

A 12th-century figure from Jedburgh Abbey

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In the museum at Jedburgh Abbey there is a fragmentary figure which is preserved from the lower thigh to just above the waist (pl 27a). On the left of the figure is seen the lower part of the bib-like fold of the overgarment which falls in a 'U' shape just touching the thigh and returns over the damaged left forearm to fall to the side of the leg. From the damage to the central area of the bib it appears that the lost left hand originally held an attribute. Around the waist the overgarment is pulled in a tight band with multiple fine folds at the top and bottom. The right and, now damaged, left thighs are plain, while a heavy tube of drapery falls to the side of the right leg. Nested 'V' and fine straight folds are arranged between the legs. The figure has a plain, slightly curved back and is 13.25 in (336 mm) in height.

The exact provenance of the fragment is not recorded but there is no reason to assume that it came from anywhere other than the abbey.

Stylistically the fragment is clearly related to sculpture and painting in the N of England. The nested 'V' and fine parallel folds between the legs, the unornamented thigh and heavy fold at the side of the right leg are all comparable with the statuette from Bridlington priory preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (pl 27b). Zarnecki has convincingly related this Bridlington figure to the strongly Byzantinising Visitation group in the Copenhagen Psalter (Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 143 2, fol 8v: Zarnecki 1953, 48, 62–3) (pl 28a). Extending the comparison to the Jedburgh fragment we notice that the gathering of the fine folds of the waist band in the sculpture and the manner in which the band loops up over the right thigh leaving an oval termination at the top are handled in a similar way in the miniature. The Copenhagen Psalter was probably executed before 1173 because of the absence of Thomas Becket in the calendar. It is also possible that the Augustinian priory of Bridlington was the place of production of the book for the calendar and litany indicate the use of a northern house of that order (Kauffmann 1975, 118–20). In the final analysis, even in the absence of precise evidence as to the provenance of the manuscript, it seems safe to follow Zarnecki's lead that because of the similarity between the Bridlington statuette and the psalter illumination the sculpture may be put to the decade 1170–80 (1953, 48, 62). Zarnecki has further shown that stylistically related sculpture at York was executed c 1170–90 (1975, 17–20). It is to this sculpture that we must now turn in relation to the Jedburgh fragment.

In the left spandrel inside the main W window of York Minster is reset an angel of St Matthew which probably originally decorated the choir screen erected by Archbishop Roger before 1181 (Zarnecki 1975, 19–20) (pl 28b). The arrangement of the angel's garments is akin to the Jedburgh fragment. The wide band of the overgarment pulled from the back around the waist, the bib-like fold falling from the left shoulder to the top of the thigh and returning over the left forearm to fall to the side of the leg, and the unornamented thighs are all very close. The draperies of the York Matthew symbol are handled with greater plasticity than at Jedburgh

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and are more accomplished in naturalistic terms. In short the York sculpture is stylistically more advanced and presages the phase of classicising naturalism of the late 12th and early 13th centuries in European art¹. This is not to say that its absolute date is any earlier or later than the Jedburgh fragment, but simply that the metropolitan master has created a more fashionable figure. Indeed, that both works are happy in the 1170s may be demonstrated by comparing the formal motifs of both figures with the angels in the spandrels in the Last Judgment in Paris (Bibl Nat MS lat 10433, fol 9), which was produced before 1173 (Kauffmann 1975, 114, cat no 89, fig 254).

From the St Matthew angel it is but a small step to the York St Mary's St John the Evangelist which was probably carved between 1180 and 1190² (pl 29a). The bib fold, the folds over the left leg of St John and those over the right leg of the angel follow the same contours. Likewise the St John may be compared with the Jedburgh fragment in the bib fold and the nested 'V's between the legs.

There is, then, a distinct three-way relationship between the Jedburgh, Bridlington and York sculptures which may be further substantiated by the comparison of a head corbel at Jedburgh with one on the reconstructed cloister arcade in the N nave aisle at Bridlington, and the Moses from St Mary's abbey, York (pls 29b, 30a & 30b). The broad forehead and the shape and structure of the eyes are virtually identical in the three works³. The hair of the Jedburgh corbel is dressed in a far more conventional manner than either the Bridlington or Moses head. Such a style may, however, be happily derived from the strongly Byzantinising Dover Bible (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 3-4), as seen in the St Matthew on folio 168v⁴.

While the Byzantinisms in the garments of the Dover Bible figures are not specifically related to the Jedburgh figure fragment, the formal drapery conventions of the Scottish sculpture clearly belong to the curvilinear damp fold tradition of Master Hugo of Bury St Edmunds⁵. This is seen by comparing the treatment of the folds over the legs and waist of the figure of Penninah in the scene of Elkanah distributing clothes to his wives in the Bury Bible, (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 2, fol 147v: pl 31a). The curvilinear damp fold style is found elsewhere in English sculpture. The Christ in Majesty from the W front of Lincoln cathedral is directly related to Christ in Ezekiel's Vision in the Bury Bible (fol 281v)⁶. The figures on the lead font at Walton-on-the-Hill (Surrey) are intimately connected to the Bury Bible and the seal of Bury St Edmunds which Zarnecki has suggested may be the work of Master Hugo (Zarnecki 1957, 5-7; 27-30). Prior and Gardner have compared the Malmesbury S porch archivolt figures with the Psalter of Henry of Blois (British Library, Cotton MS Nero C 1v) (Prior & Gardner 1912, 189). Finally, in the N of England the relief panels from the former choir screen of Durham cathedral present us with a clear example of the damp fold convention (Zarnecki 1953, 32-4, 58, ill 67; Saxl 1954, 64-6, pl 84-7).

Curvilinear damp fold draperies are found not only in British sculpture but also in N French work⁷. For example, in Parisian sculpture of the 1160s Master Hugo's style is evident as is witnessed in the vousoir and column figures of the Sainte-Anne portal of Notre-Dame⁸. Especially interesting for our purposes is one of the four half life-size figures in the S transept clerestorey at Bayeux cathedral⁹ (pl 31b). In a paper delivered at the Seventh International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in 1972, Professor William Clark cogently argued that the Bayeux sculptures originally adorned the choir screen which was probably erected by Bishop Philippe de Harcourt after the fire of 1160, and related them stylistically to sculpture in the region of Paris in the 1160s¹⁰. With this in mind it is interesting to compare the Bayeux figure with the Jedburgh fragment (pls 27a & 31b). The nested 'V's between the legs flanked by fine, shallow folds delineating the thighs are close, as is the oval termination to the

top of the right thigh, and the way in which the bib fold returns over the left forearm to fall to the side of the leg. The parallel may naturally be extended to the Bridlington statuette where one also finds over the left thigh finely incised folds akin to those on the thighs of the Bayeux figure (pls 27b & 31b). The Bayeux sculpture is stylistically earlier than the Jedburgh and Bridlington work because of the greater linearity in the folds. Indeed, in the emphasis on the knees and the hyperbolic folds over the shins the Bayeux figure has more than a little in common with the York Minster Virgin which Zarnecki has dated neatly to 1154, and which was produced under strong Byzantine influence (Zarnecki 1953, 29–31; see also Saxl 1954, 23–32). One further detail of the Bayeux figure may be related to N English sculpture. The grouped folds which shoot out diagonally from between the legs just above the hem are also seen in the York St Mary's St John the Evangelist (pls 29a & 31b). This feature, common in the curvilinear damp fold tradition, is seen in its most extreme form in the Lambeth Bible, (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 3: Dodwell 1959, pl 1–6).

The Jedburgh figure therefore belongs, in the first place, to a family of sculptures and manuscript illumination in the N of England executed c 1170–90, and, secondly, to a much larger group of works which derive from the curvilinear damp fold style of Master Hugo. The cross-Channel relationships in this style, so long noted for painting, are now clearly seen in sculpture with the Jedburgh/Bayeux/Bridlington parallel¹¹. This is not the place to enter into debate over the general concept of a Channel School in sculpture, but it must be said that the Bayeux connections in style raise important questions as to the nature and direction of cross-Channel influences¹².

The Jedburgh fragment may be reconstructed with reference to the York St Mary's St John the Evangelist to the approximate height of 48 inches¹³. The slightly curved, plain back of the figure precludes its use on a door jamb in the French fashion and suggests instead that it was originally placed in a niche (for French jamb figures see Sauerlander 1972, 13–17). By happy coincidence the central gable niche of the abbey W doorway is 52 in (1.32 m) in height, so it may well be that our fragment was originally set in this niche¹⁴ (pl 32a). Such an arrangement of a gable niche figure finds parallel in English 12th-century sculpture on the N porch at Balderton (Notts), and above the N doorway at Lullington (Somerset)¹⁵. It is unlikely that there is any direct connection between these works and the Jedburgh fragment. Instead one must look once again to Yorkshire for an immediate source. Proof of a N English exemplar is lacking, but certain evidence at least points in that direction. The W front of Nun Monkton has four niches for life-size figures, one of which preserves a female statue and another the lower section of a bare-footed figure, and a smaller in the gable of the portal¹⁶ (pl 32b). The figures were produced by the workshop responsible for the York St Mary's sculptures and the life-size statues from Archbishop Roger's W front of York Minster, 1154–81, 19 of which are extant in various states of preservation¹⁷. Excavation has determined that Roger's Minster façade had a porch 11 ft (3.36 m) wide set between 22 ft (6.72 m) square towers (Pevsner 1972, 82–3). Reading Nun Monkton as a reduced version of the Minster front in terms of portal design and figure placement, then one might postulate a more elaborate porch for the Minster. Perhaps we can suggest niched triple gables like Jedburgh W portal and therefore also create a convenient model for the 13th-century porch of the Minster S transept (Britton 1836, pl 8). While the Minster W porch reconstruction and its connection with Jedburgh must remain tentative, there is, in addition to the figure style already discussed, clear evidence of a close tie between Jedburgh and buildings in the N of England which will be of assistance in dating our fragmentary figure through its architectural setting. The W portal of Jedburgh was constructed in the same campaign as the nave arcades and aisles (RCAMS 1956, 194ff). Details from this build will therefore be taken

together to determine the date of the W portal with its gable niche for the figure. The multiple chevron set at right angles to the plane of the wall on order 5 of the Jedburgh W doorway is the same as that on order 2 of Selby N doorway, and order 3 of the W doorway of that abbey, c 1180 (Boase 1953, pl 47b). The triple shafts supporting the inner order of the Jedburgh doorway are paralleled in the doorway to the Bishop's Hall in Durham Castle where one also finds the rich ornamentation between the jamb shafts as at Jedburgh. The Durham doorway was executed for Bishop Puiset, 1153–91, probably after 1170 (Boase 1953, fig 17). The octofoil piers of the nave arcade at Jedburgh are also found in Selby nave, pier 6; Roche nave; Newminster transept; Furness transept and nave; Jervaulx choir; Ripon choir; and Byland S transept and first four piers of the nave (Fergusson 1974, 164–5). Of these we know that Ripon was begun before 1181 by Archbishop Roger of York, and Byland nave E bays were probably completed for the arrival of the monks in 1177 (Raine 1894, 82, no 63; Fergusson 1974). The bases at Jedburgh correspond exactly with those in the c 1170–7 phase at Byland (Fergusson 1974, 173). The Jedburgh capitals are carved with a mixture of waterleaf and crockets which are closely related to the pre-1177 Byland examples, and the abaci in the two places are identical. The arch mouldings at Jedburgh and Byland clearly belong to the same family as can be seen by comparing the Jedburgh arches with the fragmentary S transept E arcade S springer at Byland. Both have triple soffit rolls although the angular fillets between the rolls at Byland are absent at Jedburgh. A closer parallel for the Jedburgh pattern, albeit without a keel to the central roll, is found in the S transept E arcade, S bay, at Furness¹⁸. This phase of Furness is not dated by any documentary evidence, but two details from the N transept, which appears to follow on immediately from the S, find parallel in dated buildings. The form of the N transept tribune arches with trefoil arched subdivisions is the same as the fragmentary arcade of Archbishop Roger's palace at York of pre-1181¹⁹. The very unusual multiple billet on the outer order of the Furness N transept doorway is akin to the second order of the doorway to the Bishop's Hall in Durham Castle, pre-1191, the triple inner shafts of which we have already related to Jedburgh. From these comparisons it is evident that the Jedburgh nave/W front campaign was underway c 1170–90, which, given the placement of our figure in the central niche of the W portal, happily coincides with the date suggested through stylistic analysis of the fragment.

In spite of the fragmentary state of the Jedburgh figure it is of great importance in furthering our understanding of the placement and style of large-scale figure sculpture in late 12th-century Britain, and in introducing fundamental questions regarding the spread of the curvilinear damp fold style on both sides of the Channel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I should like to thank Christopher Wilson for introducing me to this sculpture.

NOTES

- 1 This is not to suggest that the York sculptor looked to nature or classical models as source material. His style, as we will discuss below, is to be explained with reference to the curvilinear damp-fold tradition in England. For the fully developed phase of classicising naturalism in European art see P Lasko, *Ars Sacra, 800–1200*, Harmondsworth, 1972, 240–52; L M Ayres, The work of the Morgan Master at Winchester and English Painting of the Early Gothic Period, *Art Bull*, 56, 1974, 201–23; Caviness 1977; Thurlby 1976.
- 2 Zarnecki 1975, 19. The dating of the York St Mary's figures to c 1180–90 is fully discussed in Thurlby *Thesis*, chapter 3.

- 3 The connection between Bridlington and the St Mary's abbey sculpture may be substantiated by comparing the rolled hair of the label head from the Bridlington cloister arcade, now in the N porch, with the same feature on a fragmentary head from St Mary's in the Yorkshire Museum. Similarly, the symmetrical arrangement of the crescent-shaped lobe backing the cluster of leaves on York St Mary's capital fragments nos 985 and 986 in the museum may be compared with the arrangement on the two acanthus capitals at Bridlington. Furthermore on capital 986 a berry on a stalk appears above and between two crescents in exactly the same way as on one of the Bridlington capitals.
- The drilled pupils of a second, bearded corbel head in the Jedburgh Museum may be compared with the York Minster Matthew symbol thus furthering the York-Jedburgh parallels.
- 4 Kauffman 1975, ill 188. The same convention is employed for the hair of Abel on the Lincoln frieze (G Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture at Lincoln Cathedral*, 2nd rev ed, Lincoln, 1970, pl 3a).
- 5 For the Bury Bible see C M Kauffman, *The Bury Bible*, *J Warburg Courtauld Inst*, 29, 1966, 60–81; Kauffmann 1975, cat no 56 with bibliography to which should be added, R M Thompson, *The Date of the Bury Bible Re-examined*, *Viator*, 6, 1975, 51–8.
- 6 For the Bury Bible illumination see Kauffman 1975, ill 153; for the Lincoln Christ see G Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture at Lincoln Cathedral*, Lincoln, 1970, pl 18 & 20a. I should like to thank Professor Zarnecki for drawing my attention to this comparison.
- 7 For the occurrence of curvilinear damp-fold in painting across the Channel see: Dodwell 1954, 54–6; Dodwell 1959, 16–19; Rickert 1965, 78; Dodwell 1971, 178–9; Ayres 1976, 120–40. Ayres raises very important questions regarding the direction of cross-Channel influences in curvilinear damp-fold style with specific reference to the Bury and Lambeth Bibles.
- 8 This is most clearly seen by comparing the fragmentary column-figure of St Peter, (J Cuenot (ed), *Les Rois Retrouves*, Paris, 1977, pl 79), with the figure of Aaron on fol 94 of the Bury Bible, (Kauffman 1975, ill 149). Ayres parallel between Master Hugo's style and the illumination of the glossed bible (Paris, Bib Nat MS lat 14771), which may have been produced in Paris is also interesting in this connection (Ayres 1976, 138–9).
- 9 These figures and a further related example in the Musée Lapidaire are briefly described by J Thirion, *La cathédrale de Bayeux*, *Congres Archaeologique de France*, 132, 1974 (1978), 258–9.
- 10 Many thanks to Professor Clark for drawing my attention to the Bayeux figures, for kindly sending me a copy of his paper, and supplying the relevant photograph.
- 11 For cross-Channel relationships in 12th-century painting see: Boase 1953, 180–8; Dodwell 1954, 54–6, 104–11; Dodwell 1959, 16–19; Rickert 1965, 78, 94–5; Ayres 1969, 41–54; Dodwell 1971, 178–9, 206–7; Kauffman 1975, 27–8; W Cahn, *St Albans and the Channel Style in England*, *The Year 1200: A Symposium*, New York, 1975, 115–46; Ayres 1976, 115–46; Caviness 1977.
- 12 Nineteen unpublished life-size figures from the W front of York Minster are also very important here. They were reused on the 14th-century façade having formerly adorned the western block erected by Archbishop Roger (1154–81). In addition to being directly related to the Minster Matthew symbol and to the stained glass from Roger's choir they are closely akin to contemporary sculpture in France especially St Denis, Porte de Valois, c 1175 (Sauerlander 1972, 410, pl 48–9, ill 28); and Chalons-sur-Marne, Notre-Dame-en-Vaux, before 1183 (J Cuenot (ed), *Images d'un cloître disparu*, Paris, 1976). The Minster figures are discussed in Thurlby *Thesis*, chapter 3 and are the subject of a forthcoming paper.
- 13 The calculation is made on the basis of the comparison of the Jedburgh fragment with the York St Mary's St John the Evangelist. The distance from the top to the little finger to the bottom 'V' fold between the legs of St John was taken to represent the approximate extent to correspond to the Jedburgh fragment. A slide of the St John was projected so that this distance read 10 in (250 mm) which resulted in an overall height of 37 in (0.94 m) for the figure. Applying this to the Jedburgh piece, the height of 13.25 in (336 mm) is multiplied by 3.7 giving the total height for the reconstructed figure of 47.7 in (1.21 m).
- 14 Measurement taken from the scale drawing of the W front of Jedburgh Abbey published in the National Art Survey of Scotland, pl 9. I should like to thank Dr Richard Fawcett for supplying a photocopy of this place.
- 15 For Balderton see Boase 1953, pl 70a; for Lullington see A Gardner, *English Medieval Sculpture*, Cambridge, 1951, fig 133.
- 16 For the Nun Monkton sculpture see Thurlby, *Thesis*, chapter 3.

- 17 For the York Minster figures see note 12, and on their relationship with those from St Mary's see Thurlby *Thesis*, chapter 3. The theory that the St Mary's figures came from the jambs of a portal or portals is not tenable (W Sauerlander, Sens and York, *J Brit Archaeol Assoc*, 22, 1959, 53–69). There is no archaeological evidence to support the existence of a portal, and, furthermore, the shape of the backs of the figures precludes their ever having been part of a portal scheme. One figure (R Marcouse, *Figure Sculpture in St Mary's Abbey, York*, York, 1951, pl 1), has a 90° back, while two others (Marcouse pl 12b & 13a) have them steeply rounded. The remaining figures have flat backs. The latter must have been placed against a flat wall surface, while those with steeply rounded and right angled backs would fit perfectly into a corner setting. The columns rising from the backs of the necks would probably have continued to a capital from which an arch or rib would have sprung. The most likely structure for these figures to have occupied would have been the chapter house and vestibule, as first suggested by Zarnecki (*Romanesque Sculpture at Lincoln Cathedral*, Lincoln, 1970, 24, note 49; Zarnecki's ideas are expanded in the *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, City of York*, IV, London, 1975, xlii). The chapter house setting for support figures finds parallel in the 12th-century example at St Etienne, Toulouse, as reconstructed by Linda Seidel, *A Romantic Forgery: The Romanesque 'Portal' of St Etienne, Toulouse*, *Art Bull*, 50, 1968, 33–42), and in the Camara Santa at Oviedo (De Palol & M Hirmer, *Early Medieval Art in Spain*, London, 1967, pl 192–6). In both cases paired apostles support the transverse arches of a barrel vault. Furthermore, the motif of chapter house caryatids finds parallel in Durham (Zarnecki 1953, 16–17, 56, figs 36–7). It is likely that the iconographic arrangement of the St Mary's chapter house figures would have followed Toulouse and Oviedo in having apostles supporting the transverse arches of the vault. Examination of the plan of the chapter house shows that along the S side there were five buttresses thus making a five-bay division in the structure, exactly the right number for six apostles along each side. The Old Testament figures, including John the Baptist as the last of the forerunners of Christ, would then have been placed in the vestibule.

There is a fragment of a figure preserved in the Yorkshire Museum which is stylistically akin to the rest of the St Mary's figures and yet is set apart in that it is not placed on a base. Instead, on the underside there is a clear centrally placed circular mark six in (52 mm) in diameter, the same size as the late 12th-century shafts in the chapter house vestibule. The figure is of unknown provenance, but its previous location in the rockery behind the museum suggests that it may have come from the abbey. The maximum height of the fragment is 21 in (533 mm), that is the height from the hem to just above the knees. The figure would therefore have been approximately the same size as the others. The original setting of the figure poses an insoluble problem, the cloister, a portal with a splayed rather than a stepped jamb because the figure has a flat back, or a caryatid figure for a vault other than in the chapter house and vestibule.

- 18 For Furness see W H St John Hope, *The Abbey of St Mary in Furness*, Kendal, 1902; J C Dickinson, *Furness Abbey*, London, 1965; J C Dickinson, *Furness Abbey – an archaeological reconsideration*, *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Archaeol Soc*, N ser, 68, 1967, 51–80.
- 19 For Archbishop Roger's Palace at York see J Browne, *The History of the Metropolitan Church of St Peter*, York, London, Oxford & York, 1847, pl XXXII.

POSTSCRIPT

Since completing this article two important papers on Master Hugo have appeared: E P McLachlan, *In the Wake of the Bury Bible: The Followers of Master Hugo at Bury St Edmunds*, *J Warburg Courtauld Inst*, 42, 1979, 216–24; E C Parker, *Master Hugo as Sculptor: A Source for the Style of the Bury Bible*, *Gesta*, 20(1), 1981, 99–108. The latter is of particular interest in view of the parallels between the Bury Bible and English and French sculpture discussed above.

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b Bridlington Priory: statuette: c 1170–80 (By courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum)



a Jedburgh Abbey Museum: figure fragment: c 1170–90



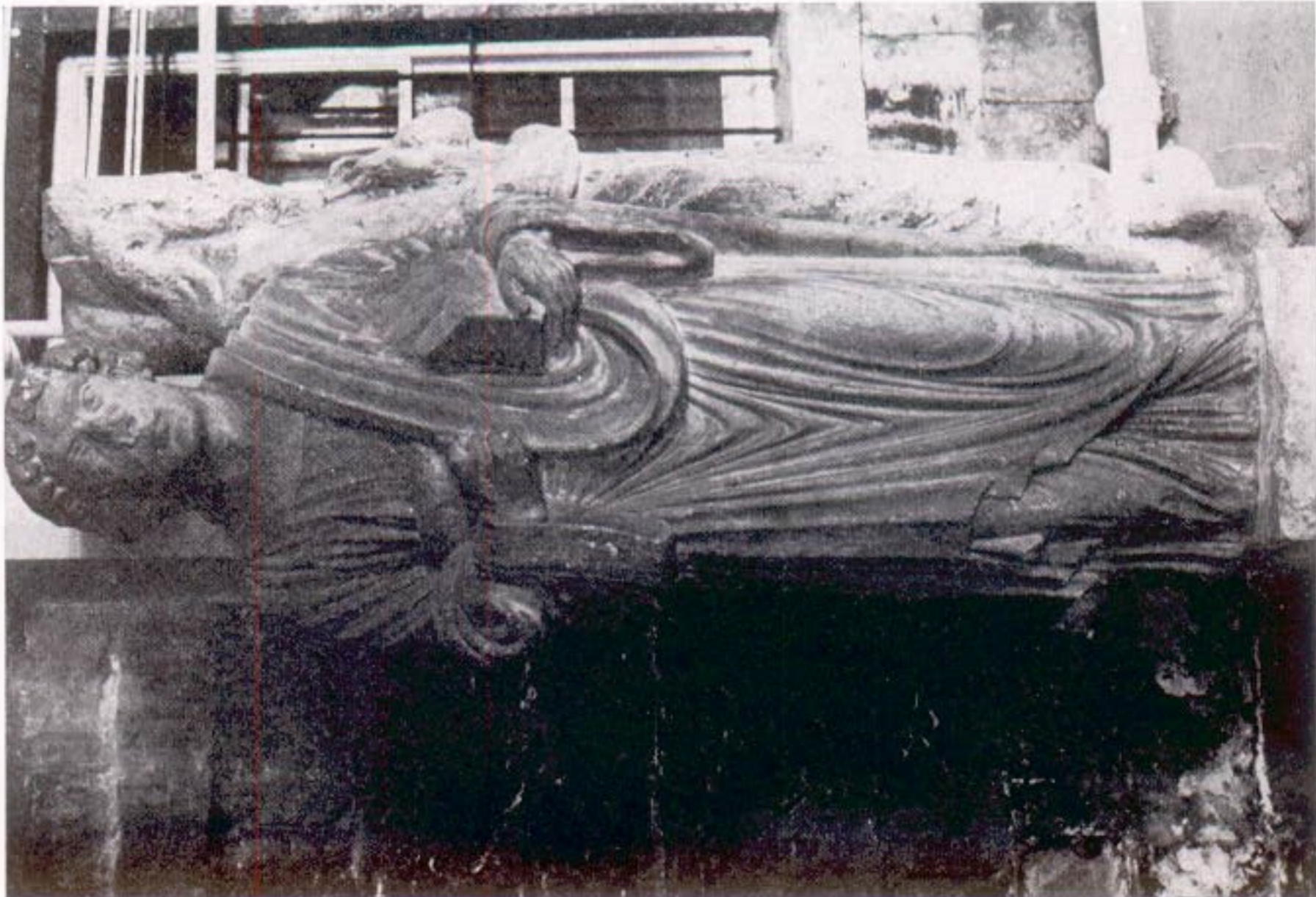
b York Minster: symbol of St Matthew reset in the inner left spandrel of the main W window: before 1181 (By courtesy: D E O'Connor)



a Ms Thott 143.2, fol L b v: probably before 1173 (By courtesy: Copenhagen Royal Library)



b Jedburgh Abbey Museum: corbel head: c 1170–90



a York, St Mary's Abbey: St John the evangelist: c 1180–90



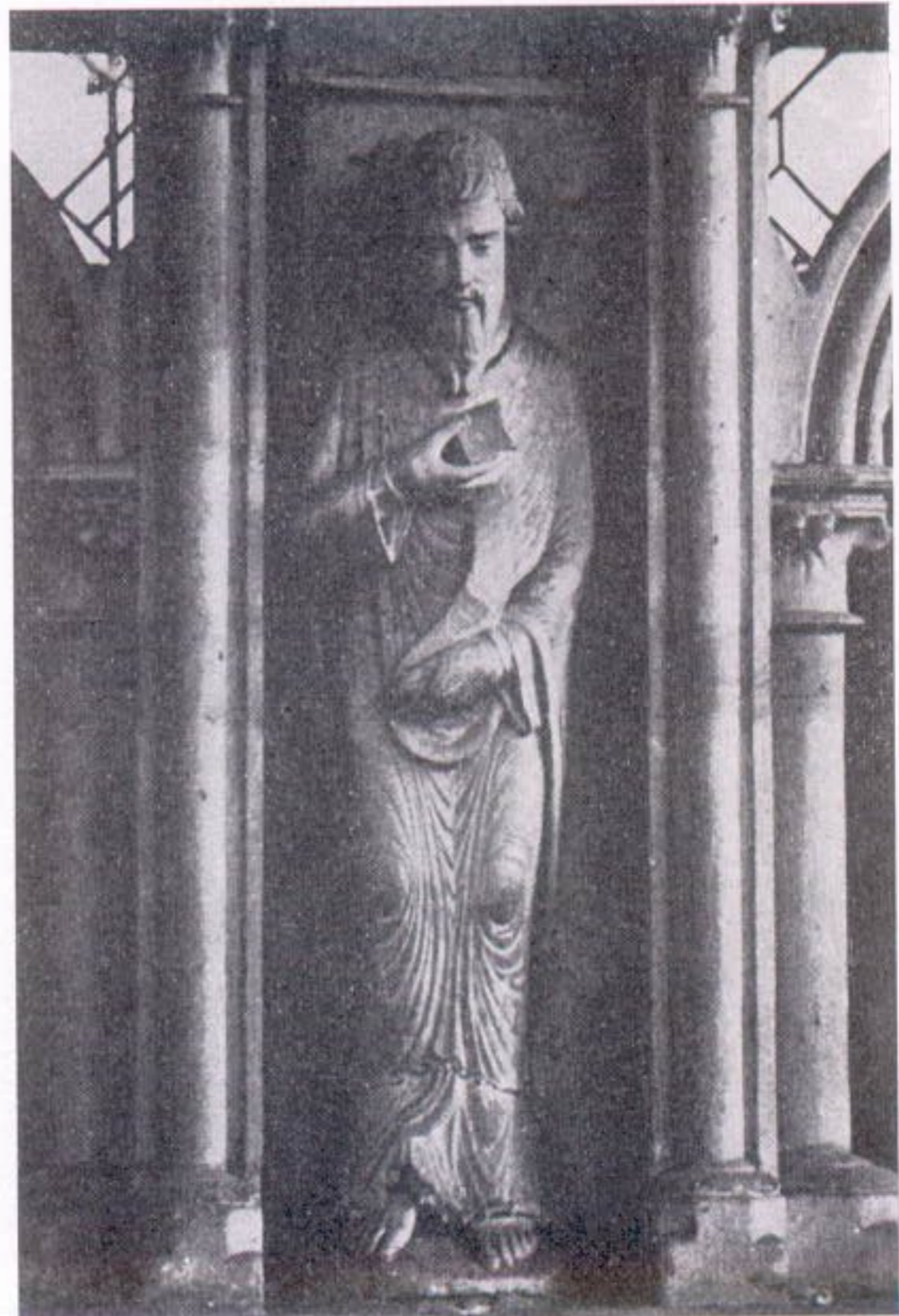
b York, St Mary's Abbey: Moses, detail of head: c 1180-90
(By courtesy: Courtauld Institute of Art)



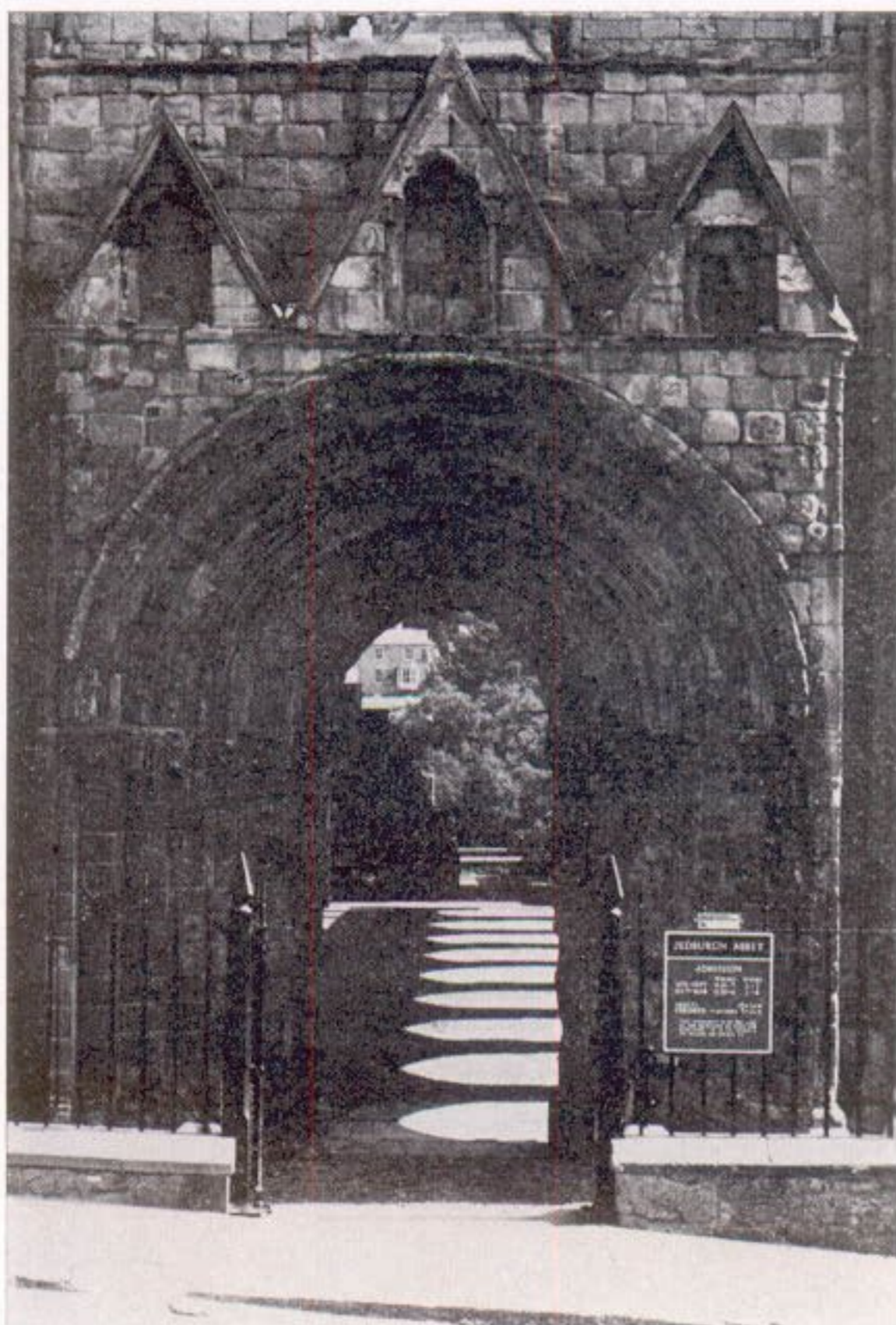
a Bridlington Priory: detail of label stop on fragmentary
cloister arcade erected in N aisle of nave c 1170-80



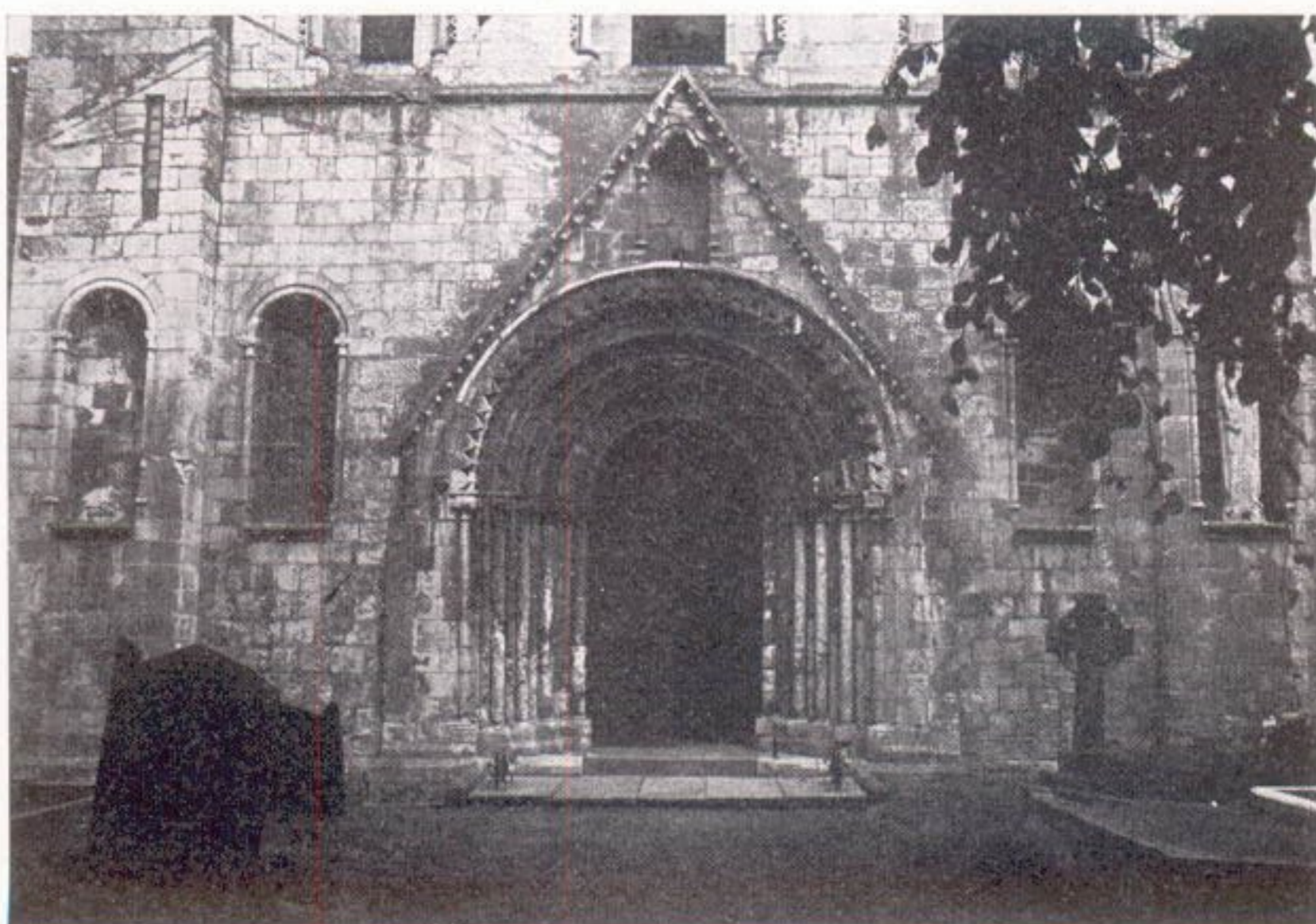
a Bury Bible: Elkanah distributing clothes to his wives: Corpus Christi Ms 2, fol 147v (By courtesy: the Librarian & Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)



b Bayeux Cathedral: detail of figure in S transept clerestory: c 1160–70 (By courtesy: Prof William Clark)



a Jedburgh Abbey: W portal



b Nun Monkton,
Yorks: W front