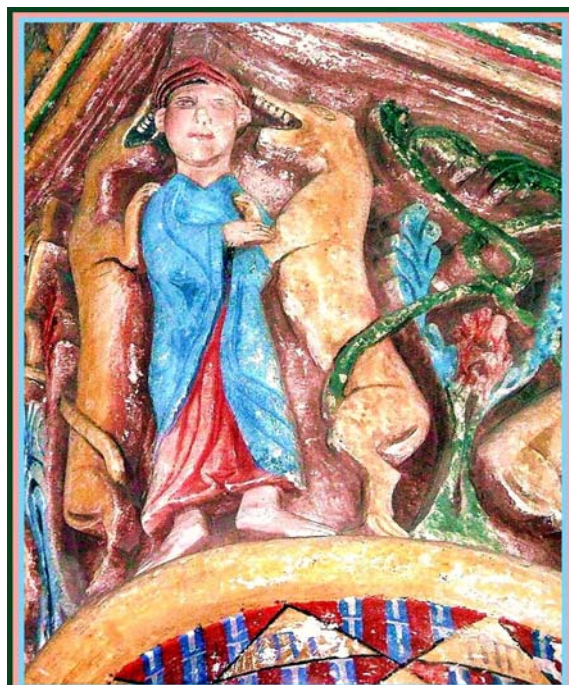


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Daniel in the Den of Lions: Early Medieval Carvings and their Origins

by TINA NEGUS

*Your God himself, whom you have served so faithfully, will have to save you.*¹

These words, spoken by King Darius the Mede as he had the prophet Daniel thrown into the den of lions for the crime of refusing to worship him, have echoed down the centuries. The events took place in Babylon, in the middle of the sixth century B.C., though the account as given in the Old Testament is much later.² Daniel's God did indeed save him, and ever since he has been taken as an example of faith and righteousness, together with Jonah and with the three young men in the fiery furnace. His trust in the Lord and his innocence are seen as a protection against evil. It is not surprising therefore that images of Daniel are found from the earliest years of Christianity until medieval times. Indeed, Daniel may be taken as a prefigurement of Christ Himself.

The Romanesque churches of France have many such images. 'Daniel' was evidently part of the mason's pattern book, and the motif was commonly chosen to decorate capitals. Two similar carvings on the capitals in the apsidioles of the north transept at Le Dorat (Haute Vienne) may be taken as the simplest representation of Daniel (see Fig. 1). He sits with legs astride, clad in a tunic with pleated skirt and knotted girdle. To either side sits a lion, and the head of each is turned away from the prophet who, with arms outstretched, grasps their lower jaws rendering them harmless. However, this image was not something new, invented by the carvers of the early medieval churches, but in essence had existed throughout history from the earliest civilisations of Indo-Sumeria onwards. Cylinder seals from about 4000 B.C. provide us with some of our oldest images, insights into the daily life and the religious beliefs and practices of the time. The image of the Tree of Life, often depicted as a date palm, or vine, is well known.³ It is frequently shown with symmetrically flanking beasts, which feed off its branches. Another similarly symmetrical ancient image shows a central priest or deity, with two or more animals. This image has been named the 'Gilgamesh motif'⁴ and has passed into the iconography of later ages with little change. The beasts are often held by their necks, tongues, or legs, or they may face inward, appearing to bite the head of the figure, or to speak into his ears. The image markedly resembles the Romanesque Daniel carvings. Both the Tree of Life and the Gilgamesh images seem to be combined on a seal from Uruk, dating from around 3200–3000 B.C. Here the figure holds branches to his chest, so that the stems extend into the four cardinal directions, symbolically filling the world with life, just as the four rivers flow from the foot of the Tree of Life in the Earthly Paradise.⁵ The flanking sheep-like creatures browse on the sprouting rosettes, said to be symbols of Inanna, goddess of Uruk.⁶ Joseph Campbell calls this central figure 'The Lord of Life'.⁷ A panel of shell inlay found in the



FIG. 1. Capital of north transept, Le Dorat, France (Drawn from photograph taken by author)

Royal Cemetery at Ur, which dates to about 2500 B.C., shows a standing figure whose arms encircle the necks of flanking rampant man-headed bulls.⁸

On some seals the central deity is shown in a yogic position, as in the 'Marshall seal', the Harappan image of 'Śiva Paśupati'.⁹ On others, the central figure is female, as in the Minoan seal from Crete, dated at around 2500–1100 B.C.,¹⁰ on which the goddess Inanna/Ishtar is shown between a lion and a lioness. Similarly, a bowl from Boeotia in ancient Greece, of the eighth century B.C., shows a goddess surrounded by her creatures, both birds and beasts, with spiralled tails and interspersed with swastikas.¹¹ Castleden offers us her Minoan name, 'Britomartis', and suggests that this was perhaps perpetuated as 'Artemis' in later Greek times. He refers to her as 'Mistress of Wild Animals', and 'Queen of Wild Beasts'.¹² The male companion of Britomartis was a hunter-god and protector of animals. This 'Master of Animals' may have been her son, her brother or her consort, and is depicted between two rampant lions with his arms outstretched above the beasts' heads.¹³ The Greek goddess Artemis, in her role as 'Mistress of Animals', is shown on a gold pectoral from Kamiros, on Rhodes.¹⁴ She is winged and her arms stretch out above two flanking lions. They rest one forelimb on her hips, and avert their heads in an attitude of submission.

The ancient Persians in the region of Luristan produced many representations of deities and religious life in elaborate and skilful metalwork. A panel of a quiver is decorated with a small naked figure, holding two deer-like creatures from their hind legs. To either side is a rampant lion, dwarfing the figure between them. This image shows both the flanking, threatening beasts and the subdued, restrained animals. A pinhead of similar origins shows the central figure in pleated skirt, hand raised as if in prayer, with a pair of flanking lions, which bite or speak into his ears.¹⁵ The Phoenician civilisation, the great sea-faring culture stretching around the Mediterranean from around 1200–1000 B.C., also used cylinder seals. Two of these show the same image as is described above, but separated into the two component parts. The first seal has a king/priest centrally, with rampant lions; the

second has a very stylised image of a figure holding aloft two deer by their hind legs.¹⁶

The ancient images discussed so far were all created before the historical events recorded in the Book of Daniel. In later times various cultures, both Christian and pagan, employed similar images. One of the plates of the famous Gundestrup cauldron (first century B.C.) shows a deity with two stags.¹⁷ The head, upper torso, and raised arms are shown, and the figure holds aloft (by the hind legs) two miniature deer. The early Roman Christians painted Daniel and the lions in the catacombs, and the image was a popular one for the Frankish Christian people. These depictions tend to be naturalistic in character, as on a fourth-century Frankish reliquary casket¹⁸ where a praying Daniel is shown between two remarkably benign and fawning lions. In the catacombs, Daniel is usually portrayed as naked, praying with raised arms, with a lion to either side. Stevenson stresses that the symmetrical approach, with as few figures as possible, is typical of catacomb paintings,¹⁹ but mentions the second version of the Daniel story, where the number of lions is given as seven. The naturalism of these early Christian images no doubt reflects the understanding of the Daniel story in the light of Christian teaching. However, in non-Christian cultures, or regions where non-Christian images were employed alongside specifically Christian symbols, the stylised ancient form of the design remained in use. A carving on a Gallo-Roman altar, dated around the year 50 A.D., was discovered near Rheims, in France. It shows a seated horned deity, called by Campbell 'The Lord of Life',²⁰ just as he names the earliest Sumerian images of about 3500 B.C. The deity is also referred to as Cernunnos;²¹ he sits in the eastern yogic position, and wears a torc around his neck. From a sack-like cornucopia, he pours out a river of grain to feed a bull and stag below, and is flanked by typical Roman depictions of Mars and Apollo, in subservient attitudes. The image also continued to be used, almost unchanged, in the Middle East. The Sassanids, the native dynasty of ancient Persia, were skilled metalworkers. A silver dish, dated to the early fifth century A.D.,²² shows the typical 'Master of Animals' with an additional lion beneath his feet (see Fig. 2).

The image of a man with beast whispering into his ears is also found in northern lands. In Sweden, seventh-century bronze matrices in the 'Vendel' style were used to produce plaques to decorate special caskets. One of these, the Torslunda stamp, shows a man flanked by two bears, which speak, or bite at his ears. However, the man is armed with both sword and dagger and strikes at the bear on his left. Brian Branston points out the similarity between this and the image on the Sutton Hoo purse lid, of the same date.²³ However, Roe separates these images with flanking beasts 'whispering' into the ears of the central figure from the true Daniel image, in which the beasts are shown in subjugation.²⁴ Bruce-Mitford also considers that the Torslunda Stamp and the Sutton Hoo purse-lid images do not depict Daniel, but despite certain differences between them suggests that these two designs have an historical and physical link, as well as an iconographic one.²⁵ However, the Bofflens ivory buckle, from Lavigny, Switzerland (see Fig. 3), illustrated by Bruce-Mitford, undoubtedly depicts Daniel: indeed, the inscription around the image includes the name 'DANINIL'. Here the prophet is shown praying with raised arms (in the 'orans' position), clothed in a simple tunic, and with upside-down flanking lions licking his feet.



FIG. 2. Sassanian silver dish
(Redrawn from N. H. H. Sitwell,
The World the Romans Knew, London:
Hamish Hamilton, 1984, p. 114)

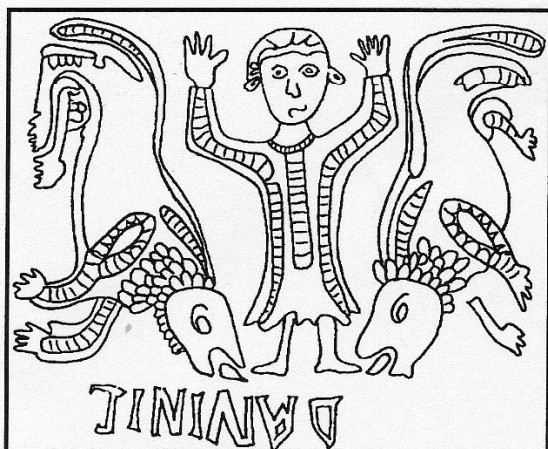


FIG. 3. The Bofflens Buckle
(Redrawn from R. Bruce-Mitford,
Aspects of Anglo-Saxon archaeology.
Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries,
London: Victor Gollancz Ltd,
1974, pl. 15)

The exquisite Shroud of St Victor was made in the eighth century in Iran, and is now part of the Treasury at Sens Cathedral, in France.²⁶ It is decorated with ovals, each depicting a central skirted figure, which stands on the mouths of upside-down lions' heads, and thus rendering them harmless. The arms of the figure reach out to a further pair of flanking lions, grasping their manes: he may represent Gilgamesh or Daniel.

Images of Daniel occur on both Celtic and Pictish stones. The Moone Abbey cross shows Daniel with seven lions, three to the left and four to the right. This is

the number given in the second version of the Daniel story, where the prophet kills the dragon, the idol of the followers of Bel.²⁷ According to J. Romilly Allen, this is the number specified in the *Greek Painter's Guide from Mount Athos*,²⁸ although he remarks that in general 'symmetry is preferred to historical accuracy'. It may well be that it is more a question of conforming to ancient usage, with its wider implications, than to the approved scriptural version. Indeed, even the carver of the Moone image has taken care to retain a sense of symmetry in the design, even though an odd number of lions is portrayed. The Meigle Stone (known as Meigle no. 2) shows a bearded Daniel in a flared and pleated skirt, resembling the ancient images (see Fig. 4). His arms are outstretched in prayer towards two lions on each side (and a little pair of cubs above). Daniel is shown in a Christ-like attitude and the whole scene is symbolic of the Resurrection:²⁹ the den of lions could not destroy Daniel, nor could the sealed tomb prevent the Resurrection. Inga Gilbert directs attention to the image of a centaur carrying the tree, below the Daniel scene, which she equates with the Babylonian mythical Enkidu, the companion of Gilgamesh on his journeyings.³⁰ This motif is also found on the Sarcophagus of St Andrews, and the Aberlemno roadside cross. Gilbert also recognises the similarity of the Daniel image to the Sumerian seals, calling him 'Master of Animals', and

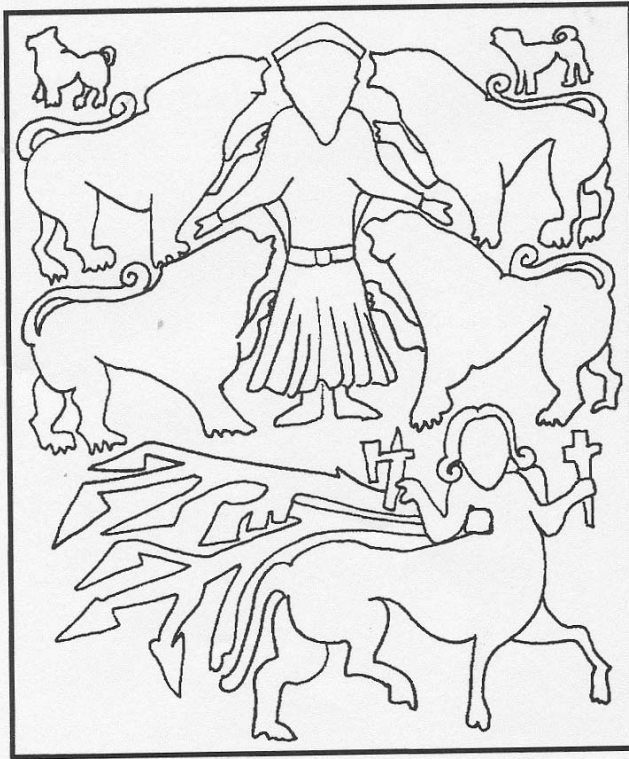


FIG. 4. Detail of Meigle Stone 2 (Redrawn from A. Ritchie, *Picts*, Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989, p. 57)

tracing the use of the image from Sumer, through Assyria, Luristan and to the Christian images of the Prophet. She considers that the image on the Meigle stone may imply a merging of the account of Daniel with the Gilgamesh epic, but that the 'pagan' version remains the stronger.

Both Meigle 2 and the more literal Moone Abbey Cross show the upper pair of lions in the 'whispering into ears' position, and thus combine this symbolism with that of the beasts in subjugation. At Kells, the Cross of Saints Patrick and Columba depicts two lions, whilst the Market Cross has four. Here Daniel occupies the prime central position on the Cross: two lions are positioned above the outstretched praying arms and two below. Roe points out the parallels with the Crucifixion, which gives emphasis to the Daniel story within the Christian context.³¹ Man (the individual human being) has a central place in the world: the people who threw Daniel into the Lion-pit were attempting to destroy his centrality, to no avail. Similarly, in crucifying Jesus, the soldiers unwittingly nailed him to the symbolic centre of the world, indicated by the flanking crosses of the two thieves. At Keills, in Argyllshire, the lovely Cross is unfortunately very eroded. However, a seated figure can be seen just below the central boss, with a book held in the left hand and the right hand raised in blessing. The short arms of the Cross show leonine creatures, facing downwards, apparently licking the face of the figure, or perhaps speaking into his ears. Roe lists this as Daniel, but given the seated position, book and hand of benediction, it might well be Christ:³² whichever was intended, the similarity with ancient images is without doubt. Amongst many other similar depictions of Daniel on Irish high crosses, the example on the cross-base at Oldcourt, Co. Wicklow, should be mentioned. Although badly eroded, this is evidently a simple image, with just two lions, which speak into Daniel's ears. It has been compared to an early Christian bronze buckle-plate from Zürich, in Switzerland.³³

As images pass from generation to generation and from culture to culture, they take on the artistic characteristics of the age and the expectations and demands of the time. So it is with the image of the Master of Animals, who became the prophetic figure of Daniel, and in Celtic and medieval times took on the styles typical of the respective ages. The Book of Kells, composed around the year 800 A.D., illustrates this idea perfectly: the Canon Table, folio 2v, at the upper central position shows a Celtic version of this image. A bearded head, within a nimbus decorated with three crosses, reaches out his arms to rest on the tongues of typically Celtic beasts to left and right.³⁴

Ó Carragáin³⁵ refers to the verse from the Book of Habakkuk which contains the words 'in medio duorum animalium innotesceris' ('you will be known in the midst of two animals').³⁶ This was read at the Adoration of the Cross each Good Friday and during the Divine Office at Lauds every Friday. Although commentators on the verse³⁷ generally interpreted it symbolically, Ó Carragáin sees the image at the head of the Canon Table as a visual pun, which strengthens the message. He points out the ambiguity of the relationship between Christ and the beasts, for although the tongues imprison His arms, He firmly grasps them in turn, making their speech impossible. However, they do speak symbolically, for by calling to mind the Habakkuk verse they proclaim the figure as Christ. The phrase 'in medio duorum

animalium' might well be used to describe all the images here considered. The scriptural and exegetical meaning is less relevant in this study than the continued use of a particular form of imagery, repeated in yet another context. Lucas gives a date of about 635 B.C. for the Book of Habakkuk, and suggests the possibility that the imagery associated with the verse was inspired by an example of the 'Gilgamesh motif' to be found in the region where it was composed.³⁸

An early medieval manuscript from the scriptorium at Moissac Abbey in France, made use of the motif to produce the capital letter 'M'.³⁹ This late-eleventh-century/early-twelfth-century letter shows a figure whose hands are thrust into the jaws of beast-heads arising from the interlace decorating the upright strokes of the 'M'. He is naked except for a cap resembling those of ancient Phrygia. In Romanesque and medieval carvings images are often composite, with several layers of meaning, and here the notion of the 'Green Man' seems to be hinted at, as Daniel is entwined in foliage: he is natural man, at one with the living world.

In the Romanesque churches of France, the Daniel motif is common. Sometimes the design is simple as at Le Dorat (see Fig. 1), and at Charlieu (Yonne). The Saintonge region of Charente and Charente-Maritime is rich in Romanesque churches and carving. Here are displayed a collection of images that may well be ultimately derived from eastern and middle-eastern sources, such as sexually exhibiting figures, mythical creatures, centaurs, dragons, green men and beasts,⁴⁰ and images of Daniel. At Aulnay, adjacent capitals of the west door show two aspects of the ancient images. The outer capital depicts two beasts whose necks are grasped by a central person: they are thus under his control and dominion. The inner capital shows two creatures whispering into the ears of the man in the centre: perhaps the two types of images are related, after all.

The church at Macqueville, just to the south of Aulnay, contains a remarkable carving, combining features of Daniel with that of the Green Man (see Fig. 5). A fully clothed man stands astride stems. To right and left, on the corners of the capital, lions rise up beside him, and appear to speak into his ears. There are many similar carvings, both in France and in England, where lions, serpents, or dragons whisper into the ears of a central figure, perhaps a representation to Christians of listening to evil voices. In some cases, as at Bridge Sollars, in Herefordshire, the dragons arise from the mouth of the face itself, appearing here to indicate the voice of a bad conscience (Fig. 6). Ear-whisperers may also arise from other parts of the body. For example, a chancel capital at Columbiers, Vienne, shows the central figure with splayed legs, which are similar to the divided legs or tails of sirens and mermen seen in the same church. The splayed legs of the central figure transform into winged dragons, rearing up to his ears. But the carving at Macqueville is not of an ordinary man. This is the Green Man,⁴¹ for the foliage, apparently that of the Tree of Life, arises from his ears. He stands firmly rooted on the earth and astride the branches, grasping the tongues of the flanking lions with both hands. He is therefore able to still their insidious whisperings. Perhaps this is the reason why the theme of Daniel is so popular in France, as the idea of a truly green man being invincible may have been deeply rooted in the medieval mind.

A third example from the same area may be found at Saujon (see Fig. 7). Only four capitals remain from the Romanesque church, but the carving is exceptionally



FIG. 5. Macqueville. Nave capital (Photographed by author)

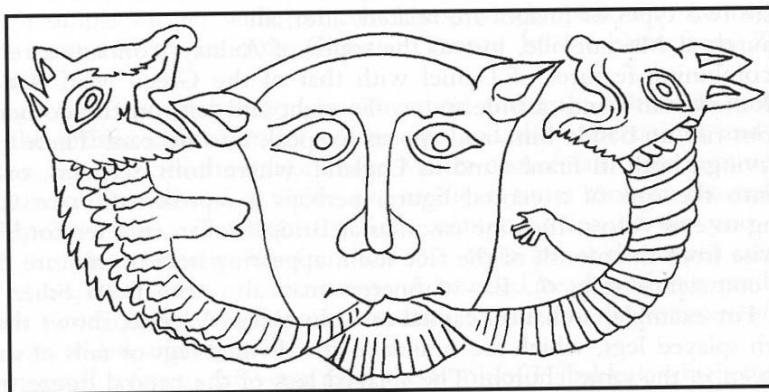


FIG. 6. Bridge Sollars. South door, right capital (Drawn from photograph by author)

fine. The seated robed figure holds a book and has his right hand raised in blessing. Surrounding him is a decorated 'glory' or mandorla, isolating the central figure from the world. To right and left are smiling lions with foliage sprouting from their ears. The image may be taken for that of Christ, but Jacques Lacoste, the authority on the region's carvings, considers this to be Daniel in the lions' den.⁴² Whether

the image represents Daniel or Christ, it is remarkably reminiscent of the seated figure on the Keills Cross, described above. A similar carving at Matha Marastay (Charente Maritime, France) which depicts a Christlike seated figure holding a book solves the problem of identification of the figure. Two lions gaze towards the viewer, while two lower ones lick his feet. The depicted book clearly states that this is 'DANIEL'.

Other Romanesque carvings on the same theme may also be found at Saint-Sornin, Meursac, Saintes, Rétaud, and at Guitinières, all in the Saintonge region of France. The central figure on the crossing capital at Saint-Sornin, stands between the flanks of the outward facing beasts, and grasps them with outstretched hands.⁴³ The lions are badly damaged and it is impossible to tell whether the figure holds their manes or tongues. At Meursac, the figure combines the image of a seated man, clad in a draped skirt, with the tongue-holding feature seen at Macqueville, and has been identified as illustrating the theme of Gilgamesh.⁴⁴ One of the crossing capitals in the church of St Eutrope in Saintes shows a seated Daniel, arms raised in prayer, and with two pairs of flanking lions. The surface carving of the lions to Daniel's left is missing, but a restored version⁴⁵ shows that the upper lions are clearly male with profuse manes: their heads are averted in attitudes of submission (see Fig. 8). Beneath them, lionesses lick the feet of the prophet, much as they do at Keills. At Rétaud, the carver has used one of the common Romanesque devices, giving the two lions separate bodies, but a shared head. Daniel is clad in a tunic, and sits beneath the lions' head; the beasts fore feet rest on his thighs, and he firmly grasps their upper limbs with outstretched hands.

The wonderful little church of St Romain at Guitinières contains much exceptional carving: the north-west capital beneath the bell-tower is particularly interesting. A seated central figure is shown in a simple wide-sleeved robe; he has two heads shown in profile: he resembles Janus, looking to left and right, to past and future. From his mouth shoot forth leaf-bearing stems, which he holds with his hands and which ensnare the flanking lions around their necks. They in turn produce more foliage from their tails. It is as though the living words uttered by the central personage (whether it represents Daniel or Christ) render the animals harmless and encourage their own verdancy. Here are combined attributes of the Daniel/Christ figure, Janus and the 'Green Man'.⁴⁶

The version of Daniel in the pilgrim church at Vézelay shows him enclosed within a vesicle, as though protected from the four lions peering harmlessly around the sides. Perhaps the most dramatic of the Daniel carvings in France is the so-called 'Lion-tamer' at Chauvigny (Vienne). The carver's name, Godfridus, appears on the choir capital depicting the Epiphany. He uses many composite and mythological images, and has a distinctive style, with rounded bold forms picked out with dark red lines and background. Daniel is provided with an extra pair of legs, giving a strong sense of movement as he swings aloft two lions by their hind legs. This action and his tunic with pleated skirt are entirely typical of the ancient 'Master of Animals' (see Fig. 9).

The church of Ste Radegonde in Poitiers features a brightly coloured capital situated between the chancel and the ambulatory, which shows four variations on the Daniel/Gilgamesh theme. The figures representing Daniel take the corners of



FIG. 7. Capital at Saujon (Photographed by author)



FIG. 8. Saintes, St Eutrope: crossing capital (Redrawn and restored by the author, from J. Lacoste, *Sculpture Romane en Saintonge*, St -Cyr-sur-Loire: Christian Pirot, 1998, p. 48)

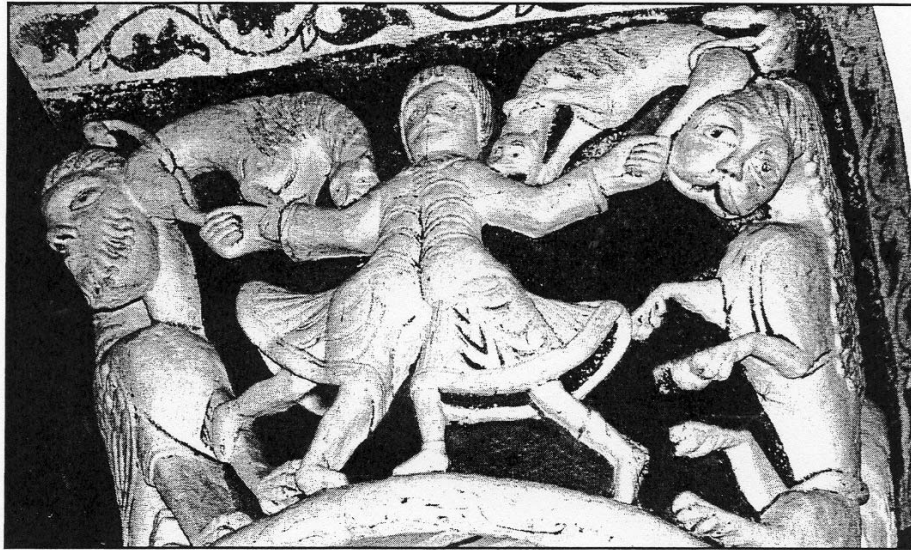


FIG. 9. Chauvigny, St Pierre: ambulatory capital (Photographed by author)

the capital, with beasts to each side and an image of the Tree of Life in the centre of each panel. One arrangement of the motif presents two flanking lionesses rearing up to speak into Daniel's ears. He turns to hold the front paw of the beast on his left with his right hand, in an almost affectionate gesture. The lions' tails, painted green, extend into foliage which entwines with that of the Tree of Life. A variant on the theme, found on two adjacent panels, depicts an upright lion on Daniel's left, and an upside-down one, which licks his feet, on his right. Daniel grasps the lower jaw of the upright beast with his left hand, while the upside-down lion whispers in his right ear. With his right hand, Daniel holds a serpent which arises from the knotted tails of a pair of reversed lions (one featuring in this panel, the other in the adjacent one). The adjacent panel on which this general arrangement is repeated shows the positions of the beasts reversed so that the upside-down lion and the serpent are on Daniel's left, the upright lion on his right. The fourth panel shows both lions licking Daniel's feet, with two serpents in the ear-whispering position. This charming and important capital clearly shows the common identification of flanking upright lions, of foot-lickers, of ear-whisperers and of the serpent, with the Daniel motif. The use of serpents in place of lions may also be seen at the Abbey church of St Pierre, at Solignac (Haute Vienne), where the two important chancel capitals depict the same theme. On one of these, Daniel is flanked by winged lions with bird-like heads. The animals are depicted speaking into his ears and with their front paws resting on his knees. On the second, the flanking creatures are serpents whose knotted tails are enmeshed around Daniel's feet. He holds the serpents by their necks and they whisper into his ears.

The final French carving to be discussed is at St Aignan (Indre-et-Loire). One of the ambulatory capitals has lions on all four corners and images of Daniel on two sides. He stands between the crossed bodies of the beasts, wearing a wide-sleeved tunic with pleated skirt, gazing fixedly forward. His arms reach out to the lions, hands resting on the tongues or lightly holding the lower jaws. The two remaining sides are filled with intertwined foliage that springs from the lions' tails. Daniel may be seen here as truly medieval, combining the ancient motif of Master of Animals with the greening of the world referred to by Hildegard of Bingen.⁴⁷

Examples of the Daniel motif in English Romanesque churches are less common. The panel on the west front of Lincoln cathedral is a naturalistic rendering: Daniel is seated holding a book, as at Saujon, surrounded by five happy lions.⁴⁸ At Shalfleet on the Isle of Wight, the tympanum is described as depicting a bearded man in a lay robe gripping by their heads two affronted lions, undoubtedly Daniel, and equally undoubtedly imagery inherited from the ancient past.⁴⁹ The tympanum at Charney Bassett (Oxfordshire) also has a central motif of a bearded man in pleated skirt, clutching affronted griffins by their manes. This may also be a representation of Daniel, though the Kerrs suggest that it depicts the legend of Alexander the Great rising heavenwards.⁵⁰ In either event, its ancient origins as a motif of mastery over the beasts remains clear. The carving on the twelfth-century font at Avebury, Wiltshire, has been interpreted as representing serpents biting at the cloak of a bishop.⁵¹ In fact, the beasts are winged, and are therefore dragons or wyverns rather than serpents. The symmetry of the overall design is emphasised by the inclusion of a foliate scroll on the bishop's left, echoing the shape of the crozier held in his right hand. Whatever event or story the sculpture records, it provides another example of the revered person portrayed between two beasts at his feet.

An Irish Romanesque carving of an apparent Sheela-na-Gig at Rath Blathmac is carved with flanking animals, which appear to bite at the figure's ears.⁵² Rynne suggests that this is a cross between a Sheela-na-Gig, identified by the widely splayed legs, and the Daniel scene found on so many Irish High Crosses.⁵³ While this same bodily position is to be seen at Le Dorat (see Fig. 1) and at Rétaud, neither of which have any obvious exhibitionist connotations, this interpretation is supported by a depiction of Daniel to be found on two capitals in the chancel at Ste Aulaye (Perigord, France) in both of which Daniel is shown in the same position as at Le Dorat, but naked, with the genital region fully exposed. Examples of the traditional image of Daniel dating to the later medieval period are rarely to be found, although the fourteenth-century capital at Thorpe Arnold (Leicestershire) may be a relic of it, albeit in a reduced form. Daniel and two flanking lions are represented only by their heads. The carving is full of vitality and charm, with Daniel and the two lions smiling happily together.

The retention of this motif from the earliest civilisations until medieval times, and its occurrence in the images of so many diverse cultures is truly remarkable. Roe draws attention to the persistence of the design and its extraordinary antiquity, and to the continuous fidelity of representation.⁵⁴ Burckhardt states that many examples of Asiatic themes passed into Christian art during the Middle Ages.⁵⁵ He claims that the sources of the current of folklore are prehistoric, reinforced from

time to time with images directly imported from the East. The Romanesque carvers had a huge vocabulary of motifs, many of which seem to have been absorbed into their designs through the travels of traders and the migrations of peoples. Images with particular meanings within an early culture may have been re-employed by later artists to express different intentions or to add a different slant to the original meaning: the ancient form of the motif may be retained, but the emphasis is changed to comply with new ideas. This is especially so within Christianity, which has taken as its own so many ancient images, and used them to express its own teachings. The Romanesque carvers appear to have adopted a complete assemblage of forms from earlier cultures, which needs to be studied as a whole. Daniel, griffins, sirens, mermaids, displaying males, females, and copulating couples, green men and beasts may all be part of this group, and should be considered together, rather than as separate entities.

The phrase 'In medio duorum animalium' might be taken to define this ancient and archetypal image. Lucas remarks that 'the clear-cut symmetry of this arrangement in line, mass and subject components, together with its total inclusiveness, seem to have endowed it with an enduringly satisfying appeal, both visually and psychologically'.⁵⁶ The identity of the central figure varies from place to place and from time to time, and is a fascinating topic for academic speculation. However, the aspect of the subject considered here is the repeated reappearance of the archetype under a variety of names and disguises. The Romanesque carvings of Daniel would have been recognisable throughout history, by people of very many differing cultures. 'In the midst of two living things *you will be known*' suggests that this position between two creatures defines the nature of the central personage, whether this nature is one of kingship, priestliness or divinity. It is how we recognise their supreme importance in our explanations of the world in which we live.

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- ³ In biblical symbolism the Tree of Life is planted in the midst of the Earthly Paradise, and represents the centre of our world, and the vertical axis linking Heaven and Earth (René Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, London: Luzac & Co., 1958, pp. 46–53 [first published by Véga, Paris, 1931]). Within Christianity, the Cross of the Crucifixion is symbolically identified with the Tree of Life (*Lignum Vitae*). In Romanesque carving, it is usually depicted centrally on capitals and tympana, and may arise from the mouth of an upside-down cat-like head below (Tina Negus, 'Mediaeval Foliate Heads: A Photographic Study of Green Men and Green Beasts in Britain', *Folklore*, 114.2, 2003, 252) as at Romsey Abbey and at Plaimpied Givaudens, near Bourges.
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- ⁷ Joseph Campbell, *Oriental Mythology: The Masks of God*, New York: Penguin Arkana, 1962, p. 40.
- ⁸ A. T. Lucas, 'In the Middle of Two Living Things': Daniel or Christ?, *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland*, ed. E. Rynne, Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987, p. 94.
- ⁹ 'Paśupati' (Lord of Animals) literally means 'Lord of Cattle': the word 'Paśu' refers specifically to bovine animals.
- ¹⁰ Brian Branston, *The Lost Gods of England*, London: Constable, 1993, p. 94.
- ¹¹ Shakrukh Husain, *The Goddess*, London: Duncan Baird, 2000, p. 161.

- ¹² Rodney Castleden, *Minoans. Life in Bronze Age Crete*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 127.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 128, fig. 40.
- ¹⁴ Peter Clayton, *A-Z of Mythology*, London: Bison Books, 1990, p. 36.
- ¹⁵ John R. Hinnells, *Persian Mythology*, Feltham, Middlesex: Newnes, 1985, pp. 40–41.
- ¹⁶ James Bailey, *The God-Kings and the Titans*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, p. 120.
- ¹⁷ Veronica Ions, *The World's Mythology*, London: Hamlyn, 1978, p. 150.
- ¹⁸ Rosemary Williams (ed.), *Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: Saturn Books, 1979, p. 114.
- ¹⁹ Such as in the catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus (see J. Stevenson, *The Catacombs. Rediscovered monuments of early Christianity*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, p. 76).
- ²⁰ Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 307–08.
- ²¹ Clayton, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
- ²² N. H. H. Sitwell, *The World the Romans Knew*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984, p. 144.
- ²³ Branston, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–83.
- ²⁴ Helen M. Roe, 'An interpretation of certain symbolic sculptures of early Christian Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities of Ireland*, 75, 1945, 1–23.
- ²⁵ Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon archaeology. Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1974, pp. 43–45, pl. 15.
- ²⁶ See Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 95, pl. 53.
- ²⁷ Jerusalem Bible, 1966, p. 1450.
- ²⁸ J. Romilly Allen, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, reprinted Felin Fach: Llanerch, 1992, pp. 218–19.
- ²⁹ Elizabeth Sutherland, *In Search of the Picts*, London: Constable, 1994, p. 151.
- ³⁰ Inga Gilbert, *The Symbolism of the Pictish Stones in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Speedwell Books, 1995, pp. 83–85.
- ³¹ Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ³³ P. Ó hÉailde, 'The Cross-Base at Oldcourt, near Bray, Co. Wicklow', *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland*, ed. E. Rynne, Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987, p. 107, fig. 6:9.
- ³⁴ Iain Zaczek, *Celtic Art and Design*, London: Studio Editions, 1995, pp. 48–49.
- ³⁵ Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "'Traditio Evangeliorum' and 'Sustentatio': the relevance of liturgical ceremonies to the Book of Kells", *The Book of Kells*, ed. Felicity O Mahony, Aldershot, 1994, pp. 421–26.
- ³⁶ The Jerusalem Bible translates this simply as 'Repeat it in our own time, reveal it in our time' (Habakkuk Ch. 3, v. 2, Jerusalem Bible, p. 1517), but draws attention to the Greek text (footnote f), translated as 'In the middle of two living things you will make yourself known'.
- ³⁷ Jerome saw this as a symbolic reference to the two cultures combined within the early church: the Jews and the Gentiles. Bede relates the phrase to two moments in the life of Christ: the Transfiguration, where Christ was made known between the two prophets Moses and Elijah, and the Crucifixion where He was revealed between the two thieves (Ó Carragáin, *op. cit.*, pp. 420–23).
- ³⁸ Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
- ³⁹ Chantal Faïsse, *L'enluminaire à Moissac aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, Auch: Edi-Service, 1992, p. 30.
- ⁴⁰ Tina Negus, 'Mediaeval Foliate Heads: A Photographic Study of Green Men and Green Beasts in Britain', *Folklore*, 114.2, 2003, p. 247.
- ⁴¹ The so-called 'Green Man' (see Lady Julia Raglan, 'The "Green Man" in Church Architecture', *Folklore*, 50, 1939, p. 45) is better named 'Foliate Head', to include non-human leaf-producing beasts (see Negus, *op. cit.*, p. 247). It may be interpreted as the union of animal and human creation with the vegetative world, and seems to be linked to the concepts of rebirth, renewal and regeneration. Typically, leaves issue from the mouth, or from the ears, eyes, nostrils or face.
- ⁴² Jacques Lacoste, *Sculpture Romane en Saintonge*, Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Christian Pirot, 1998, p. 328.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 295.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 231–32.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- ⁴⁶ Elsewhere at Guitinières, the lions themselves are shown with mouth foliage, and must be considered as 'Green Beasts' in their own right. The symbolism associated with the lion is much wider in Christianity than the Daniel story suggests, and is often a metaphor for strength and power. The Knights Templar in particular used the cat/lion head as a Green Beast motif; the Templar church at Neuvy St Sepulcre is full of foliage-uttering lion heads, but has no carving of the Daniel story, where lions are of necessity seen as submissive (see Tina Negus, 'The Knights Templar and the Green Man', *3rd Stone*, 43, 2002, pp. 45–48).
- ⁴⁷ Matthew Fox, *The Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen*, Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear, 1985, p. 30.
- ⁴⁸ Nigel and Mary Kerr, *A Guide to Norman Sites in Britain*, London: Granada, 1984, p. 88.
- ⁴⁹ Simon Jenkins, *Britain's Thousand Best Churches*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000, p. 260.
- ⁵⁰ Kerr and Kerr, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
- ⁵¹ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 722.

⁵² Jørgen Andersen, *The Witch on the Wall: Mediaeval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles*, Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, and London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977, pp. 45-46.

⁵³ Etienne Rynne, 'A Pagan Celtic Background for Sheela-na-Gigs?', *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland*, ed. E. Rynne, Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987, pp. 189-202.

⁵⁴ Roe, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵⁵ Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art in East and West*, Bedford, Middlesex: Perennial Books, 1967, p. 87.

⁵⁶ Lucas, op. cit., pp. 93-94.