this design is thought to have derived from Vine-Scroll ornament (Edwards, 1986: 32). Webster & Backhouse (1991: 228) have linked the pins stylistically to the Gandersheim Casket (fig. 28), the Croft Cross (fig. 2), the Leningrad Gospels, the Ormside bowl and the smallest brooch from the Pently hoard.

The Tassilo chalice, an Anglo-Carolingian vessel dating between 777-88 AD has been said by Haseloff (1991; in Webster & Backhouse, 1991: 168, fig. 131) to have been derived from the Witham Pins ornament, i.e. animal ornament with the continental feature of a splayed hind leg. Klindt-Jensen (1963: 75) saw the Lindau book cover as being decorated, with the exception of the Gripping-Beast medallions, with the Tassilo Chalice zoomorphic decoration. It is curious, although it would be hard to postulate any conclusion from this, that given the similarities between the animals and their gripping nature they should be found together on the Lindau book cover.

These medallions were grouped with a ring (fig. 28) which shows two 'beasts' gripping each other by Marstrander (1965: 148), Marstrander claims that here, "the vine pattern is reduced to a mere rudiment". This piece was discussed by Hinton (1974: 16-17) who identified it as two symmetrical interlacing snakes. Using Haseloff's (1951) argument Hinton claims that the similarity to the Gripping-

Beast-Style is superficial and that it was probably Anglo-Saxon in manufacture. Regardless, of where the ring originated the similarity between the two designs is striking.

The Gandersheim Casket (fig. 28) is of Anglo-Saxon origin dating to the late 8th Century. The construction of the casket relates it to Insular metal shrines and the distinctly inhabited vine indicates it had a religious use. Webster & Backhouse (1991: 177-179, fig. 138) maintain that "its brilliantly controlled array of variations on the theme of animals, Vine-Scroll and interlace may be compared with sculpture", such as the Hedda stone in Peterborough Cathedral and the Rothbury Cross Shaft (fig. 29). These pieces both share links with the Leningrad gospels which show textured animals from above. Other examples of animals which show similarities with the Gripping-Beast animals can be seen for example on the Dacre stone cross fragment (fig. 29). Here a winged lion grips at the oval formed by Vine-Scroll ornament. This piece has been linked to the Lindisfarne Gospels, "the peculiar shape of the head with pricked ears leads us to suspect a connection with the canine physiognomy which we met in the Lindisfarne Gospels and which we also know from the Setnes mounts (fig. 20)" (Marstrander, 1965: 32, fig. 14).

Another related sculptural piece is the Rothbury Cross shaft from Northumberland (fig. 29); late 8th or early 9th Century. This figure also has 'textured reptiles as seen from above' although it is hard to share Webster & Backhouse's (1991: 178) view that these are reptiles; they, like the Gripping-Beasts, seem to have marked leonine characteristics. There is a remarkable similarity between the heads and gripping posture of the smaller animals of the Rothbury Shaft and a silver (?) roller from western Iran, c1800-700 BC (fig. 80). Thought to be either Elamite or Babylonian the scene has two groups of gripping lion and human couples. The depiction of the

lions is very much the same as the figures found on the handle, which most closely resemble the Northumbrian pieces (Moorey, 1975: 20). This might help illustrate the influential role that eastern wares were having on Northumbrian art and also the problem of the similarities of the eastern imports having no fixed chronological period, if we accept that similar pieces would have found their way to the Hiberno-Saxon region at this time. A side panel from a contemporary sculpture, the sarcophagus of St. Andrew, Scotland, shows a similar pattern. Cecil Mowbray (1936: 433-434; Plate III) pointed out the similarities between the Rothbury pattern and a design from the Book of Lindisfarne, which would hint at an Irish/Hiberno-Saxon connection (see fig. 18).

The Irish also had a contemporary practice of textured animals seen from above involved in the gripping posture. The most famous of these pieces is the Romfohjellan mount found at the Romfohjellan farm, Romsdal, Norway which has been dated to the early 9th Century (fig. 24) (Youngs 1989: 145; fig. 139). The Viking context and the gripping nature of these beasts make it reasonable to think that they were as responsible for the Gripping-Beast-Style as the English material. A depiction of this piece can be found in Haseloff (1987; fig. 14).

The Romfohjellan mount has been linked to the shrine mounts of St. Germain. These are of Irish manufacture, and date 8th to early 9th Century (fig. 25). They involve swirls of snakes ending in human, bird and beast heads (Youngs 1989: 145; fig. 138a, b). Bakka (1965: 39-40) has found two similar plates from a woman's grave at Gavsel, Norway which he suggests were made from the same template. These are related stylistically to the Co. Cavan and larger Ardagh brooches.

The textured look from above can be found in other Irish and Anglo-Saxon works. The 'lions' of anuran nature are found on a decorative boss from Steeple Bumpstead England, first half of the 8th Century. These creatures grip at opposite sides of the boss. Youngs (1989: 147) has identified a similar group of four beasts at Meloy, Nadland, Norway. The plain view of serpents with animal heads can be seen on the North Face of the Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice. This is similar to the design found on the St. Germain Shrine (Richardson, 1990: 44; Plate 156). Another example of the textured 'look' in an Anglo-Saxon context is a mid-7th Century buckle from Kent. Here a fish shares the same pattern as a lead weight in the form of a lion-back biting its textured neck (fig. 21). It was found in Norway and thought to be of Irish manufacture (Marstrander, 1965: 27-28). From this brief presentation of these gripping creatures in Vine-Scroll derived ornament there is definite cause to suspect that the design played a part in the development of the 'Gripping-Beast-Motif'. The other connection between the 'Gripping-Beast-Motif' and the insular regions is that of the tingle and sledge panels of the Oseberg ship which show anthropomorphic figures participating in a scene which is usually reserved for animals. As has been stated above the tingle and sledge panels are closely related to the Broa styles. Because of this connection and the rareness of the use of anthropomorphic figures in the Gripping-Beast-Motif, we may be able to establish or discern some of the symbolism behind the motif.

The prow and sternpost ornament (figs. 50, 60, 62) are a few examples from the Oseberg find where Wilson and Klindt-Jensen have had to respond to a striking resemblance with Hiberno-Saxon art, "It seems more likely, however, that similarities between the two schools or ornament are the result of a parallel artistic development, of the sort which might be expected when we consider the common

design of the two interlace patterns" (1966: 50). It is, however, in the Irish interlace figures that we can find a more understandable similarity between these particular figures of the Gripping-Beast 'menagerie'.

The finest extant piece of Irish human interlace that has been found in Scandinavia is from Halsan, Trondelag, Norway (fig. 54), "It can be restored as a composition of four human figures in so-called 'human interlace', which is found at various places in the Book of Kells, and in Irish stone sculpture" (Bakka 1965: 39; figs. 4-6). Comparing the two figures (54 & 51) it is clear that they share certain ornamental similarities. The Irish interlacing figures, especially the transportable Togherstown brooch tradition, provide the most likely example for the gripping figures. The sub-division of the oblong into four fields; the use of the hair lappets to utilise space and the cross thatching or basket weave patter used to indicate the garments are shared by the figures from both traditions.

This basket weave pattern is a clear indication of insular influences. "One characteristic feature - basket work hatching - never became popular on the Continent" (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 40). Another example is from grave 507, Birka, Sweden, is a Hiberno-Saxon bucket (fig. 9) (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 44). This bucket ornament also utilises the inhabited bifurcated tree scroll. As Schapiro (1958: 200-221) clarifies, although found less often in the Celtic Northumbrian style in Hiberno-Saxon art, it was used for the articulation of the background interspaces as a contrasting ornament. It had an earlier tradition on pre-Christian British bronze mirrors but the Anglo-Saxon technique differs from this, e.g. the Leningrad Manuscript of Bede, 800 AD

As to what this hatching meant, Baldwin-Brown (1937: 228) claimed that it was indicative of fur or feathers. Cook (1974: fig. 50) saw weaving depictions as being part of a wider weaving tradition: "the power to bind and loose is evident in the symbolism of weaving, motifs often associated with Odin and Tree". Cook links this to the Maypole ceremony where the re-weaving of earth and Cosmos is re-enacted. This would tie in with the Levy (1948: 104) view of the pattern in an eastern context where the reed matting pattern is part of the sacred technique to create huts; hence, the sacred hut is given permanent form. The sacred hut being a place of worship to the otherworld. This type of symbolic imagery ties in well with the ship burial of Oseberg.

A feature which has already been partially discussed is the division of the field of pieces utilising the Gripping-Beast-Motif. This can be found on the bronze mount from Halsan, Trondelag. The pattern on the Halsan mount shares a lot of stylistic similarities to a silver brooch from Odeshog, Ostergötland, dated to the middle of the 10th Century. Arbman (1947: 132, fig. 37) has linked this to the Oseberg style. Other pieces have a more pronounced cruciform direction, e.g. a gilt silver brooch from Kinkaby, Sweden, with Borre style Gripping-Beasts (fig. 64). This pattern has also been observed on the Broa mounts (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 74). These animals bite at the centre and the arms of the cross. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen saw this cross design as coming from Anglo-Carolingian sources; although they stress that the, "cruciform mount need not necessarily have a Christian derivation. The shape may merely be functional or ornamental - it is a convenient form, for example, for a strap-distributor" (1966: 40-45). Wilson and Klindt-Jensen ignore the contemporary 'meanings' of the cross in the Scandinavian cosmology, discussed above. The cross was symbolic of either the Tree or Thor's hammer. Both of these are associated with

Scandinavian conceptions of palingenesis which ties in with the ship burial, ie. the continuation of life through regeneration after death. Furthermore, the Rinkaby brooch with the four beasts eating at the centre has remarkable similarities to the four harts in the Edda versions of Yggdrasil.

This of course is based on the assumption that the Scandinavian beast interact with their 'vines' in very much the same way as the Insular versions. The Scandinavian figures appear to take this connection one step further and the boundary between the vegetative and animal worlds is blurred. This can already be seen to some extent with the Northumbrian examples, especially if we take the Rothbury cross shaft as an example (fig. 29). Here the artist has used the existing Anglo-Saxon textured plain-view beast in an anarthous design, which in doing away with the Vine-Scroll uses another animal to substitute for the plant. This may say that these beasts equal plant; or this is merely an ornamental innovation. This tradition is also found on the Romfohjellan (fig. 24) and St. Germain Shrine mounts (fig. 25) and on the relief of the Urnes Church, Norway (fig. 8). Although much later the, "restless creatures (are) biting at foliage and at one another". They have been variously interpreted as deer (Cook 1974: fig. 50) or as dragons (Streit 1977: 28). They fit in as the harts devouring the world tree as on the Rinkaby brooch discussed above .

Because of the Christian context it is difficult to examine the ramifications in Insular art. We do find, however, this process in place in the Gripping-Beast-Style. If we accept that the Oseberg style is an evolved version from the Broa mounts the artists might have followed a similar process of development as the Rothbury artist in eliminating the Vine-Scroll from the design.

The most important version of this can be seen in the gripping anthropomorphic figures. If we are to assume that these figures were taking over the role of the Vine-Scroll there is no reason to assume that this was not bilateral, in that they were as much vegetative designs as animal. This assumption makes sense if we take into account the use of the tree-scroll as the template for the Broa Gripping-Beasts field divisions and the lack of the Vine-Scroll ornament in Scandinavian art even though the tree played such a pivotal role in the Scandinavian 'belief system'. In this way the artists would have been able to incorporate the new Insular influence and their love of animal ornament.

If we look at the Oseberg wagon relief we find a gesture which is repeated on the prow anthropomorphic figures. This is described by Ettilinger (1976: 84), "with his left hand the small man holds tight the left hind-leg of the feline beast, whose paw - a claw is shown - grips the man's hair on top of his head". It is the latter action which is repeated by the other anthropomorphic figures on the wagon and prow. This hair has also been interpreted as being braids or horns (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen 1966: 50).

It is important to establish the identity of these 'horns' as they would seem to assume the role of the now atrophied Vine-Scroll ornament. They seem to not only be gripped but also grip on their own accord as do the beards and some limbs on the sledge.

The role of hair was very significant in Scandinavian society. Generally hair on one's head is associated with energy, vitality, fertility and the higher forces and hair on the body is associated with more base terrestrial forces (Sil, 1975: 63; Cirlot, 1990: 135). The long beard is also commonly associated with being a sexual symbol, the larger the beard the more indicative of maturity and old age (Per

Gjaerder, 1964: 95). While Leach (1957: 149) brings forward the idea of that head hair is universally a symbol of the genital organs, Onians (1954: 530) saw the head hair, especially the beard, as being symbolic of pubic hair. He goes on to argue that as the flower is the natural metaphor for the head the hair has distinct vegetative/fertility properties.

This is evident from the Scandinavian understanding of creation. The creation of man occurred from the primeval cow licking stones covered with rime and salt. On the first day man's hair appeared out of them. Hair was seen as the first sign of creation (Du Chaillu 1889: 31). In the act of creation discussed above, plant life was created from the hair of the primordial victim (Lincoln 1976: 359). In the Scandinavian context this victim was Ymir. Du Chaillu (1889: 56) quotes the Griminismal as stating, "From (Ymirs) hair the trees ...". This connection of hair with vegetation is by no means unique, and the same associations are found in India (Lincoln, 1976: 353).

Gjaerder (1964: 97-111) discussed the importance of the gestures involving the beard. He maintains that the stroking of a beard is highly significant and associated the swearing of oaths by this action. The stroking action invokes the impression of thoughtfulness, it is a contemplative gesture, made all the more important by the symbolic associations with the gesture. Another interpretation of the stroking of hair is proposed by Talbot-Rice (1966): in a relief of a Frankish warrior dating to AD 600, the idea of the continuation of the after life after this world is expressed by the gesture of combing his hair. Although Talbot-Rice does not explain this deduction it might be connected to a practice by the Spartans. As is told by Herodotus (BK7; 209), "It is the common practice of the Spartans to pay attention to their hair when they are about to risk their lives".

The associations of hair with some gesture clearly incorporated it with the Scandinavian concept of palingenesis. Because of its regenerative and growing nature that hair was almost interchangeable with vegetation. As has been discussed above, trees/vegetation played the role of the portal to the other world. Hair was one of a group of human and animal offcuts: horns, finger-nails and toe-nails, talon or hoof were all believed to be out-crops of the life-fluid (Onians, 1954: 494). This was related to the 'Water of life' which was represented by water, blood, semen, milk and sap (Cook, 1974: 13). In Scandinavian myth this water was obtained from the Hart which gnawed at Yggdrasil (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 166).

This has two implications in trying to discern some of the symbolism behind this myth. The first is that both the hair gripping the claw or visa versa means contact between two features commonly associated with the otherworld. Interestingly the nails and hair are the only parts of the human body which continue to grow after death, which might reflect on their significance.

The Naglfer ship in the later Edda (Gyfaginning 51) was the ship of the dead, made from the nails of dead men. That the two animals associated with Gripping-Beast generally, the lion and the horned goat/horse/stag both have resurrection themes. The lion was thought to come to life three days after being born. Lions are also associated with death goddesses and guarding the passage to the otherworld (Levy, 1948: 119; Gaster, 1938: 353). Thor's goats when eaten were then resurrected by Thor from the skin and bones (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 166).

Ettlinger (1976: 85) suggests that the lion on the wagon shows direct Irish influence. Irish influence was also seen by Gjaerder (1964: 106) on Oseberg anthropomorphic figures, "the slender shape of their

beards, ending in a drop-like knob, is a significant detail which indicates a more direct contact with Irish Art". He cites as an example the Market cross at Kells, which depicts men pulling their beards (fig. 87).

A bronze gilt strip from Svenevik, Fjaere, Aust-Agder, AD 800, is ornamented with a number of snakes with lappets (fig. 91). Bakka (1965: 37, Plate 2a) relates these pieces to the Book of Kells and the Ardagh Chalice. These lappets of the snake have the same characteristics as the Oseberg drop-like beards. Lundstrom (1960: 191-194) in discussing the ornament on the Alfred Jewel (fig. 43) says that the items that the central figure grips are difficult to identify and that they have drop-like knob endings. He suggests the 'flowers' are really stylised birds. He quotes Petersson's definition of them as snakes not mere cords. However, he supports the identification of the birds being a depiction of Alexander's visit to heaven, pulled by two birds. Lundstrom also provides a number of Scandinavian pieces of similar composition. Webster & Backhouse (1992: 283; fig. 260) think that these are two floriated rods associated with the base plate of the Jewel which shows the tree of life. Ellis-Davidson (1965: 23-26) provides several examples of the occurrences of helmets, in the North Sea region, with bird heads at the horn endings, e.g. a 7th Century depiction from a Kentish grave which has affinities to Sutton Hoo and 7th Century Swedish grave pieces (fig. 84). Though Ellis-Davidson claims this is unique to the Anglo-Saxon records, since her article was written another example has been found in a Dover grave (161) (Meaney, 1981: 232). Ellis-Davidson does provide an interesting example from Niederdollendorf (late 7th Century) where the curved headgear ends in serpents. She claims that as helmets with boar devices were associated with the Vanir (fertility gods), the bird/serpent headed figures probably had a similar function.

The serpent was associated with the centre. It had several meanings, sexual energy and periodic rebirth being the main associations, the latter because of its shedding of skin, hence its vegetative nature (Cook, 1974: 11; Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 154). The Scandinavians had several mythical snakes: the world serpent, Midgarfsormr and the Serpent Nidhogg which dwelt at the roots of Yggdrasil (Ellis-Davidson, 1975: 179). Hence the snake was associated with the nether regions of the world tree, the otherworld. Similar contexts for snakes can be found in the east (Gaster, 1938: 353).

The serpent has also been more directly associated with hair. Du Chaillu (1889: 56) states that Odin the long-bearded was known as the serpent. The most famous example in myth is the head of Medusa. The power of her gaze cause death and the connection between the snakes, hair and the otherworld is not lost here.

Certainly the figures on the Oseberg sledge have 'horns' which show remarkably serpentine qualities as well as similarities to the Irish works. Regardless of what animal or substance we assume these appendages are they all share the same vegetative symbolism. In this sense to the artist they could very well double for the Vine-Scroll ornament in artistic function and symbolically.

The implication of this is that this particular version of the Gripping-Beast-Motif was representative of plant and animal. In a very general sense humankind has used vegetative metaphors in different contexts and cultures. Russell (1978: 228-230) provides examples from England, Italy and Iran that man was born from a plant. In a Christian context Christ was referred to as vine and cross. His body parts were the food at the last supper. In Ireland the king was referred to as a tree (Watson, 1981: 70). Various gods are also associated with the tree, e.g. Adonis was born in a tree; Attis, Osiris

and Artemis are also referred to as being part of or in the tree (Levy, 1948: 120-121; Cook, 1974: 11-15).

This can also be shown in language use. The definition of 'Yggdrasil' being the steed of Odin has already been discussed above. Jesch (1991) goes into great detail to explain the use of the tree in 'kennings', e.g. man equal mail-coat tree; firs of gold equal men; battle tree equal warrior man. In the myth of creation in Scandinavian beliefs, the material for creation came from the giant Ymir (Lincoln, 1991: 35).

If we accept the argument that the Gripping-Beast anthropomorphic figures may replace the Vine-Scroll motif, we know from the preceding chapter on Vine symbolism that this in turn is equivalent of a tree. This innovation might have been a mere ornamental experimentation and in no way involved with any 'meaning' behind the motif. But, if we accept this motif as a tree there is one version of the world tree which would apply to this context. Russell (1981: 58) provides a description of the Speaking Tree. This was derived from the 'Life of Alexander' (AD 300) of which some 80 versions in 24 languages have been found. In this Alexander visits the two oracle trees to find out his future. The Sun tree was hung with the hides of male beasts and the Moon tree with the hides of female beasts. The dead were buried in similar skins. These trees had branches which sprouted animal heads as on the Oseberg wagon where the branch terminates in snake heads (Ettlinger, 1976: 84). An example of this myth is provided by Cook (1974; fig. 33) on a miniature from the 15th Century Shah Namah, Persia, (fig. 81).

While this connection seems extreme, the myth and the Oseberg depiction do share certain characteristics. Firstly, the diffusion of the myth can be substantiated by examples of other Byzantine myths

'recognised' in Viking Age Art, e.g. Ettlinger's 1976 identification of the previously 'Gunner myth' as Herakles vs Hydra; and Lundstrom's 1960 identification of the Alfred Jewel and some Scandinavian pendants as being Alexander's journey to heaven. These examples are by no means undisputed but do show possibilities considering the wide distribution the 'Life of Alexander' received.

As the dead were wrapped in skins in the Alexander myth, we also find similar practices in Scandinavian myth. Roe (1945: 19) provides details of part of the Icelandic Njals - saga of a, "powerful sorcerer who, when he wished to bring a magical mist of confusion on his enemies, wrapped his head in a goat skin before pronouncing the incantation". She also claims that those about to die were wrapped up in a goatskin. Here we see the same prophetic powers associated with the animal skin and the process of mortal death. The character shows very similar powers to Odin, discussed in connection to the Castledermot figure above.

Odin was known as the 'hanging god'. In the Viking age sacrifices in this manner were made to him. Ellis-Davidson (1969: 169) maintains that both animals and humans were sacrificed to Odin by hanging them in trees. The gallows were known as the 'hanged man's horse' (Cook, 1976: 23). Odin rode the world tree, Yggdrasil, by which he saw into the future (Ellis-Davidson, 1975: 179).

Russell (1979: 226) gives an account of the practice of hanging items in trees in order to personify them, e.g. rags; a Mycenaean seal ring, shows a 'tree full of human figures'; in Attica, Greece, masks and figures were hung in trees. Lincoln (1976: 354-355) provides examples from Oldenburg and Dusseldorf of hanging hair and nails, in cloth, in a tree in order to remove pain or infertility. Dinzelbacher

(1986: 76) relates the pre-Christian practice of burying shoes with dead men. An example of the Lindin tree with shoes hanging in it is cited in this connection.

If we assume that the practice of the 'hanging objects' tree had an active Scandinavian tradition, the possibilities of the Speaking Tree seem much more realistic, especially if we recall the role of the shaman in Scandinavian society in telling the future by visiting the other world to gain information. In a separate and unrelated study a similar conclusion has been made by Eva Baer (1965: 66-68) in her examination of the inhabited Vine-Scrolls of Medieval Islamic Art. On stone slabs from one of the Ghaznawid palaces (fig. 73), (either Mas'ud III, 1099-1115 or of Bahràm Shàh, 1117-1153, but probably the later date), a winged lion and human figures are entangled in the vine. The figure's bodies are also part of the tree. Another example is found on a Ras lid brass tray dated between 1297-1321 (fig. 74). "Its wings, continued into the scrolls, develop into a pair of bearded sphinxes which are entangled in the 'branches of the tree' in such a way that the hind part of their bodies are amalgamated with the scrolls". Baer goes on to claim that these are representations of the Wàq-Wàq tree or Speaking tree from the Alexandrian romance.

On a brief examination of the Scandinavian material one item does resemble that of the Wàq-Wàq tree, a small gold brooch from the Hedeby boat burial (fig. 75). Here we have clearly a plant/tree body with a man's head on top. This is also similar to the Lindau book cover wing figures discussed above.

The proposition here is that these, whether by parallel or convergent evolution of similar characteristics, show a similar development of the use of the vine-scroll, though the vine-scroll is more pronounced in the Wàq-Wàq tree. This ability to change the traditional motif to a

popular myths' requirements could occur, whether the Oseberg versions were this Alexander myth or an indigenous one.

This evidence is largely 'coincidental' and there is no space in this present study to show the relevant connections between the evidence. However, we can deduce a central theme of the continuation of the afterlife after death, palingenesis, being a common link between these hanging items. This, in conjunction with the tree and the function it had in Scandinavian Cosmology, place the Gripping-Beast clearly within a definite thematic context.

12.2 TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF THE GRIPPING-BEAST

The initial response as to what the motif means has been predominantly one of associating the character of the Gripping-Beast with that of their *infamous* creators the Vikings. The combination of their 'grotesque' design and the exploits of the invading barbarians have left an indelible impression. The Vikings did not rape and plunder but in a wider context Viking society was much more complex that this two-dimensional description. Regardless of this, scholars have felt little hesitation at imposing their aesthetic interpretations on the design.

One of the earliest interpretations of the motif was given by Shetelig (1938: 91): "the reason certainly was that, to the pagan mind, these animal forms were something more than mere ornaments. The frowning monsters created by the Oseberg and Borre artists were imbued with pagan conceptions, with the significance of pagan protection against evil powers, and were consequentially banned from Christian monuments". Shetelig, it would appear, did not know of the Lindau book cover which was discussed above.

A totally different approach in trying to establish why these motifs were so popular was proposed by Hollander (1974: 15). He maintains that: "The richly decorated sternposts, and planks of the Viking ships, which had patterns closely resembling those of Hiberno-Saxon work, were held to be talismans against sea spirits and evil powers". The Hiberno-Saxon work in question is the interlace and knot work which he claims also had the purpose of banishing demons; hence, their depiction on high crosses and on illuminated manuscripts, e.g. Lindisfarne Gospels. This opinion was also held about the preceding Anglo-Saxon animal art, "considered along with interlaced patterns, human masks, and cosmological signs, there can be no doubt that Germanic ornament was both decorative and magical reflecting both the superstitions and beliefs of the pagan germans" (Speake, 1980:92). While their is not space in this present study to discuss the merits of what signifies magical art it is evident that this motif is widely held to emanate some meaning. The meaning might be relating only to the beast as a religious symbol for some shape shifting deity (Green, 1989: 130-134). The possibilities of meaning are as finite as the surviving insights we have into this ancient belief system.

The ship itself as a burial is thought to be symbolic of transition, that of death to re-birth in the afterlife (Hyenstand, 1940: 208). Obviously the ship burial is a long standing tradition. Interred with the dead were items which might be needed in the afterlife. One of the more curious deposits was the head of a bull and some beheaded horses (Ellis-Davidson, 1969: 164 & 168). A brief examination of this will help to illustrate the theme of the burial. Ellis-Davidson claims that this might be connected to the practice of erecting a horse's head for protection against the enemy.

The similarities between this image and the prow heads of the Viking ships should not go unobserved. Hole (1977: 129) claimed that the horse's head was buried in the house for good luck and protection against evil, e.g. in the Yorkshire village of Halton East. Green (1991: 214) also reports a tradition of depositing horse skulls in Britain; although she offers no significance except that they were buried in triplicate. Her purpose was to establish examples of different contexts of the use of symbolic triplism. Hayhurst (1989: 106) in discussing certain horse head deposits in houses, mostly on the Isle of Man, also agrees their primary role was to ward of the evil. He reports that in later Irish traditions the horse heads were placed in the foundations of the house to, "improve the resonance of the floor for singing and dancing". Furthermore, the heads were also found in the threshing barns of Denmark and South Sweden. This application would be a sort of burglary alarm according to Hayhurst. The reason for the headless horses found in the Oseberg burial might have been to have one half of the horse in the other world to provide some talismanic value to the horse heads.

While this has no immediate connection with the explanation of the Gripping-Beast it does illuminate the context of the motif. It is not clear whether the creators of this art did so on commission and with the intention to indicate a theme of transition, remembering that the first examples of this motif, the Broa Mounts, while part of a burial were not such an intrinsic part of the burial as the Oseberg pieces were.

The Gripping-Beast-Motif has been found on wide variety of artefacts: amulets, rings, swords, keys, brooches, wood carvings and made in gold, silver, jet and ivory (Graham-Campbell, 1980). The materials used to display the motif were held in high regard by the Scandinavian Vikings. Some of these materials had to be acquired by

trade or plundering. The amulets and brooches were both seen as status symbols (Jesch,1991), while the sword held an almost cultic role in the society at this time, mainly as a kin focus, being passed from one generation to the next (Ellis-Davidson, 1965: 23).

The key is an interesting puzzle. It along with the Lindau Book would fit more neatly into a Christian context. The lock and key at this time still being relatively rare phenomena, "elaborate versions ...were signs of status and function..." (Wester & Backhouse, 1991: 86; fig. 66q). From some other examples of keys from this period we can see that the common depiction in the ansate region of the key was the cross in a circle. Some guesswork can of course tie this together. The role of St Peter was that of guardian of the gates of heaven. Hence, in a Christian context where the key opens a reliquary it is not surprising that the key should have a cross, basically the cross/tree or Christ. In the Scandinavian beliefs the god Heimdrall guarded the rainbow bridge to Asgard from earth - 'Midguard'. As has been discussed above it is possible that the role of the Gripping-Beast was to represent the tree. The depiction of the motif on the key might be the Scandinavian artists' attempts to mimic or conflate Scandinavian and the new Early Christian impulses from the Insular region.

13 CONCLUSION

The initial aim of this study was to examine the origins of the Gripping-Beast-Motif and also to try to establish some form of symbolic or belief system context. This was to be established by investigating the stylistic ties between the initial developments of the Broa/Oseberg styles and the artistic developments occurring in the Insular region at this time.

The result of this preliminary investigation has resulted in several factors coming to light. The first of these is that the Insular region at this time was heavily permeated with eastern ornamental and symbolic impulses. The full implications of these impulses on this region have not been discussed in any great detail in this present study. The certainty of their presence and possible sources have been outlined. What is clear is that, in the specific case of the assimilation and adaptation of the vine-scroll ornament, different regions within the British Isles were using different prototypes. The different artistic schools at this time were not only applying their own individual technique but were probably using different eastern versions of the same material.

The implications of and reasons for investigating the Vine-Scroll-Motif was the consensus that the similarities between the insular art and Early Viking Period art are more than coincidental; in particular the way in which the creatures interact with their environment by gripping their immediate surrounds, so as to give the impression of being suspended. The extent to which this plays a part in the genesis of Viking Art has been discussed in detail above. This study has discussed why this feature was so popular within the artistic vocabulary in Northern Europe at this time. Clearly the Gripping-Beast-Motif, to a lesser extent the Insular Vine-Scroll decoration, marks a complete departure from the preceding artistic tradition. Specifically, the interlacing and overlacing of the Vendel period are interrupted by the Gripping gesture.

Many scholars have been content to ascribe this development to a change of mood or a new frame of mind heralding the start of a new epoch. This, however, is a way of missing the full implications of this development in our own chronological and classification processes. Even if we ignore the preceding proposal that the Insular region played a pivotal role in the development of E.V.P. art, the evidence of the Insular region alone shows the marked and volitional use of the gripping gesture in art. This has many implications, not least that the Scandinavian use of this gesture in different contexts has attracted nowhere near the volume of research as the Insular examples.

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters the point of departure has been two-pronged. The first was Forssander's 1943 proposal that the prototype for the E.V.P. developments were from the Ireland and England; and Marstrander's 1965 limiting of this to just the Anglo-Saxon region. Both of these views recognise the presence of the eastern impulses. During the 6th to 9th Centuries the Insular region were not the only areas subjected to this diffusion of eastern material culture and traditions. These impulses would explain the similarities and earlier attempts to attribute the prototype to the Continent. From the evidence of the deposits of traded goods between the two regions there was evidently an active route of contact at this time. This would establish a means for the diffusion of the styles and motifs well before the end of the 8th Century AD, the earliest time for the creation of the Broa/Oseberg pieces.

The main motifs of interest were those of the so-called human interlace figures and the inhabited Vine-Scrolls and their derivatives. An examination into the human interlace figures shows that these figures have an expression which utilises the gripping gesture, e.g. the Togherstown brooch. This goes contrary to Marstrander's claim that this 'pattern' is only shown in interlace form, with no contact between the figures. The gripping figure in this format is also found in a number of other media. However,

significantly, the pattern is found in metal work; this would mean that this motif is portable and could be transported to Scandinavia. As discussed by Bakka (1965) there are extant examples of this design in Scandinavia.

In Irish art we also find a deliberate employment of the gripping gesture in certain figure configurations, notably the Casterdermot figure and the triad representations. The significance of these is that they show similarities with contemporary E.V.P. beliefs.

The Anglo-Saxon material is largely tied into discussions on the derivations of the eastern Vine-Scroll pattern. The conclusion put forward by Marstrander seems the most likely, that is, that the Northumbrian designs serve as the source for the zoomorphic participants of the Broa/Oseberg styles. This is because their more bestial zoomorphic nature not only provides the most similarities to the Gripping-Beast; but also because this style is more likely to appeal to the Scandinavian eye than that of the more classical forms of inhabited Vine-Scroll ornament. Otherwise, we would expect to see a greater resemblance between the Northumbrian and E.V.P. Styles. It is unlikely that the Ormside bowl animals provide the best prototype for this motif as the textured beast shown from above enjoys a much wider expression than that of the Ormside animals. The textured animals also share characteristics with the Irish similar style, e.g. the Romfohjellan mount. This design also shows the same tendencies to cling to the vines and each other as the E.V.P. zoomorphs. The other distinguishing shared characteristic is that the figures sometimes lose their own body integrity to become part of the vine ornament.

This study also presented some insight and possibilities into the popularity of this motif besides being purely an aesthetic development. An examination into the gripping gesture, both its use in ornamental contexts and its meaning has been presented, in order to establish the contextual similarities between the Insular and Scandinavian use of this motif. On

examination of the evidence it is likely that both Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England played a role in development of the E.V.P. styles as in the period preceding and after the development there is a wealth of aesthetic and symbolic similarities in the traditions. This statement of course allows for some differentiation of expression in the respective contexts.

The first example is that of the Vine-Scroll ornament. The pattern of its dispersal across the better part of two continents indicates that because its actual representations stay relatively static for centuries of use it had more significance than that of mere durable fashion. Both the inhabited forms of the vine of early Christian Insular art and that of the Scandinavian Yggdrasil myth show remarkable similarities. Although we must accept that the writers of these myths were in fact subject to Christianity the similarities show more than a re-writing of myths. The correlations and positioning of the animals with certain parts of the tree indicates a much older tradition. The reasons for this have been discussed above.

Related to the inhabited Vine-Scroll is the occurrence of gripping figures in solo, coupled or triad configuration around a center. This is related to the inhabited Vine-Scroll as the cosmic tree/axis, a popular and influential theme at this time.

The common theme uniting these images is the idea of regeneration. Although this is too general and all-encompassing, it does allow us to establish a thematic context for an investigation of the gesture. As this study is to large extent a preliminary investigation into this motif, the path it follows has been at times erratic.

If we look at the thematic context of regeneration it is possible to sharpen our focus. The conclusion brought forward the last chapter is that the Gripping-Beast-Motif was the Scandinavian's interpretation of the insular Vine-Scroll into their own artistic vocabulary. This started in the Broa

pieces where the framework and the zoomorphs in each of the enclosed ovals indicate that the artists have been using the inhabited Vine-Scroll in the formulation of this motif. From here we can see that the Oseberg earlier designs show a marked reliance on the developments of the Broa pieces. The point of reference to the Oseberg style has been the gripping anthropomorphic figures, mainly because of their similarity to the Irish gripping anthropomorphic style and the limited expression of this variation on the Gripping-Beast. The latter designs have also been recognised as having noticeable stylistic similarities with the Broa style. The conclusion reached is that the Gripping-Beast with human figures is related to the artists' move to phase out the Vine-Scroll ornament by utilising the bodies of the inhabitants to create the framework of the environment, hence the Gripping-Beasts.

It is probable as suggested by Wilson and Klindt-Jensen (1966), that the artists experimented with this motif as a natural process of artistic evolution. In the case of the Oseberg anthropomorphic figures the artist might have been inspired by the Irish motif and as a result we find a limited number of human representations. These are obviously not as refined or practiced as the other Oseberg decorations.

The motif had a wider application than just that of a funeral context. From an ornamental perspective it was very versatile, in that it could be applied onto any surface or material. The assumption that the Scandinavian artists were using the Vine-Scroll as a paradigm does not mean that they inherited the Insular meaning with the design. In the course of this study it has not been possible to establish whether the Vikings could perceive the full import of Insular art or vice versa. From the wide range of sources discussed above it is clear that the two regions shared more than just a trade connection, and that similarities in traditions might stem from the same base of 'Indo-European' culture.

The evidence of direct contact between the Insular region and Viking age Scandinavia in conjunction with the similarities between the two styles makes it likely that the Gripping-Beast-Motif had the seeds of its genesis in this contact. It has been shown that the belief systems and symbolism were roughly compatible. The predominance of the gripping gesture is likely to have originated ultimately in the wave of eastern imports at this time. These were in turn assimilated and adapted to Insular tastes, then this hybrid used to help create the Broa/Oseberg style. There is evidence that these designs were more than ornament. While the regions which employed these subjects share some common meanings there is a clear division for indigenous development. This area of study remains, however, a largely untouched field for future Scandinavian research.

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15 CATALOGUE OF REFERENCED ARTEFACTS

1. Detail of fragmented slab from Jedburgh, Roxburghshire (Wilson, 1984: 77; fig. 78)

2. Detail of fragmented cross shaft from Croft, Yorkshire (Wilson, 1984: 77; fig. 79)

3. From the parish church of Ruthwell, Dumfries (Wilson,1984: 74)

4. Vine Columns, Harley Gospels, London, Brit. Mus. Harley M.S.2788 f. iiv, p. 2, (Rosenbaum, 1965: PL 1).

5. Monasterboice, South cross (Sexton, 1946; fig. 21)

6. Bronze book mount from Alstad, Trondelag (Bakka, 1965: 64, fig. 1)

7. Panel from Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice (Crawford, 1926: 62, No. 108)

8. Urnes Stave Church (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 501)

9. Ornament of an Hiberno-Saxon bucket from Grave 507, Birka, Sweden (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 44; fig. 12)

10. Stone Cross-Shaft at Saint Andrew Auckland, Co. Durham, Mid-8th Century (Stone, 1955: b-c)

11. Andlau, Abbey Church, west porch (Schapiro, 1963: 183; fig. 14)

12. Amiens, Bibliotheque Municipale: Cod. 18, fol. 95, Initial, B. (Schapiro, 1963: 183, fig. 15)

13. "Ascension" scene, Anglo-Saxon Ivory, Late 8th Century (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1974: 26; fig. 8)

14. Medieval Textiles from Maaseik, Belgium (Budney & Tweddle, 1985; PL LX, LXI a-b; PL LXII, LXIII)

15. Rinceau (Weitzmann, 1972: 106; No. 42)

16. The Brunswick Casket, Ivory, Mid-9th Century (Stone, 1955)

17. Bronze Strip, Castor, Northants, 2:1, (Dunning & Evison, 1961: PL. 11)

18. Comparison panels with St. Andrews (Mowbray, 1936: PL. 3)

19. Fragment of a stone cross from Dacre [after Bronsted] (Marstrander, 1965: 29; fig. 14)

20. Knop attachment (Marstrander, 1965: 29)

21. Weight with covering of gilt bronze (Marstrander, 1965: 27, fig. 11)

22. Ruthwell Cross (Henderson, 1983: 253; fig. 108)

23. Bowl, St. Ninians, Dunrossness, Shetland, Pictish 8th Century (Young, 1989: 109; fig. 98)

24. Romfohjellan Mount Fragment, More and Romsdahl, Norway, Irish origin, Early 9th Century (Young, 1989: 145, fig. 139)

25. St. Germain Mounts, Irish Late 8th-early 9th Centuries (Young, 1989: 166; fig. 138)

26. Enamelled Irish Crozier head from Helgo in Sweden (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 178; fig. 108)

27. Ormside Bowl, Anglo-Saxon, 2nd half of the 8th Centuries (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 173; fig. 134)

28. Gandersheim Casket, Anglo-Saxon, 8th Century (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 177; fig. 138)

29. Rothbury Cross Shaft, Late 8th-Early 9th Century (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 178; fig. 13)

30. The Barberini Gospels, Late 8th Century (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 205; fig. 160)

31. Witham Pins, Anglo-Saxon, Late 8th Century (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 227; fig. 183)

32. Bracteates with Single Figures (Watt, 1990: 10)

33. Gold Medallion, Villa, Inderoy, Trondheim (Axboe, 1982: 63; No. 12c)

34. Panel from Durrow Abbey Cross (Crawford, 1926: 65; fig. 121)

35. Adam and Eve, Drumcliff Cross (Crawford, 1926: 68; fig. 124)

36. Adam and Eve, from Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice (Crawford, 1926: 68; fig. 125)

37. Panel from Dysert O'Dea Cross (Crawford, 1926: 60; fig. 99)

38. Panel from the Market Cross, Kells (Crawford, 1926: 60; fig. 100)

39. Panel from Moone Abbey Cross (Crawford, 1926: 60; fig. 101)

40. The Killua Shrine (Armstrong, 1921: PL 1 & 2)

41. Bronze Pendant from Grave 762, Birka, Sweden, 2:1 (Lundstrom, 1965: 195; fig. 5)

42. Silver mount from Klinta, Oland, Sweden, 2:1 (Lundstrom, 1965: 192, Fig. 2)

43. The Alfred Jewel (Lundstrom, 1960: 191; fig. 1)

44. Pendant from Riseley, Kent, grave 56, 2:1 (Hawkes, 1965: 22)

45. Figures on stamped gold plaques from Helgo, Sweden, 6:1 (Holmqvist, 1960: 108; figs. 10-11)

46. Bronze stamps from Torslunda, Sweden (Holmqvist, 1960: 111; figs. 15-16)

47. Five examples of Adam and Eve wearing cloths [on crosses] (O'hEailidhe, 1987: 105, 6:7)

48. Figures on stamped bronze plaque from Sutton Hoo, England [after Havek], 1:1 (Holmqvist, 1960: 106; fig. 7)

49. Disc-Brooch, Togherstown, Co. Westmeath, Irish, 8th Century (Young, 1989: 63; fig. 57)

50. See Fig. 60, below.

51. Togherstown Brooch (Macalister and Praeger, 1961: PL 3)

52. Openwork bronze disk, from Nierstein (Meaney, 1981: 233; fig. 3 VIrr)

53. Openwork bronze disk, from Nierderbresig (Meaney, 1981: 292; fig. 46)

54. Bronze gilt from Halsan (Bakka, 1956: 38-39; figs. 4-6)

55. Ornamental of the Tingle of the Oseberg ship (Foote and Wilson, 1970: 292; fig. 46)

56. Interlace Figures, Irish (Meehan, 1992: 158; fig. 122)

57. Sledge Carvings, Oseberg (Humble, 1989: 7)

58. Ornament of the "Baroque impressionists" sledge from Oseberg (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 57; fig. 21)

59. Detail of the "Carolingian" animal-head from Oseberg (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966; 57; fig. 21)

60. Detail of the Prow of the Oseberg Ship (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966: 51; fig. 16)

61. Carvings on the Stem of the Oseberg Ship, about 800 [after Shetelig, 1917] (Gjaeder, 1964: 101; fig. 11)

62. Detail from the carvings on a post in the Oseberg find, about 800 [after Shetelig, 1917] (Gjaeder, 1964: 99, fig. 8)

63. Norwegian sword hilt [no more detail given] (Graham-Campbell and Kidd, 1980: 155; fig. 62)

64. Gilt Silver Brooch, from Rinkaby, Sweden (Graham-Campbell and Kidd, 1980: 160; fig. 91)

65. Ring [with Gripping-Beasts?] (Hinton, 1974: 16; No. 28)

66. Steinvisk Sword (Dunning and Evison, 1961: PL3)

67. Horse Collar from Lom, Norway (Foote and Wilson, 1970; PL 24)

68. Detail of Gilt-bronze disc-on-bow brooch from Gumbalda, Stanga, Gotland (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966; PL XXV e.)

69. Broa, Halla, Gotland, Sweden, Mounts gilt bronze (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966; PL. XXI & XXII)

70. Self Gripping Figures (Carter, 1957: 40)

71. Self Gripping Figures; (a) Jet Figure animal from Haughten, Rade, Ostfold, Norway; (b) from Inderoen, N. Trondelag, Norway (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, 1966; PL XX a & b)

72. Panel from the North Cross, Castledermot (Crawford, 1926: 66; No. 123)

73. Two Slabs attributed to one of the Ghaznawid Palaces (Baer, 1965; PL. XLVII)

74. Detail of a Rasulid brass tray (Baer, 1965; fig. 85)

75. Gold Brooch from Hedeby boat burial (Graham-Campbell & Kidd, 1980: 148; fig. 84)

76. Sarcophagus [6th Century] of Archbishop Theodore in S. Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna (Kitzinger, 1936: 65; PL 1)

77. Bishop Maximian's throne, Ravenna 6th Century (Aubert, 1946: 12)

78. Plaque, Bronze, Iran, 9th-10th Century (Fehervan, 1976; Pl. 5, No. 17)

79. Hittite Ivory, 19th-18th Centuries BC (Barnett, 1982: 23 g)

80. Base silver roller, Elamite or Babylonian, c1800-1700 BC (Moorey, 1975: 20, PL. X)

81. Alexander talking to Tree, from Persian Miniature (Cook, 1974: 65)

82. Pendant, silver figure with horned mask holding sword and staff, from Birka (Odelberg, 1974: 6)

83. Odin, from Ribe (Sorensen, 1990: 178; 71)

84. The Finglesham Man, gilt bronze buckle, Finglesham, Kent, grave 95, 3:2 (Hawkes, 1965; PL IV)

85. Bronze Plate from Torslunda, Sweden, 1:1 - See fig. 46.

86. The Frankish Warrior (Talbot-Rice, 1966)

87. Ornamental border of the Market Cross, Kells, 10th Century (Gjaeder, 1964: 101; fig. 12)

88. Bronze statuette of Freyr, the god of fertility, from Ralinge, Sweden. (Graham-Campbell, 1980: 86; fig. 40)

89. *

90. Spiral pattern stone at Tybroughney, Co. Kilkenny (Crawford, 1908: 271; fig. 2)

91. Bronze gilt ornament from Svenevik, Austager (Bakka, 1965: 30; PL 2a.)

92. Tapestry of the Oseberg Ship Burial (Jesch, 1991: 208)

93. Gold Foil from Klepp, Rogaland, Norway, possibly showing Freyr and Gerdr (Jesch, 1991: 220)

94. Key, with animal ornament (Kendrick, 1968: PL 2)

95. Bracteates (Axboe, 1982; PL 2: figs. 24 a/7, 24a/15, 24a/16)

96. Key, Anglo-Saxon 8th-9th Centuries (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 86; fig. 66q.)

97. Coin of Marius [usurper, 286 AD], Concordia militum type, struck at Trier, found at Kent (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 105; fig. 73a.)

98. Anglo-Saxon shilling stuck in Kent, c650-60 (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 105; fig. 73b.)

99. Lindau book cover (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 169)

100. Eastern vessel showing harvesting scenes (Ettinghausen, 1972: Pl. V)

101. Strap End, Anglo-Saxon, 9th Century (Webster & Backhouse, 1991: 84; fig. 66 l.)

102. Silver brooch from Odeshog, Ostergotland (Bakka, 1965: fig. 37)

* This Figure has been omitted from the end Text.

16 MAPS

1. Anglo-Saxon England 600-900 (Webster and Backhouse, 1991: 305)

2. Viking Trade Routes (Jesch,1990)

3. Map of the main trade routes in central, northern and eastern Europe during the Viking Period (Jankhahn, 1982: 34; fig. 18)

4. Map of Ireland (Mitchell, 1977)

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

78 Detail of fragmentary slab from Jedburgh, Roxburghshire

Fig. 3

79 Fragmentary cross-shaft from Croft, Yorkshire. Height 48 cm

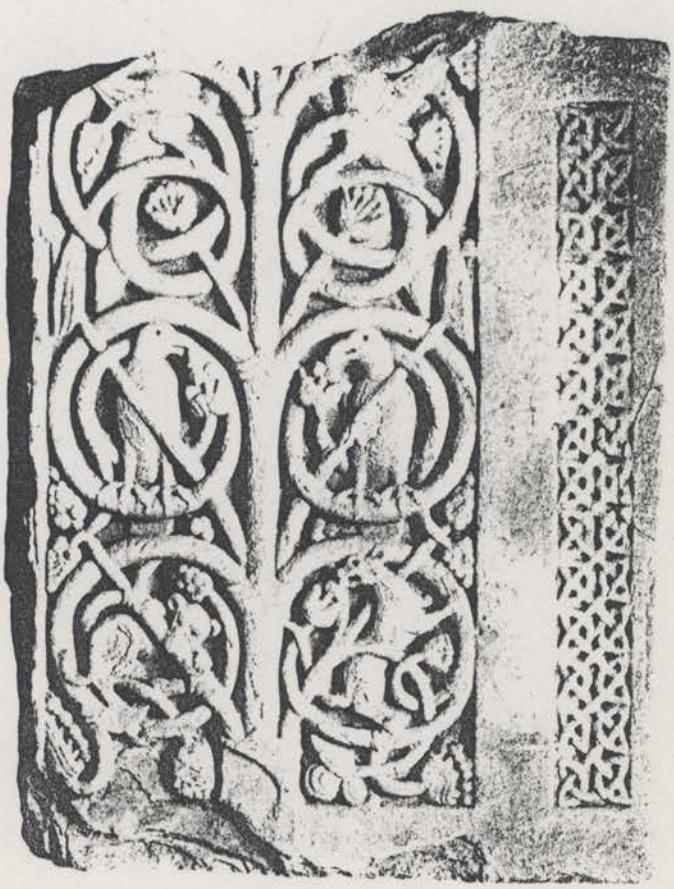
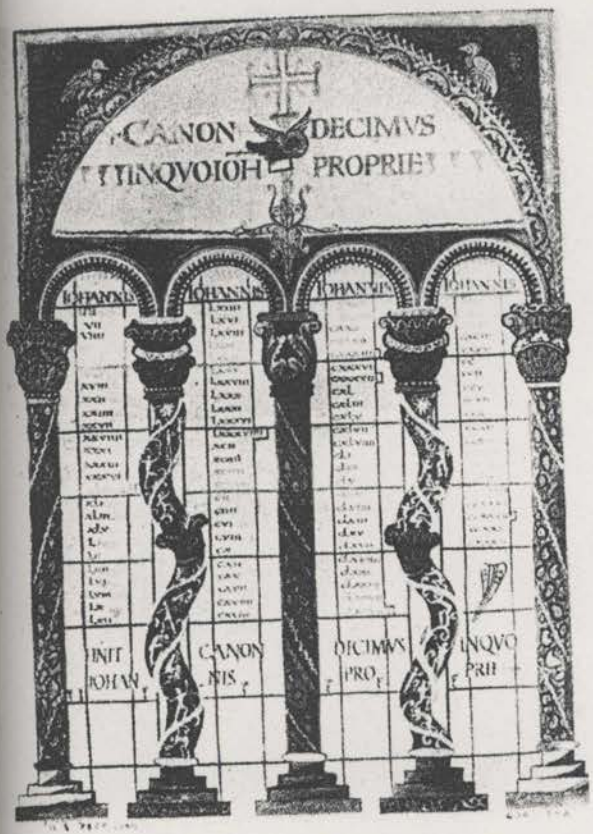


Fig. 4



c.—Vine Columns, Harley Gospels, London, Brit. Mus., Harley MS. 2788, f. 11v (*p.* 2)

Fig. 5

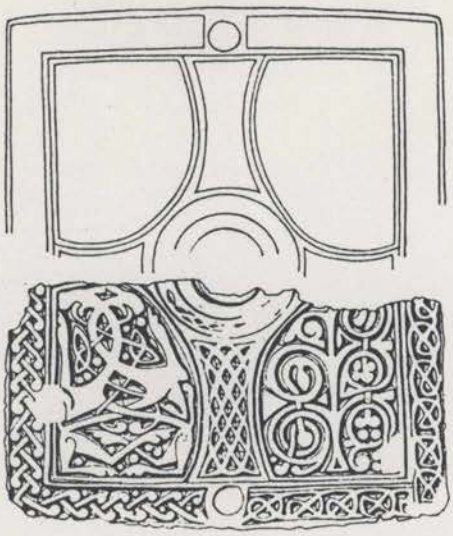


Fig.6

FIG. 1. Bronze book-mount from Alstad, Trøndelag, with completed cruciform lay-out of original.

Fig. 7

Fig. 9

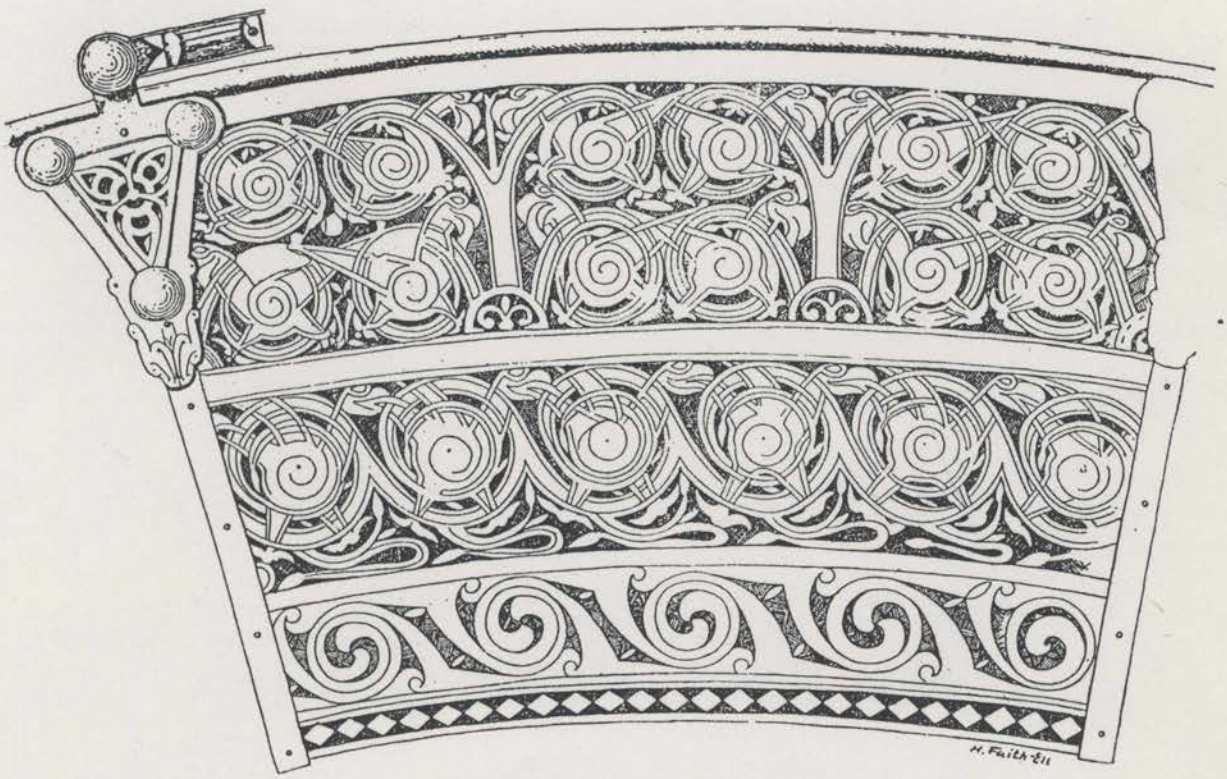


FIG. 12. Ornament of an Hiberno-Saxon bronze bucket from grave 507, Birka, Sweden. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm.*

Fig.8

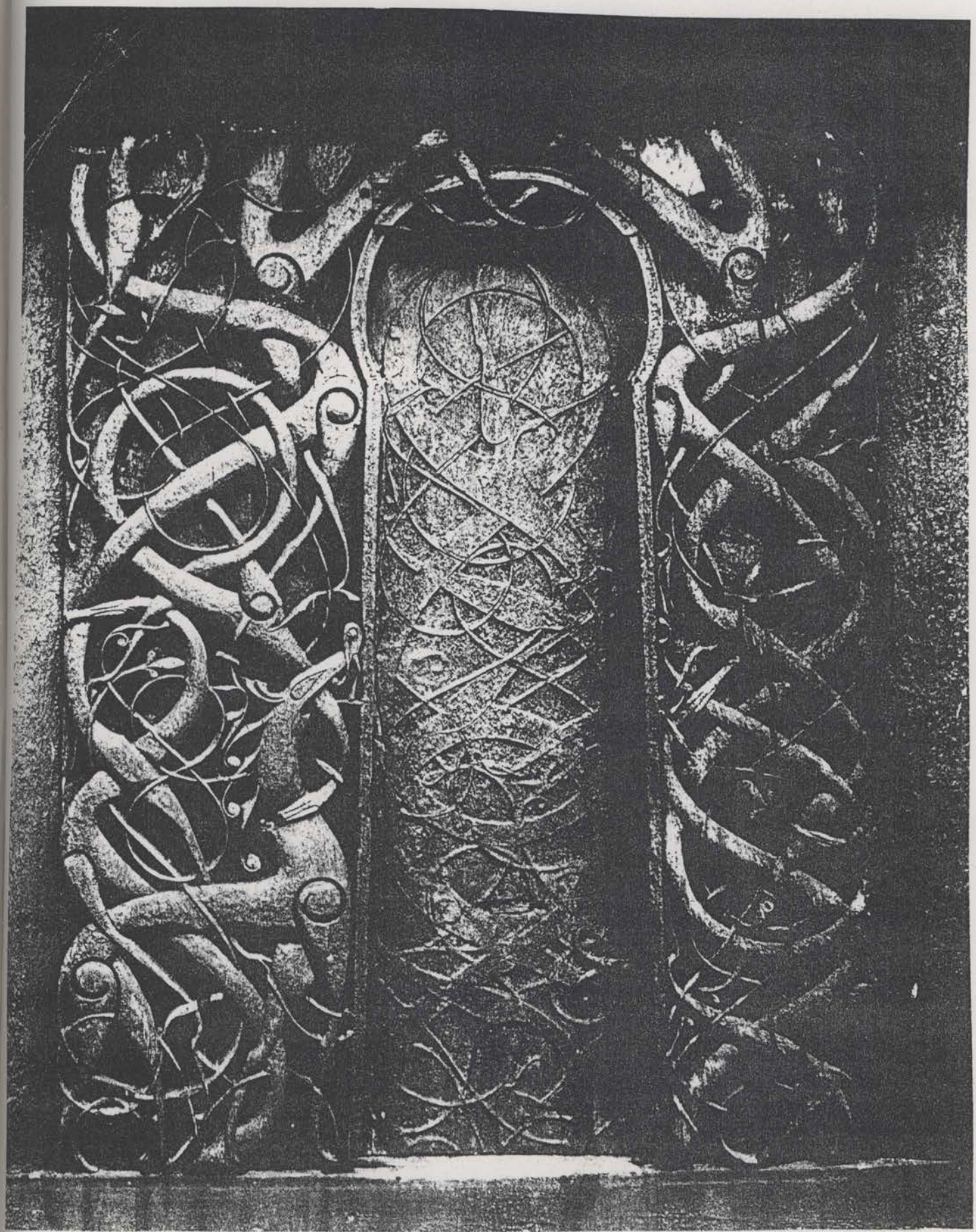


Fig.10

(B) and (C) Stone cross-shaft. Saint Andrew Auckland, Co. Durham. Mid eighth century

Fig. 11

Fig. 15 Andlau, Abbey Church: West porch.

Fig.12

Fig. 13

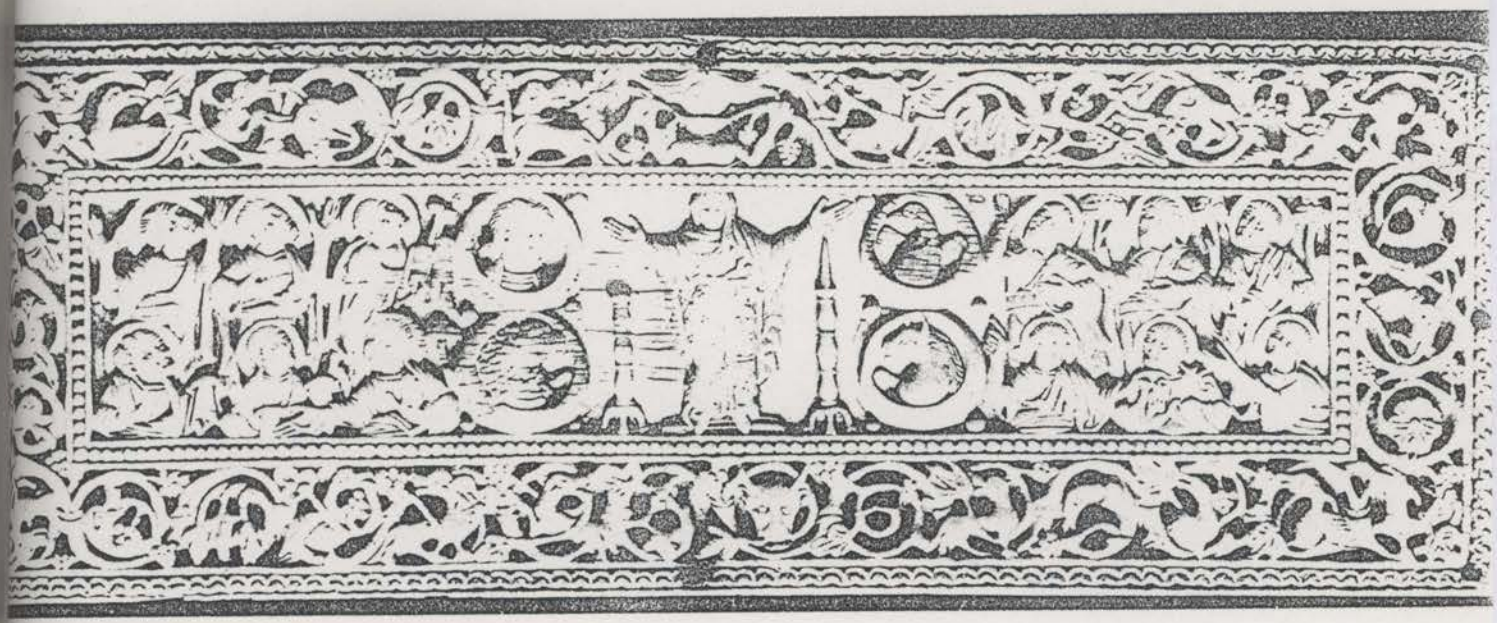
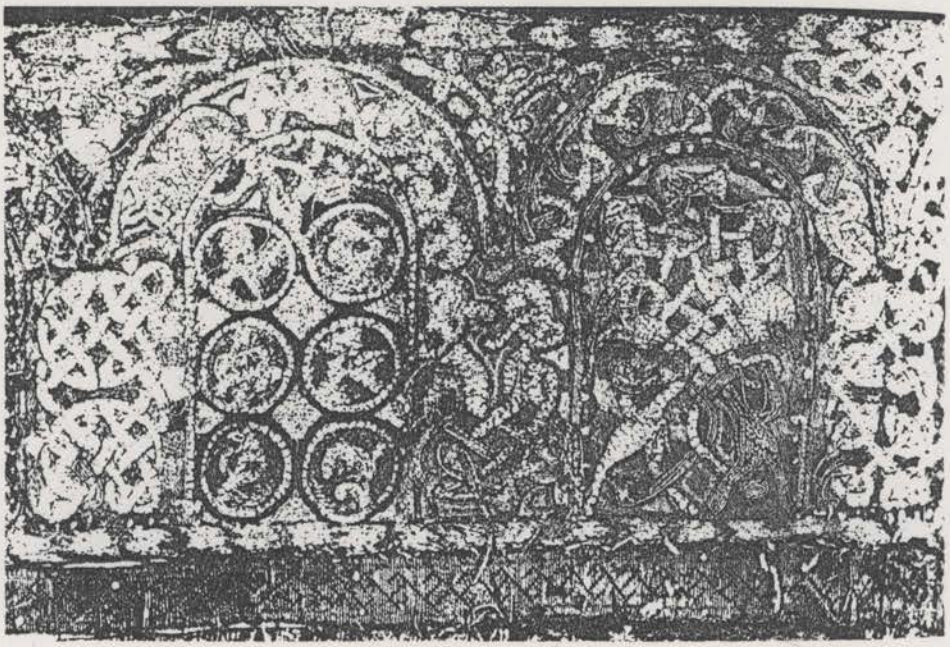
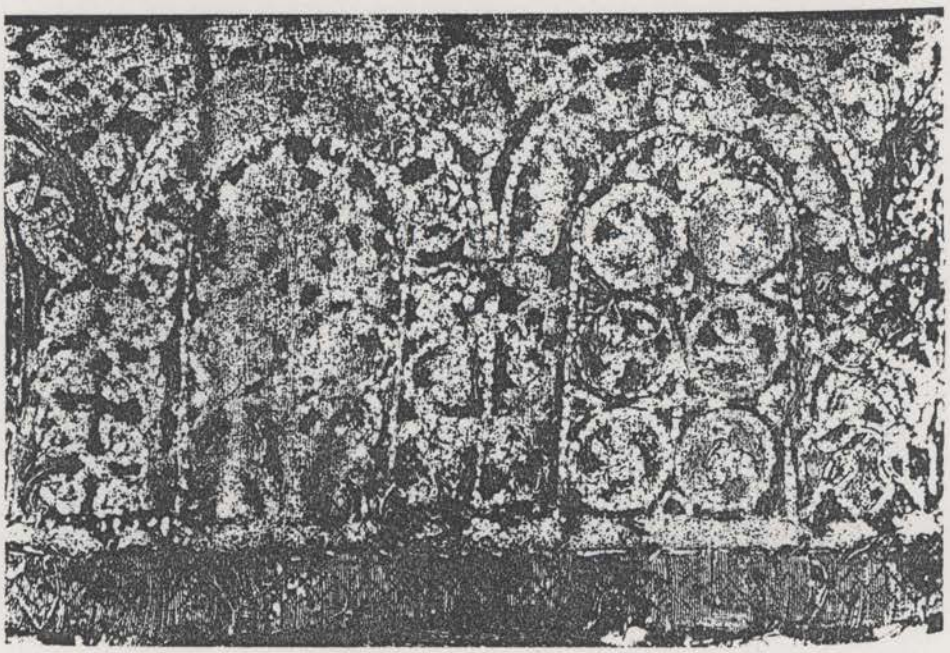


Fig. 15

Fig.16

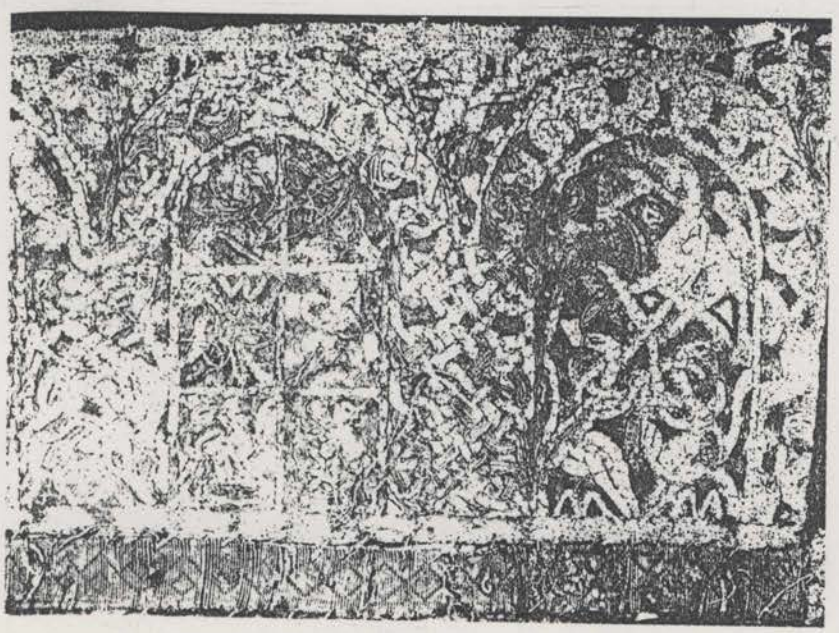


a. Arcade strip I, piers 4–6, plus tablet-woven braid

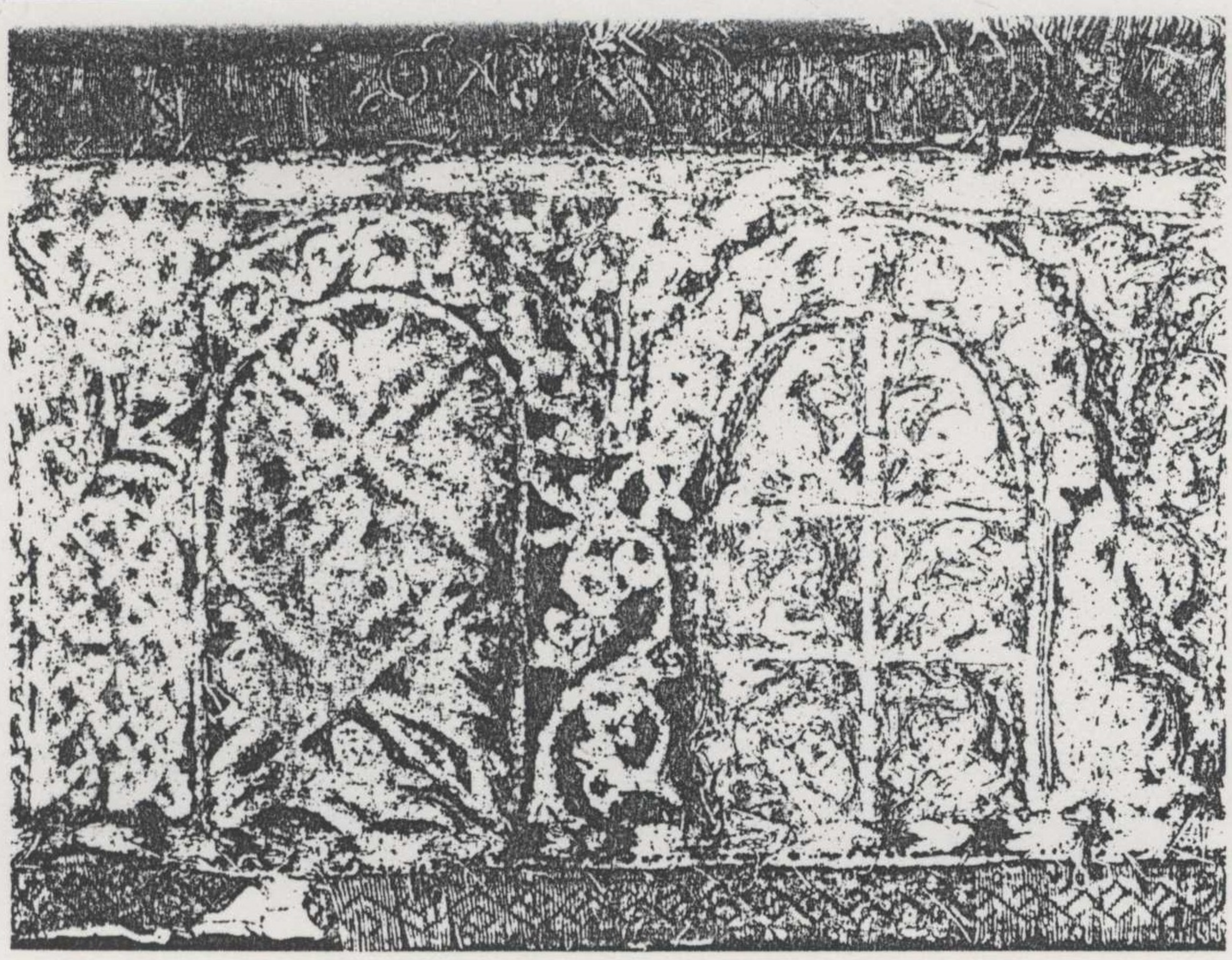


b. Arcade strip I, piers 6–8, plus tablet-woven braid

The *casula*



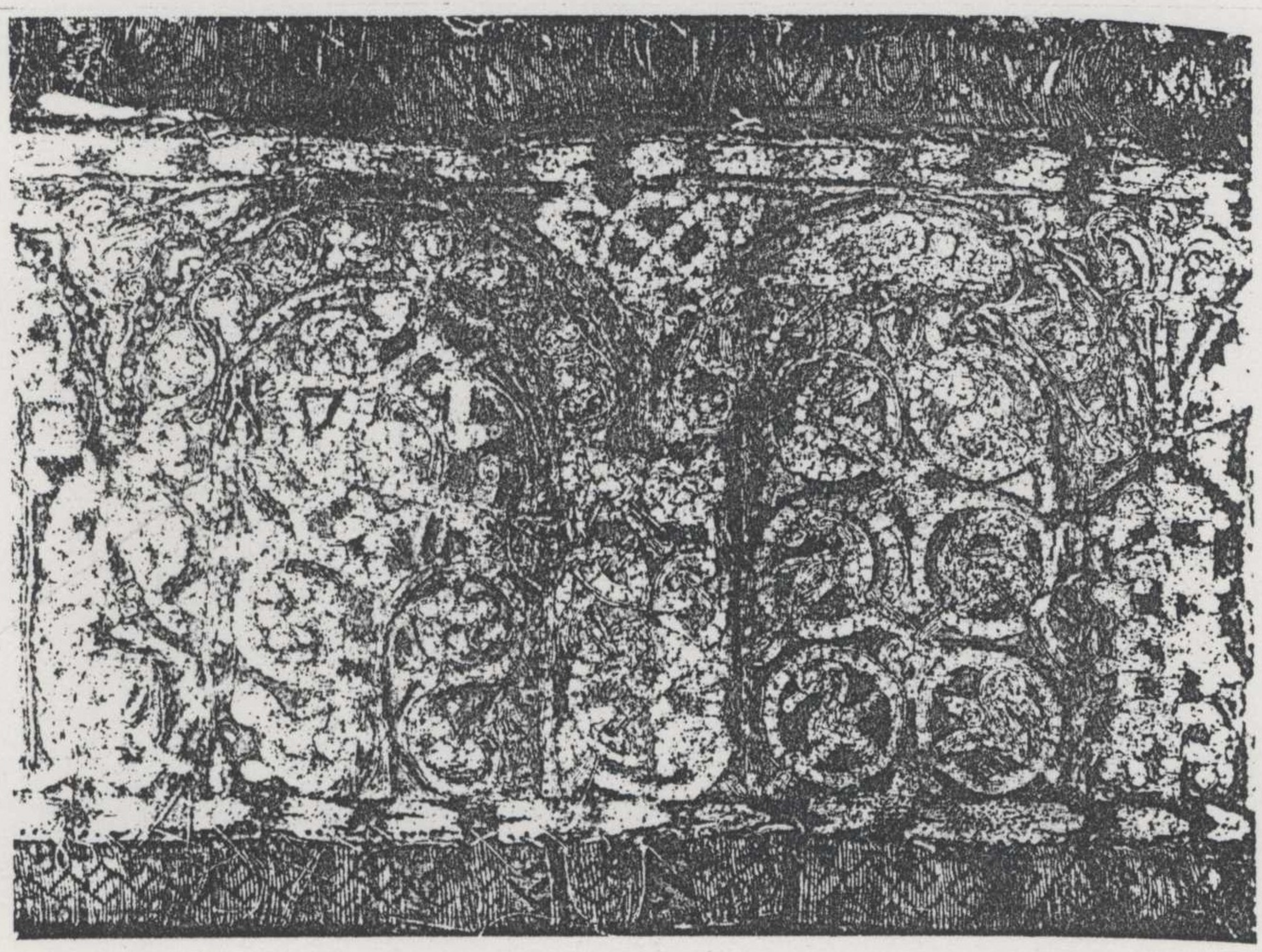
a. Arcade strip I, piers 8–10, plus tablet-woven braid



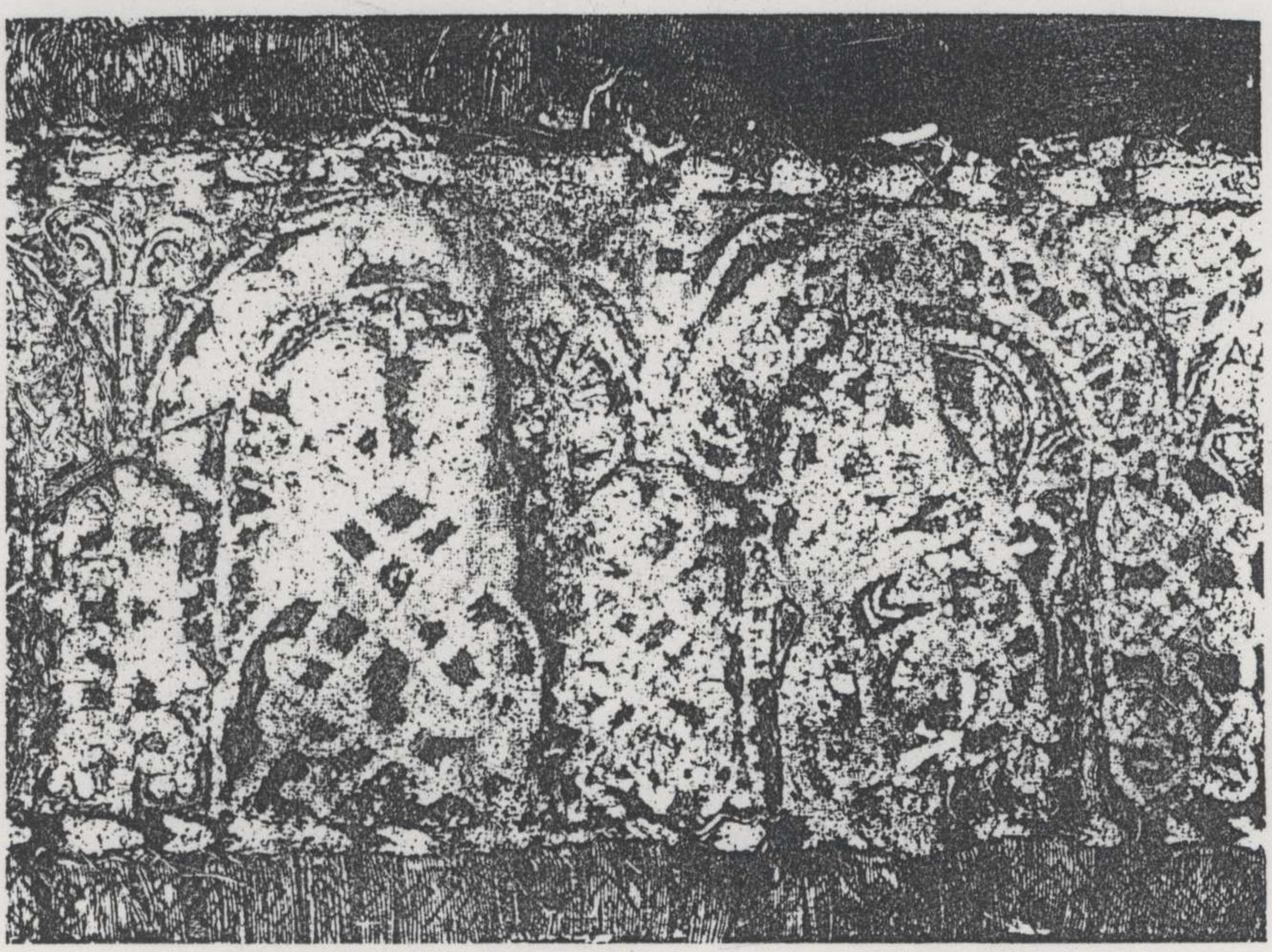
b. Arcade strip II, piers 2–4, plus tablet-woven braids

The *casula*

PLATE LXII

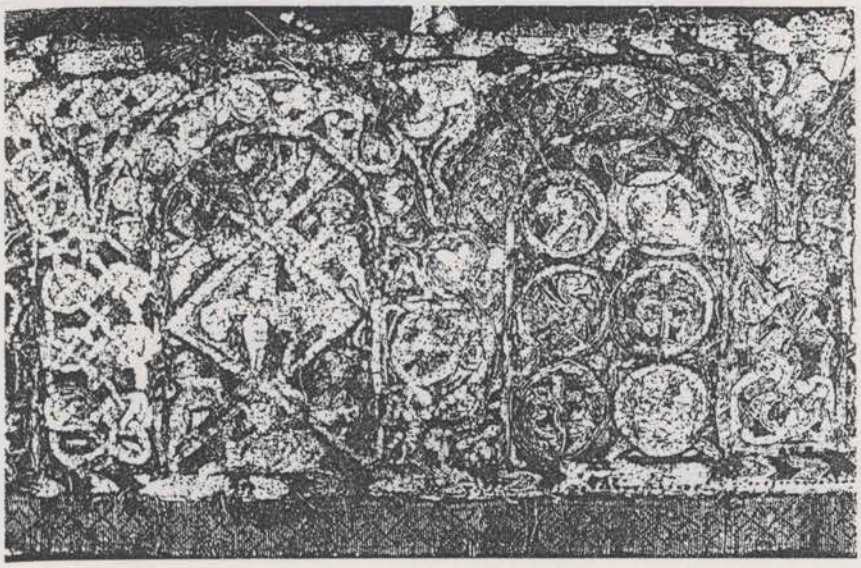


a. Arcade strip II, piers 4–6, plus tablet-woven braids

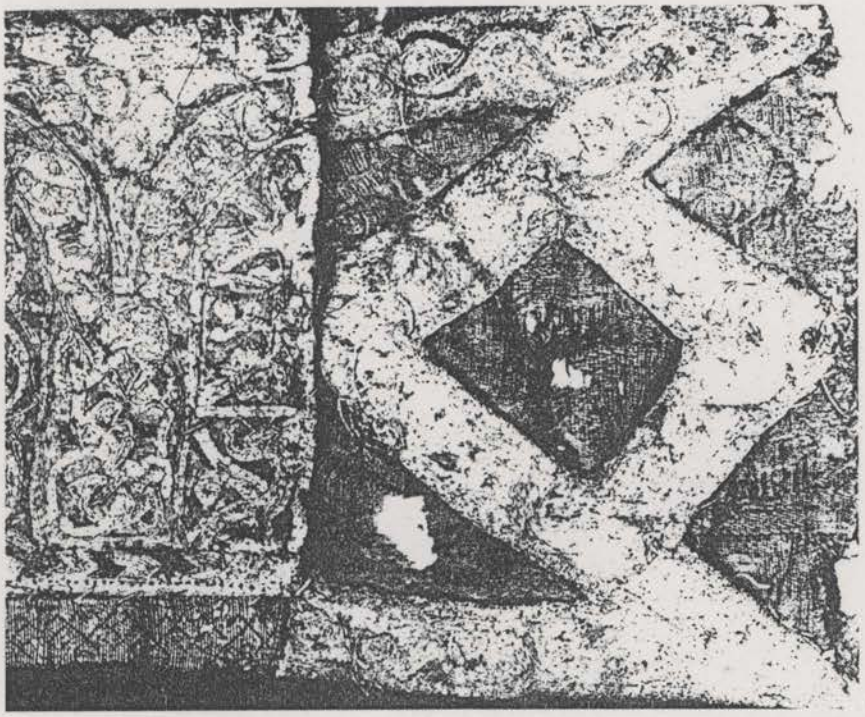


b. Arcade strip II, piers 6–8, plus tablet-woven braids

The *casula*



a. Arcade strip II, piers 8–10, plus tablet-woven braid



b. Arcade strip II, pier 10 and arched field 10, plus tablet-woven braid and monogram II

Fig. 17

a. Bronze strip, Castor, Northants. ($\frac{2}{1}$) (p. 156)

Fig.18

A, B. PANELS, SARCOPHAGUS OF ST. ANDREWS

Fig. 14. Fragment of a stone cross from Dacre. After Bröndsted

Fig. 19

Fig.20

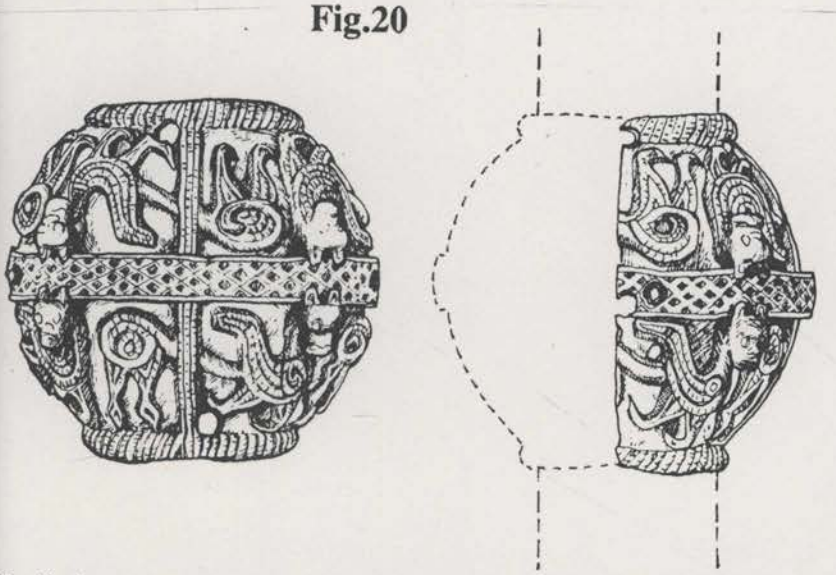


Fig. 12. Attachment of gilt bronze from a knop on the crosier of an abbot or bishop. Width: 3.7 cm

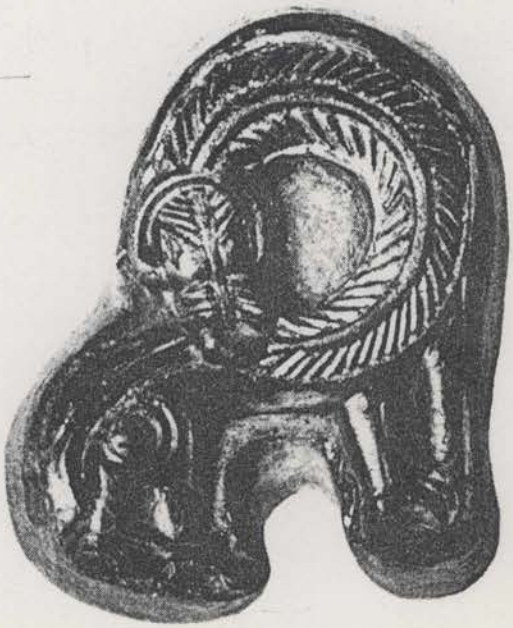


Fig. 21

Fig. 11. Weight with a covering of gilt bronze. Height 3.1 cm

Fig.22

Figure 108 a. Ruthwell Cross detail of east face b. Ruthwell Cross detail of east face c. Ruthwell Cross detail of west face d. Jedburgh slab detail
(All Crown Copyright, Department of Environment Edinburgh)

Fig. 23

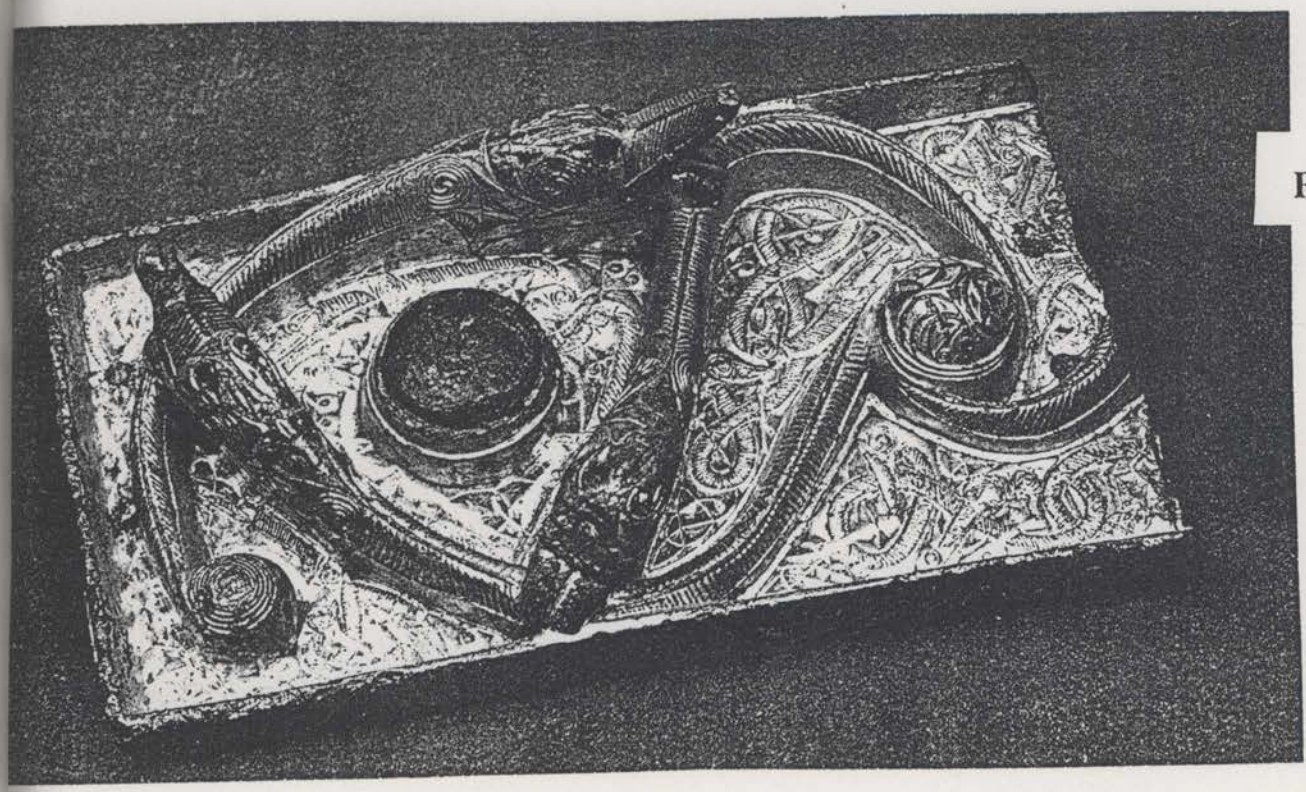
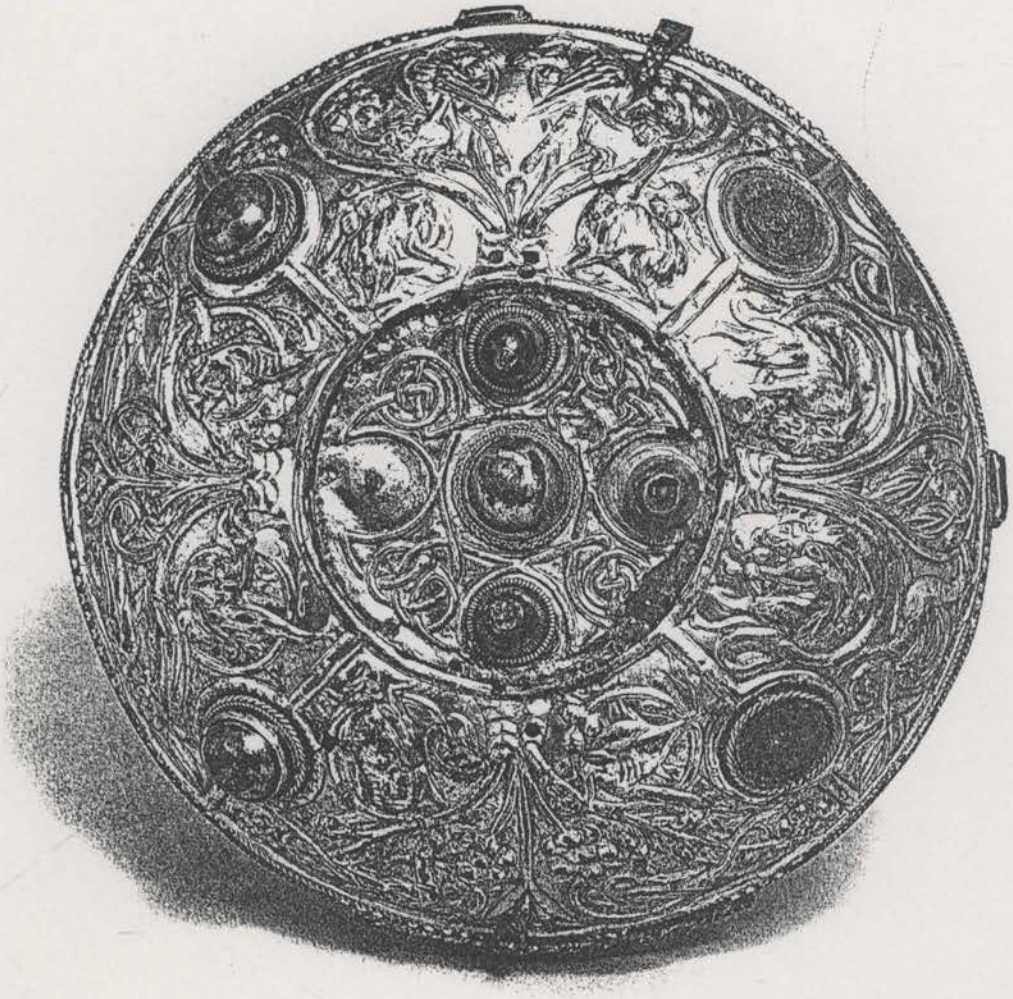


Fig.24

Fig.26

Fig. 25

Fig. 27



134

134

Fig.28

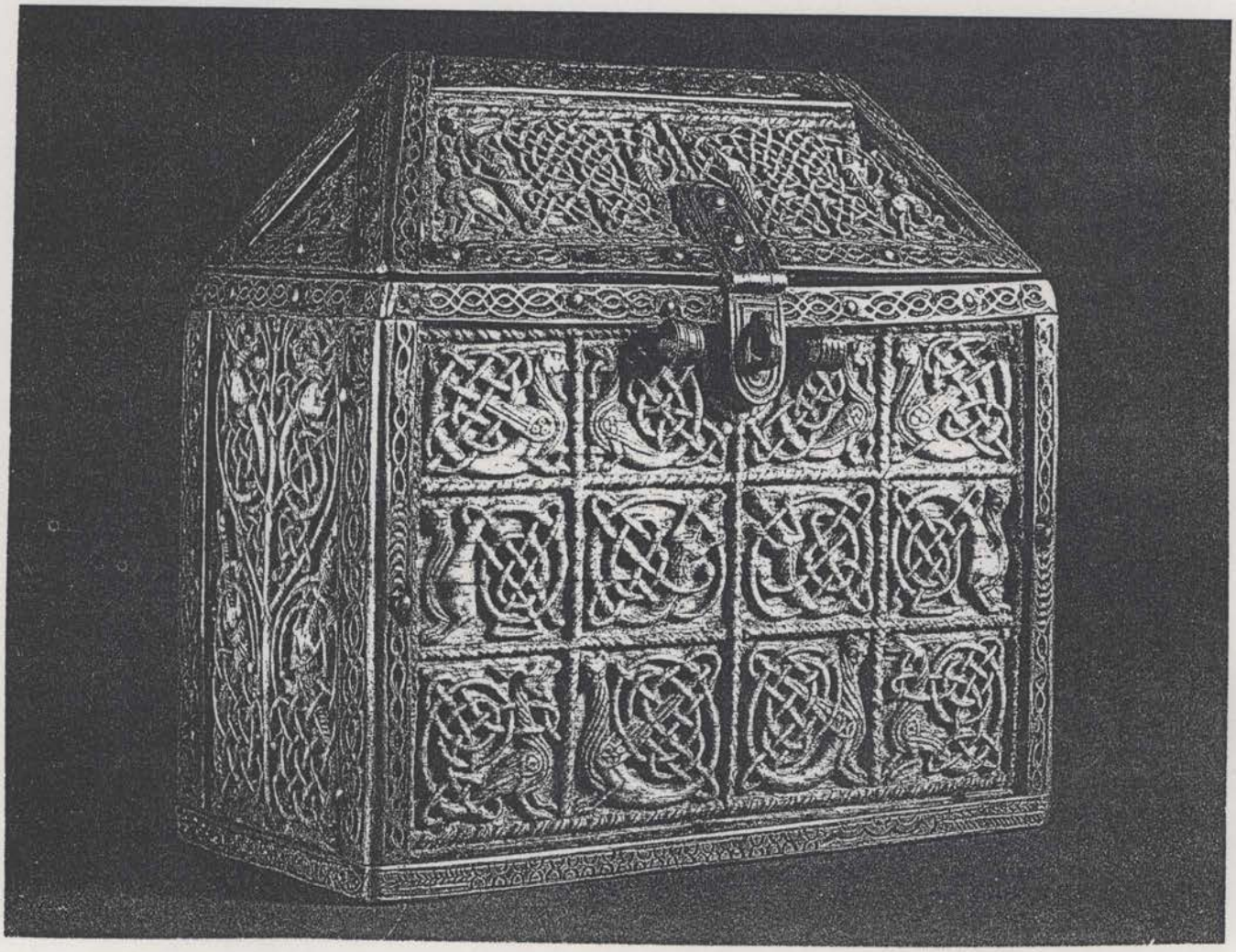


Fig. 29

Fig.30

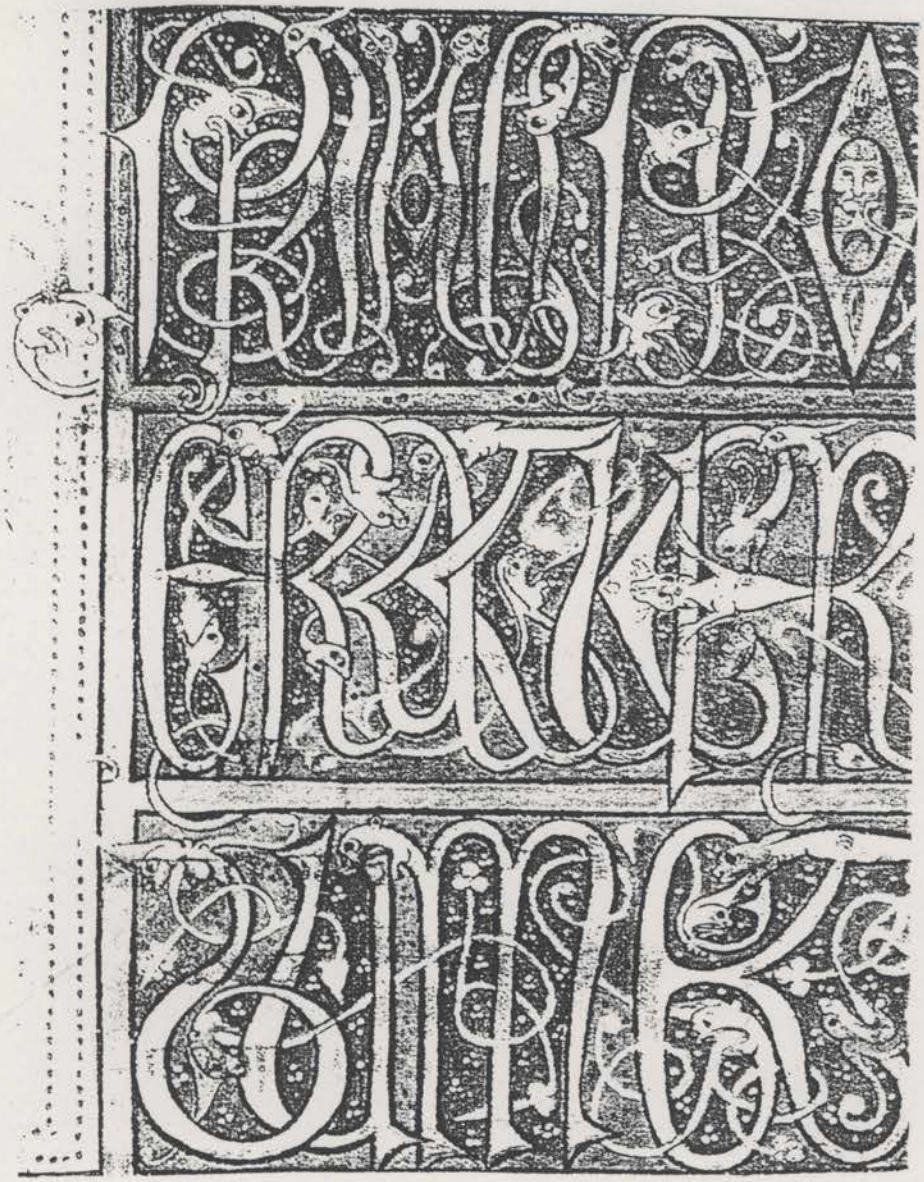


Fig. 31

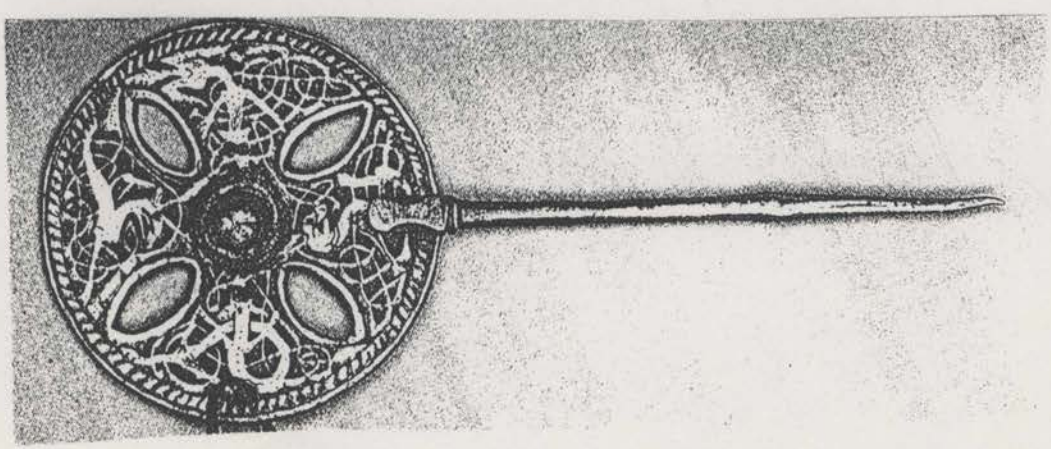


Fig. 32

Fig. 33

Fig. 34

121

Fig. 35

124

Fig. 36

125

Fig. 37

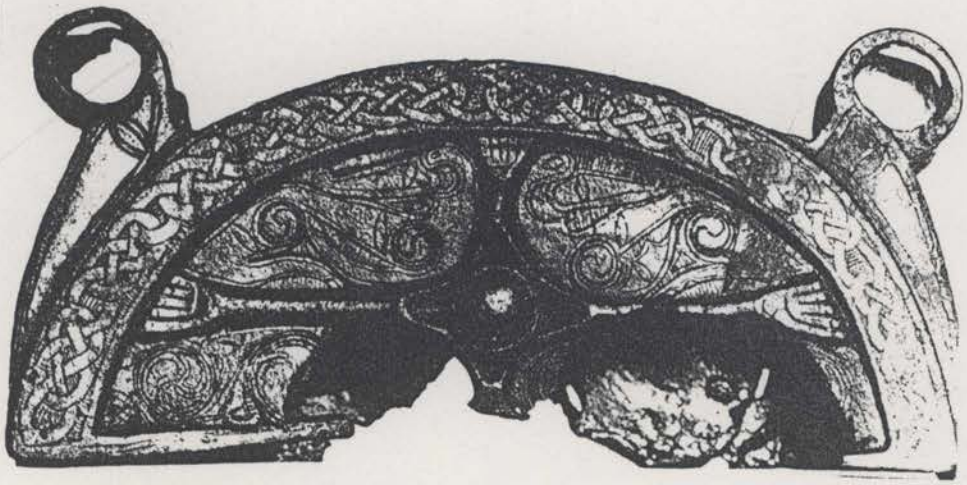
99

Fig. 38

100

Fig. 39

101



THE KILLUA SHRINE, FRONT AND BACK

(SLIGHTLY UNDER NATURAL SIZE)

Fig.40

Fig. 42

Fig. 2. Silver mount from Klinta, Öland, Sweden. 2:1.

Fig. 41

Bronze pendant from Grave 762, Birka, Sweden. 2:1.

Fig. 1. The Alfred Jewel. (Eva Wilson del.). 1:1.

Fig. 43

Fig.44

Fig. 3. 'The man between monsters' on a pendant from Riseley, Kent, grave 56. Scale 2:1

Figs. 10-11. Figures on stamped gold plaques from Helgö, Sweden. 6:1.

Fig. 45

Fig.46

Figs. 15-16. Bronze stamps from Torslunda, Sweden. 1:1.

Fig. 47

6:7. Examples of Adam and Eve wearing clothing: A. Donaghmore Cross, Co. Down; B. Graignamanagh Cross, Co. Kilkenny; C. Ullard Cross, Co. Kilkenny; D. Dacre Cross, Northumbria; E. Farnell Cross, Forfarshire, Scotland.

Fig. 6. Bronze plate from Torslunda, Sweden. 1:1

Fig. 7. Figures on stamped bronze plaque from Sutton Hoo, England (after Hauck). ca. 1:1.

Fig.48

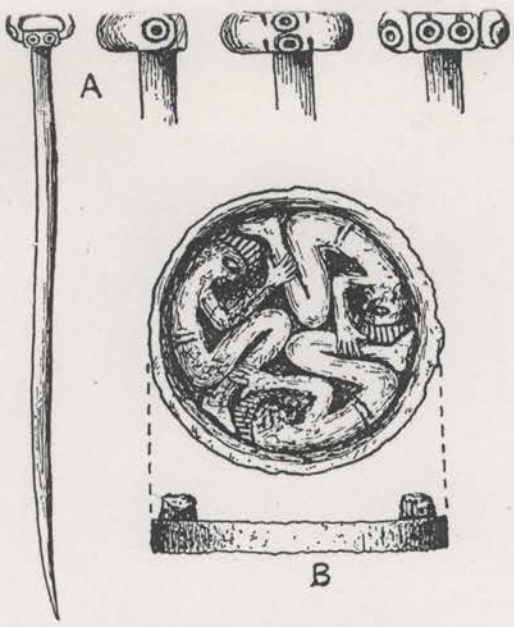


Fig. 49

FIG. 6A, B.—PIN AND BROOCH.

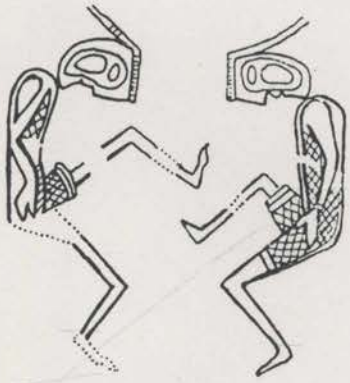
Fig. 51

Fig.52

Fig. 53

Fig.54

(4)



(5)

(6)

FIGS. 4–6. Bronze gilt mount from Halsan, human figures on the mount and reconstruction of ornamentation.

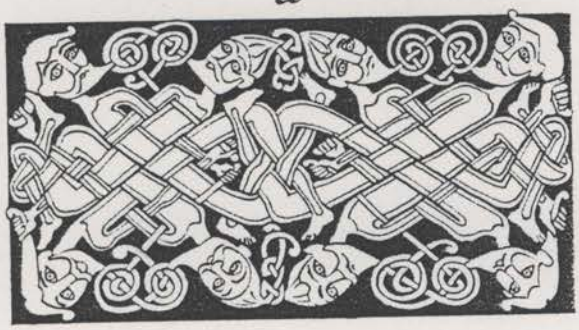
Fig. 55

Fig. 46. Ornament of the tingle of the Oseberg ship. After Simpson.

Fig. 56

Monasterboice, a; *Kells*, b; *Ahenny*, c.

a



b c

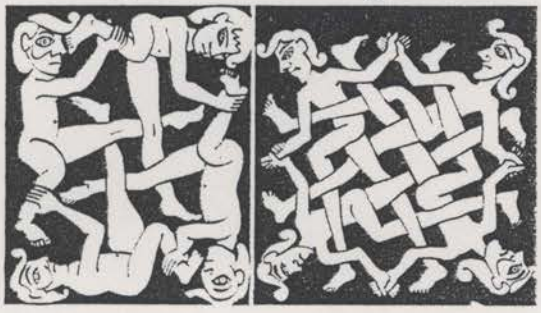


Fig.58

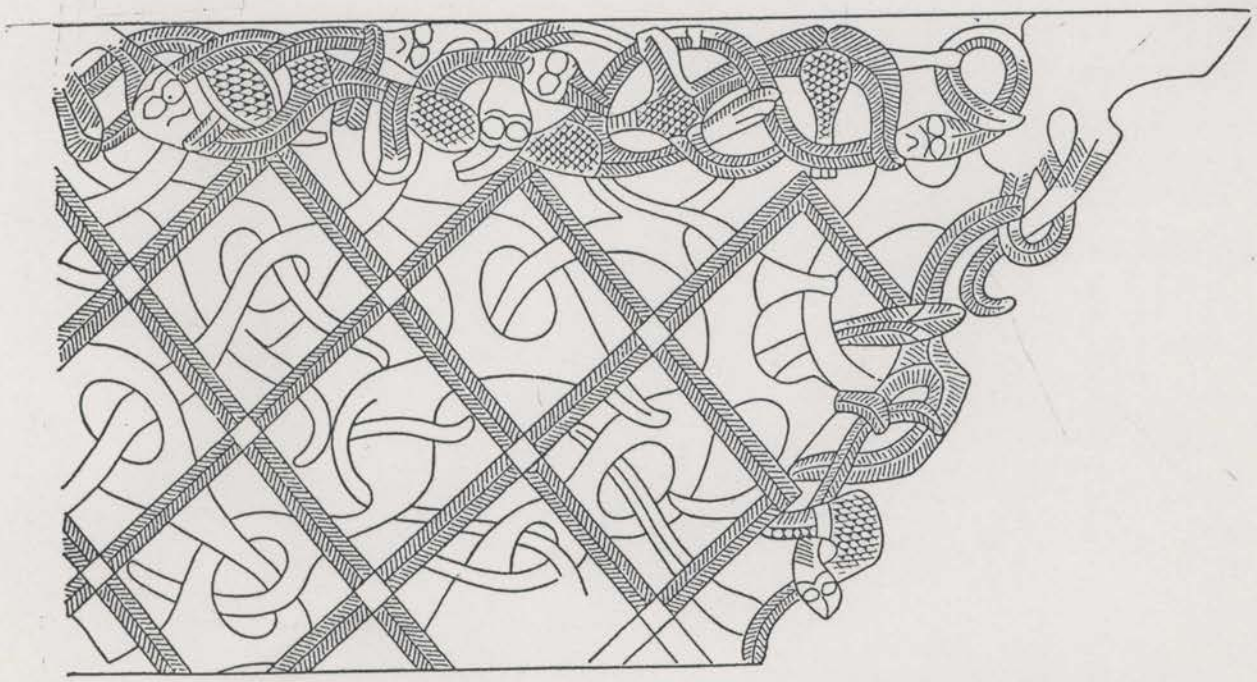


FIG. 30. Ornament of the 'baroque impressionist's' sledge from Oseberg. *Viking Ships Museum, Oslo.*

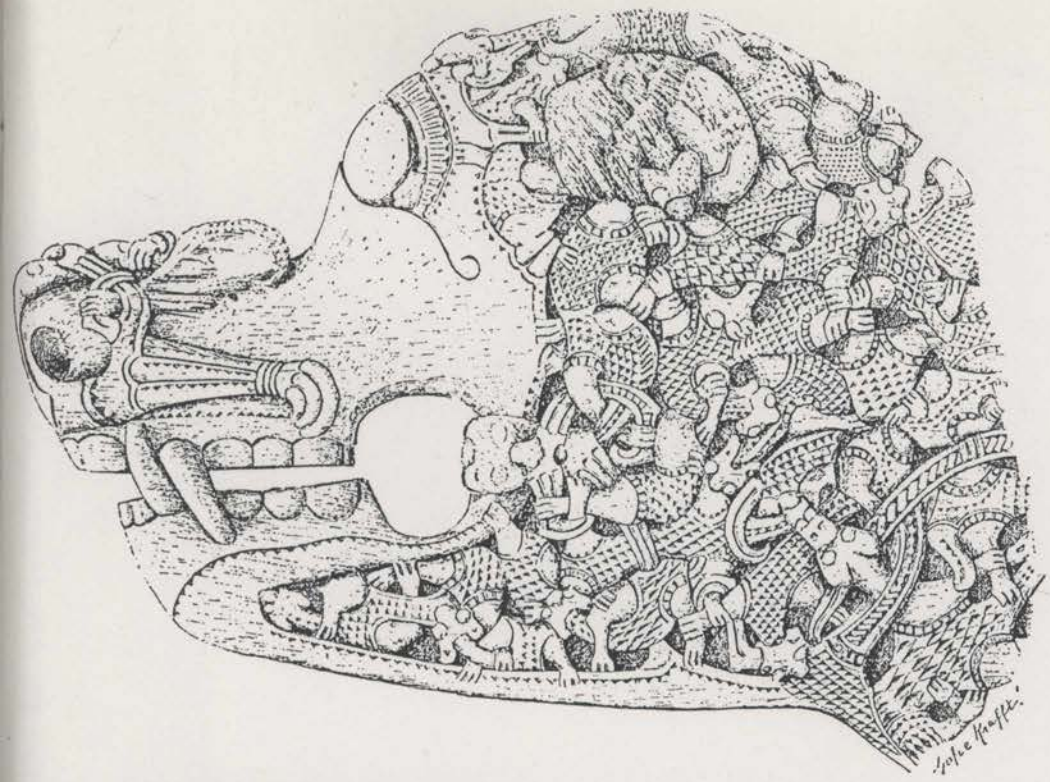


FIG. 21. Detail of the 'Carolingian' animal-head from Oseberg. *Viking Ships Museum, Oslo.*

Fig. 59

Fig. 61

Fig. 11. Carvings on the stem of the Oseberg ship. About 800. (After Schetelig, 1917)

Fig.60

Fig. 62

Fig. 8. Detail from the carvings on a post in the Oseberg find. About 800. (After Schetelig, 1917).

Fig. 63

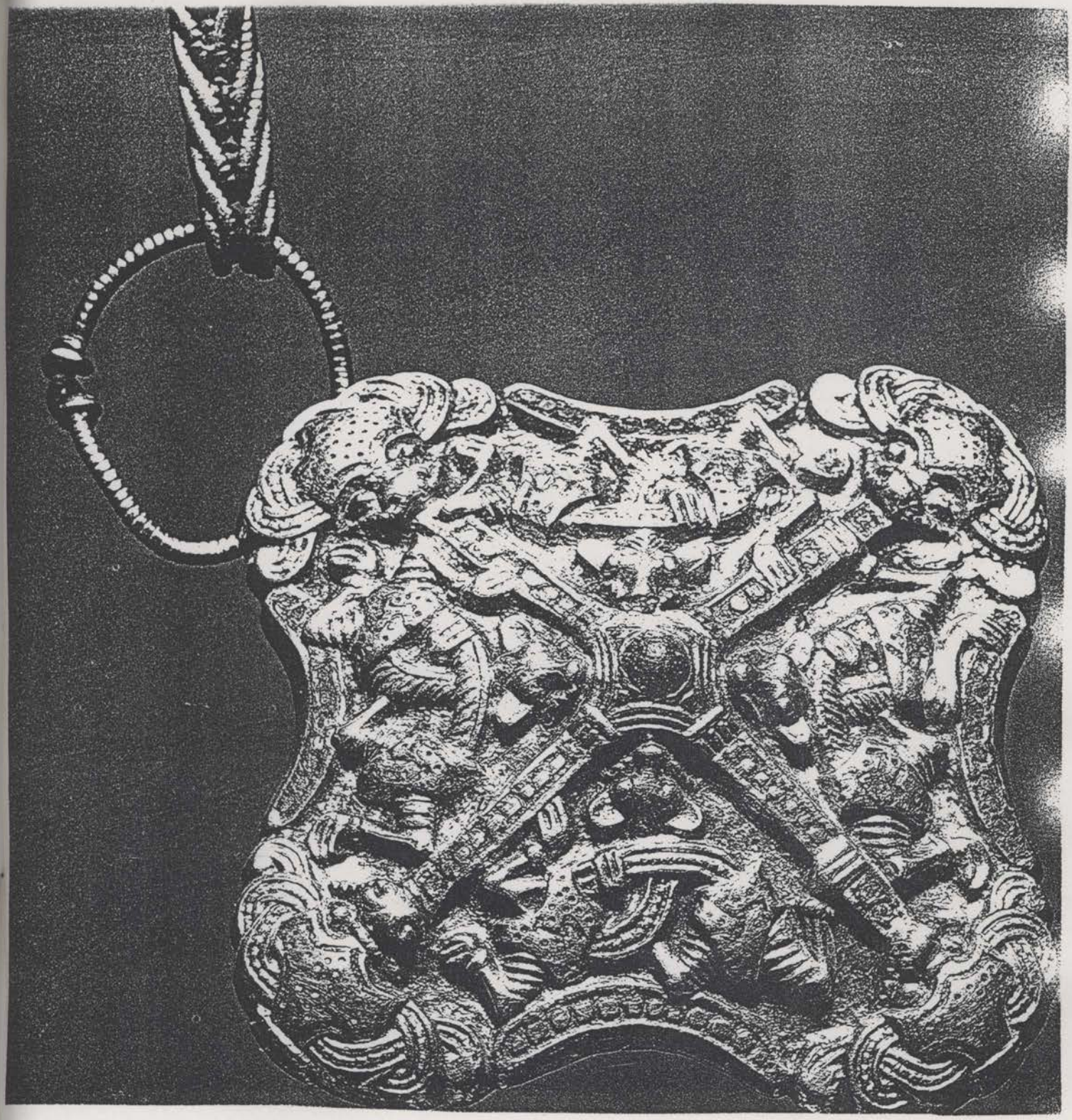
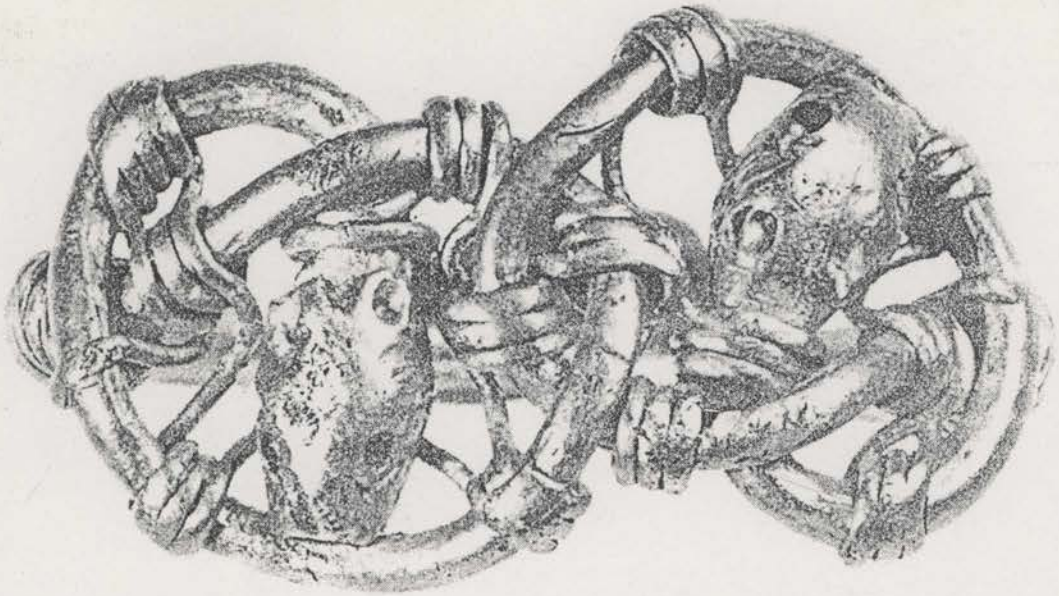


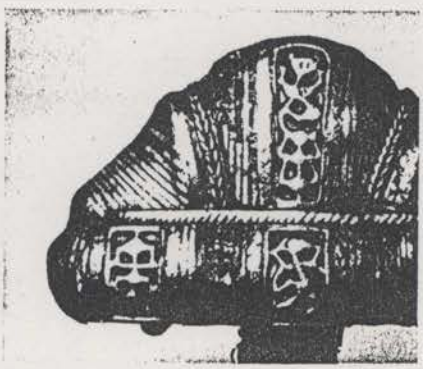
Fig.64

Fig. 65

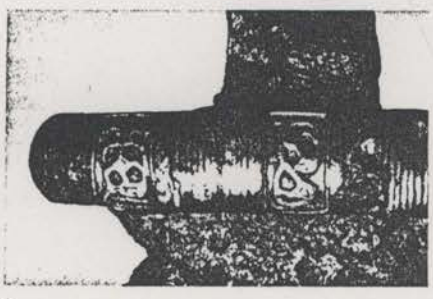


8(*a*)

$\frac{4}{1}$



b.



c.

a.

Fig.66

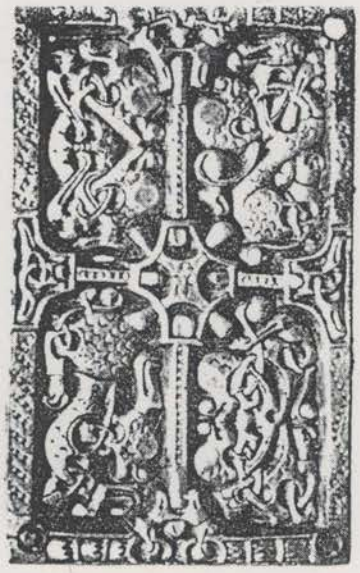
Fig. 67

Fig.68

e.

f.

a.



b.

c.

Fig. 69

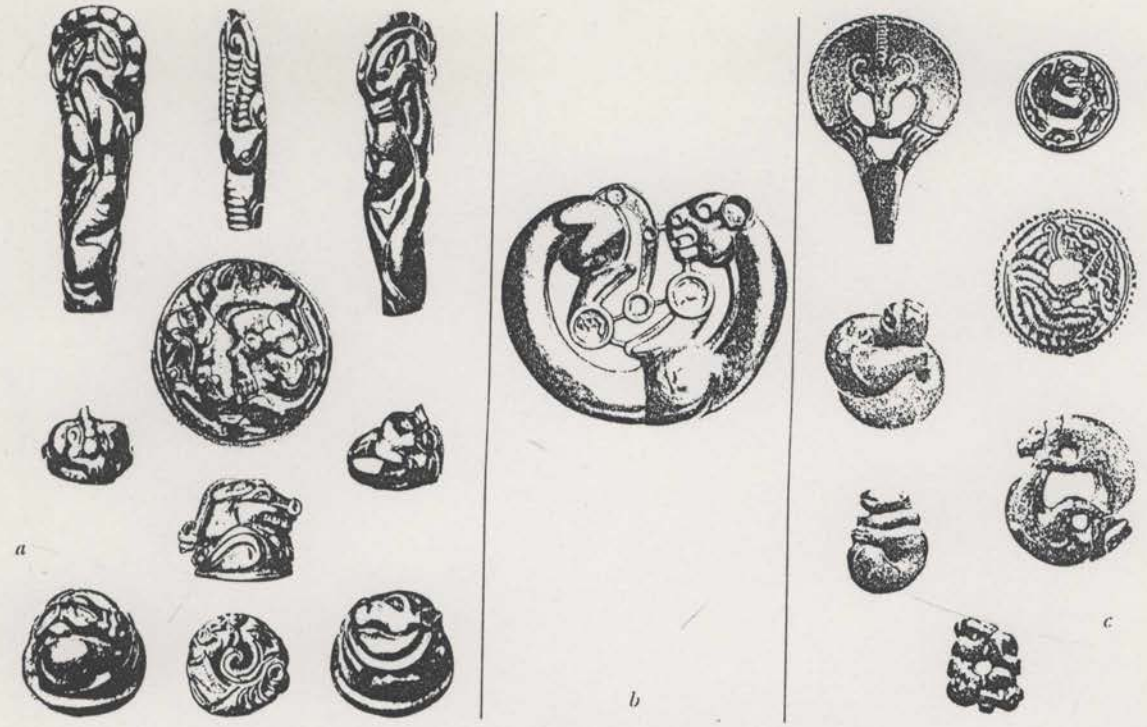


Fig.70

PLATE 4. Animal-style pieces from Siberia and Norway. Objects from widely separated sites show striking similarities. (*a*, *c*) Gold, bronze, and bone, found in Russian and Norwegian excavations. (*b*) Gold, found in Siberia.

Fig. 71

Fig.72

Fig. 73

Fig.74

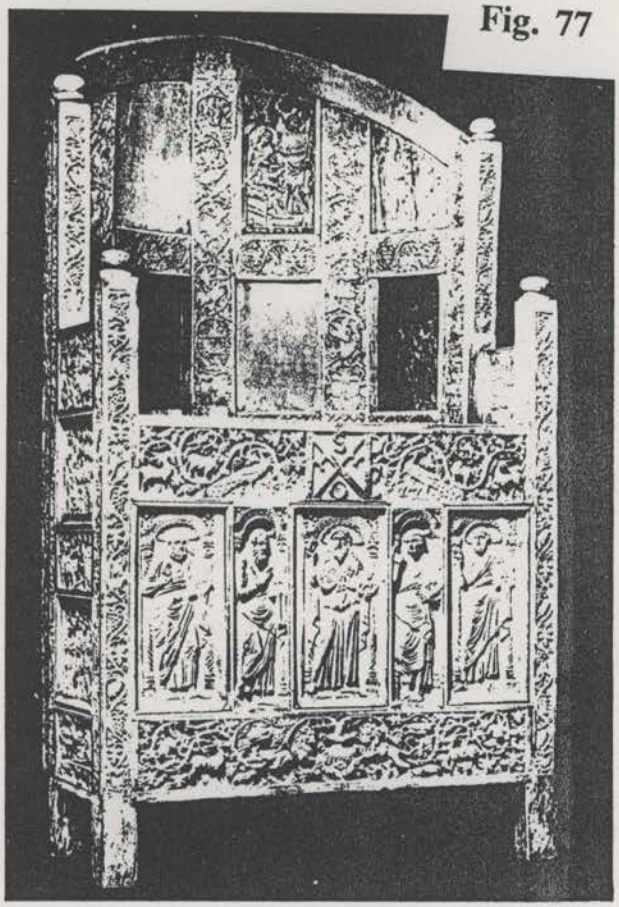
85. Detail of Rasūlid brass tray.

Fig. 75

A. SARCOPHAGUS (6TH CENT.) OF ARCHBISHOP THEODORE IN S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSE, NEAR RAVENNA

Fig.76

Fig. 77



Cliché Alinari.

CHAIRE DE L'ÉVÊQUE MAXIMIEN A RAVENNE, VI^e siècle.

Fig.78

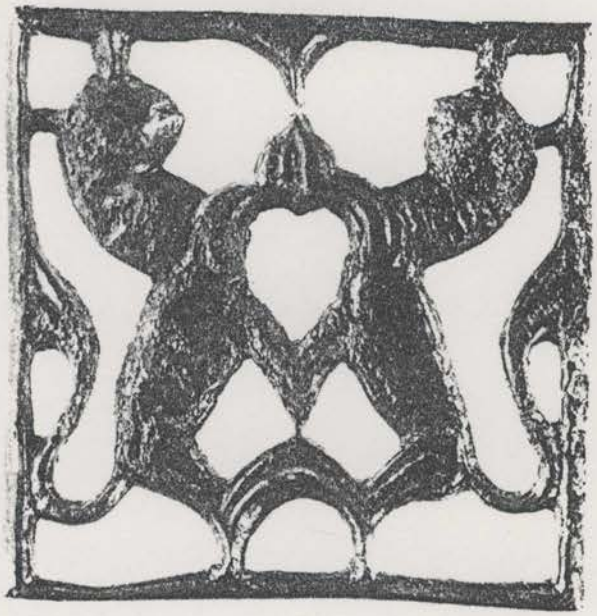
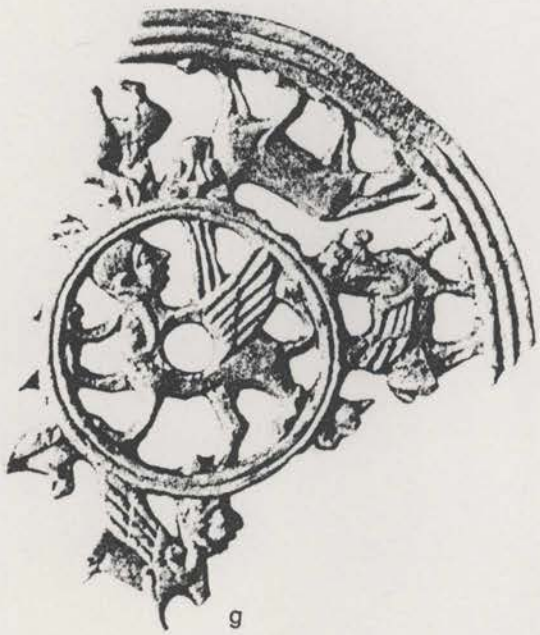


Fig.80



g

Fig. 79

Fig. 81

Fig. 82

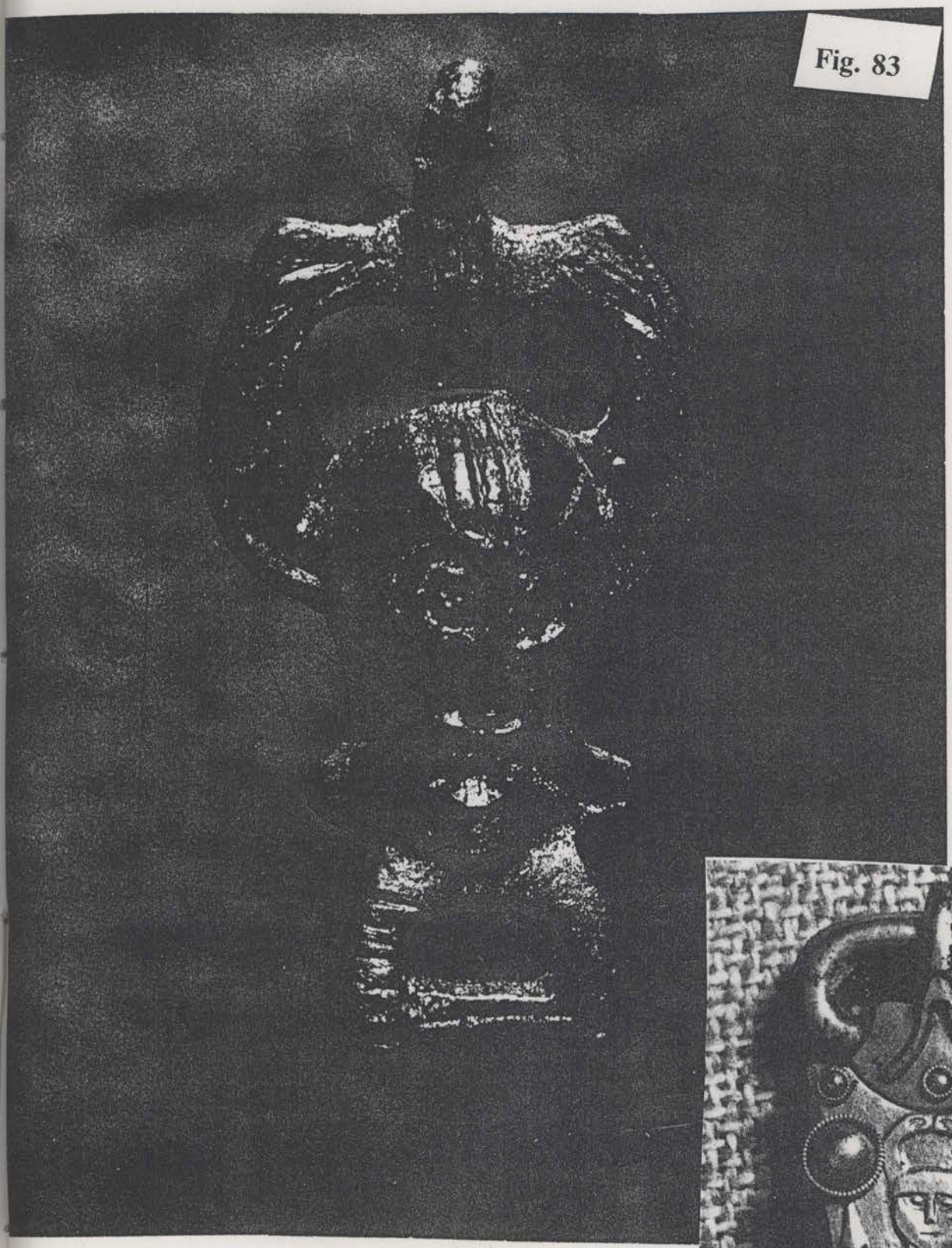


Fig. 83

Fig.84

Fig.86

Fig. 87

Fig.88

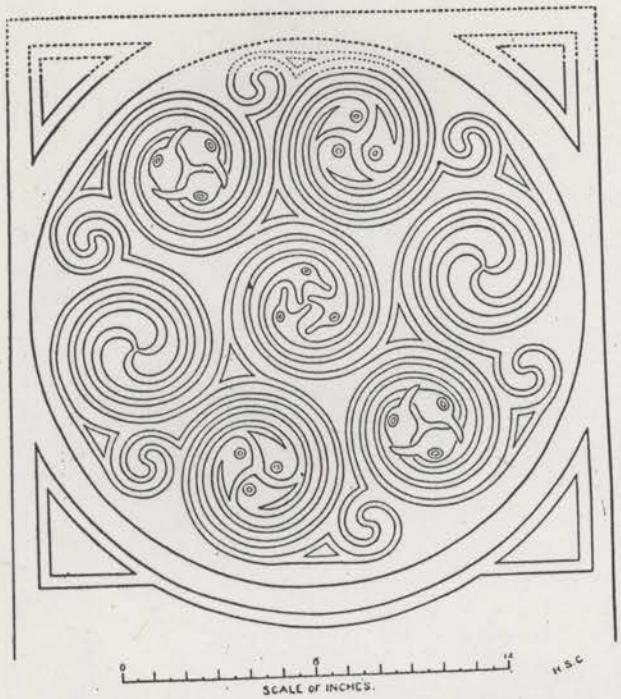
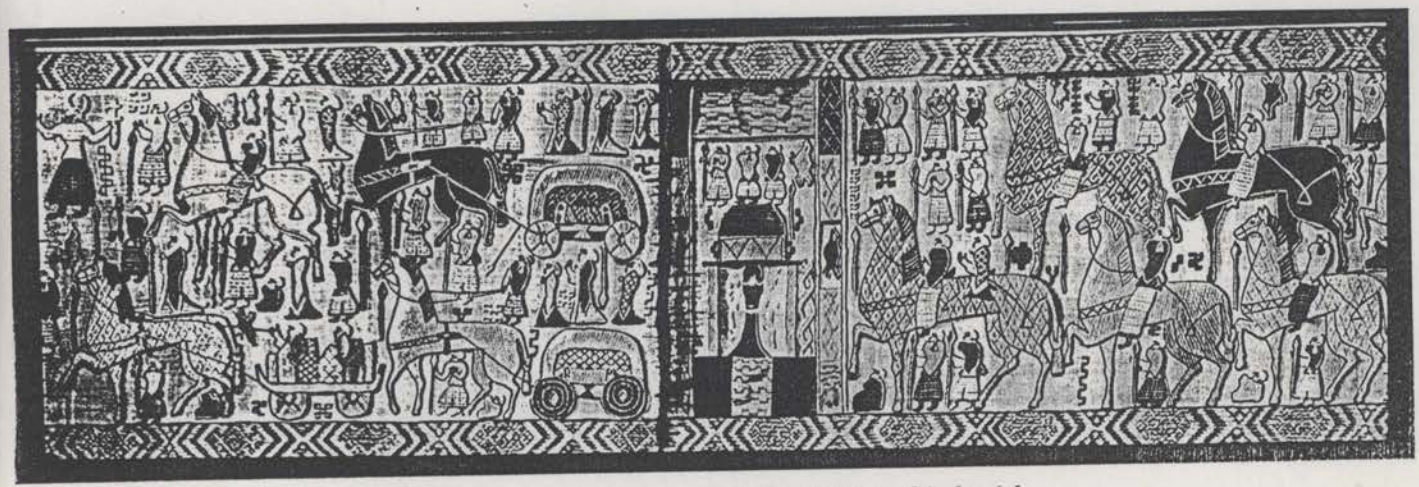


Fig.90

FIG. 2.—SPIRAL PATTERN ON STONE AT TYBROUGHNEY, COUNTY KILKENNY.

FIG. 3. Reconstructed ornamentation of Plate 2*a*.

Fig. 91



Reconstruction of a tapestry from the Oseberg ship-burial.

Fig.92

Fig. 93

Gold foil from Klepp, Rogaland, Norway, possibly showing Freyr and Gerðr.

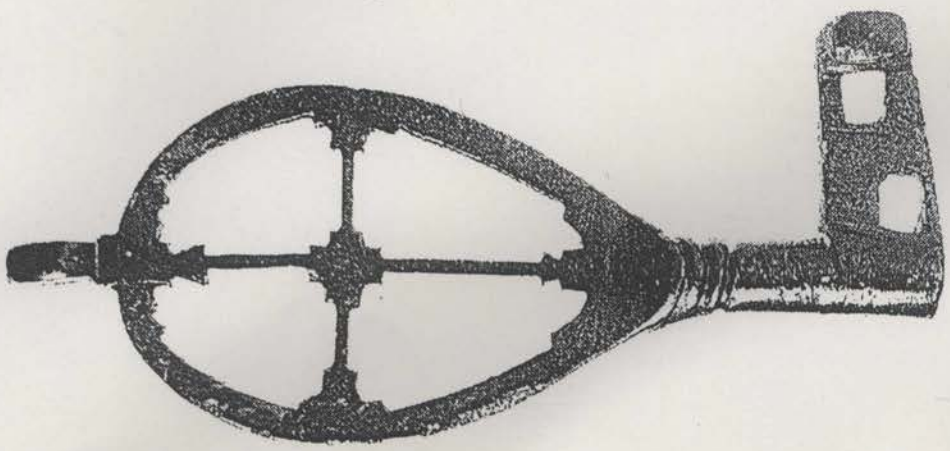
Fig.94

Fig. 95

24 a/7

24 a/15

24 a/16



b

Fig.96

73a

73b

Fig. 97

Fig.98

Fig.100

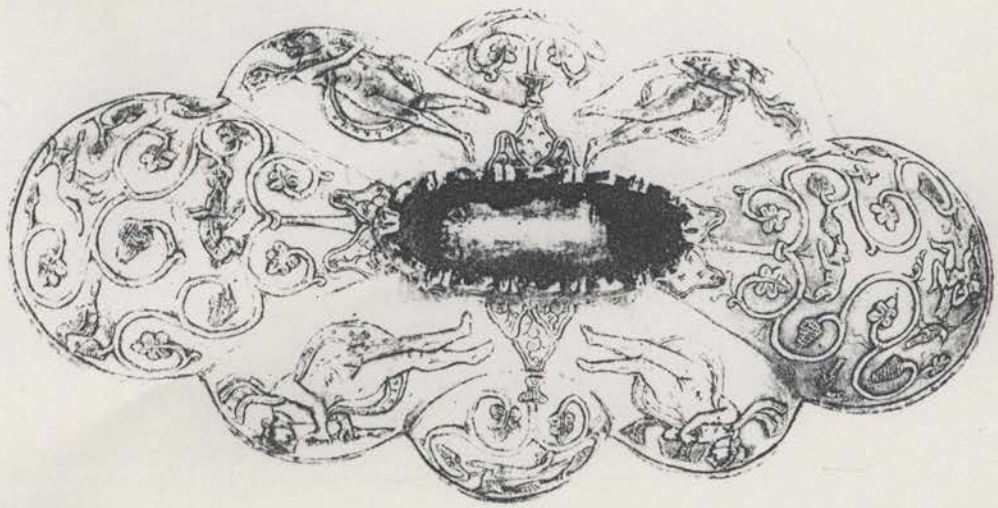
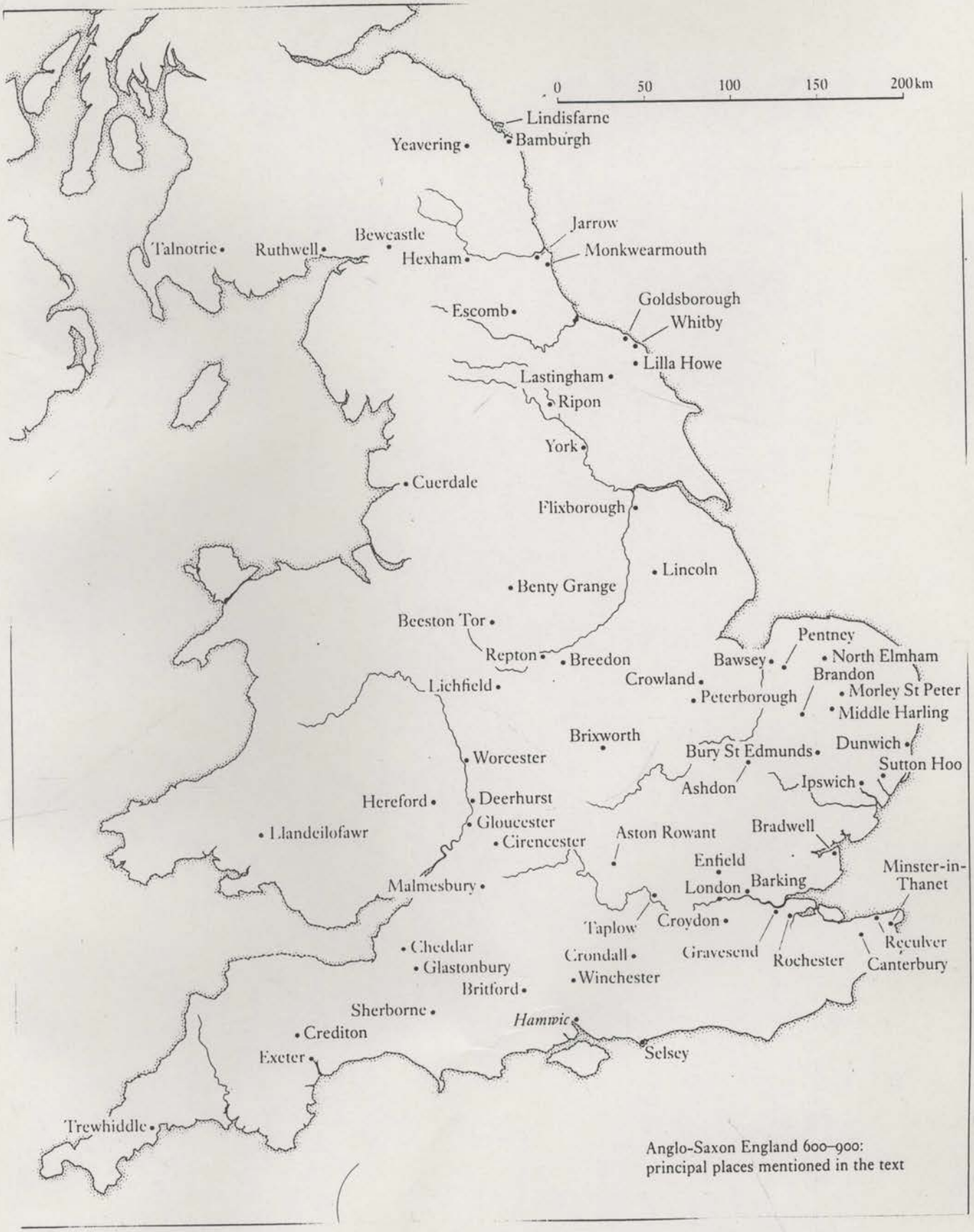


Fig. 99

Fig. 101

Fig. 102

Fig. 37 Silver brooch from Ödeshög, Östergötland. Length 8·5 cm.



Anglo-Saxon England 600–900:
principal places mentioned in the text

Map 1

Map 2

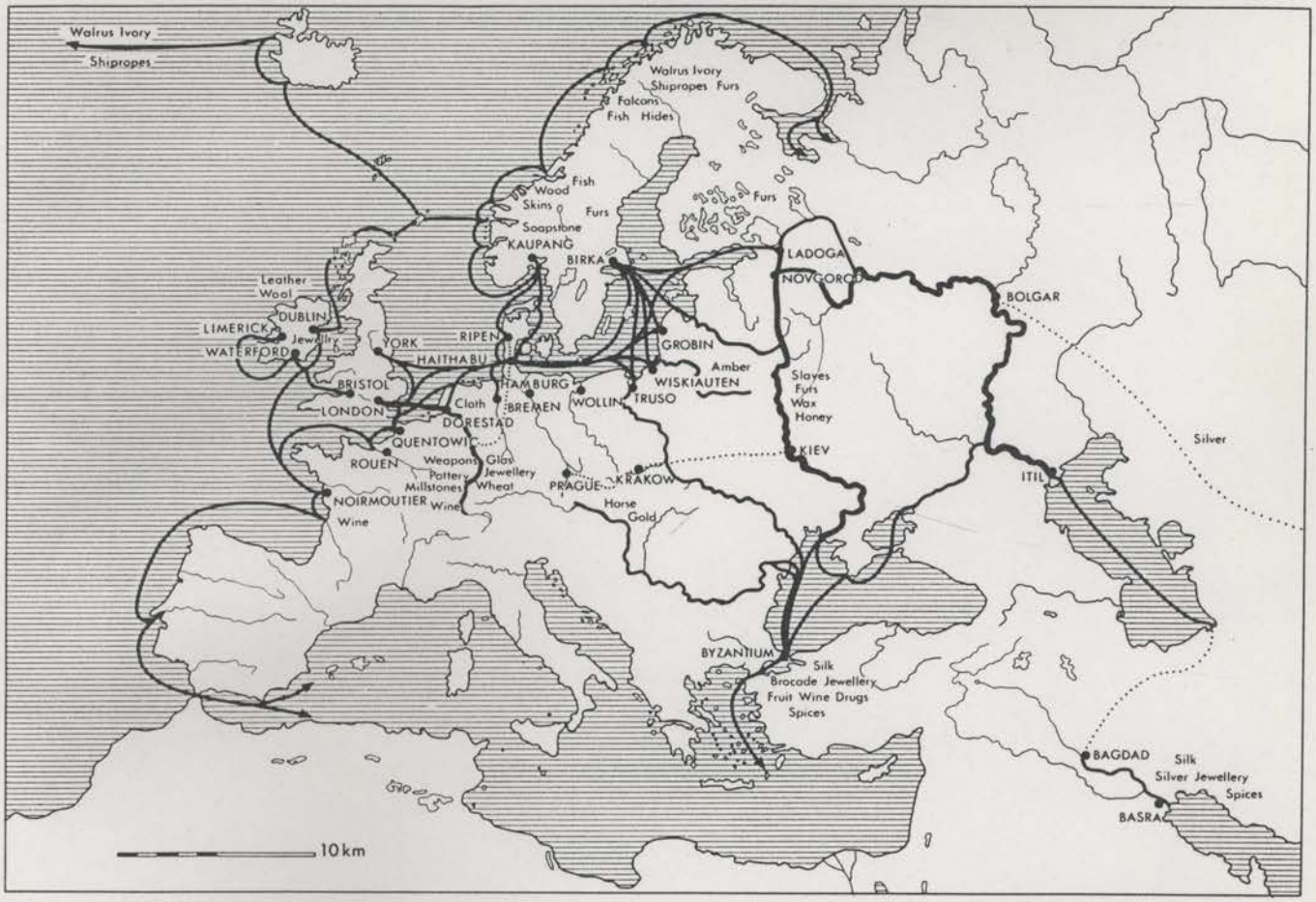
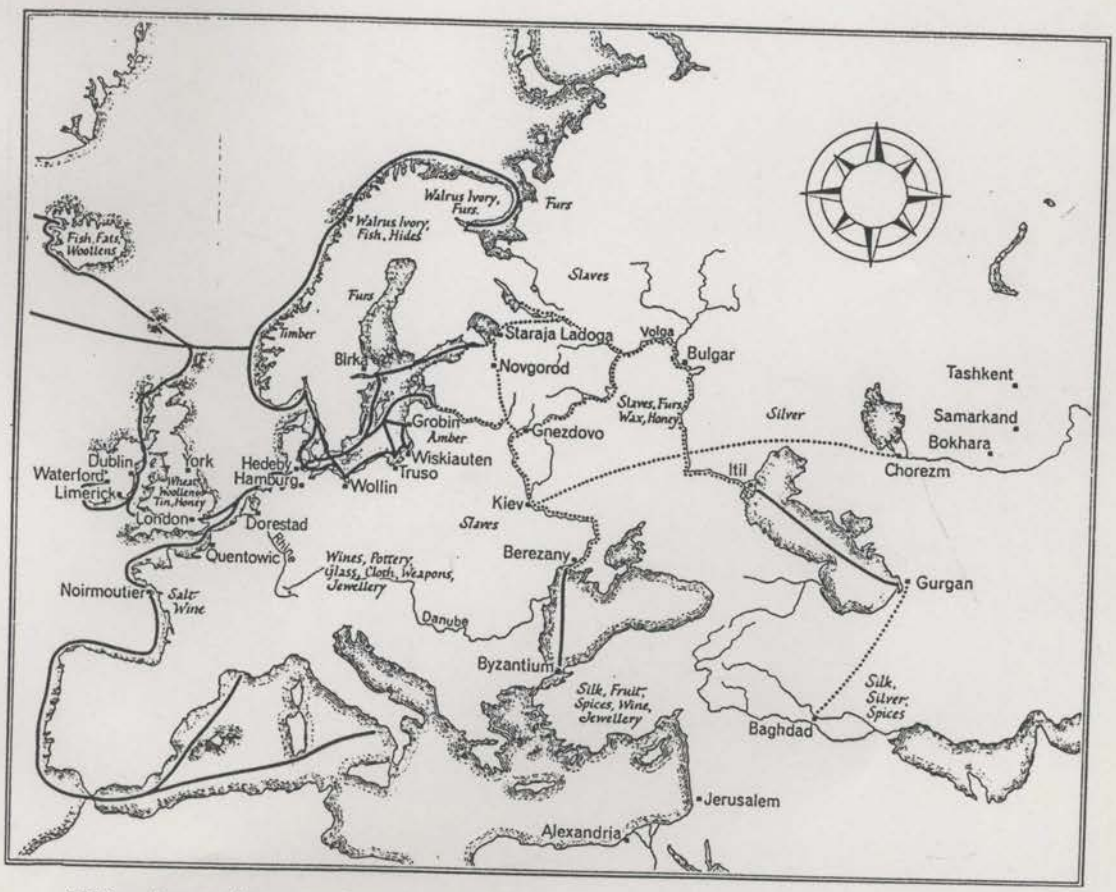


Fig 18 Map of the main trade-routes in central, northern and eastern Europe during the Viking period.

Map 3



Viking Age trade routes. Sea routes are shown as solid lines, inland routes as dotted lines.


IRELAND
0 10 20 30
Rathlin Island
Carndonagh
Coleraine
Fahan Mura
Broighter
Londonderry
Inishkeel
Portnoo
Castlederg
LOUGH NEAGH
Bangor
Belfast
Donaghmore
Ballyshannon Bay
Inishmurray
Devenish Island
LOUGH ERNE
Loughnashade
Armagh
Downpatrick
Tedavnet
Sligo
Clones
Kilnasaggart
IRISH SEA
Ballymote
Killycluggin
Keshcarrigan
Cornalaragh
Mellifont Abbey
Kells
Newgrange
Drogheda
Bettystown
Ballintober
Castlerea
SHANNON R.
Tara
Fourknocks
Templecross
Cong
Castlestrange
Ross
Lagore
Lambay Island
Moylough
BOYNE R.
Athlone
Dublin
Kilmainham
Annaghdown
Attymon
Clonmacnoise
Turoe
Derrinboy
Monasterevin
Aran Islands
Glendalough
Wicklow
AVOCA R.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Roscrea
Aghaboe
Gorteenreagh
Ardcrony
Durrow
Mooghaun North
Inis Cealtra
SHANNON R.
Kilkenny
Holycross
Limerick
Lough Gur
Cashel
Mouth of the Shannon
Ballylongford
Ardagh
Tipperary
Killamery
Ahenny
Wexford
Illauntannig
Tullylease
SUIR R.
Waterford
Lismore
Dungarvan
Garryduff
Cork
Garranes
Skellig
ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL

Map 4