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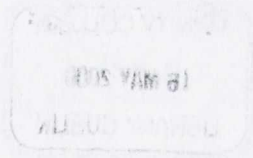
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IRISH BOOK SHRINES: A REASSESSMENT

VOLUME II

By

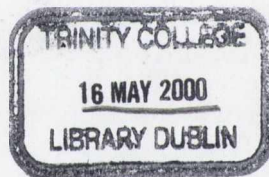
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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
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APPENDIX ONE: DESCRIPTION OF THE BOOK SHRINES

SOISCEÁL MOLAISSÉ

CONSTRUCTION

The shrine is in the form of a rectangular box, constructed from five copper alloy sheets to which openwork plates and decorative components are attached by rivets and solder. All the copper alloy sheets bear unusual tool-marks on both the interior and exterior surfaces. These rectangular marks, which appear as if they were made by a gouge or chisel, are dispersed unevenly and do not form a decorative pattern. They may have been a form of keying for solder in order to attach the openwork plates, but as they are present on the interior this does not seem a likely explanation. They measure, on average, .62 cm in length by .06 cm in width. On the interior of the front sheet the tool-marks overlap forming cross shapes.¹

Solder obscures the ends of three of the four lengths of binding strips. The visible end, at the juncture of SSA and the reverse, reveals that while the edge of the copper alloy backing plate of the reverse is chamfered, the plate on SSA curves outwards in order to engage with the binding strip. Tubular silver binding strips, U-shaped in cross-section, were used to secure the backing plates by engaging with the curved edges. In the empty rectangular space below AFP 2 on the front, the edge of the copper alloy backing sheet from the long side can be seen. This implies that the backing sheet on the long side extended around the front to impart rigidity to the structure of the shrine. The same system may have been used on the other sides but it is not possible to tell without dismantling the shrine. Where complete, the binding strips are tripartite in form and overlap along the centre of the sides. Radiography of the long side has revealed perforated semi-circular tags which extend from the binding strips, and pass below the silver frame where they are held in place by rivets.² There are no nails present in the binding strips but in certain areas the curved edges extend into a flange which runs above the copper alloy backing sheet, along the edge of the side.

All four sides have decorative rectangular silver openwork sheets which are secured

¹ These tool-marks are also present on the base of the Shrine of St Patrick's Bell [Pl.82.a].

² For the location of these tags, see the description of the long side, p.24 below.

in place by silver and copper alloy rivets. Only one inset panel of cast gilt-silver remains on the sides, the remainder probably also of gilt-silver, were removed or lost at some time in the past prior to Petrie's rediscovery of the shrine. On each of the short sides there is a sub-triangular strap-hinge attached to the upper edge. These were used to retain a carrying strap or chain. The binding strips on the upper sections are missing and the open sections of the remaining strips were flooded with solder in the recent past.³

Before the copper alloy sheets were assembled, the inset panels were attached, by rivets and possibly solder, to the openwork silver sheet. This sheet was then in turn, attached to the copper alloy backing plate by rivets. The strap-hinges were then affixed to the sides and the sides secured using the binding strips. The details of all the decorative elements in the shrine are presented in the following sections.

DESCRIPTION

Front [Pls.23-24; Fig.1]

This is constructed in the same manner as the other four sides, that is, an openwork silver plate with decorative inset panels of cast and stamped gilt-silver and gold filigree, attached to a copper alloy back plate, with the assembly held together by tubular binding strips and rivets. It appears to have been re-gilded at a later period, and this has obscured details of the decoration and inscription.

Silver openwork sheet

The principal design consists of a ringed-cross with expanded rectangular terminals, the arms and expansions of which are emphasised by inset gold filigree panels. The arms of the cross within the ring are concave and a semi-circular nodule is placed on the outside of the ring in each quadrant. A central oval panel and four semi-circular panels contained within the ring are now empty,⁴ while there are four cast silver panels of rectangular shape with concave sides inset into the inner arms. In each of the quadrants around the cross there is a sub-rectangular panel of gilt-silver, depicting an evangelist symbol. Accompanying inscriptions are engraved into the plain metal frame on each side of the evangelist panel. Around the perimeter of the front there are rectangular and right-angled

³ The solder may have been applied during the repairs in 1844 (see Vol.I, p.135).

⁴ One of these semi-circular panels formerly held a filigree panel, see [PI.23], p.6 below.

apertures, a right-angle in each corner and two rectangular panels flanking each of the four terminals of the cross. Two of these contain decorated panels: the upper right corner contains a stamped abstract motif, and on the left side adjacent to the symbol of St Luke, there is a filigree panel. In total there are seventeen decorative panels from an original complement of thirty three.

Copper alloy backing sheet

This can be observed behind the silver openwork sheet where there are panels missing. There are faint scribed lines on the backing sheet, the majority of which appear to be irregular, but in the spandrels of the cross there are lines which follow the curve of the arms. The lines parallel to the inner curve of the arms are drawn freehand, while those parallel to the ring are executed with a compass. These lines may have acted as guides for the positioning of inset panels, or less probably, to aid the alignment of the silver openwork sheet during assembly.

The dimensions of the panels containing filigree, cast and stamped silver and evangelist symbols will be provided after the relevant descriptions. The following are the **dimensions** of the apertures: L-shapes: upper left: 1.44 (L) x 1.30 (W) cm, lower right: 1.39 x 1.39 cm, Lower left: 1.4 x 1.31 cm.

The average dimensions of the small rectangular fields: 1.43 (L) x .9 (W) cm, large rectangular fields: 2.65 x 1.0 cm., spandrels of cross: 1.44 x .74 cm.

In the following description, the silver panels will be described first, followed by the filigree panels and the gilt-silver evangelist plaques.

In the upper right corner there is a stamped gilt-silver panel bearing an abstract design.⁵ The motif is incompetently executed and consists of angular knotwork which bifurcates to form a pretzel loop, which is designed to fit the shape of the panel. The short parallel lines which frame the panel convey the effect of beaded wire. A semi-circular portion of silver sheet obscures the upper right corner of the panel.

Dimensions: 1.49 (L) x 1.38 (W) x .71 (width of upper arm) x .79 (width of lower arm) cm.

⁵ The nineteenth-century photograph shows the panel aligned flush with the surface of the silver frame [Pl.23].

There are four rectangular panels with concave sides inset into the arms of the cross within the ring. The motifs are composed of two-strand knotwork, with three of the panels having a bar terminal at each end. They are covered with gold foil which has been pressed into place to take up the underlying motif present on the cast silver. The silver background may be seen where the foil is damaged. The panels are framed by a plain moulding on three sides; it is not present on the inner edge adjacent to the central setting.⁶

Filigree panels

The panels are designated AFP (Abstract Filigree Panels) and ZFP (Zoomorphic Filigree Panels).⁷ All the filigree panels appear to be secured to the silver frames by means of small silver rivets. These, which are polished flush with the surface, can be observed on the silver frame adjacent to the short sides of the panel. They most likely pierce the copper alloy back plate of the panels where it extends below the silver sheet. This method of mounting is present on the filigree panels on the girdle of the Derrynaflan chalice. Radiography of the chalice has revealed that the gold backing plate extends into a triangular projection beneath the amber studs on either side where they are retained by a rivet which pierces the backing plate.⁸

AFP 1-4: These are the T-shaped panels at the terminals of the cross. In each panel there are two motifs flanking the central setting, the upper and lower panels (AFP 1, AFP 3) form one pair, while those on the lateral arms (AFP 2, AFP 4) bear more complex designs. Each panel is framed by a single beaded wire border. The centre of these panels originally held a large oval stud; panel AFP 2 retains an original red glass cabochon. Panels AFP 1 and AFP 3 have three separate fields surrounding the central panel each of which consists of a continuous twist of three loops. These wires are composite and consist of three tiers: the topmost is a fine plain gold wire which rests upon a broad band of beaded wire, which in turn rests on a pair of very fine wires. Those wires flanking the stud are set vertically, those in the stem of the T, horizontally. A similar triple loop fills the

⁶ This moulding, which has the appearance of silver, may have been a strip of niello which has been reduced to silver through chemical cleaning.

⁷ I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Niamh Whitfield by allowing me to use her unpublished notes, comments and terminology compiled in her examination of the filigree on the Soisceál Molaisse. This is a section of her wider study of eleventh and twelfth-century Irish filigree.

⁸ See Ryan 1985a, 34, pl.42 for a radiograph of the filigree panels.

stem of the T on panels AFP 2 and AFP 4. In these panels the stud is flanked by a design of double-stranded angular interlace. On panel AFP 2 there is an intact stud collar. The collet is decorated with a plain rope-twist composed of two opposed two-ply twists of round wire, flanked above and below by beaded wire. An additional beaded wire surrounds the collar. Panel AFP 1, which has lost its stud, has two lengths of beaded wire running along the wire which surrounds the collar. The back plates consist of gold foil, intact in the upper panel, missing from the left and fragmentary in the lower. The heads of the copper alloy rivets which secured the back plates are visible on panels AFP 1 and AFP 3. Patches of gold foil are applied to the area around the rivet head, presumably to mask the damage to the foil caused by the penetration of the rivet.

Dimensions: AFP1: 2.11 (L) x 1.27 (W) cm, maximum width of arms: .9 cm.

AFP2: 2.34 x 1.21 cm, maximum width of arms: .9 cm, Collet: 1.19 x .75 x .27 (Ht).

AFP3: 1.38 x 1.9 cm, maximum width of arms: .91 cm.

AFP4: 2.3 x 1.16 cm, maximum width of arms: .84 cm.

AFP 5: The filigree in this panel is composed of a triple-tier system of plain and beaded wires. The motif consists of a quadrilobe knot with pointed ends which is framed by a single beaded wire border.

Dimensions: .9 x .9 cm.

AFP 6-7: Both these panels are of the same width, but AFP 7 is shorter in length and the edge abutting the ring of the cross is slightly concave. The centre of the panel has been damaged, but the design appears to have formed a triple interlaced loop with a returned asymmetrical loop in each corner. The design in AFP 6 also has a returned asymmetrical loop in each corner and a motif of three units, the upper of which forms a near complete ring-knot. The lower two units are more constricted but each loop frames crossed diagonal strands. Both panels are edged by a single beaded wire border, AFP 6 has the same three tier system of decorative wires but the filigree in AFP 7 lacks the topmost plain wire. The lower wires are clearly obliquely beaded.

Dimensions: AFP6: 2.16 x .99 cm, AFP7: 2.09 x 1.04 cm.

ZFP 1 [Pl.30.b]: This consists of a pair of intertwined profile beasts linked by a common head lappet and tail, which intersect in the centre of the panel. A curling foreleg runs parallel with the long neck and terminates below the lower jaw of the beast. The details

are difficult to discern but long splayed jaws and single ball-and-claw feet are evident.

The panel is framed by a single beaded wire border. The filigree is complex and the details unclear due to wear and adhering deposits. The bodies are outlined in a composite single strand of wire, anatomical points being emphasised by granules. The snout, jaws and legs are constructed of an uppermost fine plain wire placed on top of a beaded wire. There is a large granule present at the tip of the jaws which may be enclosed within a plain collar. The necks appear to be outlined by a beaded wire, below which are two finer wires. The trunks seem to be composed of five separate wires: a beaded wire supported on either edge by a plain wire resting on a beaded wire. A large granule denotes the eye; the hip by a small granule with a larger granule beneath it. The left shoulder is marked by a large granule ringed by smaller granules, the other by a collar of wire. A single granule is also used to denote the paw pads. The backing plate appears to be flat.

Dimensions: 2.66 x 1.0 cm.

ZFP 2: This panel, which is now lost, was positioned in the upper left semi-circular panel of the ring [Pl.23].⁹ It is difficult to comprehend the details due to the inadequate resolution of the photograph and the inability to examine the panel at first hand under magnification with appropriate lighting conditions. The panel is framed by a single strand of beaded wire which appears to be of similar thickness to that used on the other filigree panels. The composition shows a contorted profile biped with its head placed in the lower corner of the panel. It has widely splayed jaws, a rounded head and a short head lappet. The lappet, which is fabricated from a single beaded wire, may have been damaged as it terminates abruptly just below the neck. The slender body is composed of one to two strands of beaded wire, and the fore and hindleg joints widen where they are emphasised by a single granule. A graceful loop is formed by the body where it coils inwards under and over the foreleg, eventually terminating at the hip joint. The ball-and-claw foot of the hindleg ends in the beast's mouth, while the foreleg passes below the hindleg and over the body, also terminating in what may be a ball-and-claw foot at the top of the panel. Although not examined at first hand this panel is more accomplished than the remainder of the filigree panels.

⁹ See n.5 above regarding the loss of the panel.

Central setting

This consists of an empty oval setting which is recessed into the silver sheet. In the setting there are four copper nails which retain overlapping strips of gold foil with upturned edges. The sheets are arranged in a cruciform manner but this may be accidental. This foil would have acted as a reflective surface behind a setting of either glass or precious stone. The setting may have been a cabochon rock crystal and would probably have been bordered by gold filigree wire as seen in the collet in the T-shaped setting on the right terminal of the cross.

Dimensions: 1.8 x 1.57 cm, diameter of rivet-heads: .18 to .38 cm.

Evangelist plaques

These are manufactured from cast gilt-silver and are sub-rectangular in shape. Although worn on the raised surfaces the well-modelled figures exhibit fine detail. All the panels are framed by a milled border. Each plaque is made to accommodate a semi-circular nodule which projects from the ring of the cross. In addition the other three corners have a small rectangular indent. The plaques are secured in position by two small rivets which are polished flush with the surface. These are positioned in the silver frame at the top and bottom of the panel.¹⁰ Other large rivets, the majority of which still retain caps which have notched edges, are positioned at the corners of the plaques. Each symbol has an inscription engraved into the silver frame adjacent to the long sides, these have been discussed in the inscription section. The description commences at the top left and progresses in a clockwise direction.

The symbol of St Matthew, the man, is depicted in a frontal pose holding his angular wings crossed in front of his chest. He appears squat as he stands on an oblong field decorated with knotwork, which is placed at the bottom of the panel. There is virtually no free space between the figure and the edges of the panel. The head, in high relief, is large in proportion to the rest of the body and incised lines define the oval eyes, down-turning mouth and the edges of his cheeks (or beard). Wear has obliterated all traces of the nose. The head is sunk deep into the shoulders and the hair extends outwards and downwards where it terminates in a volute. The angular ribbon-shaped wings, which originate from emphatic shoulder spirals, are decorated with diagonal hatched lines and end

¹⁰ Radiography has revealed the presence of an extended flange which originates from the upper and lower edges of each panel, where they are secured in place by rivets.

in a hook-like terminal which engages with the curl of the hair forming a spiral. The two wings intersect at mid-chest level where the left wing passes over and under the right wing and terminates at the bottom of the plaque. He is wearing a short knee-length tunic which is decorated with a pair of conjoined peltae in the centre, flanked by a single pelta on each side, while the hem is decorated with short vertical lines. His legs are featureless cylinders and end in rectangular stumps resembling hooves.

Dimensions: 3.87 (L) x 1.18 - 2.86 (W) cm. Height of relief: .25 cm.

The symbol of St Mark, the Lion, is depicted with a frontal squat body and a profile head facing in towards the cross. His right leg is elevated slightly, where it is positioned on the projecting nodule of the ring. He also stands on an oblong panel, which is decorated with a triple interlaced knot. The angular ribbon-shaped wings are decorated in the same manner as those of St Matthew, but in this case the tip of his left wing terminates in a spiral in front of his gaping jaws. The right wing passes over and under his left wing at chest level. The large head, which is decorated with hatched lines, has long gaping jaws with two prominent fangs and a circular snout, while the circular eye has a comma-shaped extension. Two long triangular ears extend backwards from the head. He wears a short tunic which is decorated with a double row of lunettes and a band of short vertical lines on the hem. The short cylindrical legs appear to have small hooves. There are holes in the plaque between the legs and the right wing and leg.

Dimensions: 3.83 x 1.16 - 2.29 cm.

The eagle of St John stands upright with a frontal body and profile head turning in towards the cross. As with the other figures he has angular hatched wings emanating from spiralled shoulder joints with the left wing passing over and under the right. They terminate in straight edges at the end of the panel and run into the sides. The down-turning beak which is placed at the upper left corner, ends in a volute, and has a large tear-drop shaped extension suspended from the tip. He has a large circular eye, small triangular ears extending from the back of the head and the neck is covered with triangular scale-like feathers. The feathers on the torso are denoted by panels of diagonal hatched lines which are placed on either side of a median line. A large triangular-shaped tail fills the space between the legs and is decorated with six U-shaped scales, the lower register of which develops into pointed feathers. The legs terminate in a pad and two toes from which project long curling talons, the lower toes extend into the corners while the upper cross over the

base of the tail.

Dimensions: 3.82 x 1.14 - 2.30 cm.

The stocky figure of St Luke stands erect with a frontal head and the torso turned in a semi-profile position. The wings and shoulder joints are decorated in the same manner as the other three figures, the positioning of the wings are the same as the lion of St Mark. However they terminate in a volute, the left forms a spiral with the curled tip of the tail, the right behind the right leg. The triangular-shaped head has a large snout which terminates in a pelta representing the nostrils and two large pointed horns curl inwards from the crown. Curved hatched lines decorate the snout and cheeks. Two oval eyes are placed on the sides of the head and two small triangular ears project sideways. The body and legs are decorated with panels of curved hatched lines and the hip-joint is denoted by an emphatic spiral. A long curling tail passes between the legs and engages with the lower left wing. The legs terminate in triangular-shaped hooves. A small double contoured D-shaped field projects into the panel where it fills the space between the right ear and shoulder. There is a hole in the plaque between the cheek and D-shaped field.

Dimensions: 3.84 x 1.24 - 2.38 cm.

Binding strips

There are no binding strips on the left side and the adjacent ends of the upper and lower strips are flooded with solder. A fracture in the upper left strip, parallel to the two empty spaces, was repaired with solder at some time in the recent past. The strip on the upper right corner, which is damaged at the corner, is tripartite in form. The remainder are straight lengths of split tubing.

Dimensions: Upper left: 5.66 x .6 cm. Upper right: 5.77 cm. Long side (upper): 7.45 x .59 cm. Long side (lower): 6.52 cm. Lower strip: 11.52 cm.

Rivets

There are four types of rivets on the front: small flat-headed, which are used to attach the filigree and evangelist plaques to the openwork silver sheet; large flat-headed, used in the corners and at the ends of the cross arms; small dome-headed, and larger rivets with notched caps. It appears as if all are primary, but the notched caps have become detached in some places, leaving the smaller dome-headed tops beneath. The only evangelist plaque with its full complement of original caps is St Luke. These dome and

rivets with notched caps are used to attach the openwork silver sheet to the copper alloy backing sheet. The diameter of the rivets range from .26 to .46 cm.

Overall Dimensions: diameter of cross-ring: 4.55 cm. Field occupied by evangelist plaques: 10.79 x 7.89 cm. Diameter of openwork sheet: 13.55 x 10.75 cm. Front: 14.67 x 11.61 cm.

Short Side A [Pl.25; Fig.2]

Silver sheet

This has one large rectangular, four L-shaped and two T-shaped apertures, all of which would have originally held inset panels. There are ten decorative panels engraved¹¹ onto the silver sheet: six zoomorphic and four abstract, all of which are framed by an incised line. In addition, there appears to be two small panels which have been truncated by the strap attachment. These are situated just below the shoulders where the hinge begins to narrow.¹² The original hinge may have been smaller, thus allowing more space for extra panels, or else an error was made in the layout of the sheet. The sheet is retained in place by eight copper alloy rivets with silver caps. As these do not interrupt any of the decoration and are placed at regular intervals they may be considered primary.

Average dimensions of L and T shapes: L: 1.19 to 1.38 cm on sides, .65 to .91 cm on short edges. T: 1.86 to 2.0 cm on long edge, .66 to .82 cm on short edges.

Silver sheet: 10.74 (L) x 7.41 (W) x .11 (Th) cm.

Panels with abstract decoration

These flank the strap attachment, with two rectangular panels at the base and two sub-trapezoidal panels along the sides of the beast head. These trapezoidal panels differ slightly in width and shape. All are framed by an incised line. The surface is abraded on all panels and traces of gilding remain in the grooves. They are denoted AP1 to 4.

AP1: The pattern is very worn but as punched dots were used to lay out the pattern, the

¹¹ It is not possible to ascertain if the panels were cast and then soldered into place on the silver sheet. O'Meadhra (1986b, 133) has argued that the panels on the short sides of the Soisceál were cast. However the two unfinished panels AP1 and 2 on SSA are engraved and not cast. Radiography of the long side has not revealed any solder joints on the panels.

¹² The truncated field placed between AP1 and AP2 measures .48 x .25 cm.

panel may have been unfinished. A lightly incised line forms a carrick-bend with a bar terminal at each end.

Dimensions: 1.34 (L) x .68 (W) cm.

AP2: The pattern is analogous to AP1 but the lines are more deeply incised.

Dimensions: 1.34 x .67 cm.

AP3: This bears thick strands of interlace with a median-incised line. The composition is uneven, possibly due to the shape of the panel, and it extends from a four-strand plait at the top, to an eight-strand plait at the bottom of the panel. The top section of interlace is bungled and the lower section has six registers of V-pointed corner bends linked by diagonal bands. The pattern is closed at the top by a bar terminal.

Dimensions: 2.57 (L) x .61 - 1.43 (W) cm.

AP4: This pattern is more regular and is composed of thick strands of interlace with a median-incised line and closed by a Stafford knot at the top end. The design consists of two carrick-bends, a triplet bend and two turned V-pointed corner bends at the bottom.

Dimensions: 2.5 x .61 - 1.23 (W) cm.

Panels with zoomorphic decoration

All six panels are rectangular, four flank the empty rectangular apertures, while the other two are situated between the trapezoidal panels and the outer frame. They are denoted ZP 1-6.

ZP 1: The fine detail on this panel is obscured by a secondary layer of gilding. There is a single profile biped with a coiled neck and hind quarters. The body and limbs, which are double contoured, are of a single width while the head has a rounded forehead, circular eye and widely splayed jaws which bite the neck. The foreleg intersects the neck and terminates at the top left of the panel. A curl indicates the foreleg joint. The feet, one in the lower right corner, the other in the upper right, consists a double toe. A triquetra knot, which appears to originate from the tail, is placed in between the coiled limbs.

Dimensions: 2.1 x .93 cm.

ZP 2: The zoomorphic decoration in this panel is easier to discern and consists of a single profile biped with the head placed in the lower left corner. The jaws are naturalistic, with

a blunt snout. The body and neck are double-contoured, and a narrow head lappet loops elegantly in and around the body where it evolves into a tail in the lower left corner. These loops form two V corner bends at the end. The serpentine body loops back over and under the neck where it swells into the hindleg which ends in a ball-and-claw foot directly behind the head. The foreleg runs parallel with the neck, crossing under the head lappet and over the body where it terminates in a single ball-and-claw beneath the lower jaw. A circle denotes the eye, and an incised curl indicates the foreleg joint.

Dimensions: 2.11 x .85 cm.

ZP 3: This is a larger panel which depicts a symmetrical composition of two profile bipeds with heads in opposite corners. The bodies and necks are single width and double-contoured, but the tails and head lappets are composed of narrow bands. Each beast shares a common tail and head lappet which cross over and under the bodies and form a knot in the central oval field. A curl indicates the foreleg joints which runs beneath the necks ending below the lower jaws. The hindleg of each beast swells beneath the jaw of the opposing animal and intersects with the head lappet before terminating in a point. The rounded eyes and naturalistic jaws are analogous to ZP 2 above.

Dimensions: 2.85 x .92 cm.

ZP 4: This is very similar to ZP 1 and comprises a single profile quadruped with a body and neck of even width. The double contoured body forms two even loops, and the rounded head, which has short stubby jaws, is placed in the lower centre of the panel. The splayed hindlegs, which end in a ball-and-claw feet, and the fore-limbs, constrict where they form a knot in the centre of the loops. The forelegs terminate in the lower corners while the tail ends in a clubbed terminal below the foreleg. All joints are indicated by a curl.

Dimensions: 2.16 x .87 cm.

ZP 5: This is similar to ZP 1 and 4 except that the position of the head and foreleg are reversed. The head, with blunt jaws, is situated in the centre of the panel while the neck loops around the body. The hindquarters are coiled and the hindleg crosses over the head before terminating in a single ball-and-claw. The beast bites its tail, which intersects with the body and terminates in the upper right corner in a lozenge shaped expansion. A punched dot represents the eye and the foreleg joint is represented by a curl.

Dimensions: 1.84 x .69 cm.

ZP 6: This is similar in layout to ZP 3 and consists of two profile bipeds whose double-contoured bodies form a figure-of-eight, and intersect in the centre of the panel. The heads, with blunt naturalistic jaws and comma shaped eyes, are placed at each end of the panel. A simple curl denotes the foreleg joints, which run under the bodies and terminate in the lower corner of the panel. The hindleg appears to run over the neck where it then crosses over the head lappet and ends in a ball-and-claw. There is a large circular perforation, diameter .16 cm, in the centre of the panel.

Dimensions: 2.86 x .77 cm.

Strap escutcheon

This is made from sheet copper alloy, possibly brass, is sub-triangular in shape and terminates in a beast-head. A projecting hollow annular ring, fabricated from copper alloy, and which is now fractured, projects from a rectangular slot positioned approximately mid-way between the three screws. Beneath the ring there is a lozenge-shaped raised area of metal which is probably due to strain imposed on the ring through the tension imposed by the carrying chain.

The beast-head is fashioned to form a tapering snout with sloping edges with a flat surface reserved for the forehead and eyes. The decoration on the head is executed by crudely engraved lines which consist of two oval eyes with a central dot and two small leaf-shaped ears with a median line. Rows of parallel diagonal lines serve to accentuate the ears. A lightly-scribed line on the silver backing plate outlines the contours of the strap attachment.

The component is retained in place by three modern threaded screws with domed heads, one centrally placed above the beast-head, and a further two positioned along the upper edge. From the interior it can be seen that the screws project .2 cm to .36 cm from the backing plate. There are three rectangular slots in the backing plate of the shrine, average dimensions .84 x .2 -.36 cm, to accept the shanks from a previous strap-attachment. It is possible to observe a circular ring in the interior of the escutcheon through the upper two rectangular slots. This ring is probably connected to the fractured ring on the exterior.

Dimensions: Overall: 4.93 (L) x 3.11 (W) x .67 (Ht) cm. Thickness: .07 cm, Ring diameter: 1.59 cm, thickness: .3 cm.

Binding strips

The silver binding strips are tripartite in form and extend circa .8 cm beneath the openwork silver plate. This side would have originally comprised of four sets of tripartite binding strips. The two upper sections were removed at some time in the past and the area flooded with solder in order to secure the ends of the strips.

Dimensions: average width of binding strips: .42 - .61 cm.

Overall dimensions of side (including binding strips): Length: 11.5cm, Width (closed end): 8.53 cm, Width (open end): 8.76 cm. Average thickness of copper alloy back plate: .16 cm.

Short Side B [PL.26; Fig.3]

Silver sheet

This has the same geometrical configuration as SSA, with four L-shaped and two T-shaped apertures, with the original inset panels now missing. There are eleven decorative panels, ten engraved silver with zoomorphic ornament and one inset figurative panel of cast gilt-silver. Unlike SSA there are no panels bearing abstract ornament but there is a wealth of zoomorphic decoration. All the panels have suffered extensive wear, some appear to have had their top surfaces filed down, and others retain two layers of gilding. The lower layer is copper coloured while the upper layer is bright yellow. All panels are bordered by an incised line.

Dimensions: L-shapes: uprights, average length 1.32 cm, width of arms .64 cm. T-shapes: uprights 1.99 to 2.11 cm, width of arms: 1.32 cm. Silver sheet: 10.63 x 7.24 cm.

Panels with zoomorphic decoration

ZP 1: This panel displays extensive wear and a nail obscures a section of the upper left corner. In addition a thick layer of gilding obscures fine detail. The ornament consists of a single profile serpent with a coiled body and a head lappet. There are no apparent limbs and the head, which is placed in the lower right of the panel, has splayed, stubby jaws and a circular eye. A strand running across the neck may be a limb.

Dimensions: .87 (L) x .86 (W) cm.

ZP 2: This also depicts a serpent with a coiled body analogous to ZP 1. The head is positioned in the lower left corner and has a circular eye and splayed jaws. A head lappet intertwines around the body.

Dimensions: .75 x .87 cm.

ZP 3: This contains a single profile quadruped with spiralled hindquarters and a centrally placed back turning head. It is not a very competent design and it is difficult to perceive certain features. The neck and body form a simple loop, while angular limbs, which spring from the hindquarters and centre of the body, end in a double toe at the back of the head and the lower centre of the panel. The head is rounded with a circular eye and narrow, widely-splayed jaws which bite the body. A tongue, which forms an angular knot, originates from behind the body and terminates in a lobe in the loop of the body.

Dimensions: 2.04 x 1.86 cm.

ZP 4: This trapezoidal-shaped panel bears a complex pattern of two intertwined profile bipeds. Their bodies intersect mid-way along the panel and their heads are placed upside-down relative to one another. They have rounded heads with circular eyes, double-contoured bodies and long, thin jaws terminating in a curl. There are no head lappets but the slender limbs form an unresolved pattern, intertwining around the bodies. The beast, whose head is placed at the bottom of the panel, appears to have crossed, splayed forelegs. One leg is placed parallel with the lower jaw, the second beneath his body and over the head of the opposing animal, where it forms an angular loop around the jaws and develops into a tail. His hindleg intersects over the neck of the upper beast, while the upper beast's forelegs also splay and its tail intertwines around the opposing beast's jaw.

Dimensions: 2.59 x .56 - 1.34 (W) cm.

ZP 5: This is a trapezoidal panel which contains a pair of intertwined profile bipeds with double contoured bodies. Their heads are placed in the bottom corners, and the opposing hindlegs, denoted by an emphatic curl, are situated at the top of the panel. The animals intersect at the necks and above the hips, forming a double loop with the intertwined angular hindlegs at the top of the panel. The foreleg of each animal runs parallel with their neck before crossing over the neck of the opposing beast, the inner foreleg terminates in

a double toe. A bifurcating head lappet is present on the outer beast and one strand interlaces through the loop of the bodies ending in a knot below its body. The second strand forms a broken plait between the heads. There appears to be a pronounced collar on the neck of each animal. The heads are rounded with circular eyes and narrow, splayed jaws.

Dimensions: 2.54 (L) x .52 - 1.29 cm.

ZP 6: This panel has suffered considerable loss of surface and, in addition, the complex nature of the decoration makes positive identification of anatomical details uncertain. It consists of a large profile biped with a double contoured body and a large backward-facing head, which has a large comma-shaped eye and pointed beak-like jaws which run parallel with the back. The hindleg, which ends in a V-shaped foot, bends sharply across the body while the tail interlaces and forms a knot below the torso. A foreleg, which is placed in front of the body, interlaces with the extended head lappet.

Dimensions: 2.11 x .82 cm.

ZP 7: This is a rectangular panel with two confronted profile beasts. The larger animal on the right has a tubular body with spiralled hindquarters, the hindlegs splay from the centre and terminate in a double toe. Both animals have rounded heads, circular eyes and bite each other with long, widely splayed jaws which end in a curl. The smaller beast has the same spiralled hindquarters and legs, and its tendril-like foreleg intertwines with the foreleg of the opposing animal. The foreleg of the larger animal originates from the curled shoulder joint and terminates in a ball-and-claw above the hindquarters of the opposing animal. The head lappet on the larger animal terminates in a triquetra knot which is situated beneath the body.

Dimensions: 2.82 x .88 cm.

ZP 8: This panel contains a pair of profile quadrupeds, with double-contoured bodies and necks which cross at the centre of the panel. The left animal has an elevated hindleg which is grasped by the open jaws of the opposing beast. The well-developed hindleg of the right animal is placed beneath his body. The forelegs of each animal intersect at the centre where they run parallel beneath the necks. The foreleg of the left beast runs down to the lower right corner of the panel and terminates in a lobe. Both head lappets interlace around the bodies and develop into tails which are situated in the lower corners of the panel. The

jaws of the right beast are closed, and both animals have circular eyes with a central dot.

Dimensions: 2.09 x .77 cm.

ZP 9: The composition of this panel is similar to ZP 6, as it bears a complex pattern of discontinuous plait-work and appendages. It depicts a profile quadruped with a rounded head placed in the upper right corner. The body runs diagonally across the panel and there is a pair of crossed hindlegs with ball and claw feet at the left end. A large bifurcating head lappet runs above and below the body where it forms triangular fields of knotwork. The foreleg appears to be placed beneath the short stubby jaws. The tail runs below the hindleg, forming a knot below the body. Wear has effaced the details of the eye.

Dimensions: 2.12 x .79 cm.

ZP 10: This rectangular panel contains a complex pattern of an elongated profile beast (upside down) with the backward-facing head placed slightly off-centre. The neck forms a loop with the body and the hindquarters are spiralled. Long, straight jaws originate from a rounded head, and the cheek is emphasised by an incised line. The remainder of the features are difficult to discern, but there appears to be a head lappet which forms a bar terminal in the left end of the panel and intertwines around and under the body, where it terminates in a loop above the jaws. A triquetra knot, which may be a tongue, is placed beneath the hindquarters. A silver rivet, diameter .16 cm, perforates the lower edge of the panel.

Dimensions: 2.84 x .71 cm.

Panel with ecclesiastic

This is fabricated from cast gilt-silver and from examination under magnification there are two distinct layers of gilding present on the surfaces. The upper layer is bright yellow, while the layer beneath has a red coloration, probably due to the addition of small amount of copper.

The composition of the panel is symmetrical with the centrally placed ecclesiastic flanked by two pairs of zoomorphs. The figure stands in a frontal pose with the left hand holding a rectangular book to his chest, while the right hand grips an asperge or flail which passes beneath his left wrist. There is an incised line around the edge of the book and a semi-circular line surrounding the fingers may represent a napkin or mappa. The feet turn

outwards with the toes pointing upwards while the head impinges upon the upper frame of the panel. This, along with the high relief of the figure, produces a three-dimensional effect as the ecclesiastic appears to project from the panel. The head has suffered considerable wear (the nose is obliterated) and incised lines define oval eyes, a down-turning mouth, moustache, hair and a forked beard. The ears, which are in line with the eyes, are formed from two C-shaped scrolls. He is attired in a full-length tunic, or alb, decorated with contoured lines and a hem consisting of a band of incised parallel vertical lines. A cloak, which is ornamented with bands of diagonal lines, is draped over the shoulders and ends in wide sleeves which terminate in a worn spiral. The Vandyke motifs on the shoulders, three on the right shoulder and two on the left, may represent either strands of hair, or decoration on the cloak. A raised U-shaped border below the right hand may define a further vestment.

He is flanked by two pairs of animals. The upper pair are depicted in profile and are placed in the same relative positions, with their heads at the level of the ecclesiastic's elbows. They have tubular bodies with a coiled hindleg which ends in a ball-and-claw foot, pointing into the upper corners of the panel. The forelegs originate from an incised curl, run beneath the body, and terminate under the lower jaw. Both have splayed jaws with long lolling tongues ending in a lobe in front of the foreleg. The tails¹³ originate from the top of the panel and intertwine loosely around the bodies. There are slight differences between the beasts: the right beast is more slender, has an additional loop of interlace around the foreleg joint and appears to have a comma-shaped eye.

The lower beasts have tubular, sinuous profile bodies arranged in an elegant figure-of-eight with frontal cat-like heads. The heads, which flank the ecclesiastic's waist, are perched on long curving necks and have large triangular pricked ears, bulbous eyes and rounded foreheads and snouts. Their forelegs bend sharply at the elbow and terminate in a ball-and-claw feet in the lower corners of the panel. They appear to sit on their rumps and have well-developed hindlegs which bend upwards and intertwine loosely around the body.

¹³ The strand on the left beast, which is decorated with hatched bands, develops into a lozenge-shaped expansion with a curled tendril. It may be possible that this represents a serpent emerging from the top of the panel. The strand on the right beast forms a simple loop.

A raised moulding borders the panel, except where interrupted by the head of the ecclesiastic. The panel is held in place by two rivets, on the top and bottom flange, which are hammered flush with the surface of the metal. There is a small perforation below the left cheek of the ecclesiastic.

Dimensions: 3.65 x 2.57 cm., height of relief: .21 cm.

Strap-hinge

This hinged mount is fabricated from copper alloy, cast in two sections which are connected by a pin which passes through five lugs, two on the upper section, three on the lower section, in order to secure the components together. The reverse of the components are plain. The lower section has three perforated rectangular shanks, one behind the beast-head and one behind each of the circular settings. Correspondingly there are three perforations in the backing plate, measuring .86 x .45cm, to accept these shanks. A modern U-shaped brass clip passes through the perforations on the two upper shanks, thus retaining the lower section in position.

Lower component: The central triangular field appears to be a separate plate soldered into position. The ornament consists of a cruciform step pattern formed by a central rectangle which, in turn, is enclosed by a larger rectangle from which four arms extend to the edge of the field. The lower arm expands into a triangular cell which runs parallel with the walls of the setting. The interior of the arms appear to be inlaid with a corroded white metal which appears to be silver. There is decayed red enamel present in the central cell and in the field surrounding the arms of the cross. This field is bordered by a simple step-fret pattern which is interrupted at the top corners by the empty circular settings and at the base by a large beast-head. Wear has effaced most of the decoration on the three lugs.

The finely modelled beast-head has suffered wear on the raised surfaces but the decoration can still be discerned. It is triangular in shape and has a pair of triangular pricked ears placed behind the head which extend into the decorated border. The centre of the ears have a heart-shaped indentation. The eyes consist of empty circular settings placed at the side of the raised brow. Radiating lines originate from these settings and are bordered in turn by an engraved line. From the sides it can be seen that a comma-shape field, decorated with engraved diagonal lines, extends from the eye [Pl.29.b]. Two lines run from the eyes along the ridge of the snout to the raised nostrils. Incised parallel

diagonal lines decorate the length of the snout and on the side two sharp fangs are placed directly below the tip of the snout.

Dimensions: Beast Head: 1.86 (L) x 1.16 (W) x .56 (Ht) cm.

Enamel field: 1.88 x 1.61 cm.

Overall: 4.54 (length, including lugs) x 3.15 cm.

Average thickness: .6cm. Height of collet: .76 cm.

Upper component: This is similar in shape, but smaller in size than the lower component. It is attached to the lower component by a pin which passes through two attached lugs, allowing it to swivel back and forth. It is roughly triangular in shape and terminates in two circular mouldings which are secured by a horizontal pin, forming a loop. All raised surfaces and the interior of the loop display extensive wear. The lower moulding consists of two lugs, and a pair of circular settings placed either side of an inset sub-triangular metal plate, decorated with a champlevé enamel field. The cells of the plate form a stepped cruciform design, the centre of which has a square cell inlaid with silver. There are remains of red enamel at the bases of the cells. The left circular setting contains a blue glass stud, which is now worn flush with the surrounding surface. The right setting is empty and the exterior of the collet has worn through.

Under raking light traces of decorative motifs are discernable on the frame of the upper section [Pl.29.a]. They are more evident on the lower horizontal frame and consist of a row of five lozenges with alternating vertical bars. On each of the lugs there is a herringbone motif. There appears to be a rough casting seam along the left side of the component.

Dimensions: Inner field 1.16 (L) x 1.14 cm. Overall 3.3 x 2.88 cm.

Binding strips

There are two full length silver U-shaped binding strips on the long sides, and a shorter strip on the narrow end. The side strips overlap the ends of the binding strip on the short side.

Dimensions: left strip: 11.65 (L) cm, right strip: 11.53 cm, short strip: .26 (visible length) cm. Average diameter: .43 to .50 cm.

It is not possible to determine the exact dimensions of the copper alloy backing

sheet due to the fact that it is obscured by the silver sheet. However the average thickness is .13 cm. It is pierced by numerous rivets which range in size from .22 cm to .4 cm in diameter.

Overall Dimensions

Complete side, including binding strips: 11.66 (L) x 8.38 (W) cm.

Long Side [Pl.27; Fig.4]

Silver sheet

This gilt-silver plate has a similar configuration to the two short sides, consisting of L- and T-shaped apertures along the edges and three rectangular openings placed equally along the central axis. There are eleven panels missing: three large rectangular, four L-shaped and four T-shaped. There are ten panels bearing engraved decoration, six with animal ornament and four with abstract patterns. In addition an Irish inscription is engraved onto the frame bordering the side. The plate is attached to the copper alloy plate by rivets which pierce the frame at intervals. There are two portions of the inscribed frame missing, on either side of ZP 1.¹⁴ In addition some of the panels retain varying amounts of gilding, which appears to post-date the animal ornament.

Dimensions. Rectangular panels: No. 1 (below ZP 1): 3.6 (L) x 2.42 (W) cm; No. 2 (centre): 3.58 x 2.48 cm; No. 3 (bottom): 3.7 x 2.51 cm; T-shaped panel: 2.0 x 1.45 cm, maximum width of arms: .9cm; L-shaped panel (bottom left): 1.32 x 1.42 cm, maximum width of arms: .9 cm.

Silver sheet: 13.71 (L) x 7.16 (W) cm.

Panels with abstract decoration

There are four, designated AP 1 to 4, and these flank the narrow sides of the upper and lower large rectangular apertures.

AP 1: This comprises a pattern of tightly meshed angular knotwork with the strands emphasised by a median-incised line. Whereas the knots at the short end of the panel are discernable the central field is not very accomplished, the craftsman appears to have erred

¹⁴ There are two sets of three nails positioned where there are missing sections of the inscribed frame. These nails would have been used to retain the loose sections of the inscription. A repair can be observed on the inscribed frame adjacent to ZP 6, where there are two fractures. This repair, also using three rivets, was more successful as the inscribed portion still remains.

in the layout of the pattern.

Dimensions: 1.96 (L) x .73 (W) cm.

AP 2: This pattern, consisting of a 6 x 16 plait with variations is composed of thin, rounded bands which form a tight mesh. There appears to be a Stafford knot in each of the corners and a negative cross is formed in the upper centre of the panel. These voids may have initiated the loss of control of the pattern at the bottom of the panel.

Dimensions: 1.77 x .77 cm.

AP 3: The median-incised strands of this pattern form two carrick bends with a bar terminal at each end. This is the most accomplished of all the interlaced panels.

Dimensions: 1.74 x .81 cm.

AP 4: Although half of this panel is obscured by a later mounting radiography has revealed the full extent of the decoration [Fig.16]. It consists of a tightly-meshed pattern of three carrick-bends with a bar terminal at each end. The wide bands are median-incised. There appears to be an error in the layout as it is not as regular as AP 3 above.

Dimensions: 1.76 x .76 cm.

Panels with zoomorphic decoration

These are numbered 1 to 6, the first four are placed in the centre of the sheet and the remaining two flank the central rectangular aperture. All are rectangular in shape and ZP 2 and 3 retain traces of gilding. Panels 1 and 3 are upside-down in relation to the other panels.

ZP 1: This well executed panel consists of two profile bipeds with tubular bodies whose necks cross in the centre of the panel. Both have small rounded heads, circular eyes, widely splayed jaws with curling ends and a small collar around the neck. Only the right beast displays a foreleg which has a double toe and originates from a curl at the shoulder. The right beast grasps the opposing animal's hindquarters with his jaws, whose leg runs behind his head in the centre, while his well developed hindleg, which has an inner contour, is bitten by the opposing beast. The hindquarters of the left beast coil above his body. A strand of knotwork, which may be a tail, fills the left end of the panel. There is a blank rectangular field flanking each end of the panel.

Dimensions: 2.27 - 3.04 (L, including blanks) x .61 (W) cm.

ZP 2: The details of this panel are worn and obscured by a layer of gilding. Furthermore, the execution is of a lower quality compared to the other panels on this side. The design appears to consist of two addorsed profile beasts, whose stubby jaws meet in the centre, with head lappets interlacing with their spiralled hindquarters. They have contoured bodies and rounded featureless heads. The hindlegs are splayed and point to the corners of the narrow ends. Their forelegs are bound by an angular knot below their jaws.

Dimensions: 2.49 x .79 cm.

ZP 3: Even though this panel is worn and gilding obscures details it is possible to discern the features of the beasts. The design is similar to ZP 1, that is two opposed profile quadrupeds, with rounded heads and splayed, curling jaws, crossing their necks at the centre. The right beast bites the tip of his partner's elevated hindleg while the other bites the thigh of the opposing beast. Their forelegs run parallel with their necks and intertwine with their partner's neck. Their lower hindlegs are placed beneath their bodies and the upper legs elevated over their rumps. Two short head lappets intersect in the field above their necks.

Dimensions: 2.5 x .83 cm.

ZP 4: This shows two interlaced profile beasts with tubular bodies and heads placed at the ends of panel. The details are difficult to establish but they have splayed, curling jaws and slender forelegs placed below their necks. The right beast has a neck collar. Thin strands of interlace, which may be lappets or tails, intertwine around the bodies. The hindlegs cross over the forelegs and engage with head lappets in the top centre. There are two blank rectangular fields at each end of the panel.

Dimensions: 2.54 - 3.19 (L, including rectangular fields) x .66 (W) cm.

ZP 5: The design of this panel is well defined and shows a single profile serpentine beast with a tubular body, the splayed hindlegs bend around and across the body. The outer hindleg terminates in a slender double toe, while the other leg interlaces with the head lappet at the end of the panel. Both appendages end in a clubbed terminal. A rounded head with splayed curling jaws and a circular eye is situated at the top left corner. Two notches on the neck represent a collar while the long tongue and head lappet, which pass through

the hindlegs to interlace with the other hindleg, form interlaced knotwork above and below the head.

Dimensions: 1.95 x .80 cm.

ZP 6: The central portion of this panel is obscured by a later addition, but recent radiography has revealed the form of the animal [Fig.16]. It is a single biped with a tubular body which curls around and behind with the hindquarters, terminating below his head. The small, rounded head has widely-splayed jaws with curled lips, a neck collar with a punched dot representing the eye. The foreleg runs parallel to the neck, while the hindleg is elevated in front of the jaws. The tail winds around the body, forming an angular strand at the visible end of the panel and terminates behind the head.

Dimensions: 1.91 x .84 cm.

Later additions

In general these appear to be the fragmentary remains of gilt silver sheet with residues of solder. There are also extensive areas of gilding around the edges of the large rectangular panels. Due to the nature of the damage they appear to have been removed from their present position using force. Their position is indicated by their proximity to the nearest zoomorphic or abstract panel.

ZP 6: A central moulding separates two damaged panels. There appears to be the outline of a rivet beneath the panel and the linear border of the panels seem to have been stamped.

Dimensions: 1.75 x 1.0 cm.

ZP 3: On each side of this panel in the T-shaped fields there are remains of beaded silver wire. There is little detail present due to wear and subsequent gilding. On the T-shaped space adjacent to ZP 5, where it extends around the lower bar, the diameter is approximately .09 cm. The length of the smaller frame on the T-shaped space below ZP 6 is approximately .86 cm.

AP 4: This is a flat rectangular sheet which is held in place by two rivets. A line separates the sheet into two fields, one bears crudely scratched diagonal lines, the other a faint fret pattern. There appears to be a second sheet below.

Dimensions: 1.49 x .68 cm.

Binding strips

There are five U-shaped strips fabricated from silver which engage with the curved edge of the copper alloy backing sheet. The binding strips do not overlap the silver openwork plate at any point but all strips, except for BS 1, have flanges which extend below this plate. Radiography has revealed three perforated semi-circular tags which project from the edge of the binding strips and pass beneath the openwork silver sheet [Fig.16]. These are retained in place by rivets which are obscured by the openwork plate. The tags are positioned at the end of each length of binding strip: directly below ZP4, below the visible angular knot in ZP6 and in front of the jaws of the animal in ZP5.

Dimensions: No.1: 8.14 (L) x .53 (D) cm, maximum width of flange: .92 cm. No.2: 6.56 x .46 cm; No.3: 4.22 (along SSA) - 7.4 (along LS) x .45 cm; No.4: 4.06 (along SSA) - 7.3 (along LS) x .47cm; No.5: 6.83 x .48cm.

Overall dimensions of side: 14.75 (L) x 8.51 (W) cm.

Base [Pl.28; Fig.5]

Construction

This is fabricated from three separate sheets: a decorated gilt-copper alloy sheet which is sandwiched between an openwork silver sheet and the copper alloy backing sheet. The copper alloy backing plate can be observed in the interior of the shrine.¹⁵ A recent radiograph has shown that the decorated copper alloy sheet extends as far as inner double contour line framing the openwork field. Before the three elements were secured together, the two upper sheets were clamped together and lines were scribed around the interior of the L, T, cruciform and square-shaped apertures onto the smaller copper alloy sheet. This sheet was then removed and the decorative motifs were engraved in the fields outlined on the sheet. Gilding, which has a red coloration from added copper, was then applied to the sheet. The silver sheet was then replaced over the copper alloy sheet, ensuring that the apertures and associated ornament were aligned correctly, before the components were secured by means of copper alloy rivets with silver caps, situated along the inner and outer margins. Although not evident, solder may also have been used to attach the plates.

¹⁵ The dimensions of this sheet cannot be determined, even with the aid of radiography. However it probably extends to the inner margin of the incised parallel lines framing the openwork field.

Silver openwork sheet

The geometric openings in the sheet have been described above in relation to the decoration on the underlying copper alloy sheet. The positive pattern can be read as squares linked by bars projecting from each side or as crosses with four square terminals. In each corner there is a lentoid field bearing engraved decoration within a double-contoured frame. The upper right and lower left fields display a ring-chain motif which consists of centrally aligned vertebral elements. The lower left field bears two additional radiating lines at the apex adjoining the L-shape which gives rise to four vertebrae, the upper right lacks these lines and so has only three vertebral elements. The upper left and lower right lentoid fields bear near identical human masks with foliated caps. They have lentoid eyes, a long nose with flared nostrils and a down-turning mouth. A concave line runs from either side of the nostrils across the full width of the face, which may be intended to represent a beard or cheeks. A triangular notch below the chin gives the impression that the head is enclosed within a hood or cowl. The foliated cap consists of three pairs of leaves with lobed terminals emanating from a central stem.

The designs of the four lentoid fields have been executed using a different technique to that used on the other panels throughout the shrine. When examined under magnification (x 10) it is apparent that the lines bear serrated edges [Pl.30.a]. These are formed by a graver which is advanced along a scribed line by a rotating wrist action. This pushes the metal aside leaving a barb on each side which produces the characteristic zig-zag effect on the sides of the grooves. These tool-marks are also evident on the collar knop of the Ardclinis crosier¹⁶, and the front of the Sutton, Isle of Ely, late Anglo-Saxon disc brooch.¹⁷ In discussing the ornamental techniques on this brooch Bruce-Mitford drew attention to, and illustrated, comparable tool-marks present on the metal mounts of the Cammin casket.¹⁸

The four corner lentoid fields interrupt two sets of parallel lines which frame the openwork field. There are three compass-drawn circles placed at regular intervals on the long sides and two on the short sides. A rivet is positioned mid-way along each row of

¹⁶ Illustrated in Fuglesang 1980, pl.106:b.

¹⁷ Haith, C. 1984, no.105.

¹⁸ Bruce-Mitford 1956, 197, pl.xxx:b,c.

parallel lines, and additional rivets pierce the centre of each field. These circles and parallel lines impart an unfinished aspect to the reverse of the shrine. It may have been the intention of the metalworker to produce engraved decoration within these concave-sided panels.

There are other rivets present on the reverse: three large flat-headed silver rivets flank the upper and lower left lentoid corner panels, one rivet and a rivet-hole are positioned at the outer apex of the upper right lentoid panel. While the rivet at the apex of the ring-chain and human mask are primary, the flanking rivets may also be primary, as they have the same shape and colour, yet obscure portions of the decoration. When viewed from the interior of the shrine, the ends of the rivets all appear similar and are of approximately the same length.

Dimensions. Lentoid fields: human mask, upper left: 1.7 x .82 cm; lower right: 1.6 x .84 cm; Ring-chain, lower left: 1.57 x .87 cm; upper right: 1.76 x .83 cm.

Width of field framed by parallel lines: .79 - .80 cm. Diameter of compass drawn circles: .72 cm. Diameter (average) of rivet-heads: .32 cm. Silver sheet: 13.51 x 10.75 cm.

Decorated copper alloy sheet

This can be viewed through the apertures in the silver plate. There are two holes, from the result of damage, which allow the backing sheet to be observed. The decorated plate is quite thin and the geometric fields are determined by the openwork silver sheet. There are four right-angled corners, four T-shaped fields along each of the long sides and three T-shaped fields along each of the short sides. The interior has five vertical rows of small square panels on the long sides and four rows on the short, as well as four by three rows of cross-shaped apertures. This provides a total of fifty fields. Each cruciform field is surrounded by four square panels.

The engraved motifs bear abstract, foliate and zoomorphic decoration, all of which are framed by a double line [Fig.5]. Each of the small square panels bear a saltire cross. The panels in the centre have suffered greater wear, probably through handling, than those on the margins. To facilitate the descriptions of the individual panels each panel is designated a grid reference. The vertical columns are denoted A to E, while the horizontal rows are numbered 1 to 6. For example, the upper left panel is A1 and the lower right is

E6.

Panels D6, C1 and C2 contain discontinuous circles and spirals, while panels C6 and C3 have a central whorl with a step motif in each arm; C3 is more worn. A3 and A5 bear a series of interlocking fleshy S-scrolls, C4 and C5 have a similar pattern except it appears more disjointed through wear. Panel B6 bears single-strand discordant knotwork, while E2, E3 and E4, which has lost approximately one third of its surface through damage or wear, bear contoured interlaced knotwork. D4 and E5, which is also damaged in the centre, have opposed crescent-shaped motifs which appear to form a saltire. Panel D4 has a central whorl. In B5 the crescents become more angular and form opposed triangles which give rise to five conjoined saltires. Variations of the triangle with the ends opposed forming lozenge-shapes/saltires can be seen in B2, B3, B4 and D2. A4 is filled with a simple chevron pattern, while A2 has interlocking T-shapes. D1 has a lozenge in the lower arm with spiral motifs in the upper arms. D3 has five engraved rectangular Latin crosses, placed in the centre and each of the arms. D5 and B1, which display extensive wear, have short diagonal lines, possibly forming triangle and/or lozenge shapes. A6 and E1 have a lentoid in the angle with hatched diagonal lines on either side.

Panels A1 and E6, although very worn, incorporate miniature zoomorphs. In A1 there are two addorsed profile bipeds, their jaws meeting at the angle of the panel adjoining the lentoid field and their bodies filling the remainder of the panel. The upper beast is easier to discern and has long jaws, a head lappet extending backwards, a tail with a bulbous terminal curling around his hindquarters and a foreleg tucked beneath his upper body and jaw. Both have simple circular punched eyes. Panel E6 is extremely worn and contains a profile biped with a large backward-facing head with elongated jaws. The hindleg is tucked beneath the arched body, which is fitted into the top of the panel. There are no eyes but a head lappet appears to run parallel with the edge of the panel. The other third of the panel appears to be occupied by a disembodied head with elongated gaping jaws and a featureless strand looping beneath the head.

Dimensions: Openwork field: 10.49 (L) x 7.54 (W) cm. Average thickness of sheet: .07 cm.

Binding strips

These survive on three sides of the reverse, they have been removed from the long

side adjacent to the strap-hinges. The lower right strip is tripartite in form. Length on long side: 7.22 cm, on SSA: 5.85 cm. The upper strip on the long side, which measures 6.64 cm, is overlapped by the lower tripartite strip and the flange of the binding strip on SSB. The upper strip on SSB has remains of solder at the end adjacent to the strap-hinge. It measures 11.43 cm.

Overall Dimensions of Reverse: 14.63 (L) x 11.61 (W) cm.

Weight of shrine: 1376.8 grams.

THE SHRINE OF THE STOWE MISSAL

CONSTRUCTION

The shrine comprises six separate components: top, bottom and four sides which together form a rectangular box. The components are fabricated from small blocks of oak onto which are attached copper alloy plates and various metal mountings, all of which are secured in place by nails which are hammered into the wood. From the curvature along the edges of the copper alloy plates, it may be inferred that C-sectioned binding strips were used to secure the top, bottom and sides to form a sealed box. These binding strips have not survived but may have been present when the shrine was rediscovered c.1733. There are also remains of solder present on the uppermost edges of the copper alloy backing sheets on the two long sides and short side A. Solder is also found on the corresponding edges of the detached base. This is unlikely to be original as the binding strips were held in place by nails. The solder may have been applied during the refurbishment of the shrine in the later medieval period or else when the shrine was discovered in the eighteenth century.

As discussed in the relevant chapter the shrine has had a chequered history with many additions and modifications carried out to the structure. During the later medieval period the front was stripped of its original mounts, new mounts and engraved plates were added and a quatrefoil-shaped setting crudely inserted into the base plate. When the shrine was rediscovered, c.1733, a short period elapsed before it was opened to gain access to the interior.¹⁹ This intervention probably damaged two of the sides; the binding strips (if then present) were either lost or discarded. There is no one side with the full complement of panels remaining. O'Connor's description refers to two of the sides as separate from the rest.²⁰ In Warner's description he stated that two 'modern' pieces of wood were inserted to reconstruct the shrine to its original rectangular form [Pl.32.b].²¹ It is difficult to determine when these inserts were fitted, either when the shrine was deposited in Ashburnham in 1849 or shortly after its deposition in the Academy in 1883 when it may have been repaired. The base of the shrine was left separate from the box. There is no

¹⁹ O'Rahilly 1926-28, 103.

²⁰ O'Connor 1819, 1-10.

²¹ Warner 1915, 1.

record of what happened to the original decayed pieces of wood; these were most likely discarded.

DESCRIPTION

The following account describes each of the constructional elements present in the shrine in detail: the detached base plate, short sides A and B, long sides A and B and the front.

Detached base [Pl.31; Fig.6]

On initial inspection this portion would seem to be of simple construction, but on detailed examination a complex structure is revealed.²² A diagram of the cross-section is provided as an aid to help interpret the structure [Fig.17.b]. Some constructional features are obscured by other mounts and therefore these descriptions are based on inference. Fortuitously, damage to the sheet silver has allowed some of the underlying constructional features to be observed. Along the inner edge of the inscribed borders in the upper left and right quadrants there is an area where the silver is missing, allowing the underlying copper alloy to be seen. Cracks in the sheet silver, caused by abrasion and wear, are present along the inner edge of the inscribed borders and cross arms.

Commencing from the underside the first element is a single block of oak. It has survived in relatively good condition, but two of the corners and the edges are abraded and there are two longitudinal cracks which penetrate the wood from opposite ends, which may be stress fractures due to the insertion of nails [Pl.32.a]. Directly attached to the wood is a copper alloy sheet which extends beyond the wooden base by approximately 1cm on all sides [Fig.17.b.1]. This sheet is curved slightly upwards along the edges. On top of this is placed a second copper alloy sheet which does not extend as far as the lower sheet, but does have a more pronounced curvature at the edges [Fig.17.b.2]. The purpose of the curved edge would have been to engage with the C-shaped binding strips in order to form a sealed box. Placed on top of this sheet are the pierced openwork plaques, made from sheet copper [Fig.17.b.3]. The openwork patterns are situated between the arms of the cross and bear similar patterns in opposite corners. One pattern consists of squares, the other triangles with their apices facing inwards towards the cross. The reasons for the

²² Using a binocular microscope (x10, x20) and a fibre-optic light source.

assumption that there are four separate openwork plates are as follows. During the shrine's refurbishment in the late medieval period the metalworker cut through the cross and underlying copper alloy sheets in order to accommodate the quatrefoil-shaped setting. Two of these original metal sheets project slightly from beneath the central oval aperture at the one o'clock position [Pl.31; Fig.6]. The edges of these two sheets correspond with the corners of the openwork plaque and the sheet below, extending beneath the cross-arms where they were held in position, thus demonstrating that there are separate plaques in each of the quadrants. Additional evidence for this hypothesis is that the upper left openwork panel in the form of squares is misaligned in relation to the cross-arms and border. This may be due to the sheet having shifted as the components were being nailed or clamped together. If all four openwork panels were on a single sheet it would be expected that the other sheets would also be misaligned at a similar angle to the edges. Sheet silver covers the raised metal of the openwork plates. This sheet was attached by solder, traces of which may be seen on the underlying copper where the silver is missing. The silver sheet, like the copper, extends beneath the cross-arms and surrounding border. This would imply that the openwork plaques were placed in position first, and the border and cross were then placed on top, with the assembly then secured by nails.

The cross and surrounding inscribed border are manufactured from copper alloy, with silver sheet attached to the upper surfaces by solder [Fig.17.b.4]. It is difficult to determine if the cross and border are a one piece casting, or were fabricated from separate lengths of copper alloy strips soldered together. The sheet silver obscures any solder joints which may be present in the construction. The outer edges of the border are straight, while the inner edges, as well as the cross-arms are slightly curved in cross-section.

Each of the four corners has a square-shaped aperture cut into the silver. A panel of copper alloy, decorated by stamping, was placed behind the silver and secured by nails, and possibly solder. All four panels are framed by a border of notched lines, intended to convey the effect of beaded wire. These in turn are bordered by parallel incised lines which demarcate the inscriptions. Four copper alloy nails, with hemispherical copper caps, secure each of the panels in place. For descriptive purposes these are labelled RIP (Rectangular Inset Panel) 1 to 4, commencing at the upper left corner of the base and proceeding clockwise [Fig.6].

RIP 1: A median-incised band forms an angular loop with a bar terminal at the lower end.

Two secondary nails pierce the outer frame.

Dimensions: beaded frame: 1.84 x 1.29 cm, panel: .79 x .79 cm.

RIP 2: This also bears a single-strand contoured ribbon which forms an angular quadriloop knot. A secondary nail pierces the upper section of the panel.

Dimensions: beaded frame: 1.42 x 1.34 cm, panel: .89 x .90 cm.

RIP 3: This panel of a broad median-incised band has a similar motif to no 1, consisting of a simple knot with a bar terminal at one end.

Dimensions: beaded frame: 1.36 x 1.31 cm, panel: .80 x .82 cm.

RIP 4: This motif differs from the other three in that the pattern is composed from plain single strands which form a crude asymmetrical knot. The lower section of the panel has a secondary perforation from a nail.

Dimensions: beaded frame: 1.39 x 1.39 cm, panel: .84 x .86 cm.

Four copper alloy panels, decorated with simple knotwork motifs, are set into semicircular apertures at the terminals of the cross-arms. Each of these panels extends beneath the silver where they are held in position by two copper alloy nails with domed heads. An incised line is lightly scribed around each of the panels. Each panel has sustained damage, either in the form of a lateral crack or abrasion, which hinders positive identification of the individual motifs. Where they can be discerned they appear to be symmetrical patterns composed of thin, round-sectioned bands. For descriptive purposes these are labelled SIP (Semi-Circular Inset Panel) 1 to 4, commencing at the top arm of the cross and proceeding clockwise [Fig.6]. The motifs in SIP 1 and 3 appear to bifurcate along the central axis.

Dimensions: SIP 1: 1.68 x .61 cm; SIP 2: 1.61 x .55 cm; SIP 3: 1.69 X .52 cm; SIP 4: 1.69 X .56 cm.

The inscription commences at the upper left corner and reads clockwise around the edges. A second contemporary inscription is inscribed along the arms of the cross. All the inscriptions are aligned between two parallel incised lines. In addition to the nails securing the semi-circular and rectangular panels, the inscribed border originally had three nails (some of which are now missing) along the outside edges in order to secure them in place.

A late medieval mounting is crudely inserted into the centre of the cross. It takes the form of a quadrilobe into which was placed a now lost central setting, probably a

cabochon rock crystal, as seen on the front of the shrine. The mounting is secured to the wooden block by three, originally four, large brass nails with silver hemispherical caps. These nails are placed in the cusps of the quadrilobe. A secondary nail perforates the lower arm of the cross. The mounting is constructed of sheet silver, onto which is soldered four lunate-shaped cells with scalloped edges. Smaller silver trays of the same form are placed within; these may have held enamelled plaques, similar to those on the front. Two of the lunate mounts are backed with leather, while the bottom left panel has a silver sheet with a crude openwork pattern of Gothic tracery, consisting of a trefoil flanked by ogival piercings. The quadrilobe is surrounded by two-ply strands of twisted silver wire, while each of the lunate-shaped cells have a border of single-strand silver wire. Two-ply stranded silver wire also borders the central setting. Two claws, one of which is damaged, used for retaining the central setting, remain in place. Angular chisel cuts are visible where the central section of the original cross was removed to accommodate the quadrilobe mount.

All of the primary nails are short and none manages to penetrate the wood through to the other side. The nails securing the quadrilobe mount are longer and where these emerge from the reverse they are hammered flat along the grain of the wood.

Dimensions of mounting: Central aperture: 4.32 x 3.97 cm. Average dimension of lunate fields: 3.04 x 1.4 cm.

Overall 7.1 cm (l) x 5.75 cm (w).

Openwork plaques: average dimensions 5.5 cm (l) x 4.4 cm (w).

Overall dimensions of the base: 18.6 cm (l), 15.8 cm (w), average thickness of wood and metal together 1.2 cm. Wood on reverse: 18 cm (l), 14.5 cm (w), average thickness .45 cm.

Weight of base: 517.54 g.

Short Side A [Pl.33.a; Fig.7]

This side consists of a copper alloy backing sheet with two panels attached by nails: one foliate panel, of copper alloy covered with silver, and a gilt-copper alloy medallion in the form of an angel between two beasts. The alignment of the nail holes and the differential patination of the sheets, indicate that there was originally a semi-circular-shaped panel at each end, and a panel with concave sides adjacent to the central medallion. Curvature of the edges occur on three sides of the backing sheet.

Panel 1: This is an openwork panel of foliate design with horizontal top and bottom and concave sides. It is fabricated from copper alloy, sheeted in silver, with gold foil used as a backing material. Crudely engraved lines are used to denote the junctions and crossing points of the strands. Five copper alloy nails, each of which have a hemispherical cap of copper alloy, retain the panel in place. The border of the panel is plain.

The design is near symmetrical on each side of the central horizontal axis and can be read from either the top or bottom. On each end a central stem of a tree-scroll bifurcates into two lower and two upper branches which engage to form a triskele motif. Tendrils run from these branches into the sides of the frame. Four additional tendrils spring from the crown of the central stem; three of these intertwine with the offshoots from the upper stem, while the other tendril terminates in a lobe. This pattern also occurs on the opposite central stem, the only apparent difference is that the central stem has a rhomboid-shaped piece of metal removed. The triangular fields in each of the corners contain a club-ended tendril.

Dimensions: Height 5.7 cm, outer width 4.2 cm, inner width 3.1 cm.

Panel 2 [Pl.35.a]: This takes the form of a standing angel centrally placed between two flanking beasts, whose gaping jaws engulf the angel's ears. The fine detail on the relief surfaces is heavily worn and gilding is retained in the incised decoration. The joints between the outstretched arms and the wings are indicated by a blue glass stud into which is inlaid a coil of silver wire. The silver wire is missing from the left stud. The lower sections of the triangular wings bear oblique parallel lines representing feathers. A full length tunic with a flared concave hem is worn, along with a narrow belt, decorated with short vertical lines. The pleats are represented by five narrow lobe-shaped fields. His feet are depicted in plan, with faint incised lines indicating the toes. A rectangular setting of red glass²³ is inset into the centre of the naked torso. Two abraded lines, possibly indicating straps, run from each shoulder to the setting. The rounded head is placed on a thin neck; the face is heavily abraded and has two incised lines representing the nostrils and mouth. Wavy lines indicate the hair, and two large semi-circular ears project from the sides of the head. The right eye socket retains a blue glass stud.

²³ Possibly garnet, not yet scientifically identified.

The two flanking beasts are similar, differing only in minor details. They have well defined features and are portrayed in a naturalistic manner. Both are placed in an upright position, with their forepaws resting on the angel's shoulders, while their hind legs run parallel to the inner edge of the wings. Their long, lobe-shaped tails terminate on either side of the feet of the angel. A rectangular panel of blue glass is inset into the torso and neck of each beast. Silver wire forming a figure-of-eight motif is inlaid into both neck panels, while the silver wire in the torso forms a chevron pattern. Plain silver wire frames all four panels. Only fragments of silver wire remain in the glass panels of the left beast. The heads have gaping jaws with curled upper snouts, with blue glass studs inset into the eye sockets. A prominent collar, decorated with horizontal notches, is positioned between the head and neck of each beast. The joints are indicated by spirals, although the nails, two of which are now missing, partially obscure them. These nails secure the panel in place. The fore-legs end in a single ball and claw while the hind limbs have a triangular shaped thigh and a narrow tapering leg.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (D).

Overall dimensions of side: 15.0 (L) x 4.5 cm (W). Depth of curvature: .48 cm.

Short Side B [Pls. 33.b, 35.b; Fig.7]

This side consists of a copper alloy backing sheet with three decorative panels attached by nails. The backing sheet differs from the other three sides in that there is no curvature to engage the binding strips. All the edges are relatively straight. The left side of panel 1 is damaged and a semi-circular-shaped panel is missing from each end. Nail holes for these latter panels are present in the backing sheet. The sheet is secured to a modern piece of oak with two secondary nails. The wood is smaller in size than the backing plate, with a length of 13.5 cm and a height of 3.9 cm.

Panel 1: This is fabricated from copper alloy covered in sheet silver, of which little now remains. The panel is held in place by three nails: two primary on the lower edge with copper alloy caps and a secondary nail in the upper right corner. The design comprises an openwork field consisting of parallel rows of circles linked by diagonal lines, which can also be read as a negative pattern of crosses with diamond shaped terminals. The upper horizontal register has two narrow rectangular spaces, the bottom is straight and the side concave. All are bordered by plain edges. A sheet of gold foil is present behind the openwork decoration and terminates in a vertical straight edge along the central axis of the

panel. Behind the gold foil is a layer of animal skin which is visible where the foil is missing or torn. This skin may have functioned as padding in order to secure the gold foil tight against the panel.

Dimensions: 4.15 cm (L), 2.7 cm (W).

Panel 2: This is similar in size and decoration to the panel on the opposing side, with a standing angel flanked by two upright beasts. Hemispherical glass studs of a dark blue/black colour are present in the eyes of the angel and beasts. The glass panels in the beasts' bodies and necks have lost all of the silver wire inlay, but still retain the wire borders. Two settings are missing from the angel: a rectangular stud from the central cavity in the chest and the circular stud from the base of the left wing. The panel is held in place by four nails, with silver hemispherical caps, which are positioned at the joints of the flanking beasts.

Since this panel is analogous to SSA only the differences will be remarked upon. These are as follows: the head of the angel is more spherical in appearance with a wide jawline and square chin while SSA has more angular features, with a pointed chin. The hemline of the skirt is straight whereas on SSA has a gently curved hem. The lower sections of the triangular wings are more elongated and the hindquarters of the beasts form a sharp, well defined angle where they engage with the wing-tips. On SSA there is a more gradual curve.

The background between the angel and the beasts originally retained silver foil in place. A very small fragment remains below the chin of the left beast. The intention would have been to set up a contrast between the silver sheet backing, the gilt copper alloy and the silver caps of the nails.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (D).

Panel 3: This openwork panel has concave sides, straight edges along the top and bottom, and is framed by a plain border. It is fabricated from copper alloy, covered in sheet silver. The design consists of a chequer-board pattern, formed by alternating negative and positive squares, similar to the panels on the base of the shrine. The upper right and lower left corners are triangular in shape and there are two rhomboid shapes on the lower corners of the panel. The panel is backed with gold foil. In one area of the foil there is a minor tear,

where organic material (? animal skin) is visible. Five copper alloy nails with gilt-copper caps secure the panel in place.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (H), 5.9 cm (max W), 2.9 cm (min W).

Overall dimensions: 15.0 x 4.3 cm.

Long Side A [Pl. 34.a,c; Fig.8]

This side consists of a copper alloy backing sheet with four decorative panels attached by nails. There is a rectangular panel missing from the left end. Curvature of the edges occur on three sides of the backing sheet.

Panel 1: This is an openwork copper alloy mount of foliate design, covered in sheet silver and backed with gold foil. It is roughly square in shape, bordered by a plain frame, and is retained in place by nine nails with copper alloy caps. There is a tear in the gold foil along the central vertical axis in the aperture of the central stem, behind which organic material, probably leather or vellum, is visible. The incised lines highlighting the junctions are shown in **Plate 36.a**.

The panel is comparable to the foliate panel situated on LSB. However, this panel is positioned upside-down and the following description is based on the panel in its correct position. A central stem of a tree-scroll bifurcates in four stages; the lower shoots spiral inwards and re-engage with the central stem just above the base. Four small offshoots with lobed terminals on each side, engage the outer edges of the frame. The three uppermost shoots also end in lobes and intertwine with the lower members. The design is not quite symmetrical and there is a rectangular-shaped indent missing from the lower trunk. Two circular holes perforate the central stem above and below the central nail. As with the foliate panels on the short sides the crossing points of the stems and tendrils are lightly engraved on the silver sheet.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (H) x 4.6 cm (W).

Panel 2: This is an openwork, gilt copper alloy panel containing an upright male figure flanked by two pairs of beasts. It is rectangular in shape and held in place by three (originally four) nails with hemispherical silver caps. The edges of the frame bear short parallel notches which convey the appearance of beaded wire. The backing material is of some interest: it appears to be beeswax with a fragmented silver sheet adhering to the

surface.²⁴ A die-stamped fret pattern is visible on the silver sheet between the figure's right hand and the larger beast [Pl.34.c].

The central figure is modelled in high relief, but now exhibits extensive wear on the raised surfaces which has led to a loss of fine detail. The head and feet extend into the upper and lower frame, placing him in front of the composition. He is depicted standing upright with knees flexed outwards and holding a sword at an angle across his upper thighs. His right hand grips the sword pommel, while his left hand holds the blade. The head is proportionally large and projects c.0.5cm from the frame,²⁵ the legs naturalistic, while the arms, which bend inwards from the elbows, appear emaciated. He is naked, except for a small drapery fold placed across his upper right thigh. Incised lines define the fleshy mouth, moustache and a large rectangular beard which extends to the sword pommel. The hair is indicated by alternating rows of notches and incised lines. There are deep sockets within the circular eyes which would originally have held glass studs, and a small semi-circular ear on each side of the head. His gaze appears to be directed downwards, rather than facing the spectator.

The lower pair of beasts resemble hounds and are depicted in a naturalistic manner with narrow waists and muscular hindquarters and chests. The right hound is slightly larger than the left and they stand in profile on their hind legs, with their looped tails placed within the lower corners of the frame. Their forelegs are not shown, and their heads are placed level with the upper arms of the figure. Each bear deeply contoured bodies and necks, spiral joints, long snouts, down-turning mouths, forward pricked ears and a dark blue glass stud representing the eye. The contour line of the back ends in a volute which is contained within the field of the thigh. These animals bite the tails of the uppermost creatures who are also shown in profile. These are positioned on the vertical sides of the frame, with their long necks craned towards the central figure. Their wire-like bodies have arched backs, and their open jaws touch the ears of the central figure. A simple curl denotes the hindquarters, and their forelegs extend into the upper corners of the frame. It is difficult to distinguish between the upper and lower jaws, as no eyes are depicted.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (H), 3.6 cm (W).

²⁴ Before cleaning and conservation in the NMI, July 1986, the backing material was believed to be leather.

²⁵ This may be seen in Pl.37, mid-way down the right hand edge.

Panel 3: This panel consists of a rectangular openwork copper alloy plaque, covered with silver. It is bordered by a plain frame, and held in place by five (of an original complement of nine) nails with copper alloy caps. The backing sheet is of copper alloy, with a layer of organic material, most likely leather/parchment, placed behind. Approximately one third of the silver foil has been lost through damage or wear.

The openwork pattern incorporates four different geometric shapes: in the corners L shapes, along the edges T shapes, and in the centre alternating squares and crosses. The pattern, which is composed of five openwork elements along the sides, and six on the top and bottom, can also be read as square fields connected by short straight bars.

Dimensions: 4.3 cm (H), 4.6 cm (W).

Panel 4: This is a rectangular, openwork gilt-copper alloy panel depicting a warrior in profile, armed with a spear and shield. The frame is decorated with crudely-incised horizontal lines. A section of the upper left frame appears to have been miscast. Two secondary copper alloy nails hold the panel in place. Dark brown leather is used as a backing material, and is visible between the figure and frame. The panel has undergone considerable wear and much of the finer detail is effaced.

The figure faces towards the right, looking straight ahead, with his right foot slightly raised as if in a walking gait. The crown of the head, the shield and the hair at the nape of the neck, all touch the edges of the frame, while his spear projects outside the lateral borders of the frame. The head and torso are in relative proportion, but the arm and legs are short and stocky. A short, prominent nose, jutting chin and large oval eye comprise the face, while short incised lines define the hair and beard. A long strand of hair (or ?helmet) forms a volute at the nape of the neck. The left hand, which is no more than a short horizontal moulding, springs directly from the shoulder and holds a shield of D-shaped profile with a central conical boss. A long spear with a kite-shaped head is gripped in the right hand, pointing upwards at a slight angle. Due to wear it is difficult to ascertain if the figure is naked: what might be a double fold of drapery, or a belt/girdle, is positioned on his upper right thigh.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm (H) x 2.5 cm (W) x .3 cm (thickness).

Overall dimensions of side: 18.0 (L) x 4.6 (W) cm. Extent of curvature .42 cm.

Long Side B [Pl.34.b, 35.b; Fig.8]

This side comprises a copper alloy backing sheet with four decorative panels attached by nails. All four edges curve inwards along the borders of the panels, in some areas the edges are torn or missing. The backing plate is attached to a modern piece of wood. A rectangular panel is missing from the right end of the side.

Panel 1 [Pl.36.b]: This is a rectangular gilt-copper alloy panel, backed with sheet silver. It is held in place by four nails, two of which have hemispherical silver caps. A secondary nail is situated between the spearhead and the stag. As on the other panels the edges of the frame bear short parallel notches, which convey the effect of beaded wire. These are more elongated on the upper horizontal frame.

The low relief scene depicts a stag in combat with two hounds. All the animals are portrayed naturalistically and are shown in profile. The panel may be read in two ways: in the present upright position with the stag rising up in front of the hound, or else rotated through ninety degrees, which shows the stag trampling on the same hound. All three beasts have ring-punched eyes. The stag has a deeply hatched body and neck, splayed notched antlers and a curved snout with a down-turning mouth. Only one fore and hind limb are shown which have two emphatic spirals denoting the leg joints. These limbs touch the midriff and tail of the opposing hound. An intrusive triangular-shaped spear is directed towards the nape of the stag's neck from the edge of the frame. A second pointed object emerges from the top of the frame above his eye. The confronting hound has a slim, elongated body; his forelegs clamber on the snout and breast of the stag, while the hindlegs engage with the stag's belly. He displays a lobe-shaped tail and a pricked ear which project into the upper edge of the frame. A restraining collar or leash, which encircles the neck of the hound is visible at the top right corner of the frame. A simple spiral denotes the joints. The smaller hound has a similar slim body and pricked ears, with his snout positioned beneath the tail of the stag. His lower back and tail are situated along the bottom edge of the panel, with the front and hind legs widely splayed as if in a running motion.

Dimensions: 4.3 (H) x 2.4 (W) cm.

Panel 2: This is an openwork copper alloy plaque of foliate design, covered in silver with a plain frame. It is held in place by nine nails with copper alloy caps. Leather covered with

gold sheet is used as a backing material. Small areas of silver sheet are missing through damage and wear.

The design of the panel: a tree-scroll, differs only in minor detail from the foliate panel on LSA. A large central stem with a pointed rectangular opening below and a lentoid aperture on top, bifurcates in three stages. The lower branches bifurcate into two pairs of tendrils: one pair intertwines with the upper branches and terminate in the corners, while the lower corners of the tendrils form a club-ended spiral. Secondary off-shoots engage with the lower corners of the frame. A simple convex curve is formed by the middle branches, while the upper branches split into two pairs of shoots, one pair connects with the frame; the other droop downwards and terminate in a pointed volute adjacent to the central stem. The design is symmetrical along the vertical axis. As with the foliate panel on LSA the crossing points of the tendrils are marked by lightly engraved lines.

Dimensions: 4.2 (H) x 4.5 (W) cm.

Panel 3: This solid square panel is manufactured from cast gilt-copper alloy, and is held in position by six copper alloy nails with silver caps. The panel is modelled in high relief, and all the raised surfaces have suffered extensive wear. A large proportion of gilding survives in the grooves and recesses of the metal. Unlike the other panels on the shrine, there is no distinct border or frame.

The panel depicts a cluttered scene of two ecclesiastics with an angel and a seated harpist positioned between them. All four figures have small inset eyes, comprising of blue/black glass studs; the angel and left ecclesiastic are both missing a stud. The two ecclesiastics are attired in a similar fashion: large voluminous cloaks with thick folds draped over their shoulders. Both cloaks have beaded edgings; in addition the ecclesiastic on the right has his collar decorated in a similar manner. Full-length tunics with decorative hems are worn beneath the cloaks. The proportions of the two figures are alike: a stocky build with rounded heads sunk into the shoulders. Both are clean shaven with oval eyes and an incised line defining a slightly down-turning mouth. A worn incised line above the mouth may have been intended to be a moustache. Parallel incised lines define the hair, which run into small semi-circular ears set flush with the background. The noses are nearly obliterated through wear, except for a slight ridge on the left figure. Both figures are shown with the feet in plan, as if on tip-toe, the left figure wears triangular-shaped shoes

decorated with cross-hatching, while the right remains barefoot. The right ecclesiastic is slightly taller with a more elongated, tapered jawline and grasps a crosier in his right hand. It has a simple curved crook and the shaft rests on the ground between his feet. A sub-rectangular bell with projecting clapper is held in the right (?) hand of the second ecclesiastic. His thumb extends outwards above the handle of the bell. A grid pattern formed of deeply scored lines is present on the surface of the bell. Francoise Henry's suggestion that these lines represent keying for enamel (or glass) would appear to be correct.²⁶ The lines were not intended to be decorative as they are set below the surface of the bell, thus leaving a space for an inset of some material.

Placed between the heads of the ecclesiastics is a small figure of an angel, with similar facial features and hairstyle. It has triangular wings with spiral shoulder joints held in front of the body. Large feet/claws are visible between the wing tips. Parallel incised lines on the wings are used to represent feathers. The angel appears to be perched upon a plain convex moulding below which is situated the figure of a seated harper. His head is frontal with his body and limbs shown in profile. The body is small in proportion to the head, whose facial features are similar to the other three figures but display more detail as the features are not as worn. His hair-line is more extensive and terminates directly above the eyes. The inset glass studs have been set at different heights which impart a puzzled expression to the figure. A low-backed chair with a curved seat accommodates the figure. His right knee is placed in an upright position so as to support the harp which he plays with his left hand. The harp is sub-rectangular in shape with a curved bridge, with incised lines defining the strings. It is difficult to determine whether the figure is naked but a belt/girdle can be seen encircling the waist.

Dimensions: 4.2 (H) x 4.4 (W) cm.

Panel 4: This is made from copper alloy covered in silver foil, and the panel is secured by eight copper alloy nails with brass caps. Gold foil with leather/parchment comprise the backing material.

The openwork geometric pattern of L, T, square and cruciform spaces are analogous to the geometric panel on long side A. The only difference is that the top and

²⁶ Henry 1970, 83.

bottom of the panel have one less openwork element, thus making the panel narrower, but the interior fields are larger.

Dimensions: 4.2 (H) x 4.4 (W) cm.

Overall Dimensions: 18.2 x 4.3 cm. Extent of curvature of backing sheet: .57 cm.

Front [Pl.37; Fig.9]

Construction: This is less complex than the detached base, but has undergone considerable modification in the late medieval period. The original components consist of a rectangular sheet of copper alloy with straight edges, beneath which is positioned four rectangular strips of copper alloy, of width c.1.5 cm. The edges of all these strips are curved to the same extent as the backing plates on the long and short sides of the shrine, and would have served the same function as the other backing plates, that is, to engage with the binding strips.

Dimensions: (backing plate) 17 (L) x 14 (W) cm.

Onto this backing plate there are attached four separate panels of gilt-silver with niello inlay. These panels are sub-rectangular in shape, each of which has an irregular concave corner so as to accommodate the central quatrefoil-shaped setting. The panels are held in place by the central cruciform mount and the inscribed silver strips situated along the edges. The four terminals of the cross are soldered to the inscribed strips, not to the engraved panels. Certain sections of the late medieval attachments are now missing: two strips of the inscribed silver plate from the top right and bottom left corners. In addition the corners of the inscribed silver strips have been snipped off, leaving gaps and plain areas of metal which would originally have been concealed by rectangular decorative settings. The nail holes for these can be seen in the upper left and lower right corners. These settings would have been positioned flush with the edges of the inscriptions, thus concealing the nails holding the strips in place. The dimensions of these settings would have been approximately 2.92 cm in width by 2.65 cm in length.

The following account describes the engraved silver plaques, followed by the elaborate cruciform mounting. The panels are designated numbers 1 to 4, commencing at the top-left corner and progressing in a clockwise manner. Each of the panels depicts a human figure, and all are manufactured by engraving the outlines into the surface of the silver and then inlaying the grooves with niello. The contrasting textured background to

the figures is effected by a technique known as a 'rocked-graver', which leaves a characteristic zig-zag line on the surface of the silver. The figures are plain and are not gilded. All panels are framed by two parallel incised lines, inlaid with niello, which follow the contours of the central quatrefoil setting. The dimensions provided are those of the space enclosed by the niello frame.

Panel 1: This depicts Christ crucified on the cross, and the scene is executed in sketchy, angular lines. Christ's body sags on the cross with his knees and hips flexed outwards and the head sunk into the shoulders. The loincloth has a median line with three curved lines on either side representing drapery folds. A prominent knot projects from the right side of the loincloth. The crudely hewn wooden cross terminates in a stepped base which is misaligned with the upper shaft. The hands are well defined but the head, with a straight hairline and pointed chin, is starkly triangular and gives the appearance of a mask. A tiny nick indicates the mouth, and the crescent shaped eyes appear to be closed. The hair, which is parted in the middle, sweeps over the shoulders. Rays of parallel incised lines decorate the semi-circular halo. The body is well-proportioned, but the pose of the left leg is peculiar, where it appears to integrate with the cross shaft.

Dimensions: 5.3 (L) x 3.58 (W) cm.

Panel 2: This depicts a standing male figure with a book in his left hand and the right hand extended upwards towards his face. His body is depicted in an exaggerated contrapposto stance: the left arm curves into the chest, while his right hip sways outwards. Except for the arched eyebrows the face has the same mask-like countenance as Christ on panel 1, and the hair and facial features are formed by short irregular lines. He wears a long robe with a double-pleated collar which is buttoned up to the neck. Incised curved lines define the drapery folds which form a billowing, raised hem. Straight, featureless legs with ankle-length boots are apparent beneath the robe. Both feet face towards the right. A plain book is cradled in the left hand, while an enigmatic circular object is depicted in the crook of his arm. The index and fore-fingers of his right hand are held open opposite his right eye but scratch marks obscure the details of the hand.

Dimensions: 5.02 x 3.6 cm.

Panel 3: This depicts a three-quarter length figure of a bishop holding a crosier, with his right hand raised in blessing. His attire consists of a triangular mitre, divided into two

fields by a vertical line, an orphreyed chasuble, alb, dalmatic and fringed pallium. The long sleeves of the dalmatic are decorated with short incised lines, while the orphrey consists of a row of medallions. A long crosier is held at an angle over his left shoulder, with the shaft cradled in the left hand. It has a curved crook terminating in a foliate volute and a rectangular collar knop. His face is less angular than the preceding figures and has a rounded chin, high arched eyebrows and circular eyes. Two tufts of hair are present above the semi-circular ears. A protruding ring is evident on the middle finger of his exaggerated right hand.

Dimensions: 5.43 x 3.79 cm.

Panel 4: The Virgin is depicted as a full-length figure with the Christ child cradled in her left arm. She wears a floriated crown with a central trefoil element and a veil and cloak over a long tunic. The cloak displays the same billowing hemline as depicted on the male figure in panel 2 above. Her left hand holds a small circular object, most probably an apple, between thumb and fore-finger. Simple incised lines define her facial features: oval eyes, arched eyebrows and a straight mouth. The jawline does not fully extend around to her right ear. She has ill-defined legs, and the feet, with ankle-length boots, turn towards her right. The Christ child in her arms has his left arm placed horizontally above hers with his right hand raised in blessing. His hair is executed by concentric lines, but the facial features are hard to distinguish.

Dimensions: 5.43 x 3.79 cm.

Central Cross: This consists of an appliqué cross with a large oval rock crystal placed centrally within a quatrefoil-shaped mount. The four arms are decorated with a combination of twisted silver wire, gilt-silver hemispherical bosses and jewelled settings. The following account describes the central mounting proceeded by the arms of the cross (designated A-D, in a clockwise direction). Arm A is positioned at the top.

Central mounting: this consists of an oval cabochon rock crystal, with (?)silver foil backing held in place by three claws emanating from a gilt-silver collet. Originally there were six claws, three of which are now broken off at the base. Bordering the collet is a length of two-ply twisted wire which in turn is surrounded by four lunette-shaped mounts, each of which has a frame of two-ply twined silver wire. Each lunette mount has an inset openwork tray with a serrated collar. Inside this is a sheet of plain gilt-silver into which

is set an openwork panel of Gothic tracery framed by twisted wire. The tracery comprises a central trefoil with pointed ends flanked by two ogival piercings. Basse-taille enamel of three colours: blue, green and red/purple, are set into the tracery. In all four crescent mounts the enamel in the central trefoil displays a blue colour. After conservation in the NMI laboratories²⁷ a motif of a feather was revealed engraved into the metal surface below the enamel in the ogival piercings. Four nails with domed heads are placed in the angles between the quatrefoils.

Dimensions: Rock crystal: 4.71 x 3.14 x 1.8 (H) cm. Central collet: 5.83 x 4.5 cm. Lunette-shaped mounts: 3.03 x 1.38 cm. Overall: 6.72 x 6.27 cm.

Cross Arm A: This is the best preserved of all four as all the original settings remain in place. The arm is separated into two fields by three lengths of coarsely twisted three-strand wire. In the centre, between the angles of the quatrefoils, is a large blue glass stud, set in a plain collet surrounded by two opposed two-ply twists of round wire. This stud is flanked by two hollow hemispherical gilt silver beads. Progressing upwards there are two nails, each surrounded by a flat notched ribbon set on edge, so as to form a coil around the nail, this arrangement is also known as 'filigree beehives'.²⁸ These can be viewed in section on **Plates 33 and 34**. This arrangement is then repeated, that is, two hemispherical beads and two 'beehives'. The arm terminates in a large oval-shaped rock crystal (or coloured glass), now extensively chipped, surrounded by a plain collet which in turn is bordered by opposed two-ply twists of round wire separated by a plain round wire.

Dimensions: crystal: 2.12 x 1.6 cm, overall: 5.79 x 2.49 cm.

Cross Arm B: This has the same arrangement of mounts, but only the central row of triple strand wire remains. One 'filigree beehive' and the nail from a second mount, closest to the outer setting, are missing. The lower stud is of red glass in a plain collet framed by a false plait wire border; the upper setting of green glass is also flanked with two opposed two-ply twists of round wire. All four hemispherical gilt-silver beads are in place.

Dimensions: crystal: 1.7 cm in diameter, overall: 4.82 x 2.31 cm.

²⁷ In July 1986.

²⁸ Rather than use the cumbersome term 'a coil of flat notched ribbon set on edge', the descriptive term 'filigree beehives' will be used. These 'beehives', in the form of beaded gold wire, are present on the filigree panels on the ninth-century Derrynaflan chalice (Ryan 1983b, pls.7-16). They are also found on Ottonian and later metalwork; see Lasko (1994, 82, n.12) for further references.

Cross Arm C: This arm is shorter as it accommodates a larger setting at the extremity. The blue glass stud in the cusp has a plain collet with a two-ply with border and is flanked by two hemispherical beads. One of the two filigree beehives is missing. The lower setting is the most elaborate on the cross arms. A central oval cabochon rock crystal is retained by a collet with a stepped edge. A second collet with a serrated edge is separated from the first by a gap of c. 2 mm.²⁹ Surrounding the collet is a plain round wire flanked by opposed 2-ply twists of round wire. Adjacent to this is a raised plate which contains twenty-four sets of gold granules in the form of triangles. These are arranged sequentially: two triangles of three granules followed by a triangle composed of six granules. This field is bordered by false plait wire.

Dimensions: crystal: 2.52 x 2.0 cm, setting: 4.25 x 3.94 cm, overall: 5.98 x 2.49 cm.

Cross Arm D: This arm is similar in layout to arms A and B, that is, a glass bead (red in this case) in the cusp of the quatrefoil bordered by false plait wire flanked by two hemispherical beads. All four hemispherical beads are in place, as are the three lengths of twisted wire, but one of the filigree beehives are missing and the other three 'beehives' have lost the central nails. The outer setting would appear to be a replacement for an original glass stud: it is made of bone/ivory and is smaller in size with a secondary interior collet used to secure it in place. As it is perforated through the centre it originally functioned as a bead, possibly from a rosary. A false plait wire border surrounds the collet.

Dimensions: bead: 1.66 cm (diameter), overall: 4.84 x 2.38 cm.

Filigree 'beehives': average diameter ranges from .54 - .68 cm, maximum height .69 cm. Average diameter of hemispherical bosses: .66 cm. Average diameter of glass settings at cusps of central mounting: .87 cm.

Inscription: The script is engraved on four separate silver plates which are placed around the edges of the front. It is divided into two registers and reads across the upper section along the full side before continuing along the bottom register. The top-right and bottom left plates are missing. The lettering and the three rows of parallel lines framing the inscription are inlaid with niello.

Overall dimensions of front: length 19 cm, width 15.4 cm.

Weight: Front and sides: 1012.7g; Base: 517.54g; Total weight: 1529.61 g.

²⁹ This crystal is most likely a replacement for a missing larger stud which would have filled the existing gap.

THE SHRINE OF THE CATHACH

CONSTRUCTION

The present form of the shrine is a composite wooden box to which metal plates and mounts are attached by nails. The base and four sides of the box form one unit, while the wooden lid is nailed separately to the inside of the front of the shrine [Pl.40].³⁰ There are copper alloy plates nailed to the lid and base of the wooden box, and, in turn, a gilt-silver repoussé plate is attached to the front and an openwork silvered copper alloy plate to the base. Additional copper alloy and gilt-silver mounts have been attached to the four corners of the shrine. These later mounts interfere with the primary phase by partially obscuring the decoration. The front of the shrine was originally secured to the sides with tubular binding strips, which are now non-functional, but the strips have secondary mounts added to increase their length. At a later stage four locking pins were used to secure the lid to the lower section of the shrine. These functioned by passing through a hollow cylinder, one on each of the four corners, where they emerged at the base. A metal cap at each end of the pin maintained the shrine in a closed position. At a later date two hinges were inserted into the junction of the lid and LSA. At this stage the locking pins had ceased to function. There are no binding strips present along the base or on the vertical edges of the corners.

DESCRIPTION

The following account examines and describes each of the constructional elements present on the shrine. The sequence is as follows: short sides (A and B), long sides (A and B), the base and the front.

Short Side A [Pl.41; Fig.10.a]

This side comprises a primary gilt-copper alloy plate overlaid at each end by a later corner mounting which obscures approximately half of the primary plate. All the metal components are attached to the wooden side of the box by nails.

Primary phase [Pl.43.a]

This plate is 14.4 cm in length, but only 8 cm is visible as the ends are obscured

³⁰ This wooden box was probably inserted by Sir William Betham in the early nineteenth century.

by the later mountings. Radiography has been successful in revealing the extent and nature of the decoration on the sides [Fig.18]. Approximately 1.5 cm has been removed from each end of the side, which corresponds to the hinge/junction of the late-medieval corner mount.

The design consists of two interlaced, ribbon-shaped zoomorphs cast in false-relief. As no limbs are apparent they may have been intended to represent serpents. The bodies are formed of two rectilinear parallel strands of even width which intersect in the centre of the panel to form two wide figure-of-eight loops. One of these strands emerges from the rear of the snake's head and runs parallel with the body so it probably represents a head-lappet. The snakes' heads face opposite directions with their jaws facing inwards towards the centre. They have a distinctive forward-pointing eye and a curling, lower jaw but the remainder of the details are more difficult to discern. The upper jaw intertwines around itself in a complex pattern, terminating in a club-shaped tip. Each animal's tail loops back around where it terminates in front of the snout as a lobed tendril. From the radiograph it appears that the crossing-points of the body and tail of the left snake may be bound by a ring knot. A number of isolated offshoots and appendages loop around the serpents jaws to form a complex, asymmetrical pattern. The foliated tendrils end in lobes, some of which have the characteristic semi-circular indent on the long axis. Where the narrow tendrils cross the snakes' bodies they form definite breaks in the strand with a small gap on either side of the tendril leading to meshed facets. This same feature also occurs where the snakes bodies intersect.

There are also some interesting technical features present on these panels. The background field is gilt, but the cast false-relief decoration was left ungilded to provide a contrast between the different metal surfaces. To complete this effect the rectangular strands of the snakes' bodies were inlaid with fields of niello. This was achieved by removing a section of copper-alloy to leave a channel along the length of the strand. The strand was then filled with niello, into which was pressed silver wire. This wire has been described as 'zig-zag', but the term 'wavy' is more apt. In a number of places, the niello has become dislodged leaving the empty channel, thus allowing the original keying marks to be observed.

The plate is pierced by approximately twenty nail holes of varying diameters. Most

of these can be considered secondary as they intrude upon the decoration, but from the radiograph it can be seen that they also appear behind the late medieval corners, so the side may have been subject to modifications over a long period of time.

Late Medieval Additions

Corner D1³¹

This consists of two gilt copper-alloy plates, one rectangular, the other square, originally connected by a hinge joint which is now non-functional. The plates are soldered to the primary plate and attached to the wooden core by nails. The square plate contains two inset panels (SP 1-2) and the full corner is bordered by a silver frame.

SP 1: This rectangular panel has a recessed field surrounded by a border of sheet silver. The outermost edge forms a tubular hollow cylinder which was used to engage a locking-pin. A length of twisted gilt-copper alloy wire flanks this cylinder. Two copper alloy (brass?) nails pierce a vertical field decorated with incised cross-hatched triangles. The silver border is heavily worn with most of the incised decoration effaced except for the inner vertical strip which has a herringbone motif. This pattern is inlaid with niello. Two ribbed lugs of the hinge joint are attached to the inner border.

Dimensions: 2.3 x 3.7 cm.

The square mount is in better condition and contains two rectangular panels of gilt-copper alloy.

SP 2: This depicts two rectangular fields composed of four triangles with their apexes facing inwards so as to form a maltese cross. The panel is bordered by a notched line.

SP 3: The design consists of three adjacent squares, each of which is composed of three squares of decreasing size placed inside one another. A diagonal line bisects each square. A single nail-hole perforates the lower edge of this panel.

Both these panels are cast and are surrounded by a border of sheet-silver, which, although worn, still retains some incised motifs. The top horizontal and inner vertical strips have a simple single strand interlace pattern, while the central horizontal strip has a motif of chevrons alternating with vertical lines. The lower strip has a herringbone motif. All of these motifs are incised in to the silver surface, and some still contain traces of niello.

³¹ For ease of description the panels on the corners are denoted SP (Secondary Panel) 1-3.

Behind the silver strips on the top and bottom of the panel the copper-alloy is tooled to form a cusped edge. Three ribbed lugs of the hinge-joint are attached to the inner border by solder.

Dimensions: 3.3 x 3.7 cm.

Corner A1

This corner has suffered more wear than corner D and is similar in construction, that is one rectangular and one square plate of gilt-copper alloy attached to the primary plate by solder and two nails. In this case the two plates are not connected by a hinge; they are soldered together. A decorated silver strip borders these two elements.

SP 1: This is constructed in the same manner as panel 1 on the other end, which is a hollow cylinder flanked by a twisted gilt copper alloy wire. The recessed field, also of gilt copper alloy, is pierced by two brass nails and has an engraved design of a diagonal cable-twist motif. Little decoration remains on the silver border, except for the inner edge, which bears a chevron/slash motif.

Dimensions: 1.7 x 3.6.

SP 2 and 3: These two gilt-silver panels may be considered together as they are both struck from the same die. The design consists of an irregular false-beaded border which is interrupted at three points by a naturalistic acanthus leaf. The leaf is formed by three trilobe elements all of which spring from a short stem. Two leaves sprout from one edge and a single leaf from opposite side. All face towards the centre of the panel. The two upper corners contain a quatrefoil motif, one is rotated 45 degrees in the opposite direction to the other forming a saltire. Also present on the panel are five pellets which are placed between the three leaves. The outer edge and the two lower horizontal silver strips all decorated with a herringbone motif, while the upper horizontal and inner edge have the chevron/slash pattern. Both of these panels are placed upside-down on one another in the frame. The lower panel is pierced by a nail and a nail-hole on the lower edge.

Dimensions: 2.9 x 3.6 cm.

Overall dimensions of SSA: 18.3 x 3.65 cm.

Short Side B [Pl.42, 43.b; Fig.10]

This follows the same constructional scheme as SSA, with a primary decorated plate overlain at each end by secondary mounts. All these mounts are attached to the wooden core by nails.

Primary Phase

This consists of a decorated gilt-copper alloy plate 13.5 cm in length of which 8 cm is visible as the ends are obscured by secondary mounts. Radiography has been successful in revealing the extent and nature of the decoration on the side [Fig.19]. Approximately 1.5 cm has been removed from each end, which corresponds to the hinge/junction of the late-medieval corner mount.

The false-relief decoration is similar to that on the SSA, but differ in certain details. Two serpents with ribbon-shaped bodies interlace through each others' necks and curl backwards to form two figures-of-eight. The snout of the upper beast-head forms three lobes which resemble antlers. Foliated tendrils loop around the snout and body in a loose fashion, but combine in the central field to form a complex disarray of tendrils. From the radiograph it can be seen that the tendrils which emerge from behind the plates and terminate below the snouts are the serpent's tails. Due to the sharper contrast between the gilt background it is easier to distinguish the various appendages. A trailing lappet extends from the rear of the lower jaw of each head, where it then intertwines with the snakes' bodies, finally terminating in a simple lobe at the edge of the frame. The interlaced tendrils that spring from the lower beast head are more irregular; the jaw forms a tight cluster of tendrils which then intertwine with two foliate lobes. The X-ray has also revealed that the tendrils emerging from behind the mount on the right end of the side appear to form a ring-knot which encircles the crossing point.

The technical aspects of this panel are the same as SSA, which is false-relief casting, with wide bands containing niello fields inlaid with wavy silver wire. There are no nails present in this panel, but twenty-six perforations of varying diameters occur throughout the side.

Dimensions: (visible): 8 x 3.5 cm.

Late Medieval Additions

As with SSA these additions consist of two corners, each of which is constructed from two gilt-copper alloy elements, a rectangular plate connected to a square plate by hinges and/or solder. The four plates are covered with sheet silver along the edges.

Corner B1

See description of corners A1 and D for construction of this type.

SP 1: The recessed field is of gilt-copper alloy which is decorated with an engraved vertical strip of opposed lentoids, reminiscent of ears of wheat. This strip is pierced by two copper nails. Surrounding the full panel is a decorated silver strip inlaid with niello. On the vertical edge there is a herringbone pattern, while the horizontal band bears a simple, undulating motif.

Dimensions: 2.5 x 3.6 cm.

SP 2 and 3: For a full description see panels SP2 and 3, corner A1, SSA. The nielloed silver border has a range of incised motifs: the horizontal top strip bears a herring-bone design, the central horizontal band has incised parallelograms with a central dot, the outer vertical strip has a step pattern, and the inner vertical strip has undulating single strand interlace.

Dimensions: 3.0 x 3.5 cm.

Corner C1

See description of corners A1 and D1 for this type.

SP 1: The recessed field has an engraved vertical strip decorated with cross-hatched triangles. This decorated field is pierced by five nails, the three smaller ones seem to be original, the two larger ones secondary.

Dimensions: 1.8 x 3.6 cm.

SP 2 and 3: Both these panels are of gilt copper alloy and exhibit a foliate design similar to an acanthus leaf. At a distance the two panels look the same, but there are differences. The designs are engraved into the surface of the metal; they are not die-stamped. SP 2 bears an undulating fleshy stem terminating in a trefoil leaf. The leaf is composed of three lunate elements, each of which has a median line. A second undulating stem is placed behind, but it does not end in a leaf. There is a kink in the stem from where the leaf emerges, and across the width of the leaf there is a semi-circular line of punched dots. Panel SP 3 displays a more developed version of the leaf-tendrill, rather than two separate stems as SP 2, the second stem is connected to the first where it forms the underside of the stem as it undulates. It terminates in the same trilobe, and along the centre of the stem is a line of punched dots which resemble beading. In both panels the design is left plain, but in contrast the background is textured with cross-hatched lines. Panel SP 2 is perforated by a nail in the top right-hand corner, while panel SP 3 is pierced by two nails along the

lower edge.

The silver border surrounding the above three panels is extremely worn (in certain areas striations seem to indicate that the surface was filed down) and faint traces of a step-pattern remain.

Dimensions: 3.4 x 3.6 cm.

Overall dimensions of SSB: 18.6 x 3.6 cm.

Long Side A [Pl.44; Fig.11]

As with the other sides, this consists of two phases of construction. On this side there are two modern hinges inserted into the top edge. The secondary mounts are attached to the ends of the primary plate by solder and to the wooden core by nails.

Primary Phase

This side originally comprised fourteen cast copper alloy panels; at present only ten are fully visible, with two partially exposed beneath corner B. Two more panels are obscured by corner A. The original length of the side was 19 cm of which 14.1 cm is now visible. Radiography has revealed the nature of the decoration on the two panels beneath corner B, but the decoration on the other two panels has not been determined [Fig.20].

Each rectangular panel bears engraved decoration in the form of either zoomorphic, foliate or abstract motifs. These will be described in detail below. From observation it seems most likely that the full side was cast in one piece; the panels were not separately applied as they are an integral part of the casting. All panels are bordered on three sides by strips of silvered copper alloy, and in each of the corners by a hemispherical boss. The six bosses placed between the panels along the central horizontal axis are of larger diameter (.62 cm) than the smaller bosses (.4 cm) on the top and bottom borders. All these bosses are of silvered copper alloy and conceal the nails used to attach the side to the wooden core. The left and right top corner bosses are bisected by the inserted hinges. A horizontal strip (c.2 cm wide) consisting of alternating silver and copper wires is hammered into a groove which borders the top and bottom of the side. All the panels were originally covered in gold foil, which survives almost intact on six of the panels, with two further panels having only half their surfaces covered and the other two having lost their foils completely. The foil was impressed onto the engraved panel and secured by stitching, that

is nicking the edges of the frame to form miniature burrs.

For descriptive purposes the panels are described as either zoomorphic or abstract (ZP, AP) and numbered from left to right. At present when the side is viewed, all the zoomorphic panels are placed upside-down. This would imply that this side was positioned upside-down when the shrine was first constructed, or less probable, taken apart and re-positioned incorrectly during the late medieval refurbishment. Each rectangular panel measures, on average, from 2.2 - 2.4 x 1 cm.

Zoomorphic Panels

ZP 1: This panel depicts a single profile beast with a backward pointing eye, curling jaws and extended head lappet. The disposition of the body is somewhat confused with no definite representation of limbs. The squat contoured torso develops into an elongated, ribbon-shaped neck which forms a circular loop. An incised curl defines the hindquarters, but instead of an articulated limb, the hindleg seems to be represented by an incised line which bends at an angle to form a foreleg. This combined fore/hindleg evolves into an extended head lappet while forming a triangular knot which intertwines with the looped neck. An extended tongue bifurcates into an upper section which runs parallel with the upper snout, while the lower half runs diagonally across the hindquarters to the bottom left-hand corner. The upper curl may in fact be a crease which developed in the gold foil where it was pressed into position. A substantial portion of the gold foil is missing from this panel, as it only remains above the body and down the right hand side of the beast.

ZP 2: This shows a single quadruped with the head placed in the upper right corner. The head bears the usual attributes with splayed, curled jaws, pointed eye and extended head lappet which interlaces with the torso and hindleg. The tongue forms a simple curl below the lower jaw. One foreleg extends below the tongue, the other intertwines with the hindleg, and forms an angular line above the rear of the beast. The joints of the legs are denoted by a volute. Approximately half the gold foil is abraded leaving the copper alloy surface exposed.

ZP 3: This depicts a single quadruped with a central back-turned head which is placed over a contoured ribbon-shaped torso. The eyes and upper jaw are obscured by a secondary nail. The differences with ZP 4 (which is easier to discern), are that the triquetra knot is placed above the upper jaw, and the tongue develops into the hindleg forming an angular knot. Only one foreleg can be discerned. Some gold foil is missing/abraded from the lower

centre of the panel.

ZP 4: This shows a single quadruped with back-turned head and contoured body, very similar in disposition to ZP3. The head is centrally placed and bears a backward pointing eye, splayed, curled jaws and an extended head lappet. The lappet intertwines with the neck and two forelegs and terminates in the bottom right corner of the panel. A ribbon-shaped torso emerges from the spiralled hindquarters and develops into an elongated neck which forms a simple loop around itself, the head lappet and the forelegs. The joints are indicated by a simple curl from which the splayed front and hind-legs originate, terminating in a single ball and claw. An elongated tongue passes over the deeply arched back and develops into a triquetra knot situated below the body. A section of gold foil is missing from the upper jaw.

ZP 5: This displays a single contorted beast, with the head and forequarters in profile, but the hindquarters shown in plan. At the junction of the hindlegs and tail the elongated body bifurcates, one strand forms the forequarters, neck and head, whilst the other connects with the beast's head lappet. A long ?tail passes through the lappet, neck and foreleg and terminates in a lobe in the bottom right corner of the panel. The hindlegs intertwine to form a simple angular knot while a well-defined foreleg terminates in a ball and claw beneath the lower jaw. The head is similar to all the other beasts on this side with splayed open jaws with curled snout, backward pointing eye, although in this case there does not appear to be a tongue. A nicked line runs parallel to the top and bottom of the panel above and below the body of the beast. Gold foil covers all of the panel except for an area around the eye. Some of the details are obscured where the foil is pressed into the edges of the panel.

ZP 6: The design of this panel consists of two non-symmetrical opposed profile beasts whose necks and forelegs cross in the centre. Both have lentoid eyes and curled splayed jaws from which a tongue emerges. The tongue passes beneath the body of the opposing beast and develops into the tail. The tails form an angular knot at the short ends of the panel. A simple curl indicates the hindleg joints which terminate in a single ball and claw foot. A similar curl also represents the forequarters. The beast on the right is depicted with a deeply-arched back and a long neck.

Abstract panels

AP 1: This displays a version of a foliate motif, based on four linked half-palmettes. These palmettes are squat, with the volute tightly rolled, and bear a double nick where the tendril

springs from the volute. The tip of the tendril develops into a small knob and the lower right tendril curls up into a second half palmette. Three of the lobed tendrils have an incised triangle placed within the tips. A technical feature of this panel is the deeply incised lines leaving the foliate motifs in false relief. This may be a result of the absent gold foil which, when pressed into the lines, would have softened the hard edges of the pattern. The centre of the panel is pierced by a single nail hole.

AP 2: This panel bears an abstract motif consisting of a central carrick bend knot, the strands of which forms a bar terminal at each end of the panel. All the strands have deeply incised notches to give the appearance of beaded wire. The central and triangular interstices are filled with incised parallel lines. There is no gold foil present on this panel.

AP 3: This composition consists of two palmettes positioned horizontally with their apexes facing inwards towards the centre. These are flanked on either side by two half-palmettes, both of which originate from a single volute placed adjacent to the central apexes. A characteristic trait of these palmettes is the presence of a double nick which is positioned where the bulb springs from the volute. Two vertical lines run from the edges of the volutes across the apex of the left palmette. Alternatively the composition may be read as four half-palmettes placed either side of a horizontal median line. The tips of the two outer right half-palmettes could then be seen to curl back to form the two left central half-palmettes. There are also slight differences between the two central palmettes. The left palmette has the two indented bulbs facing outwards and separated by a single line, while the right indented bulbs face outwards and are separated by a double incised line. A large nail pierces the lower centre of the panel.

AP 4: The composition of this panel is nearly identical to panel AP3, except for some minor details. A curious feature of this design is that the symmetry has been reversed, with all inward facing palmettes are now facing out, and the outward ones now face in. A small area of gold foil is absent from the right palmette.

There are two partially exposed panels beneath the late medieval additions of corner B. Approximately 3 mm (one seventh of the total length of each panel) is revealed, the lower panel has slightly more decoration visible due to the misalignment of the corner. The small portion that is visible is enough to determine the decoration of the panels. The lower panel has an incised horizontal V with slightly curved arms; next to this is an elongated double curve following the same contours. These incised contours follow exactly the same lines as those on the outer edge of panel AP3. The double curve motif is the outer curl of

the volutes present on the opposed palmette. The upper panel only has the horizontal V exposed, but from the disposition of the lines it can be deduced that it is the same motif. Also, the arrangement of two panels with foliate motifs above one another can be seen in panels AP3 and 4.³²

Late Medieval Additions

These follow the arrangement found on the short sides and consists of a rectangular plate with a hollow cylinder on the corner, attached to a square plate which houses two inset panels. The corners on this side are labelled A and B; the corresponding portions on the short sides are denoted A1 and B1. While corner B is in reasonably good condition, corner A is extremely worn and shows signs of damage.

Corner A

The two plates which comprise this corner were originally attached by a hinge, which is now broken. Both plates are soldered onto a separate backing plate.

SP 1: The outer hollow tube is distorted and contains a wooden plug. Unlike the recessed fields on the other corners, this does not bear any engraved decoration. It is surrounded by a silvered border, only one side of which still retains an incised pattern of chevrons separated by horizontal lines. The other three sides are effaced through wear. Two large nails pierce the recessed gilt-copper alloy plate.

Dimensions: 1.8 x 3.5 cm.

SP 2 and 3: Both of these inset gilt-silver panels consist of the same die-struck foliate pattern as described for Corner A1, SSA, panels 2 and 3. In this instance, however, they are much more worn, and are pierced by nails and perforations. Very little silver survives on the surrounding frame and there are no traces of any incised decoration remaining. The inner edge of the frame retains two broken lugs from the hinge assembly. Two nails pierce the lower strip of the frame, while there is also a nail and a nail-hole present in each of the inset panels.

Dimensions: 3.2 x 3.5 cm.

Corner B

These two elements are soldered separately onto the backing plate.

³² Radiography of the side has confirmed the above observations by revealing two foliate panels analogous in decoration to panels AP3 and 4 [Fig.20].

SP 1: The recessed field has a decorated vertical field consisting of opposed lentoids set along a central spine. This gilt-copper alloy plate is pierced by two large nails and is flanked by a length of twisted wire. A silvered strip decorated with incised lines inlaid with niello surrounds the plate. The horizontal top and bottom strips have short vertical lines placed between parallel lines, while the inner strip has a step/fret pattern.

Dimensions: 2.0 x 3.6 cm.

SP 2 and 3: These inset gilt silver die-struck panels consist of the same foliate motif as described for Corner A1, SSA, panels SP 2 and 3. The bottom panel is pierced by two nails. Most of the original niello inlay is still retained in the grooves of the decorated silver strip. There are a wide range motifs which include an undulating line akin to single-strand interlace on the two vertical and lower horizontal strips, a herring-bone pattern on the upper horizontal strip, and a step/fret motif on the central horizontal frame.

Dimensions: 3.3 x 3.6 cm.

Overall dimensions of LSA: 24.3 x 3.6 cm.

Long Side B [Pl.45; Fig.11]

This side, has an additional secondary mount placed mid-way along the side its length, which, further obscures the primary decoration. Both phases of construction have suffered damage, loss and wear. Unlike the other corner pieces, which cover the primary decoration, on this side the decorated plate has been cut back to accommodate corner C. All mountings are attached to the wooden core by nails.

Dimensions: 24.5 x 3.6 cm (Average Ht)

Primary Phase

Originally this side comprised fourteen decorative panels, of which now only four survive, and two of these have had approximately one fifth of their length removed to accommodate the later insertion of corner C. The central D-shaped mount obscures four panels completely and two partially, while each of the corners cover two panels. Where the original decorative scheme survives it can be seen that, as on LSA, the same layout of alternating hemispherical bosses and strips of silver is used to frame the panels. There are no inlaid strips of twinned copper/silver wire on the horizontal edges, instead flat strips of silver are soldered onto the backing plate. The four panels with gold foil visible are decorated by a different technique to those on LSA. Instead of impressing the gold over an engraved background the foil was positioned in the recessed panels and then decorated.

This can be observed where the foil is damaged or torn and on the two partially exposed panels behind the central mounting where the foil has been removed, revealing a plain copper alloy background. It is highly unlikely that die-stamping was used as this produces a sharp, clear pattern and even allowing for excessive wear, the end result would not be as indistinct as that now present. It is more probable that the design was incised free-hand onto the foil using a blunt point, probably of wood or copper. This technique leaves a characteristic ridge and furrow effect which is present on these panels. As the point was drawn across the surface it formed a groove (furrow), which in turn distorted the malleable gold into a ridge on either side. Another element which contributed to the lack of clarity in the designs produced is the thickness of the gold foil. If the foil was thinner the lines would have been easier to discern. Due to the effects of damage and wear it is difficult to interpret the decoration, but what does remain is executed in a clumsy, incompetent manner. As a result of the crude nature of the decoration, the panels are not differentiated into zoomorphic or abstract, and are thus denoted PP (Primary Panel) 1-4.

Dimensions: The original length of the side was 21.4 cm of which 7.3 is now visible. The rectangular panels measure (on average) 2.7 x 1.2 cm.

PP 1: This is similar in design to PP 3, but the end is truncated and an area of gold foil is missing. The design consists of a wide crossing loop with two centrally placed intersecting diagonal lines, all of which are contoured. The lines of this panel are more distinct than in the other three and the sinuous loops may have formed the body of an intertwined beast.

PP 2: Approximately one fifth of this panel was removed to accommodate corner C. What remains is badly effaced and the only element which can be discerned is an angular knot developing from a spiral, similar to ZP 6, LSA. There are two large conjoined rivet holes and punch marks on the foil, and further rivet holes below the edge of the panel.

PP 3: This panel is the best preserved of the four, except that the wear/damage occurs at the crucial central area where they may have been a beast-head. The remainder of the composition forms a wide loop at either end, one appears to be a spiral, the other has two diagonal lines crossing in the centre. Both loops form a lozenge-shaped void in the centre of the panel. The arrangement of these contoured ribbons is similar to the beasts depicted in ZP 3 and 4, LSA, where there is a centrally placed backward-facing head. Therefore the crossed diagonal lines may represent an interlaced foreleg and head-lappet, and the spiralled loop the hindquarters. The edges of this panel are very ragged and uneven, and

a large central perforation resembling a drill-hole pierces the centre of the panel.

PP 4: This panel is very worn, especially in the central area where the surface is completely smooth. The right end depicts a spiral with a triangular-shaped bar terminal originating from the centre. This may have represented the coiled hindquarters and tail of a quadruped, as a similar composition is present on panel ZP1, LSA. The incised lines on the opposite end of the panel are too damaged to allow recognition of any specific features. Three nail holes pierce the gold foil panel.

Late Medieval Additions

These take the form of two applied corner mounts, C and D, which are similar to those on the other three sides. In addition a large, hollow D-shaped mount, which forms the lower section of a circular setting mounted onto the front, is attached mid-way along the side. This mounting is soldered onto two rectangular plates which are similar in design to the rectangular components on the corner pieces.

Corner C

This is in excellent condition and comprises a rectangular plate with a hollow cylindrical tube, and a square plate with two inset decorated rectangular panels. Both of these elements are attached to a thin copper alloy plate which is situated behind the junction of the two plates.

SP 1: This is a recessed gilt-copper alloy plate which has a vertical field of engraved decoration, consisting of cross-hatched alternating triangles. The outer cylinder is flanked by a length of twisted wire. Wear has obscured most of the decoration engraved into the silver border but the vertical strip retains a motif of undulating lines inlaid with niello. Five nails and one nail-hole pierce this plate.

Dimensions: 2.1 x 3.5 cm.

SP 2: It is difficult to ascertain whether this (and panel 3) are cast with the surrounding frame, or else cast separately and then inset. The latter is more likely considering that the die-struck panels on corners A and B on LSA were inserted in the frame. This panel bears decoration in the form of three conjoined quatrefoils which form negative lozenge shaped spaces between the central arms, and triangular spaces along the edge of the panel. In the lozenge shaped spaces there is an incised latin cross. The panel is gilt-copper alloy, and is pierced by a nail along the left edge.

Dimensions: 2.5 x 1.2 cm.

SP 3: This panel, of gilt-copper alloy, has a motif consisting of four-strand, double-contoured knotwork. Panels SP2 and 3 are surrounded by a silvered border which bears an engraved pattern of two-strand interlace inlaid with niello. A single nail perforates this panel.

Dimensions: individual panels 2.5 x 1.2 cm; Full plate 3.3 x 3.5 cm.

Corner D

This differs from corner C in that the two components are joined by a hinge joint with ribbed lugs. The square components bears two inset gilt-copper alloy panels.

SP 1: This consists of a hollow cylinder flanked by a length of twisted wire. Adjacent to this is a recessed plate of gilt copper-alloy which bears a vertical panel of engraved decoration. The decoration comprises eight alternating triangles, each of which is filled with incised parallel lines. Two large nails pierce this field, while a smaller nail perforates the lower edge of the panel. This recessed plate is surrounded by a silvered border which has an engraved design of an undulating, feather-like motif.

Dimensions: 2.1 x 3.6 cm.

SP 2 and 3: Both of these panels will be described together as they bear near identical motifs. Each has a double row of incised quatrefoils with lentoids positioned in the spaces between. Panel SP 2 has two rows of five, while SP 3 has two rows of four. Two incised parallel lines surround the decoration. The silvered border bears engraved chevrons on the three outer strips, double-strand interlace on the inner vertical edge, and a herring-bone motif on the central horizontal bar. All of these patterns are inlaid with niello. Behind the silvered border on the top edge, the copper alloy plate had a scalloped edge.

Dimensions: 3.2 x 3.6 cm.

Central mount

This is a hollow, D-shaped container which is attached to two rectangular mounts by solder, which in turn are soldered onto the primary copper alloy plate. The mount has an engraved base-plate [Pl.39], and the hemispherical setting on the front of the shrine acts as a lid. The D-shaped mount and its base, will be described first, followed by descriptions of the attached rectangular plates.

The curved surface is divided into four separate fields by three vertical strips which

are framed top and bottom by an everted flange. These strips are of gilt-silver and are flanked on either side by lengths of twisted wire which are soldered into position. In between the lengths of wire are placed raised vertical silver panels. Originally there were four panels but only one full and one damaged panel remain. These are engraved with a repeating motif of a trilobe leaf separated by a horizontal lentoid. The background is inlaid with niello. The lower flange had the same engraved motif, but is now nearly completely effaced through wear. On the outer surface of the upper flange there are twelve miniature silver granules, each of which is surrounded by a coil of twisted gilt-silver wire [Pl.40.a]. The base is semi-circular in shape and is attached to the copper alloy base plate by two small nails and possibly solder. It is made of gilt-silver and is engraved with the letters IHC in Gothic characters. The background is decorated with cross-hatching and ragged foliate trefoil leaves [Pl.39]. One corner of the plate is missing and the straight edge is pierced by two nail holes.

Dimensions: base 3.8 x 2 cm; length (inc. flange) 6.7 cm; height (inc. flanges) 4.5 cm; projects 1.9 cm from edge.

Behind the central mount, opposite corner D, there is a square plate with approximately one third of its surface obscured. It is constructed in the same manner as the other corner pieces, that is, two inset panels surrounded by a decorated silver border. The two inset panels are die-stamped, and bear the same motifs as described for corners B, LSA; A1, SSA and B1, SSB, while the border has a design of an undulating line on the outer edges. The central horizontal strip is decorated with a herringbone motif which is inlaid with niello.

Dimensions: 2.7 x 3.4 cm.

Facing corner C is a second plate of which more than half of its surface is obscured by the central mount. This plate is analogous to the rectangular elements of the other corners and has the same recessed central panel of gilt-copper alloy surrounded by a silver frame. There is no apparent decoration on this plate but the silvered border is decorated with an engraved design of four-strand interlace punctuated by oval loops, inlaid with niello. A nail hole perforates the upper horizontal strip while the plate is pierced by three nail holes.

Dimensions: .9 (visible length) x 3.4 cm (ht).

Overall dimensions of LSB: 24.5 x 3.6 cm.

Base [Pl.39]

This part is constructed in two sections, a plain copper alloy backing sheet onto which an openwork copper alloy plate, sheeted in silver, is nailed. The plain sheet is slightly larger than the openwork component, and extends c.1 cm beyond the edges of the latter. These edges would have been concealed by binding strips which are now missing. On the edge corresponding to LSB the D-shaped base-plate from the late-medieval mounting was inserted by cutting away a section of the plain copper alloy sheet.

The geometric pattern may be read as either positive (solid) or negative (openwork) shapes. As negative spaces they conform to an L shapes in each of the four corners, T shapes along the straight edges (five on each short side, eight on each long side, twenty-six in total), and cruciform spaces in the central field (forty in total). These cruciform spaces are flanked by a negative square in each quadrant. The positive elements consist of a lattice of pierced squares which are connected by horizontal and vertical bars and the overall pattern can be read as linked crosses with square terminals and base. This plate was manufactured in a crude fashion as there are dimensional discrepancies apparent between similar elements.

The silver sheet is attached to the openwork copper alloy sheet by solder. Radiography has revealed the method of attachment, which was achieved by folding a triangular tag of silver sheet behind each of the four corners of the square elements. These were then tacked into place using solder. A contour line engraved into the silver sheet defines all the edges of the geometric spaces. Numerous rivets and nails were used to attach the openwork plate to the back plate. The primary nails are easily identified as they retain silver caps and are polished flush with the silver surface. These are positioned on the straight strips connecting the openwork rectangles, but only ten remain in position. Ten additional silver nails perforate the inscription and decorated field along the edges. Other rivets of different form and materials also pierce the openwork plate: copper-alloy, brass and silver-capped brass. Some are flush with the surface, others raised and hammered in at angles. There are also numerous nail-holes and perforations of varying diameters along all of the edges.

The inscription is engraved into the silver sheet and commences at the top left edge (LSB) and runs clockwise along the three consecutive edges. Damage occurs to the sheet

at the beginning of the inscription, and on two other areas of the long sides. On the side corresponding to SSA decoration occurs in the form of step and chevron patterns. Approximately one third of the decorated strip is missing through damage. It can be seen that the edges of these missing areas correspond with the lines forming the inscription or pattern. These lines were engraved too deeply into the surface of the silver sheet, thus eventually causing the metal to fracture and break off at these points.

Dimensions: Backing plate: 24.1 x 18.5 cm. Openwork plate: 23.5 x 17.2 cm. L spaces: 1.4 x 1.6 cm (approx). T spaces: 1.8 x 1.7 cm (approx).

Cruciform spaces: 1.7 x 2 cm (approx).

Front [Pls.38, 46; Fig.12]

This portion of the shrine consists of many diverse elements using a range of material and techniques. The principal feature is a central rectangular repoussé plate, which is framed by four die-stamped strips. There are also two elaborate settings placed above and below the central seated figure with four additional settings placed in each corner, binding strips with elaborate filigree corner pieces and a miniature censer attached to one of the corners by a silver trichinopoly chain.

Central plate

This sheet, which is fabricated from gilt-silver, has been hammered, embossed and engraved to produce figurative and architectural elements in high relief. The surface is divided by raised mouldings into a triple arcade which consists of a large central arch flanked by a smaller version on either side. These, and the spandrels above the arches, contain repoussé figures which contrast with the engraved heraldic and ecclesiastical figures placed in the background. Two central columns rise from roll-moulded bases and two similar mouldings are placed at equal intervals along each shaft. The two upper mouldings function as capitals for the two minor arches which spring from these. A similar capital is situated at a slightly lower level on the outer columns of the minor arches. These columns have been cut back to accommodate the flanking foliate strips. A raised moulding, outlined by punched dots, runs parallel with the inner and outer edges of the architectural elements.

In the central arch there is a large male figure with his head placed to the right of centre. He has an enlarged right hand raised in blessing, while the left holds a book. Long

wavy hair falls over and behind the shoulders. He is seated on an elaborate throne and wears a long flowing robe with deep folds which form wide sleeves and a V-shaped-neck. The head is oval in shape with incised lines defining the long nose, lentoid eyes with rounded pupils, and a short, straight mouth. A curved moulding represents the eyebrows, while short slashes engraved around the lips and lower jaw depict a beard/stubble. The figure gazes straight ahead with a vacant expression. A large circular setting obscures the top of the head, while the area below the knees is obscured by an elaborate square mount. The throne has a horizontal seat and base and concave arms which terminate in beast heads. The base is rectangular and above this there is a central horizontal feature with rounded corners which may be intended to be a cushion. All of these surfaces are decorated with cross-hatched lines. The two throne pommels consist of fierce beast-heads with splayed jaws, lentoid eyes and small rounded ears. The jaws are notched to indicate teeth and the upper snouts terminate in a lobe. There is less wear on the right beast head and, as a consequence, the details are sharper, for example, the flowing lock of hair placed behind the eye.

The left arch incorporates a standing figure of a bishop with his right hand raised in blessing and his left holding a crosier. His feet, mitre, right hand and left arm all touch the sides of the arch. He is wearing a chasuble with a pallium-shaped orphrey decorated with cross hatching and chevrons, an apparelled amice which is also decorated with hatching, a dalmatic with vertical parallel pleats and a triangular mitre. Deep V-folds are present on the chasuble on either side of the orphrey. The facial features are very worn with incised lines defining rectangular eyes, spatulate nose and the straight mouth. Two small ears are placed just below the rim of the mitre. His feet are placed flat on the ground, facing outwards, but the toes have suffered impact damage. The left hand, with the elbow turned outwards, grasps the crosier just below the collar knop. It is of simple construction with a single knop; the crook is formed from a single volute. Below his right sleeve there is an engraved scene of a tonsured cleric with his hand extended outwards toward a dove-like bird placed above his head. The bird has a plump body, rounded eye and pointed beak and wings. An applied setting conceals the body of the cleric, but between the setting and right foot of the bishop there is a series of engraved lines, which may be the cleric's foot or another bird.³³

³³ Radiography of the front has failed to resolve these engraved figures beneath the setting [Fig.20].

The right arch is broader and slightly higher than the left, and depicts a scene of the crucified Christ flanked by the Virgin and St John. A circular setting inserted into the bottom right corner obscures part of the figure of St John. Christ is situated in the centre of the arch with his arms outstretched to form a V and his head inclined to the left. Only the upper shaft and transom of the cross, which is decorated with cross hatched lines, are visible. Christ's body is somewhat disproportionate; the head, arms and torso are broadly naturalistic, but the lower half of the body, especially the legs, are shortened. Only the left leg is depicted and the object behind may be either the right foot or a suppedaneum. The loin cloth is loosely draped and secured by a knot at the waist. Wear has effaced most of the detail on the figure, but the rib-cage and clavicles are defined by deeply-engraved lines. Long, flowing hair droops over the shoulders, and a circular halo decorated with cross-hatching is placed behind the head. Little detail of the face remains except for rectangular eyes, spatulate nose and a straight mouth. A circular band above the forehead may have been intended to represent a crown of thorns. The Virgin and St John have similar facial types with bulky, rounded jaws, rectangular eyes and straight mouths. Her head is inclined towards Christ and she has her hands open in a gesture of grief. She is attired in a long head-dress, tunic and full-length robe. Her hips sway outwards to form a contrapposto pose. St John stands to the left of Christ with his right hand held up to his chin and his left hand holding a rectangular book. The hair is defined by short incised lines and he wears a full-length tunic with a rounded neck-line and deep folds. It appears as if his right hand clutches the hem of his garment. Radiography has revealed his elbow and lower half of his body [Fig. ***]. Both the Virgin and St John appear to be unshod. In each of the spandrels formed by the upper members of the cross and the curve of the arch there is an engraved bird. Both look backwards over their shoulders whilst walking with the fore-leg raised. The wings and tail-feathers are defined by parallel lines while the body feathers are formed by a grid pattern. Each bird has a circular eye, curved beak and a head and neck devoid of feathers.

In each of the two spandrels above the arcade there is a repoussé figure of an angel swinging a censer with heraldic beasts and figures engraved in the background. The angel in the left spandrel is in profile and genuflects with one foot behind him and one on the arch. Both hands grip the cord/chain of the censer which touches the edge of the central arch. The censer is biconical in form with a projecting foot and has two parallel incised lines around the central expansion. The angel wears a long flowing robe which has deep

folds, a rounded neckline and tight-fitting cuffs. His nose extends directly from his forehead in a straight line, below which is a small mouth, prominent chin and square jawline. The eye is lentoid-shaped and the hair short and thick, similar to that of St John. Behind his head is a series of rounded punch-marks set in three parallel horizontal lines, the remainder of this feature is obscured by a large rock-crystal setting. However radiography has shown that these punch-marks are the base of a pair of wings which extend backwards [Fig.20]. Beneath the right foot of the angel is a small triangular abstract motif, decorated with cross-hatched lines.

The right spandrel contains a similar angel with a profile body and a frontal head. A large rock-crystal setting conceals the back of the figure, but radiography has revealed the positions of his second wing and back leg [Fig.20]. This angel also genuflects with one foot resting on the top of the arch. He wears similar vestments and also swings a censer in towards the centre arch. There is slightly more detail apparent on the censer with incised lines defining the conical foot, hemispherical base and apertures triangular lid. Wear has obliterated most of the facial features, but the wide nose, straight mouth and oval eye can still be distinguished. A large triangular wing, decorated with punch marks and parallel lines, extends from the left side of his head outwards.

Engraved figures: There are two engraved figures placed in front of the left angel, one above the censer, the other below, framed by the central arch and the upper die-stamped strip. The upper figure depicts a wyvern with a frontal human head attached to the profile body of a dragon [Pl.46]. It is shown walking with one of the three-toed feet placed under the arched neck which develops into a curved back, the wing of which is decorated with hatching. The tail bifurcates into a floriated terminal below, but the upper part, along with a portion of the wing and head, is partially hidden by the die-stamped border. Two lobes (which may represent a hair or hat) extend from below the upper strip on either side of the head, the facial features are defined by sketchy engraved lines. The figure below, who is placed standing on the arch, appears to be a tonsured ecclesiastic who grips a biconical chalice with his right hand. The details are sketchy, but a long garment with rounded neckline is depicted. The eyes, eyebrows and nose are shown, but the mouth is absent.

In the space bounded by the wing and censer of the right angel there is an engraved wyvern, similar in all respects to the one in the opposite spandrel, except for the head

which is shown in profile. The tail is obscured by the inserted circular mount, but the floriated tip can be seen emerging from behind the edge. This beast has more facial detail, with a strong jawline, prominent nose and circular eye, but lacks the talons present on the toes of the opposite wyvern. The head is crowned with hair(?) in the form of a flat cap. Below the censer there is an engraved figure of a rampant winged lion who stands on top of the arch looking towards the angel. On each of its feet there are three splayed toes with sharp talons, while the tail curves into an S-shape with a floriated tip. He has a sharply-pointed triangular wing with incised lines representing feathers while his hindquarters are decorated with lightly punched dots. The profile head is roughly square shaped with a rounded snout and forehead, long mouth, small ears, circular eye and short whiskers. **Dimensions:** central arch 13.6 x 7.7 cm; left arch: 9.3 x 5.1 cm; right arch: 9.6 x 6.9 cm. Maximum height of relief: .9 cm (Christ in Majesty).

Die-stamped strips

These comprise four separate rectangular strips set around the edges of the central plate, all are fabricated from die-stamped gilt-silver and have their inner edges folded over to provide a narrow border. This fold also acts to reinforce the edge of the sheet. The strips are attached to the wooden core by copper alloy nails; there is also a backing plate of copper alloy behind each separate strip. The opposing strips bear identical designs: the short sides have a foliate pattern, while the long sides, whose ends extend over the foliate strips, display affronted heraldic beasts.

Upper strip: This is damaged at the left corner where a portion has been removed with a sharp instrument. The design is obscured at the centre and at the lower end of each corner by the applied settings, and along the top edge by the binding strip. The repeating pattern commences on the left with two opposed affronted beasts, the first a wyvern, the second a lion [Pl.46]. There are lightly engraved branches placed in the spaces surrounding the beasts. Only one pair of beasts, to the left of the circular setting, is completely visible; three other pairs are partially concealed, and one pair, behind the setting, are fully obscured.³⁴ There is one odd beast of different form at the extreme right of the strip. Therefore, there would originally have been five pairs of beasts and a single variant on the strip. It is only necessary to describe the left and right beasts from one pair,

³⁴ Their outlines can be made out on the radiograph [Fig.20].

as the others are identical in every way, except for the amount of wear present on the surface. The left beast is shown in profile and has a long neck, short torso with two upright triangular wings, and a downward curling tail which bifurcates into two splayed strands, each of which terminates in a trefoil leaf. There are two feet shown - each has three toes with knob-like talons forming a spatulate shape. The hindleg is placed directly below the wings, while the foreleg is held extended in front of the chest. The small, rounded head has a circular eye and long jaws which are held open. Overall the head, neck, torso and tail form a horizontal S-shape. The identification of the right beast is more straightforward, a standing lion whose posture mirrors that of the wyvern. The two erect forelegs and heads are placed directly opposite one another. All features of the lion are depicted in a naturalistic manner, broad chest with speckled mane, slender waist, well-developed hindquarters and upright neck. The tail, which is exaggerated in length, curls into an S-shape above the rear and terminates in a trefoil. All four feet have the same characteristics as the opposing wyvern, except that the talons are more prominent. The rounded head has a circular eye, a small ear placed at the back of the head, a straight lower jaw and a blunt snout with lips and whiskers defined by tooling. This head is a miniature version of the beast heads shown on the throne above. The strip is secured by one silver and two copper nails, there are fourteen small and four large perforations present.³⁵

Dimensions: 22.7 x 1.9 cm.

Lower strip: This bears the same arrangement as the upper strip, five paired wyverns and lions with a single beast at the extreme right. There is an additional beast situated in the left corner. The strip is torn and damaged below and around the edge of the square setting, and overall shows more wear than the upper strip. As the paired beasts are struck from the same die that produced the scheme on the upper strip, descriptions for these animals are unnecessary. The same twig-like design is also engraved in the spaces between the beasts. It is difficult to describe the features of the single beast in the right corner as it has suffered considerable wear. The beast is shown in profile and has a tubular body forming an S-shape, there seems to be a head at either end of the body with a small head lappet and splayed jaws. This, and the beast at the opposite end, interrupt the decorative scheme by encroaching on the adjacent beast. Although the beast at the left corner is partially

³⁵ Radiography has since revealed additional perforations throughout the front of the shrine [Fig.20].

concealed by the binding strips there is more detail present. The rounded head has a prominent forehead, small lappet or ear, dot-and-circle eye, and a fleshy snout. The S-shaped body has either feathers or scales depicted with a possible wing so the beast may be intended to be a dragon/griffin. This identification may also be proposed for the single beast at the right hand end of the upper strip. Where the strip overlays the shorter foliate strips the edge is left unfolded. This strip is secured by seven copper nails, with perforations for six more. There are seven larger perforations (for secondary nails), which impinge on the decoration, as well as areas of missing gilt-silver.

Dimensions: 23.4 x 1.7-1.9 (w) cm.

Right strip: This bears a repeating pattern of alternating oak leaves and acorns disposed at intervals on an undulating tendril. From a total of seven, there are only two full leaves and portions of two more visible. The remainder are concealed on the top and bottom by the applied settings.³⁶ The oak leaves spring from the tendril mid-way along the curve: one leaf faces outwards, the next inwards. Each leaf is depicted in a naturalistic manner displaying prominent mid-ribs and leaf veins. At first glance the leaves may appear to be exactly alike, all having been struck from the same die, but on closer examination there are subtle differences in size and shape. If a comparison is made with the opposite foliate strip it can be seen that there are also differences between the leaves, but even allowing for wear and damage, these disparities occur at the exact same positions on both strips. Therefore it can be concluded that both strips were struck as a frieze, and not as a single repeating motif.

Dimensions: 13.3 x 2.1 cm.

Left strip: This is an identical foliage pattern of oak leaves and acorns as described above for the right strip, and is also obscured top and bottom by inserted settings. The binding strip also conceals the design along the edges. On this strip there are four leaves: one fully visible and two and a half concealed from view. The folded edge is absent from the lower section of the strip.

Dimensions: (visible): 11.5 x 1.2 cm.

Applied settings

³⁶ Radiography has partially revealed these.

There are six of these attached to the front of the shrine, all of which may be considered secondary as they partially obscure the decorative scheme. All appear to be secured to the front by means of nails which pierce the flat base, which in turn is hidden by the crystal settings.³⁷ The four corner settings are rudimentary in design and technique, but the two central ones are more elaborately constructed. The shapes also vary, two are circular, two are oval, one is octagonal and one is square. Five of these contain rock crystals, one is empty.³⁸ These will now be described in detail with the four corner settings first, followed by the two central settings. They are numbered 1 to 6, commencing from top left-hand corner [Fig.12].

Setting no. 1: This consists of a cabochon rock crystal with a prominent central ridge which is inset into a gilt-silver tray. The setting is surrounded by a strand of twisted silver wire and inside this there is a field of plaited wire from which rises an undulating frame with tripartite claws. The claws are rectangular and they are separated from one another by a curved moulding. Originally there were sixteen claws, but through loss and damage only nine now remain.

Dimensions: 4.55 x 3 cm.

Setting no. 2: This consists of an oval cabochon rock crystal with a prominent ridge which is set in to a large collet. The crystal is retained by an undulating frame. The outer flange consists of a silver tray with a milled edge, onto which is soldered an oval silver band which has a herringbone motif inlaid with niello. On the inside of this band there are two twisted silver wires which in turn border a serrated frame. There are portions of the rounded serrations missing on the top and bottom of the border.

Dimensions: setting 5.9 x 4.5 cm; crystal 4.2 x 2.8 cm;

Setting no. 3: This retains a hemispherical rock crystal which exhibits a reddish-tinge in certain lighting conditions. The surface of the crystal is badly pitted. The outer flange of the setting is fabricated from a length of thick, milled silver wire. On the floor of the setting between the flange and crystal there is a plaited silver wire. A thin silver border of

³⁷ These nails and associated perforations can be seen on the X-ray image [Fig.20].

³⁸ For the purposes of this description the stones will be referred to as rock crystal, although there is a possibility that they may cast glass. It is not possible to differentiate between rock crystal and glass without the aid of scientific analysis.

serrations in the form of truncated cones holds the crystal in place. Behind the crystal there is a reflective backing of silver foil.

Dimensions: setting 3.8 x 3.4 cm; crystal 3.1 x 2.6 cm.

Setting no. 4: This is a crude octagonal setting holding a similar shaped crystal. The crystal is constructed as a doublet with a separate backing plate. This plate is of silver which has now tarnished and has thus imparted a purple-blue coloration to the stone. The setting consists of silver wavy ribbon wire set on edge which has a row of serrations and four claws (two of which are now broken) attached to the plate.

Dimensions: setting 3.6 x 2.8 cm; crystal 2.8 x 2.15 cm.

Setting no. 5: This is the most elaborate setting on the front of the shrine. It is hemispherical in shape and has a central circular aperture containing a cabochon rock crystal. The setting is fabricated from gilt-silver and has small collets containing glass and precious stones placed at intervals around the curved surface [Pl.38]. A band of plaited wire encircles the base of the setting from which two empty circular collets extend into the central plate on either side of the seated figure's head. The curved surface of the boss is divided into ten fields by applied vertical strips of gilt-silver wire which have a single granule placed at both ends. These fields are bordered top and bottom by a band of twisted wire. A roughly circular collet, surrounded by a coil of twisted wire, is placed in the centre of each field. These collets contain four pearls, four blue stones (?sapphires), one green stone (?emerald) and one stud of brown/red glass.³⁹ One feature of these collets is that they were not all made to the same dimensions, that is, they were constructed specifically to accommodate the differing sizes of the stones. For example, there is a very small collet containing a pearl at the four o'clock position, and a large sub-lozenge shaped collet with a ?sapphire at the eleven o'clock position. This would indicate that these are in fact gemstones, because if they were fabricated from glass they would all have been cast to the same size and shape. The rock crystal is held in place by an everted flange which was formed by crimping and folding in the edge of the metal sheet. On LSB the lower section of the setting may be seen, but the top edge of this is not fully visible unless the hinged lid is raised [Pl.40.a]. The decoration on this curved section consists of a row of ten (originally eleven) coiled granules with traces of an engraved chevron pattern present

³⁹ The stones have not yet been positively identified by scientific means.

on the surrounding edge.

Dimensions: setting 4.7 (diam.) x 2.3 cm (ht.); crystal 2.4 x 2.4 cm.

Setting no. 6: This is the only rectangular setting on the front of the shrine. It is now empty but formerly held a rock crystal. The setting is manufactured from a range of gilt-silver twisted wires and coiled granules. A lower rectangular tray contains the setting proper, with only the border visible which is made from four lengths of thick ribbed silver wire. In each corner there is a circular collet; three of these contain dark blue glass studs, the fourth (lower left) holds a turquoise-coloured glass stud. A coil of twisted wire surrounds the outer edge of each collet. Placed inside this border there is a second gilt-silver tray with serrated edges which are folded over to secure the central mount. This mount is pierced by a large nail in each corner, and although they are worn, still apparent are radiating incised lines emanating from the centre. On the outer flange between the nail heads there is plaited silver wire forming a two-strand interlace pattern. These strips are bordered on both sides by a thin strip of finely beaded-wire. At this juncture the surfaces of the central aperture slope inwards at an angle of approximately 45 degrees. On these surfaces there are varying numbers of coiled granules arranged in single rows, six on the short sides, ten on the long sides, while the other two sides contain eight. The coils of beaded wire extend and cross between the granules forming a figure-of-eight arrangement. A strip of plaited silver wire borders the rim of the empty cell.

A portion of decorated sheet metal is visible in the interior of the setting. The design is worn but a foliate motif consisting of a central trefoil/fleur-de-lys with two curved offshoots springing from each side can be made out. These offshoots terminate in a trilobe. A backing sheet of copper-alloy with damage to the upper edge, obscures the remainder of the design. The backing sheet is of the same height die-stamped strip depicting the heraldic beasts: this decorated strip, and the lower half of the central figure's legs, were cut away to allow for the insertion of the setting. The piece of decorated metal overlays the plain copper-alloy backing sheet, but is inserted behind the lower horizontal strip. It may have been used as a wedge to hold the original crystal tight against the rim of the setting.

Dimensions: 4.65 x 4.3 cm (overall); 2.4 x 1.95 cm (central aperture), height 1 cm.

Binding strips

For this section the binding strips will be described first followed by the upper sections of the corner mounts. The construction of the binding strips can be ascertained due to the fact that a full corner section is at present loose, and can be removed to allow examination of the underside.⁴⁰ This shows that the plain C-shaped strips were cut down and incorporated into corner C at each end. The binding strip and corner were attached by solder. These binding strips are not contemporary with the corner pieces, they appear to belong to the primary phase, or a phase earlier than the corners. If the strips were coeval with the corner mounts a neater joint would be expected, not the crude assembly and wastage of metal that is now present. There are two different types of binding strip present on the sides; each belonging to a separate phase. The first type is made from a tube of silver, C-shaped in section, and has an overall diameter of 0.9 cm. This type is situated on three of the sides: the upper section of long side (B) where it is crudely cut away in the centre to allow for the late medieval insertion; the right short side (B) where it extends mid-way down to a length of 6.7 cm, where at this point it is attached to the secondary binding strip by a crude solder joint. The final strip on the lower long side (A) is the only complete one remaining. Where the ends run into the corner pieces there is a raised moulding between two applied bands. This latter binding strip is most likely to belong to the primary phase of construction as the length (20.5 cm) is extremely close to the dimensions of the primary plate on the corresponding long side (19 cm). It has to be taken into consideration that the corner pieces abut quite neatly into place, so it is possible that it could be contemporary with the corners. The second type of binding strip is angular in cross-section and has an approximate diameter of 0.85 cm. These strips are present on both of the short sides and conceal the corner pieces A and B where they overlap them at the junction with long side A. The length remaining on SSB is 7.3 cm, and the full strip on SSA (where it is secured by a silver nail mid-way along the edge) measures 14.3 cm. The date of these rectangular binding strips will be considered in the discussion section.

The next components to be described are the four corner pieces. These are fabricated from gilt-silver and are decorated with coils of twisted wire. The two upper corners (C and D) extend further down the binding strips than corners A and B, while the

⁴⁰ The loose section of binding strip runs from the right of the circular setting (No. 5) to mid-way down the right binding strip where a break occurs.

lower corners are concealed on the short sides by the angular binding strips. The descriptions will commence at the upper right (corner C) and proceed clockwise.

Corner C: This consists of two strips, C-shaped in cross-section, which are soldered together to form a right-angle. At each extremity there is a moulding comprising of two curved bands with a median incised line: the moulding on the long side is slightly convex in shape, while that on the short side is flat. These mouldings contain three diagonal strips of opposed twisted wire which divide the surface into separate fields. Single granules surrounded by coils of twisted wire are placed in these spaces. The long side moulding, which has suffered considerable wear, has two central fields with four coiled granules in each and two flanking fields with three granules in each. The moulding on the short side has the same decorative scheme, but has one granule missing from the central field. Between the mouldings and the inner section there is a band of silver with an engraved design which consists of a step pattern on the lower strip and single strand interlace on the upper. A plain strip of silver is soldered along the centre of each corner. Below the strip on either side there is a rectangular field bordered by a length of twisted wire. These fields contain granules surrounded by double coils of twisted wire: on the upper section there are five granules on the outer edge and four on the inner, the side section bears five granules in each section. In the angle between the two sections there is a silvered-copper cap, which is for the locking-pin which passed through the hollow cylinder below in order to secure the lid. When viewed from the side [Pl.44] it can be seen that there are three vertical strips of silver placed between two curved bands, the full assembly forms a truncated cone. Each section extends 4.5 cm from the corner along the length of the binding strip. When detached the long side measures 10.3 cm and the short 10.6 cm.

Corner B: The decorative portion of this corner is confined to the long side. It has similar technical features to corner C, with a central silver band divides the mount into two fields, each of which have granules with coils of twisted wire. There are four granules on the inner edge, while the outside has three, two further ones are missing. Instead of individual coils, the wires run between two granules forming an S-shape. The outermost edge of the corner is perforated. A curved silver band with incised chevron ornament terminates the moulding.

Corner A: This is also confined to the long side and the remaining portion is divided into

two areas by a central band of silver which is perforated by a nail-hole on the top corner. There are three coiled granules in the inner section and four in the outer. The central strip and outer edge are extremely worn, with no traces of engraved ornament or gilding remaining.

Corner D: Although this has suffered some wear, it is the best-preserved and the most elaborate of the corner mouldings. Commencing from the short side the first section consists of a barrel-shaped moulding which has three lengths of silver applied, one of which displays a faint step-pattern. This same motif is found on the curved collar which acts as a border between the two sections. Unlike the other mouldings on the front there are no coiled granules present in this section. The next area has a longitudinal strip of silver acting as a divide between the inner and outer fields. A faint pattern of conjoined lozenges is discernable on the surface of this strip. Also present is a round-sectioned bar which is formed into a simple hoop and soldered into position. This hoop retains an oval link which in turn pierces a chain made from knitted silver wire. On either side of the dividing strip there are two rows of coiled granules bordered above and below by a length of twisted silver wire. The granules present are approximately half the size of those on the other corner pieces. There are two rows of eight on the inner surface while the outer surface has two rows of ten. As with corner C there is a silvered copper alloy pin-head in the corner proper, although in this case there is no openwork mount constructed around it. The next section on the long side has the same decorative scheme of double rows of coiled granules on either side of a silver strip. This strip also bears a worn pattern of conjoined lozenges. The outer surface which also displays excessive wear, has eight granules above and twelve below, separated by twisted silver wire. Some of these granules are obscured by solder which was used to secure the locking pin in position. On the inner surface there are two rows of eight coiled granules, bordered by twisted wire. There is no division between the lower row of coiled granules on the outer surface on the long and short sides as they form a continuous row. The bead-like moulding on the long side is separated from the previous section by a silver band incised with chevrons. The moulding is slightly convex and is separated into four fields by four silver strips, two of which have an incised step-pattern. Each of the fields contain a row of four coiled granules.

Dimensions: corner 4.9 cm (short side) x 4.8 cm (long side).

The chain bifurcates at the end where it has silver wire wrapped around it at right

angles to form a loop.⁴¹ This bifurcated loop holds a single circular link which in turn is attached to a small censer. This is manufactured from two silver hemispheres, each of which has a loop soldered directly onto the apex. The upper hemisphere is larger than the lower one and has an incised line running around the edge. Inside each component there is a rectangular loop; these pass through one another to form a permanent link, but still allow the two halves to rotate through 90 degrees in relation to one another. There are four small tags placed at equal intervals around the circumference of the upper component which act as locking devices by securing both halves together. Each hemisphere is perforated by four small holes. On the lower half there are faint traces of engraved Gothic characters with a cross-hatched background.

Dimensions: chain 8.7 cm (l); censer 5.3 x 2.55 cm.

Overall dimensions of front: 25 x 19 cm; 23.5 x 17.2 cm (excluding binding strips);
Repoussé plate: 20 x 13.6 cm.

The wooden lid, to which the front is attached, measures 23 x 17.5 x .5 cm. It is in good condition, except for two longitudinal cracks which were caused by the insertion of a nail [Pl.40.b]. The interior height of the wooden box proper measures 2.65 cm.

Weight of shrine: 2,326 g.

⁴¹ A similar loop was probably present on the other end of the chain. It is now missing and the oval link perforates the chain directly.

THE MISACH

CONSTRUCTION

The shrine takes the form of a sealed rectangular box to which metal plates and various mountings are attached by nails. The internal wooden core⁴² is covered in a textured red paper which gives the appearance of leather. This paper may be observed through the apertures on the base and short sides. Except for the front and the applied settings, the remainder of the shrine is of copper alloy. Tubular binding strips of C-shaped cross-section are positioned along the straight edges of the front and base of the shrine and are securely clamped in position by overlapping tripartite corner mouldings. The binding strips and corner mouldings are retained at regular intervals by nails. The short sides bear nail holes along the edges and are attached to the wooden core by the brass nails which secure the central zoomorphic escutcheon to the openwork plate.

The front has a series of twelve die-stamped silver panels, as well as three inscribed strips of silver which frame the upper and lower edges. A crucifix is placed at the top centre, while eight rock crystal settings in filigree collets are placed at intervals along the edges, with an elaborate filigree band which runs across the width of the shrine. The upper surfaces of the binding strips and corner mouldings are covered in sheet silver, while the four corner strips and the short edges bear engraved designs. The stamped panels are secured to the front by solder, while the settings are held in place by a combination of nails and solder.

The components of the shrine will now be described in detail: the short sides, long sides, base and front.

DESCRIPTION

Short Side A [Pls.49.a]

This side comprises of two elements, an openwork plate bearing zoomorphic decoration and a centrally placed escutcheon comprising two addorsed beast heads and a central suspension loop. This escutcheon is secured in place by two copper alloy nails which penetrate perforated flanges at the extremities of the snouts. In the recent past the

⁴² According to Betham the interior was constructed of yew with an oak side (1826, 218). However when Armstrong and Crawford examined the shrine only the base was of yew; the remainder of the box was constructed from 'modern yellow pine' (1922, 109).

escutcheon was removed and replaced in the wrong position, thus obscuring a portion of the openwork decoration. The openwork plate and escutcheon are fabricated from copper-alloy. The surrounding binding-strips and the suspension chain will be described in the relevant sections.

Openwork plate

This is divided into two fields of decoration which are separated by the central escutcheon. In order to clarify the intricate zoomorphic designs the beasts have been drawn out in **Figure 21.a**. Even with these visual aids, some of the patterns still remain unresolved due to the uncertainty of the composition which contains an assortment of disembodied heads, loose ribbon strands, foliated off-shoots and disarticulated limbs. In addition, some anatomical features are ambiguous, for example a curling tendril could represent either a lip lappet or the lower half of a jaw. In certain instances, only a conjectural description can be given, and the only generalisation that can be made is that the profile ribbon-bodied zoomorphs entangle themselves with foliate and abstract elements.

Right side: This field contains a snake whose ribbon-shaped body forms a wide, uneven loop which curls back and crosses the body at the neck, terminating in a clubbed tendril in the bottom right corner. All strands have an incised median line, which due to the depth of the grooves, give the impression of a double strand. The head, which bears two short upward curling jaws and an oval eye, is placed in the upper right corner. A bifurcating lappet emerges from the back of the head. The upper strand runs along the upper edge of the frame, while the second strand runs along the neck where it forms a knot inside the loop of the body and then bifurcates into two further strands. The upper strand ends abruptly inside the loop, while the lower intersects the body and terminates in a notched tendril along the bottom edge of the frame. The central loop forming the body is intersected by interlaced knots bearing median lines which run parallel to the loop of the body and develop into an uneven cluster of knots in the bottom right corner. Two other strands, which are partially obscured by the upper binding strip, spring from the centre of the body loop at an angle to each other and terminate in notched lobed tendrils at each side of the escutcheon beast-head.

Left side: This side also contains a snake entangled amongst a complex pattern of strands and tendrils. All the strands defining the beast have an incised median groove. This snake

has a ribbon-shaped body which curves back on itself to form a pear-shaped loop; this then bifurcates beneath the zoomorph's snout and intersects the neck and body forming a heart-shaped knot. Alternatively these loops may be read as appendages which spring off and then reconnect with the body. A heart-shaped knot may also be seen as emanating from the lower edge of the frame. The head, which faces downwards, has short rounded jaws with the upper snout ending in a lobe. An incised oval line defines the eye whilst a lappet extends backwards from the head along the upper edge, terminating in a lobe. There may be a lappet emanating from the forehead but the binding-strip obscures this section. A cluster of strands intertwine with the body of the snake in the bottom left corner of the field, while on either side of the escutcheon beast-head there is a flowing composition of notched, lobed tendrils. These tendrils may have been intended to represent disembodied zoomorphic heads as the lower 'head' has a circular eye, a long, curling upper jaw with minor off-shoots and a short, curled lower jaw. A small tendril, which may be a lappet, springs from the back of the head, while two foliated tendrils shoot from the neck in opposite directions. The head is viewed with the jaws facing in towards the escutcheon. The upper 'head' is more difficult to distinguish, as the binding-strip partially obscures the layout. Similar characteristics are present: circular eye, small curling lappet and long, convoluted jaws terminating as lobes.

In general the openwork plate retains a high polish on the surface of the metal, especially in the centre above and below the escutcheon where there is a mirror-like finish. There are three fractures present in the plate of the left field. As these are directly in front of the snout of the beast-head they are most likely the result of strain imposed by the carrying chain. The median grooves present on all the strands originally held inlay, but all that remains are two strips of silver which are present in the wide curve of the snake's body on the right-hand field [Fig.21]. Niello may have been used as an inlay to provide a contrast with the silver and thus make it easier to distinguish the zoomorphs from the unassociated strands.

Dimensions: Openwork plate: 19.5 x 3.1 cm. Average Thickness: 1 mm. Full side (including binding-strips): 22 x 6.1 cm.

Central escutcheon [Pl.51.a]

This component consists of two beast heads placed back-to-back with the necks conjoined to form a suspension loop. Both heads are decorated in a similar manner, except

for the moustache of the left beast which extends as a flange into the openwork field. The eyes are defined by raised hemispherical mouldings with a central punched dot and are situated in a pear-shaped field formed by the brow, snout and the moustache tendril. The nose runs from the high forehead to the snout where it terminates in a volute representing the nostrils. The eyebrows are formed by a raised moulding and two incised lines run from the eyebrow to the nasal ridge. The snout volute develops into a notched, foliated tendril which borders the side of the cheek and terminates at the back of the jaw. A single curved tendril springs from either side of the volute on the left beast-head.

The high relief heads were cast as one unit and there are traces of niello remaining in the incised grooves along the nasal and eyebrow mouldings. A perforated flange extends from each corner of the jaws into the central undecorated area. None of these perforations retain nails, but there is a nail present in each of the flanges extending from the snouts. There is considerable wear on the central loop from contact abrasion with the carrying chain.

Dimensions: overall length: 8.23 cm. right head: 3.5 x 1.45 cm. left head: 3.6 x 2.9 cm (incl. flange). Max. height: 1.7 cm, width: 2.4 cm.

Short Side B [Pls.49.b]

This is comparable to SSA in that it comprises an openwork decorative plate divided into two fields by a central escutcheon. However, there are apparent differences from SSA, principally the two openwork zoomorphic fields are dissimilar in design and composition. The left side exhibits a loose, flowing composition of ribbon-bodied beasts, but the other side is much more tightly constricted with dense bands of intertwining strands with little space in between. The body and tail of the prominent beast is plain and lacks the grooves for inlay which allows a contrast to be set up between the zoomorphs. There are also considerable differences in the central escutcheon: the opposing beast heads differ from one another as one is broad and cast in low relief, while the other is similar to the heads on SSA except it is smaller in scale. The two heads radiate from the edges of a circular medallion rather than conjoining to form a suspension ring. Finally the openwork plate is approximately .5 mm thicker than that on SSA.

The plate is secured to the wooden core by the binding strips. A number of nails would also have retained the plate in place as there are seven nail-holes placed at intervals

around the edges, with three more possible sites piercing the decoration. There are two nails holding the escutcheon and plate in place, one through the flange at the snout of the left head, and a second through the lower of the two flanges which extend from the right beast's head.

Openwork plate [Fig.21]

Right side: This bears an unusual arrangement of two interlocked zoomorphs, one of which is a snake with a trailing bifurcated body, the other, placed upside-down below, is a profile beast with a prominent joint spiral. The jaws of both zoomorphs entwine in a dense cluster of strands in the upper right corner forming meshed facets. The anatomical features of the lower beast are easier to distinguish and consist of a large hindquarter spiral which runs into an arched back, which in turn, develops into a long neck upon which sits a head of irregular shape. A double lappet springs from the crown of the head, one strand ends in a simple lobe, the other extends into the edge of the frame. The lower jaw is a simple curled lobe, while the upper jaw entwines with the jaws of the opposing beast and terminates at the lower edge of the frame. A secondary tendril loops in and around both pairs of jaws. Two roughly incised lines define the oval eye. A sub-rectangular body extends backwards from the hindquarter spiral. An arched tendril, ending in a lobe directly below the beast head escutcheon, springs from this rectangular appendage. A median line is present on the head lappet, the upper jaw and the associated strands.

The two zoomorphs interlock deftly in an ambiguous manner. What appears to be the foreleg joint spiral of the lower beast can be read as the curled lip lappet of the upper beast/snake. This may be intended to represent both a lappet and a joint spiral. The head of this second beast is similar with an oval eye, short lobed head, and lip lappets and entwined jaws. The upper jaw extends to the top right corner, while the lower terminates in a loop adjacent to the forehead of the lower zoomorph. A long, trailing mane, or secondary head lappet, consisting of two parallel strands, curls and intersects both bodies (where it diminishes in to one strand) passing through both sets of jaws, where it finally terminates in the upper right corner of the panel. The double-stranded body of the snake extends backwards where it terminates at the escutcheon flange. The lower strand ends in a simple lobe while the upper evolves into a notched, lobed tendril. A median line is present on all strands and appendages of the body.

There is one further area containing interlace; beneath the back of the lower beast a notched tendril runs parallel with the featureless appendage placed below the escutcheon beast-head. This tendril extends in the opposite direction where it forms a dense cluster beneath the arched back of the beast, finally springing off to form a looping double strand across the bodies of both beasts. Between the cluster and the foliated tendril there is an oval form framed by a single strand which may be a disembodied zoomorphic head entwined amongst the abstract elements.

Left side: This consists of two ribbon-shaped beasts (snakes?) whose bodies form a loop in the centre with their heads placed in opposing corners of the field. This is similar in composition and space to the left side of SSA. The body of the upper snake forms a pear-shaped loop which curves back and engages with the (?)elongated upper jaw forming an angular knot. A second strand erupts from the neck and intertwines around the body before connecting with the head lappet of the second beast. The head has an incised oval eye, short curling lower jaw and a head lappet which runs parallel with the upper edge of the frame. There is a small knob-like projection on the crown of the head which extends into the edge of the frame.

The second snake, whose head is placed directly below the escutcheon, has a short, curved body which terminates in a notched tendril across from it's jaws. An irregular, meandering head lappet intertwines with the body of the second zoomorph. The head is similar in shape, but the eye is represented by a drilled circular perforation, while the upper jaw evolves into a bifurcating lobed tendril. The lower jaw (or lip lappet) is defined by a short curling strand. Alternatively the lobed tendril may represent a tongue placed between two short curling jaws.

As with SSA the undecorated areas of metal retain a high polish, notably around the central escutcheon. Under magnification it can be seen that all the grooves engraved into the metal are keyed to accept inlays. There are two fragmentary strips of niello present in the openwork plate [Fig.21]. The remainder of the inlay (?silver, as well as niello to provide a contrast) has been removed through zealous over-cleaning in the nineteenth century.

Dimensions: openwork plate: 19.8 (lower edge) - 20.3 (upper edge) x 3.5 cm. Full side (including binding-strips): 22.7 cm x 6.3 cm. Average thickness of plate: 1.5 mm.

Central escutcheon [Pl.51.b]

This consists of an openwork circular medallion to which two beast heads are attached on opposite sides. The medallion is in the form of a ringed cross with a circular suspension loop cast on to the lateral arms, and a chain is attached to the suspension loop by an annular ring. This chain has caused considerable wear on the inner surfaces of the loop. The four arms are cast in higher relief than the surrounding ring. The edges of the lateral arms are flush with the curved edges while the upper arm projects outside the ring. File marks on the lower arm indicate that this arm was truncated at some time in the recent past. A semi-circular node projects from the inner surface of the ring into each of the quadrants formed by the arms of the cross. A contour line runs around the circumference of the medallion and extends into three of the arms but wear has obliterated the lines near the centre.

As previously stated the right-hand beast head is similar in form to those present on SSA, but smaller in scale. It has the same raised moulding which forms the brows, nasal ridge and snout. These mouldings delineate a pear-shaped field on either side of the head, each of which contains a hemispherical boss representing the eye. An incised line runs along the nasal ridge and brow. A pair of volutes forms the snout, each of which develops into a notched tendril along the side of the jaw where they terminate in a curled lobe. A perforated flange extends from below each of the jaws, one of which retains a brass nail.

The left head is broader and more squat in appearance, with the snout in higher relief than the forehead. The central raised ridge bifurcates to form a V-shaped moulding behind the eyes and then extends along the side of the head where it develops into the snout. This moulding in turn delineates a pear-shaped field on either side of the head which contains a raised, bulbous eye. A second V-shaped field on the crown of the head retains an iron nail used to secure the escutcheon in place, while the tip of the snout extends into a perforated flange which retains a brass nail. Niello is present in the median lines on the Y-shaped moulding.

Dimensions: Overall length: 7.4 cm. Right head: 2 (l) x 1.9 (incl. flange). Left head: 2 x 1.45 cm. Max. height: 3.1 cm. Diameter of medallion: 3.15 cm. Width of central loop: 2.98 cm. Height of loop: 1.96 cm.

Long Sides [Pl.50; Fig.21]

The description of long side A will also apply to long side B, as this is a direct copy of the former. Unlike the short sides, the composition on these sides has a high degree of symmetry which tends to diminish the erratic but inventive style of zoomorphic decoration. It is difficult to extricate and describe the individual beasts from the complex pattern of intertwined appendages and tendrils. The design consists of two zoomorphs with ribbon-shaped bodies whose heads and feet are placed above one another at the narrow ends of the side. Their bodies form undulating loops which intersect to create three oval fields before crossing the opposing zoomorph in the centre of the panel.

The most efficient method for distinguishing each zoomorph is to follow the body from head to tail across the length of the panel [Fig.21]. An ornithopomorphic head with an oval eye and downward curving beak is placed in the top left corner. The rounded head develops into two parallel strands which curve downwards where they intersect with secondary tendrils (emanating from the neck below the head) and the tail end of the body returning in the opposite direction. The body then forms one and a half S-bends, intersecting with its own body at each junction until it reaches the centre of the panel where it crosses the body of the opposing zoomorph. At each of the crossing points there are short, rectangular breaks which resemble a dense grid pattern, hereafter described as meshed facets. These breaks result from the intersection of the four appendages in the interior of the loops which form a quatrefoil-shaped void in the centre. These appendages, possibly limbs, bend sharply and bifurcate, intersect with the ribbon strands, and then intertwine with the opposing series of appendages from the void in front (or behind). Each pair terminates in a lobed tendril and club-ended strand above and below the crossing points. The foot ends flush against the lower edge of the panel where it terminates as a small, notched lobed tendril below the head. A distinguishing feature is the semi-circular notch which may have functioned as a site for a nail. Placed directly above the foot and following the lower curve of the neck is a double-stranded, lobed tendril with an uneven notch. This independent element serves no anatomical function and may have been inserted as a space filler. If the same feature on the opposite beast (where there is a tendril without the notch) is examined, it can be seen that it sprouts from the neck, akin to a foreleg. From the above description a strange hybrid beast has emerged with a bird's head, serpentine body, ten limbs and a club-shaped foot. Where the two bodies intersect in the centre of the panel there is a plain raised lentoid set in relief which may be attributed to

either beast.

The second beast which occupies the right-hand side of the panel, exhibits the same undulating body, that is, three full loops which double back at the centre with limbs springing from the interior and terminating as tendrils. The foot also ends in a notched, lobed tendril, albeit with a larger, more circular notch producing a narrower foot. There is also a deviation in the detailing of the head as the eye, although it has the same lentoid shape, is smaller and placed at an angle. The beak is in the same down-turning position but it lacks the median line and instead of terminating in a sharp point it curls around and follows the undulations of the body. Another modification is the position of the median line on the ribbon-shaped strands. The strand with the median line develops into a plain ribbon at the central crossing point, while at the same junction the plain ribbon emerges from the intersection with a median line. This position is reversed in the opposing zoomorph, as the uppermost strand of the left beast has a median engraved line. All the minor offshoots bear median lines. All these lines are deeply scored to accept inlay and therefore small fragments of niello are retained in two of the minor strands of the right beast. Perhaps the left beast originally held silver inlay, thus making it easy to distinguish one from the other. On the left beast a small fracture occurs at the junction of the beak and the upper notched tendril.

Dimensions: Long Side A: Overall length (incl. binding strips): 25.2 cm (top) - 25.6 cm (bottom). Overall width (including 'foot'): 6 cm. Openwork plate: 22.4 - 22.9 cm x 3 - 3.3 cm.

Long Side B: Overall length (incl. binding strips): 25.8 (top) - 25 cm (bottom). Overall width (including 'foot'): 5.7 (left end) - 6.3 cm (right end). Openwork plate: 23.1 - 22.1 x 3.8 - 4.0 cm

Base [Pl.48]

This consists of a pierced copper alloy plate which is held in place by tubular binding strips along the edges. Circular perforations along the edges and in the centre indicate that originally the plate was secured to the wooden core by nails. The copper alloy sheet is pierced so as to produce cross-shaped apertures (one hundred and three in total) in the central field. The remaining metal can be read as a positive step pattern. Other negative geometric elements include twenty-six T shapes along the edges, three L shapes along SSA (right edge) and two squares along LSA (bottom edge).

The plate was manufactured in a crude manner and appears to be in an unfinished state. There is distortion visible in the bottom right quadrant which probably resulted from improper alignment of the original sections when the present back was cast. The two corners on LSA have a right-angled L-shaped aperture present, resulting in an asymmetrical configuration. There are also crude, unfinished geometric designs engraved along SSB (the left edge) of the plate. These consist of three to four squares (one partially obscured shape may be a square or T shape) and one L shape, which are situated between the T-shaped voids. The interior of these unfinished motifs bear engraved parallel lines which may have been used to highlight what shapes were intended to be cut out.

Dimensions: overall (including binding strips): 26.6 (l) x 22.7 cm (w). Exposed area of plate: 23.3 (l) x 20.5 cm (w). Average dimen. of cruciform apertures: 1.3 x 1.5 - 1.6 cm. Average dimen. of T apertures: 1.9 (l) x 1 cm (w). Average thickness of plate: 1 mm.

FRONT [Pls. 47, 52; Fig.13]

This comprises a series of die-stamped silver panels which are attached onto a silver backing sheet by solder and nails. There are eight cabochon rock crystals in filigree settings arranged in a cruciform manner, which divide the front into quadrants. Two lateral strips of silver decorated with filigree extend from the central setting. Also present is a crucifix which is placed between the central setting and the upper binding strip. An inscribed silver strip is soldered to the upper and lower edges while the lateral and corner binding strips are covered in engraved silver sheets.

Each of these elements will now be described in detail, commencing with the die-stamped panels.

Die-stamped panels

The number of panels, including fragmentary additions and repairs, total seventeen; twelve of these bear die-stamped figures and a further three the inscription which is present on the upper and lower strips. Rather than describe each panel individually, the description provided will be a compilation based upon all the four panels displaying the same figure(s), as all panels are obscured to some degree by the applied settings. To aid this process each panel is identified by a prefix and number, for example, V1 to V4 represent the four panels depicting the Virgin and child [Fig.13]. The panels can be grouped into three types based on the figures represented: (i) single upright hooded figure, (ii) seated Virgin and child and

(iii) a group of three ecclesiastics or saints. Each of these panels is repeated four times with one set in each quadrant. Many of the panels have sustained damage and wear over the years, especially on the delicate raised surfaces.

There are two different types of background used: plain and cross-hatched. The plain is used on the lateral strips depicting the hooded figure, while the Virgin and ecclesiastics panels bear a grid-pattern. These in turn may be further subdivided: the background on the ecclesiastics panel is constructed on a dense, diagonal grid while the pattern on the Virgin panels are more open and irregular. In addition the background to the inscribed plates comprises short, engraved lines forming a basketry pattern which highlights the lettering.

(i) Hooded Figure: Of these four panels only HF1 depicts the lower half of the body, while panels HF3 and 4 show the entire head. It is probable that a full length figure was originally shown, but the overlapping settings and plates preclude a full inspection. The figure extends his right hand in an awkward manner (in a gesture of blessing?) with the left arm held across the waist. He appears to be wearing a long, sleeveless tunic with a rounded neck-line. The deep, concave folds extend outwards from the centre of the vestment and result in nested V-folds between the legs. Above the neckline there are three bosses, which may represent a decorative hem or neck ornament. The circular face has rounded, staring eyes, upturned mouth, and a long rectangular nose which extends from the arched eyebrows. Four vertical, curved lines represent a short goatee beard, and the circular moulding surrounding the head may be either a hood or halo. Above panels HF3 and 4 there is a moulding consisting of two parallel lines, while the edges of panels 1, 2 and 3 display a row of pellets.

Dimensions: HF1: 3.5 (l) x 2.1 (w) cm. HF2: 3.1 x 2.3 cm. HF3: 3.5 x 2.4 cm. HF4: 2.8 x 2.3 cm.

(ii) Virgin and Child: These four panels are placed above and below the central square setting. All retain gilding: V2 has a substantial amount with less on the other three panels due to wear. V2 is the only panel which is fully visible, as V1 is partially obscured by the crucifix, while the lower portions of V3 and 4 are obscured by the lower setting. The descriptions will be based upon panel V2.

The Virgin has very stylised, nearly abstract features. She is depicted in a frontal pose, seated, with the large Christ child draped across her lap. Her large head is triangular with a sharply pointed chin, slit mouth, lentoid eyes and a single ridge defining the nose and eyebrows. She wears a tripartite crown with triangular projections; its contours are delineated by six ridges interspersed with five bosses (best seen on V4). A short neck is set asymmetrically upon her torso; the shoulders and right hand are defined by a single line which terminates in three spindly fingers extended in a gesture of blessing. Two circular depressions with a central boss represent the breasts, while parallel vertical lines indicate drapery folds. Below the child her body forms deep vertical ridges, two of which are tapered and appear to represent the legs from the knees down.

The Christ child has a long rectangular profile body with his legs crossed at the ankles. The two triangular ridges may be intended to represent a loin-cloth. An enigmatic lentoid-shaped object is situated in the middle of his torso. As with the Virgin, a single raised line forms the shoulders and left (?) arm, which hangs limp and terminates in four fingers. The face is sub-rectangular with features similar to the Virgin, that is short mouth, lentoid eyes and a raised ridge for the nose and eyebrows. Two diagonal projections emerge from the corners of the head, which may be ears, but are more likely to be the outer elements of a crown, the central portion of which is a Greek cross terminating in three bosses. The child's head sits upon a crescentic-shaped neck. The bodies in panels V1 and V2 are marred by an unfinished drill perforation (probably modern).

Dimensions: V1: 4.8 (l) x 3.5 (w) cm. V2: 4.65 x 3.1 cm. V3: 5 x 3.1 cm. V4: 4.7 x 2.8 cm.

(iii) Ecclesiastics: These four panels depict three ecclesiastics placed under a series of arcaded niches which follow the contours of the heads. There are no other architectural features present. At the extreme left is an enigmatic standing figure who holds a cross-staff in her/his right hand (seen in E4). The figure is likely to be female as no facial hair is depicted. She is standing upon a quadruped of unknown species (possibly a dog, lion or dragon) which has an arched back, muscular hind-legs and a curling tail. The head and forelimbs, which are obscured in all four panels, may have been pierced by the cross-staff. An interesting feature of the drapery is the manner in which they change direction from narrow, parallel, vertical folds to wider, angled pleats, as if to emphasise the raising of

the garment to accommodate the beast below, or to indicate a kneeling position. The head of the figure is pear-shaped with a pointed chin, the facial features include a short mouth, lentoid eyes and a long, straight nose running from the eyebrows. She appears to be wearing an amice with outward curling edges. The shoulders and arms follow the same format of a single raised line as seen on the other figures. Her emaciated right arm bends inwards at the elbow, and her large right hand seems to support a rectangular object decorated with a grid pattern, possibly a book, satchel reliquary or rational. Directly above this there is a medallion decorated with a cross, perhaps a brooch, clasp or an iconographical attribute. Below her folded hands the drapery is arranged in radiating folds which are divided from the lower section by three raised lines. Between the cross-staff and the edge of the garment there is a running chevron; and a similar pattern borders the right side of the garment.

The central, upright figure is in more conventional ecclesiastical garb, and from his tonsure and crosier he would appear to represent an abbot or saint. He wears a chasuble with a cruciform orphrey, the lower half of which forms deep, nested V-folds, and an amice with a flared collar. Below the chasuble is an alb with parallel radiating pleats. He holds in his right hand a long crosier with a crocketed, volute crook and two biconical knops placed along the shaft. The oval face has the characteristic prominent ridge defining the nose and eyebrows, bulbous lentoid eyes and a short, straight mouth. A tonsure is depicted and the closely cropped hair and beard are defined by short, incised lines while two semi-circular ears project from the side of the head. Both arms and the shoulders are displayed in an emaciated fashion, the right hand is unnaturally short, the left is raised in a gesture of blessing.

The third figure is a seated bishop who holds a short cross-staff in his right hand, with his left hand raised in blessing. He wears a triangular mitre, V-shaped amice, and a chasuble with a cruciform orphrey. Deep U-shaped drapery folds gather above the knees, while the parallel pleats on either side would appear to represent an alb. Even though the knees and lower leg are shown there are no feet present. The triangular head, which is at a slight angle, has the same eyes, nose and mouth as the other figures. Short, thick, vertical lines define the hair and beard, while two triangular ears protrude from the side of the head at different levels. The arms and shoulders are defined by a single raised line. On either side of the mitre there are two disembodied human heads, each occupying an

arcaded niche. The larger, left-hand head bears the same facial features as the other figures. The smaller head is more triangular in shape and both heads have closely cropped hair with a curved fringe.

Dimensions: E1: 6.5 (w) x 7.5 (h) cm. E2: 5.6 x 7.1 cm. E3: 6.4 x 7.8 cm. E4: 6.1 x 7.9 cm.

Settings

These all comprise a central cabochon rock crystal secured in a collet and surrounded by panels of gilt-silver filigree.

No. 1: This small crystal is retained in an elaborate collet, the frame of which consists of twisted wire. An undulating twined plaited wire divides the collet into fourteen separate registers, each of which contains a granule surrounded by a coil of twisted wire (henceforth known as coiled granules). This collet is centrally placed within a circular tray which has a raised flange decorated with openwork wavy ribbon wire, forming interlocked pear-shaped loops. The flat surface of the tray is divided into twenty fields by undulating twin-plaited wire. Each of the fields originally contained three coiled granules, some of which are now missing. The tray is bordered on both sides by twined plaited wire. There are three (originally four?) granulated triangles soldered onto the edge of the openwork flange [PI.52.a]. In addition there are four miniature collets, each containing a hemispherical, blue glass stud. These collets have eight knobbed projections placed around the perimeter. The full assembly is secured to the front by three modern nails, a copper alloy on the left and two others of silver.

Dimensions: crystal: 2 x 1.3 cm. Blue glass studs (average diam.): 1.1 cm. Collet: 2.6 (w) x 2.95 (l) cm. Setting: 4.7 (l) x 4.3 (w) x .4 (h) cm.

No. 2: This consists of an oval cabochon crystal secured by a damaged, openwork collet which is decorated with a two-strand, contoured interlace pattern [PI.52.b]. The upper edge of the collet has a border of twisted wire, while the base is surrounded by a length of thick, ribbed wire. This assembly is soldered to the oval tray which is divided into thirty-two triangular fields by diagonal and curved lengths of twisted wire. Inside each field is a single coiled granule. The outer flange of the tray is decorated with an engraved step pattern. There are four circular collets and three (originally four) triangular granular mounts soldered onto the edge of the tray. The base of each collet is surrounded by a coil of twisted wire and a hemispherical, blue glass stud is retained by the crimped edges. The

tray is pierced by three modern nails, two of copper and one of silver.

Dimensions: Crystal: 3.55 (l) x 2.6 (w) cm. Collet: 4.3 (l) x 3.1 (w) x 1.85 (h) cm.
Tray: 5.7 (l) x 4.7 (w) x .35 (h) cm.

No.3: In this setting the tray and collet form an integrated unit. The crystal and tray are oval in shape, and the right edge of the latter is obscured by the binding strip. The outer flange is turned upwards and bears no decoration, while the upper edge of the collet has eight indents forming an undulating border. Eight plain strips of wire radiate from the centre to form eight separate fields, these are bordered internally by strips of twined, plaited wire, three of which are straight, the other is curved and placed parallel to the outer edge. The curved fields contain three to four coiled granules, while there are two clusters of triple granules in the spaces between the indents and the curved length of wire. The mount is pierced by two silver nails and has four perforations.

Dimensions: Crystal: 2.84 (l) x 1.9 (w) cm. Tray: 4.9 (l) x 3.69 (w) x 1.3 (h) cm.

No.4: This is the largest and most elaborate of all the settings and it is enhanced by two rectangular plaques, decorated with filigree, which extend from the sides. The large oval rock crystal is set within a collet which, in turn, is attached to a rectangular plate. The rim of the collet has a border of twined plaited wire. There are two oval registers of coiled granules separated by a plain wire, which is flanked by twined-plaited wire. In each of the four corners of the plaque there is a hemispherical green glass bead retained in a plain collet, which is surrounded by a length of plaited wire, coiled granules and a plain wire flanked by twined-plaited wire. In the spaces formed between the central and corner collets there are four filigree motifs consisting of three coiled granules placed within an annulet of twisted wire. There are also four pairs of coiled granules divided between the upper and lower edges.

A circular medallion is formed where the central mount abuts the lateral plaques, with approximately three-quarters of each medallion situated on the latter. Whereas the medallion on the left appears complete, the right one does not form a full circle, a portion is missing from the lateral strip. These medallions are similar to those placed in the corners of the plaque, that is a hemispherical green glass stud in a plain collet, surrounded by a coil of double-plaited wire with a row of coiled granules in the central field, nine in the right, eleven in the left. The circumference consists of a plain wire flanked internally by

plaited wire. In addition, the left medallion has two straight lengths of twisted wire forming an internal division.

The left rectangular plaque has upturned edges with an internal plain wire dividing the mount into two equal registers. These are sub-divided by a horizontal length of twisted wire while the edges and both sides of the central wire are bordered by double-plaited wire. In three of the fields there are six coiled granules, with seven in the lowermost field. The right plaque is similar in the internal disposition of plain and twisted wires dividing the mount into two registers. A length of double-plaited wire is soldered onto the plaque to form a chevron design which creates five fields in each register. There are between four and five coiled granules placed in each of the fields.

Dimensions: crystal: 4.4 (l) x 3 (w) x 1.8 (h) cm. Central plaque: 7.3 (w) x 6.8 - 6.95 (l) cm. Left plaque: 4.4 (l) x 1.9 (w) cm. Right Plaque: 4 (l) x 2 (W) cm.

No. 5: This setting has an intricate collet consisting of an undulating edge on to which is soldered fourteen annulets of double-plaited wire [Pl.51.b]. Each of these encloses three coiled granules, with an external coiled granule placed between adjacent rings. The collet is bordered by a plain wire flanked by double-plaited wire on either side. The outermost register contains forty-five coiled granules (some of which are now missing) bordered by double-plaited wire. The raised flange at the edge of the tray is undecorated. Two modern nails and two perforations pierce the outer tray.

Dimensions: crystal: 3.35 (l) x 2.6 (w) x 1.55 (h) cm. Tray: 5.0 x 3.9 cm.

Nos. 6, 8: These will be considered together as they are virtually identical. Both hold circular crystals in a plain collet, no.6 has a stepped edge while no.8 is serrated. Thick ribbed wire surrounds the edge of both the collet and tray. Inside each tray there are a series of fifteen coiled granules: in no.6 they are bordered by a single coil of twisted wire and a double coil in no.8. There are four subsidiary plain collets soldered onto the edge of the setting, each retains a hemispherical blue glass bead and the base is bordered by a coil of twisted wire. Both settings are pierced by a single modern nail.

Dimensions: No.6. Setting: 3.4 (l) x 3.1 (w) cm. Crystal: 1.8 (l) x 1.6 (w) cm. No.8. Setting: 3.25 x 3.1 cm. Crystal: 1.85 x 1.6 cm. Average diameter of small collets: .7 cm.

No. 7: This is an oval crystal and setting mounted longitudinally. The inner tray slopes

up to function as an integrated collet and this field contains three registers, each with a series of coiled granules, separated by strips of double-plaited wire. Plaited wire runs around the inner edge of the collet and the outer edge of the tray. The outer flange is similar to S1, consisting of wavy ribbon wire forming an openwork pattern of interlocked, pear-shaped loops. Soldered onto the upper edge of the flange are a series of miniature coiled granules, while three large granulated triangles (originally four) are attached to the openwork border. Three large nails and one perforation pierce the tray.

Dimensions: Crystal: 3.4 (l) x 1.25 (w) cm. Settings: 5.32 (l) x 4.3 (w) cm.

Crucifix Figure

This consists of a figure of Christ, fabricated from copper alloy and covered in sheet silver, which exhibits extensive wear. The underlying copper alloy is revealed at the feet, left hand and the crown of the head. The figure is in an upright position with outstretched arms, head inclined to the right and legs flexed at the knees. A loincloth, with deep nested folds, drapes around the thighs. The hands are disproportionately large: the right has four fingers, but the left, having lost the silver covering, is finely modelled and thus appears more naturalistic. The torso is narrow with crude incised lines defining the ribs while a concave depression represents the sunken abdomen. Wear has obliterated most of the facial features leaving lentoid eyes, rectangular nose and a short mouth with nicked lines defining the hair and/or a crown of thorns. Three nails secure the figure, one through the uncrossed feet and one each through the palm of the hands. The nail piercing the left hand has a head with a notched edge and a central saltire, and attaches the figure directly to the upper binding strip. Originally the figure was attached to the inscribed strip. On close examination it can be seen that the lettering of the inscription diminishes in height in order to accommodate the angle of the outstretched arms showing the original placement of the figure.

Dimensions: Length: 7.4 cm. Width (across arms): 6.8 cm. Width (across knees): 1.2 cm.

Binding Strips

These are numbered BS1 to 8 on **Figure 13**. It is probable that the original binding strips still remain intact beneath the late medieval additions on the front.

The positioning of the straight binding strips are the same on the base and front of the shrine, that is, two long and two short lengths of C-shaped tubes. These are attached

to the corners by hollow tripartite mouldings. These eight mouldings, positioned at the top and bottom of each corner, consist of a vertical tube to which two binding strips are cast on at right angles. The straight binding strips engage with these mouldings either by overlapping or abutting. From examination it is evident that there are perforated V-shaped tongues extending from the ends of the straight strips, which in turn, engage with the raised mouldings at the ends of the tripartite corner mounts. Nails are driven through both components to secure them to the wooden core.

A detailed description of all binding strips will be now provided, commencing with those on the base.

Base [Pl.48]

The tripartite corner mouldings are fabricated from copper alloy, which were gilt in the nineteenth century, and have a projecting, circular 'foot' on the lower surface of each corner. Unlike the front the binding strips on the base have not been identified by a number or prefix. For identification purposes they will be described in relation to the binding strips on the front of the shrine, the 'upper strip' is that strip directly below the upper strip on the front (BS1) where the crucifix is placed.

Tripartite corner mouldings

Upper right: This comprises a gilt-copper alloy binding strip of C-shaped cross-section which extends 3.5 cm along LSB, 2.5 cm along SSA and 5 cm on the vertical arm. There is an additional sleeve on the vertical arm, 1.5 cm in length, which is pierced by a brass nail and has a perforation for a second nail. A collar with an incised line terminates the arm and abuts the binding strip on the long side. Two brass nails pierce the long side arm: one through the collar, one through the short arm, and a further one through the vertical arm. The 'foot', which has suffered considerable wear, is pierced by a nail and has a circular perforation. The diameter of the mouldings are 1.3 cm and the thickness is 3 mm.

Lower right: The arms extend 2.2 cm along LSA and 1.9 cm along both SSA and the vertical element. This is the shortest of all the base corner mouldings. Each arm is pierced by a copper alloy nail, with a perforation in the arms extending along the long and short sides. All ends overlap the binding strips.

Lower left: This extends 4.5 cm along each of the sides (LSA, SSB) and 1.4 cm along the vertical arm. There are two raised mouldings, decorated with incised lines, at the ends of the lateral arms. Two copper alloy nails pierce the lateral arms and there are three nail perforations on the vertical arm.

Upper left: These arms extend 4.5 cm along SSB and 4.6 cm along LSB where they terminate in a raised moulding with incised lines. The vertical arm is 4.9 cm in length. There are three copper alloy nails and two perforations on the vertical arm as well as a crack which has been repaired with solder in the recent past. The arm on the short side has two nails; the long side one nail and two perforations.

The straight binding strips on the base are all fabricated from copper alloy which was gilt at a later stage. All are undecorated and have V-shaped flanges extending from either end.

Dimensions: Upper strip (LSB): 15.5 x 1.3 cm. It has six perforations some of which are obscured. Lower strip (LSA): 16.8 x 1.2 cm (three perforations). Right strip (SSA): 15.8 x 1.3 cm (two perforations, one with a stress fracture on the edge). Left strip (SSB): 11.8 x 1.2 cm (one perforation). Average thickness: 3 mm.

Front [Pl.47; Fig.13]

Unlike the base, all the binding strips and corner mounts on the front are covered in silver, six bear decorative motifs engraved onto the silver sheet while the plain binding strips on the long sides (BS 1,5) are silvered, that is, molten silver has been applied to the surfaces to leave a thin layer.

BS 1: This consists of a plain silvered copper alloy binding strip.

Dimensions: 17.2 x 1.3 cm.

BS 2: This is a tripartite corner piece partially obscured by setting no. 2. This strip is covered by sheet silver which is plain on the upper surface and decorated with a worn step pattern along the sides. There is a raised moulding at either end and the decoration is bordered by two parallel horizontal lines. A number of nails pierce this corner: two silver and two brass (secondary) as well as two circular nail perforations.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm along each side; width 1.1 cm, height 1.5 cm, width of decorated

strip: 6 mm.

BS 3: The design on this side consists of ten pairs of interlocking loops highlighted by the cross-hatched background. Each forms a figure-of-eight, with the loops consisting of contoured, uneven wide strands, the interior of which are decorated with small nicks [Pl.49.a]. The pattern is framed by a plain area on either side and a raised moulding at each end. Two brass nails perforate the binding strip.

Dimensions: 13.6 (l) x 1.25 (w) x 1.3 (h) cm.

BS 4: This corner mount has decoration on both sides consisting of a pattern of four strand, wide band contoured interlace [Pl.49]. The design is framed by a plain area on either side, which extends mid-way down the edges, and is set against a cross-hatched background. There is a single nail-hole on the short side and it is pierced by four brass and one silver nail. A raised moulding terminates each end.

Dimensions: 4.2 cm along each side, width 1.3 cm, height 1.3 cm (approx), width of pattern 1.6 cm.

BS 5: This consists of a plain silvered-copper alloy strip of C-shaped cross-section.

Dimensions: 17.2 x 1.5 (w) x 1 (h) cm.

BS 6: This consists of a corner piece with crudely applied foil, torn at the corner. It is very similar in design to BS2, that is, a plain on upper surface with a worn step pattern along the sides framed between two incised lines [Pl.49]. There is a raised moulding at either end. It is pierced by two brass and three copper alloy nails.

Dimensions: 3.9 cm along each side, width 1.3 cm, width across corner 1.7 cm.

BS 7: The design engraved on to the silver foil is more complex and is based on a foliate pattern with looping branches springing from a stem which runs down the centre of the strip giving rise to two zones of decoration [Pl.49.b]. Each branch loops back around a lower member before it curls back and terminates in a frond (short side) or comma-shaped nodule. On the upper surface a full palmette is formed with a basal stem and two leaf nodes on either side. Each node has a single punched dot. This pattern is repeated by each succeeding branch where they form a total of twelve fields, six on each side of central stem. The background between the branches is cross-hatched and there is a raised moulding

at both ends. The strip is pierced by one copper alloy and one modern nail.

Dimensions: 14.1 (l) x 1.3 (w) x 1.3 (h) cm.

BS 8: This corner-piece is partially obscured by setting No. 1. The decoration, which is confined to the upper surface, consists of two sets of opposed step patterns forming an angular grid. Each set is framed between parallel lines and there is a raised moulding at each end. The foil has three perforations and is pierced by five brass nails.

Dimensions: The strip extends 5 cm along the short side, and 4.3 cm along the long side. Width 1.5 - 1.6 cm (approx).

Chain [Pls. 47, 51]

This is manufactured from copper alloy and extends from a terminal with a swivel action which is attached to each of the beast-head escutcheons on the short sides. Each link consists of a single length of wire formed into a double oval (dumb-bell) shape which is folded over to make a single oval loop. This loop-in-loop chain is 85 cm long.

Directly attached to the escutcheon on SSA is a penannular copper alloy ring, approximately 1.8 cm in diameter, which shows little wear. A ring of similar form and diameter of 2 cm is attached to SSB. These rings are in turn linked to the two-part swivel mechanisms. They differ slightly on each side so separate descriptions are provided. Both attachments are of copper-alloy.

Short Side A: The upper section comprises a circular ring with two knobbed projections resembling zoomorphic heads and a raised moulding directly below. A projecting shank passes through a sub-conical collar and connects with the chain. The lower section is cylindrical in shape and has a raised moulding around the centre and at the mouth where the chain emerges. There is decoration in the form of vertical nicks around the central moulding and an inlaid strip of silver runs around the circumference near the top. A flush rivet passes through the lower section and retains the chain contained in place. The wear is confined to the cylindrical section with little wear presents on the ring.

Dimensions: length: upper section 1.9 cm; lower 1.2; overall 3.2 cm, width of ring 1.15 cm; thickness of ring .3 cm.

Short Side B: This component is very similar to that on SSA, except that the collar has

a more pronounced flare. The central moulding on the cylindrical section is effaced through wear but the inlaid silver strip is present. The chain is secured in the same manner, that is, with a rivet through the lower section.

Overall Dimensions of Front: 26 x 23.2 cm.

APPENDIX TWO: OVERALL DIMENSIONS OF THE BOOK SHRINES

LOUGH KINALE: 34.5 (L) X 28 (W) X 11 (T) cm.

SOISCEÁL MOLAISSÉ: 14.67 x 11.66 x 8.76 cm.

Internal dimensions: 13.46 x 11.1 x 7.38 cm.

SHRINE OF THE STOWE MISSAL: 19 x 15.4 x 4.6 cm.

Separate base plate: 18.6 x 15.8 x 1.2 cm.

Internal dimensions: 16.5 x 13.05 x 3.2 cm.

THE SHRINE OF THE CATHACH: 25 x 19 x 5.25 cm.

Internal dimensions: 22.1 x 16.5 x 2.65 cm.

THE MISACH: 26.6 x 23.2 x 6.3 cm.

THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK OF DIMMA: 18.9 x 16.5 x 4.99 cm.

THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK OF MOLING: 19 x 15.3 x 7.6 cm.

ST CAILLIN'S SHRINE: 28.3 x 23.6 x 5.14 cm.

APPENDIX THREE: LIST OF MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES PRESENT ON THE BOOK SHRINES

LOUGH KINALE

Materials: Tinned copper alloy is used for the backing sheets on the front and sides, in addition to the binding strips, corner pillars and cast frames on the front. Sheet copper alloy on reverse. Gilt-copper alloy on the openwork medallions on the side panels, and lateral strips and openwork zoomorphic panels on the front. Domed amber studs inset into the medallions on the sides and front. The studs inset into the five bosses on the front are inlaid with lead-alloy grilles. All the amber studs are retained in place by beeswax. Wood remains on the front, sides and reverse of the shrine.

Techniques: These are limited and include cast copper alloy components fabricated using the lost-wax method: beast heads, suspension loops and strap hinges. Two-piece clay moulds appear to have been used for the cross frame, medallions and the L-shaped frames on the front, as well as some of the binding strips. More complex casting using two-piece moulds include the openwork medallions on the front and sides, the plaques with zoomorphic decoration in the arms of the cross, and the openwork strips framing the front. Post casting work on these panels included engraving, filing, polishing and gilding. A number of the binding strips are fabricated from hammered sheets of copper alloy. Solder was used to attach the caps onto the corner pillars. Nails were used to retain the binding strips, corner pillars, openwork frames on the front and the medallions along the sides. The frame of the cross and the bosses on the front were held in place by pins which passed through holes in lugs which perforated the thickness of the wood.

SOISCEÁL MOLAISSÉ

Materials: The backing plates are fabricated from sheet copper alloy and are overlaid by openwork silver frames. These openwork frames retain cast gilt-silver panels on the front and SSB. In addition the front has gold filigree and stamped silver panels. There is a cast and engraved copper alloy escutcheon on SSB which is decorated with blue glass studs and red enamel. Gold is used for the filigree panels and for gilding the evangelist and inset panels in the arms of the cross on the front. The intact setting on the front retains a red glass stud.

Techniques: The copper alloy backing sheets are hammered while the copper alloy escutcheon on SSB was cast in a two-piece mould. The red enamel in the lower component of the strap escutcheon was applied using the *champlevé* technique. The gilt-silver panels depicting the evangelist symbols on the front and the ecclesiastic on SSB were also cast in a two-piece mould. Post casting work on these panels included engraving, filing, polishing and gilding. These panels are retained in place by rivets which pierce extended flanges which run beneath the sheet. Sheet gold was impressed over cast silver panels with knotwork decoration on the front. Gold sheet and wire was also used for the filigree panels and carpeting for the settings on the front. The motifs on the gilt-copper alloy backing sheet on the reverse were engraved. A rocked graver was used to execute the motifs on the corners of the base of the shrine. The binding strips were fabricated from sheet silver and the zoomorphic and abstract panels on the openwork silver frames on the sides were engraved and polished.

SHRINE OF THE STOWE MISSAL

Primary phase

Materials: Copper, copper alloy, plain and stamped sheet silver, silver wire, gold sheet and gilding, solder, red and blue glass, animal skin, wood.

Techniques: All the copper alloy backing sheets are hammered and polished. The decorative panels on the sides are copper alloy and were cast in single and two-piece moulds. Post casting work on these panels included filing, polishing, engraving and gilding. These were further embellished by inlaying glass studs into the eyes of all figures and the cast glass panels on the short sides were inlaid with silver wire. A red stone setting is inlaid into the angel on SSA. The copper alloy foliate and geometric openwork panels on the sides are covered in sheet silver which was attached by soldering. The openwork panels along the sides were backed with gold foil, animal skin, wax and die-stamped silver sheets. Copper alloy nails, with silver or gilt-copper alloy caps, were used to secure the panels to the wooden core. The base of the shrine has decorative openwork panels of copper alloy to which silver sheet is attached by soldering. Extensive areas of sheet silver were attached by solder to cover the sides and cross arms of the base. Engraved and stamped copper alloy panels are inset into the corners and terminals of the cross arms.

Late-medieval phase

The gilt-silver figurative panels on the front are decorated with a rocked graver and inlaid with niello. The inscription on the silver frame is also inlaid with niello. There are decorative silver collets used to retain the rock crystal and other glass studs. Gold wires are used for decorative effects on the front and include twined, twisted, beaded and serrated ribbon wire laid on edge. Granulation is present on the border of the lower rock crystal setting. Hemispherical gilt-silver caps are used to conceal the nail heads. The gilt-silver decorative frame was cast in the form of Gothic tracery and blue, green and red/purple basse-taille enamel are set into the lunette-shaped fields of the central setting.

THE SHRINE OF THE CATHACH

Primary phase

Materials: Copper alloy, gilt-copper alloy, sheet gold and gilding, niello, silver wire, twined copper and silver wire, sheet and cast silver.

Techniques: The short sides are technically complex and are of gilt-copper alloy, cast in false relief. Into the wide bands are inset strips of niello inlaid with wavy silver wire. The long sides have finely cast copper alloy panels with animal, foliate and abstract designs. These panels are overlaid with sheet gold on LSA while the panels on LSB are fabricated from gold sheet which are decorated with incised lines. Silvered hemispherical caps are used to conceal the nail heads. The openwork base plate is of copper alloy covered with sheet silver. Radiography revealed that the sheet silver was folded into seams behind the openwork plate.

Late medieval phase

Materials: gilt-silver sheet, gold and silver filigree, cast silver frames, niello, settings of rock crystal, pearls, coloured glass and possible sapphires and emeralds.

Techniques: Die-stamped gilt-silver sheets displaying heraldic beasts and foliate motifs; repoussé gilt-silver sheet with ecclesiastical figures; engraved figures and beasts on all gilt-silver sheets on the front; gold and silver filigree used to decorate the collets and corners, consisting of granulation, coiled granules and ribbed, twisted and plaited wire. The cast silver frames used to retain inset panels are engraved and inlaid with niello. Inset panels of die-stamped gilt-copper alloy along the sides. Cast silver binding strips and collets.

Locking devices on the corners consisting of vertical cylinders to accommodate retaining pins.

MISACH

Primary phase

The materials used are hammered and cast copper alloy, along with inlays of silver and niello. The limited techniques include openwork casting on the short sides; false relief casting on the long side. Other cast copper alloy components include the binding strips, corner pillars and feet. The beast-head escutcheons were cast using either a two-piece mould or the lost wax process. Post casting work on the sides and components include filing, polishing and engraving. Silver and niello were inlaid into the openwork decorative sheet on the short sides.

Late medieval phase

This is confined to the front of the shrine. The principal feature is the widespread use of die-stamped silver sheets displaying religious figures. There are engraved silver sheets overlaying the binding strips and inscribed sheets on the upper and lower edges of the front. All the settings and the central band are decorated with silver filigree in the form of granulation, and twisted, ribbed and beaded wires. The collets are inset with rock crystals and miniature glass studs. The only cast component is the copper alloy crucifix which is covered in sheet silver.

THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK OF DIMMA

Primary phase

The materials used are hammered copper alloy for the backing plates of the shrine, in addition to sheet and cast silver. The backing plates are fabricated from hammered copper alloy sheets. The reverse of the shrine consists of four cast openwork silver plates decorated with intertwined animals. Post casting work on the sides and components include filing, polishing, engraving and in selected areas a rocked graver is used. On the long side there is a thin silver sheet with zoomorphic interlace executed with a rocked graver.

Late medieval phase

On the reverse there are cast gilt-silver figures, engraved decoration and cast silver

openwork plates, silver collets with blue glass studs. The other three sides have die-stamped silver sheets, decorated with heraldic beasts, soldered and nailed on to the backing plates.

THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK OF MOLING

All the backing plates are of sheet copper alloy. The front, which is tinned, is dominated by a large rock crystal which overlays an engraved gilt-copper alloy sheet engraved with an inscription. The central setting is surrounded by gold filigree wire. The other settings are of gold filigree, copper alloy and sheet silver and they retain glass studs.

ST CAILLIN'S SHRINE

Materials: Gilt copper alloy sheet, plain copper alloy backing sheets, cast copper alloy figures and heads, sheet silver, niello inlay, glass studs.

Techniques: The front is fabricated from die-stamped gilt copper alloy sheets interspersed with one large and numerous smaller settings. Ribbed gold wire surrounds the large setting while the others are made from sheet silver. There are four plaques decorated with die-stamped figures of ecclesiastics. These are surrounded by engraved silver frames with figurative ornament inlaid with niello. The front is framed by an inscribed silver sheet inlaid with niello. A cast copper alloy crucifix is fixed to the upper binding strip and cast human heads are situated on each of the corners on the back and front. These are framed by engraved silver collars. The ecclesiastical panels and corner clamps are held in place by long pins. The base has a cast openwork copper alloy sheet which has been silvered.

APPENDIX THREE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Anthropomorphic

In the form of a human or using part of the human anatomy such as the head.

Apotropaic

An image, symbol or action intended to avert evil influence or ill luck.

Band

A descriptive term for the form of a strand.

Beehive

A form of filigree in which flat beaded wire is formed into a coil which diminishes in radius as it increases in height.

Cabochon

An oval convex gem: smooth and not cut into facets.

Carpet page

Manuscript page consisting purely of decoration (sometimes incorporating a cross into its design), reminiscent of an eastern carpet.

Chevron

A pattern of zig-zag lines.

Corner clamp / pillar

A form of binding strip which is placed vertically at the corners of a box in order to conjoin and retain horizontal binding strips.

Coiled granule

A form of filigree in which a single granule is bordered by a length of decorative wire, both of which are soldered onto a metal backplate.

Colophon

An inscription recording information relating to the circumstances of the production of a manuscript.

Contour lines

Furnished with a line close to and following the outline of a figure, motif or strand.

Crook

The handle or the upper curved element of a crosier.

Die-stamped

A method whereby repetition in a design can be achieved by stamping a piece of metal with a die on which the motif has been engraved or cast.

Drop

Terminal section of a crosier crook, often a hollow box-like extension.

Duplex

A pair of rings placed crosswise. Often set diagonally within a square field.

Enamel

A vitreous (glassy) material applied in powdered form to a metal background and then fused. Various metallic oxides are used to produce different colours.

Enamel, champlevé

A technique of enamelling by which enamel is used to fill recesses which are either cut or cast in the metal background.

Enamel, cloisonné

Describing enamel set in small metal cells individually mounted on a separate backplate.

Enamel, basse-taille

A translucent enamel applied to a metal background in which designs have been executed in low relief.

False-relief

Carving or casting in such a way that the pattern is of equal height to, or lower than, the surrounding surface of the piece.

Ferrule

The reinforced tip of a staff or crosier, usually a metal fitting.

Filigree

The use of fine gold and silver wire, often beaded or twisted, for decorative effect. The wire is usually soldered onto a metal backing plate.

Foliate

Leaf-like

Gilding

The application of a thin layer of gold to the surface of an object.

Granule

A minuscule spherical bead of gold or silver which is used to highlight or infill decorative features within filigree.

Herringbone

Lines set obliquely at equal angles on opposite sides of a line.

Iconography

The study of the meaning of visual images, including their symbolic content.

Insular

Belonging stylistically to the early medieval common cultural area of Britain and Ireland.

Interlace

A feature term used to describe strands crossing each other alternatively, that is, under and over.

Kerbschnitt (chip-carving)

Cutting away the background to a pattern with oblique cuts to leave facets, originally a wood-working technique imitated in metalwork to give added brilliance.

Kite-brooch

Brooch with a pendant head of varying shape, joined by a hinge mechanism to the pin-head.

Knop

Decorative metal fitting on the shaft of a crosier, used to conceal the junction of the metal casing.

Knot

Strands forming bends and loops, with other strands passing over or under them.

Lappet

Elongated secondary crest or appendage extending from the main figure.

Lentoid

Pointed oval shape formed by intersecting arcs.

Lobed tendril

Tendril with a lobe usually at the heel area and formed by a notch in one contour.

Millefiori

A term used to describe decorative glass inlays produced by cutting transverse slices from thin bundles of multi-coloured glass rods.

Missal

A service book containing the texts necessary for the performance of the Mass, together with ceremonial directions.

Niello

A mixture of metallic sulphides, fused at low temperature, usually dark blue/black in colour, which is inlaid into grooves on a silver or copper alloy surface for decorative effect.

Offshoot

A secondary strand branching from the main figure.

Ogee

Usually an architectural moulding consisting of a continuous double curve, with the upper part convex and the lower part concave. architectural decorative element

Orant

A posture for prayer in which the hands are not folded but raised to the level of the shoulders or head.

Penannular brooch

A brooch of circular form with a gap in the ring, through which the pin may pass for fastening.

Quadrilobe knot

Figure of four superimposed lobe shapes.

Rational

The breastplate worn by an Israelite high priest. A similar ornament was worn by a bishop during the consecration of the mass in the medieval period.

Repoussé

Technique of decorating sheet metal by impressing it from the back.

Ring-knot

Closed circuit knot with interlace incorporating a free-ring.

Shrine

Reliquary or container made to encase or house a relic in order to preserve it and to enshrine it for devotional purposes.

Stitching

A method of holding filigree or other panels of ornament by way of small burrs of metal, which are cut from the walls of a recess. These burrs overlap the edge of the panel thus retaining it in place.

Tendril

Elongated offshoot with a clubbed or curled terminal.

Trewhiddle

A ninth-century Anglo-Saxon style of decorated metalwork, named after a hoard from Cornwall dated c.875.

Triquetra

Closed single knot or triple loop formed of three intersecting arcs.

Zoo-anthropomorphic

A figure which comprises both animal and human elements.

Zoomorphic

In the form of an animal or part of an animal.

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- ALC: The Annals of Loch Cé, Hennessy, W.M. (ed. and trans) 1871, 2 vols, London (repr. Dublin 1939)
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- AU¹: Annala Uladh, Annals of Ulster, Mac Carthy, B. (ed. and trans) 1893-1901, Vols II-IV. Dublin.
- BAR: British Archaeological Reports
- CS: Chronicum Scotorum. A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the earliest Times to A.D. 1135, Hennessy, W.M. (ed. and trans) 1866, London.
- DIL: Dictionary of the Irish Language Royal Irish Academy 1983 (compact edn.) Dublin.
- JIA: Journal of Irish Archaeology
- JGAHS: Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society
- JKHAS: Journal of the Kerry Historical and Archaeological Society
- JRSAI: Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.
- MGH: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: scriptores* Hannover and Leipzig 1826-1934.

- MIA: Miscellaneous Irish Annals, A.D. 1114-1437, Ó'hInnse, S. (ed and trans.) Dublin.
- NMAJ: North Munster Antiquarian Journal
- PG: *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Graeca*. Migne, J.P. (ed.) 1857-1912, Paris.
- PL: *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina*. Migne, J.P. (ed.) 1844-1891.
- PSAS: Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.
- PRIA: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.
- PRDS: Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society
- TRIA: Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.
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