

ANN PRESTON-JONES & ELISABETH OKASHA. *Early Cornish sculpture* (Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture volume XI). xiv+501 pages, 448 colour and b&w illustrations, 2 tables. 2013. London: The British Academy and Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-726565-9 hardback £85.



The venerable Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture (CASSS) series continues with a foray into Cornwall for its eleventh instalment. While to some it may seem a contradiction in

terms to include Cornish material in an Anglo-Saxon corpus, it is well worth doing so for several reasons. The sculptured stones of Cornwall belong almost exclusively to the ninth century and after, coinciding with the expansion of Wessex into the area; they are stylistically within the same Insular tradition as the sculpture described in previous CASSS volumes. Inclusion within the series means the stones are catalogued with all the thoroughness of the CASSS format, including hundreds of high-quality black and white photographs, 33 colour images, and some tentative experiments with laser scanning and photogrammetry. But perhaps the best reason for the inclusion of Cornwall in the series is that it challenges CASSS in important ways and points to how the series could evolve in future volumes.

The standard CASSS format applies here, including ten useful chapters of background and context followed by the descriptive catalogue. The volume includes a well-illustrated geological report by Roger Bristow and an introduction to the distinctive topography of Cornwall, both key to understanding the distribution of the sculpture. Interestingly, the majority of the carved stones in Cornwall are granites, which are generally coarse and difficult to carve with intricacy. While most of the stones used for early medieval sculpture are locally sourced, St Austell and Bodmin Moor granites were sometimes transported upwards of 20km, even where nearer sources of granite were available. The distinctive outcrops of West Penwith and Bodmin Moor have inspired research on the materiality and mnemonic capacity of stone within prehistoric monuments, and there is

considerable scope for extending such analysis into the early medieval period.

The comprehensive historical summary in Chapter 4, by Oliver Padel, details the timeline of Anglo-Saxon expansion into Cornwall. The documentary evidence for the early medieval part of this story is sparse—Padel's summary skates over the fifth to seventh centuries in just over a page—and it is therefore necessary to look to other sources. In this context, it is a surprise to find the vital evidence that we do have for these centuries—the Latin- and ogham-inscribed stones—is largely omitted from the volume (although they are listed, without illustration or description, in Appendix E). It is a fair point that these stones are neither Anglo-Saxon nor sculptured, but they are arguably part of the wider early Cornish stone-carving tradition that remained visible in the landscape, much like the earlier undecorated pillar stones of Tintagel and Mabe, which do make it into the catalogue. Nonetheless, where this volume improves on many of its predecessors generally, and sheds important light on early medieval Cornwall specifically, is through the provision of archaeological context. Hence, Chapter 5 details what we do know about the post-Roman centuries in Cornwall, where Romano-British settlement sites, land use and ceramic production continue down to the seventh century.

Another important challenge to the CASSS series is the distinctiveness of the Cornish cross-carving tradition. The majority of the Cornish corpus consists of free-standing crosses and cross-heads, fitting rather more comfortably with the Irish Sea zone than neighbouring Wessex. There are several concordances with Anglo-Saxon sculpture but with important differences: there is relatively little in the way of foliated ornament, animal art and figural sculpture that characterises much of the sculpture in south-west England. Instead, the closest parallels in design and form of the early Cornish sculpture are with south Wales and north-west England in the Viking Age. The predilection for wheel- and disc-headed crosses here forms a distinct continuum of monuments stretching north to the Whithorn and Govan schools of Viking Age sculpture; a CASSS volume covering southern Scotland now feels like more of a necessity than ever before.

The appendices list other non-diagnostic cross-marked stones in the region, including the expansive Appendix G that lists some 600-odd later medieval crosses, discussed by Andrew G. Langdon in Chapter

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2015

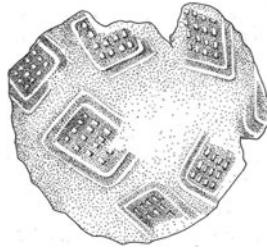
10. This unique phenomenon whereby simple cross-incised and wheel-headed grave markers continued to be produced through the later medieval period makes dating Cornish crosses extremely problematic, and raises doubts over the early dates often ascribed to similar sculpture in other areas across the Irish Sea zone.

The volume overall handles these difficulties deftly, but to my mind the focus on 'Anglo-Saxon sculpture' is perhaps too limiting in scope for Cornwall, and masks the complex engagements with stone in the early medieval period. The gap between the early Latin-inscribed stones and the sculptured stones covered here may be as much as two centuries, but the earlier pillars remained visible and influential. The vertical inscription down the shaft of Lanteglos 1 is an eloquent citation of early epigraphy in the area, even though it dates from the eleventh century and is in Middle English instead of Latin. The inscribed stones themselves may be evoking the grammar of prehistoric standing stones or undecorated pillars as found at a handful of churchyards alongside early medieval sculpture.

These comments are intended more as a provocation than a criticism. The volume is an indispensable addition to CASSS as it diversifies the umbrella term of 'Anglo-Saxon' sculpture. The Cornish crosses defy categorisation, incorporating influences not just among British, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian sculpture but also ancient monuments and natural places. The parallels across the Western seaboard also brings this volume up against something else that might challenge the CASSS format: the carved stones from Wales have been recently catalogued in a separate three-volume corpus that is modelled on CASSS but enhances and expands on its remit to include all early medieval sculpture as well as epigraphy and simple incised crosses. The Welsh volumes also include much more detail on landscape location and monument biography, which allows for a greater archaeological appreciation of the carving of stone as an enduring social practice. While CASSS remains a primarily art-historical project, there are signs here that it might embrace a more archaeological outlook in future volumes, which can only be encouraged.

ADRIÁN MALDONADO
Department of History and Archaeology,
University of Chester, UK
(Email: a.maldonado@chester.ac.uk)

VASANT SHINDE, TERESA P. RACZEK & GREGORY L. POSSEHL (ed.). *Excavations at Gilund: the artifacts and other studies*. (Museum Monograph 138). xviii+254 pages, numerous b&w illustrations, and tables. 2014. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; 978-1-934536-66-7 hardback \$99.95 & £65.



Knowledge of the prehistory of South Asia in the third and second millennia BC has been dominated by the Indus civilisation since the 1930s.

In this volume, scholars will find a much-needed new perspective on an early culture that existed on the margins of the Indus alluvial plain. The site of Gilund lies among a cluster of small-scale sites that are recognised by a material culture based largely on shared ceramic styles and referred to as the Ahar-Banas Complex in south-eastern Rajasthan. In this volume, Vasant Sinde, Teresa Raczek and Gregory Possehl present convincing evidence with which to consider Gilund as a major centre in the midst of a culture of agropastoralists and artisans living at both seasonal and permanent settlements. The site was occupied in two major periods: the Chalcolithic (3200–1700 BC) and the Early Historic (third century BC to the Kushan period).

In spite of Gilund's large size (22ha), social complexity, widespread economic interaction and a landscape rich in natural resources, Shinde *et al.* categorise the site as an example of 'Early Social Complexity' rather than 'urbanism'. It is, in fact, the largest known Ahar-Banas site and includes mud-brick structures in the form of a small segment of a circumference wall and parallel-wall complex. Along with other storage facilities, the latter may have been 'communally based.' The presence of multiple workshops devoted to a variety of crafts, some of which were produced for external trade and others for consumption within Gilund itself, further demonstrates the social and economic variability within the settlement. This social variability is confirmed by other aspects of the site plan, such as domestic structures that were built using many different construction techniques including mud brick, as well as stone and wattle and daub; some