

*The Dover stone.* Dover Corporation Museum. Fig. 31.

This Kentish stone, found at Dover early last century, is, unlike the Sandwich stone, unmistakably Christian. It is also of much later date. A proper sepulchral slab, it measures 6 ft. 2 in. in length, 2 ft. 3 in. in width at the place where the runes occur; and the average thickness is about 7 in. The runes are preceded by a cross and read ✠𐌶𐌰𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸 *jislhêard*, probably the personal name of the deceased, Gislheard.

The first rune, *j*, is probably best explained as a formal variant of the types †, †, †, found elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon usage, although it will be recalled that the form ✠ is not unknown in common Germanic usage (e.g. the Noleby stone, Fig. 28). It occurs with the same phonetic value [j] in the name *jilsuiþ* on the third Thornhill cross fragment (see below) and in the name *adugisl* on the yew weaving-slay of Westeremden (Friesland; Fig. 23) which belongs to the eighth or early ninth century. The second rune, here transcribed *i*, must denote a vowel, presumably the high front vowel between *e* and *i* generally denoted by this rune already in common Germanic usage; it occurs with the same value on the Brunswick whalebone casket, a Northumbrian piece of the early eighth century. The shape of the *s*-rune lies half-way between the common Anglo-Saxon *h* and the simplified *l* of Thames, Chessel Down, and St Cuthbert's shrine at Durham; its closest parallel is on the Bewcastle cross-shaft, although this is of much earlier date. Apart from the distinctly archaic *s*-rune on the Scanomodu coin, all these forms of the *s*-rune were probably current simultaneously and I do not believe that any chronological significance should be attached to them.

As there are no early features either in the runes or in the name itself, and as this is obviously a Christian monument, the date of the inscription is probably no earlier than the ninth century; it may even belong to the early part of the tenth.