

# THE ROMANESQUE DOORWAYS AT DINTON AND LECKHAMPSTEAD

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*The doorway at Dinton has much enjoyable sculpture and, unusually, an inscription that explains the meaning of the strange animals and their surroundings. This suggests that a specialist designer, almost certainly a cleric, had arranged the imagery in order to teach the people. The designer's ultimate written sources appear to have been the Book of Revelation and the Moralia in Job of Gregory the Great. The animals in the tympanum – combinations of lion and snake – and the snakes and men's heads elsewhere, speak of spiritual life here and hereafter. By using emotive patterning and the depiction of a familiar altar cross, the designer encouraged the onlookers to hope for heaven for themselves. A doorway at Leckhampstead, though of different appearance, has a similar teaching purpose, and was made by some of the same craftsmen. Further related sculpture has been identified at Quenington and South Cerney, Gloucestershire; the connection was probably through the patronage of the sisters Agnes de Munchesney and Cecily, countess of Hereford. The tympana at Dinton and Leckhampstead make use of two different compositions that occur at a total of thirteen churches in Britain. The final sections of the paper discuss the transmission of shared designs for doorway sculpture in the first half of the 12th century.*

## THE DOORWAY AT DINTON, ST PETER AND ST PAUL

### History

Under Edward the Confessor, the king's thegn Avelin held Dinton. Following the Norman Conquest, Odo, the king's half-brother and bishop of Bayeux, held the manor and church, but Odo was exiled and his property forfeited for rebellion in 1088. Historians deduce that the estate then descended like that of Swanscombe, Kent, which had also initially been given to Odo but which became the chief place of the honour of Munchesney. In 1140, on the death of Geoffrey Talbot, the barony passed to Walter of Meduana (de Mayenne), to his widow Cecily, countess of Hereford, and then to her nephews Ralph and William, the sons of her sister Agnes de Munchesney. During the reign of Henry II, that is, some time after 1154, Agnes granted Dinton church to the Benedictine nunnery of Godstow a few miles north of Oxford; in 1185 she herself held Dinton manor, and is thought to have died shortly after 1190.<sup>1</sup> Dinton Hall, presumably on the site of the medieval manor house, is immediately to the west of the church: the village

is centred half a mile further south-west.

The south doorway (Fig. 1) is likely to date from the second quarter of the century,<sup>2</sup> and thus comfortably between the tenures of Bishop Odo and the Godstow nunnery. In other words, it must have been the result of lay patronage. Cecily and Agnes were daughters of Payn Fitz John and Sibyl de Lacy, and Payn is among those landholders identified by Malcolm Thurlby as patrons of sculpture in Herefordshire in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest a direct connection with that celebrated school of sculpture – there is no sign of that in the doorway – but it shows that from at least 1140 Dinton was in the hands of a landed family familiar with arranging for sculpture to be incorporated into its manorial churches.

### The post-Conquest church and the doorway

The area is rich in stone, so perhaps Dinton had a stone church in Anglo-Saxon times, or a new or enlarged one soon after the Conquest. It is possible that the splendid doorway was added to an earlier, plain, building. This suggestion is prompted by the fact that little now remains of anything earlier than the 13<sup>th</sup> century, only the doorway and the wall in which the south arcade was cut.<sup>4</sup> If the whole



FIGURE 1 Dinton. The south doorway (photo: Zodiaque). All figures are of Dinton unless noted



FIGURE 2 The inscription and the lintel

church had been built at the same time as the doorway and to the same quality, one would have expected something more would have been preserved of its plan or sculpture. In any case, at the time of the Gothic rebuilding it is clear that only the doorway was considered worth preserving; it was moved onto the new south aisle wall without alteration. Though the completeness and magnificence of the doorway delights the modern visitor, its retention is likely to have been due to the usefulness of the sculpture. Its outward appearance would have been considered old-fashioned by the 13<sup>th</sup> century – for example, in its use of the chevron pattern – but the teaching it expressed would have remained valid.

The doorway is of three orders with a hood-mould or label. The first order includes decorated jambs, tympanum and lintel. The second order has spiral columns, carved capitals and impost, with a roll moulding in the arch. The third order has chevron mouldings in jambs and arch; these are almost continuous, but are interrupted on each side by one course with other carving. The label is continuous in jambs and arch, and has three rows of

billet moulding. This doorway is one of the most lavish surviving in England, and not only is it large, fully carved, well-preserved and complete, but the tympanum, lintel and capitals all contain developed subjects of more than average interest and, above all, there is an inscription.

### The Inscription

Any inscription is a rarity in England in this period, but this one explains the content of the carving, unusual even for Romanesque Europe (Fig. 2). The first line is easily seen on the vertical face of the tympanum, but the second is on the chamfered slope on the top edge of the lintel and is hardly visible from ground level. The letters are not inscribed but raised; they are in a continuous string mostly without word-breaks, although there are occasional stops placed in mid-line, to indicate a new word or the omission of letters within a word.

A carving with the name of a sculptor certainly has its human interest, but yields little information beyond the craftsman's nationality.<sup>5</sup> Occasionally an inscription allows a building to be dated.<sup>6</sup> Verse inscriptions at Jaca in northern Spain refer to the



sculptural programme but are so learned as to leave room for doubt about their interpretations.<sup>7</sup> The inscription at Dinton is remarkable because it precisely defines the sculptural programme. It does this in two lines of Latin hexameter, a verse form more like a crossword puzzle clue than poetry. In the version below, word-breaks have been inserted, and letters not carved but necessary are given in square brackets:

+ PREMIA PRO MERITIS SI Q[U]IS DESP[ER]ET  
HABENDA  
AUDIAT HIC PREC[E]PTA SIBI QUE SI[N]T RETINENDA  
+

A literal translation would be:

If anyone despairs of having rewards for meritorious deeds,  
Let him hear here of the precepts which he ought to retain.<sup>8</sup>

A more free translation given by Charles Keyser is:

If anyone should despair of obtaining reward for his deserts,  
Let him attend to the doctrines here preached,  
and take care to keep them in mind.<sup>9</sup>

The 'rewards for meritorious deeds' were resurrection to life after death, to go to paradise, to feed from the Tree of Life. The 'precepts' were the moral guidelines to be followed in this life to ensure that outcome. Thus the message to those who entered the church was that they had the opportunity of going to heaven. As will be described below, this teaching is reinforced, first in intellectual terms by the sculpture above and below the inscription which uses imagery taken from biblical texts and the Fathers. Secondly it is expressed emotively, in the surrounding envelope of vigorous rich patterning. The patterns actually symbolise heavenly light according to a widespread usage,<sup>10</sup> but, equally, their energy and abundance satisfy the onlooker and evoke a response of joyfulness. A meaningful inscription demonstrates a serious purpose to what has sometimes been dismissed as 'decoration' added to architecture. We cannot tell the quality of this patron's belief, or where this lay between the extremes of superstitious fear and the sensitivity of those who corresponded with St Anselm,<sup>11</sup> but some acknowledgement of God's power and his presence in the building was surely being made by the provision of sculpture, here and elsewhere.



FIGURE 3 The tympanum

## DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SCULPTURE AT DINTON

### The tympanum and lintel

The inscription looks forward to the final attainment of reward for good deeds, and the tympanum pictures two creatures feeding from the fruits of a tree generally – and reliably – taken to be the Tree of Life (Fig. 3). This tree is described as a reward in *Revelation 2:7b*: ‘To him who is victorious I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that stands in the Garden of God’. *Revelation 22:12a* speaks of ‘recompense’: ‘Yes, I am coming soon, and bringing my recompense with me, to requite everyone according to his deeds!’.<sup>12</sup> The tympanum illustrates the reward of eternal life to faithful believers. Perhaps significantly, the doorway contains no reference to those individuals whose bad deeds and impenitence would deny them entry to heaven. A further passage in *Revelation 22:1-5* describes paradise as a fruitful garden lit by the light of God himself; this description applies not only to the tympanum and its semi-circular border of beaded plait, but extends to the imagery of the whole doorway.

The creatures who are feeding on the fruit of the Tree might, in isolation, be described as dragons, but we know for certain from the inscription that here they represent faithful believers enjoying paradise. The creatures have a forepart like a lion – the head, the heavy mane and the clawed legs – and at the back a serpentine tail. These combination creatures, with or without wings, are termed wyverns, and are quite common in Romanesque sculpture.<sup>13</sup> Within the semicircle of the tympanum, the two wyverns are arranged roughly symmetrically either side of the Tree. It is sometimes argued that this composition was first taken from designs on silks or ivories but, while this may be true, any connection is distant in both time and space: the composition has become Romanesque. Although symmetry is still intended and recognisable, the tympanum is enlivened by the curves of the Tree’s trunk and by the individualised attitudes of the two creatures. Symmetry has been retained as an important feature demonstrating the desirable orderliness of heaven, but new life itself is suggested by the naturalistic variations vibrating within that framework.

Beneath the tympanum and the inscription, the lintel contains imagery which is clearly not part of

the landscape of paradise (Fig. 2). The confrontation between a large dragon and a small angel wielding a cross is a cosmic battle or, rather, a conflation of two battles, which scripture relates as preceding the final state of things pictured in the tympanum. The rough figures in the narrow space of the lintel compress references to the victory of the archangel Michael over Lucifer and the victory of Christ over Death.<sup>14</sup> This scene in the lintel is in fact a lengthy footnote to the inscription, redressing its Pelagian emphasis on good works with very necessary references to the intervention of God to save mankind. The use of text and image in harmony, with both forms of communication being equally important and neither expendable, represents a rational response of learned men living in a largely illiterate society, and is well exemplified by the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Uta Codex*.<sup>15</sup> Those at Dinton who knew Latin could comprehend the entire doorway, but the illiterate no doubt had it explained to them; they could ‘read’ the promise of sweet reward high in the tympanum and see the hard-won salvation below in the lintel. They would understand the efficiency of the altar cross wielded by the angel, the sign of the cross helped them too to survive the devil’s malice. Interpreted in the moral sense, the altar cross could have signified attendance at mass and prayer in church as well as the ‘precepts’ heard in sermons.<sup>16</sup>

The craftsmanship of the doorway extends further than the fine finish of the tympanum and the consistent liveliness of the whole patterned surface, that is, beyond what was supplied by stone-carvers. There is another kind of skill present, in the pairing of the inscription and the lintel, and in the fact that these are positioned immediately over the doorway, close to the men and women who enter the sacred space and who must therefore see the message; even the soffit is used, to place a second length of three-fold beaded plait, to make clear the close presence of God the Trinity inside the church. Further, it was a teacher or designer, rather than a sculptor, who made sure that the dragon filled over three-quarters of the lintel – no heavenly symmetry here. One cannot call the dragon exaggerated: this imbalance is an example of the expressive power of Romanesque sculpture at its best. Wordlessly it demonstrates the constant pressure of evil: such a dragon is more than a saint could manage on his own, even the angel is dwarfed and his weapon seems very inadequate.<sup>17</sup> The battle is a spiritual,

heavenly one, as signalled by the presence of several domes (or stars) and the line of zigzag below the angel.<sup>18</sup> The harder the fight, the greater the triumph will be, which is why the angel looks out at us and smiles. All this has been condensed into a few commonplace images by the skill of a practised, literate, designer.

#### **Individual features in the first and second orders: birds**

Around the tympanum and lintel are a number of individual carvings within the continuous patterns in the arches and jambs. In the first order, on the angle of the jamb on both sides at the top, is what looks like a miniature capital: is it perhaps possible that there were wooden shafts fitted here in the somewhat concave chamfer below these capitals?

There are normal capitals and impostes in the second order. On the left side of the arch, the upright of the impost has two units of star pattern on the south face, then a bird on stumpy legs walking to the right, its head nearly rubbed out (Fig. 4). On the east face of the impost (Fig. 5), is

a fine sprig of foliage with berries (perhaps the bird is coming to feed on them); on the chamfer all round is a little arcade with spiral columns, filled in each bay by an upright leaf. The right impost has only the star pattern on the upright and the arcade on the chamfer. The left capital is of double scallop form, with the semicircular shields having three concentric semicircles while the cones are simply wrapped (Fig. 5). On the right side of the doorway a large bird fills the capital (Fig. 6). This bird stands symmetrically on the angle on very thick legs; it is not gripping the cable ring but clutches a ball in each foot just above the ring. The feathered wings are spread to left and right, its breast is feathered but the beak is worn away and the outlines of the eyes can only just be made out.

Birds, especially doves, had been a symbol of the soul in paradise since the Christian art in the catacombs took over the Roman wall-decoration of birds in grape vines. Thus one or both of these birds might be a dove. An alternative interpretation for the bird on the left impost (Fig. 4) derives from its similarity to a bird on a doorway at Wold Newton



FIGURE 4 Left side, second order, impost with bird walking to the right





FIGURE 5 Left side, all orders and soffit of doorway from the east



FIGURE 6 Right side, second order, capital with standing bird



FIGURE 7 Wold Newton, Yorkshire. Left side of doorway with bird walking to right



FIGURE 8 Left side, third order, the panel from the south



in the East Riding of Yorkshire (Fig. 7). That bird is also walking to the right, towards the door, and at Wold Newton it can be identified as a *Perdix*, representing the return of a lapsed Christian to the church.<sup>19</sup> The bird on the right capital at Dinton, with its symmetrical stance and spread wings, recalls many examples of birds in continental churches particularly in Germany and Italy. That the bird is clutching balls, when it could have gripped the ring instead, suggests that a ball or balls had to be included, and therefore that this bird is a Crane,<sup>20</sup> which represents a believer keeping watch through the darkness of this present life.<sup>21</sup> Hence the birds to left and right of the door could characterise members of the congregation: a lapsed believer returning to the church, and a persevering believer. The bird-carvings are close enough to the inscription to suggest that, in going to church regularly and in watching prayerfully, the parishioners played their part in the cosmic battle, and that this would bring them to their reward.

#### The panels in the third order: snakes

At the level of the capitals and imposts of the

second order just discussed, in the third order on each side there is one stone with individual carvings (Figs 8, 13). On the left side, the continuous chevron moulding is broken by a plain band or fillet crossing it at the level of the chamfer on the impost. Against this fillet (Fig. 8), the chevron roll and hollow coming from below end in miniature capitals, with inscribed semi-circles and cable ring like those on the adjacent full-size capital of the second order. The chevron roll next to the angle finishes not with a capital but with an indistinct small carving resembling a man's head (Fig. 9, 10), but the hairstyle, if it is all hair, is unusual for the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the skull-like face itself is difficult to see as an authentic medieval face. Yet the carving is only worn, and does not appear to have been deliberately altered. Professor Musset describes it as a head whose hair ends in serpents: although that particular snake imagery is rare, it is found in sculpture in Germany, and in a context that is arguably paradise.<sup>22</sup> Above the fillet the chevron mouldings continue as before: the interrupting panel functions as a modified capital and impost.



FIGURE 9 Left side, third order, the supposed head from the south



FIGURE 10 Left side, third order, the supposed head from the east



FIGURE 11 Right side, third order, large head on the angle



FIGURE 12 Third order: the plain soffit, the chevrons and the balls of grapes



FIGURE 13 Right side, third order: the panel from the south



On the right side, another fillet breaks across the chevron mouldings. Below the fillet the rectangular panel does not continue the mouldings but has been worked into a complex set of motifs (Figs 11, 13). Due to damage and the unfamiliar subjects, the various features can be a little difficult to recognise. On the angle and using the full height of the panel, is a man's head. The face was conceived as symmetrical about the angle, but on the left it is incomplete because that surface is kept plain all around the chevron order in soffit and reveal (Figs 5, 12). Consequently, only part of the features are carved on the left side (as the viewer sees it), but the face is complete on the right. To have given this head such a prominent place despite the inevitable restriction shows that it must incorporate an important part of the doorway's message.

Carvings of this kind are – or, like this one, attempt to be – symmetrical. Such duplication signals to the viewer that the imagery is to be read in a spiritual not literal sense, symmetry indicating the order and perfection of the new creation.<sup>23</sup> To identify the details of the man's head, work down the angle of this stone from the top (Fig. 11): the man's forehead is mostly concealed by the fillet; his nose is on the angle but its tip is broken; then come the man's upper teeth; a foliage stem is emitted from the mouth and branches to left and right; finally, at the bottom and extending into a spandrel of the chevron angle roll, is the remnant of the man's bearded chin. On the south face of the panel (Fig. 13) one branch of the foliage stem coming from his mouth expands into a spray of four simple lanceolate leaves, with the smallest leaf vertical on the man's cheek and the fourth and largest extending to the right along the bottom of the panel. The remainder of the carving on the south side of the panel is of snakes and domes.<sup>24</sup> The one large beaded snake and five domes are easily recognised in the upper right part of the panel, but there are two other snakes, one on either side of the man's nose. They are small and spiral-patterned; they curve over the eye, pass down beside the nose and then turn and enter the man's nostrils. The small snake on the reveal or left side is only partly carved, as with the foliage stem there.

The motif of a man emitting foliage from his mouth is common in Romanesque sculpture, and the author has suggested elsewhere that it illustrates man breathing the new life in paradise.<sup>25</sup> On the panel at Dinton, the man inhales snakes through

his nostrils and exhales leaves from his mouth: the pair of small spiral-patterned snakes have a logical connection to the leafy stems and therefore must be associated with eternal life in some way. In Romanesque sculpture elsewhere, snakes coming from the mouth are compatible with the new life in heaven, perhaps as the 'new' snake coming from an old skin.<sup>26</sup> The two small snakes entering the nostrils may represent the man's soul, bringing him new life at the resurrection.<sup>27</sup>

The large snake (Fig. 13) approaches the man's cheek from the right, its head directed to an indistinct bulge just below and to the right of the eye, in the region of the man's ear. A man's head with snakes apparently nibbling his ears is a widespread motif that is normally fully symmetrical; there would be a snake approaching the man's head from both sides.<sup>28</sup> In the absence of symmetry, a spiritual context is supplied by the five domes or stars alongside the snake.<sup>29</sup> A possible meaning for this snake is that it could signify thoughts or beliefs which when absorbed lead to meritorious deeds, and thence culminate in the reward of life eternal: this is the meaning deduced for the imagery in Figures 14-16 as explained below.

At Rock, Worcestershire, in a work of the Herefordshire School roughly contemporary with the doorway at Dinton, a capital of the chancel arch shows a naked man with a snake on either side, their open mouths against his ear; the snakes weave in and out of his body as though they are part of it (Fig. 14). As a companion to this symbolic treatment, another capital in the same scheme shows a realistic man in his underwear in a similar pose: in this case, the man is flanked by two men's heads in profile, they can be understood as speaking to him (Fig. 15). The two men's heads are disembodied, giving the impression that their words are something remembered by the man on the angle, perhaps from a sermon or a book. Both capitals at Rock have been interpreted by the author as depicting a man receiving spiritual advice on controlling his earthly appetites.<sup>30</sup> In Cologne, a carving survives of a bearded man in his underwear, flanked by two wyverns (Fig. 16).<sup>31</sup> This capital shows the wyverns and the man combining to pull his forked beard: the wyverns assist the man with the reining-in of his animal desires and thus symbolise spiritual councillors of some kind.<sup>32</sup> It is suggested, therefore, that the large beaded snake at Dinton approaches the man to encourage him with



FIGURE 14 Rock, Worcestershire. Capital of chancel arch, nave side



FIGURE 15 Rock, Worcestershire. Another capital of chancel arch, chancel side



FIGURE 16 Cologne, Germany. Capital, c.1200, a bearded man and two wyverns (Köln, Domschatzkammer, Kapitell mit bärtigem Kopf (Inv B 857), Vorderansicht) © Dombauarchiv Köln, Matz und Schenk

good advice for living the earthly life. The snake might, for example, be speaking to the man on the angle about the heavenly reward for his faithfulness on earth, so that the man foresees himself breathing the life of heaven. At Rock (Figs 14, 15), the men are also still living an earthly life, but they are thinking about heaven – or more precisely, they are hearing about heaven – and this encourages them in the struggle to control their earthly desires. Perhaps we might think of the voices as whispering to the men. The interpretation of snakes as spiritual advisers and strengtheners fits the context at Dinton, for there is a void experienced by the believer between the offer of salvation, in the lintel, and its achievement, in the tympanum, a void which must be filled as the inscription says, by faith and perseverance on earth. The two birds, when interpreted as suggested in the previous section, embody the same message; they are models for perseverance on earth.

As can be seen by reference to the geographical range of the illustrations cited, and from the different possibilities discussed in this section, there is a range of combinations of man with

snakes, and consequently of interpretations: it is best not to try to pin down the snake with one precise definition, but just to note that snakes were symbols for representing the soul, the interior life of the spirit and the after-life. The positive use of snakes in various conventional formats in Romanesque sculpture is so widespread that it suggests some authoritative written text lies behind them all, but not the Bible. There, the snake may be wise but its wisdom is usually slanted towards craftiness, notoriously so in Eden (*Genesis* 3:1);<sup>33</sup> while in *Revelation* the serpent or dragon represents total evil. *Genesis*, more realistically, also states that the snake's head is the seat of its life, meaning that intelligence is its chief characteristic (*Gen.* 3:15); another neutral view of the snake comes in proverbial form when the disciples are told to be 'wise as snakes and harmless as doves' (*Matt.* 10:16), while Christ himself is the snake, lifted up, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, to save the people (*Num.* 21:8; *John* 3:14).<sup>34</sup> In the sculptural imagery discussed above the snake is employed for positive purposes but not as Christ.

One of the greatest influences on medieval



imagery was the writings of Gregory the Great. He is the pope who was inspired by a dove, indeed, as legend has it, he was actually whispered to by a dove. According to the story, there were times when Gregory's scribe was ready to take dictation but he heard nothing – this was because the pope was receiving the words from the dove – then the pope would dictate the next passage of the work in hand. Although the *Vita* says the dove put its beak to Gregory's lips, illustrations show the dove at his ear.<sup>35</sup> In his long work *Moralia in Job*, Gregory repeatedly attempts to describe his personal experience of heavenly inspiration: its speed of arrival and the barely-audible voice, as well as its perfect wisdom.<sup>36</sup> A dove represented this voice in the *Vita* and in the illustrations cited, no doubt because it implied that the Holy Spirit itself came to speak to the pope, but Gregory was more modest: he was impressed by the hidden ways of communication used by the agents of the divine voice, and searched for other, more accurate, ways to describe his experience.

Two particular words used by Gregory are to be associated with snakes. First, he describes inspiration as *insinuating* itself into the ears of the heart, a verb which describes the sinuous movement characteristic of a snake. Secondly, the idea of *subtlety* is used by Gregory to describe the delicacy, speed and precision of spiritual communication: this is a concept paralleled by the movements of a physical snake. He writes, for example: 'in a moment and in secret the inspired soul is made to know the subtle quality of the inward utterance', or '[God] insinuates subtle thoughts'.<sup>37</sup> When Gregory writes of the unknown paths by which inspiration suddenly arrives, or the small openings through which the insights of contemplation come, one can equate these descriptions to the movement of a snake through its underground home: Gregory's inward ear 'as it were stealthily received the veins (*venas*, channels) of the whispering thereof', and 'the Almighty shows himself to us by the chinks (*rimas*) of contemplation. He does not speak to us, but whispers, in that He does not fully develop himself, yet something of himself He does reveal to the mind of man'.<sup>38</sup>

Speed, secrecy, near-silence, 'otherness' and wisdom can all be attributes of the snake, yet Gregory never makes this comparison explicit even though throughout *Moralia* he names many other common creatures in the normal way, whether they

occur in the text he is expounding or whether he introduces them into the argument himself. It is suggested that Gregory the Great had snakes in mind when writing about spiritual inspiration because he had observed and marvelled at their movements,<sup>39</sup> and being of a Roman patrician family, he made the traditional association of the snake with eternal life.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps because this favourable belief about the snakes belonged to (what was for him) the recent pagan past, he would not name his model. Other passages in *Moralia* have been used by the present author to elucidate the Romanesque imagery of the mermaid and of the centaur: in these particular cases also Gregory does not name the creatures he has in his mind's eye, for they were characters in pagan mythology.<sup>41</sup>

### The patterns

The concept of heaven is put before the church-goers by illustrating statements taken from the Bible and the Fathers, and it is also made present in the patterns around those central carvings. The patterns activate the doorway to delight modern viewers, but additionally the patterns told the medieval audience more about heaven.

First, the opening into the church is itself picked out as a special area (Fig. 1). There is a horizontal zone at the head of the door which includes the inscription, the lintel and the capitals, imposts and panels beside it with their carvings of birds and snakes. These parts are concerned with teaching on earthly life (moral actions to be rewarded; salvation; perseverance; mental prayer). The spiral shafts in the jambs of the second order are appropriate to frame the entrance into the church, an earthly place but inhabited by God in the sacrament.<sup>42</sup> The minor patterns of stars and arcading on the imposts may depict the outer verges of heaven; that is, they represent the stars of the firmament and the 'pillars' that were believed to support the dome of the firmament over the earth (for example, *Job* 26:11); this was the most that earthly mankind could see of heaven. Together these areas in which earthly or moral matters of some kind or another are displayed form a border round the actual opening; they were the nearest parts of the sculpture to the church-goers.

Remaining areas of the doorway apart from the tympanum, chiefly the arches and jambs of the third order and label, provide much of the excitement of the whole work. Without them, the

teaching programme would have functioned, but it would have been less impressive and therefore less effective. Several geometric patterns have already been encountered in the description and interpretation of the doorway above, but it is worth repeating that in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century these abstract patterns were combined as a coherent language to speak about heavenly things. The Dinton doorway comes at the peak of their usefulness, when craft skills have increased so far that representational carvings, such as the animals feeding on the tree, can be combined with patterns on equal terms both as regards execution and teaching content. The chief of the geometric patterns is the chevron moulding. It is an optically active pattern: in manuscripts, zigzagging patterns are used for the shining mandorla round Christ or the Agnus Dei, in sculpture they can be seen as representing God's power and glory, the Light of God.<sup>43</sup> Billet moulding has something of the same optical effect. The chevron order at Dinton contains the imagery of the man and the snake that whispers about heaven, and the possible head on the left side that might represent a man in paradise: these men are exposed to the Light of God, one on earth, the other in heaven. In the spandrels of the chevron order, there are domes that are cut into what are probably bunches of grapes (Fig. 12):<sup>44</sup> the combination suggests the link between the wine of the mass and the heavenly feast at the Marriage of the Lamb.<sup>45</sup> The tympanum and its border of plait, together with these outer areas of pattern, advertise the excitement and light of heaven to come.

### Related sites

There are three external connections which suggest themselves for Dinton. First, there are similarities of detail with the doorway at the church of the Assumption, Leckhampstead, about 18 miles north of Dinton. Secondly, there is a striking general similarity between the make-up of the whole doorway at Dinton and the two doorways at St Swithin's, Quenington, Gloucestershire. Lastly, a connection of some sort must have existed between Dinton and the seven other churches in Britain which display a tree and two animals in their tympana, as also between Leckhampstead and the four other churches having tympana showing a man standing between animals.

### Leckhampstead

Recognisable similarities of workmanship occur at Dinton and on the south doorway at Leckhampstead (Fig. 17). Most notably, heads of the creatures in Leckhampstead's tympanum (Fig. 18) closely resemble the head of the dragon on the lintel at Dinton (Fig. 2); this repetition witnesses to the sculptor carrying the outline in some form from one site to the other. Domed stars are similarly used (Figs 13 & 21). The Dinton tympanum is more competently drawn and better modelled and finished, while the bird on the angle of capitals at both churches must surely be by different craftsmen (Figs 6, 19 and 20).<sup>46</sup> It is therefore suggested that the tympanum at Leckhampstead was carved by the man who carved the lintel at Dinton. There is less, and less elaborated, sculpture at Leckhampstead, with no carving in the jambs except for the shafts of the second order, and only roll mouldings in the arch: the patterned orders at Dinton are lacking.<sup>47</sup> The stain of paint survives on the tympanum and in the arch, and painting made up for the lack of craft skill or money for carving at Leckhampstead. Even so, the doorway contains developed teaching that would have required an expert to design it.

Making up the full semi-circle of the tympanum at Leckhampstead,<sup>48</sup> are a lower segmental stone that has been carved, and a number of upper stones which are not carved but painted. Originally, the whole tympanum would have been painted, the separate stones would not have been so noticeable and the semicircular field would have presented a more uniform appearance. The carved stone is crammed with figurative detail and domed stars, while the painting consists of a field of haloed stars: the scene is heaven. For clarity, both types of star have been omitted from the diagram, Figure 26, top.<sup>49</sup> The outline of the dragon was useful to the workman for illustrating any terrible, powerful beast: it was the context in which it was used that determined whether the beast was to be feared for its evil power (as at Dinton) or for its omnipotence (as at Leckhampstead). The attractive little man in the centre smiles (Fig. 21). Because he is smiling and because he has no weapon, the massive claws indicate no threat to him: they are shown, like the overwhelming size of the monsters and their pointed teeth, to indicate the great power of the creatures. Both monsters have an open mouth and extended tongue, wings, two forelegs and a serpen-

tine tail which gives off spirals and what Charles Keyser calls 'pods'. These features of the tails recall some representations of grapes and vines.<sup>50</sup> The monsters at Leckhampstead are combinations of lion and snake, but they are more elaborate than the two creatures of that kind in the tympanum at Dinton (Fig. 3): they have the additional attributes of fruit and wings.<sup>51</sup> The four components of the Leckhampstead monsters – lion, serpent, grapes

and wings – spell out positive ideas of a powerful, everlasting, generous, spiritual being.

Once the modern onlooker has discarded the idea that the claws are about to clutch and tear the man and has adopted a properly impartial frame of mind, it should be possible to appreciate that the little man is shown reaching out to hold hands with the benevolent 'monsters'. It is suggested that this man represents Christ, and the scene is his arrival

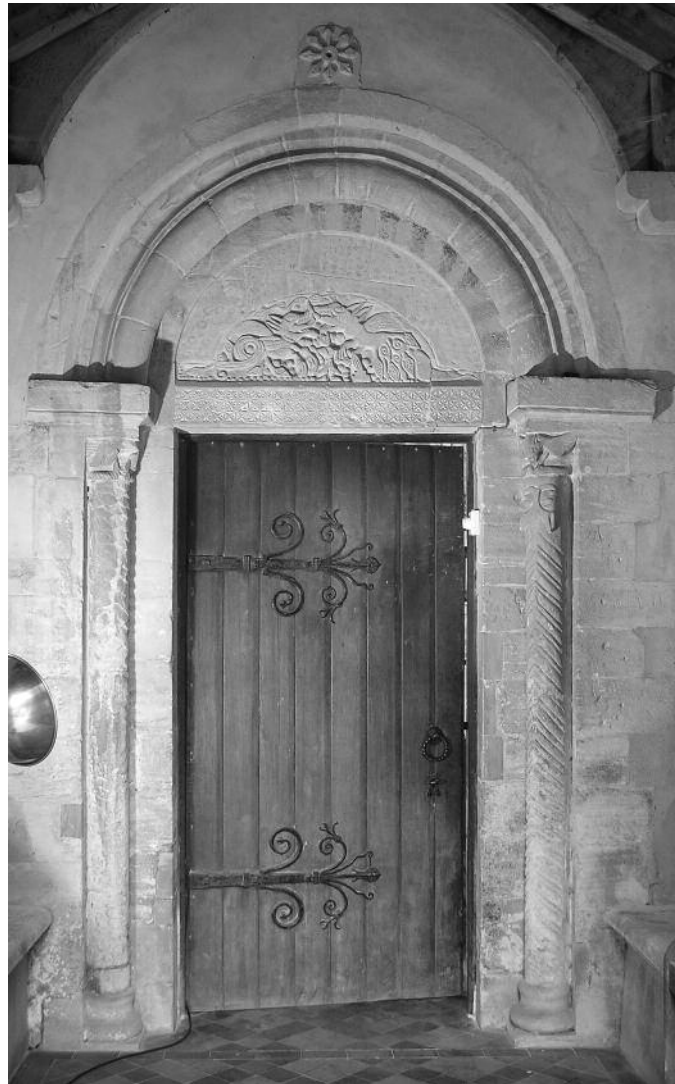


FIGURE 17 Leckhampstead. The south doorway





FIGURE 18 Leckhampstead. The tympanum



FIGURE 19 Leckhampstead. Bird on left capital



FIGURE 20 Leckhampstead. Bird on right capital

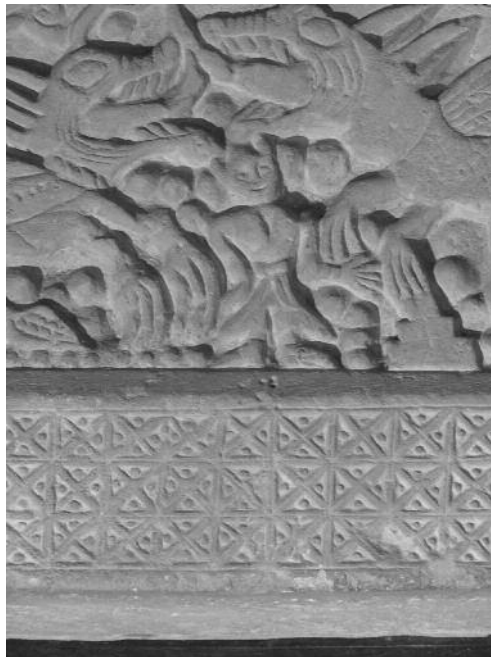


FIGURE 21 Leckhampstead. Detail of tympanum: the Trinity

in heaven from his Ascension: this is why he is dressed as a traveller in short tunic and boots (*John* 14:2, 3). He is probably wearing a crown, being seen as King on his return to heaven, victorious over Death and Hell. He is greeted with a roar of welcome and triumph by the other two Persons of the Trinity. The stack of ashlar to the right of the man at the lower edge of the tympanum is an altar and its plinth or steps, a reference to the priesthood of the ascended Christ, that is, to his office as intermediary between God and mankind as a consequence of the Incarnation (*Hebrews* 4:14-16).<sup>52</sup> The message for parishioners was that they had an advocate above the stars in heaven, and a place for them was being prepared there.

There is a bird on both capitals in much the same position as the large bird at Dinton. The one on the right has ears like a beakhead (*Fig. 20*), which is not likely to be correct: we may suppose the craftsman was instructed to carve a bird with a long heavy beak, and he assumed this creature was a beakhead, a form familiar to him. The bird on the left is more successful (*Fig. 19*), the feet are natu-

ralistic, even if they do not close around the cable ring; the wings cover difficult areas of recession; the tail feathers appear on the extreme left. Between the legs, below where the bird's head would have been, is a long tapering scar, the remains of a long beak on the angle. The workman's first attempt produced a beakhead-bird, but the second approaches a common type, such as the cranes on capitals of the chancel arch at Hampnett (*Gloucs*), *Figure 22*.<sup>53</sup>

The eight-pointed star in the stone above the apex of the label has a large central hole bored in it (*Fig. 17*); it is like many lesser star forms in the Romanesque which have depressions or circular marks at the centre. This large hole was probably used to set some shining object, a roundel of glass, for example. The form of the star is very like stars on the label of the doorway at South Cerney, Gloucestershire, a site associated with Quenington. If the star is part of the original doorway, it might be there to correct something lacking in the theology of the tympanum. The arrival scene could have given the idea that, during the earthly life of



FIGURE 22 Hampnett, Gloucestershire. Capital of chancel arch with Cranes drinking from a chalice



the Son, the Father and the Holy Spirit remained alone in heaven awaiting his return. The difficulty arises due to the limitations of concrete visual imagery for representing eternity, but the error would have been avoided by the addition of a unitary Light over all.<sup>54</sup>

### **Quenington**

Dinton and Quenington churches are about 40 miles apart. There is not space in this article to expand on the numerous links between the four various sites

involved, but the similarity of the three main doorways is striking (Figs 1, 23, 24).<sup>55</sup> The connections can only be summarised here.<sup>56</sup> It is suggested that many of the same craftsmen, but not the main sculptor, worked in both counties. The designer is likely to have been the same man throughout, chiefly because at all four sites examined a familiar item that furnished a church is added to a standard scene. At Dinton the item is the altar cross wielded by the angel; at Leckhampstead it is the altar; at Quenington and South Cerney Christ is shown

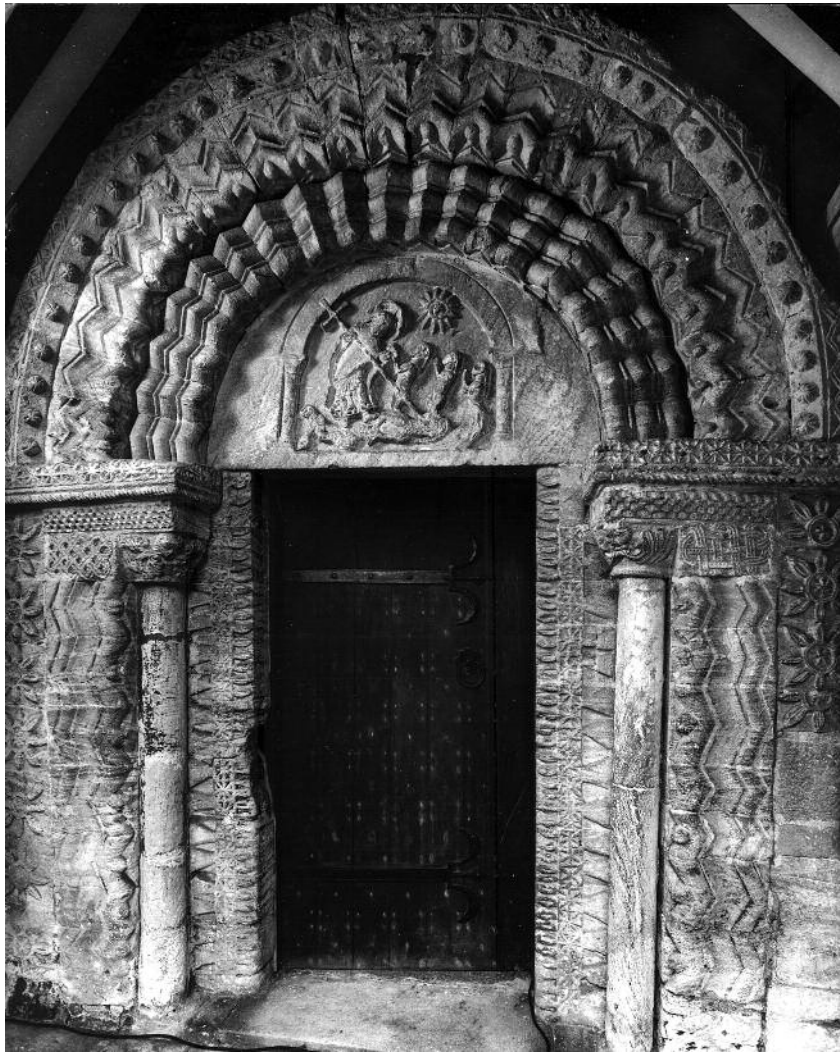


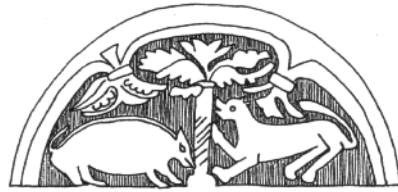
FIGURE 23 Quenington, Gloucestershire. The north doorway (photo: Zodiaque)



FIGURE 24 Quenington, Gloucestershire. The south doorway (photo: Zodiaque)

wearing liturgical vestments, a chasuble and a cope. At Quenington, then in the diocese of Worcester, the designer used two subjects derived from a decorative scheme in the chapterhouse of Worcester cathedral priory, and at South Cerney the design is unique, but at Dinton and at Leckhampstead he made use of ready-made designs for tympana. This suggests his stay in Buckinghamshire was comparatively brief; further, the pattern-carvers present at both the Gloucestershire churches and Dinton are lacking at Leckhampstead. The initiation of a

connection between the two pairs of churches is likely to have been brought about by Cecily, countess of Hereford, whose dowry seems to have included Quenington, and whose third husband succeeded to the barony of Munchesney in 1140. Cecily's sister Agnes de Munchesney is named in connection with Dinton in several documents but her position there is not clear, and she could have had an interest in the manor before 1140.<sup>57</sup> The Leckhampstead doorway is the result of some local connection of which no record remains.



Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire



Llanbadarn Fawr, Radnorshire



Dinton, Buckinghamshire



Lullington, Somerset



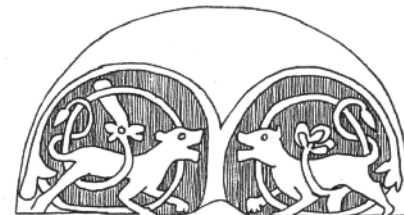
Fritwell, Oxfordshire



Trenglos, Cornwall



Knook, Wiltshire



Wordwell, Suffolk

FIGURE 25 Diagram of Tree-and-two-animals tympana. These represent the blessed in heaven feeding from the Tree of Life, as defined by the inscription at Dinton. Simplified diagrams prepared from photographs and observation; not to scale

### The dissemination of designs for sculpture at village churches

There is a vast amount of Romanesque sculpture to be seen at village churches, and it may be helpful to suggest three simple divisions of it. The divisions proposed here are made according to the degree of specialist attention given to the content; they are not concerned with the style or sources of the sculpture, the ability of the sculptor, the date

of the work or the patronage. The categories proposed are those a designer might have recognised. Broadly speaking, then, there are three types of sculpture to be seen at village churches of the Romanesque period in England and Wales: universal themes, shared designs and individual schemes. The first type of sculpture is ubiquitous, the second has parallels elsewhere and the third is unique.





FIGURE 26 Diagram of Man-between-animals tympana. It is suggested these picture the arrival of Christ in heaven from his Ascension. Simplified diagrams prepared from photographs and observation; not to scale. The Caverswall diagram is developed from a drawing by Elizabeth Pritchard in M O H Carver, 'A Twelfth Century Fragment at Caverswall, Staffordshire', *North Staffordshire J. Field Studies* **20** (1980), 1-8. Several photographs by Michael Tisdall were used for the diagrams of the Downe St Mary and Treneglos (Fig. 25) examples

Sculpture depicting common themes appears outside on simple doorways and corbels, and inside churches on capitals and chancel arch. There is widespread uniformity in the range of motifs used in these positions – human heads and animal masks on corbels, geometric patterns on doorways, foliage on capitals, chevrons on the chancel arch. However, it would be a mistake to assume that these repetitious things were left entirely to the craftsmen, because here and there their common form is seen to be varied by a distinctive learned comment or expansion. The themes of this

common sculpture are basic Christian teaching of the period: a warning of the Second Coming (in corbels); alerting to the presence of God within (at doorway); the clothing of the church interior as paradise.<sup>58</sup> The basic alphabet of this common sculpture contributed to building up the more elaborate displays in the shared and unique categories.

The tympana at Dinton and at Leckhampstead use shared designs, those showing a tree-and-two-animals and a man-between-animals (Figs 25, 26). These motifs recur on tympana at a number of churches that were otherwise unrelated (Fig. 27).

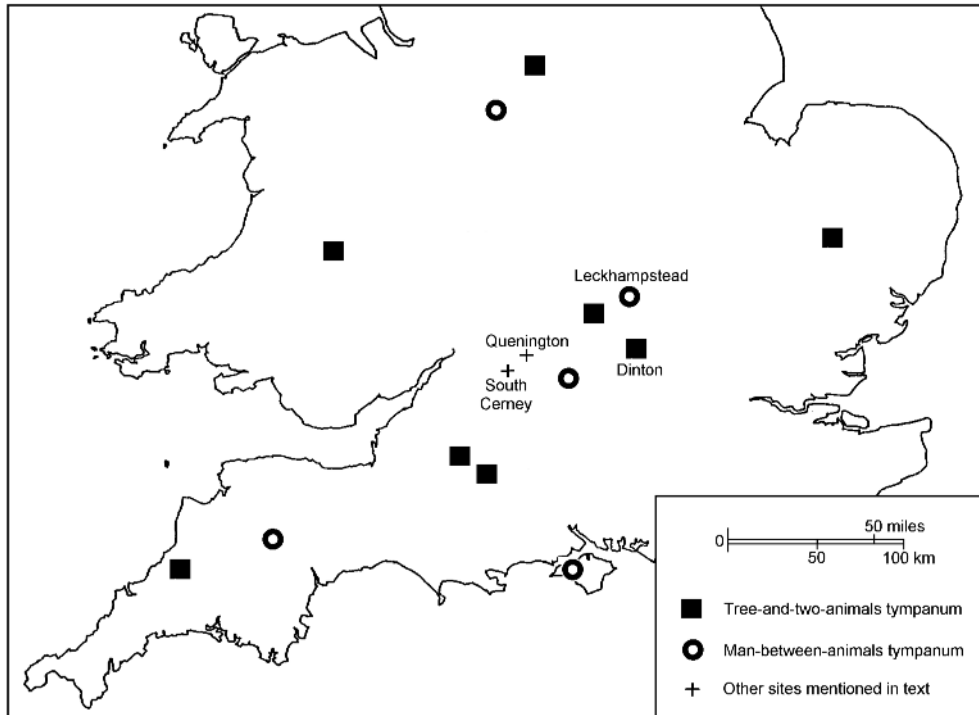


FIGURE 27 The distribution of tympana of the two designs illustrated in Figures 25 and 26. The four named sites are associated with one designer, as described in the text

Such shared designs must have been compiled and made available by some outside clerical body; probably this was a religious community, as is certainly the case for the more complex unique schemes in the third category. We may postulate a distant clerical source that compiled the circulating pattern-books containing the two themes (at Dinton, a symbolic paradise; at Leckhampstead, the Triumph of Christ).<sup>59</sup> Shared designs would have been circulated in the form of a text with accompanying illustration: the description of the teaching content would have been the more important element because the document was intended for the use of clergy, the local cleric or a peripatetic designer. The written description of the man-between-animals format (Fig. 26), following the liturgy for the Ascension, would have emphasised that there is rejoicing in heaven at the return of Christ. This excitement is pictured by the various creatures greeting and embracing the man in their

different ways: the parallel with dogs jumping up when master comes home can be strong. The exuberant foliage is similarly expressive.

A more or less detailed sketch of the composition would almost certainly have been included in the pattern book along with the description of content, but the final appearance of any tympanum was determined by local conditions, for we see that style and details may vary greatly between sites sharing a design (Fig. 25). Variations would have derived from the precise model that guided the sculptor's own drawing on the stone, from the experience of the sculptor, and from any particular additions required by the designer. The tympana at Knook and Wordwell take their styles entirely from other media, respectively reproducing the subject in the style of an illuminated manuscript and an ivory carving. The remaining tympana follow largely sculptural conventions, but details may in part follow manuscript styles. These may have come

from the pattern-book or a local model: there is much more detail of this kind remaining which cannot be shown in the diagrams, but should be studied on-site. Additions to standard designs were made, for example, at Dinton the designer showed the angel fighting with an altar cross, whereas St Michael routinely plunges a spear into the dragon's mouth: an altar only occurs in the man-between-animals format at Leckhampstead. Another cleric, at Llanbadarn Fawr (Fig. 25), incorporated his own material into the standard composition of a Tree between two animals: the tree springs from the head of a smiling lion beside a large star.<sup>60</sup> Although several tympana employ foliage styles taken from manuscripts, the compositions themselves are not paralleled in illuminations: the designs are peculiar to sculpture at village churches.<sup>61</sup>

The third kind of sculpture, individual schemes, may occur on doorways, chancel arches or fonts; such a scheme makes visible a carefully worked web of texts selected from the Bible or the Fathers, and the sculpture is a unique composition for that one place. The sculpture provided for the doorways at Quenington and South Cerney is of this kind. The designers of such sculpture were specialists, in demand over wide areas.<sup>62</sup> The distinctiveness of the works in Gloucestershire contrasts with the relative ordinarieness of the subjects in Buckinghamshire, and again suggests that the designer had been brought to Dinton from Gloucester or Worcester. He was conversant with the learned decorative scheme in the Worcester chapterhouse, and he had at his fingertips the material in circulating pattern books. He could produce a grand pair of doorways for the primary patron in Gloucestershire, but also was careful to consider the general audience of layfolk, and to 'cut his cloth' according to the craftsmen available to him.

### **The tree-and-two-animals design, used at Dinton**

There are eight doorways, diverse in appearance and proficiency, that have this design in the tympanum over their main doorway (Fig. 25). An interpretation of the doorway at Llanbadarn Fawr, Radnorshire, has allowed the period within which it is likely to have been made to be estimated from documentary sources; it is no later than 1137.<sup>63</sup> The Dinton doorway is the most elaborate and finely made of the eight examples, but they cannot be placed in any sort of relationship or sequence on that account.<sup>64</sup>

An exploration of the patronage at the eight sites from documented historical sources is hampered by the poor survival of evidence, but it appears that only Wordwell Church belonged to a religious community at this time, since in Domesday it was already in the hands of St Edmundsbury Abbey; presumably the other churches were in lay hands. Dinton Church was given to Godstow nunnery after 1154; Fritwell was given to St Frideswide's, an Augustinian house in Oxford by 1166, and Lullington was appropriated by the Augustinians of Longleat in 1393. The Augustinians have been shown to have fostered schemes in Yorkshire and at Melbourne in Derbyshire;<sup>65</sup> however, to go further is speculation. Apart from the suggestion that there were circulating pattern books, it is difficult to think of any one factor which could have produced the distribution of these designs (Fig. 27). In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century there must have existed links now lost to us, among families, through overlordship, or between clergy, that brought the design to the notice of the various patrons. A clerical connection of some kind must have been involved, for although lay patrons might confer and correspond about their own building projects, and visit those of others, they would have had neither the expertise in the precise choice of subjects, nor the further models necessary to guide the sculptors on site.

At most churches (Dinton, Fritwell, Llanbadarn, Trenglos and Wordwell) both animals are of the same kind, but at Ashford one is a pig (perhaps to show a Gentile), at Knook and at Lullington one is a wyvern; in these three cases, the second animal is a lion. Because of the inscription at Dinton, it is possible to interpret the animals in all the tympana in this shared design in the same way, whatever their species. Thus all these creatures, when found in an appropriate context, can represent the blessed in heaven.

Most of the doorways have been moved or restored over the centuries, so that now only half of them still have their original capitals (Dinton, Llanbadarn, Knook and Lullington).<sup>66</sup> It is unfortunate that so many capitals have been lost, and that those at Knook are merely of symmetrical foliage, because it seems likely that capitals could form part of the shared design. The remaining three sets of capitals logically prepare for the scene in the tympanum. Capitals at Llanbadarn and Dinton mention resurrection,<sup>67</sup> which is to be followed by entry into the paradise of the tympanum. Both



these sites include serpent imagery in this position, suggesting that snakes too might have been a part of the formula. At Lullington, on the right side of the doorway, one capital has two animals like those in the tympanum, while the adjacent capital has a centaur (Christ). On the left side, one of the two capitals is a plain scallop shape, but the next capital compresses the message of redemption into one stone: a long-haired man (Samson, a type of Christ) wrestles with a lion, watched by an ecstatic bird (a hopeful soul?).<sup>68</sup> The capitals here all seem to refer to the Harrowing of Hell, and the vertical relationship of the carvings over the whole doorway proceeds up from the Harrowing to the promise of Paradise in the tympanum, Christ enthroned and, at the apex of the gable, a group of abstract geometric symbols for God the Three in One.

#### The man-between-animals design, used at Leckhampstead

There are five doorways, or the remains of them, which have this design (Fig. 26).<sup>69</sup> As described above, the format treats the arrival of Christ from his Ascension as a home-coming; Christ is given an exuberant welcome from the animal symbols representing God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (Figs 18, 21). This design employs a metaphor used by Christ himself, and presents teaching about the Ascension in a way that would have been accessible.

It is interesting that in this instance two pairs of designs are somewhat alike (Caverswall and Charney Bassett; Downe and Shalfleet) while the Leckhampstead example is one very much on its own. We may infer that at least two pattern books with adequate illustrations were in circulation, but that for Leckhampstead the designer contrived to provide a composition using motifs that were already in the repertoire of this less experienced sculptor: the angel and the dragon of the lintel at Dinton reappear in the tympanum at Leckhampstead as the three persons of the Trinity.

#### REFERENCES

1. *VCH, Bucks* vol. 2 (1908), 272–73; 280; W E Wightman, *The Lacy Family in England and Normandy 1066–1194*, (Oxford, 1966), 175–177, 181–2, 207, 259.
2. See note 63 below.
3. Cecily's first husband had been Roger fitz Miles of Gloucester, Earl of Hereford, *VCH, Bucks* vol. 2 (1908), 272–73. Oliver de Merlimond, another patron of sculpture, had probably been in the earl's household, M Thurlby, *Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture* (Logaston rev ed 2000), 5, 6, 111–22; 104.
4. Leaflet available in church, 2008: *Dinton Church*, by RCCW. See also [www.crsbi.ac.uk](http://www.crsbi.ac.uk), the website of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, Dinton site report.
5. For example, the 'Robertvs' at St Augustine's, Canterbury, and at Romsey Abbey, were probably Norman sculptors.
6. At Weaverthorpe, East Riding, an inscription 'enables the building to be dated with unusual precision' to 1121–2, see C. Norton, *St William of York*, (Woodbridge, 2006), 53–4.
7. C B Kendall, 'The verse inscriptions of the tympanum of Jaca and the PAX anagram', *Mediaevalia*, **19** (1996), 405–434.
8. My thanks to Peter L Wood for this translation.
9. C Keyser, *A List of Norman Tympana and Lintels*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1927), xxx. The tympanum is illustrated as fig. 40.
10. For the significance of pattern, see R Wood, 'Geometric Patterns in English Romanesque Sculpture', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, **154** (2001), 1–39.
11. Anselm sent copies of his prayers to Countess Mathilda of Tuscany and others who requested them, see B Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm with the Prosolgion*, (Harmondsworth, 1973), 9–10.
12. Translations from the New English Bible. The illustration of a creature more or less delicately eating a single fruit is a widespread and early one: for example, it occurs in Ravenna on the 6<sup>th</sup>-century throne of Maximian; on the Anglo-Saxon Bewcastle cross, also at Melbourne in Derbyshire on the 12<sup>th</sup>-century chancel arch.
13. The wyvern is (or was) one kind of snake. Wyverns, also complete lions and snakes, are common in Romanesque sculpture, and the Dinton inscription encourages us to consider whether such creatures elsewhere, if they are accompanied by foliage, might not also represent believers in paradise.
14. Respectively, for example, Daniel 12:1; Rev. 12:7, 8 and 1 Cor. 15:55–57; Col. 2:13–15.
15. A S Cohen, *The Uta Codex: Art, Philosophy*

- and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany*, (Pennsylvania, 2000).
16. The altar cross has a conical base which is held by the angel in both hands; only a little of the actual base can be seen. The word 'precepta' might suggest sermons were preached to the laity: evidence is lacking for this period and for a rural audience, C Morris, *The Papal Monarchy, the Western Church from 1050 to 1250*, (Oxford, 1989), 305–09. The sculpture itself would have given opportunities for extempore or regular teaching, beyond the outline interpretation given in the present paper.
  17. A lintel at Ault Hucknall (Notts) shows an armed man fighting a dragon, with an altar cross standing between them: this is a picture of the Crucifixion. That cross has a stepped base.
  18. Wood, 'Geometric Patterns': for domes as stars, 7–8; zigzag as firmament, 24–25.
  19. In the bestiaries, a long narrative based on observation of partridges yielded moral teaching; see R Wood, 'The Augustinians and the Romanesque Sculpture at Kirkburn Church', *East Yorkshire Historian*, 4 (2003) 31–32. The Perdix hears the call of its father, God, and its mother, the Church.
  20. The Crane in the bestiary represents the faithful Christian, see [www.aberdeen.ac.uk/bestiary](http://www.aberdeen.ac.uk/bestiary). Using the Fox and Crane fable as a Christian allegory, the Crane will be rewarded with a feast in the next world, see Wood, 'Kirkburn', 23; R Wood, 'The Romanesque Tomb-Slab at Bridlington Priory', *Yorks Archaeol J*, 75 (2003), 71, 73. The thickness of the bird's legs compensated for the loss of natural length; it is seen in numerous other examples, e.g., fig. 22.
  21. At least some continental examples are also cranes, although all are usually called eagles.
  22. L. Musset, *Angleterre Romane* 1 (La Pierre qui Vire, 1983), 323. On a capital in Germany, two women wear crowns, while the man between them emits foliage and has a forked beard which ends in serpents; all look peaceful and contented, see A Legner, *Romanische Kunst in Deutschland*, (Munich, 1999), pl 99 (Spieskapell). For a local comparison of a small head surrounded by patterns, see J. Blair, 'An early 12<sup>th</sup>-century Purbeck marble graveslab from St Frideswide's priory' in *Saint Frideswide's Monastery at Oxford*, ed. J Blair (Gloucester, 1990), 266–8. The inscribed semi-circles on that graveslab recur on capitals at Dinton, and in work of the 1130s associated with the Augustinians in Yorkshire. Tiny human heads look down from the spandrels of a chevron order on the doorway at Fridaythorpe, East Riding. Once again, patterns are an evocation of the light of heaven.
  23. Plato in the *Symposium* said the deformed is always inharmonious with the divine and the beautiful harmonious. Compare Ernst Kitzinger, 'Some reflections on portraiture in Byzantine art' in *Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West* (Bloomington, 1976).
  24. In bestiaries, the lengthy section on snakes included everything from dragons downwards, large and small, natural and supernatural.
  25. R Wood, 'Before the Green Man', *Medieval Life* 14 (2000), 8–13.
  26. See D Kahn, *Canterbury Cathedral and its Romanesque Sculpture*, (1991) pl xi; Legner, *Romanische Kunst in Deutschland*, pls 95, 102, 103 (sculpture at Quedlinburg, Riechenberg and Goslar; men emitting or exhaling symmetrical snakes).
  27. Augustine, *Lit. Comm. Gen.*, 12.35; *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, ch. V. See R Wood, 'The two major capitals in the crypt of Saint-Bénigne at Dijon', *Antiq. J.*, 89 (2009), 230–32. See also R Wood & D Stephenson, 'The Romanesque doorway at St Padarn's church, Llanbadarn Fawr, Radnorshire', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* 156 (2007), 55–60.
  28. At Tournus, Burgundy, for example, a capital combines both these compositions by showing two symmetrical winged snakes emerging from a man's mouth and going to his ears: '[ses] oreilles sont mangées par des sortes de salamandres issues de [sa] bouche.' C Chanay, *Saint-Philibert de Tournus: Regards sur la Sculpture*, (Saint-Gengoux-de-Scissé, 1995), 12–13; photo 17.
  29. At least three of the five domes retain a sub-circular incised mark at the centre, showing where a dab of paint should highlight the star.
  30. R Wood, 'The Romanesque Tympanum at Fownhope, Herefordshire and the functioning of the Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture', *Trans Woolhope Naturalists' Field*

- Club*, 53 (2005), 69–71.
31. H Decker, *Romanesque Art in Italy*, (1958), pls 3, 69, 79, 161. The carving of snakes in symmetrical compositions was much more common in Italy and Germany than in Britain. Snake imagery could arouse an instinctive adverse reaction which it would have been difficult to overcome, but in Italy there were probably memories of a time when the snake had been a symbol of immortality.
  32. A cloister capital from Bridlington priory shows a clothed man pulling his forked beard, his muscles similarly bulging with the effort: on the opposite face of the capital a naked man seems to masturbate. For reining-in or bridling as self-restraint, see F Carlsson, *The Iconology of Tectonics in Romanesque Art*, (Hassleholm, 1976), 90–95.
  33. A Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, (1953), 71. The Vulgate describes the snake as *callidior*, a quality ranging from clever to crafty, subtle.
  34. The snake is often used in the initials to Psalms 12/11 and 69/68, which begin *Salvum me*, so that it figures Christ saving the psalmist.
  35. J Beckwith, *Early Medieval Art: Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque* (1964), 103; fig. 83; G Zarnecki, *The Monastic Achievement*, (1972) fig. 9.
  36. G R Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great*, (Cambridge 1986), 102–3.
  37. *Moralia* Bk. xxviii chs.1–9; Bk. xxx chs.2–4. English translations from Library of the Fathers, (1850) III parts 1 and 2.
  38. *Moralia* Bk.v chs.51,52. Peter, abbot of Celle (died 1182), wrote an essay on ‘Conscience’ which in ch.6 echoes Gregory the Great on inspiration, and in ch.12 describes how ‘wisdom and conscience come to the mind in step, so that wisdom never comes without conscience and conscience never comes without wisdom. Both wisdom and conscience with equal gait pull the soul toward its goal as though it were their own vehicle.’ See *Peter of Celle: Selected Works*, trs H Feiss (Kalamazoo, 1987), 145, 147. The two snakes approaching the man’s ears to whisper to him might be understood as Wisdom and Conscience.
  39. Reading Gregory on inspiration sometimes recalls the poem ‘Snake’ by D H Lawrence.
  40. J M C Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (1973), 223–236, says ‘snakes... were in the main of good repute in the pagan Graeco-Roman world... they were [among other things]...regarded as representing the beneficent spirits of the dead.’
  41. R Wood, ‘The Norman Chapel in Durham Castle’, *Northern History*, 47/1, 35–36. The long passage in *Moralia* about Christ being ‘the rider of the horseman’ was echoed by a twelfth-century writer, who did name Christ as the centaur.
  42. Wood, ‘Geometric Patterns’, 9, 11.
  43. Wood, ‘Geometric Patterns’, 23–25.
  44. These domes cut into bunches of grapes are sometimes seen on chancel arches.
  45. Revelation 19:9.
  46. Compare Ron Baxter’s account of the Leckhampstead connection, [www.crsbi.ac.uk](http://www.crsbi.ac.uk), Dinton, section VIII.
  47. Though of generous width, the opening of the doorway at Leckhampstead (1.09m by 2.15m) is not of the same proportion as that at Dinton (1.23m by 1.89m).
  48. Keyser, *Tympana*, fig. 66. The fracture in the carved stone is due to its slender ‘wings’, and can already be seen in the plate in the first edition of Charles Keyser’s book, published in 1904. It is surprising that the head of the doorway can maintain the pressure with only the support of the door frame.
  49. Wood, ‘Geometric Patterns’: individual stars, 5–7; starry lintels, 8–9.
  50. For example, on a ciborium in S Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna. An Anglo-Saxon panel at Britford, Wilts, similarly shows bunches of grapes within a raised border. Spirals and trefoil leaves picture a vine on the twelfth-century chancel arch at Powerstock, Dorset, see Wood, ‘Green Man’, fig. 3.
  51. According to Plato’s *Phaedrus*, ‘more than any other thing that pertains to the body, [the wing] partakes of the nature of the divine’. The thirteenth-century Bishop Grosseteste in *Hexameron* uses birds as an image of spiritual men.
  52. For the blockish representation of the altar set on a plinth or steps, compare J Beckwith, *Early Medieval Art*, (1969) ill. 171, or H. Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: an historical study*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. revised 1999), II, ills. 55, 58. It is tempting to link the form of the altar to those on the Morgan and Warwick ciboria, hence to the sources used for the



- Gloucestershire sculpture mentioned in note 56, however, this connection is not necessary. The altars are illustrated in N Stratford, 'Three English Romanesque enamelled Ciboria', *Burlington Magazine*, **126** (1984), 204–16, pls. 36, 37.
53. Further Cranes with this type of beak are illustrated in R. Wood, 'The Romanesque Chancel Arch at Liverton, North Riding', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* **78** (2006), figs. 12, 13, 14.
  54. Compare the stone at the apex of the gable on the north doorway at Lullington, Somerset: a circle and three smaller motifs.
  55. The three doorways are featured in Musset, *Angleterre Romane*, **1**, pls. 116, 137, 139; the same photographs are used for figs. 1, 23 and 24. The fourth church involved is All Hallows, South Cerney, Gloucs.
  56. Submission to *Trans. Bristol & Gloucs. Archaeol. Soc.* in progress.
  57. See note 1.
  58. For corbels and expansions of their imagery, see Wood, 'Kirkburn', 14–25; for developed foliage capitals of Corinthian style, see J K Knight and R Wood, 'St Gwynllw's Cathedral, Newport: the Romanesque Archway', *Archaeol. Cambrensis*, **155** (2006), 173. It is such expansions from the norm which can secure a safe interpretation of common imagery.
  59. The same pattern, a foliage scroll, in the lintel at Fritwell is used up the stem of the tree at Trenglos, might this have been copied from a circulated master copy? There is some evidence for a pattern book of geometric patterns, see Wood, 'Liverton', figs. 15, 18 showing rectangular panels of geometric patterns which could have been copied straight from samples in a circulating list; see also R Wood, 'The Romanesque Font at St Marychurch, Torquay', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* **62** (2004), 94–5.
  60. Wood and Stephenson, 'Llanbadarn', 54.
  61. The boar-hunt imagery is only found in sculpture and occurs at seven churches spread across England from Yorkshire to Devon, see Wood, 'St Marychurch', 89–94.
  62. The Cluniac designer of the unique south porch at Malmesbury Abbey probably came from Burgundy, and he went on to Yorkshire; the Augustinian designer at Kirkburn produced several unique schemes, in Derbyshire and Yorkshire.
  63. Wood and Stephenson, 'Llanbadarn Fawr', 65–68. The dates are derived from recorded events in the Norman attempt to subdue mid-Wales.
  64. As well as the examples on this side of the Channel, the design of a tree-and-two-animals is or was found in Normandy at two churches, Hérouville and Marigny, see M Claussen, 'Romanische Tympana und Türstürze in der Normandie', *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, **75** (1980), 27; pl 14f; fig 19.
  65. Wood, 'Kirkburn' for example. It may be coincidence, but the odd feature of the man's forehead being covered by the fillet/impost (right side of the third order, fig. 11) is also seen in schemes in churches associated with the Augustinians of Guisborough, see Wood, 'Liverton', figs. 21, 22, contrast fig. 23.
  66. At Dinton, the term 'capitals' in this paragraph refers to the carved panels in the third order. At Wordwell, the capitals of the south doorway are in a completely different style from the tympanum, and Ron Baxter suggests that the tympanum is a replacement of c.1130–40. See [www.crsbi.ac.uk](http://www.crsbi.ac.uk), entry for Wordwell, section VIII.
  67. At Llanbadarn, note 27, the 'new body' is shown as a wyvern; in its mouth is a smaller, simple, snake (the soul) which itself has a sprig of foliage (new life) in its mouth.
  68. The Lullington capitals were sketched by W W Wheatley c.1845: my thanks to Michael McGarvie for sending me photocopies, which were a help in deciphering the actual remains. The Worcester chapterhouse scheme included Samson wrestling with the lion as a type of the Harrowing of Hell; its text may be translated as 'Samson's strength brought down and conquered the lion: Christ conquered the dragon of hell and tied him up' (Heslop; Henry).
  69. A tympanum at Bully, Calvados, is weathered, but is also of this design, though it was misunderstood by the sculptor. The human figure is emerging through a line of clouds into heaven, his arms spread as on the Cross; the lions' tails should resemble those on the tympanum at Shalfleet. See L. Musset, *Normandie Romane*, **1** (La Pierre qui Vire, 1967) pl. 113.