

Late Mediaeval Scottish Ecclesiastical Buildings c. 1400 - 1550

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Introduction

- We shall consider two types of ecclesiastical building in this presentation and see how their structure and main architectural style related to the functions they served.



Abdie Parish Church

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Distribution

- It is sad fact that relatively few of Scotland's Mediaeval Church buildings exist fully intact, but those which do remain give us a glimpse of what we might have expected to see had we been living in Mediaeval Scotland. We know that Scotland played an important part in European Christendom and even as a fairly small country boasted some:
 - 13 dioceses
 - 130 religious houses
 - 1100 parishes
 - and several chapels

Monks at Prayer in the Cloister



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History

St Andrews Cathedral

- The 11th and 12th century building in Scotland was influenced by the European styles and saw an increased demand for masons. Other influences are seen, too:
- Dunfermline Abbey – (Durham)
- Jedburgh Abbey – (Hampshire)
- Kelso Abbey – (Peterborough)
- A shift from the Romanesque to the Gothic is seen at St Andrew's Cathedral – which exists only as an impressive ruin. Arbroath Abbey is another good example.



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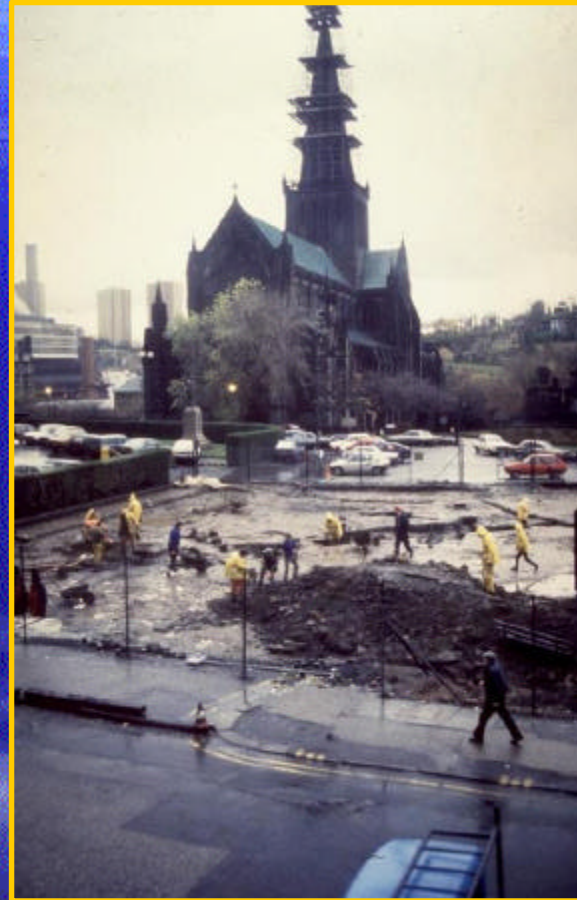
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St Andrews Cathedral-priory was an Augustinian foundation, the original community being brought to the church of St Rule around 1127. From 1472 the bishops of St Andrews became archbishops with authority over other dioceses.
Further information may be found in CANMORE, the Royal Commission's searchable online database, at <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html>.

Monasteries and Cathedral Building

Glasgow Cathedral

- Monasteries were at the forefront of all ecclesiastical building of this time. The religious convictions and aspirations of those who built are clearly discerned as we shall see later.
- By the 13th century the bishops' cathedrals were taking more prominence.
- Brechin, Dornoch, Dunblane, Elgin, Glasgow*, Whithorn
- And although of a particularly 'high' style, they were not of too great a scale.
- The Cathedrals became more prominent whilst the parishes seem to have been much less ambitious in their building projects.



A team of archaeologists excavate an area of waste ground situated close to Glasgow's medieval cathedral, which can be seen nearby with scaffolding around its steeple.

Much of the cathedral's existing fabric dates to the 15th century, and these excavations revealed evidence of another building constructed during this period: Cameron's Tower, a tower-house erected to provide accommodation for the resident Bishops.

- West of Scotland
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The Scottish Style

Ceiling at St Machar's Cathedral

- After the wars of independence in the thirteenth century, architectural inspiration was sought from afar and so the Scots looked to France.
- John Morrow (Paris):
- Melrose, St Andrew's, Paisley, Glasgow
- Netherlandish wood: Melrose stalls, maybe the ceiling of St Machar's – demonstrating the adapting the styles to the Scottish need.

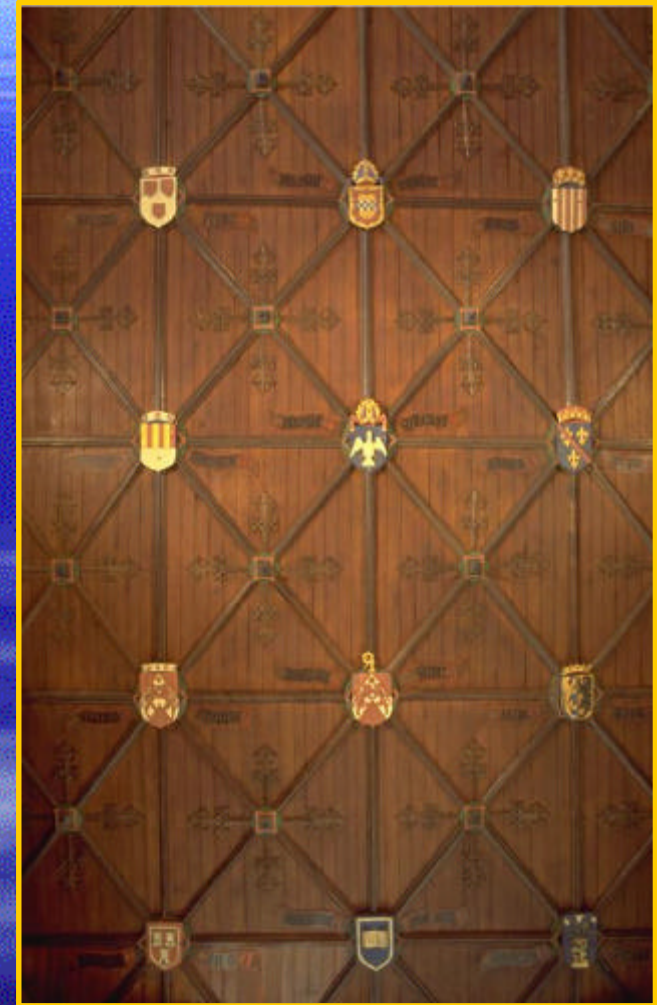


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Inside St Machar's



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15th and 16th Century

- By the 15th and 16th centuries, religion had begun to become more personal as benefices patronized local churches resulting, often but not always, in the wealthiest burghs and parishes displaying the finest architecture: -
 - Aberdeen
 - Edinburgh
 - St Andrews

St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

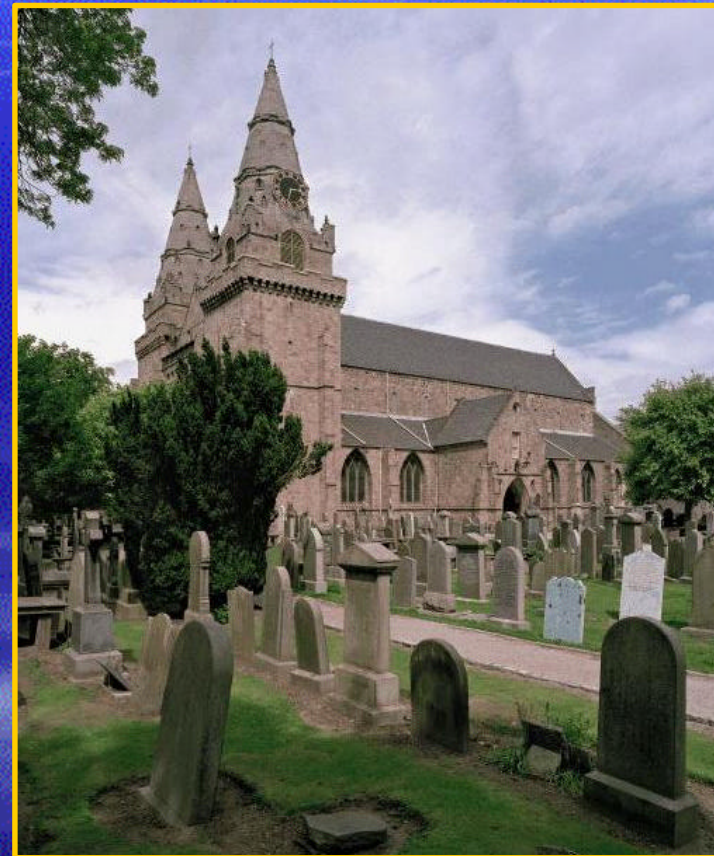


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Collegiate Churches

Seton Collegiate Church, East Lothian

- Some rural, and not always the least maintained, were rebuilt when they took Collegiate status :-

Including: -

- Roslin -
- Seton



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The ruined side walls of the nave are all that remains of the 13th century parish church on this site. The church now standing was built between the mid 15th century and the mid 16th century. The second Lord Seton founded a college here in 1492. Many pious noble families in late Medieval Scotland built and endowed collegiate churches. These were churches which had a number of canons dedicating their prayers to the founder and his family. Originally intended as a cruciform church, a new nave was never built and what remains is the central tower, north and south transepts and the choir. The choir ends in a three-sided apse, an idea borrowed from the continent.
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The University Chapel

- King's Chapel,
Aberdeen

built: 1498 - 1505

The original choir stalls commissioned by Bishop Elphinstone can be seen against the walls. Carved out of oak, they are highly decorative and a rare surviving example of medieval church furnishings in Scotland. Much of the stained glass is modern.

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Monasteries

- Basic Structures of the building included: -
- Church for saying (and singing) of the Divine Office (the prayers of the monks)
- Stalls – similar to those seen above at King's College

Nave of Dunfermline Abbey

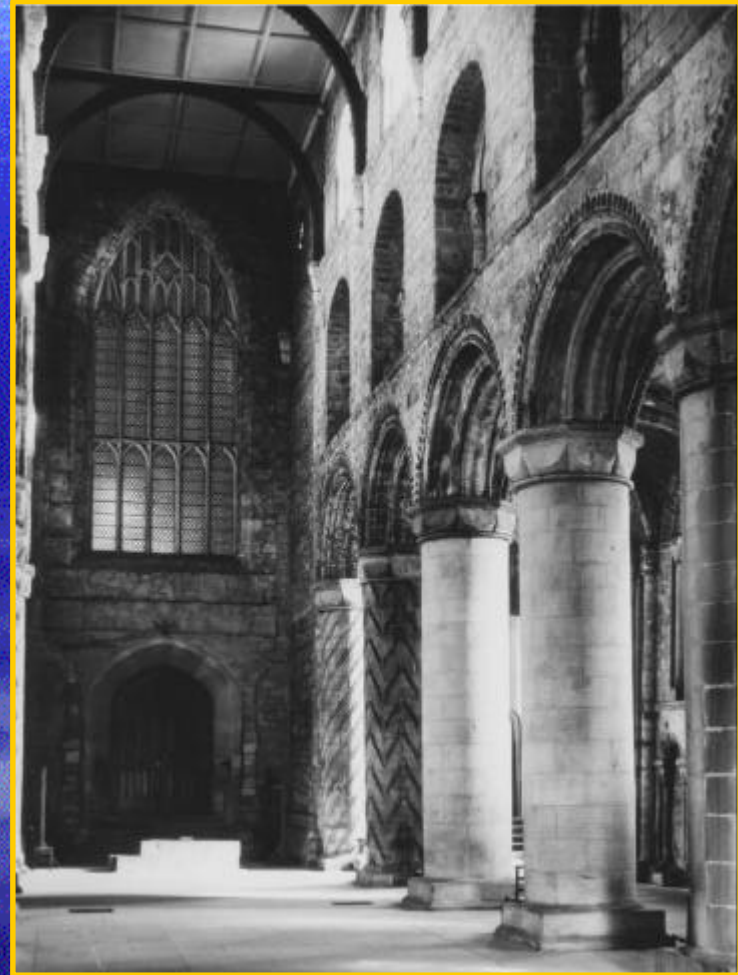


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Arbroath Abbey Sacristy



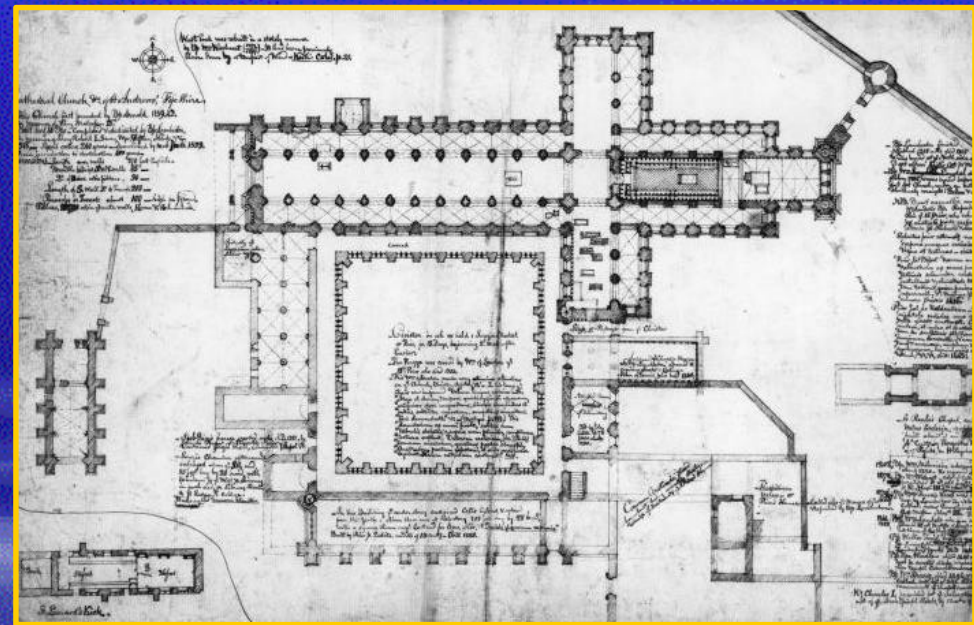
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Sacristy – normally next to the Church and was the storing place of vessels and requirements for the services. Sometimes a library might be there too. A treasury was normally found on the upper floor where valuables were kept.

- **Cloister** – These usually ran alongside the church and gardens would be in the middle of the buildings around which the cloister went.

- **Chapter-house** – most basic form rectangular and would have benches around the walls. Inchcolm boasts an octagonal shaped chapter-house with built-in seating

Cloister at St Andrews



- Dormitory – Monks would sleep here in separate beds but without any division. They would sleep with their habits on and there was even a rule governing the way one's hands were held above the bed whilst sleeping.
- Reredorter – or latrine could normally always be reached from the dormitory! The location of the provision of water often determined how the monasteries would be built.

Refectory

- Meals eaten in silence with readings read aloud to community as they ate. Main meal (*prandium*) was eaten about midday during the summer (after Sext) in the winter (after None – about 2 p.m.)
- Essentially a vegetarian diet was kept and it would have consisted mainly of bread, eggs, vegetables and sometimes fish. In winter there would be an evening drink before Compline!
- The refectory was the third most important room in the monastery and was usually on the upper level – perhaps as an analogy with the Last Supper in the Upper Room.

Inchcolm

Chapterhouse

15th century changes to this Augustinian priory. It is a unusual building with a thirteenth century polygonal chapter-house and it has three cloister walks on the ground floor above which is the dormitory, guest room and an impressive refectory.

- Scottish design to the smaller sized church which had similarities with castle construction.
- Vulnerable site and a more fortified structure was employed by the way of vaults

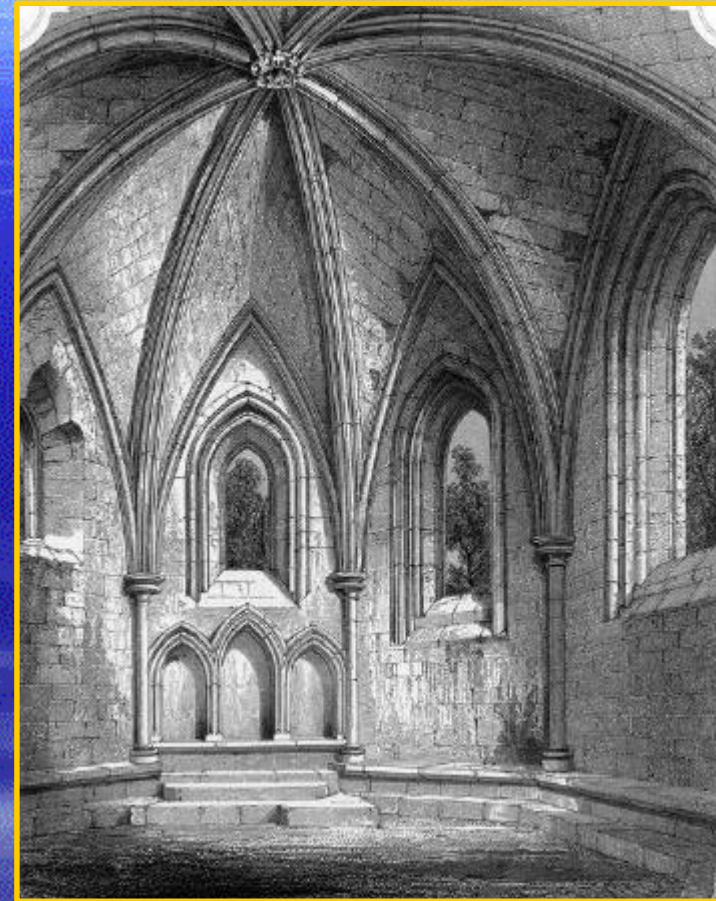


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Melrose

- From 1136 – 1560 and then as a parish kirk until early 19th century. Was a Cistercian Abbey and arguable one of Scotland's finest. Significant rebuilding had begun after an attack by the English in 1385 although this was never completed.
- The Church is said to be one of the most important indicators of changing architectural attitudes in the later Middle Ages.
 - Rebuilding through fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – not to any great new styles but surprisingly a building of the same basic structure on a bigger scale.



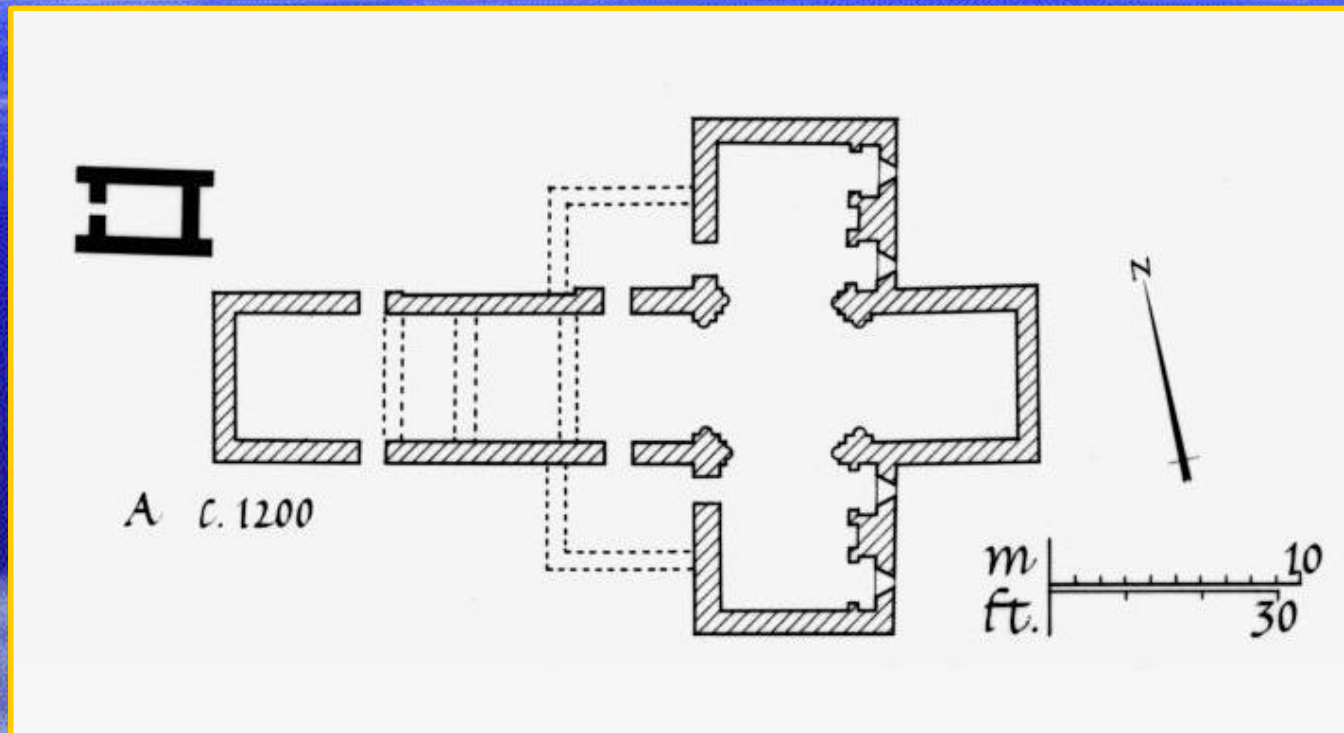
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The high altar was housed in the presbytery surrounded by beautiful windows in the east, south and north walls. The present church originates from the rebuilding work after the destruction in 1322 and the burning in 1385. In the presbytery there are recesses for tombs. Originally laymen were not allowed to be buried within Cistercian churches but the rules were relaxed. Alexander II is buried here and Robert de Bruce's heart is also believed to rest in the church. Text Copyright Ikon Scotland

Main Architectural Shapes

- Cruciform

Iona Abbey



This plan shows the layout of the abbey as it was around 1200 AD. It was a simple cruciform building with a long narrow nave which possibly pre-dated the abbey. There were no claustral buildings. The 'Michael Chapel' was also built at the same time. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

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- **Rectangular** (South Queensferry) and often smaller and more rural churches.



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■ Apsed

The 'queir' of Terregles Church was built as a burial place on behalf of Agnes, Lady Herries in the late 16th century. Some traditional Gothic forms of the late Middle Ages, e.g. a three-sided apse, have been retained in this post-Reformation design.

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Internal Architecture and Function of Monasteries and Churches

The symbolism of ecclesiastical building in the mediaeval period helped to declare something of the majesty, mystery and splendour of God.

Inside the church or monastery, this symbolism found its ultimate expression at the altar; the table upon which the sacrifice and miracle of the Mass would be performed by the priest.

The altar was the focus of any church or monastery. If the ecclesiastical building can be said to be a lamp of God then the altar was the flame.



Chancel, Glasgow Cathedral

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The End.