

THE BURY ST. EDMUNDS CROSS

The Work of Master Hugo?

A Re-examination by NORMAN SCARFE, M.A., F.S.A.

In 1964, Sir Kenneth Clark (now Lord Clark), knowing my interest in the history of Bury St. Edmunds, kindly sent me a copy of the New York Metropolitan Museum's publication of its recently acquired masterpiece, a walrus-ivory cross designed and carved with great virtuosity. The publication was entitled 'The Bury St. Edmunds Cross',¹ and its author, Thomas P. F. Hoving, Associate Curator at the Museum (now its Director), gave some persuasive reasons for linking the cross with St. Edmund's abbey at Bury. For Hoving, the dating evidence indicated the decade 1181-1190, which covered the famous election of the subsacrist, Samson, to the abbacy and ended in the massacre of fifty-seven Jews in the town. But he mentioned the possibility, 'which deserves further examination', that 'most of the carvings' (there are no fewer than 108 figures on the cross) were done 'around 1150, and the inscriptions added under the directions of Samson' (the cross bears over 60 inscriptions, in Greek and Latin, apart from one in old Hebrew). Later articles² assumed the later date, and with that the cross continues to be labelled. It is time to examine the earlier one, not least because Professor Peter Lasko has lately suggested a very much earlier one.³

¹ Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Bull.*, xxii, No. 10 (1964), pp. 317-340. I am primarily indebted to Lord Clark for arousing my interest in this great masterpiece of sculpture. I am also indebted to Professor George Zarnecki, Dr. Rosalei B. Green and Professor Peter Lasko for reading early drafts of this article. Since it went to press, a re-appraisal by Hoving at a seminar in London (July, 1974) showed how his recent study of Oslo Museum's Christ has led to substantial agreement with my thesis.

² C. M. Kauffmann, 'The Bury Bible', *Jour. Warburg and Courtauld Insts.* xxix (1966); Sabrina Longland, in the Metropolitan Museum's *Bulletin* xxvi (1968), and *Jour.* ii (1969); and in *Connoisseur* cl.xxii (1969), pp. 163 f; John Beckwith, *Ivory Carvings in Early Medieval England* (1972), articles 104 and 105. I must thank the Librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for enabling me to study the Bury Bible.

³ *Ars Sacra, 800-1200* (1972), pp. 167-168. At the exhibition of 'Ivory Carvings in Early Medieval England', held at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, while this article was in the press, the cross was still dated 1180-1190 in the exhibition catalogue. However a label was added to the cross, announcing, for the first time, that the Metropolitan Museum now believes it to be the work of Master Hugo of Bury.

In his letter to me in 1964 Lord Clark wrote:

'I think the connection with Bury is convincing. But as you will see, this is established by comparison with the Bury Bible, which would put it back to Abbot Anselm [1119-1148]; the connection with Samson which he seeks to prove via the Jews goes too much against stylistic evidence for my taste.'

I had my own reasons for thinking that, if the Bury connection were truly convincing, then certainly what one knew of the history of St. Edmund's abbey in the 12th century pointed to a date nearer to the end of Anselm's abbacy and to the Bury Bible than to the 1180s. However, my ignorance of all but the most elementary 'history of style' of the period made me hesitant about presenting some related details of the life of that great Benedictine house. I now assemble them, for they may enable scholars who continue to accept the cross's Bury provenance to think again about its date. I confess I am not as reluctant as I was ten years ago to express opinions about style and its history.

Let me briefly review the dates that style-historians have so far produced for this cross. The first, *c.* 1050, by Wiltrud Mersmann,⁴ was swiftly dismissed by Thomas Hoving in the original Metropolitan Museum publication cited above. Hoving's own date, *c.* 1181-90, he justifies in these words: 'The cross is . . . a virtual seminar in the style of the late twelfth century, for in the figures one can detect the inexorable and fascinating change from a Romanesque to a decidedly early Gothic point of view.' In the articles already cited, neither C. M. Kauffmann nor Sabrina Longland nor John Beckwith challenged Hoving's date, though I have found few art-historians who did not (privately) think it too late. Now, in Peter Lasko's book, which he describes in his preface as 'on the whole an unrepentant history of style', we are given stylistic reasons for thinking 'a date of *c.* 1100-1120 very possible'.⁵ (Such wild fluctuations by art-historians, from the 1050s to the 1180s and then back to the 1100s or 1110s are breathtaking: an ordinary professional historian is relieved to find his evidence pointing somewhere in the middle.)

'The cross', Lasko says, 'certainly shows, here and there, slight beginnings of the "dampföld" style that was to dominate English art from about 1135 onwards, when the Bury Bible was illuminated by the painter Hugo, but it hardly represents a fully developed form of it'.⁶

⁴ 'Das Elfenbeinkreuz der Sammlung Topic-Mimara', *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, xxv (1963).

⁵ Lasko, *op. cit.*, p. 293, n. 43.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 167. By 'the painter Hugo' Lasko must mean 'Hugo as painter', for Hugo's contemporaries adjudged bronze-casting his greatest accomplishment: see below. He was manifestly a major artist, ready to try his hand in more than two materials and two dimensions.

Plainly, such a judgement rests precariously on the assumption that, at a certain time; in this case *c.* 1135, all English artists, at least all those composing groups of clothed human figures, whether in manuscript illustration, wood, stone or ivory carving, or bronze casting, were all more intent on exploiting a trick of style than on expressing the mood of a subject. This is a big assumption, particularly with the master-artists, who presumably felt free to borrow or originate, to develop or 'soft-pedal' or rest a particular 'style' at will and as the subject dictated. Art-historians are not always themselves artists and where they are dependent on stylistic development as a substitute for dating evidence risk assuming a comparable dependence in the mind of the artist.

My friend Peter Lasko forces me to say this by his implied contrast between the incipient 'dampfold', as he sees it, in the cross, and the developed form established (he implies) by Hugo's Bible. For there seems to me a possibility, I put it no higher, that Hugo executed both the Bible *and* the cross, and in that order! Perhaps I might go a little further and say that *if* Hoving's evidence is accepted, of the connection between the cross and St. Edmund's abbey at Bury, then the possibility of Hugo's authorship becomes a strong one.

Such blunt speaking about style is unavoidable. For one aspect of style has led Lasko to suggest a date, *c.* 1100-1120, which seems, on more basic counts, to make nonsense of the whole conception of this cross. To the non-specialist, the extraordinary artistic beauty of the cross lies in the overall design – in the relation of the various parts to the whole, the vitality and rhythm, even the relation of the figures to the whole dimension of surrounding space – and finally, but fundamentally, in the treatment of the very remarkable subject-matter.

It was this subject-matter that led Hoving to connect the cross with Bury and to give it (unnecessarily, as I show) so late a date, and especially the subject-matter, the messages, of the carved inscriptions. First, there are the most prominent of the inscriptions, those carved in capital letters down the sides of the whole main-post of the cross: 'The synagogue falls after stupid, criminal effort', and 'The Jews laugh at the death-agony of God' – *JUDEI RISERE, etc.*: see Plate VI. Then there is the very strange wording of the placard projecting over the hand of God (Plate VII), in which, in Greek, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Confessors' replaces the usual title 'King of the Jews'. Again, the implication seems to be strongly anti-Jewish; as if the donor of the cross could not stomach the idea of Christ as king of that people. ('Confessor' meant 'believer in Christ as Messiah.') Not only is this rare substitution of Confessors for Jews matched in a surviving Gospel of Mark from Bury abbey

(Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS 72), but there is an identical mistake in the spelling of the Greek form for Confessors (*EXOM [O]LISSON*) instead of *EXOMOLOGESION*).⁷ That is perhaps Hoving's most clinching argument for the cross's Bury origin.

Another remarkable parallel, between the capital-letter inscription (about the Curse of Ham) on the cross and the text of a verse arranged by Samson for the decoration of the monks' choir at Bury, is cited by Hoving as additional evidence for linking the cross not only with Bury, but also with the time of Samson. But, of course, an inscription on an *earlier* cross at Bury with which Samson was familiar might equally explain his versification of that particular story about Ham's Curse.

I need not recite here Hoving's very full account of the anti-Jewish elements that led him to conclude: 'The cross may not be the only medieval monument that carries on a polemic against the Jews, but it is not matched in vehemence.' Its anti-Jewish feeling is certainly strong enough to warrant the deduction that that feeling provides an essential clue to both the place and time (perhaps even the very occasion) of the cross's conception and execution. And that seems to rule out the possibility of Peter Lasko's preferred dates (c. 1100-1120). Lasko rightly remarks: 'That the anti-semitic content of these inscriptions points exclusively to Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds (1182-1211: Hoving, *op. cit.*) is not convincing'.⁸ But he is not at liberty to assume that anti-semitism found any expression in England in the first two decades of the 12th century, let alone the sort of explosively vehement expression seen in this cross. Hoving's generalisation is similarly misguided: 'It is against this poor, alien people and their Synagogue, harried and persecuted through the centuries, that the text of the cross directs itself with wrath'.⁹

Even the briefest reference to H. G. Richardson's book on *The English Jewry under Angevin Kings* (1960) would have corrected the misconception that the unimaginable suffering of the Jews in our own century makes us prone to. Richardson re-affirmed that there is no suggestion that Jews were settled in England before 1066, and he showed that, under the Conqueror, a Jewish community from Rouen was established in London; that 'French the Jews in England remained until their expulsion in 1290'; and that 'this Frenchness the English Jews shared with the English nobles'.¹⁰ What he is saying is that, far from being 'a poor, alien people', they were seen as part of the new alien governing establishment, however much they might be divided by religion from the other ruling Normans.

⁷ Hoving, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

⁸ Lasko, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-3, n. 41.

⁹ Hoving, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

Richardson also shows that there is no evidence of the Jewish community's being settled outside London until after 1130,¹¹ and that there, under Henry I's long rule (1100-1135), they enjoyed real privileges and liberties, and the king's protection.¹²

Perhaps equally relevant to Lasko's suggested dating is Richardson's evidence on the traditional hostility with which Christian churchmen naturally regarded Jews. Early in the 1090s, the Norman abbot of Westminster based a written 'Disputation' between Christian and Jew on discussions he himself had had with a learned Jew, and he makes the Jew ask why they should be treated like dogs, since it was agreed that the Mosaic law should be observed. Another 'Disputation', borrowing heavily from this one, but written late in, or soon after, Henry I's reign, omits that reference to Jewish ill-usage, and for Richardson this exemplifies the improved relations secured, however temporarily, under Henry I.¹³ In short, in England, the years 1100-1135 are the years most unlikely in the 12th century to have provided the circumstances of so considerably anti-semitic a great work of art.

Finally, Richardson shows the Jews spreading out from London under Stephen into parts he controlled, such as Norwich and Cambridge. It seems to me that this is the period (1135-1154) in which anti-Jewish sentiments probably began to develop. It is certainly the time at which Bury St. Edmunds begins to fit into the picture.

I think those who have studied the cross might agree that the most dramatic and significant of its carved scenes are set at the centre, the intersection, of the cross: at the back, the poignant figure of the Lamb of God; at the front (Plate VIII), most telling of all, and so lively as to be almost in motion, the lifting up on a cleft stick (symbolic, prophetic of Christ's cross, according to St. John's Gospel, 3.14) of a brazen serpent by Moses in the wilderness, so that those murmuring Israelites who had been bitten by real serpents might look on it and be cured (Numbers, 21. 8-9).

The unquestionable importance of this superb centrepiece would cast doubt on the proposition that the Oslo Museum's Christ was conceived for this crucifix, if his head masked it.¹⁴ (On the contrary, the severe tilt of the head down on to the right collarbone may mark the sculptor's intention to leave a view of the whole dram-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9: nor have later writers shown reason to think otherwise, e.g. V. D. Lipman, *The Jews of Medieval Norwich* (1967).

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 109-112.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴ M. Blindheim, 'En romansk Kristus-figur av hvalross-tann', *Årbuk*, 1968/9, Kunstindustrimuseet i Oslo, Oslo (1969); also Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Year 1200, Catalogue* (1970). It is now agreed that this Christ and cross remain together, 1 year in Oslo and 3 in New York, for the next 12 years.

atic action of the centrepiece, with Moses flinging his message scroll well clear.) For me, the natural interpretation of the powerful centrepiece starts with Moses, the most prominent figure, brandishing out from the cross, for all to see, his ominous, frightening message to the Israelites that proved all too truly prophetic: 'And thy life shall be in suspense before thee, and thou shalt fear, day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life'.

Whoever designed this cross was, surprisingly enough, addressing the Jews, trying to persuade them to save themselves from their enemies by understanding the truth about Christ's death. The message of this beautiful crucifix was, as usual, an urgent plea for a certain kind of understanding. The quotations betray much bitterness against the Jews for their part in slaughtering the Lamb of God, yet lead into this central message of hope for them. But how was it supposed that they would read it?

Jocelin of Brakelond's *Chronicle*, begun in 1198, the year of his first appointment as cellarer to St. Edmund's abbey,¹⁵ was written as a record of Abbot Samson's rule and of his encroachment on the rights of the convent, especially the rights of the cellarer,¹⁶ though the intensity of Jocelin's feelings produced such a vivid portrait of Samson that many modern writers, including Hoving, refer to the *Chronicle* as 'a biography'.¹⁷ Hoving expresses disappointment at Jocelin's 'somewhat brusque' references to Samson in the role of subsacrist and master of the works, yet Jocelin does record that, at the time of the ransoming of King Richard, Samson as abbot gave all his attention to the making of a very precious gold and silver cresting to St. Edmund's shrine, from which prominent place it could hardly be removed.¹⁸ I feel that Jocelin's *Chronicle* gives so full a picture of the abbey in his day that, had this cross been made during it, its creator, a major artist, and his achievement are most unlikely to have gone unmentioned. As to the Bury cross, Hoving quotes, without seeing its full significance, the reference by Jocelin that, above all, seems to me to make sense of the cross's extraordinary messages. One of Samson's first acts on becoming abbot, in 1182, was to dismiss the sacrist, William Wiardel. Jocelin explains why: 'The sacrist, William, was called the father and patron of the Jews; for they enjoyed his protection, and could come and go as they pleased, and went hither and thither throughout the mon-

¹⁵ Over the matter of the time at which Jocelin first began writing his *Chronicle* I disagree slightly with Mr. R. H. C. Davis, to whom we are indebted for the important discovery that Jocelin held this office, second only to that of prior: R. H. C. Davis, ed., *The Kalendar of Abbot Samson*, Camden Soc. (1954), pp. li-lvii.

¹⁶ This thesis I first propounded to the Suff. Inst. Arch. in a lecture in April 1963: I hope soon to publish it.

¹⁷ Hoving, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

¹⁸ H. E. Butler, ed., *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond* (1949), p. 97.

astery, *wandering past the altars*, and round the feretory, even while masses were being sung . . .¹⁹

I assume that 'the Bury cross' was a small altar cross, and stood in a church frequented by Jews; for its central purpose seems to be to address a warning to them and a passionate appeal to embrace Christianity. There cannot have been many such churches. It is to me of prime significance that, in a monastic church already linked, by Hoving, to this cross, on stylistic grounds, there is such remarkably explicit evidence that here the Jews would have been able to read its message; though not, presumably and significantly, *after* 1182.

At Bury, the altar most likely to have been dignified by this smallscale masterpiece is that of the monks' own choir. There was already a rood, heavily adorned with gold and silver by Archbishop Stigand, above the high altar²⁰ east of the monks' choir. The monks' choir itself was given a new enclosure by Samson when he was subsacrist; he had pictures painted on its walls and composed elegiac verses for them.²¹ The textual coincidence between cross and murals, cited by Hoving to suggest that the sculptor knew the paintings, could equally have worked the other way round, with Samson quoting a text he knew from daily familiarity with the cross on the altar of his own choir. Other reasons for thinking it belonged here, rather than at a side altar or the main nave altar, are its exquisite quality and its relatively small size: just under 2 feet high, and barely 14 inches in width. I see it standing so as to be visible from behind and from each side, as well as the front, on a low screen behind the monks' choir altar. We know from the surviving peg-holes on the cross that a separate small figure of Christ, probably the one at Oslo, originally hung from it. I believe, too, that there may have been separate small figures of Mary and John on either side. My reason for thinking this is that, from the *Gesta Sacristarum*, much is implied about the sculpture of the cross in the monks' choir. For we read that, between the years 1148-1156, it was carved incomparably by the hand of Master Hugo: '*Crucem in choro et Mariam et Iohannem per manus magistri Hugonis incomparabiliter insculpi.*'²²

The stylistic possibilities of 'the Bury cross' being Hugo's work will doubtless be argued out by more expert style-historians than

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10. My italics.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 108.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²² T. Arnold, ed., *Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, II (1892), p. 289. The scale of such a group composition would have been almost identical with the 14th-century wall-painting which serves as a reredos to the main altar in Brent Eleigh parish church, 12 miles south of Bury. The 'Rattlesden' St. John, dated by Lasko to c. 1180, clearly formed part of a comparable group (see *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.* xxxii (1973), p. 269, pl. xxx).

me. I am content to rest my case on the very remarkable comparisons already made by Hoving between the cross and the other surviving great masterpiece by Master Hugo, 'the Bury Bible'. That has now been dated to *c.* 1135 on stylistic grounds.²³ His cross he made between 1148-56. Meanwhile, perhaps *c.* 1140, he made the great double bronze doors for the west front of the abbey church: 'As in other works Hugo surpassed everyone else, in the making of these doors he surpassed himself'.²⁴ The doors have vanished, presumably at the Dissolution. If we assume that this ivory cross is his, and that he did both the Bible and it, may not the passing of between thirteen and twenty-one years and the experience of working in such very different materials (walrus-ivory is harder than elephant ivory, and the scale of the carving almost microscopic) have by themselves brought about incalculable changes (including even some loss of power) in the great artist's techniques? In analysing the Bury Bible, Kauffmann wrote: 'It is no longer possible to evaluate how far the difficulties in tracing the stylistic origins of the Bury Bible are due to Master Hugo's inventive genius . . .' My feeling is that such a high degree of potential inventiveness is equally likely to invalidate deductions about any major differences of treatment that may be found between the Bible and the considerably later cross.

Meanwhile, if I stop thinking about a hypothetical progressive development of the 'dampfold draperies' trick, and compare the right arm of Amos in Hugo's Bury Bible (Hoving, Plate 22) with that of Moses on the central disc of the cross (Hoving, Plate 24: here, Plate VIII), I see Moses as the freer, more emancipated, more assured piece of modelling. Above all, I see these two figures as being extremely close in style, as Hoving, the Metropolitan Museum's expert, did. Whereas I see Amos as an earlier work by the *same* artist, Hoving saw it as an earlier work, influencing a different artist working in the same abbey half a century later. And it is reasonable to suppose the *missing* figure of the hanging Christ would have been carved more ambitiously than that of Christ in the miniature Deposition (Plate IX); just as the few surviving large-scale pictures in the Bury Bible show greater virtuosity than the smaller ones, like that of Amos. This point certainly promotes acceptance of the Oslo Museum Christ.

I recognise the force of Professor Lasko's comparison between details of the Bury cross and late 11th-century and early 12th-century Lotharingian works in the same medium: the central ivory panel (? *c.* 1101/7), for instance, in the book-cover of the Gospels of Bishop Notger of Liège.²⁵ Before I turn to look closely at the story

²³ Kauffmann, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Arnold, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ Lasko, *op. cit.*, plate 170.

of anti-Jewish feeling in Bury round about the years 1148-56, which seems to me to help to clinch my own argument, let me consider, briefly, ways in which a superb Bury artist, working in the 1130s and 1140s, might have absorbed some of the plastic ideas Professor Lasko finds running parallel in England and Lower Lotharingia (particularly in Liège), and which might have provided Hugo with a working model.

An obvious means of contact was Baldwin, possibly the greatest of Bury's abbots (1065-1098). Between St. Denis and Bury, he was prior of Liberau, in Upper Lotharingia.²⁶ In furnishing the apsidal eastern chapels of his great new abbey-church at Bury,²⁷ he is more than likely to have used works of art brought with him or sent as mementoes of the region of his earlier monastic rule. Then, a successor as abbot of Bury, for about five years during the first two decades of the 12th century, was Albold. He had previously been prior of Meulan. The dedication of the easternmost apsidal chapel at Bury to his patron, St. Nicaise, suggests Albold's devotion to that saint, and that he would therefore have been familiar with Nicaise's famous foundation at Rheims, in Champagne, which was also presumably within the artistic orbit of Liège.²⁸

I turn back to Bury and the extraordinary subject-matter of the ivory cross. The main indication that the Jews may have been unpopular at Bury in the days *before* Samson's abbacy is given by Jocelin of Brakelond. As cellarer, one of the three chief obedientiaries, he was all too familiar with the estates and debts of the abbey. Jocelin's *Chronicle* opens in 1173, with his own start at the abbey. Abbot Hugh was getting old. He was a good monk, but a feeble abbot, and no use at managing the abbey's money affairs. St. Benedict's *Rule* was strictly obeyed, and God was honoured in the regular services of the monks' choir. But the abbey was deep in debt.

Twenty years earlier, in the time of Abbot Ording, a fire had burnt the refectory, dormitory, chapter-house and infirmary, and the abbot's hall – all of which had already been newly rebuilt once since the beginning of the century.²⁹ Now their repair (Mr. Whittingham thinks 'mainly reroofing') was quickly put in hand and completed under Helyas, the sacrist for whom Master Hugo made the new cross for the monks' choir. Abbot Hugh followed Ording as abbot in 1157, so there is every probability that he started in debt, with

²⁶ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, sub Baldwin.

²⁷ A. B. Whittingham, *Arch. Jour.* cviii (1952), p. 170 and R. Gilyard-Beer 'The Eastern Arm of the Abbey Church at Bury St. Edmunds', *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxxi (1969), pp. 256-262.

²⁸ The possible debt of St. Edmund's 'pilgrimage-church' transepts to Albold and Saint-Remi de Reims is suggested by Gilyard-Beer, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Whittingham, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

so much building-work to be paid for. By the time Jocelin arrived, as a novice, sixteen years later, the abbey's affairs were in a very poor way.

Borrowing was the only solution that Abbot Hugh could think of. Every half-year, Jocelin says,³⁰ one or two hundred pounds were added to the debt. (I suppose a multiplier of about a hundred is not now too much to give some idea of this in modern money.)

'I saw a bond given to William FitzIsabel³¹ for £1,040, but have no idea what it was for. I saw another bond that was given to Isaac, the son of Rabbi Joce,³² for £400, but I don't know why. And I saw another given to Benedict³³ the Jew of Norwich for £880 . . . *We had owed Benedict another debt for fourteen years.* In all, we owed him £1,200, not counting all the greatly increased interest . . . Then the cellarer, without telling the rest of the monks, owed £60 to Jurnet,³⁴ Benedict's brother.'

Jurnet's home, the Stone House in King Street, still survives in Norwich.³⁵ In Bury, Hatter Street, quite close to the abbey, was then known as Heathenman's Street. The Jews were protected by the king, and when a Jew died the king could, and sometimes did, claim all his wealth. Christians who owed money to Jews could actually gain by the Jews' death, for the king did not usually claim from *them* all the debt that they had owed to the Jews. Financial indebtedness to the Jews undoubtedly underlay much of their 'unpopularity', which certainly culminated in slaughter in 1190, but which was fluctuating ominously in East Anglian towns in the 1140s and 1150s.

Jocelin's references to the Norwich Jews are very much to the point. Jurnet of Norwich was one of the richest Jews in England. In 1144, a Norwich boy of 12 called William was either killed by accident, or else murdered, in circumstances that would nowadays lead us to suspect sexual complications. It now seems questionable whether the boy's death was caused by a Jew, but the relevance of the story to the Bury cross is that people in East Anglia, at the time of the making of Hugo's cross for the monks' choir, were ready to believe that the boy died by crucifixion at Jewish hands. The evidence relating to the episode was thoroughly examined and published by Augustus Jessopp and M. R. James in their book, *St. William of Norwich*, in 1896, and there has been a more recent

³⁰ Jocelin of Brakelond, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-6. My italics.

³¹ He seems to have been a Christian usurer: Lipman, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

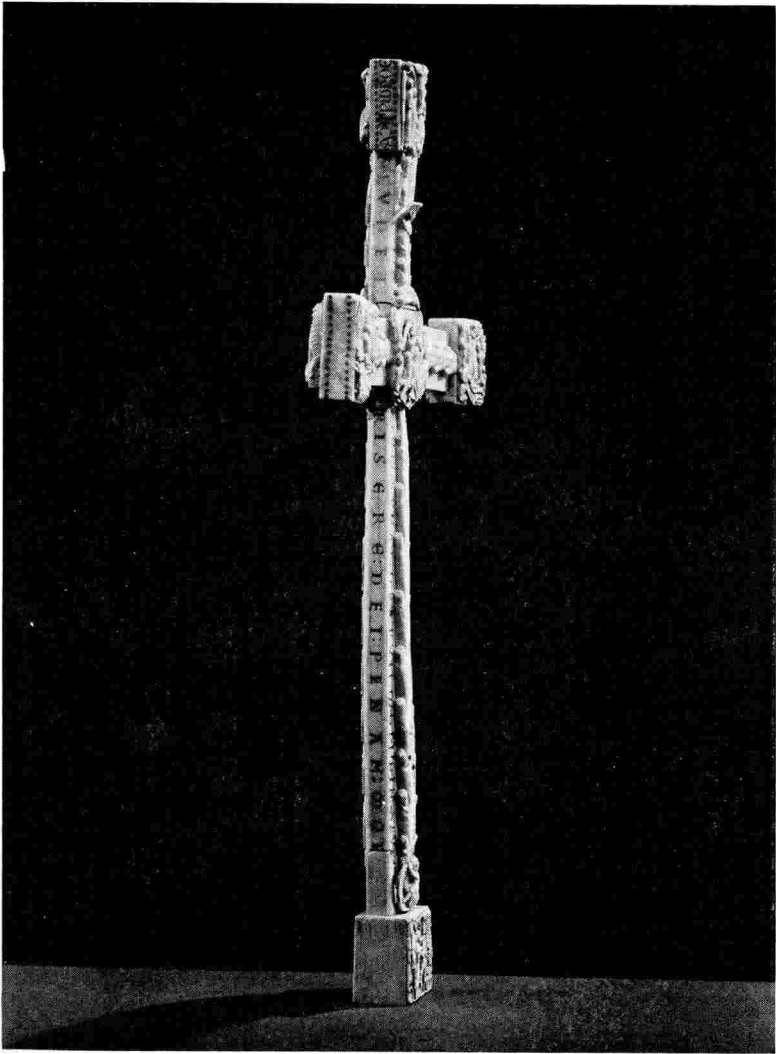
³² Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 11, 239. Josce was the distinguished rabbi of the London synagogue in Henry I's reign.

³³ Lipman, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-102.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-32, Ch. VI (pp. 95-112), p. 150.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

PLATE VI



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, Purchase, 1963.

Inscription down left side of cross, taunting the Jews for their derision at Christ's death: 'IUDEI: RISERE: DEI: PENAM: MOR[TIS]'

PLATE VII



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Clusters Collection, Purchase, 1963.

The placard projecting above the hand of God says, in Latin: *IESUS NA[Z]ARENS REX CONFESSORUM* - 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the *Confessors*.' And in Greek it reads: *[BASI] LEOS EXOM[O]LISSON* - instead of *exomologesion* (see p. 78).

PLATE VIII



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, Purchase, 1963.

Scene at centre of cross, with the brazen serpent. Moses, centre foreground, displays to all Israelites the message: 'And thy life shall be in suspense before thee . . .' (see p. 79).



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, Purchase, 1963.

Tablet showing the Deposition and Lamentation: 'They shall weep for him as for an only-begotten son'.

look at it in a book called *Saint at Stake* by M. D. Anderson. The case is also thoroughly examined and summarised by V. D. Lipman.³⁶ Apart from the abbey's debts to Norwich Jews, its involvement, and the involvement of Bury and Suffolk people, in the cult of St. William is clearly recorded.

On Whit-Saturday, 1152, a Bury woman bent double from infancy went to Norwich as instructed by St. William in a dream, and got as close to the saint's tomb as the throng would allow: there she prayed, and an hour later was cured.³⁷ At a time unrecorded, a Lincolnshire man who (provoked) slew his brother and two nephews with a pitchfork, travelled the saintly shrines of England with his right arm clasped in a ring made from the pitchfork. At Bury, the ring snapped and the arm became acutely painful, whereupon St. Edmund, in the usual dream, recommended a visit to St. William, who did the trick. Contemporaries, marvelling at the unjealous collaboration of the two saints, reflected that: 'the one withstood the heathen [Danes] raging against the law of Christ, the other endured the Jews, renewing, as it were, in him the death of Christ'.³⁸

Here are signs of quite enough anti-Jewish sentiment to warrant the conception of the themes of that ivory crucifix. The translation of the boy William's corpse from a place near the monks' cemetery gate at Norwich to the chapter-house in 1150, and from the chapter-house to the south side of the high altar in 1152, and from there to the Martyrs' Chapel north of the high altar in 1154, must be reckoned something of a register of anti-Jewish emotions, first in Norwich itself, of course, but also in the neighbouring East Anglian mercantile centre of Bury, where the Jews flourished, to their increasing peril, in their own street.

On a very prominent scroll between the shrouded Christ and the skulls of Golgotha, in the tablet showing the Deposition and Lamentation (Plate IX), the inscription is taken from Zechariah: 'They shall weep for him as for an only-begotten son'. Here the Jewish sorrows are anticipated, and a local contemporary reference to St. William may well have been implied and understood: he, too, was an only-begotten son.

St. Edmund's abbey certainly seems to have supplied the conditions for the carving of this extraordinary crucifix, and belief in the boy William's crucifixion may have supplied the occasion. The 'incomparable' qualities of the design suggest that Hugo's was the hand that made it.

³⁶ Lipman, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-57.

³⁷ Jessopp and James, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-241.