

Sculptured Stone found on Site of Chapel “ by the Cloister ” in Burial Ground of Wells Cathedral Church.

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THE fragment of a sculptured stone, recently found at Wells, is certainly pre-Norman in style. The discoveries of sculptured stones at Ramsbury, and other places in Wessex, suggest that it once formed part of the shaft of a cross. Dragonesque ornamentation of the surface is a leading feature in the Saxon sculpture of Wessex, and the Wells fragment is probably an additional example of the prevailing characteristic of the local school of art. The curved portion of the ornament is apparently the thinner part of the body of a scaled dragon. The dragon has, as is usually the case, been drawn in the form of a figure of eight, or with some more complicated convolutions; and the body has been intersected by interlacing bands, all of which shew complete regularity of alternate “under and over” design. The curve of one of the edges of fracture suggests that there has been another dragon on the shaft, or that the body was doubled back, so that one fold nearly touched another. From the appearance of the surface, it seems probable that the stone was broken up no long time after it was sculptured, and that the cross, of which it formed part, was inside a church and not exposed to weather. This latter remark applies equally to the finest of the Ramsbury stones. Some general remarks on the dragonesque character of the Wessex ornamentation will be found in my paper on the West Camel Stone.*

* See *Somerset Archæological Proceedings*, vol. xxxvi, Part II, p. 70.