

What Is the Subject Carved on the Socle in the West Doorway of Peterborough Abbey?

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This article revisits the carved socle beneath the trumeau of the west door of the abbey and considers the significance of such a skilfully fashioned sculpture in a position which is marginal and not easily seen. It has received attention in the past from scholars such as M. R. James, George Henderson and Alberto Ferreiro, who have suggested that the narrative represents the fall of Simon Magus. This reading is explored in terms of the familiarity of the subject to the Peterborough community during the period when the socle was made. A more generic reading is also suggested in line with the contemporary practice of personifying as well as allegorising virtues and vices. The east side of the socle is flat and devoid of sculpture in order to accommodate the doors. It will be argued that the significance of the socle and the degree to which it is associated with Simon Magus is as much to do with its position as its content; the depth and darkness of the sculpture and its location at the bottom of the composition of the west front, gives it impact as a powerful counterfoil to the church above representing Simon Magus' arch rival, St Peter.

WALKING through the west door of Peterborough cathedral it is easy to miss the carved socle or plinth which supports the trumeau dividing the entrance in two (Fig. 1). As a supporting element of a functional architectural feature – an entrance – a socle is anyway not designed to be the focus of attention in its own right, but rather a marker, a liminal point between the outside and inside of a building, and a low point which implies the existence of a high point to which it visually relates. Where, as at Peterborough, it is decorated with figurative sculpture, then its low position is liable to be integral to the interpretation of its narrative; the carving is in that place for a reason which is likely to relate to the function of the socle and whatever it supports.

An examination of an image in this particular position however would have to set aside any expectation that it would have been put there for an exhortative or didactic purpose. An entrance, especially a ceremonial entrance such as a west door, is not a place to pause and consider, and especially not to stoop down to peer at a sculpture virtually at ground level. The point is brought home by the modern experience of trying to examine the sculpture, which interrupts the passage of visitors, sets off the electric doors, and irritates the vergers. Unusually in terms of the discussion of what something may signify, intention here may be

argued as more important than reception, especially ongoing reception through the ages. It is therefore as a marker, as something which is significant simply for being there, that this sculpted plinth should be considered.

The figured socle, if not particularly common in what survives of English medieval art, is however more evident on the continent where statue columns flanking doorways at more or less contemporary sites, such as the transept portals at Chartres or the north door of Reims, are frequently displayed above figures in this position. From here they play a part in the narrative, a narrative which usually focuses on the triumph of the righteous represented on the column over the diminutive figures on the socles at their feet.

At Peterborough, the socle is about 850 mm high, roughly circular and sculpted over about two thirds of its surface; the back, facing into the church, being plain and roughly hewn. It is made from Alwalton marble, a local version of Purbeck with a more shelly constituency, and the sculpture is very worn in places, though still generally decipherable. The drawing (Fig. 2) gives an impression of the appearance of the sculpture as it would look on a flat surface. The defaced elements are indicated by hatching. Working from the left to the right, the scene opens with a standing naked, apparently male figure whose face is so eroded or possibly deliberately damaged as to be virtually featureless, though he has a flat wedge shaped face, no neck, and the right eye and a horn are visible. The right leg is crossed over the left (which may have a cloven hoof) as if moving forward and he holds a serpent by putting his right hand over its neck and his left further down the body above a knot in the coil. The serpent with open mouth reaches menacingly towards, or maybe beyond, a second male figure with his back to the first figure, again naked, with cloven feet and a tail. The head here is completely broken away. With his right hand, he seems to be pushing a man who is upside down, who forms the centre of the composition and is facing due west. This figure is very accomplished, with long hair flying out, and wearing a long elegant robe attached at the neck with a clasp and gathered at the waist with a belt (Fig. 3). His left leg stretches up towards the top of the composition, slightly bent at the knee. His right leg, fully bent at the knee, splays out in front of a winged third figure on the right. This one, again male, has a face shaped like the first with horns and wild hair brushing against the base of the column above. He is a little damaged further down, but his bird-like taloned and feathered feet are in good condition and his left hand may be holding on to the foot of the falling man. A final figure whose whole body faces outwards, tilts sideways towards the centre of the composition and has wings sprouting from his shoulders, shaggy upper legs like a satyr and cloven feet. He too seems to advance forwards. He has highly developed pectoral muscles and the distinctive

detail of carving above his thighs may indicate abdominal muscles or genitalia (Fig. 4).¹ The flat back of the socle has an iron loop attached to the base to secure the bolts which can still be seen on the original doors. (Fig. 5). The socles of the door jambs to north and south of this central socle are also flattened at the back to facilitate the closing of the doors so it is assumed that what we see now is the original arrangement presumably dating from the early stages of the construction of the west front, and that the sculpture we see is what was intended for that location.

This being the case, the narrative we see at Peterborough lacks the characters which would immediately identify it with the Simon Magus story, the disciples Saints Peter and Paul. Examples in France from the Romanesque and early Gothic periods such as the famous Simon Magus capitals at Autun Cathedral in Burgundy, and the many 13th-century examples in stained glass in France show, without exception, the fall of Simon Magus in the presence of Peter and Paul.² Without these characters, the focus of the subject at Peterborough is diluted, making it a less specific narrative. The door itself dates from the 13th century and seems to have been cut to fit around the socle in a rather rough and ready manner. Both door and sculpture could have been altered to accommodate this closing mechanism, and, given the drawn-out history of the building of the west front, we can perhaps imagine a rather piecemeal approach to designing this aspect of the portal running over a number of years. (Fig. 6)³. It is possible too that the socle was brought from elsewhere and installed in its present position, in which case it would have been made prior to the building of the west front at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries. A stylistic comparison of the sculpture with other work on the site does not cast light on a possible dating. The socle is compositionally sophisticated and dynamically carved and there is nothing else like it which survives at Peterborough, although the Alwalton marble effigies of monks from the chapter house are of a similar quality, and made from the same material at possibly around the same date.⁴ However, their subject is so different that it is hard to compare them on stylistic grounds.

Given the possibility that the socle predates the west front, it is worth looking for comparative material from an earlier date. Cross-legged postures, horned wedge-shaped heads, and snakes are all features of the mid-12th-century frieze sculpture on the west front of Lincoln cathedral in the scenes, for instance, of the torments of hell.⁵ A further local example from the same period was a feature of the west front of the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, part of the fabric constructed under the auspices of Abbot Anselm (d. 1148).⁶ Here there was a broad oblong, vertical shaft of stone about one and a half metres high, and carved on two sides

which seems to have fitted into a corner (Fig. 7). The sculpture is very worn, but the overall composition has striking similarities with the Peterborough socle with two demons flanking a figure which they are tormenting whilst serpents wind around his feet. There are differences: the figure is upright, carries what seems to be a satchel hanging from his neck, and is being consumed into the mouth of hell below; though the satchel is a feature of Simon Magus iconography elsewhere, and may originate in an association of the figure of Simon Magus with the man described in Psalm 52 who put confidence in his wealth rather than in God.⁷ However, the general theme and the exterior position on the west front of the abbey church relate to the socle at Peterborough, and both have strong connections with Lincoln.

Whether the socle was moved to its present position when the west front was constructed or whether it was a bespoke piece, the subject must have been chosen as an appropriate one for its setting. This setting is significant even if it is not visually arresting, and less so now that the 14th-century strainer arches obscure the view of the west door and that these arches have been filled in with doors so blocking some of the light. On this count, it is instructive to look at pre-modern views of the façade. Watercolours by Turner and Girtin, both dated 1795, whilst not strictly topographical, show the impact on the west door of strong shafts of lateral light.⁸ Earlier still, Daniel King's engraving for Dugdale's 17th-century *Monasticon* gives real prominence to the socle. (Fig. 8)⁹

I suggested the historiated socle as an architectural, sculptural element which makes sense structurally and iconographically in the space it occupies. At Peterborough, it is placed in the centre of the building, with St Peter himself towering above at the top of the central gable, though this visual relationship is very distant indeed, and it would always have been impossible to take both in with one glance. Much closer to the socle is a plinth placed on the spandrel between the two door arches large enough to support a statue, but which is now obscured by the later porch (Fig. 9).¹⁰

Two roughly contemporary façades but without the added giant porch which so distinguishes Peterborough, are those at Wells and Salisbury. Prior to the addition of the porch, the socle and spandrel plinth at the former would have been on the same kind of visual scale and related to each other in the same way as the sculpture of the Virgin and Child and the unsculpted socle at Wells (Fig. 10). At Salisbury, the tiers of arcades over the façade are a reminder of the original design of the architecture surrounding the west door at Peterborough. What the statue on the Peterborough plinth might have been, and whether it was ever put there, we do not know, but the façade to which the socle originally belonged arguably did not include the existing sculpture of St Peter.¹¹ It would also have been more lit and therefore

visible, and it would at first have been framed by an architecture more to its scale than the towering tripartite porch added to it.

Considering its quality and the paucity of surviving English sculpture of the Romanesque and Early Gothic periods, it does not seem to have received much attention as sculpture. Rather, its subject has been the focus of commentators beginning with R. J. King in 1862 who described it as a sinful Benedictine monk reaping his just rewards¹², and then M. R. James in the late-19th- century who, in a codicil to an article on the Romanesque typological choir paintings at Peterborough, gave a brief notice of the socle and firmly identified it as the fall of Simon Magus.¹³ More recently George Henderson, whilst acknowledging the association with Simon Magus, anticipated the post-modern by questioning the validity of narrowly identifying the image at all¹⁴, and Alberto Ferreiro has produced a considerable volume of work on Simon Magus including a *catalogue raisonnée* of the images of him listed in the Princeton Index of Christian Art including the image at Peterborough.¹⁵ Ferreiro does not question this identity, his intention being to complement the theological literature, which is his main concern, with the visual record of the legend.

Do we have sufficient reason to confirm that the composition was intended to represent the fall of Simon Magus, or is questioning what the scene specifically represents and what it means in this context too modern and narrow an enquiry for the mindset of the period to which it belongs?

Before turning to these issues, the character of Simon Magus and his history in medieval religious culture should be briefly explained. His biblical credentials can be found in the Acts of the Apostles where, in the city of Samaria, a certain Simon offered to purchase with money the spiritual power of Peter and John only to be sternly rebuked by Peter.¹⁶ A much lengthier series of episodes involving a figure now described as Simon Magus appeared in the apocryphal Acts of Peter, the account of his passion and in a series of Early Christian writings attributed to Clement of Rome.¹⁷ Although his true colours are suggested in Acts, it is in the apocryphal narratives that Simon Magus is thoroughly exposed as an impostor who through trickery wins people over by persuading them that he is more powerful than God.

The scene is set in Rome whence Peter had hastened, having heard of the growing reputation of the man. Miracles worked by the devil on the one hand and the intervention of Christ on the other ensued, including Peter resurrecting a tunny fish and a major role in the drama being given to a talking dog. Finally, Simon sought to sway public opinion by flying up above Rome, and Peter called on his God to thwart the magician, who fell from the sky, broke his legs in three places, and expired. Over time this story was explicitly located during

the reign of Nero, in front of whom the disputes between Peter and Simon took place. Paul also became involved in the action.¹⁸

Closer to the period of the actual construction of the west front at Peterborough is the 13th-century *Golden Legend*, which presumably post-dates the sculpture by at least half a century but which nevertheless reflects more closely the cultural understanding of Simon Magus than the original apocryphal writings where the legend was first set out. Here Peter first encounters Simon in Jerusalem and then the action moves to Nero's Rome. The author cites Clement, Jerome and Leo as his sources and narrates the story as part of the reading for the feast of St Peter on 29 June.¹⁹ Paul is described as participating in the disputes with Simon whose death after being brought down from flying is brought about by a split skull, perhaps significant given the headfirst plunge of the figure at Peterborough as well as other identified Simon Magus figures of the Romanesque and Gothic periods. Amongst the tricks attributed to Simon in the *Golden Legend* are these: that he 'caused brazen serpents to creep upon the earth, and stone statues to laugh, and dogs to sing', though unfortunately Jacopo gives no sources for these claims.²⁰ Overall between the 2nd and 13th centuries, the name of Simon Magus frequently occurs in theological and popular devotional writings as a type for greed and particularly simony, and the spot where Peter knelt in prayer calling on God to sabotage Simon's flight became part of the sacred topography of Rome, prompting the construction of an oratory to SS Peter and Paul in the 8th century (later incorporated into the church of S. Maria Nova) to be built over the spot.²¹ To this day the stone bearing the imprints of Peter's knees is displayed in the church .

Through which particular, written sources then might this figure have been transmitted to the monks of Peterborough in the late-12th and early-13th centuries, and what kind of personage would have been represented to them? In theological works a common description of Simon is as the first Anti-Christ, a label particularly promoted by Bede in whose writings it appears three times, and later repeated by Hrabanus Maurus, Walafrid Strabo and Hincmar of Reims amongst others.²² The monastic library had a number of works by Bede including his commentaries on the Gospels which, including the references to Simon Magus as Anti-Christ, in total mention him eight times. These commentaries appear on the first folio of the 14th-century *Matricularium*, a catalogue of minor texts apparently acquired by the monastery over a period of about two hundred years. The manuscripts are listed according to the chronological order in which they entered the collection, so Bede's commentary firmly belongs to the period before the construction of the west front.

The thirty-ninth manuscript to be listed in the *Matricularium* (out of a total of 348, so again an early entry) is a work of particular relevance – ‘The Apostles’ Dispute with Simon Magus’ (*Altercacio apostolorum cum Simone Mago*).²³ This text also had a special place in the history of the English Church since it was amongst the manuscripts displayed above the high altar at St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, as one of the original books sent by Pope Gregory to Augustine to aid him in his evangelising of the English in the late-6th-century. The subject of the manuscript would have been particularly relevant at St Augustine’s, given its earlier dedication to SS Peter and Paul. The titles are listed by the 14th-century monk and chronicler, Thomas of Elmham who describes the Magus text as ‘*Conflictus apostolorum Petri et Pauli cum Simone Mago, et passio eorundem*’.²⁴ A manuscript of his chronicle now at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, contains a drawing of the high altar with the books above it.²⁵ Peterborough’s *Altercacio* must have been a copy of the same text or a version of it, and its significance was presumably not lost on the higher clergy of the English church and particularly not on Abbot Benedict who had been prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, before coming to Peterborough and who, even though the two Benedictine foundations were bitter rivals, must have known the display of manuscripts and relics which adorned the sanctuary of St Augustine’s abbey church.

Benedict who ruled at Peterborough from 1177 to 1193 was responsible for the completion of the nave, presumably including the west door with the socle. Amongst his many gifts to Peterborough, Benedict ordered a number of manuscripts to be copied. Robert of Swapham, whose history of the abbey dates from the 13th century, lists these.²⁶ No reference is made to the *Altercacio*, so we must assume that it came from elsewhere. It does however mention a glossed apocalypse, and although by this date the standard gloss for this text would have been the *Glossa Ordinaria*, it is possible that passages from a commentary popular from the 12th-century might have been incorporated into the text. The commentary in question is attributed to a writer known as Berengaudus who lived somewhere between the 9th and the 12th centuries, though Derk Visser puts forward a strong case for his being of Carolingian origin. Entitled the ‘Exposition on the Seven Visions in the Apocalypse’ (*Expositio super septem visions libri Apocalypsis*), it was widely circulated and Simon Magus appears in the commentary both for chapters 8 and 13.²⁷ Certainly extracts from this commentary appear as a gloss in a number of illuminated English manuscripts of Revelation during the period, and its popularity has been widely recognised.²⁸ The illustrations from some of these will be considered below.

Another aspect of monastic life in which the Peterborough community would be expected to have encountered Simon Magus was in the liturgy where the apocryphal *Passio* of St Peter, already referred to, was the usual text for homilies delivered on the occasion of the feast of **Saints** Peter and Paul on 29 June.²⁹ He seemed to be a popular figure for the purposes of moralising in sermons, such as the homily already referred to by Hrabanus Maurus and also, in the context of the English church, in sermons by Aelfric in the 8th century and in the 10th-century Blickling homilies.³⁰

In terms of visual sources Simon Magus had appeared figuratively from the early Christian period when his story was sometimes represented on sarcophagi. By the 12th century an iconography of the narrative had been formulated.³¹ A number of different episodes from the legend may be represented, of which the fall of the magician is the most common. The pertinent question for the Peterborough socle is what defines an image of the fall of Simon Magus, what criteria can be applied to an image to identify it as such. A picture in a manuscript, or occasionally a sculpted representation such as the one on the 12th-century Porte de Miégeville at St Sernin, Toulouse, or on a 13th-century stained glass panel at Bourges Cathedral may carry identifying inscriptions which leave no doubt of the original identification and reception of the image **(Fig. 11)**. Details may be included which give the subject precise narrative definition such as the presence of specific characters or settings. In the case of the Simon Magus narrative they may be Nero, Saints Peter and Paul, talking dogs, a city backdrop or wings sprouting from the magician's shoulders, all of which can be seen in the window dedicated to the life of St Paul in the axial chapel at Chartres cathedral. The narrative context may also indicate the identity of the figure of the magician. On the sculpture appearing on the south transept portal at Chartres depicting St Peter, the figure of the magician cowers at the feet of the apostle, as he does at Reims at the feet of St Paul. One specific attribute of Simon Magus which relates to his appearance in the passage from Acts is a money bag around his neck which can be seen in both the examples at Chartres and Reims, though it is also a general attribute for Avarice (as can be seen at Lincoln) and suggests Simon as a type or personification of that particular vice.

At Peterborough, there is no inscription, no other human protagonists, no money bag and no wings. There is a snake but, as we have seen on the Lincoln frieze and the fragment from the west front of Bury St Edmunds, snakes often appear to torment the damned, and the mention of the miracle with snakes in Aelfric and the *Golden Legend* would be sequentially out of place at his fall, although may be there as a reminder of his over-weening ambition as a magician. The falling figure at Peterborough certainly does not look like the English

representation of Simon Magus as it was to emerge half a century later in a specific group of illuminated Apocalypses mostly with the Berengaudus gloss, referred to above, two of which, the 'Abingdon' and 'Gulbenkian' Apocalypses, include pictures of the magician.³² Indeed, with his long hair, full length, long sleeved, belted robe, the Peterborough figure is dressed more like the Anti-Christ himself than the hooded and probably anti-Semitic caricature of Simon Magus in these English apocalypses (Fig.12).³³ Moreover, the Peterborough figure is noticeably decorous rather than the ridiculous figure with his robe riding up round his waist or even over his head as he falls, as is the case with the majority of stained glass examples mentioned above.

Whilst in the English illuminated apocalypses Simon Magus and the Anti-Christ are differentiated, it has already been noted that in the literature, the magician was often himself identified as the Anti-Christ. The falling figure at Peterborough might therefore also signify both and more. Peterborough, like other great European Benedictine houses, had to defend its independence and resources against a constant threat to its wealth and authority from the ambitions of lay powers. At this period, for instance, its relationship with the King went through turbulent times, both Henry II and John keeping the abbacy vacant for a number of years in order to claim the revenues.³⁴ Although Abbot Benedict was in favour with Richard I, his successor Akarius (d. 1210) led his community through the period of the papal interdict under King John, and Robert of Swapham describes these years at Peterborough as *dies mali* on account of the sufferings thereby inflicted on the abbey.³⁵ The well-dressed layman on the socle, upside down and shut out of the abbey church, might also have had a more local resonance for the monks, representing for them another potential threat in the form of the ambitions of temporal authority.

I began by saying that an architectural element like a socle is meaningful in terms of its location and spatial relationship with other parts of the building. In two important respects the association with Simon Magus makes more sense if considered first from the two-dimensional perspective which places the church above the socle as personified by the image of St Peter, and secondly from the three-dimensional which places the actual church of St Peter behind. Clearly the socle figure, perhaps identified with the Anti-Christ, is both a literary and an architectural counterfoil for the triumph of the Apostle. The virtue-overcoming-vice implication of the saint standing with the magician beneath his feet is evident at Toulouse, Chartres and Reims, and also at Amiens and Le Mans. These churches however are not dedicated to St Peter, but the English Benedictine abbey church is. Rather than just linking the existing sculpture of St Peter on the gable with the socle image, or even

the putative one on the plinth above the door, perhaps the church itself can be understood as St Peter rising above the socle at its feet. Indeed the second seal of the abbey from the 13th century depicts on the reverse side an enthroned St Peter wearing a papal tiara with a beast beneath his feet.³⁶ It is predictable in this period of church reform, the later stages of which coincide with the construction of the Peterborough west front, that there should be an emphasis on Petrine iconography especially in his role as representing the triumph of the Roman church.

It has been noted how much of the public imagery of Simon Magus appears during the 12th and 13th century. At Peterborough, as well as the seal, there is another feature which may link the abbey with the Reform movement. Whilst no longer apparent, the trumeau recorded by Daniel King in his 1655 etching of the abbey's west front for Dugdale's *Monasticon*, is carved as a spiral, a motif long associated with the columns flanking the tomb of St Peter under the Vatican church.³⁷ Assuming King's drawing is not a fiction (and it is the central feature of the composition) then the column impaling, as it were, the Magus was visually representative of Rome's apostle. Looking at the column which today rises above the socle, it is made from a lighter marble than the socle and it is possible that it could be a later replacement (Fig. 13). Further echoes of Early Christian Rome are apparent in the overall design of the completed west porch, modelled on a giant triumphant arch, redolent of the architecture of the Holy City when Constantine recognised Christianity. Hugh Candidus, chronicling the history of Peterborough in the 12th century, transcribed the papal bull purported to have been sent by Agatho in the 7th century which proclaimed the abbey as a second Rome with due privileges and liberty from the interference of secular and local ecclesiastical powers.³⁸

In two images which bookend the sculpture at Peterborough, the fall of Simon Magus is shown as a mirror of the martyrdom of St Peter. In a sacramentary from the abbey of Fulda of the 970s (fol.93) and in the 'Gulbenkian Apocalypse' of the 1260s (fol. 16), the magician plummets headfirst down from the sky on the left of the composition and Peter is martyred upside down on the right (Figs 14a and 14b)³⁹. The cross-plan of the abbey church of Peterborough may be seen as Peter's cross mirroring on a grand scale the diminutive fall of the Magus on the socle. Moreover, the falling figure is also outside this church, literally locked out by the great bolt attached to the back of the plinth. This visual means of cutting off Simon Magus' access to the church echoes the language used in numerous reforming documents from the 9th through to the 12th, centuries which commend that corrupt bishops should be cut off from the church community just as Simon Magus was from Peter.⁴⁰ If we

can assume that the plinth above the door did carry an image of Peter, then the same idea is alluded to again but in a different dimension, so, Simon Magus can be seen to be both below the feet of the Apostle as well as ostracised from the holy space which he patronises.

The association of Simon Magus with the Apocalypse through Berengaudus' commentary adds further resonance to the position of the socle at the centre of the west front of the cathedral, because this is a location where traditionally apocalyptic narratives are set. In this position the sculpture accrues multiple readings: as representing the triumph of Peter in the form of the cursed figure of Simon Magus – a false prophet, an Anti-Christ, and a simoniac; as the ever-present threat of lay ambition over the rights and authority of the Benedictine community; as personifying the vices of greed and pride, and all of these destined for the nether-regions of hell, positioned in its traditional location in the lower registers of a church's public façade.

The knowledge of Simon Magus in this period of church reform, of the ascendancy of Rome, of millenarianism and of growing anti-Semitism, as a figure who represented opposition to the church cannot be doubted. The familiarity of the character and the context within which he was understood at this time makes his fall an apt subject for a church dedicated to St Peter, placed in a position associated with those damned at the final judgement. It can therefore be concluded that the insertion of this sculpture in this position at Peterborough was intended at least partly to allude to the magician as I hope this brief exercise in contextualisation has demonstrated. With the present state of knowledge, it is not possible to definitively state that the sculpture is a bespoke piece for this location, but its style and iconography relate to surviving East Anglian examples in similar locations and dating from no earlier than the mid-12th century, and it is made from materials local and available to the Peterborough community. It is likely at least therefore to be local work, However, though for some viewers the image may have particularly conjured up the story of the Magus, to others it may have had a more generic meaning, just as Dives who is also often depicted with a money-bag around his neck may in the same way be a type for Avarice, or Alexander, who also thought he could fly, a type for Pride.⁴¹ On the other hand the position of the socle is such that the idea of contemporaries 'viewing' the sculpture as a didactic piece is unlikely. Like much medieval visual culture, the carving is not validated by its visibility. Rather we must imagine it co-existing with the community which shared its space, brushed by the hems of clerical robes as processions passed through the west door, cast into shadow by the great building dedicated to St Peter above it, and occasionally caught by a shaft of light from the setting sun. In sum, its meaning is as much defined by where it is rather than what it is.

Whatever the case, the socle deserves to be brought out of the darkness and into the light as an accomplished and significant piece in the corpus of surviving English Transitional sculpture.

CAPTIONS

Fig. 1. Socle viewed from the north side.

Fig. 2. Drawing of the carving on the socle. Copyright Lucy Hariades

Fig. 3. Detail of the west side of the socle.

Fig. 4. Detail of the south side of the socle.

Fig. 5. View of the back (east side) of the socle.

Fig. 6. View of the bottom corner of one of the 13th-century-doors where the bolt was fitted.

Fig. 7. Relief sculpture formerly on the west front of the abbey church at Bury St Edmunds. Mid c12th

Fig. 8. The west front of Peterborough Cathedral engraved by Daniel King for William Dugdale's *Monasticon*. 1655. Detail.

Fig. 9. The plinth above the west door.

Fig. 10. The west door of Wells Cathedral. c.1230

Fig. 11. Simon Magus beneath St Peter's feet on the south nave portal (Porte de Miégeville) of the abbey church of St Sernin, Toulouse. c.1110-1115

Fig. 12. The 'Abingdon Apocalypse'. Simon Magus (on the left) and the Anti-Christ. 3rd quarter of the c13th. London, British Library, MS Add 42555, fol. 44. Copyright London, British Library

Fig. 13. Detail of the bottom section of the trumeau.

Fig. 14a. Fulda Sacramentary. The Fall of Simon Magus and the Martyrdom of St Peter. c.976. Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Theol. 231, fol. 93. Copyright Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek

Fig. 14b. The 'Gulbenkian Apocalypse'. The Fall of Simon Magus and the Martyrdom of St Peter. c.1265. Lisbon, Museu Calouste, Gulbenkian MS L.A.139, fol. 16. Copyright Lisbon, Museu Calouste

NOTES

¹ There is a slight indication too of genitalia on the figure on the north side of the socle.

² Two adjacent capitals showing the flight and fall of Simon Magus, dated c. 1130 and located on the south wall of the south nave aisle at Autun. Examples in stained glass can be seen at Bourges, Auxerre, Chartres, Angers and Tours. Cathedrals, and at the church of St Pierre at St Julian-du-Sault in North Burgundy.

³ An observation made by R. J. King, *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England*, Vol VI (London 1862), 62.

⁴ See the article by T. Tatton-Brown in this volume. pp. ????? The village of Alwalton was given to the monastery by Abbot Andrew (d.1199) for 'an augmentation of their commons'. The date accords with the use of Alwalton stone for the effigies and for the socle in the late-12th and early-13th-century. J. Sparke, ed., *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Varii*, 2 vols (1723) Vol II, 103. See also S. Gunton, *A History of the Cathedral Church of Peterborough*, 3rd edn (London 1790), 21.

⁵ G. Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln: the sculpture of the cathedral* (Lincoln 1988) 59-70; D. Kahn, 'Anglo-Saxon and Early Romanesque frieze sculpture' in D. Kahn ed., *The Romanesque Frieze and its spectator* (London, 1992) 61, 73-74; plates 111-112.

⁶ A.B. Whittingham, *Bury St Edmunds Abbey* (London 1971) 19-21.

⁷ Ps. 52, v.7. 'Ecce homo, qui non posuit Deum ad jutorem suum: sed speravit in multitudine divitiarum suarum: et prevaluit in vanitate sua'. Simon Magus illustrates this psalm in the following Byzantine psalters: Moscow.Hist.Mus. MS.D.129 (Chludov Psalter), fol. 51v, 9th century; Mount Athos MS 61, fol. 64, 9th century; London, British Library, MS. Add.19352 (Theodore Psalter), fol.66, 11th century. In sculpture roughly contemporary with the Peterborough socle, the figures of St Peter on the South portal at Chartres and on the North portal at Reims both stand on images of Simon Magus with a moneybag.

⁸ J.M.W. Turner, *The West Entrance to Peterborough Cathedral* (London, Tate Britain); T. Girtin, *Peterborough Cathedral from the West front* (London, Courtauld Institute Art Gallery).

⁹ William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum, sive Pandectae coenobiorum Benedictinorum, Cluniacensium, Cisterciensium, Carthusianorum: a primordiis ad eorum usque dissolutionem*. 3 vols (London, 1655-73) Vol.I (1655) plate 22.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the building sequence of the west front at Peterborough see L. O'Reilly, *The Architectural History of Peterborough Cathedral*, (Oxford, 1997) 87-111.

¹¹ For a discussion of the sculpture on the West front, see J. Luxford....in this volume ???

¹² Note ii above.

¹³ M.R. James, 'On the paintings formerly in the choir at Peterborough', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* IX (1896) 178-194.

¹⁴ G. Henderson, 'The damnation of Nero and related themes' in A. Borg and A. Martindale ed., *The Vanishing Past. Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology presented to Christopher Hohler*. BAR International Series III (Oxford, 1981) 39-52.

¹⁵ A. Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in Patristic, Medieval and Early Modern Traditions* (Leiden, 2005) 307-335

¹⁶ Acts 8:9-24.

¹⁷ J.K.Elliott ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1993) 401-423 and 433-436.

¹⁸ A. Ferreiro (as in n.14) 202.

¹⁹ Jacopo da Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. G.Ryan and H.Ripperger (Salem, New Hampshire, 1991 [1941]) 330-341.

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- ²⁰ *The Golden Legend* (1991) p.332. Though Jacopo gives no source, Aelfric refers to this trick in his homily on the Passion of the Apostles Peter and Paul. B. Thorpe ed., *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The first part containing the Sermones catholici or homilies of Aelfric. Vol. 1* (London, 1844) 377.
- ²¹ R. Davies, *The lives of the eighth-century popes (Liber Pontificalis): the ancient biographies of popes from AD 715-AD 817*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool, 2007) 82-83.
- ²² Bede's phrase is *Multi in nomine Christi venere Antichristi, quorum primus Simon Magus*, appearing in each of his commentaries on the synoptic gospels (*Patrologia Latina (PL)* vol 92, cols 0102C, 0263B, and 0545C). It is echoed in a homily by Maurus on a passage from Luke (*PL* vol 110, col 0424C) and three times in Strabo's gloss on Mark which quotes Bede extensively (*PL* vol 114, cols 0192C, 0226D and 0227C) and in a treatise by Hincmar on Predestination (*PL* vol 125, col 0462C).
- ²³ K. Friis-Jensen and J.M.W. Willoughby ed., *Peterborough Abbey. Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* (London 2001) 49-54 and 72. The *Matricularium* is in Cambridge University Library, MS Peterborough 15.
- ²⁴ C. Hardwick ed., *Thomas of Elmham, Historia Monasterii Monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis* (London, 1858) 99 <http://bit.ly/1OW7X5Y>.
- ²⁵ Cambridge, Trinity Hall. MS 1, fol.77. See P. Binski and S. Panayotova ed., *The Cambridge Illuminations. Ten centuries of book production in the Medieval West* (London, 2005) 254-256.
- ²⁶ Robert of Swapham's chronicle is transcribed in J. Sparke, *Scriptores* (as in n.3) Vol II. 97- 122. For Benedict's career see 97-108, and for the list of books, 98-99.
- ²⁷ D. Visser, *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation (800-1500). The Apocalypse Commentary of Berengaudus of Ferrières and the relationship between exegesis, liturgy and iconography* (Leiden, 1996) 87-103. Visser argues that Berengaudus is to be identified with Berengaudus of Ferrières who lived in the ninth century.
- ²⁸ N. Morgan *Early Gothic Manuscripts, 1250-1285, 2. A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 4. (London 1988), 16-19, 201-214.
- ²⁹ Ferreiro (as in n.14) 145.
- ³⁰ R. Morris ed., *The Blickling Homilies of the tenth century from the Marquis of Lothian's unique ms. A.D. 971* (London, 1880), 170-193; *The Homilies of Aelfric* (as in n.18) 377-384. See also Ferreiro (as in n.14) 202-205.
- ³¹ A. Ferreiro (as in n.14) 25, 207 and 307-335.
- ³² London, British Library, MS Add. 42555, fol.44; Lisbon, Museu Calouste, Gulbenkian MS L.A. 139, fol.39v
- ³³ Suzanne Lewis, 'Tractatus adversos Judaeos in the Gulbenkian Apocalypse', *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986) 543-566.
- ³⁴ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/northants/vol2/83-95>.
- ³⁵ Sparke, *Scriptores* (as in n.3) Vol II, 106.
- ³⁶ *Victoria County History Northamptonshire. A history of the County of Northampton Vol 2* (London 1906) 95.
- ³⁷ Note viii above. See also M. Roberts, *Dugdale and Hollar: history illustrated* (Newark, NJ, and London 2002) 113.
- ³⁸ Henderson (1981) 46. The bull is transcribed in Sparke, *Scriptores* (as in n.3) Vol II, 9-13.
- ³⁹ Göttingen Universitätsbibliothek. Cod. Theol. 231. For the 'Gulbenkian Apocalypse', see n. 33
- ⁴⁰ The typical phrase is *Si quis episcopus per pecunias obtinuerit dignitatem, deliciatur, modis omnibus abscindatur, sicut Simon Magus a Petro*. See for example *Capitularia Regum Franciae Occidentalis, Capit. 2*,

Cap.290, pag. 380, lin.13 (c9th), Concilia aevi Saxonici a. 916-960. Conc. VI, 1, (Herstal?) 920, cap.5.p.46, lin.19 (c10th); Petrus Damianus, Epistolae, Epp. Kaiserzeit IV, 3, Epist. 140, p.485, lin.10 (c11th) and Placidus Nonant., Liber de honore Ecclesiae. Libelli de lite 2, Cap.41, Rec. A, pag. 587, lin.7(c12th).

⁴¹ For example, see the representation of Dives on a 12 th-century nave capital in the abbey church at Orcival (Auvergne) showing a figure flanked by demons with a money-bag around his neck, and the title inscribed on the abacus, *Fol Dives*.