

TYMPANUM IN NORTH TRANSEPT

English Romanesque Art – Hayward Art Gallery Catalogue, 1984

St Michael fighting the Dragon and David rescuing the Lamb

Tympanum; Limestone: broken into four pieces; h 520 mm (at apex),
d 230 mm, l 1.500 m (at base)c 1120;

This lintel was set, probably in the 19th century, over the staircase doorway in the north transept. Broken through settlement, it was removed in 1983 for repair by Harrison Hill Ltd. It is of a somewhat irregular shape and was evidently cut on the left-hand side to fit into its present position. Since all the original Romanesque doorways of the church still exist, this lintel must have come from elsewhere, perhaps from the original chapter house.

St Michael in the centre, wings outstretched, a round shield with a boss in o raised sword in the other, confronts the dragon whose body is covered with scales. Around the twisted tail twines thin foliage which also forms a collar round the neck of the beast. The dragon shows a strong connection with the last of the Scandinavian animal styles, the Urnes, and this also applies to a related tympanum at nearby Hoveringham. On the left David, kneeling on one knee, wrenches open the lion's jaws, while the lamb is shown above. Apart from the ne hand and a lion's tail which interlaces with the hind legs, there is nothing Viking in the style of this group.

The soffit (under-side) is carved with acanthus, interlace, cable and irregular foliage. The recent removal of the lintel revealed further soffit carvings at both ends, on the left a large plant and on the right a grotesque figure with a human head, wings and the hindquarters of an animal with the legs sticking up. The carvings of the soffit were damaged by a rebate for a door 970 mm wide.

The flat relief, the lack of modelling, the folds and other features marked by engraved lines and the occasional use of drilled holes make this tympanum very close to the narrative capitals of the crossing of Southwell, also dating to c 1120

*“English Romanesque Art 1066-1200”
Catalogue from Hayward Gallery 1984*





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123 St Michael fighting the Dragon and David rescuing the lamb, tympanum

Limestone; broken into four pieces; *h* 520 mm (at apex),
d 230 mm, *l* 1.500 m (at base)
c. 1120; Southwell Minster, Nottinghamshire
The Provost and Chapter of Southwell Minster

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styles, the Urnes (see p. 22), and this also applies to a related tympanum at nearby Hoveringham. On the left David, kneeling on one knee, wrenches open the lion's jaws, while the lamb is shown above. Apart from the lion's tail which interlaces with the hind legs, there is nothing Viking in the style of this group. (For a similar subject on a lintel from St Bees, see 124.)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY Keyser, 1927, fig. 142; Clapham, 1930, pp. 135-6; Kendrick, 1949, pp. 121-2; Stone, 1955, p. 48, pl. 29a; Kelly, 1971; Lang, 1982, pp. 57-9



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