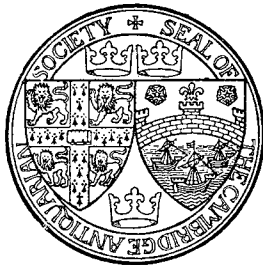


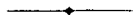
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OCTOBER 1935—OCTOBER 1936



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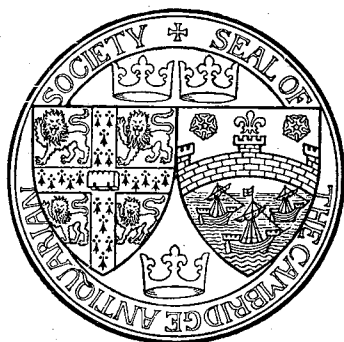
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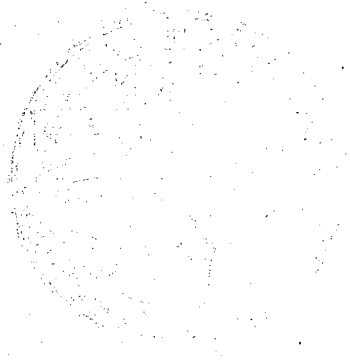
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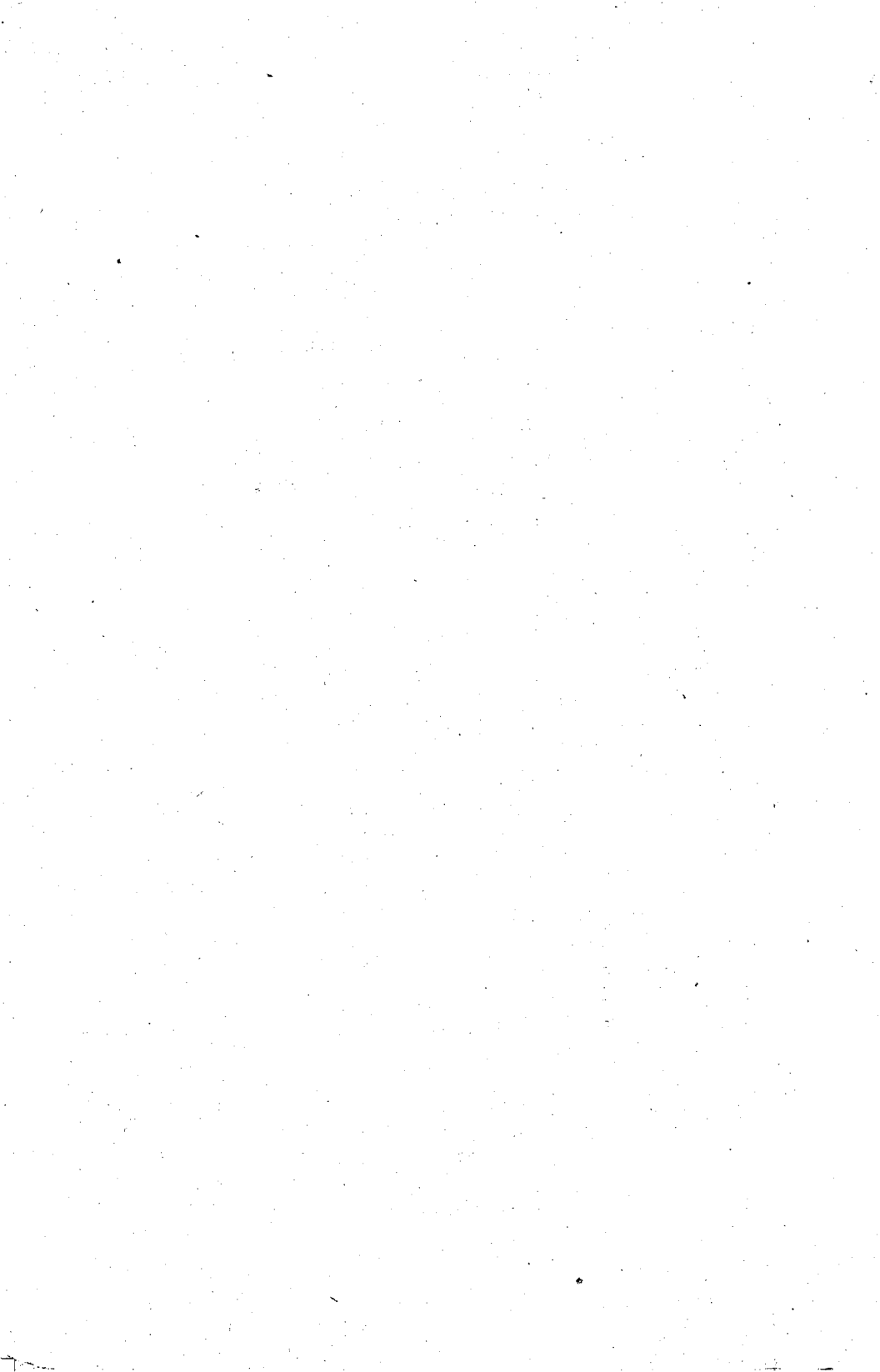
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## A NOTE ON SOME FURTHER ROOF BOSSES IN ELY CATHEDRAL.

By C. J. P. CAVE, M.A., F.S.A.

In a paper on the roof bosses in Ely Cathedral mention was made (*Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.* xxxii, p. 36) of certain bosses in the north transept.<sup>1</sup> These have now been photographed, and it turns out that seven out of the eight bosses on the central rib have a figure of one sort or another in the centre. The figures are very small and are therefore difficult to see from the floor. They are as follows, the numbering being from south to north:

(1) A grotesque head with clenched teeth, and with leaves coming from the outer corners of the mouth and from the forehead.

(2) A bear seated in the midst of foliage, chained, collared, and muzzled (Pl. Ia).

(3) A head very similar to No. 1 but the teeth are not shown.

(4) A human head with a curious headdress; it might almost be a very low and broad mitre, or it might be the headdress of a craftsman; the hands are holding the mouth open.

(5) Foliage only.

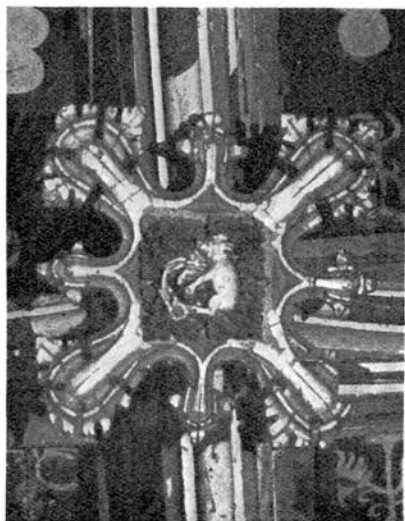
(6) A pelican vulning itself.

(7) A grotesque head; the face seems to be painted and the painting is probably modern.

(8) A grotesque face with much wrinkled forehead, open mouth, protruding tongue, and leaves coming from the corners of the mouth.

Some other roof sculptures have been noticed since the above-mentioned paper was written. Round the lantern tower, just where the lantern itself rises from the vaulting of the octagon, are eight wooden demi-figures of a rather remarkable character. They are all crowned, six of them are bearded, one is certainly a woman, and one possibly so. Three

<sup>1</sup> By a slip of the pen these were described as being in the *south* transept instead of the *north*.



*a*



*b*



*c*



*d*

Roof bosses in Ely Cathedral.

of the bearded figures are holding their beards in their hands (Pl. I*b*), and the other three have their hands more or less hidden by their beards; one has his hands in an attitude of prayer, and one has his arms folded. The woman (Pl. I*c*) has a veil hanging down over her shoulders, her left hand is raised to the back of her head and her right hand is clasping the stem of a plant. Of the other unbearded figure (Pl. I*d*) only the head is visible; the mouth is open and the tongue is shown though it is not protruding.

The most remarkable thing about these figures is that the lower part of the body is covered with leaves and stems of plants; the foliage is purely conventional, and is typically "Decorated"; the demi-figures seem to be rising out of the foliage. There may be a number of figures of this type but the only ones that I can call to mind are two corbel figures at the west end of the nave at Tewkesbury, known locally as David and Bathsheba,<sup>1</sup> and the small figure of a woman in the north aisle of the nave at Exeter. The latter figure, it is true, is not quite like the Ely examples, but the motif seems to be the same, especially in the Tewkesbury figures; moreover, they must be not very far apart in date.

<sup>1</sup> The latter is illustrated in Prior and Gardner, *Medieval Figure Sculpture in England*, Fig. 452.

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