

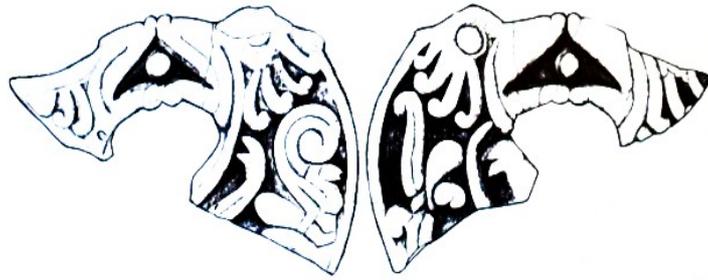
Somerford Keynes

Late Saxon Sculpture

This fragment is a rare piece of late Saxon sculpture from the Cotswolds, dating from the reign of King Cnut (1016-1035) in the first half of the 11th century AD.

It is probably part of a standing headstone to a grave and has close parallel in a gravestone of a similar date found in the church in Bibury and now preserved in the British Museum. The style is so close that they might be the work of the same carver.

The design is Scandinavian in style of the Ringerike type. Two beasts face each other, their mouths touching and holding a round ball between them. One is now only a snout but the other retains mouth, eyes and a strong curving neck. The detail is very clear and the carving has survived damage from weathering.



In 1995 the break was repaired and the sculpture conserved and mounted by stone conservator Michael Eastham, with funding from the Pilgrim Trust, the Council for the Care of Churches and, St. Andrews Conservation Trust. The Corinium Museum in Cirencester provided specialist advice. The illustration is by Richard Bryant.

Source: Somerford Keynes All Saints