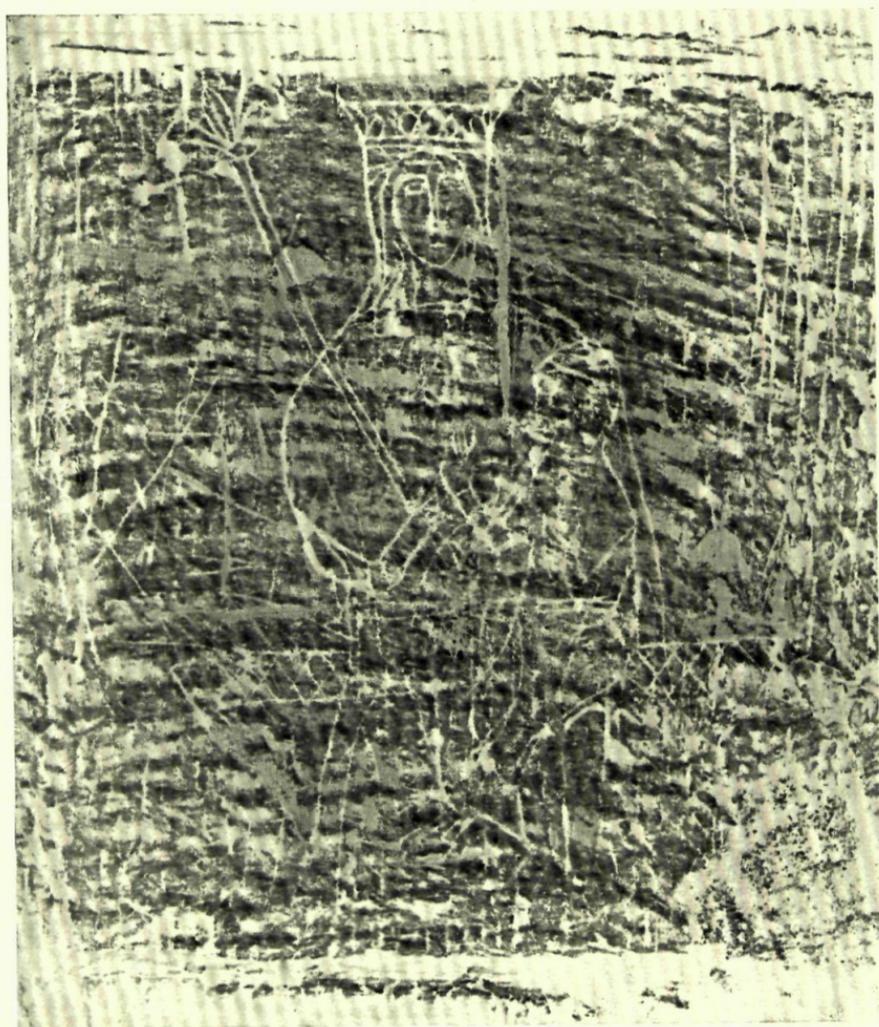


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GRAFFITI IN KING'S SOMBORNE CHURCH

TWO of these somewhat rare outlined drawings have recently been re-discovered in King's Somborne Church by the Rev. G. E. H. Theophilus.

A graffito is a drawing scratched on a wall or stone, and in mediaeval times painters frequently incised with a pointed instrument the outline of an intended painting.

The graffiti here are probably such an outline, the finished paintings having disappeared, leaving only the original scratched sketches, and these so slightly incised as to be most difficult to see.

These most interesting specimens of 13th century art are incised on the only ancient column in the church, the easternmost in the south arcade, which dates from the Transitional Norman period.

The Crucifixion. This graffito faces the nave, measures 9 inches in height and the upper portion is 32 inches from the floor. Our Lord is depicted on the Cross, the ends of which are enlarged, the arms outstretched and the feet crossed, and on His right is St. Mary and on His left St. John. The drawing covers portions of two stones and numerous crosses are scattered about, added probably by persons who had no knowledge that the graffito was present.

The Blessed Virgin and Child. This faces the south aisle and is very difficult to distinguish. The crowned Virgin seated sideways with the Infant on her knee is on the fifth stone from the ground, and the whole drawing is 9 inches in height. The Virgin holds a sceptre in her right hand and the structure upon which she is seated is also to be discerned.

Both graffiti are disfigured by scorings and re-working of the stone and are not very apparent at first sight. Attempted photographs were a failure, but rubbings brought out the subjects satisfactorily. The photographs reproduced here are of these rubbings.

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