

so doing she has immeasurably enriched our understanding of this period and its complex interconnections.

Joe Flatman
Department of Archaeology, Flinders University

Lang, James, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture Volume VI: Northern Yorkshire*

(Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001) hardback; 540 pages; black and white illustrations; RRP £135; ISBN 0197262562

On one level, this is a uniform contribution to the British Academy's high quality and extremely valuable *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* series. Yet on another level, it is an exemplary embodiment of all that is good about early medieval scholarship. It was written in the final years of the life of the late James Lang, whose sad death occurred in 1997. For the last year of his life, Lang knew that his time was limited and 'struggled heroically' to finish the catalogue; he almost succeeded. The work was completed by a team of his colleagues, primarily Derek Craig and Rosemary Cramp, and brought to press four years later. The result is not quite seamless. That was not the intention, as Cramp points out in the introduction: 'although Jim gave *carte blanche* to alter anything we thought necessary, we have tried to leave his work as much as possible untouched so that his inimitable voice comes through.' That voice can clearly be heard in such gems as 'one of these cruciform panels depicts a quadruped elegantly stepping down the chequered border, whereas the one above is contorted as though it has slipped on the stairs' (33). There are minor inconsistencies and disagreements which are mostly explained in footnotes, enabling the interested reader to track the points of difference between the various contributors.

Following the pattern of earlier volumes in the series, the catalogue is preceded by preliminary analytical and discursive chapters on earlier research, historical background, regional geology, monument forms, ornament, schools of sculpture and inscriptions. The geology and inscriptions chapters were written by John R Senior and John Higgitt respectively, following the earlier volumes' precedent of drawing on specialised expertise. The remainder was written by Lang, with some lacunae filled by Cramp. In the *Corpus* tradition, these chapters, although not as lengthy as in some other volumes, are informative, bringing together the best of existing scholarship. There is good extensive discussion of plantscroll, reference to recent work on units of measure, use of templates and measurement analysis, and discussion of significant influences such as the Carolingian connection associated with Alcuin of York. The discussion

of schools of sculpture is adventurous in places, but well argued and convincing, although the section on the 'lorgnette or spine-and-boss group' by Cramp did not convince this reviewer that the sculptures featuring that motif justify classification as a school.

The catalogue entries are outstanding, giving detailed particulars of location, discovery, condition, dimensions, and description, as well as some discussion. The remaining volumes of the *Corpus* are awaited with mounting impatience, as the value to scholarship of this kind of information becomes increasingly apparent. I take exception to the categorisation by Cramp (270) of a fragment of rectangular section decorated on four faces as part of a cross-shaft, since there is insufficient evidence to be sure that it was once part of a cross. This label is generally avoided by Lang, who prefers the more conservative 'shaft'. The single most impressive monument in the catalogue must surely be the Easby monument, which Lang identifies as a cross-shaft and -head in four fragments. It is a little disappointing, then, that the discussion does not explain the basis for considering the fragments as parts of a single monument. There can be little argument against the shaft fragments fitting together, but some explanation of the head fragment's connectedness would have been welcome.

The form and motif table provides a useful summary and comparison, and the maps are excellent. The bibliography is extensive and seems not to have omitted any major relevant works. The photographs illustrating the catalogue are generally comprehensive and of a high standard, illustrating the creativity of the photographers in accomplishing the necessary contortions to photograph faces obscured by pews and other church furniture. In an interesting departure, most of the photographs here have been taken by the *Corpus* research fellow, Derek Craig, rather than by a dedicated photographer as in previous volumes. That the quality of Craig's photographs is generally indistinguishable from the remainder, shows that his impressive academic skills are not the only string to his bow.

This book is an indispensable reference for the student of early medieval stone sculpture. Its value as part of the ongoing *Corpus* series is unquestionable. It is also a pleasant reminder of the dedication and ability of those of our colleagues who were involved in its production, and an enduring contribution to the field by one of its leaders, who will be sorely missed.

Pamela O'Neill
Department of History, University of Melbourne