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CROYLAND ABBEY WEST FRONT SCULPTURE



Report for Anderson and Glenn, March 2014

Jennifer Alexander BA, PhD, FSA

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Introduction

The sculpture of the west facade of Croyland Abbey consists of a series of figure sculptures of saints and secular figures, together with a carved tympanum on the west portal related to the titular saint of the abbey, St Guthlac, (Plate 1). Many of the figures carry attributes which serve to identify them as saints, but others can only be identified more generically, either by the presence of crowns, or by their dress. Their inclusion on the facade is due to their evident involvement in the history of the abbey, but it is not possible to be certain of their names in the absence of either inscriptions or attributes. In some cases it is possible to make suggestions, based on evidence drawn from the abbey's monastic history, and identifications have been proposed in previous accounts, but without any supporting evidence these remain speculative. It is evident that the facade was built in several phases and that not all the sculpture is of one period, or in its original position.

Documentary evidence for the abbey is substantial, albeit subject to scholarly dispute with regard to the reliability of its sources. The account in the *Victoria County History* provides the best summary.¹ There are descriptions by Richard Gough and William Stukeley, who both made detailed studies of the building during the 18th century, together with a considerable body of topographical evidence with drawings by the Bucks, Watkins, *et al*, and by Cotman and de Wint, dating from the 18th and early 19th centuries.² Gough drew extensively on Stukeley's account for his own description and many later writers have also done the same.

Most of the drawings show the same oblique view of the west front and caution is needed in using them to date the state of the structure as there is evidence of some

¹ W. Page, *Victoria County History, Lincolnshire*, vol. 2 (London 1906), pp. 105-118.

² Richard Gough, *The History and Antiquities of Croyland-Abbey in the County of Lincolnshire, Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica No. XI*, (London 1783). William Stukeley's notes are in a collection of four notebooks in the British Library Add. MSS 51048-51, his drawings of the upper sections of the west front are dated 1734. Extracts of Stukeley's notes and redrawn copies of his drawings were published in 1856, by John M. Gresley, *Some Account of Croyland Abbey, Lincolnshire*, (Ashby de la Zouche 1856) from which Plates 26 a-d are taken.

drawings being derived from existing ones and many look very similar. An exception to this is the frontispiece to an addition to Gough in a supplement to *Biblioteca Topographica Britannica No. XXII* and titled *A Second Appendix to the History of Croyland*, published in 1795 anonymously, which is a more archaeological study of the west front. The engraving by James Basire is of drawing by J[ohn] Carter, dated 1781, and is therefore the drawing that Gough mentions that he commissioned but did not include in his 1783 publication.³ Photographs from the mid 19th century and 20th century provide further evidence for the state of the west facade.

Scholarly interest in the west front sculpture has been limited to studies of the tympanum, and to an adjacent, badly damaged, standing figure, and the remaining 19 figures have attracted little comment since the 18th century.⁴

Architectural History

The abbey church's west front is of three main phases, from the late 12th century, the third quarter of the 13th century, and the second half of the 15th century. The monastic records show that building work on the church was undertaken during the middle and second half of the 12th century, with the west end of the building completed in the last quarter of the century. The arcading on the south-west section of the facade, with its mixture of scalloped and waterleaf capitals, and the doorway partially encased by the porch chamber on the north west, are from this phase and show the transition from Romanesque to Gothic architectural styles.

A major rebuilding of the centre of the facade was undertaken in the 13th century, when the whole section was taken down and rebuilt. The wider Romanesque buttresses were kept and remain behind the later ones, with their angle shafts and capitals still visible. The early Gothic builders had made the buttresses taller, to

³ Gough 1783, p. 88.

⁴ The most recent study of the portal is George Henderson, 'The Imagery of St Guthlac of Crowland', in W.M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century, proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium*, (Woodbridge 1985), pp. 76-94.

support the new centre section, and these buttresses are capped off level with the head of the blind tracery (both are visible in Plate 24, left).

The 13th-century work dates from the period of abbot Ralph de Mersh (1254-81), completed by his successor Richard Crowland (1281-1303). The blind tracery of the sections flanking the west window, and its lower jambs relate closely to the Angel Choir at Lincoln which was in building between 1256-80 and introduced bar-tracery to the region (Plate 2). The proportions of the 13th-century west window would, however, have been closer to the north-west window of Grantham, which is Lincoln-derived, than to the Angel Choir east window itself, suggesting six lights rather than eight. Grantham's window is dated on stylistic evidence to the last decades of the 13th century (Plate 3).⁵

The centre of the facade was again modified and enlarged in the 15th century, when the window head was removed and replaced by a taller version surrounded by tiers of image niches with figure sculpture, and it seems probable that a triangular gable completed the elevation. Further figure sculpture, on the same type of polygonal socles as those of the top tier, was added to the older part of the facade at the same time. New, much more substantial, buttresses were built to support the centre of the facade, that on the south incorporated into the west range of the claustral buildings. The massive west tower over the parish aisle was built at the same time, and there is evidence on its south face that it was intended to be taller since the stumps of mullions for a further window facing south can be seen at a level above the roof of the late-Gothic church (Plate 50). The 15th-century raising of the west window is dated between 1427-70 (period of abbot John Litlington) and involved extending the jambs of the 13th-century window upwards and providing a new set of Perpendicular tracery, which resembled the adjacent tower west window, and replaced the earlier geometric forms.

⁵ Philip Dixon, 'The Church of St Wulfram 1: The Development of the Church', in D. Start and D. Stocker (eds), *The Making of Grantham: The Medieval Town*, (Sleaford 2011), pp. 51-70.

A smooth transition between the existing jambs and their new section was effected by cutting new blocks for the edges of the blind arches which had originally supported the window arch. They now share their mouldings with the upper jambs and the mason designed the mouldings to reproduce the profile of the earlier arches. Donations towards the window's glazing in 1463 confirm its date towards the end of Litlington's abbacy.⁶ The rear arch, towards the nave, was also raised and the space between the two arches panelled.

The abbey was dissolved in 1539 and the site passed into secular hands with the exception of the north aisle which remained as the parish church. It became the site of a Civil War earthwork, which a Stukeley drawing shows enclosing most of the church site, and there are accounts of damage to the timber ceilings of the church later in the 17th century. The buildings gradually decayed during the next two centuries until a major restoration campaign began in the 1860s under Scott, and continued in several phases until the end of the century, with some evidence of repairs to the upper level of the west front at an unrecorded date before that.

A photograph published in 1864 shows the west front just before Scott's restoration and is a valuable record of its earlier state (Plate 4).⁷ At this time the upper right hand side of the facade above the window had been rebuilt in brick with some attempt to recreate the niches there although figures were not placed in these spaces and the damaged figure now to the right of the window apex was missing. The repair was in place in the early 19th century as Holdich refers to work on the upper part of the facade being of brick in 1816.⁸ The right hand side of the window head was in a poor state in 1864 with much of the arch moulding missing, there is a marked failure visible in the bonding of the remaining arch stones and considerable distortion of the whole upper area. Some of the cusping had fallen from the blind tracery, particularly on the north side, as well as several of the shafts between the

⁶ Henry T. Riley (trans.), *Ingulf's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland, with the continuations by Peter of Blois and anonymous writers*, (London 1854), p. 433.

⁷ W. Howitt, *Ruined Abbeys and Castles of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London 1864).

⁸ Benjamin Holdich, *The History of Crowland Abbey*, (Stamford 1816), p. 109.

figures at this level. Part of the restoration included removing the brick niches and replacing them with the current arrangement in which stone has been inserted to create a single open space instead of the three niches there originally, and the fragment of a second seated figure has been inserted to the right of the apex of the window arch.

It is not evident how much restoration of the figures was undertaken in the 19th century, with the exception of Fig. 2A that was given a new head, but the headless figure to the north of the portal, plus its socle, had been removed from the facade before the photograph was taken. Some objects held by the figures are visible in the photo and have since been lost. A series of photos in the Conway Library collection, undated but from between 1900-40 show the sculpture in situ and I have further photos that I took in 1977 that help determine what has been lost (Appendix plates 1-7.).

Architectural Context

Facades with large-scale figure sculptures are a feature of English Gothic architecture from the period of the Wells west front in the early 13th century onwards. Within Lincolnshire, the gatehouse of Thornton Abbey, from after 1382, has two-storied image niches with the figures raised up on polygonal socles, and the west tower of Grantham has buttress figures in niches from c.1300-10, but these are more isolated images.⁹

Closer in date to Croyland, there are a number of buildings with sculpture used on the facade, for example Beverley Minster. The prominent buttresses there have layers of figures in niches with further rows linking across above the aisle west windows and arranged in tiers around the portal to create a sculptural zone at the base of the facade. The figures are mostly 19th-century replacements but were

⁹ John Maddison, 'The Church of St Wulfram 2: The Tower and Spire', in Start and Stocker 2011, pp. 71-94.

intended by the original builders. The facade up to the top of the west window is dated by the glass to 1388-96 and the whole was probably finished by 1425.¹⁰

Bath Abbey's early 16th-century west facade is dominated by a massive window framed by buttresses with the famous images of Jacob's ladder with its ascending and descending angels on both sides. It also has large scale figures of apostles under canopies, and further images of angels on the gable above, beneath a large figure of Christ. Three further niches with figures surround the west porch.¹¹

The format of the Croyland facade, in which the niches form a continuous arcade is closer to the arrangement seen on smaller-scale architecture, such as porches or screens. Exeter Cathedral's 14th-century screen at the base of the west front resembles a reredos with its broad ranks of niches framing figures but the relative scale of the niches and the arched openings mark a departure from Croyland's design. Westminster's west porch from the middle of the 14th century is closer to Croyland in its framing of a late-Gothic arch with two rows of figures in niches although it is at ground level and the arch is of the entrance portal rather than a window (Plate 5). The figures at Westminster are replacements from the recent past but they are standing on polygonal socles under canopies that are visible in the earliest drawings of the porch from the 17th-century.¹² Canterbury's SW porch from the early 15th century is of a similar design although here the medieval figures included the knights who murdered Becket and the portal acted as a prelude to the shrines inside the building.¹³ The cathedral's pulpitum screen from the middle of the 15th century is also made up of large-scale figure sculpture framing an arch and has a row of six kings set within niches. These are identified as Richard II, Henry V,

¹⁰ Rosemary Horrox, 'The Later Medieval Minster', in R. Horrox (ed.), *Beverley Minster, an Illustrated History*, [Beverley 2000], pp. 37-49.

¹¹ N. Pevsner, *Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol*, (Harmondsworth 1986), pp. 100-102.

¹² Tim Tatton-Brown, 'Westminster Abbey: Archaeological Recording at the West End of the Church', *Antiquaries Journal* 75 (1995), pp. 171-88.

¹³ Tim Tatton-Brown, 'The rebuilding of the nave and western transepts 1377-1504', in K. Blockley et al. *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture, The Archaeology of Canterbury new series vol 1*, (Canterbury 1997), pp. 128-46.

Ethelbert (the Anglo-Saxon founder), St Edward the Confessor, Henry IV and Henry VI. The smaller niches above the row of demi-angels holding shields at the top were filled with images of Christ and the apostles.¹⁴

Lincoln Cathedral included a prominent display of patriotism in the reworking of the west front in the second half of the 14th century, in which images of the eleven kings from William the Conqueror up the reigning monarch, Edward III, are presented as seated figures under a canopied arcade (Plate 6). The theme of Lancastrian rule is evident in the choir screen at York Minster from the period of c.1440-60 with the 15 kings from William the Conqueror to Henry VI represented.¹⁵ Despite being a work of the same period, Croyland's scheme does not follow such a political line and although it does include royal figures, these are of the kings related in some way to the abbey and they are presented with the saints whose shrines were there, and in the company of further benefactors.

¹⁴ F. Woodman, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, (London 1981), pp. 188-97.

¹⁵ Sarah Brown, *'Our Magnificent Fabrick', York Minster, an Architectural History c.1250-1500*, (London 2003), p. 233.

Analysis and Interpretation of the west front Sculpture

The numbering system used on the drawings A-217-02 and A-217-03 is followed here, with the facade divided into the ground level and four tiers. Sculpture is identified by alphabet from A to I, and by tier.

Ground Level

There are three figure sculptures at ground level, plus the portal tympanum.

Portal

The portal (Plate 7) is from the 13th-century phase and is Lincoln-derived, based mostly on the north portal of the Angel Choir (Plate 8), but with the cusping on its paired arches taken from the larger Judgement Portal (Plate 9). Its moulded arch springs from a continuous band of stiff-leaf foliage capitals, supported by endelit shafts of Purbeck marble, some of which have been lost, alternating with slender coursed beaded mouldings. This is another feature taken from the Judgement Portal, where the jambs display the same alternation of mouldings and endelit shafts under capitals with strongly accentuated stalks to the stiff-leaf foliage (visible on the right side of Plate 16). The use of hoodmoulds with crocketed soffits for the arches is derived from the Lincoln north portal. The abaci at Croyland are Purbeck and connect with a string course that originally extended across the portal area of the facade but has since been dressed back. Croyland's portal is also similar to the west portal of Newstead Priory, Nottinghamshire which is another Lincoln-dependent design, from c.1280 (Plate 10).¹⁶

The Lincoln north portal and its two derivatives include a lobed motif in their tympana, and Croyland is the only one to have an iconographic scheme while the others were intended for a single figure sculpture. Croyland and Newstead additionally display the foliage tendril motif that is used on the interior of the Angel Choir where it flanks the aisle windows, but it is not used for the portals there.

¹⁶ Jennifer S. Alexander, 'The West Front of Newstead Priory Church', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.* 100 (1996), pp. 55-60.

The three portals share ideas and it is possible that the same master mason may have worked on all of them although there are differences between them. These concern the relationship between the portals and the windows above, and how they are framed. At Croyland and Lincoln the portal is of a similar width to the window whereas Newstead's is narrower (Plates 1, 8 and 11). Both the Newstead and the Croyland portals occupy a separate lower zone on the facade which is divided from the window above by a string course, whereas the Lincoln north portal breaks into the space of its window and its zone is delineated by a stepped string course.

The Croyland mason has taken a pair of trefoil-headed arches from the Lincoln east wall dado arcade and used taller versions to frame his portal and has not connected them to the portal's moulding, similarly the Lincoln mason separated the steeply pointed flanking arches from his portal. This is unlike the arrangement at Newstead where the mouldings for the blind tracery panels that frame the portal are integrated with it. At Croyland the Purbeck marble string course provides a horizontal element, linking across from the portal abaci to the shaft rings of the flanking arches and this has no parallel at the other two sites.

There is much greater coherence between the portal and its flanking elements at Lincoln and Newstead than at Croyland, but this may be due to later rearrangement of the minor elements at Croyland. The current mixture of different-sized canopies, partial foiled motifs, and flanking pieces of sculpture, is muddled, and is unlikely to represent the original layout of this area.

The portals at Lincoln were constructed in an early part of the 1256-80 phase and Croyland's is of similar date, with Newstead a little later. The use of stiff-leaf carving, rather than the naturalistic plant-forms present in the later stages of Lincoln, such as the cloister window capitals from *c.*1290, place the Croyland work no later than *c.*1275.

Tympanum

The imagery of the tympanum (Plate 12) has been analysed by George Henderson and shown to draw on the legendary life of St Guthlac, but his interpretation of some scenes can be challenged (Plate 13 a-e).¹⁷ The first two scenes are straightforward; the central image is of the saint driving off two demons with a scourge, given to him, according to the legends, by St Bartholomew and kept as a relic at Croyland (Plate 13a). The upper scene shows demons, this time with wings, carrying off the saint but being repulsed by St Bartholomew (Plate 13b). Although the right hand scene was interpreted in the 18th century by William Stukeley as the saint on his death-bed, Henderson argues for it representing an episode from the life of St Guthlac in which he effected a miraculous cure of Egga, a nobleman (Plate 13c). The scene is depicted on the early 13th-century *Guthlac Roll* (BL Harley Y6), after one showing Guthlac warding off demons with his scourge, and both stress, according to Henderson, the power of the saint during his life, rather than make reference to his posthumous miracles. The image on the *Roll* differs in certain essential respects from the tympanum, in particular it shows the saint holding up his belt that he used to cure Egga's madness by fixing it around him, and since this detail is not included in the carving it raises doubts about the interpretation.

Henderson draws particular attention to the figure's hat, which he describes as being 'similar in outline' in both cases, but he does not seem to have been aware that the example on the portal has been damaged and the upper section of the figure's head and part of the hat are missing. It would be much more usual for this to be the death-bed scene of the saint, and the head of the figure, with its trimmed beard and prominent row of curls on the forehead, is almost identical to that of the saint in the top lobe. The draperies are also very similar. The structure on which the figure is lying resembles an altar or a shrine rather than a bed and this supports the view that Guthlac is represented here. Other examples of saints placed on shrine-like sarcophagi, compressing scenes of burial and translation, are commonly found in the 13th century, most notably in the illustrations of the life of St Edward the Confessor by Matthew Paris. The badly damaged smaller image above the figure's

¹⁷ Henderson 1985.

head most probably represents Guthlac's soul leaving his body, as depicted in an image of Guthlac's death in the *Roll*, with an angel in attendance. In a second *Roll* image, in which Guthlac is near death, he is attended by a monk named as Beccelinus and this is most probably the second figure on the tympanum scene.

The lower lobe is less controversial and shows the arrival of Guthlac and his companions by boat, with the figure at the prow reaching out to grab the branch of a tree on dry ground, while a farrowing sow is shown in the foreground (Plate 13d). The detail of the farrowing sow is not mentioned in any of the literary accounts of Guthlac and Henderson follows Stukeley's connection of it with an episode in the *Aeneid* in which the presence of a sow indicates a favourable site, suggesting a sophisticated background to the designer of the portal's iconography. While this might have been the case it is also true that a number of other saints' legends include this reference, for example, St Brannoc in the West Country, and the foundation story of Glastonbury Abbey also includes a farrowing sow. It may well have been a familiar convention by this date.

The left-hand lobe shows a standing and a seated figure between two structures, one having a gabled canopy above a solid base (Plate 13e). Henderson interprets the scene as Guthlac appearing in a vision to Athelbald, later king of Mercia with the seated figure that of Athelbald next to an altar with covered vessels, and the standing saint next to his shrine, from which he has emerged. In this reading the amorphous lump under the canopy represents the saint starting to emerge, before he is revealed as a standing figure next to the shrine. It would be simpler, however, to read the lump as the billowing cloak of the saint.

The layout of the tympanum requires that the scenes are read in a particular order, and would have followed the layout of contemporary stained glass in which the viewer starts at the base of the window and moves upwards. Thus the first scene is that of the lower lobe, Guthlac and his followers arriving at Croyland, with the next two vertical scenes those of Guthlac fighting off demons, with the help of Bartholomew's scourge and with Bartholomew's intervention. The scene to the right

is the death of the saint and that to the left the vision of Athelbald that led to the foundation of the abbey. Some of these scenes are related to the images on the *Guthlac Roll*, and share the emphasis on Guthlac's struggle with demonic forces, but consisting of five scenes rather than the estimated 20 of the *Roll*, concentrate on the essential elements of the story.

Figure Gr. 1. Ht: 1.53m.

Ecclesia

A standing headless and armless female figure in a full-length robe with a shorter belted kirtle over it that has a small fringe (Plate 14). The drapery folds cover the figure's feet. Both arms have been broken off at elbow level, but were clearly angled at that point. There is considerable damage to the front of the figure with much detail lost. The drapery survives better at the back and is arranged in a series of heavy folds. Early 20th-century photos, when the figure was in a less damaged state, show the entire belt with its looped knot clearly defined, for example it is visible in photos taken between 1900-40 in the Conway (A 86/3170), and most of it was still visible in 1977 (Plate 15).

The figure is comparable to the similar statue on the Judgement Portal at Lincoln from c.1260 that was identified by Lethaby in 1907 as the personification of Synagoga (Plate 16).¹⁸ Synagoga represents the Old Laws, and is usually depicted dropping the tablets of the Ten Commandments from her hand, while Ecclesia, representing the New Laws, brought about by Christ's sacrifice, holds the chalice containing Christ's blood. Ecclesia is shown triumphant whereas Synagoga's posture is slumped, and she has her eyes bound. Both hold a staff with a flag, but Synagoga's is broken. The iconography is seen in early examples on Carolingian ivories, with the two figures present at the Crucifixion; Ecclesia takes her place on Christ's right hand, in the act of collecting the blood from his side, while the bowed figure of Synagoga turns away from the scene. Later medieval examples place the figures in the same

¹⁸ W.R. Lethaby, 'Notes on sculpture in Lincoln Minster: the Judgement Portal and the Angel Choir', *Archaeologia* 60 (1907), pp. 379-90.

position, so that Ecclesia is to the viewer's left and Synagoga to the right, for example, at Bamberg Cathedral (Plate 17).

Croyland's figure is described by most writers on Gothic sculpture, from Prior and Gardner to Williamson, and its connection to the Lincoln workshop acknowledged, but the iconography has not been reassessed.¹⁹ No traces remain of the broken staff, Tablets of the Law, or slumped pose associated with the figure at either Lincoln or Croyland, and both figures are sited on the left of the portal instead of on the more correct right side. I have proposed that both figures should be identified as Ecclesia, with a chalice balanced on the palm of the left hand and gripped by the fingers, the elbow bent at a shallow angle.²⁰ The Lincoln figure's arm and hand survive and demonstrate that the hand is meant to support a chalice, as in the continental examples, and not inverted as Lethaby saw it, pushing the Tablets of the Law away. Traces of the Croyland figure's left hand can be seen in a comparable pose on the Conway photo (A86/3170). The carving of the Lincoln figure is of higher quality with greater detailing on the kirtle's fringe and on the belt, even allowing for the poor condition of Croyland's figure, and the drapery folds at Lincoln are more varied in the depth of their cutting. The heavy folds at the rear of the Croyland figure are not present at Lincoln.

The socle has scenes from the Expulsion, on the left is the Tree of Knowledge with the serpent wound around it and apples still on the branches, and faint traces of figures to right and left (Plate 18). The scene is completed by the pointing hand of God emerging from an arch to the right. The centre panel has an angel with arm raised, but broken off, in front of a gabled canopy supported on shafts representing the closed portal of Paradise. Its other hand is stretched out towards the right. The

¹⁹ E.S. Prior and A. Gardner, *An Account of Medieval Figure-Sculpture in England*, (Cambridge 1912), Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture, 1140 -1300*, (New Haven 1995).

²⁰ Jennifer S. Alexander, "'Sadly mangled by the insulting claws of time", 13th-century work at Croyland Abbey church', in John McNeill (ed.), *King's Lynn and the Fens, Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology*, *British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions xxxi*, (Leeds 2008), pp. 112-133.

final panel is framed by a tree on the right while two feet and a section of clothed leg remain from the expelled figures that are otherwise only represented by faint traces on the surface. A bust of a male head with a headband is carved on the corbel beneath the socle and is supported by a plain block that interrupts the Purbeck string course. The iconography of the Fall and Expulsion is the anti-type to the image of salvation, represented by Ecclesia.

The socle and the figure supported by it project further than the trefoil-headed arch under which they are placed as the arcade has a flat rear wall and was not intended to be a site for figure sculpture (Plate 7). A gabled and trefoil-headed canopy of the correct scale for the figure has been inserted next to it above the portal spandrel where it serves no purpose, and there is a second matching one on the other side. The canopies were framed by shafts supported on corbels creating an enclosed space of about 500mm in height which is insufficient for figures of the size of Gr. 1. Worn remains of a console for a small figure can be seen on the south example. These, and the pieced quatrefoils next to them appear to have been placed on the facade without any reference to the portal, or to the tall flanking trefoil headed arches.

Figure Gr. 2. Ht: 0.78m

Socle (Plate 19) with the figure of a smiling seated angel on a throne with one hand resting on its knee and once holding a sceptre, or something similar, from which the supports remain attached to its cloak. The other arm was bent at the elbow and the hand raised although this has not survived. The socle on the east side of the Lincoln Judgement Portal has a demi-angel emerging from clouds with a similar, but equally damaged, pose and has additionally lost its face.

The edge of the narrow throne that the Croyland angel is perched on is visible on the left and a canopy extends upwards behind the figure before projecting out level with the top of its head to provide the support for further sculpture. The angel has a simple belted tunic and long wings that extend down behind the throne. A voluminous cloak is also indicated behind the angel and loosely placed around the

shoulders. There is no trace of the figure that would have been placed on this socle, but the widely held assumption that it was the companion to the other portal figure is probably correct, in which case it would have been Synagoga. The socle is supported by a demi-atlas figure above the Purbeck string course. It is of the same period as the Expulsion socle and the figure placed upon it, that is, the third quarter of the 13th century. Despite the damage and weathering it is evident that the angel was intended to be seen as smiling, a characteristic of 13th-century sculpture that indicated 'the signs of bliss, joy, love and innocence'.²¹ As such it would be an appropriate figure to form the anti-type to the defeated figure of Synagoga.

Figure Gr. 3.

Small scale draped standing figure with marked sway and contraposto pose (Plate 20). Lacking a head and both arms, with some indication that its left arm crossed over the body and its right arm was raised. In very poor condition. It is standing on a corbel positioned next to the arch moulding of the portal and in 1864 there was a small canopy over it which has since been lost but was one of a pair and its companion to the south of the portal survives in an equivalent position.

Historiography

Neither the Gr. Fig. 1 nor its socle were present in 1864 (Plate 4) when the facade was photographed, presumably removed for conservation, since 18th-century topographical drawings show some sculpture in this location. The antiquarian reports suggest that the sculpture has been very damaged and hard to decipher for some considerable time. In 1754 Stukeley described a socle with scenes of 'Adam and Eve in Paradise', to the north of the portal, which is probably the present one, but identified the figure standing above it as Christ; this can only have been a guess since he stated that it lacked any identifying features. Stukeley described the socle on the south side as having 'angels' carved on it, and at that stage it still supported a larger figure which he identified as the Virgin Mary. Samuel Buck's west view of the

²¹ See Paul Binski, *Becket's Crown, Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170-1300*, (New Haven 2004), pp. 247-59.

abbey church from 1726 (Plate 21) shows two figures on socles framing the portal and the legend to the engraving describes them as, '... a Lay Man of great quality and a Dignifi'd Clergyman'. The figures must therefore have already been without their heads and symbols by the early 18th century, and the south figure had been lost before the end of the century. Carter's drawing of 1781 shows a headless figure to the left of the portal, with a smaller figure next to it, and a socle without a figure to the right.

Context for Ground Level Figures

Monumental paired images of Ecclesia and Synagoga are much more familiar from mainland Europe than from England but several English examples survive, apart from Lincoln and Croyland. Winchester Cathedral has a 13th-century figure of what was probably Synagoga from an exterior, but unknown, site (it was excavated from the Deanery garden) and a second figure of Synagoga can be found at Howden, Yorkshire, from c.1320. Its original site is unknown but the choir of the church underwent a substantial rebuilding at this date, and included a new east facade with niches for sculpture around the east window on both the interior and exterior.²² The slightly later chapter house doorway at Rochester has both Synagoga and Ecclesia present, although much restored.

The figures from continental Europe are either placed on either side of a central figure of Christ as at Bamberg (Plate 17), or sometimes of Solomon, as at the cathedrals of Strasbourg, and of León. In the case of the Lincoln Judgement Portal, (Plate 9) the central tympanum image is of Christ revealing the wound in his side, and the siting of the Ecclesia and Synagoga on the portal jambs is therefore iconographically coherent, but the Croyland figure, Fig. Gr. 1, has no connection with the Guthlac imagery of the portal and an alternative site needs to be considered. Its lack of a niche also strongly suggests that it is not in its intended site. The figure belongs to the same period as the portal and its tympanum, the third quarter of the

²² Prior and Gardner 1912, p. 317, and p. 334.

13th century, and was retained, and found a new site, when the west facade was remodelled in the 15th century.

Although it has been completely swept away in the later remodelling, the upper section of the 13th-century facade will almost certainly have consisted of a gable above the head of the window. Lincoln's east gable has a window that lights the space above the vault but this is not the only possible design and the area may have been a site for sculpture. It is possible that the figures of Ecclesia and Synagoga were installed there, together with an image of Christ, perhaps the predecessor of the large-scale but shallow sculpture that has been placed on the triangular bridge in the centre of the village (Plate 22). Alternatively, the figures may have been used on a portal that formed part of the architecture of the area to the east of the crossing about which very little is known.

Sculpture of the Upper Levels of the Facade

Introduction

The levels of the facade above the portal contain two distinct groups of figure sculpture, with the upper two tiers of figures in niches comprising one group (Plate 23), and the lower two rows of figures attached to the blind tracery of the earlier walling the second (Plate 24). Both groups are from the same, 15th-century, date and are part of the building phase that included the raising of the height of the west window. The figures are all approximately life-sized and the standing ones range in height from 1.59m to 1.86m. Those in tier 3 are the largest at 1.80m to 1.86m and tier 2 has the shortest at 1.59m to 1.73m. Measurements include an integral thin polygonal base on which the figures rest their feet, but not the larger bases which are separate pieces of masonry. The images have been carved from single blocks of stone as figures with little projection so that they occupy their shallow niches without extending beyond them even as seated figures. Fig. 4E, St Peter, is the only exception (Plate 25). They all have over-sized heads to allow for their installation at height, and their attributes are mostly large scale, with the exception of St Andrew's cross. Robes have simple, heavy folds and there is little ornamentation.

Marked similarities can be found between the figures' drapery styles, consisting of heavy, enveloping folds that conceal the body, and within the head types. The faces resemble those of the row of kings on Lincoln's west front from the 14th century, with prominent eyes, large foreheads and curled hair (Plate 6 and front cover). The bearded heads at Croyland conform to a similar design with flowing beards and long moustaches that are shaved beneath the nose. The sculptor has paid particular attention to the depiction of the beards, suggesting venerability though long beards in the case of the apostles, and youth in the case of St Guthlac who has a neatly trimmed short beard (Plate 39). Richard II is the only crowned figure with a small chin-beard, by which he can be identified (Plate 36). Hair stands out as separate deep waves and is kept back from the forehead. The eyes are bulbous and some have pierced pupils. Most of the figures are older males and have long faces, but two

figures, 3H, St Guthlac, and 2H (Plate 44), usually identified as a young queen, have much more rounded faces. The figures on the two lower tiers are all clean-shaven, but the hair and head types resemble those of the upper tiers. Crowns have rows of strawberry leaves above a deep coronet.

There were spaces for 14 figures in the upper two tiers (Plate 23), of which we have 10 complete figures and one partial one, which might suggest an iconographic programme that included the 12 apostles and two Croyland saints. It is evident that two figures of kings are included in the group as well as St Guthlac which means that not all the apostles can have been represented. Medieval lists of apostles were not always consistent with the Biblical accounts of those present at events like the Last Supper or Pentecost, and the apostle who replaced Judas was sometimes Matthias, or at other times St Paul was brought in as the twelfth member. Of the Biblical group eight can be identified reasonably confidently at Croyland by their attributes; Philip, Peter, Andrew, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the Less, Thomas and Jude. Three more were noted in the 18th century and have since been lost, St Paul (in part), St John the Evangelist and St James the Greater, which means that Simon is the only one not included. Apostles are usually shown as bare-footed, but several of the upper figures that can be confidently identified as apostles are wearing shoes.

The figures were described by Richard Gough and William Stukeley, the latter having seen the site shortly after the collapse of the section of the upper south niches in c. 1750 and found the seated figure of St Paul fallen to the ground. Stukeley had made drawings of the upper facade and its figures in 1734 when all the niches were filled, and he shows St James the Greater, a seated figure dressed as a pilgrim, to the right of St Paul, with a standing figure of St John the Evangelist holding a chalice, next to St James the Less (Plates 26a/b). Stukeley's identifications of the figures are not always accurate since he was almost certainly working from ground level, but the attributes of the two saints are sufficiently distinctive to trust his interpretation of them.

The upper two tiers of figures, the arcade of niches in which they are placed, and the window that they frame were designed together when the 13th-century facade was remodelled and should be seen as a single feature.

Tier 4

The fourth tier had space for 10 figures, with the four middle ones seated and their heights graded to allow for the intrusion of the window head into this area. It is noticeable that the centre of the row of niches does not coincide with the middle of the window and some of the niches on the south side must have been wider to accommodate this. Antiquarian notes and drawings record the damage to the area of the south niches and this section was patched with brick brought out level with the front of the arcade (Plate 4). Three niches could be seen in the brickwork but there is no trace of the figures that will have originally been placed there although two small pieces of sculpture, perhaps head corbels, can be seen. The rear face of the south section has since been repaired in stone, reusing bits of moulded stone, but without any attempt to reconstruct the arches, resulting in the complete absence of one south niche and two are left incomplete.

The niches form a continuous arcade of cinquefoil subcuspated arches with traceried spandrels, separated by deep triangular buttresses that terminate in crocketed gables and have finials that break into the cornice above (Plate 25). Further shallow gables ornament the buttresses at intervals beneath. Only one of the complete niches, that over the figure of St James the Less on the south side (Plate 34), has a vault inside its canopy, and the remaining half of the adjacent niche had a simpler rib vault, the rest are unvaulted.

All the standing figures are placed on deep bases carved with grotesques and have battlemented socles graded in height around the window head. Four demi-angels bearing shields occupied the space between the niches and the spandrels, of which three remain (Plates 29b & 33).

Figure 4A. Ht: 1.67m

St Philip, Apostle

Complete standing male figure holding a stack of three loaves in his right hand which is covered with a cloth, and pointing to it with his left (Plate 27). Bearded head. Wearing a long robe that covers his feet and arms to the wrist, and a cloak fastened with a quatrefoil broach. Base with very worn head carved on the front face, cut from separate stone. Identified as St Philip from the loaves, which relate to his involvement in the miracle of feeding the five thousand. Stukeley shows the figure holding three circular objects on a plate in his right hand and blessing with his left. He was uncertain as to his identity, writing and crossing out both 'Our Saviour' and 'St Andrew', leaving the phrase 'blessing bread' (Plate 26a).

Figure 4B. Ht: 1.67m

St Matthew? Apostle and Evangelist

Complete standing male figure holding a rectangular object in a bag in his left hand and the lower part of the staff of a cross in his right, which is broken above his hand but traces of its attachment to the figure's robe and beard remain (Plate 28). Bearded head, with receding hairline and single curl. Clad in simple long robe that covers his feet but stops at elbow level, with a shorter mantle over. Feet visible and wearing shoes. Base with monstrous horned head pulling at the side of its mouth. Stukeley shows the figure holding a *cross bottony*, and he identified it as St Philip (Plate 26a). St Matthew, as one of the evangelists, is usually shown with his symbol of the angel, or with the attributes of a tax-collector, either a money bag or scales. It is probable that a money bag is shown here.

Figure 4C. Ht: 1.68m

St Thomas, Apostle

Complete standing male figure holding a spear in his left hand, and pulling at his beard with his right (Plate 29a). Wearing a long robe with loose sleeves and a cloak over. Belt decorated with pierced quatrefoils refers to the Virgin's girdle that

Thomas secured as evidence of her assumption into Heaven. Head with long beard and receding hairline. Feet visible and wearing shoes. Separate base with bat carved on front face, its head decayed but apparently human, the wings still detailed. Polygonal battlemented socle truncated by presence of window arch. Demi-angel beneath holding a shield with a cut-out corner (Plate 29b). Stukeley identified it as St Thomas (Plate 26a).

Figure 4D Ht: 1.41m

St Andrew, Apostle

Complete seated male figure holding a saltire cross in his left hand and clasping a book in his right, therefore St Andrew (Plates 25 & 30). The cross is shown end-on so it is only visible as a saltire cross from the side. Wearing a long robe with a cloak over, fastened at the neck with a plain broach. Feet visible and wearing shoes. Bearded head. Plain polygonal base. Battlemented socle built into the frame of the niche. Abraded demi-angel beneath holding a shield (Plate 29b). Stukeley's drawing is imprecise and shows the figure seated but not apparently holding anything in his left hand, and he thought it was St Bartholomew (Plate 26a).

Figure 4E Ht: 1.02m

St Peter, Apostle

Small seated male figure, wearing a long robe with a plain amice, holding two keys upright in his hand with his left resting on the top of a book, its clasp clearly shown (Plates 25 & 31). Feet visible and wearing shoes. Head with short curls and trimmed beard. Plain polygonal base. Low battlemented socle built into the frame of the niche. Stukeley, who noted this as St Peter, shows the figure holding an open book on his left knee and two keys in his right hand (Plate 26a).

Figure 4F Ht: 0.70m

St Paul?

Lower half of seated figure of the same scale as 4E, right hand missing, left apparently resting on several ?books balanced on knee (Plate 32a). Plain throne visible behind figure. Part of the reassembled section of the upper facade and not present in 1864. North side of unvaulted canopy still in place, south missing, and section of moulded stone re-used in frame above. Plain polygonal block beneath, no socle, all this area made up. Stukeley reported that a seated figure of St Paul had fallen from the facade sometime between 1748 and 1757 when he saw it lying on the ground. He had drawn the figure in this position in 1734 as St Paul, with his left hand resting on a book on his knee and his right hand holding a sword, point downwards (Plate 26b). It is possible that the worn projection against the figure's right leg might be the remains of a sword (Plate 32b).

Figure 4G

Figure missing

Base and polygonal battlemented socle for figure in equivalent position to 4C on north, therefore for a full-sized standing figure (Plate 33). Base with grotesque demi-figure with cowed head, open mouth with teeth mostly missing, hands clenched into fists, and pierced eyes. Right side of niche and part of canopy with rib vault survives above. Demi-angel beneath holding a shield with a cut-out corner in same pose as angel under 4C. Stukeley's drawing includes the figure of St John the Evangelist in simple robe, with a chalice held in his covered left hand and pointing to it with his right above this socle. Carter's drawing of 1781 shows the niche complete but without a figure in it, and it therefore seems likely that it was lost sometime between c.1757-81 since Stukeley did not mention it falling with the St Paul statue.

Figure 4H Ht: 1.74m

St James the Less

Complete standing male figure holding a reversed long club in left hand and a book in right, therefore St James the Less (Plate 34). Wearing a long robe with a mantle over, feet not visible. Bearded head with long hair in waves. Base with winged and

bearded monstrous head. Elaborate cusped vault to canopy. Stukeley identified this figure as St James the Less (Plate 26b).

Figure 4I. Ht: 1.67m

St Jude

Complete standing male figure holding a long halberd in his right hand and a book clasped in left (Plate 35). Head with straight hair, long beard and pierced eyes. Long robe with shorter mantle over, feet not visible. Base with bearded demi-figure in cowl, also with pierced eyes seeming to mimic the appearance of the saint. Stukeley identified this figure as St Matthew (Plate 26b).

Tier 3

The four figures in this tier are under projecting canopies sited under the plain sections of the socles of the upper register that provide a visual break between the two sets of figures (Plate 23). The canopies consist of three-sided sets of gables separated by angled pinnacles. The gables are trefoil cusped and crocketed and cover simple seven-part rib vaults with foliage bosses. All the figures stand on flat integral polygonal bases which are placed directly on the sills of the niches. The moulded buttresses that form the arcade of the upper level descend uninterrupted into this area and end in further shallow niches with bases. The design of the canopies recalls those of the gallery of kings on the west front of Lincoln Cathedral, but in a simplified form.

There is little consensus in the literature about the identities of the four figures in this row, with the exception of St Guthlac at 3H, although a connection between the two religious figures and the two seculars as founders is suggested. This is certainly correct as the arrangement is precisely set out to have the abbey's two main saints framed by two kings, one a major benefactor and the other its original founder. The saint opposite Guthlac is clearly Bartholomew as he carries his symbol of a knife. The two kings can be identified as Richard II and Aethelbald.

Figure 3A. Ht: 1.86m

Male Royal Figure, Richard II

Complete standing male figure with left hand missing but raised and supporting an object, now lost, with a dowel hole in his shoulder from its attachment, and holding a large upright sword-hilt in his right hand (Plate 36). There is no trace of the sword blade, or of any support for it and so it was probably made of metal and fixed into the hilt. Head with short curled hair, short beard on chin and long moustache. Crowned, the rear of which is only lightly carved. Short robe extended to just below knee level, with fleuron-decorated dropped belt at hip, cowl and cloak. Front of canopy badly eroded. Stukeley shows the figure holding an upright sword and an orb in his left hand, and identified it as King Athelbald (Plate 26a).

It is more likely to be Richard II, an important benefactor of Croyland. His Letters Patent of 1393 confirmed two important Anglo-Saxon royal charters of Aethelbald and Eadred relating to the founding of Croyland and gave royal approval to what were probably spurious original documents, thus making him an important figure in the abbey's history. The initial letter of the charter shows Richard enthroned with St Guthlac and Aethelbald.²³ Richard II's appearance is known from his tomb effigy in Westminster Abbey which is widely accepted as a portrait and shows him with a short beard on his chin. It closely resembles most other depictions of Richard as an adult, such as the contemporary portrait in Westminster Abbey, and supports this identification of the figure (Plate 37).

Figure 3B. Ht: 1.80m

St Bartholomew

²³ Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms. Ashmole 1831.
<http://bodley30.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~31275~113773:Confirmation-of-two-charters-of-Cro>, where the date is in error, accessed 10 Feb 2014.

Complete standing male figure holding large knife in right hand and book in left, clasp clearly visible (Plate 38). Head with curled hair, beard and long moustache. Full length robe, with mantle over, one foot visible and bare. Stukeley shows the figure holding a large knife in his right hand and a book in the left, and identified it as Kenulf, the first abbot (Plate 26a). Bartholomew figured largely in the legend of St Guthlac, his image was on the abbey's seal and a relic of his finger was kept at the abbey.

Figure 3H. Ht: 1.84m

St Guthlac

Complete standing male figure holding a scourge in his right hand and left hand raised but damaged (Plate 39). Wearing a habit with a cowl, feet visible and bare, head with tonsure and short beard but no moustache. Trampling a demon with a large cloven front hoof, mouth open and tongue extended, wearing a doublet. Stukeley identified the figure as Guthlac (Plate 26b). The scourge is that described in the life of St Guthlac as the gift of St Bartholomew.

Figure 3I. Ht: 1.81m

Male Royal Figure, Aethelbald

Complete standing crowned male figure holding a short staff in his left hand and an open scroll with a clearly visible seal raised in his right (Plate 40). There is no trace of the upper part of the staff, or of any attachment for it, which means it may have been made of a different material. Wearing a full length robe with a cowl on his shoulders and a cloak. The feet, which appear to be in shoes, are covered by the robe. Head with waved hair and long beard, wearing a crown which is damaged. Stukeley's drawing (Plate 26b) is inaccurate here and shows a youthful crowned figure who lacks a beard, the figure's left hand is shown in a pocket instead of holding the staff, or sword hilt, and the right hand seems to hold an unusual form of sceptre. Aethelbald was credited with founding the abbey in 716, and legends tell of his visit to confer with Guthlac during the period of his exile from Mercia. His image

is also shown on the portal tympanum. The presence of the document with its prominent seal in the figure's right hand confirms this as an image of a founder.

Tiers 1 and 2

The figures in tiers 1 and 2 stand on substantial polygonal socles with battlemented rims almost identical to those of tier 4, and these have been inserted into the blind arcading from the 13th-century facade to provide support for the figures (Plate 24). The more slender conical corbels beneath the socles closely resemble 13th-century examples and may be part of the original facade. The figures in tier 1 are under canopies that project from the facade but those of tier 2 are fitted under the tracery in an awkward arrangement, in particular Figs 2B and 2H which have their heads squeezed between the cusps of the blind tracery (Plates 43 & 44). The gabled canopies emerge from the tracery mouldings and are separated by endelit shafts that terminate in 'swallowers', heads at the top of the shafts (visible in Plate 46), a feature that is more usually associated with architecture of the 12th than the 13th century. One foliage capital remains at the level of the second tier on the south side whereas the north one has been replaced by a simple roughed-out block in the recent past. Longer shafts that framed the tracery up to the level of the original window head and ended in capitals have since been lost, although the north shaft was still extant in 1977 (see Appendix Plates 4 & 6).

Despite the presence of the gables and corbels it is unlikely that figure sculpture was originally intended to be placed against the blind tracery. Lincoln's east wall has a very similar layout in which gabled canopies and bases are inserted at intervals on the buttresses, but these are demonstrably not intended sites for figure sculpture, and none was originally present (Plate 2). Three figures have subsequently been installed at Lincoln; the 'Queen Margaret' figure, now compromised by the wall of the later Russell chantry, and 'Edward and Eleanor' on the south-east buttress where the lack of bases results in the figures overhanging the edge (Plate 41). Additionally, there is no evidence that Lincoln was intended to have a sculptural programme, apart from that associated with the Judgement Portal, and it would be

difficult to envisage an iconographic programme that would make use of such a large number of sites. Croyland doubtless had the same arrangement.

The lower level Croyland figures share the same general proportions and facial types with those of the upper two levels, with bulbous eyes and well-defined other features, although none of the lower ones has a beard. Comparison between Fig. 2H, the young king, and Fig. 3H, St Guthlac, reveals a similar use of delicate features, including a small mouth and a deep forehead (Plates 44 & 39). Additionally, the hair on 2H, which is one of only two of the lower figures with hair visible, is of the same form as that of Fig. 3A, Richard II (Plates 44 & 36). Differences can be seen between the drapery styles of the two groups and the robes on lower figures are generally less bulky and concealing. It seems likely that two groups of sculptors were at work on the figures, but deriving their work from the same sources.

The iconography of the eight lower figures is difficult to determine as none has a distinctive symbol; there are two figures in armour, two kings and the rest are abbots or bishops, one with a replaced head. The antiquarians, and writers of more recent reports, have attempted to relate them to the history of the abbey, but reach no definitive conclusion. The costume is abraded and the clerics' robes lack the sort of detail necessary to determine what sort of vestments they are wearing, although it is possible to distinguish between the monastic habit worn by Fig. 2I (Plate 45a), and the vestments of the others, Figures 2A, 1A and 1I (Plates 42, 46 & 49) which are all very similar and differentiated mainly by the way that they hold their croziers.

Since Richard II and Aethelbald are included in the facade it would be logical to assume that the two royal images also refer to benefactors and this may well be the case. King Edred, whose charter was confirmed by Richard II is a possible contender, as are several later medieval royal figures who provided support to the abbey by confirming property rights through charters. These were Stephen, Henry II, Richard I, Edward I, Henry IV and in the later 14th-century, John of Gaunt who proved to be a powerful ally in the boundary disputes that involved the abbey in a lengthy legal

battle. Towards the end of the construction period Henry VI visited in 1460 and granted a charter confirming the liberties of the vill of Crowland.

Of the abbots, the two most recent office holders were also major benefactors to the abbey. Abbot Litlington (1427-70) was described in the documents as the builder of the west front, and his predecessor Abbot Upton (1417-27) also paid for building work and made donations of valuable gifts and of books for the library. It would therefore have been appropriate for their images to have been included.

Saints Guthlac and Barthomolew are on the upper facade, Croyland's other saints, whether canonised or not, are therefore candidates for inclusion. These are St Waltheof, an Anglo-Saxon patron who was executed by William the Conqueror and canonised after miracles were reported; St Neot, whose relics were brought to Croyland at some date before his translation to a new shrine in 1213, and Abbot Thomas de Welles who was not canonised but had a cult associated with his tomb from the middle of the 13th century.

Tier 2

Figure 2A. Ht: 1.67m

Bishop or Abbot

The figure is clad in plain vestments of a chasuble over an alb and surplice with an amice (restored) at the neck (Plate 42). He holds a very abraded staff in his left hand and either points to it with his right or is blessing. Visible in 1864 without its head and neck, now replaced by a 19th-century version. Stukeley discovered that the head and the top of the crozier had fallen from the facade in 1744 and he returned the following year to take it away. His notebook records that the head was displayed in his garden until 1748 when he gave it to Philip Yorke, 1st Earl of Hardwicke, who set it up in the church, or chapel of his house, Wimpole Hall.²⁴ Stukeley's drawing of the original head shows what appears to be braided hair over the figure's right ear

²⁴ BL Add. MSS 51049, C.E. Wright, 'Four Stukeley Notebooks', *British Museum Quarterly*, 27 no. 3/4 (1963-4), pp. 61-5.

and the replaced head has a longer plait instead (Plate 26d). The figure was holding a plain crozier according to Stukeley and he identified the figure as Turketyl who was made the first abbot of Croyland under Edred (946-55), according to the legendary account of the early days of the abbey, but either Litlington or Upton is also possible. Conway photo A86/3171 shows the figure's left hand clasping the staff, but it had been lost by 1977 (Appendix Plate 4).

Figure 2B. Ht: 1.73m

Military Figure

Standing figure in armour with a mail coif, poleyns on the knees and having a short kirtle and long cloak. right arm broken off after elbow, left wearing a gauntlet (Plates 43 & 26c). The 1864 photo shows the figure's arms in place and a sword held upright in the right hand. Gough was able to make out a coronet on the coif and saw in a book in the left hand, he identified it as Earl Waltheof, and Stukeley as William the Conqueror, but there is no evidence to support either claim and Fig. 1H is more likely to be Waltheof. Gough misread the pose of the left hand which can be seen in Conway A86/3171 touching the remains of the upright sword, part of which was still visible in 1977 although the pommel had been lost (Appendix Plate 4). One possible contender is John of Gaunt whose tomb effigy in St Paul's medieval cathedral, that was lost in the 1666 fire, shows him in armour with a coronet on his helm. His tomb had been made in the mid-1370s, and he died in 1399.

Figure 2H. Ht: 1.66m

Male Royal Figure

Crowned figure holding the remains of a sceptre in the left hand with the right hand resting on the upper garment, traces of the rest of the staff remain attached to the figure's shoulder (Plate 44). The upper part of the sceptre lost after Conway A61/421A was taken, and had already been lost by 1977 (Appendix Plate 5). Wearing a belted long robe with a cowled neck and loose sleeves, feet covered but wearing shoes. Clean-shaven and with waved hair. The figure is usually described as

female, and variously identified as William the Conqueror's queen, Maud or Mathilda (Stukeley, plate 26c), or as St Pega (Gough) but it is more likely to be a youthful king. Several kings who were benefactors to Croyland are usually depicted as clean-shaven, these include Stephen, Edward I and Henry VI.

Figure 2I. Ht: 1.59m

Cleric, St Neot?

Complete standing figure wearing a habit with a short tunic over and a cowl, with a mitre, or simple hat, on his head, holding a staff with a damaged cross head in his right hand and displaying an open book with his left (Plate 45a). This is Archbishop Lanfranc, according to Stukeley, who shows him wearing a chasuble (in error) and a mitre (Plate 26c). The sculpture is noticeably shorter than all the other figures and it is possible that it depicts St Neot, who was a monk and a hermit (Plate 45b). The saint was described as being of such diminutive stature that he needed to stand on a stool to say Mass.²⁵ His relics were at Croyland by the 13th century when he was translated to a new shrine, and may have been there since the Anglo-Saxon period. St Neot is shown in a 16th-century stained glass cycle at St Neot, Cornwall where he is dressed in similar robes. The cross staff that he is carrying, rather than a crozier, may have been intended to differentiate him from the figures of abbots on the facade.

Figure 1A. Ht: 1.72m

Bishop or Abbot

Standing male figure holding a crozier in his left hand, his right hand raised but missing and shown blessing by Stukeley (Plates 46 & 26c). Wearing a mitre above braided hair and with unornamented vestments of a chasuble and amice over an alb and a cassock. The crozier has a pronounced knop and foliage carving in the head. Abbot Ingulfus, according to Stukeley, the last Anglo-Saxon abbot, but again may

²⁵ D.H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 5th edn (Oxford 2003), pp. 381-2.

have been intended to represent one of the 15th-century abbots involved in the new building work. Closely resembles Figure 1I (Plate 49).

Figure 1B. Ht: 1.78m

Male Royal Figure

Damaged standing figure wearing a crown with an unusual broad brim which is placed low on the figure's head (Plate 47). Face damaged but evidently clean-shaven. Wearing a cloak fastened at the chest with a large lozenge-shaped broach once decorated with a fleuron, over a garment that covers the feet and has a diagonal belt buckled on the hip. Both arms are missing below the elbow. Stukeley shows the figure holding a sceptre in his right hand with his left hand pointing towards his feet (Plate 26c). His hand is visible on Conway A86/3171 holding his belt and it was still there in 1977 (Appendix Plate 6). Identified as Henry I by Stukeley, but may have been Stephen, Edward I, or Henry VI.

Figure 1H. Ht: 1.73m

Military Figure, St Waltheof?

Figure in armour, with plate leg armour of poleyns and greaves, body covered by a surcoat reaching to the knees, a short cape, and wearing a crown on top of a basinet (Plate 48). The helm is shown with a separate chin piece. Holding a long staff in the left hand, broken off at the level of the hand, and with the other arm bent at the elbow and stretched across the chest. There is a seated animal between his legs. Stukeley's drawing (Plate 26c) shows a battleaxe in the left hand, the weapon would accord with the stories of Waltheof's battle with the Normans in York at which he slew a large number of the enemy. The animal is unexplained. Waltheof was an Saxon benefactor of the abbey whose body was brought to Croyland after his execution for rebellion against William I in 1076. Miracles were reported at his tomb in the chapter house and it was moved into the church after the late 11th century and he was proclaimed a saint.

Figure 1I. Ht: 1.73m

Bishop or Abbot, Thomas de Welles?

Standing figure in vestments wearing a mitre and holding a crozier in his left hand, the right hand, which has lost several fingers, was blessing (Plates 49 & 26c). Closely similar to 1A, although the vestments are more like those of 2A. The crozier has the same sort of foliage head as 1A, but with the addition of a more elaborate polygonal section beneath with traceried ornament. Abbot Joffrid, according to Stukeley, (Plate 26c) but Abbot Thomas de Welles who died in c.1253 and had a cult centered on his tomb is more likely.

***Ex-situ* sculpture, Christ on the triangular bridge, Crowland**

The figure inserted against the parapet of the town's bridge is widely believed to have come from the west front of the abbey church and this is probably correct (Plate 22). It is included in all the antiquarian accounts and Stukeley drew it in position on the bridge in the 18th century. An unsigned drawing in the British Library dated 1775 shows the figure in a less-damaged state and holding a large orb in the left hand, with the right arm broken off at the elbow but raised.²⁶ Although the figure is badly abraded sufficient of it remains to determine that it belongs to the same group as the 15th-century figure sculpture and has very similar draperies and design of crown. It is seated on a narrow slab-like throne almost identical to that of Fig. 4F (Plate 32), and its drapery shares the same arrangement of nested v-folds between the knees. As with the other complete figures on the facade, it has an over-large head to compensate for its siting high up on a building. The shallowness of its form also suggests that it was intended to be placed in a niche.

Reconstruction of the West Front's Sculpture Arrangement

The cornice at the top of Croyland's facade consists of a row of masks alternated with the finials from the niches beneath, capped off with a mixture of re-used

²⁶ BL King George III Topographical Collection, 24m.

moulded stone laid horizontally and chamfered blocks (Plate 25). The restored section lacks the sculpted cornice and a simpler one has been made up with re-used stone, including a short section of moulding. A misplaced section of the masks and finials cornice has been reset on the exterior of the nave north arcade wall, where it abuts the north-west tower.

The cornice does not represent the upper limit of the facade in the medieval period. Still extant against the southern face of the north-west tower is a section of a further upper level, and the area of brickwork on the return wall is the infill from the removal of the inner face of the wall and the probable start of a gable (Plate 50). The moulded stone on the left is the front face of the jamb of a niche of similar type to the ones beneath and its moulded stone cill can be seen in section above Scott's capping-off of the facade. The off-set above it is also part of the tidying up of the top of the facade and replaces the head of the niche and the start of the gable. One of two ogree niches originally sited at either end of the centre of the facade at the top of the buttresses remains as a further site for figure sculpture (Plate 1).

Two possible versions of the upper level can be reconstructed, each based on the presence of a row of further niches at this point. In the first the niches are all of the same height and reproduce the form of the larger ones in the row beneath, with a shallow gable raised above but separate from them. The second version would consist of a similar continuous row of niches, but graduated in height to occupy the space of an integrated gable, with a larger central niche in which was the figure of Christ now on the triangular bridge. Since the niches would have been the intended site of the 8 figures now fitted awkwardly against the blind tracery it is probable that their polygonal socles were also meant to be used in the niches. As the socles are all of approximately the same size it is more probable that the niches would be of a constant size, and the Christ figure placed either in the centre or in the gable above.

This reconstruction of the facade would place all the figure sculpture at the level of the head of the 15th-century window and above it. The lost top row of niches would

provide sufficient spaces for all the figure sculptures, and the two niches at the buttress heads may have provided further possible sites for the figure of Ecclesia now on the portal and the lost Synagoga figure to flank Christ.

The typographic drawings of the Croyland facade do not show the upper register, or a gable in place. Daniel King's c.1660 image may show two rows of niches above the window, but the strange angle of the facade on his drawing does not invite confidence in the accuracy of the depiction. The earliest drawings that can be accepted as reasonably reliable are from the 1720s and later, and show the facade at its current height. It is clear however that the raising of the facade in the 15th century either caused, or exacerbated, its structural problems with its marked lean to both north and south. The distortion of the window head must have occurred as it was being built, with the two sides spreading and resulting in the head of the arch being noticeably wider at its springing than at the base of the jambs.

The two rows of upper niches are also distorted and although there was an attempt to bring the north side back to vertical, the south side follows the line of the leaning 13th-century walling. It may therefore have been the case that the medieval masons took down the upper niches soon after they had been built to reduce the weight bearing down on the facade and brought the sculpture down to be installed against the blind tracery. A lower pitched roof could have easily been accommodated since the nave vault rose no higher than the top of the west window and that would only have needed a low gable.

The two phases of Croyland's west front sculpture represent two distinct periods in the abbey's history. The 13th-century portal was built with the central section of the facade and provided the visual introduction to the shrine of the abbey's main saint with its scenes from the life of St Guthlac. At the same time monumental figures personifying Ecclesia and Synagoga were produced, possibly together with an image of Christ, that were either intended to be placed high up on the gable of the 13th-century facade or to frame a portal in the lost east end. The architectural and sculptural source was the new work at Lincoln, the Angel Choir, which was itself a

shrine building, built in the second half of the century to house the relics of St Hugh. Croyland's facade design of a six-light window framed by two blind-traceried windows of similar height can also be seen at Newstead Priory, where the master mason used the whole facade for his design instead of compressing it into the central space.

The 15th-century remodelling of the facade changed its appearance radically and it now resembled a sculptured screen, using ideas invoked at other sites outside the region for smaller-scale work on porches, or for internal pulpitum screens. Figure sculpture was used to position the abbey's saints within the assembly of other holy figures and alongside patrons from the recent and ancient past. The remodelling did not affect the portal which was retained. Possibly at this stage Ecclesia and Synagoga were intended to be incorporated in the new gable where they would have flanked a newly-made figure of Christ.

The master mason encountered problems with the stability of the new work and it must have become apparent early on that the weight of the walling above the new window head was endangering the facade. Possibly even before the work was completed it was decided to abandon the top tier of niches and the gable, and to incorporate the figure sculpture against the blind tracery of the earlier work, despite its unsuitability as a site for sculpture. The group of Ecclesia, Synagoga and Christ were separated, Christ being taken away for the bridge and the other two figures placed beside the portal. The figure sculpture of the later period is not of the same high quality as the 13th-century work, part due perhaps to its intended site at the top of the facade. Nevertheless it does represent an unusually complete set of figure carvings from the late-Gothic period, intended for an audience sufficiently well informed about the history of the site not to need names to be attached to the figures.



Plate 1. Croyland Abbey west front.



Plate 2. Lincoln Cathedral Angel Choir east facade.

Plate 3. Grantham St Wulfram, north aisle west window.

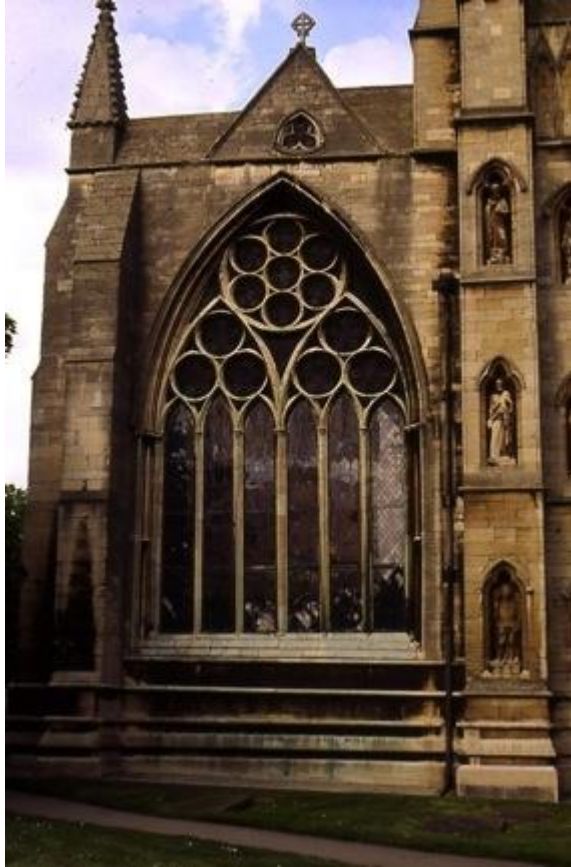


Plate 4. Croyland's west front in 1864.

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/earlyphotos/c/006zzz0000c44d7u00109000.html>



Plate 5. Westminster Abbey west porch.



Plate 6. Lincoln Cathedral west front, gallery of kings.



Plate 7. Croyland west portal.

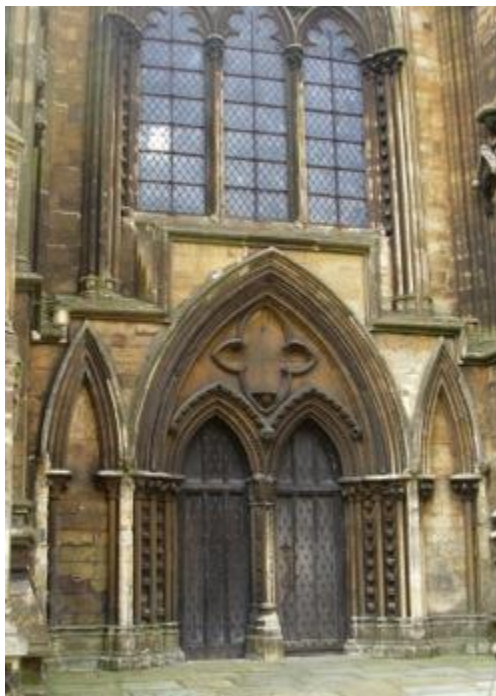


Plate 8. Lincoln north portal.



Plate 9. Lincoln Judgement Portal.



Plate 10. Newstead Priory west portal, detail.



Plate 11. Newstead Priory west front.



Plate 12. Croyland west portal tympanum.



Plate 13a. Tympanum centre.



Plate 13b. Tympanum upper.



Plate 13c. Tympanum right.



Plate 13d. Tympanum lower.



Plate 13e. Tympanum left.



Plate 14. Croyland Ecclesia.



Plate 15. Croyland Ecclesia in 1977.



Plate 16. Lincoln Judgement Portal, Ecclesia.

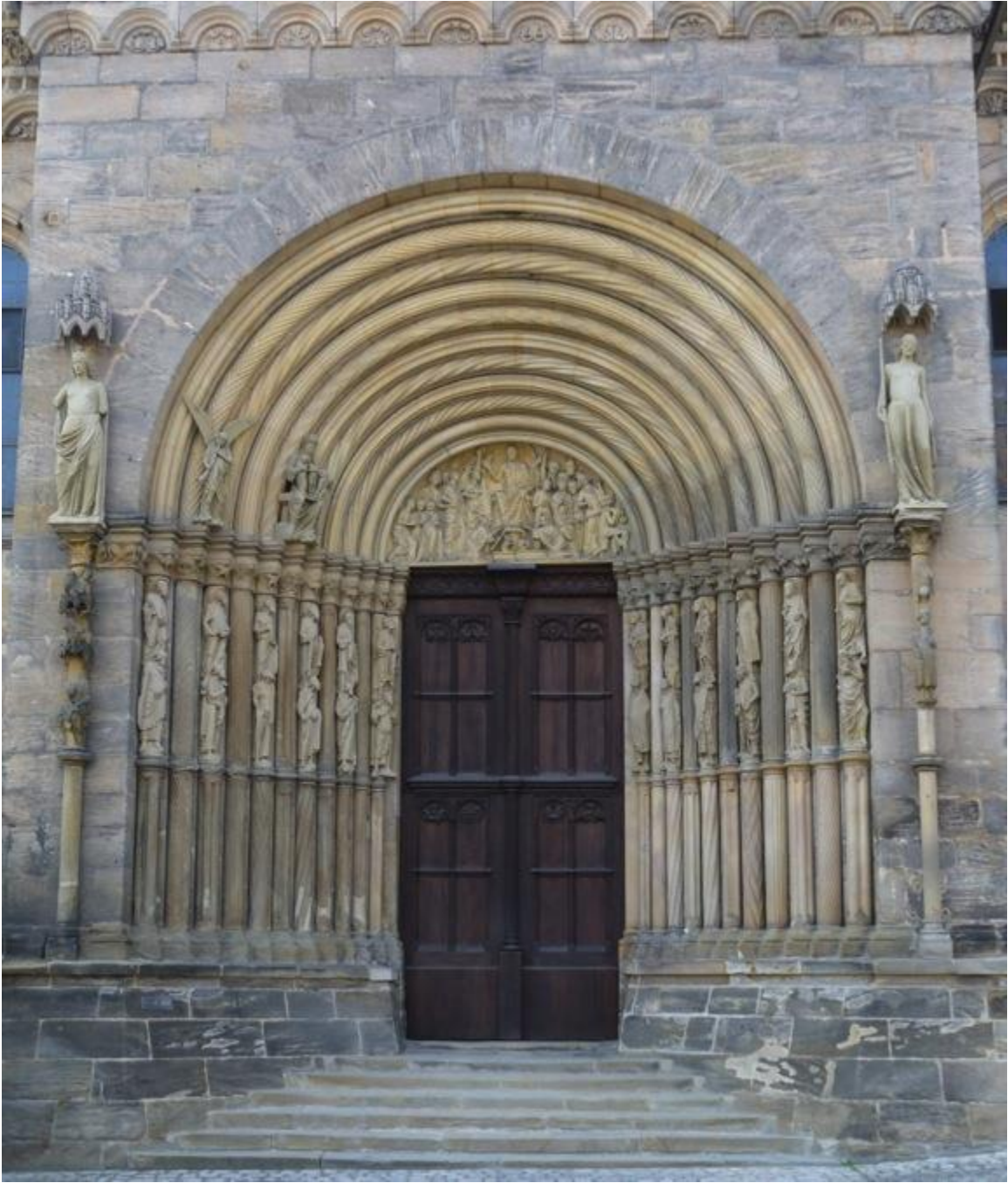


Plate 17. Bamberg Cathedral north portal, with figures of Ecclesia and Synagoga on columns to left and right.



Plate 18. Croyland north socle, the Fall and Expulsion.



Plate 19. Croyland south socle.

Plate 20. Fig. Gr 3.



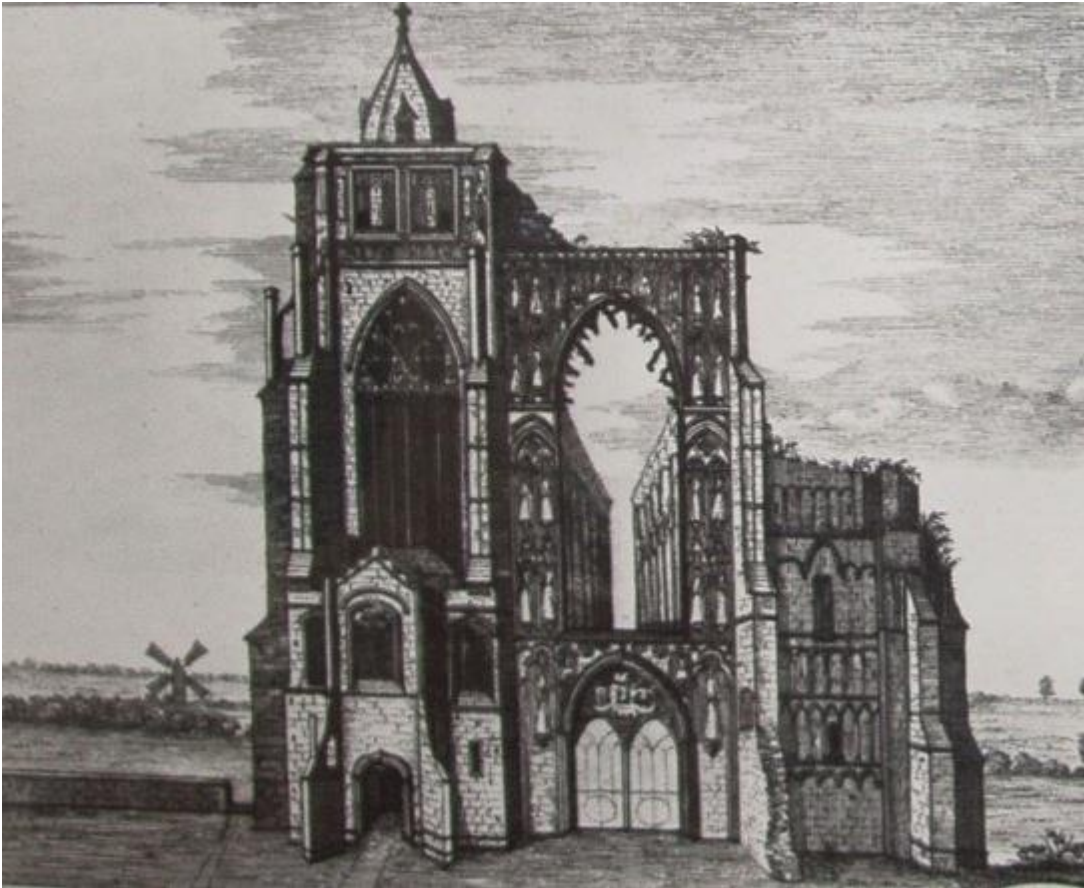


Plate 21. Croyland west front, Samuel Buck 1726, detail.



Plate 22. Crowland bridge, figure of Christ from Croyland Abbey.



Plate 23. Croyland, tiers 3 & 4.



Plate 24. Croyland, tiers 1 & 2.



Plate 25. Tier 4, figs 4D, St Andrew and 4E, St Peter.

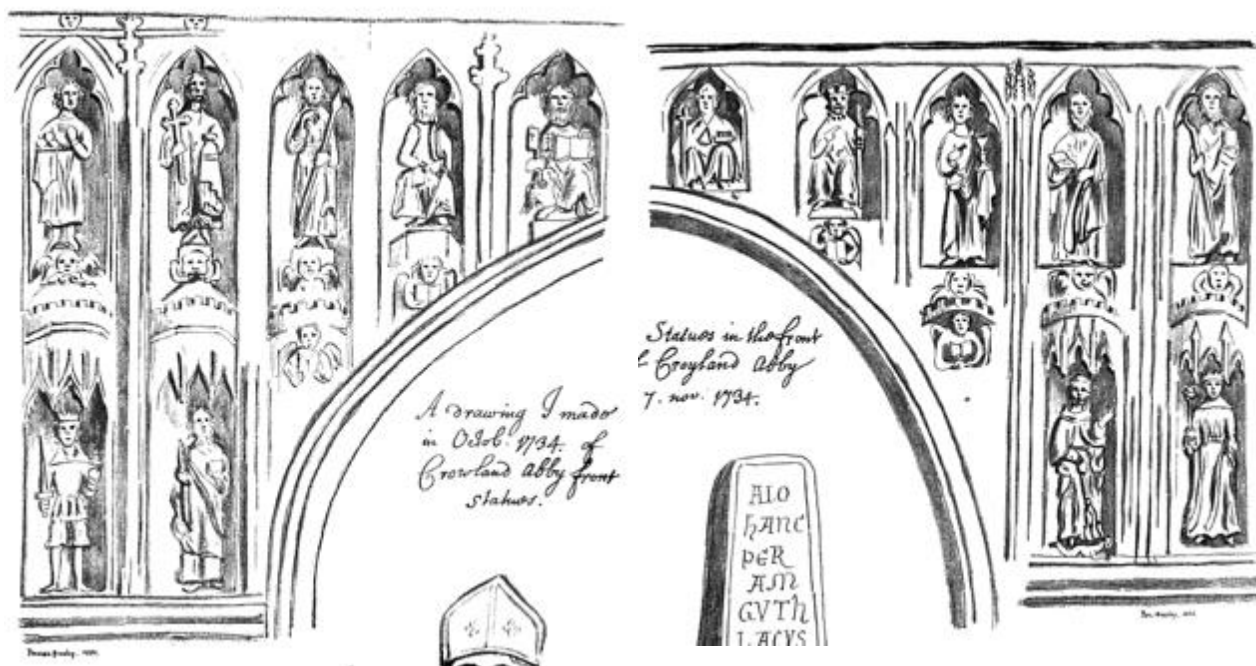


Plate 26a/b. Croylund upper tiers drawn by Stukeley in 1734, 1856 copy.

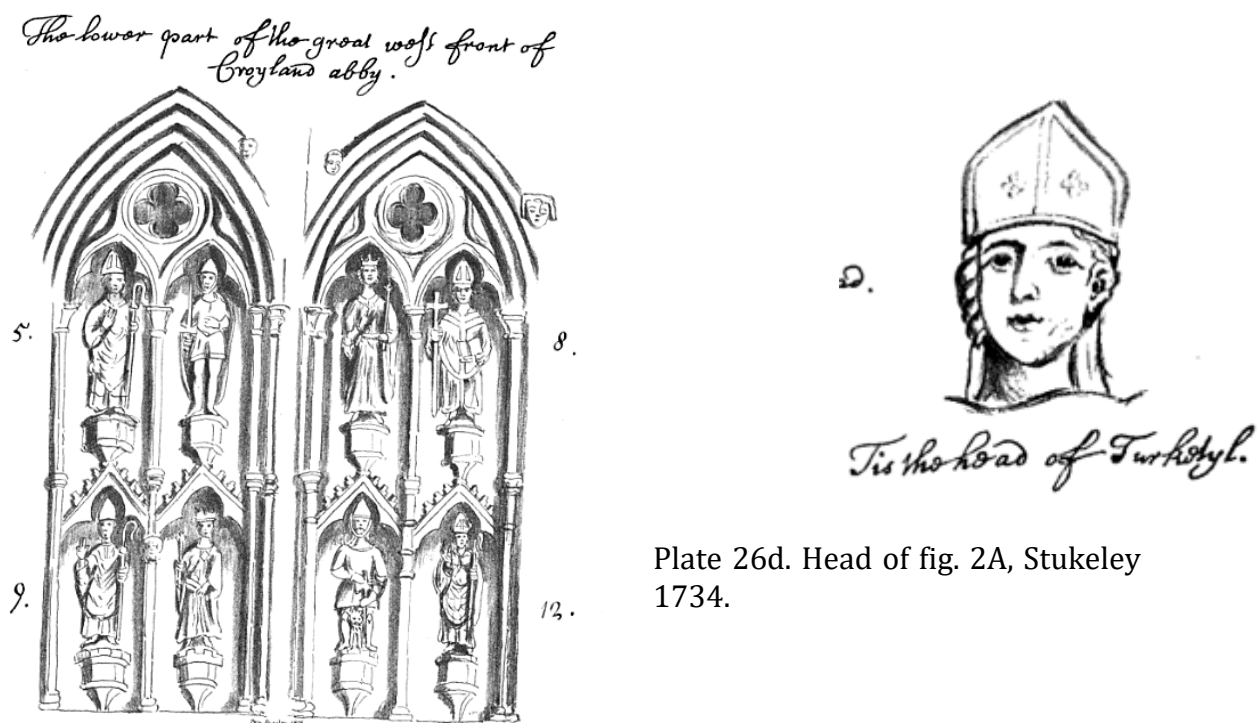


Plate 26d. Head of fig. 2A, Stukeley 1734.

Plate 26c. Lower level sculpture, Stukeley, c.1734.



Plate 27. Fig. 4A, St Philip.



Plate 28. Fig. 4B, St Matthew?



Plate 29a. Fig. 4C, St Thomas.



Plate 29b. Demi-angels below 4C & 4D.



Plate 30. Fig. 4D, St Andrew.



Plate 31. Fig. 4E, St Peter.



Plate 32a. Fig. 4F, St Paul.

Plate 32b. Fig. 4F, side view.





Plate 33. Socle to fig. 4G.



Plate 34. Fig. 4H, St James the Less.



Plate 35. Fig. 4I, St Jude.



Plate 36. Fig. 3A, Richard II.



Plate 37. Richard II, portrait in Westminster Abbey.



Plate 38. Fig. 3B, St Bartholomew.



Plate 39. Fig. 3H, St Guthlac.



Plate 40. Fig. 3I, Aethelbald.



Plate 41. Lincoln Angel Choir, SE buttress figures without bases.



Plate 42. Fig. 2A, bishop or abbot.



Plate 43. Fig. 2B, military figure.



Plate 44. Fig. 2H, male royal fig.



Plate 45a. Fig. 2I, St Neot?



Plate 45b. Figs 2H & 2I.



Plate 46. Fig. 1A, bishop or abbot.

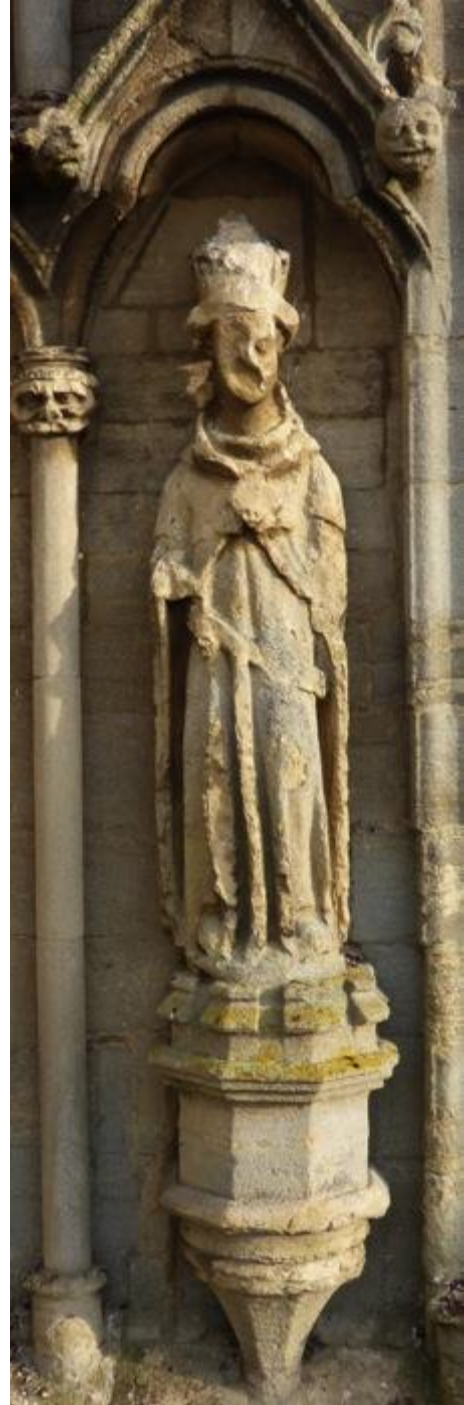


Plate 47. Fig. 1B, male royal fig.



Plate 48. Fig. 1H, St Waltheof?

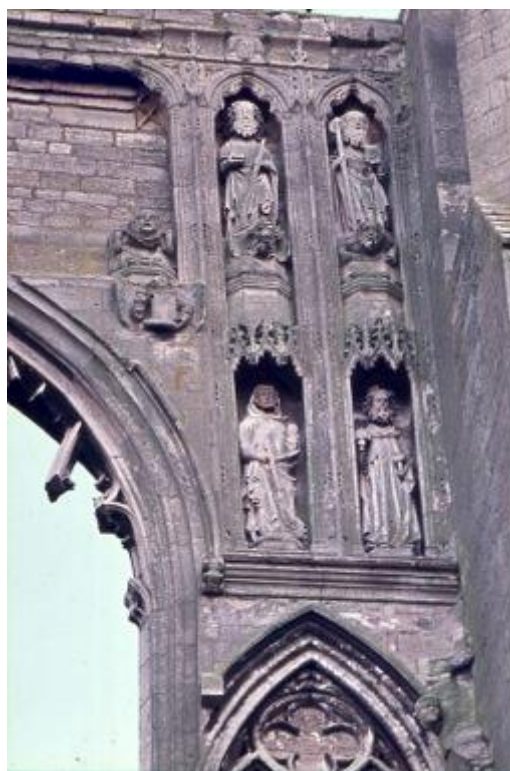


Plate 49. Fig. 1I, Thomas de Welles?



Plate 50. Croyland NW tower from S, with evidence for lost row of niches on left.

Appendix: photos from 1977.



Plates 1 & 2. Tiers 3 & 4.



Plate 3. Tier 4 centre.



Plate 4, tier 2 N.

Plate 6, tier 1N.



Plate 5, tier 2 S.

Plate 7, tier 1S.

