The Antrim Cross in the Hunt Museum

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Of all the valuable donations made by John and Gertrude Hunt to the Craggaunowen Project in trust for the Irish people, undoubtedly the most important in an Irish context is an unique bronze equal-armed cross with enamel-decorated bosses which is said to have been found in County Antrim (Plate X). It is now one of the highlights of the collection on display in the Hunt Museum, located in the National Institute for Higher Education at Plassey, about two miles east of Limerick city. The cross was first illustrated and briefly commented upon in the Catalogue of an Exhibition of Early Irish Art shown in Berlin, Munich and Hamburg just over twenty years ago, since when only passing references have been made to it. However, as the cross must rank highly among the most important pieces of ecclesiastical art to have survived from the Early Christian period in Ireland, it may be considered worthy of the more detailed description and evaluation of it which is offered here.

The original German description of the cross given under item 112 in the 1959 Exhibition Catalogue may be translated into English as follows:

CROSS. Bronze.
Cast. At the end of each arm and in the centre there are pyramidal-shaped bosses decorated with red and yellow enamel and with blue-white millefiori. The ornament on the panels of the pyramids at the ends of the arms is purely geometrical. Two of the panels of the centres of the cross have geometrical ornament, and the other two have an animal with backward-looking head. The back of the cross is hollow. There are three rivet-holes in each arm.
Findspot: County Antrim. Around 700 A.D. Hunt Collection.
Length and breadth 16.3 cms.

Opposite the illustration of the cross in the Catalogue, the following comments can be found (again translated from the German):

The only surviving cross of this type. It is displayed in public for the first time in this Exhibition. Some fragments in the possession of the National Museum have previously been associated with book ornaments. Through this new find, it is probable that these crosses were attached to reliquaries.
The cross belongs to the 7th century A.D. Bronze, with yellow and red enamel inlay and blue-white millefiori.

Other than the fact stated in the Catalogue that the cross was found in County Antrim, I have unfortunately been unable to obtain any further details of its find circumstances.

DESCRIPTION

As the Catalogue points out, the cross is of cast bronze and is 16.3 cms long and

P. Harbison, "Recreating Early Ireland", *Archaeology,* 32, No. 2 (March-April 1979), 14.
broad. Other than the rivets, it consists of five separately-cast or hammered parts which will now be described individually in turn.

1. The square centre of the cross (though not the central pyramidal boss — see No. 4 below), together with those two arms of the cross facing the geometrically-decorated panels of the central boss.

The centre of the cross is a platform c.3.3 cms square and 1 cm high, which stands slightly above the level of the arms (Plates X, 2 and XII). At each corner of the platform there is a raised L-shaped bracket, and cast in false relief on the upper surface of each of these brackets there is a further L with two hyphens added to the end of each arm. These brackets are intended to give the impression that they hold the central boss in place. However, they do not in fact do so, as the central boss (No. 4 below) was cast separately, and the flange projecting horizontally from each of its sides has been cut away at the corners of the boss so as to fit inside the brackets. In reality, the boss was fixed in position by means of rivets which penetrated through the holes in the middle of each of these flanges to the platform and further to the back plate (No. 5) below, but only one of the rivets survives. In each of the two sides of the platform beneath the animal ornament of the central boss, there is a slit for the attachment of the two separately-cast arms (Nos. 2 and 3 below).

Cast in one piece with this central platform are the two arms of the cross which face those panels of the central boss which bear purely geometrical ornament. Like the two separately-cast arms, they have concave sides terminating in tronco-pyramidal bosses. The concave parts of the arms are 0.8 cms high, and an incised line just inside the edge of the upper surface follows their outlines and those of the adjacent bosses, except where it makes a semi-circle around two rivet-holes at the base of each of the terminal bosses (Plate XI, 1). Three out of the four rivets for these holes remain, and they may all once have been virtually flat-headed as they are now. Placed approximately at the most constricted part of each arm, though slightly off-centre in one of the arms, there is a further rivet-hole, the last rivet of which could conceivably have formerly held in place a decorated plaque which may have ornamented the area within the incised line. The boss at the end of each arm has the appearance of a pyramid, with the top cut off more or less flat (Plates X and XI, 1). But it is not a true symmetrical pyramid, as the base adjoining the arm and that of the outermost face are longer than the bases of the other two sides. The height of the bosses, including that of their respective plinths, is 1.7 cms. It may be noted that the base of the outermost face of the pyramid is slightly convex, whereas the bases of all the other faces are straight. Both bosses are virtually the same, differing only in very small details, and having their sloping trapezoidal panels decorated with fields of champlévé enamel. The four panels in line with the arms of the cross have two obtuse-angled fields of enamel which interlock downwards with two right-angled fields having arms of unequal length. The enamel used in these fields is yellow in colour with a tinge of green. Holmqvist¹ suggested that the pale yellow enamel as found on the Ekerö crozier² may have been red originally, and the same may


also have been true of the yellow enamel of the Antrim cross. On the cross, the fields of yellow-green enamel were set in a background of blue. The two side-panels on each arm have a different design, consisting of an upward-pointing arrow flanked by acute angles, all of the same yellow-green enamel. In the plinth or base of each of these sides with the arrow pattern there is a rivet-hole near the extremity (visible on the right-hand boss on Plate X, 2), with rivets remaining in three out of the four perforations. The top of each boss contains four squares (empty in the case of the boss illustrated in Plate XI, 1, but filled with fine white dots of millefiori forming an X-shaped cross on a blue background on the other arm seen in the general illustration, Plate X, 1, and on the more detailed photograph, Plate XI, 2).

2 and 3. The other two arms, each cast separately.

These other two arms were each cast separately, and have a perforated tongue (Plate XI, 2 and 3) which passed through a slit in those sides of the platform of the central boss below the animal decoration. Each arm was held in place by a rivet which came down from the horizontal flange of the central boss (No. 4) and its platform (No. 1), and then through the perforated tongue of the arm to the back plate (No. 5) below. One of the arms is still attached, but, through loss of a rivet, the other arm has come loose (Plate XI, 2 and 3) and its boss has been slightly damaged. The rivet-hole at the constricted part of each arm can be seen to be slightly closer to the central boss than those of the arms of No. 1, but none of the rivets has been preserved in the separately-cast arms. The incised line on the constricted parts of the arms is the same as on No. 1, though worn away at the base of the boss of the loose arm. The decoration of the bosses of these arms differs in some respects from that of the arms of No. 1 above. Whereas the fields on the upper parts of the trapezoidal panels in line with the arms form two separate obtuse angles on the arms of No. 1, the bosses of Nos. 2 and 3 have the angles run together across the top, and the side panels have a lozenge shape enclosed by two obtuse angles above and two acute angles below. As on the other bosses, these angular fields are filled with champlevé enamel, but one of the lozenges still shows traces of horizontal and vertical lines of white dots of millefiori forming full or partial squares on a blue background (just visible on the upper side of the left-hand boss on the general view, Plate X, 1). The colour of the champlevé enamel of the fields of the bosses on these two arms seem to have a very slightly different hue to that of the bosses of No. 1, suggesting that the separately-cast arms were made at a different work-session to the two arms cast in one piece. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the base of the bosses of these two separately-cast arms is not in the shape of an approximate rectangle as is the case with the two bosses of No. 1, but virtually in the shape of a trapeze, the slightly convex outermost side being about 2 mm longer than that adjoining the constricted part of the arm. While the millefiori pattern has not been preserved at all on the top of the boss of the arm which is still attached, the white X-shaped pattern is better preserved in the four squares on top of the loose arm (Plate XI, 2) than on either of the bosses of No. 1 above. There are no rivet-holes in the sides of the plinths of the pyramidal bosses, as on No. 1 above, but, unlike No. 1, these arms Nos. 2 and 3 have an off-centre horizontal slit in the plinth of the outermost side of the boss (seen on the dark side of the left-hand boss on Plate X, 2). A view of the interior of
the loose arm (Plate XI, 3) shows that inside the hollow boss a stump protrudes from the centre of three of the sides, but not from the fourth side which adjoins the arm.

4. The central boss

As befits its place at the centre of the cross, this boss differs from the others already described. It is smaller at the base and larger on the truncated top, and therefore more steep-sided than the others (Plate X, 2). Its height, together with the platform supporting it, is 2.5 cms, and — unlike the others — it is square. Although the back of the cross cannot now be seen because the back plate (No. 5) has recently been glued on, we may presume from the boss of the loose arm and from the description in the 1959 Catalogue entry quoted above that the back of the boss is hollow. Projecting from the bottom of each side of the truncated pyramid is a horizontal flange which, as described above, is cut away at the corners to fit into the L-shaped corner brackets of the central platform (No. 1 above). Furthermore, in the middle of each flange there is a hole for riveting the boss to the platform (No. 1) and to the back plate (No. 5) beneath it and, on two opposing sides, for attaching the separately-cast arms. As with the other bosses, there are two alternating designs used in the panels, each differing from its neighbour but mirrored almost exactly in the panel opposite it. The panels (Plate XII, 1) of the faces in line with the two arms cast in one piece (No. 1) have in the middle two squares placed side by side, both of which were presumably filled with millefiori, and one still shows slight traces of the already familiar X-shaped pattern on an apparently orange-tinted background. These are enclosed above by two obtuse-angled fields of the yellowish-greenish enamel already encountered, and below by two similarly coloured fields forming acute angles. On one side (Plate XII, 1) one of the lower fields has an oblong indentation in the interior of the angle, while on the other side, both angles are indented in a similar manner.

The panels facing the separately-cast arms (Nos 2 and 3) each bear an animal with backward-looking head. As well as the fact that they face in opposite directions, these animals also vary in minor details one from the other (compare Plate XII, 2 and 3, and Fig. 4, f and G). Their bodies were filled with yellow enamel, and the background was presumably blue. The heads of the animals have a large circular eye in the centre; their mouths are wide open, and the longer upper and shorter lower jaws protrude noticeably upwards and backwards respectively. There is a pointed ear lappet at the back of the head. The neck forms a continuous curve with the body which rises up and contracts in width towards the hind quarters. Starting at the shoulder in the shape of a curved comma cutting across the neck, the upper part of the foreleg is in the shape of a slightly irregular pelta, while the lower part curves backwards under the body, terminating in upside-down ‘paws’ formed of a spiral expanding into a trumpet-like end. The back shoulder is indicated by a curving comma shape which likewise expands below into a trumpet-end to form the upper part of the hind leg. The lower part of the hind leg projects forwards below the front ‘paw’ and terminates in the same manner as the foreleg, but with the ‘paw’ facing downwards. The square top of the boss, which is slightly domed, is decorated with five interlinked squares, one at each corner and one in the centre. These squares retain traces of the usual white X-shaped millefiori, but in this case the background would appear to have been red.
5. The back plate.

The back plate is thin and is hammered flat, its outline conforming to that of the cross; the section which backed the loose arm has been broken away and is now missing (Plate XI, 4). The perforations in the plate correspond to those on the upper surface of the cross, though only a few of the rivets have been sufficiently well preserved to reach the back plate.

DATE

There would seem to be little possibility of obtaining a reliable date for the cross on the basis of its shape, but the date of late 7th century or c. 700 originally suggested for it in the Exhibition Catalogue might appear at first sight to have much to recommend it, as the cross shares certain decorative features with other pieces of metalwork which some authors have dated to around this time. The combination of millefiori with angular fields of champevé enamel, discussed by Françoise Henry in a number of publications, is found for instance on the Moyleough Belt-Shrine which also provides parallels for the arrangement of five squares as found on top of the central boss of the Antrim Cross. Interlocking L-shaped fields of yellow enamel on a red background, combined with panels showing finely filimented white millefiori like that on the Antrim Cross but forming a continuous cross-cross pattern on a blue background, can be found decorating the base of a bowl found at Mikelbostad in Norway (Fig. 1, A). This bowl, for which a date of c. 675 has recently been proposed, provides one of the best parallels to the Antrim Cross decoration. Françoise Henry has illustrated other items of metalwork which provide equally valid comparisons but, alas, little basis for dating. One good example is the disc from Tårland, also in Norway (Fig. 1, B), where—in the angles of an equal-armed cross—we find not only interlocking L-shaped panels of champevé enamel, but also a hint of the arrow decoration seen on two of the arms (No. 1) of the Antrim Cross. It may be said, however, that the absence of chip-carving, spiral ornament or interlacing on the cross ought not to be used to make any assumptions about its chronology in relation to other major pieces of metalwork which

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5 Compare, however, the crosses from Carlisle in W. G. Collingwood, Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age, London 1927, p. 58, Fig. 72 and p. 87, Fig. 105.
9 Illustrated after O. Rygh, Norske Oldsager (Antiquités Norvégiennes), Christiania 1885, Fig. 121.
11 Henry, (1936 — note 6), pp. 239ff. — Group C.
12 Illustrated after Rygh, (note 9), Fig. 483; see also Henry (1936 — note 6), Pl. XXXVII, 4.
13 There is a curious resemblance between the combination of arrow, acute-angled fields and four squares on the ends of the No. 1 arms of the Antrim cross (Pl. XI, 1) and the design of a glass stud on the Moyleough Belt-Shrine (O'Kelly (note 7), Pl. 25).
bear decoration of this nature such as the Ardagh Chalice or the Tara Brooch, in view of the possibility mentioned above that ornamental plaques — possibly of a kind related to that from Seim in Norway\textsuperscript{14} — could formerly have been riveted to each of the arms of the cross in the area enclosed by the incised line.

But in contrast to the date of around 700 originally proposed for the cross in the Exhibition Catalogue, a somewhat later date is suggested by the comparisons for the central boss animals found in manuscripts and metalwork which must therefore be

\textsuperscript{14} Rygh, (note 9), Fig. 629; \textit{Christian Art in Ancient Ireland}, Vol. 1 (ed. A. Mahr), Dublin 1932, Pl. 32, 2; C. Blindheim, “A Collection of Celtic (?) Bronze Objects found at Kaupang (Skiringssal), Vestfold, Norway”, \textit{Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15-21 August, 1973} (ed. B. Almqvist and D. Greene), Dublin 1976, Fig. 7.
studied now in some detail in an attempt to assess the chronological position of the Antrim Cross animals within the whole series of comparable beasts. Animals with backward-looking heads have a long history, and a geographical distribution stretching as far as the Russian steppes. The most extensive discussion of this motif as found in Ireland, Britain and on the Continent during the seventh and eighth centuries has been presented in Haseloff's study of the Tassilo Chalice, which bears the motif and which is one of the few items of metalwork from north of the Alps with a close and reliable date in the 8th century. Yet none of the Tassilo Chalice animals, nor those of the same style and period found elsewhere on the Continent, provide us with satisfactory parallels for a number of features seen on the Antrim Cross animals, though a buckle from Dorestad in Holland is illustrated here as an example of continental work which approaches the insular style (Fig. 4, C). Indeed, no really good parallel for the cross animals as a whole would appear to be forthcoming, and in our search for reliable dating criteria, we must content ourselves with parallels for individual characteristics of the animals, and in particular for the head with widely-open mouth, as well as jaws of differing length both curling up at the end, which would appear to be the beasts' most diagnostic chronological features.

Animals with open mouths are more the exception than the rule in the seventh century, and where they do occur, the mouths are not very widely opened, as for example on the Armoy brooch or the lion of the Book of Durrow (Fig. 2, A) which has teeth in the lower jaw only. By about 700, the mouth has opened somewhat wider, when the Book of Lindisfarne (fol. 91) presents us with animals showing a tongue and a fine set of teeth, including canines in both jaws (Fig. 2, B). Fol. 12 ro of the same manuscript (Fig. 2, C) shows one of the first examples of a mouth opening more widely, though not as widely as on the Antrim Cross animals, and the upper jaw does not curl up at the end. Fol. 90 of the same manuscript (Fig. 2, D) provides us with an early instance of a lower jaw being shorter than the snout, though neither curls up at the end. A generation or so later, page 142 of the Book of Lichfield gives us another example where the lower jaw is slightly shorter than the snout (Fig. 2, E), both — possibly for the first time — turning outwards at the end, and on the head

15 Compare L. Lea, The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland, c. 400-1200 A.D., London 1975, p. 347, Fig. 132.
16G. Haseloff, "Der Tassilo-Kelch", Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Band 1, Munich, 1971. For his most recent remarks on the Chalice, see his "Zum Stand der Forschung über den Tassilo-Kelch", Bautenzeit in Oberösterreich, Linz 1977, pp. 221-236, where he concludes that it is not possible to refine the date of the Chalice beyond the years 768 to 788.
17Haseloff (1951 — note 16); see also J. Ypey, "Fundstücke mit anglo-karolingischer Tierornamentik in niederländischen Sammlungen", Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, 18 (1968), pp. 175-191.
18Illustrated after Haseloff (1951 — note 16), p. 39, Abb. 31; see also Ypey (note 17).
19Henry (note 2), p. 164, Fig. 20b.
20The animals with open mouths on the Durham Cathedral Library manuscript A.I.I.10 (J.J.G. Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th century, London 1978, PI. 9) are of a different type.
21Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), PI. 43 (see also PI. 45).
22Illustrated after T.D. Kendrick et al., Evangelium Quattuor Codex Lindisfarne, Vol. II: Commentary, Osten and Luasanne 1960, p. 204, Fig. 42, h.
23Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), PI. 42.
24Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), PI. 80.
Fig. 2.

there is an elongated S-spiral below the animal’s eye. Fig. 2, E\textsuperscript{22} illustrates an animal from page 5 of the same manuscript with a more widely opened mouth. Page 7 of the St. Gall Codex 51, dating perhaps from the eighth or the early ninth century, demonstrates a continuity of the same traits, but with a less widely-opened mouth (Fig. 2, G\textsuperscript{26}). Here we can see, too, an ear lappet resembling that on the Antrim Cross animals, and also akin to that in the Durham manuscript A.II.16\textsuperscript{27} which cannot be closely dated. Another St. Gall manuscript, Codex 60 — which may date to the ninth century — clearly draws on the toothful Lindisfarne animals, but with the addition of an outer curl on the snout and a crude arabisque of lines above and below (Fig. 2, H\textsuperscript{28}).

Most manuscript beasts from the Book of Lindisfarne to that of Kells scarcely open their mouths at all, but while the same applies to gold, silver and bronze decoration tentatively assigned to the 8th century, we do find more animals with widely-opened mouths on metalwork which, however, is not easy to relate chronologically to the manuscripts. The incised animals below the handle escutcheons of the Ardagh Chalice (Fig. 6, B\textsuperscript{29}) have mouths which are opened more widely than any of the manuscript beasts seen so far, and the S-spiral below their eyes comes closest to that seen in the Lichfield Gospels (Fig. 2, F) and the St. Gall Codex 51 animals (Fig. 2, G), while the marked out-turning of the snout-end is slightly closer to that seen on the possibly 9th century St. Gall Codex 60 animal (Fig. 2, H). In the circular frieze immediately surrounding the rock crystal on the underside of the base of the Chalice there are filigree animals with a longer upper snout and shorter lower jaw, each with a slight turn-up at the end (Fig. 6, A\textsuperscript{30}). The angle at which the mouth is opened comes close to that of the Antrim animals (Plate XII, 2 and 3; also Fig. 4, F and G), and the almost round eyes of some of the animals of the frieze are also like those on the Antrim Cross beasts. Closely allied to the Ardagh Chalice in a number of technical respects is the Tara Brooch. Curling out from the rim of the brooch we find dragons having half-opened mouths with jaws curling up at the end into a spiral, and having numerous teeth. On some of these (e.g. Fig. 3, A\textsuperscript{31}) the area behind the lower jaw can be seen to have a trumpet-end emerging from a spiral in a manner which finds an echo in the ‘paws’ of the Antrim Cross animals. The general animal decoration of this brooch is allied to that on some Scottish brooches, of which one from Dunbeath in Caithness (Fig. 4, B\textsuperscript{32}) shows an animal with backward-turning head having a half-opened mouth and a looping tongue reminiscent of one of the animals from the Lichfield Gospels (Fig. 2, F). Another brooch, from Mull (Fig. 4, B\textsuperscript{33}), shows an animal also with backward-curving head, round eye, very widely-opened mouth and exentuated jaws curling up at the end, all characteristics approaching those on the Antrim Cross animals.

\textsuperscript{22} Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), Pl. 76.
\textsuperscript{26} Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), Pl. 201.
\textsuperscript{27} Alexander (note 20), Pl. 85.
\textsuperscript{28} Illustrated after Alexander (note 20), Pl. 283.
\textsuperscript{30} Illustrated in A.T. Lucas, *Treasures of Ireland: Irish Pagan and Early Christian Art*, Dublin 1973, p. 104, Fig. 64.
\textsuperscript{31} Illustrated after a National Museum photograph.
\textsuperscript{32} Illustrated after a National Museum photograph. See also *CAAI*, I (note 14), P1s. 14-15.

Illustrated after a National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland photograph.
extended snout and much shorter curling lower jaw of the Mull brooch animal is also found on a piece of ‘insular’ metalwork found at Kaupang, in Norway (Fig. 3, F). The hatching of the snout and the spiralling end of the lower jaw on this animal can also be seen on another beast of a somewhat different character on the west face of the South Cross at Ahenny, Co. Tipperary (Fig. 6, E), which is modelled on metalwork which is scarcely much earlier than the second half of the eighth century. Also comparable is an animal with widely-opened mouth and curling upper and lower jaws on a mount from Laland, Klepp, Norway, in the Archaeological Museum in Stavanger (No. 5670b).

The rather shorter lower jaw curling up at the end is also found on the D-shaped

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34 Illustrated after Blindheim (note 14), Fig. 6; see also M. and L. de Paor, Early Christian Ireland, London 1958 and 1978, Pl. 43.
plaques in the Museum at St. Germain,\(^{35}\) which have an almost identical twin from a ninth century grave at Gausel in Norway.\(^ {36}\) On these pieces, the eye of the animal (Fig. 6, C\(^ {37}\)) has a long appendage known from manuscripts, and while the beast has numerous teeth which are lacking on the Antrim Cross animals, the angle of its mouth opening is almost exactly the same as that of the animals on the cross (Fig. 4, F and G). Very closely allied to this St. Germain/Gausel animal type and, like it, gripping a


\(^{37}\) Illustrated after Henry (note 2), Pl. 66.
human head in its canine teeth, is that on the crozier head found at Ekerö, in Sweden,\textsuperscript{38} which also has a widely-opened mouth (Fig. 6, D\textsuperscript{39}). The herring-bone ribbing of the bodies of the St. Germain/Gausel animals, though considered by Wilson\textsuperscript{40} to be of no chronological significance, is also found not only on the Tara Brooch animals, but also on the crook of the Ekerö Crozier as well as on a mount of possible Irish origin in the National Museum in Copenhagen (Fig. 1, C\textsuperscript{41}). This mount, and the St. Germain/Gausel plaques, belong to the so-called ‘boss style’ which may date from the later eighth\textsuperscript{42} or earlier ninth century.\textsuperscript{43} There is a considerable variety in the animal heads with open mouths on the Copenhagen mount, most of them having the carded and curling lower jaw. One of these, top right in the illustration Fig. 1, C, closely resembles a head on the end of the ring on the back of the Killamery brooch (Fig. 5\textsuperscript{44}), for which dates around 800 or in the ninth century have been suggested.\textsuperscript{45} Also on the back-plate of this brooch there is an animal with backward-looking head and a mouth which is scarcely opened, and its body and forelegs have the herring-bone ribbing of the ‘boss style’ animals. Its hind leg, and particularly its ‘paws’, bear a resemblance to those of the Antrim Cross animals. The High Cross which stands at Killamery has, on its west face, interlacing serpents with open jaws and a curling upper lip (Fig. 6, G) which are not only comparable to the St. Gall Codex 60 animals (Fig. 2, H), but also close in style to two stone-carved animals of ‘insular’ inspiration at Münstair in Switzerland,\textsuperscript{46} normally dated to around 800 though conceivably somewhat earlier. Slightly more worn, but having a similarly opened mouth and a curling snout, are animals on the North Cross at Ahenny (Fig. 6, F).

The widely-opened jaws which we have just seen on metalwork, for which dates in the later eighth or in the ninth century have been suggested, would seem to have had a considerable influence on the development of the animal style in subsequent centuries, when there is a relatively higher proportion of animals with widely-opened mouths than in preceding centuries. One manuscript example can be found in the MacDurnan Gospels (Fig. 2, I\textsuperscript{47}) which are normally ascribed to the later ninth or early tenth century, though the early ninth century date which Bieler\textsuperscript{48} suggested on

\textsuperscript{38}See notes 3 and 4. See also J. Werner, “Jonas in Helgö”, \textit{Bonner Jahrbücher}, 178 (1978), 519-530.

\textsuperscript{39}Illustrated after: Henry (note 2), Pl. 69.


\textsuperscript{41}Illustrated after D.M. Wilson, “An Irish Mounting in the National Museum, Copenhagen”, \textit{Acta Archaeologica}, 26 (1955), 166, Fig. 5.

\textsuperscript{42}M. and L. de Paor (note 34), p. 119; Wilson (note 40), pp. 152f.

\textsuperscript{43}Bakka (note 36), pp. 39ff.

\textsuperscript{44}Illustrated after \textit{Treasures of Early Irish Art} (note 10), Pl. 47.


\textsuperscript{47}Illustrated after F. Henry, \textit{Irish Art during the Viking invasions}, (800-1200 A.D.), London 1967, Pl. 43. I am grateful to Richard Warner for having drawn this example to my attention.

palaeographical grounds need not be considered as being inconsistent with the art-historical evidence, as the animal illustrated from it here is a cross between the Lichfield animal (Fig. 2, F) and one on the Copenhagen mount (Fig. 1, C). Metalwork animals with opened mouths are found in some numbers, for instance, on the earliest parts of the Kells Crozier (Fig. 4, A⁴⁹), formerly dated by MacDermott to the late ninth/early tenth century and more recently to the period around 950.⁵⁰ Echoes of these animals are found even later, as evidenced by the stone found in an eleventh

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⁴⁹Illustrated after M. Mac Dermott, “The Kells Crozier”, Archaeologia, 96 (1955), 79, Fig. 13, 2.
⁵⁰M. de Paor, “The Viking Impact”, in Treasures of Early Irish Art (note 10), p. 148, Fig. 31.
century layer at Christchurch Place in Dublin (Fig. 4, D). These tenth and eleventh century animals have shorter and toothless jaws, which could be seen as a development of those on animals on the Copenhagen mount (Fig. 1, C), on Hiberno-Viking brooches, and in the Book of MacDurnan (Fig. 2, I).

As the backward-looking head, the ribbon-shaped bodies, and the comparatively unusual way in which the animals tuck their legs beneath the body, are not apparently susceptible to close dating, it is the comparisons of the head details discussed in extenso above which seem to offer the greatest potential for a closer dating for the Antrim Cross. This review of animal-heads with widely-opened mouths does not exhaust all the comparative material, but the selection of the most important examples offered here should help to determine the approximate position of the Antrim Cross animals within the development of the whole motif, as seen through the individual traits. The ear lappet finds a counterpart in the St. Gall Codex 51 animal (Fig. 2, G), dating from the eighth or earlier ninth century, but also on the Durham A.II.16 manuscript which may be somewhat earlier. The opening of the mouth to an angle of more than 90°, combined with the outward turning of the extremities of the jaws would seem to make its first appearance in the Lichfield Gospels (Fig. 2, E), possibly from the second quarter of the eighth century, but this parallel for the Antrim Cross animals is not as satisfactory as those provided by other pieces of metalwork. The angle at which the Antrim Cross animals open their mouths is found on the animal frieze on the base of the Ardagh Chalice (Fig. 6, A), as well as on the Ekerö Crozier (Fig. 6, D) and the St. Germain/Gausel plaques (Fig. 6, C). The shorter lower jaw expanding outwards at the extremity, characteristic of the Antrim Cross animals, is found on the South Cross at Ahenny (Fig. 6, E), the St. Germain/Gausel plaques (Fig. 6, C) and the Kaupang fragment (Fig. 3, F), as well as on the Copenhagen mount (Fig. 1, C) which is related in style to the Killamery brooch (Fig. 5) where the animals' feet are comparable to those on the Antrim Cross.

Thus, two characteristics of the Antrim Cross animals can be seen to be present also on the metal plaques of St. Germain/Gausel type, although the animals on the plaques have teeth, whereas the cross animals do not. The characteristic ‘droplet’ falling from the middle of the inner line of the pelta on the decoration of La Tène type on the back of the St. Germain plaques finds a counterpart on fol. 139 ro and to a lesser extent on fol 29 ro of the Book of Lindisfarne. But on the St. Germain plaques this feature is combined with a coiled hair-spiral thicker than that found in Lindisfarne, and it finds perhaps a closer parallel in Christ’s monogram on fol. 33 vo of the Book of Armagh, which dates to around 807. Wilson considered these mounts and the Ekerö Crozier

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32 Compare the animals on an unprovenanced shrine (E.C.R. Armstrong, “An Imperfect Shrine recently purchased by the Royal Irish Academy”, Antig. Jn., 1 (1921), Pl. V) and on brooches from Co. Donaghal (Mac Dermott (note 49), Pl. XLII, a) and from Tara (CAAI, I (note 14), Pls. 25-26.

33 C. Alexander (note 20), Pl. 33.


35 Henry (note 47), Pl. 29.

36 Wilson (note 41), pp. 170f.
to be slightly earlier than the Copenhagen mount, for which he suggested a date of around 800. While the animals with interlocked beaks on the Copenhagen mount (Fig. 1, C) have late 8th century counterparts, for instance in the Corbie Psalter in Amiens, they find an even closer parallel in Ireland on the west face of the cross now at Bealin, in Co. Westmeath, which has been dated by inscription to the years between 798 and 811. A date late in the eighth or in the first decade of the ninth century would thus seem plausible for both the St. Germain plaques and the Copenhagen mounts decorated in the ‘boss’ style, and in view of the characteristics shared by the Antrim Cross animals and those on the St. Germain plaques, a similar dating might also seem appropriate for the manufacture of the Antrim Cross.

Further support for such a date comes from other details on the cross which are found both on metalwork and in manuscripts. The L-shaped brackets on the platform of the central boss of the Antrim Cross are found on a similar pyramidal boss from Fure, in Norway, as well as on brooches, once with dotted ornament and twice unhyphenated, but combined with animals with widely-opened mouths. But they are also encountered in the Book of Kells on fol. 203 ro — a page which, perhaps more than any other in the Kells codex, shows obvious borrowings from metalwork. Another manuscript showing the same borrowing tendency is the Canterbury Gospels (British Library, MS Royal I E VI), a southern English work of the later 8th century or around 800. Here, particularly in the panel under the rondel at the top of the central column of Canon Tables on fol. 4 (Plate XIII, 1) we see the brackets filled out with dots which are closely akin to the hyphens on the Antrim Cross brackets (Plate X, 1). Both the Kells and Canterbury pages just mentioned also display square bosses which clearly give the impression of having been modelled on bosses in the form of a truncated pyramid similar to those on the Antrim Cross, and in the case of the Canterbury Gospels, clearly bearing the design of angular fields of champlevé enamel. Comparable bosses, based probably on Anglo-Saxon models, may be found on the large arch of the second page of Canon Tables (fol. 8b) of the Gospels from St. Martin des Champs, Ms. 999 in the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris, a manuscript of Charlemagne’s Court School written around the early 790s and certainly before 795.

Irish High Crosses also show similar borrowings: L-shaped brackets lacking hyphenation can be seen on the lowermost panel on the east face of the shaft of the north cross at Ahenny, on a fragment at Kilkieran, Co. Kilkenny, and on the north face of the Bealin Cross, the last dated — on unproven grounds — to the years between 798 and 881. Bosses in the shape of a truncated pyramid are found on the ends

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58 Henry (note 47), Pl. 26, upper.
60 Henry (note 2), p. 144.
61 E. Bakka, “Some English Decorated Metal Objects found in Norwegian Viking Graves”, Årbok for Universitetet i Bergen, Humanistisk Serie 1963, 1 (1963), 46, Fig. 51.
62 Unprovenanced — Henry (note 47), Pl. 63.
63 Lagore — CAAI, I (note 14), Pl. 20, 3; the Londesborough Brooch — CAAI, I, Pl. 23, 2 — where the animal also has a shorter lower jaw.
65 W. Braunfels, (note 46), pp. 144 and 380 with Pl. 154.
of the arms of crosses such as Durrow (Plate XIV, 1), the north and west crosses at Monasterboice, as well as on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois (Plate XIV, 2) for which a date in the 830s or 840s has recently been suggested, though they probably represent magnified versions of slightly earlier crosses in other materials (see below). Through these pyramidal bosses on the High Crosses, it is possible that the Antrim Cross could be as late as the second quarter of the ninth century.

While the toothlessness and comparatively short snout and lower jaw of the Antrim Cross animals could be seen to point towards the open-mouthed animals of the 10th and 11th centuries, these features are also found, for instance, on the Copenhagen mount, tentatively dated above to around 800. But one factor which ought to deter us from dating the Antrim Cross much after 800 is the presence on some of the bosses of millefiori decoration. This technique was obviously used frequently throughout the 8th century as can be seen from its imitation in manuscripts, such as on folios 143 and 221 of the Lichfield Gospels. The square panels on folios 67 ro and 202 ro of the Book of Kells, with four squares each filled with X-shaped decoration, show an interesting parallel for the millefiori-decorated panels on the tops of the arm bosses on the Antrim Cross. But the Book of Kells, which can scarcely be dated much later than the first decade of the 9th century, would appear to be one of the latest examples of the manuscript use of designs apparently modelled on millefiori prototypes, and as we do not find millefiori used on metalwork likely to be of 9th century date, it would seem unwise to propose a date much later than around 800 for the Antrim Cross. Thus a date in the later 8th or early 9th century, obtained from the metalwork borrowings found in the Gospels from Canterbury and St. Martin des Champs, and in the Book of Kells, would lend support to the similar dating achieved from a study of animal ornament comparable to that on the central boss of the Antrim Cross. Some of the major masterpieces of Irish metalwork mentioned above in the course of the discussion have tended to be given dates in the later 7th or earlier 8th century, doubtless on the basis of comparisons with the Books of Durrow, Lindisfarne and Lichfield, but in the absence of any reliable chronological anchoring points they could theoretically be dated to any time in the 8th century, as some of the motifs found in these manuscripts continued to be used, often with only minor variations, until around 800. If the date for the Antrim Cross suggested here is even approximately correct, there are possible implications that some of the other major metalwork items referred to above ought to be dated nearer to 800 than to 700. The apparent similarity between the finely filamented X-shaped decoration on the bosses of the Antrim Cross and that on the base of the Mklebostad Bowl (Fig. 1, A) could suggest that these two objects may be roughly contemporary. Because millefiori decoration of this delicate nature has been found on only very few other objects, it is conceivable that they may even be products of the same workshop. The possibility of their contemporaneity could find support in the square-shaped body

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67 Alexander (note 20), Pls. 50 and 78 respectively.
68 Henry (note 64), Pls. 120 and 67 respectively.
of the man forming the handle attachment for the Minklebostad Bowl\textsuperscript{70} which presents such a striking resemblance to the figures with similarly-shaped bodies on the Moone Cross,\textsuperscript{71} datable to the ninth century. Holmqvist\textsuperscript{72} pointed out the close similarity in animal and human head motifs between the St. Germain plaques (Fig. 6, C) and Ekerō Crozier (Fig. 6, D), and if a rough date of around 800\textsuperscript{73} were correct for the former, it could also be taken to apply to the latter as well. The trick of using a shape resembling a curving bird-beak as the appendage of an animal’s eye as found on the Ekerō Crozier (Fig. 6, D) is also encountered on the Killamery Brooch (Fig. 5), which most scholars\textsuperscript{74} would not date before 800. Through S-shaped fields of Champlévè enamel, the Ekerō Crozier may be linked to the Moylough Belt-Shrine. One of the animals on this Shrine (Fig. 3, E\textsuperscript{75}) has each of its jaws curled up into a spiral at the end — a feature which seems to make its first appearance in the Book of Lichfield, but which finds better parallels in the metalwork of the ‘boss-style’ which is scarcely earlier than the later 8th century. Two other animals on the Belt-Shrine (e.g. Fig. 3, D\textsuperscript{76}) have an elongated snout curled up at the end comparable to that found on the Emly Shrine (Fig. 3, C\textsuperscript{77}) for which a date late in the 8th century has recently been suggested,\textsuperscript{78} and the Emly Shrine animal in turn may be compared to the animal heads on the back of the chain attachment of the Tara Brooch, one of which is illustrated here (Fig. 3, B\textsuperscript{79}). Indeed, the animal heads on the Tara Brooch (Fig. 3, A and B) and the Ardagh Chalice (Fig. 6, A and B) are perhaps closer to those of the ‘boss style’ (e.g. Fig. 6, C and D) of around 800 than they are to those of the Book of Lindisfarne (Fig. 2, C and D) a century earlier, or the Book of Lichfield (Fig. 2, E and F) dating perhaps from the second quarter of the 8th century. But while the eye details of the Ardagh Chalice animals are clearly comparable to those animals in the Books of Lindisfarne and Lichfield, the details of the angles of their snouts and jaws when compared to those of the ‘boss-style’ animals create a considerable possibility that both Brooch and Chalice may belong to the second rather than the first half of the 8th century — a date which would bring the Chalice closer in time to the brooches found with it. In this connection, it may be noted that the contorted body of the animals on the back of the Tara Brooch pin\textsuperscript{80} may be compared to that of the animal on the mount from Tessem in Norway\textsuperscript{81} which, however, has a head closely resembling those seen on the Copenhagen mount (Fig. 1, C) or in Mac Durnan’s Gospels (Fig. 2, 1).

\textsuperscript{70} Henry (note 2), Colour Plate B.
\textsuperscript{71} ibid., Pls. 70-72.
\textsuperscript{72} Holmqvist, (note 3).
\textsuperscript{73} Compare Wilson (note 41), pp. 170f.
\textsuperscript{74} See Graham-Campbell, loc. cit. (note 45).
\textsuperscript{75} Illustrated after O’Kelly (note 7), Pl. 19b.
\textsuperscript{76} Illustrated after O’Kelly (note 7), Pl. 15.
\textsuperscript{77} Illustrated after Treasures of Early Irish Art (note 10), Pl. 31.
\textsuperscript{78} G. F. Mitchell, in Treasures of Early Irish Art (note 10), p. 137.
\textsuperscript{79} Illustrated after Treasures of Early Irish Art (note 10), Pl. 32.
\textsuperscript{80} Henry (note 2), Pl. 29.
\textsuperscript{81} Bakka (note 61), p. 50, Figs. 56-57.
COMPARABLE FRAGMENTS

The Antrim Cross is unique in being the only one of its kind to survive virtually intact. There are, however, a number of pyramidal bosses preserved in Irish and Norwegian museums for which a variety of uses have been suggested, but which may originally have formed parts of crosses akin to that from County Antrim. These are as follows:

1. **No provenance.** National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, 1920.56 (formerly Killua Castle Collection). This pyramidal boss, cast in one piece with its arm, is about 6 cms square at the base. It is decorated with chip-carved interlacing and with interlacing animals whose feet are closely comparable to those of the Antrim Cross animals.

2. **Two unprovenanced bosses.** National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, R.2954 and R.2955. They appear to form a pair, and presumably came from the same object. They are decorated with spiral ornament, and are not truly pyramidal in shape in that their base is rectangular, measuring 8.5 by 6.2 cms.

3. **Fure, Askvoll, Sogn og fjordane, Norway.** Bergen Museum, 4969 a. From a woman’s grave, said to be not later than 800. ‘Pyramid’, rectangular in shape (7.5 by 6 cms), with L-shaped settings for enamel on top surrounding a rectangular panel of chip-carving in the centre. On the sides there are two backward-looking animals, and a vine-scroll on one side.

4. **Marvig, Jelsa, Rogaland, Norway.** Stavanger Museum, 2271 a. This boss is practically square on top, but more rectangular at the base where it measures 4.3 by 3.2 cms. Petersen suggests that this piece is of Irish origin, but it is not necessarily so.


6. **Bremvik, Hamarøy, Nordland, Norway.** Tromsø Museum, 1369. A flat-topped pyramid (4.5 cms square), decorated with chip-carved interlacing, and with remnants of arms.

7. **Oseberg, Norway.** Ship Museum, Oslo. A flattish pyramidal boss, 4.2 cms square, decorated on the sides with interlocking L-shaped fields of red, yellow and

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[^8]: E.C.R. Armstrong, "Lord Emly's Shrine; Two Ridge-poles of Shrines, and Two Bronze Castings", *Antiq. Jn.,* 2 (1922), 136-137 with Pl. X, Fig. 2. My thanks are due to Raghnall Ó Flóinn for having brought this reference to my notice.
[^8]: I. Petersen, "British Antiquities of the Viking Period found in Norway", *Viking Antiquities of Britain and Ireland,* Part V, Oslo 1940, pp. 51ff.; No. 65 with Fig. 55; Bakka (note 61), pp. 45ff. with Figs. 49-55.
[^8]: Petersen (note 84), p. 38, No. 43 with p. 39, Fig. 36; Wilson (note 41), p. 169, Fig. 7.
[^8]: Petersen (note 84), p. 55, No. 71 with p. 57, Fig. 61.
[^8]: *Ibid.,* p. 77, No. 111 with p. 78, Fig. 88.
[^8]: S. Greig, "Kongsgaarden", in *Osebergfundet* (ed. A.W. Brøgger and H. Shetelig), II, Oslo 1928, pp. 74-76 with Fig. 34.
grey-blue enamel, and on top with others forming a square. Its decoration bears a close resemblance to that on the bosses of the Antrim Cross. The normally-accepted date of 800-850 for some of the contents of this famous ship-burial lends support to the roughly similar dating suggested above for the Antrim Cross.

In addition, there are two other pieces found in Norway which may originally have formed parts of a cross. These are:

8. Borhaug, Vanse, Vest-Agder, Norway. Universitets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, 2892.89
   A flat, rectangular panel (7.2 by 5.7 cms) with an opening in the middle. Although flat, it may have served in the same position as the pyramidal bosses on the ends of the arms of the Antrim Cross.

   An arm with a flattened rectangular boss (2.2 cms wide) at one end.

Of these pieces, that from Fure (No. 3) bearing vine-scroll decoration is probably not of Irish origin, but some of the other Norwegian pieces may well be.

This list, which could possibly be extended, suggests that there must have been a number of crosses similar to that from County Antrim which were current in Ireland and Britain during the early part of the Viking period from the late 8th century onwards.

The following pieces may also have been parts of crosses:

A. Two mounts in the British Museum, 3/2/1840.91 Probably part of a free-standing cross.

B. No provenance. British Museum, 1920/10/22.1.92 Raftery93 suggests that this was probably part of a cross.


PURPOSE

It has been suggested95 that the Antrim Cross was attached to a reliquary. However, a study of some Scottish and Irish field monuments of stone suggest that it may have served a slightly different purpose. The upright Pictish slab known as No. 3 at Aberlemno, in Angus (Plate XIII, 2), bears a cross like that from County Antrim; its bosses are rectangular or almost square on the arms (compare the Marvig boss, No. 4 above) and rounded in the centre — features which must surely have been copied from a metal prototype. The ringed form of the Aberlemno Cross poses the question as to whether the perforations on the sides of two of the arms (No. 1) of the Antrim Cross served the purpose of fastening arched segments connecting the arms of the cross, thus making it a ringed cross too, though if so, one may well ask why these holes are found

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89Petersen (note 84), p. 28, No. 24 with p. 29, Fig. 21.
90Ibid., p. 48, No. 56 with p. 47, Fig. 48.
91CAAI, I (note 14), Pl. 31,2a-b, and Vol. II (note 82), p. 104; Henry (note 47), Pl. 55.
92CAAI, I (note 14), Pl. 37,6.
93CAAI, II (note 82), p. 104.
94CAAI, I (note 14), Pl. 31,6, with Vol. II (note 82), p. 100.
95Frühe Irische Kunst (note 1), quoted above; Henry (note 2), p. 100.
on only two of the arms? Another Scottish slab, from Ulbster, in Caithness,98 shows an equal-armed cross with pyramidal bosses, but without segments joining the arms. Both the Aberlemno and Ulbster slabs suggest that, in Scotland at least, crosses comparable to that from County Antrim were attached to upright panels, probably of wood, which also bore further decoration. If the metal cross copied on the Aberlemno slab were even of roughly the same size as the Antrim Cross, then the model on which the whole slab was based would have been considerably smaller than the existing stone slab.

Turning now to Ireland, we find a somewhat similar, though ring-less, cross on the east side of a stone cross-shaft at Toureen Peakaun, in Co. Tipperary (Plate XV, 1). This cross, which is incised, has shorter arms but longer square terminations than the Antrim Cross, yet both seem to belong to the same general family. The shaft formed part of a cross with crutches under the arm,97 and depending upon the size of the partially lost head, the full cross in its pristine state could have stood to a height of 3.75-4.0 m. If the incised cross (53 cms high) were modelled on one which equalled the Antrim Cross in size (16.3 cms from end to end), then the wooden/metal prototype on which the stone cross was presumably based may have been about one third its size, and thus about 1.25-1.30 m. The other face of the Toureen Peakaun shaft has a more stumpy equal-armed cross of smaller dimensions incised upon it,98 with square terminations possibly modelled on enamelled bosses. Above it, there is an undeciphered inscription in lettering of a kind found on the Ardagh Chalice, but which is also used in manuscripts from the Book of Lindisfarne to the Book of Kells, so that the cross could date from any time in the 8th or early 9th century. Because of the date suggested here for the Antrim cross, the Toureen Peakaun cross may have been erected nearer 800, rather than the date of around 700 which I have recently put forward elsewhere.99

But the most interesting stone comparison of all is that provided by the head of a High Cross embedded (probably upside down) in cement on the old monastic site at Clonmore in Co. Carlow. The head (Plate XV, 2) measures 1.56 across the arms, and standing in relief in the centre there is a circle surrounding a cross, which, while not being exactly the same type as the Antrim Cross and apparently lacking its pyramidal bosses, nevertheless bears a strikingly close resemblance to it. From end to end, the arms of the cross within the circle measure 46 cms vertically and 42 cms horizontally. The encircled cross is thus just under three times the dimension of the Antrim Cross, and if its original model were of the same size as the Antrim Cross, we could postulate that the whole High Cross was based on a prototype which was marginally more than a third of the actual size of the stone cross. But, unfortunately, we do not know what the original height of the High Cross was, as only its head has been preserved in one piece, and the shaft of a cross standing nearby cannot be attributed to the head with any certainty. However, by using the proportions of another stone cross at Clonmore (arms 1.22 m wide, total height 2.25 m), we could estimate that the original height of

98 J. Romilly Allen, The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, III, Edinburgh 1903, p. 34, Fig. 31.
98 M. Moloney, “Beccan’s Hermitage in Aherlow: The Riddle of the Slabs”, North Munster Antiq. Jn., 9 (1962-65), 100, Fig. 1.
the High Cross bearing the cross in circle was approximately 2.87 m. If one assumes that the encircled cross at Clonmore was based on a prototype of the same size as the Antrim Cross, and furthermore that the size ratio between the two (46:16.3 cms) also reflected the ratio in size between the High Cross and the model on which it was based, we could estimate that, if the High Cross were originally 2.87 m high, then the model which it copied may have been about 1.01 m or about 3 ft 4 ins high. Curiously, a very similar result is obtained if we compare the Crucifixion plaque from Rinnagan, near Athlone, with the Crucifixion scene on the south cross at Clonmacnois which must have been modelled on a plaque like that from Rinnagan which presumably served as the decoration of a cross. The Rinnagan plaque is 21 cms high and about 13.7 cms wide, while the Clonmacnois Crucifixion scene measures 57 x 32 cms, and thus 2.7 times taller than the Rinnagan plaque. As the Clonmacnois cross (minus its base but including its cap) is about 2.9 m high, we could reckon that the model on which the whole stone cross was based was probably about 2.7 times smaller, and thus approximately 1.07 m high. But a note of caution must be sounded in these calculations which attempt to establish the approximate height of the models on which the High Crosses are presumed to have been based. As the size of the pyramidal as opposed to the rectangular boss fragments listed above can be up to 6 cms square, as opposed to about 3 cms for those of the Antrim cross, we would have to consider the possibility that such models could have been as much as twice the size of those calculated above, that is, just over 2 m or up to 7 feet tall, though this seems less likely.

It is noted above that the extremities of the arms of the Antrim Cross are very slightly rounded, suggesting that it may well have been mounted in a circle like that at Clonmore. A closer look at the Clonmore cross reveals that only its two vertical limbs come into contact with the circle which surrounds it. This circumstance could help to explain why slits are found on only two of the arms (Nos. 2 and 3) of the Antrim Cross (just visible in the plinth of the left-hand pyramid on Plate X, 2), suggesting that they may have been for the reception of clamps which fastened only these two arms to the circle surrounding the cross. If this supposition were correct, it is possible that the rivet-holes (Plate X, 2 right) on the other two arms (No. 1) served the purpose of attaching the cross to the (wooden?) background on which the cross was mounted, rather than being used to join arched segments to the arms of the cross, as on the Aberlemno slab (Plate XIII, 2).

On the basis of the Clonmore cross, the suggestion may be put forward here that the Antrim Cross was originally mounted in a circle and attached to a larger cross, presumably of wood, which was probably just over 1 m or about 3 ft 4 ins high, if the calculations set out above are in any way reliable. As a wooden cross which bore an enamel-decorated metal cross is scarcely likely to have stood in the open air where it would have been a prey to the elements, it would be justifiable to conclude that it stood inside a church. There it could have served either as an altar cross or a processional cross, or both, as may also have been the case with the late eighth century English(?)

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100 Henry (note 2), Pl. 46.
101 Ibid., Pl. 84.
102 Compare also the design on the Marcus graveslab at Clonmacnois, and others of a similar nature illustrated in P. Lionard, "Early Irish Grave Slabs", Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad., 61 C (1961), 113, Fig. 10.
metal-decorated wooden cross from Bischofshofen, in Austria,\textsuperscript{103} which is 1.58 m tall and which gives us some further idea of the kind of cross on which some Irish High Crosses of stone were modelled. A cross 1.01 m high would be just the right height for an altar cross, but as Irish High Crosses were decorated on all four sides, it seems probable that the crosses on which they were modelled were to be seen from all sides too, so that they may have served as processional crosses — which, however, may well have doubled as altar crosses when they were not being used in procession.

If, however, the Antrim Cross were not attached to a cross like that on which the Clonmore High Cross was presumably based, it is possible (if somewhat less likely) that it adorned an upright panel — probably of wood — akin to the Scottish slabs referred to above. Rectangular slabs with ‘Celtic’ crosses in relief have been found at a number of Irish sites such as Glendalough\textsuperscript{104} and Clonmore, as can be seen in the lower part of Plate XIV, 2. These, however, are of much smaller size than the High Crosses of stone. Other upright rectangular slabs in Ireland may be recalled, such as those at Fahan Mura, Drumhallagh, Inishkeel and Carndonagh — all in Donegal — Duvillaun and Inishkea in Mayo, as well as at Gallen Priory in Offaly,\textsuperscript{105} which may be decorated with a cross or with a Crucifixion scene on one or other side. The size of possible models for these slabs may be hinted at in a scene on the High Cross at Kells which we know from an inscription to have been dedicated to Saints Patrick and Columba. There, on the top of the north side of the cross\textsuperscript{106} we find two figures, probably seated, of which that on the left as we look at it seems to bear a book in his hand. The right-hand figure holds what might at first appear to be a book too, but oblique sunlight shows it to be a rectangular object bearing a ringed cross in relief. This object covers the upper part of the torso of the figure, and can scarcely have been much more than 50 cms or about 1 ft 6 ins high. Of course, it could be a book with its cover decorated by a ringed cross, but in view of the neighbouring figure’s apparent book which does not bear a cross, it could also be interpreted as a rectangular cross-bearing panel of a type which could have served as a model for the previously mentioned cross-bearing slabs known from various parts of Ireland. Bearing in mind the names of those to whom the cross is dedicated, and in the absence of any other satisfactory identification of the figures,\textsuperscript{107} one might be pardoned for speculating that the left-hand figure could be the earliest known representation of St. Patrick, while the right-hand figure could be St. Columba holding what could be taken as a votive or dedicatory cross for the church at Kells which would have been established recently from St. Columba’s great monastery at Iona.

Even if we can only surmise that the Antrim Cross was originally attached to a wooden (?) altar cross or processional cross, or to a roughly rectangular panel which


\textsuperscript{104}Henry (note 2), Pl. 21.

\textsuperscript{105}See Henry (note 2), for illustrations of these.

\textsuperscript{106}P. Harbison, “On Some Possible Sources of Irish High Cross Decoration”, in Festschrift zum 50 Jährigen Bestehen des Vorgeschichtlichen Seminars Marburg (ed. O.H. Frey), Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Band 1, Gladenbach 1977, Taf. 38.

\textsuperscript{107}The tentative identification of these figures as Saints Peter and Paul put forward by Helen Koe (\textit{The High Crosses of Kells}, Meath Archaeological and Historical Society 1959, p. 25) would probably be negated by the presence of the ‘Celtic’ cross.
could have served a votive or dedicatory purpose, the fact that a similar cross has been translated into stone at Clonmore would seem to be symptomatic of a general tendency, starting possibly in the late eighth or early ninth century, whereby crosses of wood and metal were transformed into stone, undergoing in the process a two- or three-fold enlargement and 'monumentalisation', probably to suit open-air conditions. The crosses at Ahenny are well-known instances of this, and other crosses such as that of SS. Patrick and Columba at Kells and the south cross at Clonmacnois suggest that the models on which they were presumably based must have had a free-standing position in a church in order that the decoration on all four of their sides could be seen. The two last-mentioned crosses have Crucifixion scenes on the shafts of their west faces which were probably modelled on plaques like that already mentioned from Rinnagan. But, alas, there are few other pieces of metalwork surviving intact which could be claimed with any degree of probability to have decorated the type of crosses on which High Crosses in stone were modelled. For that reason, the Antrim Cross is all the more significant as the only virtually complete cross known from Ireland belonging to a type which may have served as a model for the decoration of High Crosses in stone. It is thus not only a very important piece of Early Christian metalwork in its own right, but can also be seen to mark a significant step in our understanding of the development of the stone High Crosses of Ireland.

Acknowledgments

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1. The Antrim Cross.

2. The Antrim Cross seen from the side; note the difference in shape between the central and end bosses, and the perforations on the end (left) and side (right) of the arms.

(Photos: Brian Lynch)
1. Partial view of one of the arms (No. 1).

2. Separately-cast arm (No. 2/3).

3. Separately-cast arm (No. 2/3) seen from the back.

4. Back view, showing back plate (No. 5).

THE ANTRIM CROSS

(Photos: Brian Lynch)
1. One face of central boss (No. 4).

2. One of the animals on central boss (No. 4).

3. One of the animals on central boss (No. 4).

THE ANTRIM CROSS
(Photos: Brian Lynch)
1. Detail of Fol. 4 of the manuscript Royal 1 E VI.

(Photo: copyright of the British Library)

2. Pictish cross-slab at Aberlemno (No. 3), Angus, Scotland.

(Photo: Dept. of the Environment, Edinburgh).
1. Durrow, Co. Offaly. Note rectangular tronco-pyramidal boss on end of cross arm. (Photo: Brian Lynch)

2. Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise. Note square tronco-pyramidal boss on end of cross arm.

(Photo: P. Harbison)
1. Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary. Fragment (centre) of the shaft of a High Cross, bearing an incised cross.

(Photo: P. Harbison).

2. Clonmore, Co. Carlow. Head of a High Cross, bearing a raised cross in a circle.

(Photo: P. Harbison)