

The **Hartlepool stones**. St Hilda's Church, **Hartlepool**, and Black Gate Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne. Fig. 30.

Several small sepulchral slabs were found in 1833 on the site of an early Northumbrian monastic cemetery at **Hartlepool**, Co. Durham. As some of these were discovered under the skulls in the graves they are sometimes known as 'pillow-stones' or, more generally, as 'name-stones'. Similar stones have been found at Lindisfarne, another ancient Northumbrian monastic site. The cross design marks the stones as Christian although the use of pillow-stones dates back to Anglo-Saxon heathendom. Some of the stones bear inscriptions in insular lettering; of two stones with runic inscriptions one, stone no. 2, is illustrated in Fig. 30.

The latter stone measures $8\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $2\frac{7}{8}$ in. The runes are $\mathfrak{N}|\mathfrak{I}|\mathfrak{D}|\mathfrak{D}|\mathfrak{I}|\mathfrak{X}|\mathfrak{A}|\mathfrak{P}$ *hilddig yþ*, a female personal name, more properly *hildig yþ*; the *d*-rune appears duplicated in error, while the *g*-rune is added above the word between *i* and *y*.

The other runic stone, no. 1, measures very nearly $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. square by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. and bears the symbols for 'Alpha' and 'Omega' followed beneath by the runes $\mathfrak{N}|\mathfrak{I}|\mathfrak{P}|\mathfrak{A}|\mathfrak{I}|\mathfrak{R}|\mathfrak{A}|\mathfrak{P}$ *hildiþryþ*, again a female personal name.

The names are presumably those of nuns buried in the respective graves. The monastery was originally founded about A.D. 640; by 686 it had become a nunnery. As it was sacked by the Danes around 800 the stones most probably belong to the eighth century. This dating also conforms with the retention of final *-i* in *hildi-*, later Old English *-e* as in Hildeburh, the name of Finn's queen (*Beowulf*, 1071, 1114).

Of the two forms of the *d*-rune, \mathfrak{D} and \mathfrak{D} , the first is the more common in Anglo-Saxon usage; the second is the more archaic and occurs in several early inscriptions, such as the Scanomodu and Pada coins. Characteristic of normal Anglo-Saxon usage are the shapes of the *h* and *y* runes.