

CROSSING CAPITALS

By Joan Hiller, May 2015

1. Pevsner N. *Nottinghamshire* (The Buildings of England), 2nd edition 1979, p320.

Each of the capitals, with strong volutes and more old-fashioned than the scallop capitals in the rest of the minster, is carved with one scene. With one exception, the iconography is quite simple but without continuity from one scene to the next. The scenes are the Last Supper, an unidentified scene including an Annunciation, a procession relating to the Entry of Jerusalem on the next capital, the Agnus Dei, and the Washing of Feet. They are among the most important examples of such capitals in England, comparable with those at Hereford (perhaps the first c. 1115), Westminster Abbey, and Reading. The technique of these, based on manuscript-drawing technique, is extremely linear, a crisscross of folds in the draperies without any comprehension or system, and faces with large, staring eyes, consistent with a date of c.1120.

2. Summers, N. *A Prospect of Southwell*, 1974, p34

The capitals of piers between chancel and crossing are carved with figurative scenes from the life of Christ: the Last Supper, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Annunciation, and Christ washing Peter's feet. They have no comparison with the sophisticated nobility of nave and transepts; the workmanship is more advanced than in the Saxon tympanum, but is still crude. If they, too, are not reused material from the Saxon church, they are certainly the earliest remaining Norman work and imply an advance of style between the building of the original east end, and the nave and transepts which followed.

3. Kelly, F *The Romanesque Crossing Capitals of Southwell Minster in Southwell and Nottinghamshire; Medieval Art, Architecture and Industry*, ed J. Alexander, 1998, p13.

Abstract: (see photocopy)

The capitals of the East crossing piers are well enough known but difficult to see. Their largely Eucharistic symbolism is appropriate at the crossing framing the entrance to the choir. However, since they do not exactly fit their present position, it is possible that they are re-used or were intended for an earlier fabric. Consequently, their relative dating is not secure. Stylistically they belong to the first quarter of the 12th century. This note deals with the suggestion made by J. Romilly Allen in 1892 that these narrative capitals are based on manuscript prototypes and re-examines the iconography. It also suggests a date after 1109.