Notes and Documents

A SECOND JEWISH SCOLA IN LINCOLN

C. P. C. Johnson

The Jews of medieval Lincoln, in common with the other Jewish communities in England, had their own meeting place, the synagogue or scola, where they could worship and meet socially. The scola was generally a private house adapted for this use, and referred to by the name of the owner (eg. the scola of Peytavin Magnus), although there are some instances of synagogues being owned by the community as a whole, as at Norwich. 1

It has been generally considered that Lincoln possessed only one scola, that of Peytavin Magnus, which figures so largely in the story of the crucifixion of Little St. Hugh. This building has been identified with the present day Jews Court. 2 A manuscript reference to a second scola, contained in the register of chantry endowments known as the Liber de Ordinationibus Cantarianum has never previously been examined in detail: I have translated here the relevant passages from two deeds relating to property belonging to the Gare and Thornton chantry. 3

297 To all Christ's faithful seeing or hearing this present writing, Walter of Bredham of Lincoln, and Matilda his wife send greeting in the Lord. Know you all that we with one accord and consent have given, granted and by this our present charter confirmed to Masters Richard of Stretton, Canon of the church of Lincoln, and Harvey of Louth, Rector of a moiety of the church of Tannsower [Tansor, Northants], their heirs and assigns, one place in Lincoln with the buildings and other appurtenances built thereon in the parish of St. Martin, Lincoln, that is, in Hungate, viz. that place which lies in length from the King's street of Hungate as far as land which now belongs to the mother church of Lincoln, and which was of Peter called Allutarius [fiancé] towards the east, and in breadth between land of the Vicars of the said mother church on the north, and land which was once of Elias Martin the Jew and is now of the said mother church on the south ... Dated: Feast of St. Mathias the Apostle [24 February], 1312/13.

301 To all Christ's faithful seeing or hearing this present writing, John of Thornghagh, son and heir of Peter of Thornhagh of Lincoln, sends greeting in the Lord everlasting. Know you all that I have granted, released, remised and for ever for myself and my heirs quitclaimed to the venerable lords the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral church of the Blessed Mary of Lincoln, all the right and claim which I have had or could have in a certain annual rent of two shillings and six pence which I have sold, claiming it payable to me from a certain place, and buildings built thereon, which the same Dean and Chapter have acquired in the parish of St. Martin, Lincoln, that is, in Hungate, on the east side of the street, between land of the Vicars of the said Cathedral church on the north, and land of the same Dean and Chapter, where used to stand the Jews synagogue, on the south ... Dated: Saturday on the eve of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist [23 June], 17 Edward III [1324].

From these two deeds we perceive that there was a chantry property situated between land of the Vicars Choral on the north, and the former scola on the south. The next step in the process of identification was to trace the history of the various properties.

The site of the second Jewish scola, Lincoln

1 Property owned c. 1265 by William son of Thomas Paris.
2 Vicars Choral property shown as two cottages, The High Street frontage was owned by Peter Allutarius in 1265.
3 Thornton chantry property (see text); Peter Allutarius also once held the eastern section of this property. Later, Common Chamber.
4 The scola Judeorum. The dotted enclosure represents a later garden.
5 A Common Chamber property of the Dean and Chapter. Three other properties below this were also owned by the Dean and Chapter.

The Vicars Choral properties are detailed in an excellent Cartulary, dealing with their endowments up to the fourteenth century. Both this source* and their terrier dated 1902 show that this property was the only one owned in this area by the Vicars; therefore to identify it was the crucial stage in the search for the scola. According to the 1902 terrier, nos. 39–40 Hungate with a given frontage of 32ft were owned by the Vicars, and an examination of Padley's plan* shows two cottages (no. 2 on sketch) with the correct length of frontage. This appeared to be conclusive but to make sure, a comparison of boundary references was made: Peter Allutarius was mentioned both in the Liber and in the Vicars' Cartulary.

Further information concerning the Thornton property (no. 3 on sketch) showed that it was later taken over by the Dean and Chapter's Common Chamber. Let at 12s. per annum until c. 1763, it then lost the Hungate frontage which was taken over by the lessee of no. 4 (the scola) for stables, and 3s. in rental was transferred. 4

From an examination of these and other sources, notably the later leases relating to properties both north and south of the scola (nos. 3 and 5 on sketch), a clearer picture of its history has emerged. In the early thirteenth century it belonged, apparently, to one Elias Martin, who probably died c. 1233. His heirs, Isaac Peytavin and Dyaya had to pay a debt of £44 to the King at the rate of 12 marks per annum. 4 This arrangement may have collapsed, for on 8 December 1249 the house of Elias was presented by the King to Hagin, son of Master Moses; 4 this brings us back to the Liber de Ordinationibus Cantarianum. At the
beginning of the section devoted to the Gare and Thornton chantry, there are a number of deeds relating to Hagin’s properties in St. Martin and St. Cuthbert, one of which was the property described in the text above. The houses and rents once belonging to Hagin, including not only the house of Elias but also those of several Jews implicated in the Little St. Hugh affair, acquired in 1257, were given in 1286 by Queen Eleanor to Sir Stephen Cheyneld, an Oxfordshire landowner. He in turn sold them in 1299 to John of St. Ives, Rector of Stainton by Langworth, and Gilbert of Atherby, citizen of Lincoln. Gilbert, having acquired John’s interest, granted part of this holding to Master William de Thornton in 1311.

From the foregoing account it appears that the scola could have been conveyed to Thornton in 1311, but we do not know for certain. The meaning of another deed in the Liber is ambiguous, but it is clear that Gilbert did own the scola and that by 1312 it was in the hands of the Dean and Chapter.

Nothing more is known of the property until the late fifteenth century when it appears in the surviving Bond Rentals of the Dean and Chapter. Leased for years at an annual rental of 14s, the first known lessee was Thomas Syme, in 1489. Christopher Forman appears in 1529, followed by Thomas Whaitman in 1586, Original Morris in 1591 and Thomas Turberville in 1600. From leases of the seventeenth century it is apparent that the High Street frontage of this property was the important part of the holding, whereas the Hungate frontage had been relegated to a minor role. This would fit the general conception of Lincoln’s town centre gradually decaying and contracting, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In the eighteenth century the property was rebuilt, probably by John Harvey or John Garmston, both prominent citizens, as a town house: the garden can be seen depicted on Padley’s plan. The Hungate frontage was occupied by stabling, still partly extant. 262 High Street, named Garmston House, was occupied by surgeons between 1849 and 1872, after which it reverted to commercial use. The first floor was used as a cinema until 1960.

Is it possible that a third scola Judeorum existed in Lincoln? There is little evidence for or against such a suggestion, but in view of the number of Jewish community in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the possibility need not necessarily be ruled out. Furthermore, the etymology of Scolegate has not been satisfactorily explained: this was the name for Danesgate between the early fourteenth century and the early seventeenth century.

To conclude with yet another mystery, the charter of Richard III to the City of Lincoln, granted in 1484, makes mention, in a list of former Jewish properties, of ‘a place with the appertainances in the same city which was the burial place of the Jews’. This, too, has never been discovered.

FOOTNOTES

6. Plan of the City of Lincoln by James Sandby Padley, 1842 1st edn.
7. L. A. O. Church Commissioners: 2 C.C. 4/150762–5; L. A. O. D and C/C 40/3; lease of no. 4 to John Garmston in 1758 at 14s. per annum; L. A. O. D and C/C 34/1; lease of no. 4 to John Garmston in 1772 at 17s. per annum.
9. Information of Dr. V. D. Lipman.
13. L. A. O. D and C/C 1/8 no. 300: the phrasing of the deed is very confusing.
15. L. A. O. D and C/C 1/8 no. 327.
16. See above.
17. L. A. O. D and C/C 15/28289/3/6, where the description of the property at the time of the Parliamentary Survey (1649) is given: ‘All that tenement in St. Martin’s parish consisting of a hall, a parlour (the floor being boarded), one kitchen very ruinous with a buttery, a cellar and three lodging chambers, two little gardens, one stable built of rough stone and thatched, the site and seat by estimation 1 rood (the tenement built of stone and covered with tile . . . ).’

Book Review

THE VIKINGS IN BRITAIN by H. R. Loxton, 176pp., illus., Batsford, 1977, £2.75 paper, £5.95 hard covers;
THE VIKINGS by Michael Haslach Kirby, 207pp., illus., Phaidon, 1977, £4.95 paper, £6.95 hard covers.

While it has always been of great interest to read of the origins of the Vikings and their amazing journeys and colonizing activities, anyone merely seeking an account of the Vikings in Britain has been required to pick among the chapters of Sawyer, Jones, and Wilson for the relevant information. Sight of Professor Loxton’s book offers immediate access to this information but I am afraid your reviewer often found it a short cut up a very steep hill!

The chapters, two dealing with Britain on the eve of the raids, and seven summarizing the impact of the Vikings are particularly stimulating and contain many important insights. The main body of the book is an account of the progress of the Viking incursions set against the Scandinavian background. The military and political detail is at times overwhelming — there are too many characters, locations, and sub-plots — and after mastering the picture in England it needs an agile mind to start again in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. While there is no doubt about the scholarship of the book perhaps such a complex and detailed story deserved the use of more imaginative illustrative material. Could not much of the money spent on the photographs have been more profitably used to supplement the few maps included?

An immediate reaction to Michael Kirkby’s book might be to wonder whether we need another general book on the Vikings. However, that said this volume can certainly be recommended to anyone wishing to be introduced to this complex subject. It is clearly well researched and written in an easy style which makes it a pleasure to read. One could perhaps complain that the illustrations make the book unnecessarily expensive, but many do seem to be new and are often of help to the text.

GEOFFREY F. BRYANT  BARTON-UPON-HUMBER