



## Monkwearmouth, County Durham

Ἰρμεῦδα

Church of St. Peter

Grid ref .... NZ 402 577

Church fabric

Carved stones

### Date

West wall of nave and porch, raised in successive periods to become West tower – periods A2 to C3.

*Taylor*

Tower and nave West wall, Eastern quoins.

*Fisher*

- Carving on tower string course, second stage.
- Two lions in case in North arcade – possibly bench-ends
- Sepulchral slab with inscription in case in North arcade.

*Taylor*

### Notes

Founded as a monastery in AD674 by Benedict Biscop on land given by the Northumbrian King Ecgfrið whose father Oswy lead the Synod of Whitby in AD644. Biscop was one of Oswy's young retainers, and at the age of twenty-five decided to be a monk. After travelling to Rome on several occasions and taking orders he returned to Northumbria, where Ecgfrið gave him land on the North bank of the Wear. He also founded JARROW monastery and it was dedicated in 685. He founded a library which was destroyed by Vikings in C9. He died in AD689. By C8 there were 600 monks at both monasteries.

Very little remains, except West wall of Biscop's church 30' x 18' 6". He brought masons from Gaul and also glaziers and some Gallic influence appears in the head of one window. The tower was a porch in the earlier church, with a steep roof and a chamber above the porch. The barrel vaulting in the porch is later Anglo-Saxon as are the remaining three sections of the tower.

In this earlier stage was built a doorway with some carving – not very clearly to be seen. Porch has some barrel vaulting which is later work, as before stated. (This last is not clearly stated in the information available).

Some early Saxon carved stones, including some with continental workmanship. In the porch in 1866 was found a C8 tombstone.

Excavations continue on monastery.

*Beryl Moore, late 1960s or early '70s*

### Carved stones

- Stones, probably cross-shaft fragments in interior nave West wall.
- Carving on doorway jambs.

### Notes

Carved slab, 4' tall, standing at E end of S aisle. Probably a Viking grave slab, it has two circles at top left with beast, maybe lion, and right has interlace. Below is head with foliage decoration issuing from mouth. One large trifoliate leaf each side of head and below a complex, inhabited vine scroll pattern with gripping beasts (maybe Ringerike style).

Main three scrolls contain maybe a dog at the top, with possibly a dragon and an elk. The quality of the whole is very fine.

To S, next to slab, in low alcove, are some other carved stones, two with interlace panels.