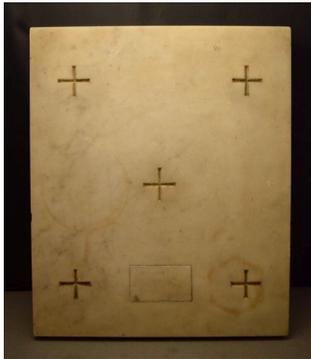


Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary

The Altar Stone



The altar stone (left) is a small stone with carved crosses and a central cavity for one or more relics. It is inserted in all altars, whether wood or stone and is, liturgically, the real altar. Altar stones *alataria portatilia*, were valuable when a priest traveled to an area where there was no altar and only a plain table was available. Some years ago St. John's Episcopal Church in Norristown acquired a portable freestanding altar. The rector immediately had an altar stone made which was inserted and later anointed by the bishop.

“With very few exceptions, the Altar-stones were removed in the reign of King Edward 6th and either broken, by which their consecration is at once destroyed, or used unbroken as pavement.” A. Welby Pugin, 1868



The Eastern Orthodox counterpart of the altar stone is the Antimens/Antemension, (lower left) a cloth made of silk or linen with a small relic of a martyr sewn into it that is placed on the altar table. The Eucharist cannot be celebrated without it.