

Senlis Cathedral,

As this is the smallest cathedral and as the first major work after the Crusade it may be assumed that the fighting debts were still being paid off and funds were harder to come by than a little later.

It seems from the disparities in the plan that a number of campaigns were involved in the eastern chapels, maybe very short. From the first, the buttresses between the chapels were large enough to support flyers, and were continued the same size the full height to the top of the gallery wall.

Once work got under way, the east was a little ahead of the west. From the stonework it seems that one contractor was given the task of building the westernmost two bays with the tower and the portal, and that he more or less kept up with the many teams working simultaneously in the rest of the building. The work of this western team is massive, with enormous members and shafts, and well-carved if simplistic capitals, and give the impression of being by a military contractor, perhaps employed on castle work, possibly for the king whose residence was just to the west and in direct view of the new works. I have referred to him as the Westblock Master.

See my "La construction de la façade occidentale de la cathédrale de Senlis", *La Cathédrale Notre Dame de Senlis au XII^e Siècle*, Paris 1987, 109-118.

The story is somewhat complex, as some of the better carvers of the capitals in the east also worked in the central portal, at all levels, and I assume they simply slotted their work in with that of the major western team.

The capitals in the choir come from a different group of men to those in the nave, and marks a break in the works. Not necessarily a break in time, but with a slant in the work with the advantage that not all the capitals could be carved at the same time.

The work continued apace into the gallery in a number of campaigns, and integrated with the masonry of the Westblock Master, whose work continued into the clerestory level.

The rest of the clerestory has been replaced, save for a couple of original capitals over the eastern piers. Work then continued more slowly over the next three or four decades in the completion of the tower and the spire.