

Cathedrals of the Northern and Eastern Frontiers of the Medieval Latin Church

This is part of a 2020/1 pandemic task to catalogue all the medieval cathedrals of the Latin Church. I thought that for this (almost) final stage, since most of these buildings on the frontiers were rather outside of the cathedral canon and not familiar to most, it was necessary to write them all up in a gazetteer. So here we go. I've learnt a lot, hope you do too.



[Visit the Frontiers map in Google Maps](#)

A few bits of terminology and other notes

In medieval Northern France and England, most cathedrals were three-storey basilicas, that is, internally an arcade, with a middle triforium or gallery storey, with a clerestory on top. This is not the rule in these regions by any means, where both lack of funds and stylistic choice prevented this cathedral “norm”. An important concept, especially around the Baltic, is that of the “hall-church” where the central vessel is the same height as the aisles, and there is no clerestory. [See useful diagrams on Wikipedia.](#)

For cardinal directions, I use a letter to refer to parts of building (“E arm”) but the full word (“east”) when describing the position of something relative to another.

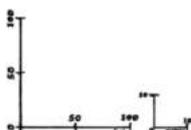
The terms “diocese”, “episcopal see”, “bishopric” and “suffragans” are all essentially the same thing, with slightly different connotations of geography, office and hierarchy. Same goes for “archdiocese”, “archiepiscopal see”, “archbishopric” and “province”.

A cathedral church was primarily built for a chapter of canons, a bishop could run a diocese without one. Hence why when we get down to Bar and Durrës toward Greece, actual cathedrals become scarce, even if there are offices of bishops beyond this outline.

All plans are to scale, with feet/metres in the footer. Google are wont to pull 3D imagery.

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Scandinavian Kingdoms

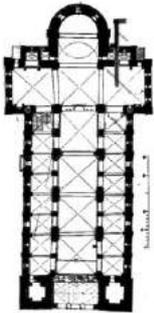
Christianity was established in Scandinavia by the beginning of the eleventh century, with its bishops initially subject to Bremen in Germany before its own three archbishoprics were established during the twelfth century. From 1397 to 1523, the kingdoms were ruled under one monarch as the Kalmar Union.

Archdiocese of Lund (Kingdom of Denmark)

In 1103 Lund was the first archdiocese in Scandinavia. Denmark was arguably the most powerful Scandinavian state in the Middle Ages, dominating the Kalmar Union. This changed with the rise of the Swedish Empire in the seventeenth century.

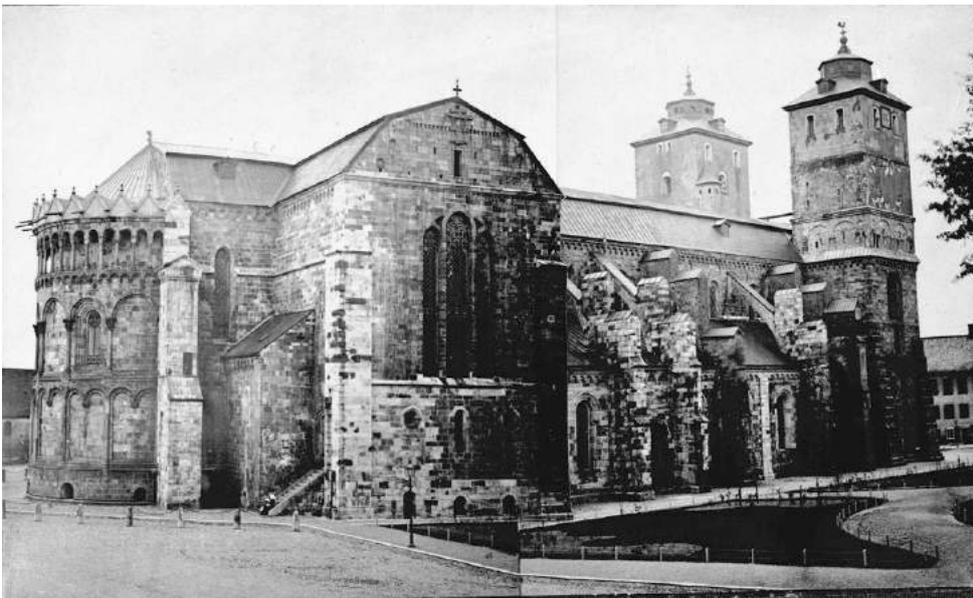
All modern Denmark unless stated.

Lund (Sweden)



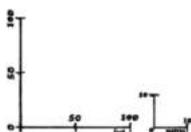
Diocese founded 1048 in Skåneland at the bottom of the Scandinavian peninsula, which was firmly Danish from the ninth century (it only became part of Sweden with the 1658 Treaty of Roskilde). The cathedral is the earliest surviving great Romanesque church built in Scandinavia, begun 1103, heavily indebted to the great churches of the German Empire, particularly Speyer. It has a double-bay vaulting system like Rhineland

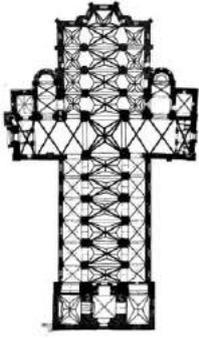
Romanesque, although the current high vault dates to after a fire of 1234.



Lund Cathedral, photograph shortly before the 1870s restoration.

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Aarhus

Masonry church first begun around the 1190s. Current church is mostly brick. There is extremely limited architectural detail inside: no middle storey, and arcade arches are pointed with no mouldings. The nave is articulated as paired bays with compound half-piers.

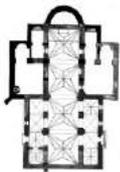
The church was given a hall-choir 1467-1471, with similarly stark octagonal piers, and subsequently high-vaulted throughout. The great W tower was initially completed around 1477. In the 1930s it received its current form of upper clock stage and copper-covered spire reaching 96 m.



Aarhus Cathedral in 1875. Note the "Rhenish helm" of the top of the tower before the low spire, and the onion domes of the choir towers.

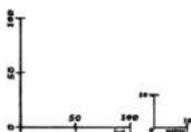
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Børglum

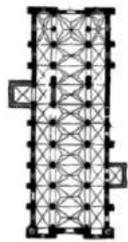


A monastery was established on an estate of the Danish crown in the twelfth century, and later became a house of Premonstratensian canons. Around 1215 it was permanently chosen as the seat and cathedral church of Vendsyssel diocese, the northernmost of the Danish peninsula, with the canons as its chapter. The church consists of a Romanesque apse, which was flanked by echelon apses until the transepts were taken down in the late sixteenth century. Aisles were added to the western bays and the whole space vaulted with tierceron vaults c.1500.

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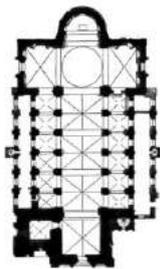
Odense



Built shortly after the death of King Canute IV in 1086, who was canonised 1101. The initial limestone rubble Romanesque church was replaced, partly due to issues with the porousness of the masonry, with a new brick build: firstly the nave from 1300, then the E arm, completed 1499. The belfry over the W nave bay was built c.1466-1586. The floor of the E arm is raised high above ground level to accommodate a crypt for St Canute. The decision to retain a basilican design with gallery openings and low side aisles rather than the usual Baltic hall-church was possibly made to accentuate the antiquity and special role of the building.

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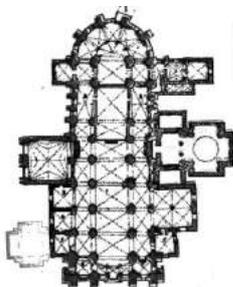
Ribe



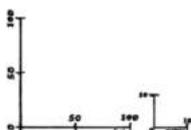
Begun after 1134: the only Danish cathedral with a masonry crossing dome, ala Speyer II (German Empire). Otherwise the elevation has large, subdivided gallery openings of a more Anglo-Norman model. The clerestory was replaced to allow for sexpartite vaults sometime in the mid thirteenth-century. After its collapse on Christmas Day 1283, the flanking N tower on the W block was replaced with the tall, largely brick Commoners tower by 1333. Brick outer chapels were added to the nave in the fifteenth century.

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Roskilde



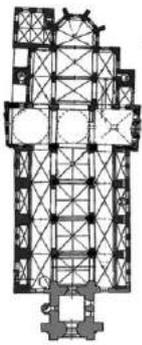
Another basilican elevation rather than a hall-church, and, despite being constructed with brick, also the most French Gothic influenced of any Danish cathedral. The apse of around 1200, is articulated inside as four stories, with a gallery above the aisle and the roof abutting the triforium (like, e.g., Noyon, 1160s). Both the main arcade columns and the gallery openings' shafts of the hemicycle are polished limestone. However, unlike a general French Gothic design, there are no radiating chapels



nor flying buttresses (largely because the relative lightness of bricks makes them unnecessary).

The nave, also with vaulted galleries but built entirely of brick, dispensing with the polished limestone elements, was completed by about 1280. A year after her death in 1412, Margarethe I, founder of the Kalmar Union with Sweden and Norway, was interred in the choir. Subsequently many Scandinavian monarchs were buried in the cathedral, resulting in a number of elaborate two-storey burial chapels being attached to it.

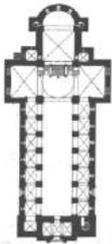
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Slesvig (Schleswig, Germany)

The transepts, partly of granite, tufa and brick represent a Romanesque church completed around 1200. The Romanesque nave may never have been completed, regardless, what we have now is a fully-brick hall church built with flanking side chapels. The hall-choir was built in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

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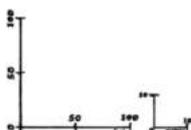
Viborg

Originally begun after 1132. By the nineteenth century the building was a largely brick Baroque structure in poor repair. The church was completely rebuilt, except for the apse crypt, 1863-76, over the original plan with the elevation largely in imitation of Lund.



Photograph of Viborg Cathedral in 1863, before Neo-Romanesque reconstruction

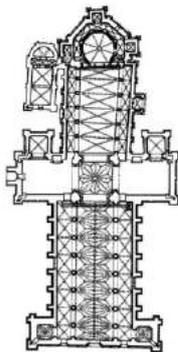
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Archdiocese of Nidaros (Kingdom of Norway)

Became an archdiocese in 1152. The extremely northern town at the mouth of the River Nidelva was chosen as the Norwegian archiepiscopal church both for the important cult of St Olav, but also to place it for the ambitions of Norway's colonisation of the northern isles: the Faroes, Orkneys, Iceland and beyond towards the Americas, until the end of the medieval warm period made the agriculture of the settlements unsustainable.

All modern Norway except where stated.

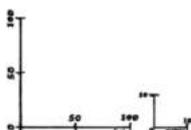


Nidaros (modern Trondheim)

Diocese established 1068. Perhaps the most English-like cathedral in this collection, both in its manner of gradual construction and replacement, and architectural style. The major Romanesque church of the second half of the twelfth century is preserved in the lower parts of the transepts and forms the general plan of the building. A Gothic octagon was added at the east end as a shrine for St Olav (King Olav Haraldsson of Norway, 995-1030). This was probably

directly inspired by the "Corona" chapel of Canterbury Cathedral for St Thomas Becket's head relic which in turn made reference to Roman mausolea.

A rebuilding of the choir followed to link with the octagon more fully in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, and had close similarities to Lincoln Cathedral: a church that was just winding up its Gothic rebuilding in the 1220s. The nave was then replaced in the manner of Lincoln's new Angel Choir (1256-80) in the second half of the century, incorporating bar tracery and lavish spandrel ornament. However after a fire in 1531 and the Lutheran Reformation in 1537, the arcades of the choir were largely destroyed, and the nave was unroofed. By the mid seventeenth century the nave was only a large open courtyard reduced to the height of the outer walls before the blocked-up W arch of the crossing.



Nearly all of Trondheim's current appearance, especially the interior, dates to restoration work in the nineteenth century. The original choir arcades were rebuilt, from surviving fragments bedded in the sixteenth-century work, 1877-90. The nave was rebuilt in a similar fashion from 1906-30. The W front towers, likely far exceeding their medieval height, were both raised by 1969.



Trondheim Cathedral, engraving of 1762, following a view of 1661. There are a number of inaccuracies: the N sacristy is omitted, the nave is missing a bay before the W front, the clock stage and belfry are too small. The spire dated to the 1630s and forms the basis of the current design in copper-covered steel.

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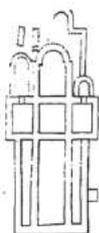
Bergen



Diocese founded 1068. Church built late in the twelfth century as a coronation and burial church in the royal palace area of Holmen to the north of the modern city. The church was demolished down to the foundations in 1531 by Danish sheriff Eske Bille to aid in fortifying the palace.

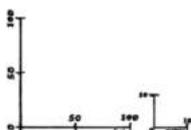
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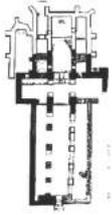
Oslo



Diocese founded 1068. St Hallvard's Cathedral was built in the reign of King Sigurd of Norway, who was buried there in 1130. It was a building more of the character of the German Empire, with cushion capitals. After a great fire in 1624, the building was abandoned and now only exists as an excavated set of low walls. Its successor 1.4 km away dates from 1694-7.

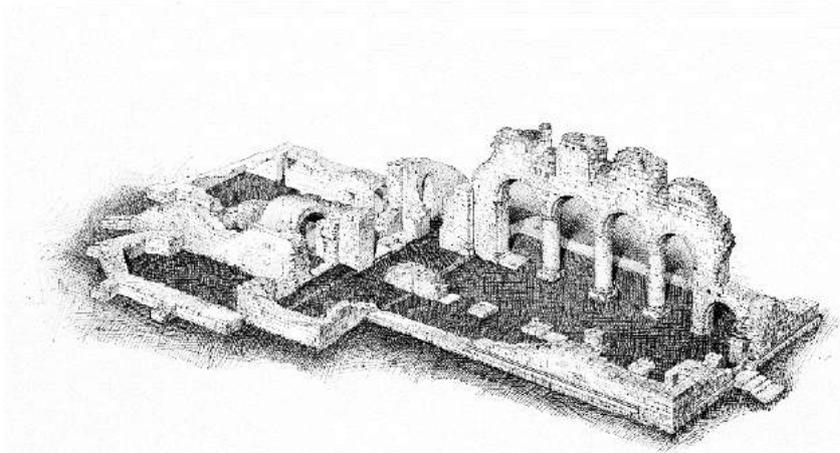
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Hamar

Diocese founded out of Oslo 1152. The church was heavily damaged by the Swedish army in 1567, and by the eighteenth century only the S arcade remained standing to nearly full height. It is now covered by a large steel and glass cover built in 1998 at a cost of 76 million kroner (\$8M US) to protect it from frost damage. Like most stone churches of the Norwegian west, it has a close knowledge of Anglo-Norman models. It is a two-storey arcade, with clerestory windows over the piers, and evidentially had no vaulting.



Hamar Cathedral ruins, ink on paper by Olaf Nordhagen, 1904, Riksantikvaren – direktoratet for kulturminneforvaltning

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Stavanger

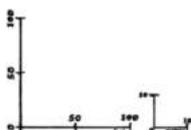


Diocese founded out of Bergen 1112x25. A simple two-storey Romanesque nave of the early twelfth century cognizant of contemporary Anglo-Norman work, with a new Gothic choir post the 1273 city fire. The choir is vaulted, but roofed continuously with the low nave. The east front, unusually flanked by a pair of towers, frames a four-light geometric tracery window with lavish rayonnant niche work that has been compared to the Chapel of the Bishop of Ely in Holborn, London, 1284x6.

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Skálholt (Iceland)

Diocese founded 1056. The settlement, essentially capital of Iceland for centuries, was abandoned for Reykjavik at the end of the eighteenth century.



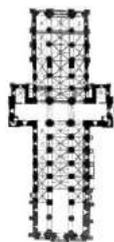
Medieval timber churches lost to fire in 1309 and 1624 were around 50 m long, which would make them the largest wooden churches in medieval Europe. A concrete and timber church of was built 1956-63.

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Hólar (Iceland)

Diocese founded 1106. Current church built 1757x63 by Bishop Gísli Magnússon, replacing the damaged medieval timber cathedral, parts of which were recycled in nearby buildings. A very basic building of red sandstone, with sash windows and not much else to speak of. However, because of Lutheran tolerance of images, some important artworks survive. These include a German carved multi-scene altarpiece and an English alabaster reredos of 1450-70 still partly in its original frame.

[click for map](#)



Kirkwall (Orkney Isles, Scotland)

Bishops appointed as early as 1056. Current church begun 1137 as a shrine to Magnus, Earl of Orkney, by his nephew Rognvald Kali Kolsson. The building is on Anglo-Norman three-storey scale, and related to Dunfermline Abbey (1128-) and Durham Cathedral (1092-1133). The E arm was extended in the early thirteenth century with high vaults, which also were retrofitted to the nave. Scottish control of the island was always strong, and the diocese was transferred to St Andrews in 1472.

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Kirkjubøur (Faroe Isles, autonomous territory of Denmark)

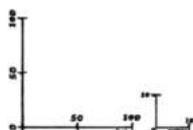
Diocese established as early as 1076. A now roofless Gothic box of basalt, with tall pointed moulded windows. The E end looks like it was vaulted. Two rubble walls either side of a tall opening in the W front show that a tower was planned, but possibly never built.

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Garðar (Greenland, autonomous territory of Denmark)



Diocese founded 1123. A simple cruciform building of local red sandstone with a wooden roof probably built under Jón *smyrill*



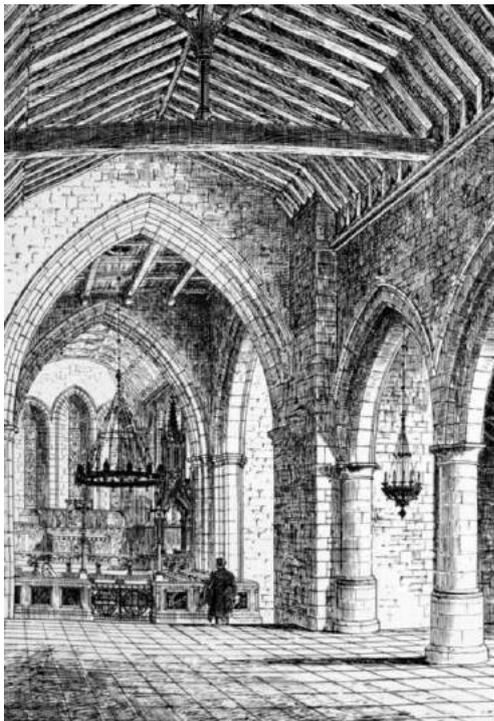
Árnason (1189-1209). What is there today is basically just raised turf over the foundations, and some bits of loose masonry on top.

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Peel (Isle of Man, autonomous territory of the United Kingdom)



A ruin within Peel Castle on St Patrick's Isle, connected by a causeway to modern Peel. An ancient Gaelic site dating back to at least the fifth century, part of the Norse-controlled Kingdom of the Isles at the time of the founding of the Province of Nidaros.

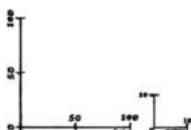


Unrealised plans for restoration of Peel Cathedral by R. Anderson, published in The Building News, 4 July 1879.



The choir dates to the later part of the thirteenth century when Scandinavian control had lapsed and the bishop was frequently an English or Scottish cleric. It could easily pass as the chancel of a large English parish church of the time, although the transepts and crossing tower help accentuate its cathedral status. It has been roofless since the eighteenth century. A new church was built in the town 1879-84.

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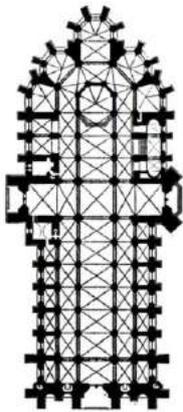


Archdiocese of Uppsala (Kingdom of Sweden)

Uppsala was chosen as the archiepiscopal see in 1164, and the other Swedish dioceses consolidated around that time.

All modern Sweden except where stated.

Uppsala

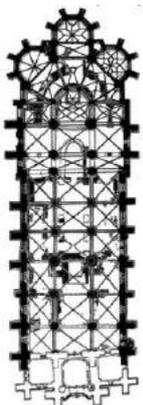


By far the most French-looking groundplan in this whole collection, with an apsidal ambulatory with radiating chapels. These are often associated with the documented presence of a French architect in the city 1287, an Etienne de Bonneuil. However, the initial plan had probably already been laid out and the east end partly built up by that point.

Externally the cathedral is faced in brick, except for the N transept façade, and it is possible Bonneuil was called in to specially to supervise that part. The nave was built in the later fourteenth century, and the W front completed in 1465. Its length, no doubt to emphasise its archdiocesan status, is some 117 metres, exceeding that of St Andrews in Scotland, previously the longest cathedral at these latitudes.

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(3D view available)

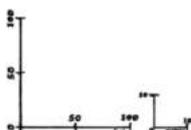


Linköping

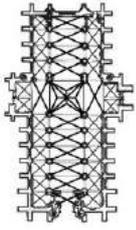
Although it also has radiating chapels and is faced in limestone, this building is far more typical of a large Baltic church than Uppsala. The hall nave was built 1250-96, an early manifestation of a type later to become ubiquitous round the Baltic. It was extended west 1308x60, and completed with the present E arm c.1408-20 and 1487-1500 under a series of architects of North Rhine-Westphalia origin.

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Skara

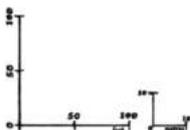


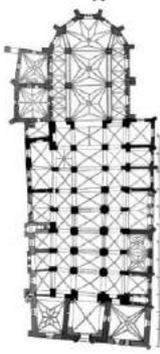
Founded 1014: the first bishopric in Scandinavia. The current building is largely the result of a rather speculative restoration of 1886-94 that removed Baroque additions to the transepts and choir, and in doing so replaced them with imitations of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth-century nave. The defining feature of this elevation is its tall grid-like triforium passage, more akin to Brabantine work than anything else.



Photograph of Skara Cathedral before restoration with its Baroque aided transept. The towers were nicknamed "Skara byxor" for their resemblance for a pair of trousers hung out to dry.

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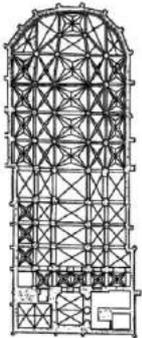
Strängnäs

A brick hall-church nave, likely the first masonry cathedral on the site, was built from 1250 and consecrated 1291, when – in a somewhat grimly amusing irony – so many candles were used that they managed to seriously set fire to the new building.

Repair work continued through to 1340. A single tall tower was added in front of the W front 1424-44, and a lower-vaulted hall-choir with apsidal ambulatory added 1448-62. Chapels were

added piecemeal along the sides of the nave giving it the full double-aisle appearance by the end of the Middle Ages. Many paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries still survive on the cathedral's vaults.

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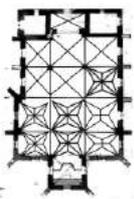
Västerås

Like Strängnäs, originally built as a brick hall-church consecrated in 1271, with customary side chapels added to the north and south sides in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and a single tall W tower by 1420. There were enough side chapels by the 1460s for the new hall-choir to be built with double aisles to match the nave's width, although the inner aisles are awkwardly

cut off to avoid a double ambulatory.

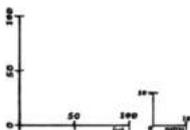
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Växjö

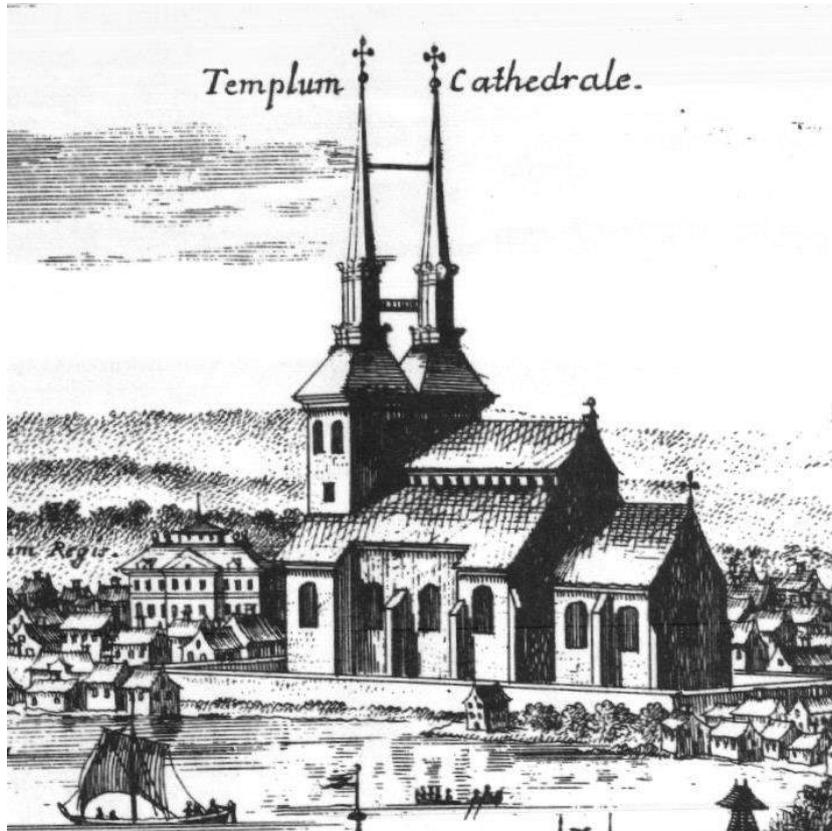


A relatively small building for a relatively small diocese, the last of the medieval dioceses to be founded, 1164x80. A brick hall church ending a sanctuary flanked by sacristies.

The vaults are a curiously uneven mix of simple cross ribs and late-medieval tierceron designs, presumably representing patterns of rebuilding after damage.



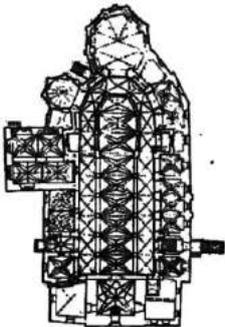
Its most striking features is the shallow W tower topped with twin timber spines, reinstated from pictorial evidence in 1958-60.



Engraving of Växjö Cathedral from Erik Dahlberg, Svecia Antiqua et Hodierna, mid to late 17thc

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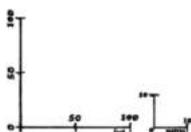
Turku (Finland)



Nominally established as the Diocese of Åbo in the mid twelfth century. By 1249 Swedish control over the area was established and the bishop moved from Koroinen down the River Aura to Turku.

The current church was begun in the late fourteenth century as a brick-built hall-church with an unaisled choir. In the 1420s the W tower was begun and chapels along the N aisle. In 1440s onwards, the E end was replaced with the current ambulatory and the vaults raised accordingly in the nave to transform it from a hall-church into a basilica. The large, almost octagonally-planned All Souls chapel was added to the east.

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Kingdom of Scotland

The cathedrals of Scotland are an odd group of buildings. Early on Scotland adopted the monastic structure of the Gaelic Church, where abbots and bishops were essentially interchangeable: represented in cathedral architecture by the round tower at Brechin.

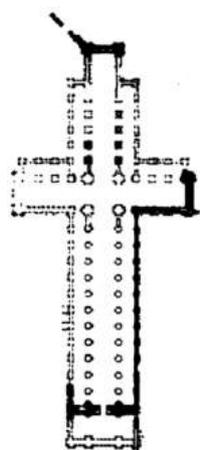
However, after the Norman Conquest of England, in the late eleventh century the Scottish kings invited the Normans into the country, and subsequently the dioceses were organised somewhat on the English model by the middle of the twelfth century. After the Scottish Wars of Independence at the end of the thirteenth century, Scottish architecture diverged greatly from England, essentially supplementing the northern mode of the Early English Gothic style it had fully absorbed with elements from the Low Countries.

Until the end of the fifteenth century, nominally, all the dioceses in the kingdom were suffragans of York. However, its bishops were consecrated directly by the Pope.

All modern Scotland. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland has no episcopal structure so none of these buildings are strictly cathedrals today.

Archdiocese of St Andrews

St Andrews did not become an archbishopric until 1472, but was recognised as the most important see in the Kingdom of Scotland by the eleventh century.

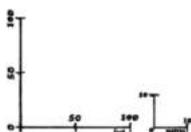


St Andrews

The first church of St Rule, still standing separately from the later cathedral ruins, was begun around 1100 for the prized relics of the Apostle. The new cathedral was begun 1158, of which the high E wall still stands. The original W end collapsed in 1272 and was rebuilt as a low narthex, but clearly the initial



St Andrews, the church of St Rule with the Early Gothic cathedral behind, engraving by R.W. Billings, 1850s

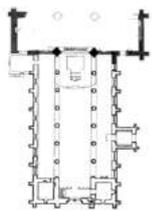


intent was to build a church equal to the length of Old St Peter's basilica in Rome (about 126 m): a similar ambition to Santiago di Compostella, guardians of another apostle's relics at a frontier of the Christian world.

The whole church was three-storey with galleries, the choir designed with high vaults, the nave just a timber barrel ceiling. All the arcades are gone, the main standing survivals are the E and W fronts and the S aisle outer wall onto the cloister.

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Aberdeen

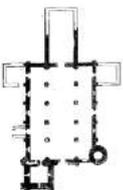


Usually referred to as St Machar's, Old Aberdeen. The two-storey nave, of fourteenth-century columnar piers, with narrow capitals and moulded arches survives, the church ending with the western crossing

arch. The W block, with its twin towers with corbelled out crenelations and a strange central fenestration of seven cusped lancets, was completed in the fifteenth century. The twin stone spires and heraldic timber ceiling were added under Bishop Gavin Dunbar (1518-32).

The E arm was demolished in the 1560s, and the crossing tower, predictably, subsequently collapsed 1688. The area has since been so heavily interred that archaeology is basically prevented to understand the extent of the lost half of the building.

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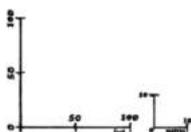


Brechin

The diocese was established a little before 1150, but the religious site goes back to the early eleventh century, shown by the Irish-style round tower incorporated into the south-west corner of the nave.



Old Aberdeen Cathedral, W front from SW, engraving by R.W. Billings, 1850s



The church has a simple two-storey nave, unvaulted. The S arcade has octagonal piers, while the N alternates with shafted versions. The current chancel of the Church of Scotland church is Victorian, partly over the original foundations of the demolished choir.

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Dornoch

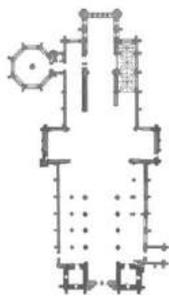


Essentially a simple lanceted cruciform building put up between 1224 and 48. The striking motif is the prominent continuous hoodmould around the tops of all of the windows, even forming little

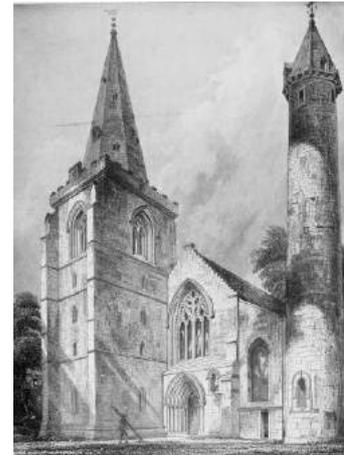
pointed arches between. It is now aisleless, as the arcades of the nave were removed 1835-7 and the whole building was fitted with plaster sham-vaults.

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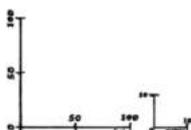
Elgin

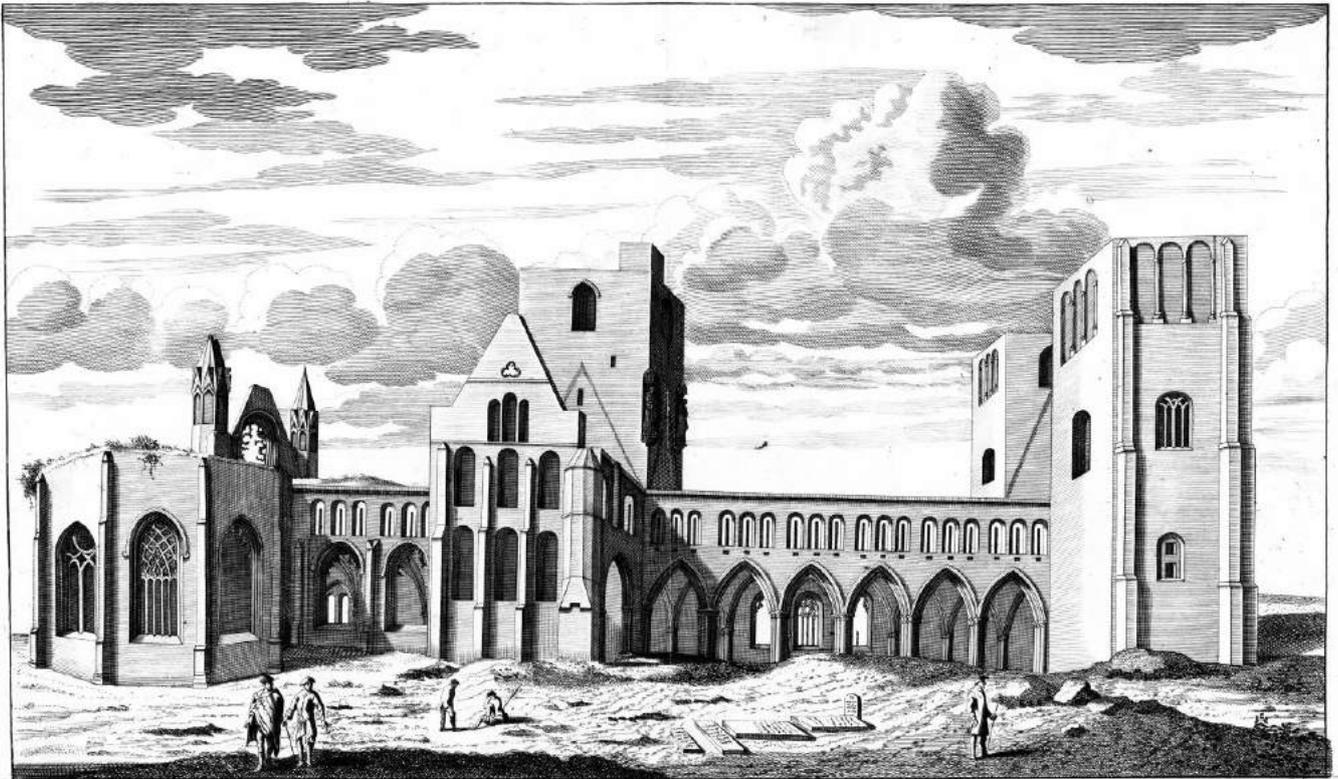


Probably the third most ambitious cathedral in Scotland after the archdioceses, but now a ruin. The W front towers, main arcades, transept walls, and parts of the choir date to the original build after 1224. After 1270 (ostensibly after a fire), the outer walls were built further out, lengthening the E arm with an aisleless projection and, exceptionally for Britain, giving the nave double vaulted aisles. The church was two storey and had no high vaults.



Brechin Cathedral, W front with round tower from SW, engraving by R.W. Billings, 1850s

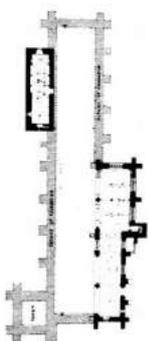




Elgin Cathedral, before the collapse of the crossing tower. Theatrum Scotiae, John Slezer, 1693.

Lead was stripped off the roofs in 1567 after the Scottish Reformation. The crossing tower collapsed in 1711, destroying the nave arcades.

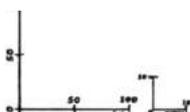
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Fortrose

Cathedral of the Diocese of Ross, erected in the mid twelfth century at Rosemarkie, but consolidated as a chapter in the mid thirteenth and a cathedral church begun at Fortrose around the same time. The most prominent survival is the S nave aisle, largely intact with its moulded arcades and vaults, with the N sacristy of the choir surviving to the E. The rest of the relatively modest building plan was revealed in excavations of 1874.

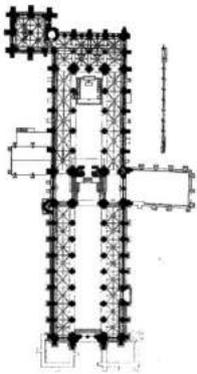
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Archdiocese of Glasgow

Glasgow only became an archbishopric in 1492, partly by the virtue of the university founded in the city via Papal Bull in 1451.

Glasgow



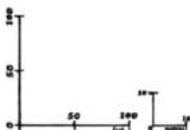
The most splendid medieval Scottish cathedral to survive with a roof (the collegiate church at Edinburgh was only the seat of a bishop 1634-89). The choir was begun around 1240, its vocabulary, such as a profusion of lancets, retention of a gallery come from Lincoln, although there is no use of polished limestone or dado arcading. Like most northern Early Gothic churches (e.g. Byland Abbey) the aisles are vaulted but the central space has a curved timber ceiling. There is an extensive crypt below the choir, partly due to the sloped site but also for housing the relics of St Kentigern.

The transepts and nave followed in the early to mid-fourteenth century, as shown by the development in window tracery. The protrusion from the S transept is an aborted part of the 1240s work, of which the crypt was vaulted by the first archbishop, Robert Blackadder (1483-1508). The unfinished western towers were removed in the 1840s.



Glasgow Cathedral with its W block extant in 1780, William Angus after Paul Sandby, published in The Virtuosi's Museum, London 1778-81.

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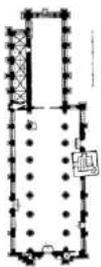
Oban



On the island of Lismore, the cathedral of the diocese of Argyll. The current Church of Scotland church occupies a remade shell of the former unaisled choir. The ruins of the small unaisled nave and W tower lie over the churchyard wall.

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Dunblane

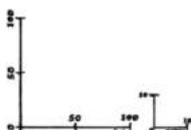


An essentially second half of the thirteenth-century building incorporating an eleventh-century tower into its S aisle, with an aisled two-storey nave (c.f. Elgin) and what is essentially a very large chancel as the choir. No crossing, and no vaulting in the main church (including the aisles), except for the space on the N side of the chancel, which was probably meant as a sacristy with useable space above the vault. The nave was unroofed from 1622 until 1889.

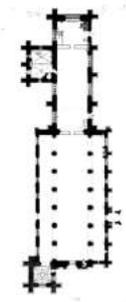


Dunblane Cathedral nave before restoration and re-roofing, engraving by R.W. Billings, 1852

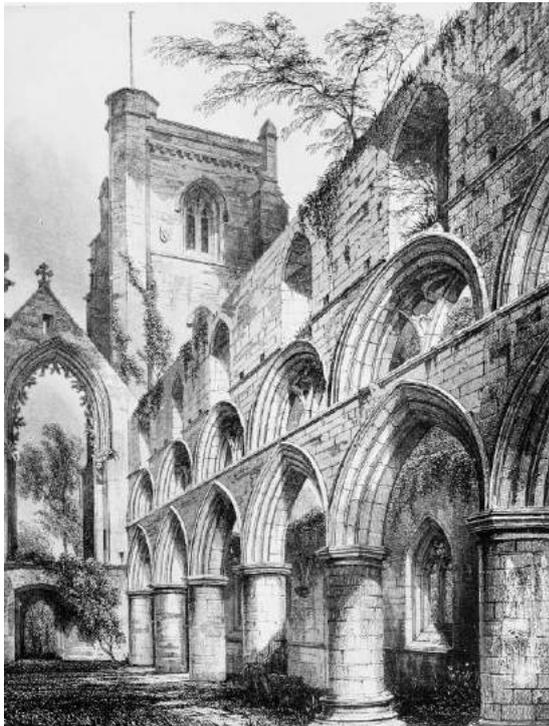
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Dunkeld



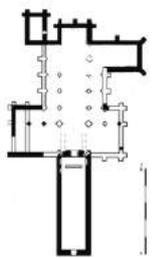
An old site with Gaelic Church “abbot bishops” from the mid ninth century, and consolidated as a diocese by 1114. The earliest surviving part is the fourteenth-century choir with decorated buttresses and pinnacles, the tracery being nineteenth-century replacements. Inside there is a stretch of dado arcading at the west end of the N wall. The three-story nave, never vaulted and now unroofed, was built somewhat later, and has odd, low, cusped gallery openings.



*Dunkeld Cathedral nave,
engraving by R. W. Billings,
1845x52.*

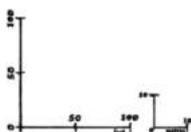
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Withorn



Cathedral of the Diocese of Galloway, established a little before 1153. The chapter was a Premonstratensian priory attached to the church. The now-roofless one-storey unaisled nave is the best surviving part of the building, dating from the early thirteenth century. The extent of the aisled choir is clearly marked by wall footings.

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Lordship of Ireland

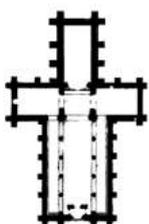
The medieval cathedrals of Ireland are consistently the most modest or, to be blunt, downright unimpressive compared to almost any other region of the Latin Church (will leave you to judge about the lower Adriatic). While it was always in full communion with Rome, Irish Christianity attracted ascetic leaders and took on a more monastic character than any other region, and was the source of a number of codifications of Latin theology, such as the sacrament of Confession.

It was not until the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111 that a formal diocesan system was agreed upon. With twenty-four dioceses – nearly as many as England and Scotland put together – most had extremely modest incomes. Nevertheless a few, such as Limerick, were built on a continental Romanesque scale, partly driven by the arrival of the Cistercians to the Ireland and their church buildings in the 1140s.

With the Anglo-Norman Conquest of the early 1170s, there was an even larger wave of building, by far the most notable were the two cathedrals of Dublin, both using up-to-date and innovative West Country Gothic designs. However, most rebuilds were no bigger than an English parish church (indeed, some Irish dioceses only had annual incomes of around £100, equal what to some contemporary English parish rectors would bring in from tithes!). Only about half of the medieval dioceses retain churches with any discernible old fabric today.

All modern Republic of Ireland unless stated. All functioning churches (i.e., not ruins) are held by the Church of Ireland, part of the Anglican Communion. Most of these settlements also have a nineteenth-century Roman Catholic cathedral, often with the same dedication.

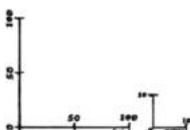
Archdiocese of Armagh



Armagh (Northern Ireland)

The current plan follows a rebuild after a fire of 1511, but the edifice was drastically restored in the late 1830s by L.N. Cottingham, and substantially revamped since.

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Ardagh



Building destroyed in 1496 during the initial uprisings against the Tudors. Low walls of a stone box in a graveyard, basically.

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Clonmacnoise



Part of an extensive monastic complex founded by Saint Ciarán in 554. Built as Temple MacDermot (Mac Diarmada, a ruling dynasty in Connacht) in the early tenth century, with alterations, namely the doors and the late medieval hall vaulting of the E end (probably c.1460).

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Clogher (Northern Ireland)

Burnt down in an extensive fire 1396. The current church was built 1744 under a James Martin.

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Connor (Northern Ireland)

Damaged in rising of 1641 and see moved to Lisburn in 1662. Current church 1820s.

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Derry (Londonderry, Northern Ireland)

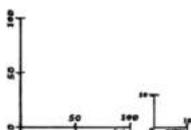
Destroyed in Irish Rebellion of 1593-1603. Current building, by William Parratt, consecrated 1633, is the first cathedral built by the Church of England, and also the first non-Catholic cathedral built in post-Reformation Europe. It is essentially a Gothic Survival aisled Perpendicular church. The intended aisled chancel was built over its partly-begun foundations in 1887.

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Down (Downpatrick, Northern Ireland)



The post-Ráth Breasail cathedral was established on an ancient site dedicated to Holy Trinity by 1124, but the building owes its shape to John de Courcy, an English knight who installed Benedictine monks on the site 1177. The current cathedral represents the initial build of



their choir in the early thirteenth century, but was in ruins by the eighteenth century, and subsequently restored with plaster rib vaults and a W tower. It is exceedingly unlikely the medieval crossing and nave were ever begun (if they were it would be the longest church in medieval Ireland outside of Dublin), but in the past year (2020/1) parts of the monastic ranges include the kitchen have been excavated to the northwest.



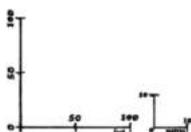
Down Cathedral, unknown watercolourist, 1790. British Library Ktop LII, 47.2.a

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Dromore (Northern Ireland)

Current building dates from 1661. Originally unaisled; annexes and a frankly rather ugly apse were added throughout the nineteenth century.

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Kilmore



The current cathedral is on the site of the parish church, rebuilt 1858-60 under a William Slater which incorporates a late Romanesque doorway.

The old cathedral church survives as the rubble masonry walls of the parish hall up the road, representing what seems to be an unaisled vessel with the base of a W tower.

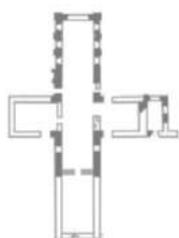
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Raphoe

Medieval masonry survives at the SE corner of the building. Otherwise essentially an eighteenth-century build interfered with in the nineteenth century.

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Trim (Newtown Abbey)

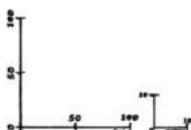


Founded by English cleric Bishop Simon Rochfort who transferred his see of Meath from Clonard to the Anglo-Norman Newtown at Trim in 1206 and installed Victorine Canons as its chapter. Much of the unaisled cruciform church, which was at least intended to be vaulted, including choir and chapter house survives as ruins, but construction of the nave probably never got much further

than its current extent.

The seat of the bishop was nominally transferred to the town parish church of St Patrick after the suppression of the house under English King Henry VIII in 1536 (one of a few successful attempts of dissolving religious houses in the Lordship, some of which would survive into the seventeenth century), but cathedral status was not officially confirmed until 1955.

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Archdiocese of Cashel

Cashel

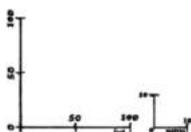


Situated on the Rock of Cashel, a natural limestone outcrop occupied by the Kings of Munster from the fourth century. Cormac's Chapel, built 1127-34, is the most sophisticated building built on the island in the first part of the twelfth century. It marries native Irish structure such as a stone steeply-pitched roof, with Norman detailing like profusely decorated blind arcading and a rib vault, and some ideas from the German Empire such as the placement of the towers flanking the E end of the nave.

The chapel is now however set in between the choir and S transept of a large unaisled thirteenth-century cruciform cathedral built 1235-70, arguably the largest (but not the longest) Irish cathedral built outside of Dublin in the Middle Ages. The choir has continuous shafted lancets with curious shafted openings sitting between them.



Cashel Cathedral, N transept and choir with round tower, by W.H. Bartlett, engraved by E.J. Roberts, 1842.



The cathedral was badly damaged in a 1647 siege during the War of the Three Kingdoms, and completely abandoned in the subsequent century, now surviving as a roofless ruin.

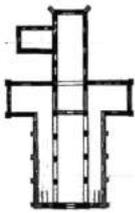
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Ardfert



Roofless except for the N transept since 1871, but one of the most interesting medieval cathedrals in Ireland. The choir, of around 1250, is similar to the sort of ambitious, long, lanceted chancels built in north-east England in the first part of that century, including the prerequisite sedilia and piscina group. The nave very awkwardly retains the twelfth-century doorway and flanking arches, which spills over beyond the current nave wall.

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Cloyne

A sixth-century monastic centre with a 30 m tall round tower from the tenth century, the church has pointed cut-through wall arcades in the nave (probably c.1200) and a slightly later chancel, though all rather restored.

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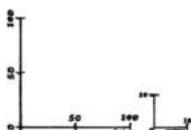
Cork

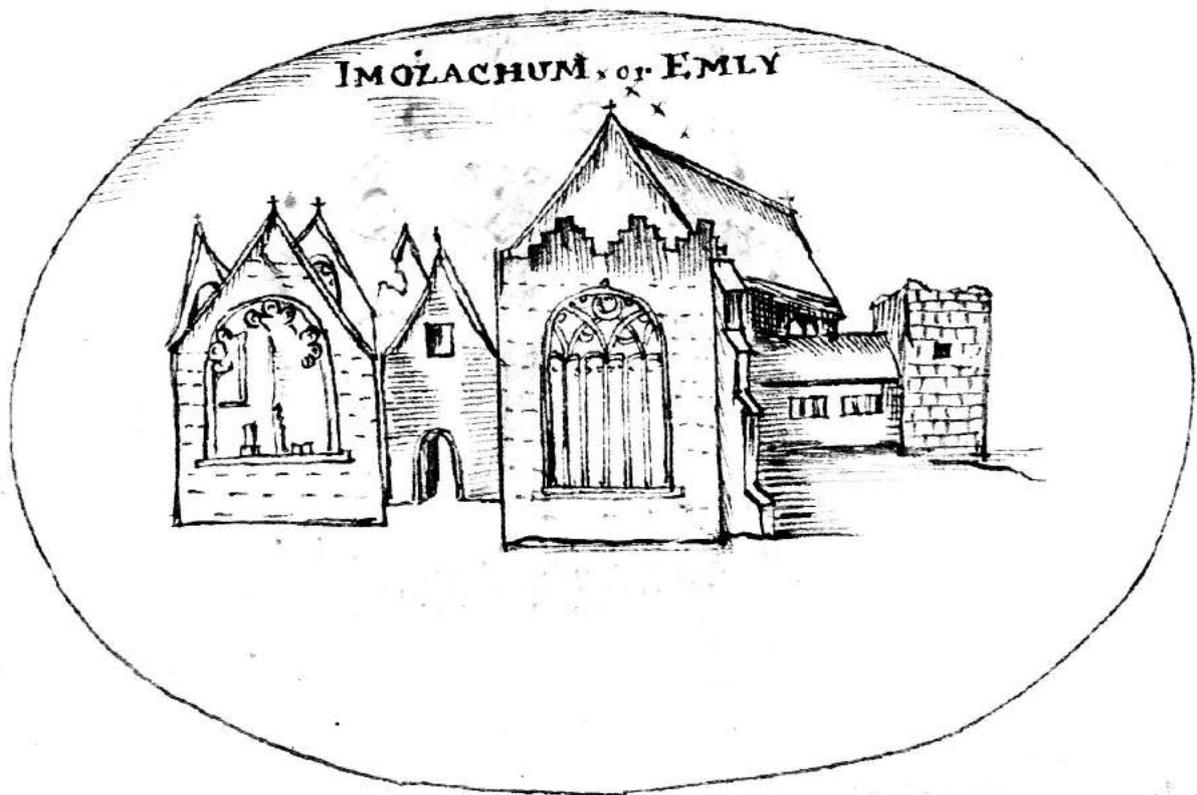
A small seventeenth-century church was replaced from 1863-79 with a lanky Gothic fever dream by English opium-eater William Burges.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)

Emly

Eighteenth-century drawings show the dilapidated cathedral. It was pulled down 1828 for a new building that was also demolished after disestablishment. The site became a graveyard therefore is now essentially obviating excavation.





Emly Cathedral, pen and ink drawing by Thomas Dineley, 1681 (National Library of Ireland MS 392, p. 119)

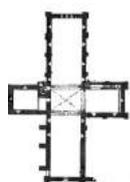
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Kilfenora



A unaisled, rendered masonry box of nave of little distinction serves as the current church, but the now un-roofed chancel is a fairly sophisticated early thirteenth-century build. The niche on the north side of the interior with three-light ogival tracery is probably a fifteenth-century insertion. A large N annex (possibly a chapter house) has a glass ceiling dating from 2005 to protect three twelfth-century high crosses.

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Killaloe

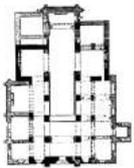
Unaisled cruciform plan – E arm longer than W – dating to the thirteenth century. Rib vault under the crossing, surmounted by



partly medieval tower. Thin, high and often well moulded lancets. Preserved extremely ornate late Romanesque nave south door.

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Limerick

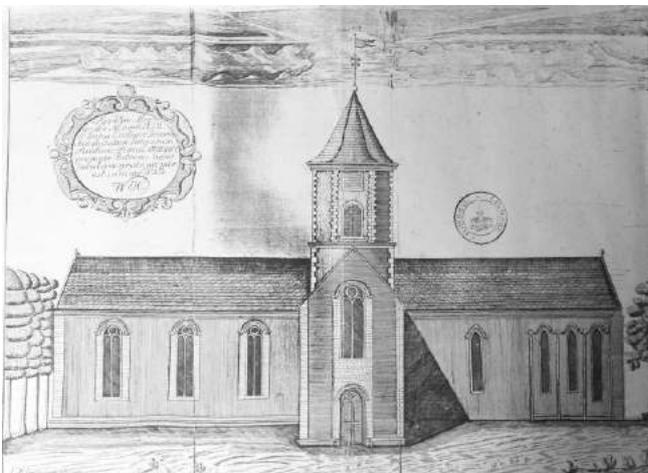


One of the few Irish cathedrals realised shortly after the Synod of Ráth Breasail with a build to reflect its episcopal status. The pointed nave arcades are supported by square piers with minimal articulation support a clerestory. It has essentially no connection to mature Anglo-Norman Romanesque going up over in England at the same time in the early twelfth century.

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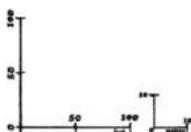
Lismore

In ruins by seventeenth century, extensively rebuilt from 1633. The crossing piers are medieval, but pretty much everything else is rebuilt, and fitted with an extensive set of timber and plaster mock vaults in the early nineteenth century.



Lismore Cathedral, drawing by Jonas Blaymire and engraved by J Haydon, published 1739. The octagonal brick-quoined crossing tower was almost certainly never built, but the chancel is largely as it exists now.

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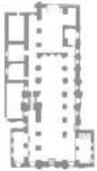


Ross

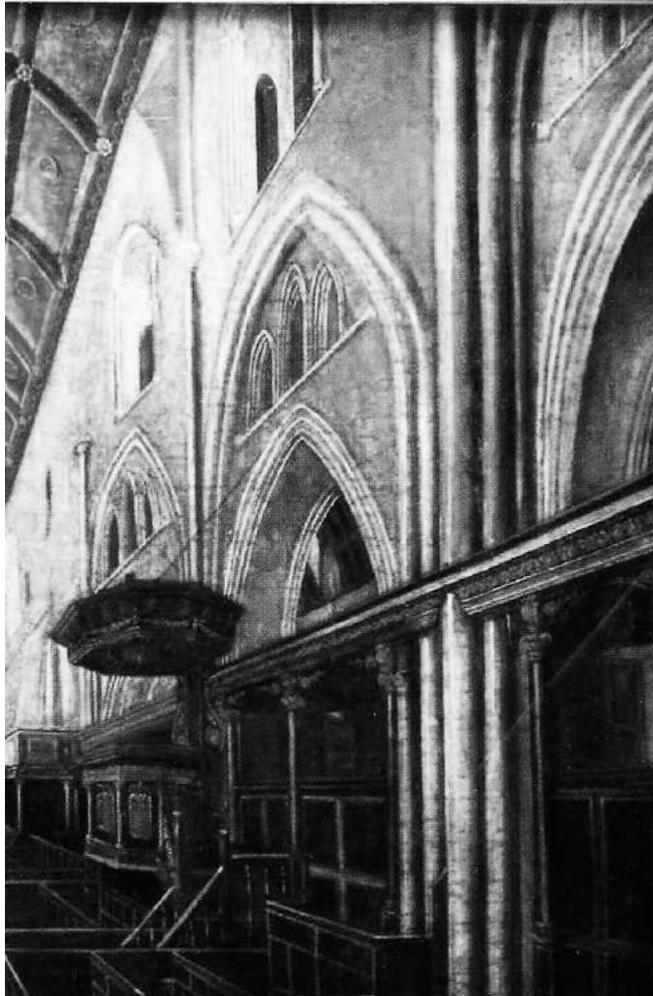
Damaged during the 1641 rebellion, the church and a round tower were levelled. 1660s the nave was rebuilt. The Neo-Romanesque W door is a late nineteenth-century insertion.

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Waterford



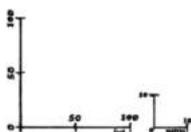
The medieval building was demolished in 1773 for a new neo-classical church. A number of pictorial records of the building inside and out were made before it was demolished, along with a plan, which is the one that is used here. It had a “giant order” elevation that Roger Stalley points out, among similarities to other West County monuments, is very like the transepts of Glastonbury Abbey, 1184-.



Waterford Cathedral, the “West Country” giant order of the choir, unknown artist, oil on canvas, c. 1730, Waterford Museum of Treasures.

The arch of the arcade is articulated as continuing above the second storey openings in the elevation.

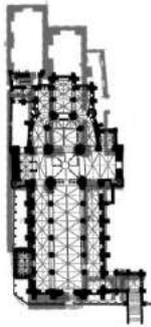
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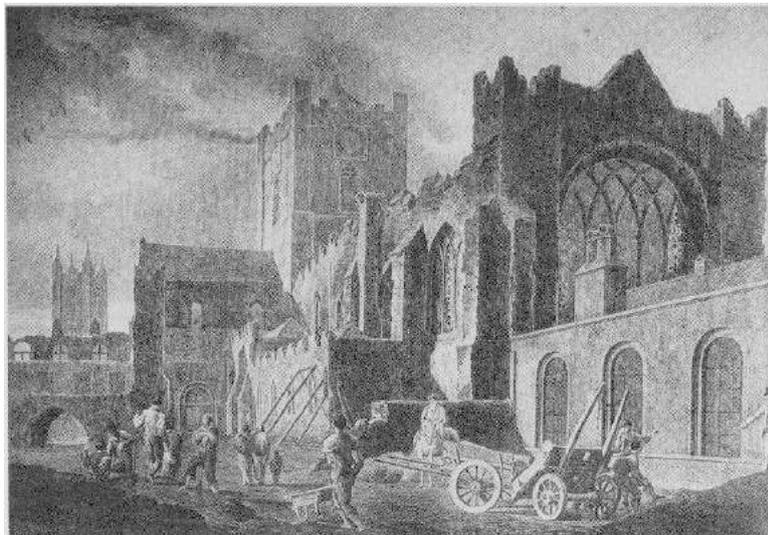
Archdiocese of Dublin

Dublin is unusual for its two cathedrals. It is not uncommon for a bishop to have equal seats in two churches with separate chapters (Coventry and Lichfield in England; Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Callahora in Spain), less so two in one settlement (Saint-Vizier in Occitane), but unique for an archiepiscopal see to have two seats. Like Coventry and Lichfield, one (St Patrick) was secular and one (Christ Church) was run by a religious community (Arrouasian Canons). In the Middle Ages, neither managed to win priority over the other, but in 1871, it was decided that Christ Church would be the cathedral of Dublin, while St Patrick would be the national cathedral.

Dublin, Christ Church

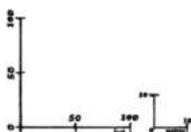


Founded c.1030 by Sitruic, King of Dublin. The plan of the initial Anglo-Norman build that replaced his church is revealed by the extensive crypt under the entire building. The apse and transept were built in a West Country manner (to the point of using Dundry stone brought over via Bristol) with both Romanesque and Early Gothic elements. The nave, begun in the 1230s, is the most sophisticated Gothic design in medieval Ireland, with elegant stiff-leaf arcades and a triforium passage linked together through polished limestone shafts.



Dublin, Christ Church, the "Long Choir" in 1824 before demolition. The props on the S aisle suggest the parlous state of the fabric at the time. The now-demolished chapter house can also be seen behind.

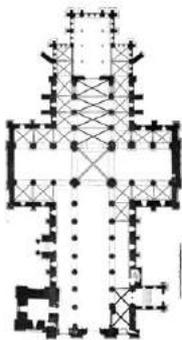
However much of what you see today is an extensive recreation under G.E. Street, 1871-8. The original apse was removed in the mid fourteenth century for a long, rudimentary "long choir" of one storey. Then in 1562 the S side of



the nave (and, naturally, the high vaulting) collapsed and was rebuilt as a sheer wall with a few openings to the W.

Street's restoration demolished the "Long Choir" and rebuilt the apse over the crypt, the lower parts of the elevation using salvaged original carved masonry, and rebuilt the nave arcade after the example to the N.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)



Dublin, St Patrick

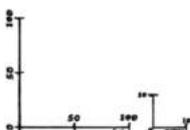
The first English archbishop of Dublin, John Comyn, in 1192 raised the church of St Patrick to a collegiate church, to solidify religious practice in his archdiocese. Around 1220 the next archbishop, Henry of London, raised the chapter to the status of a cathedral, not surprisingly to the dismay of the canons at Christ Church.

The building, erected from the 1220s onward, is as ambitious as any comparable English cathedral: a three-storey elevation intended to be vaulted throughout. Its planning, particularly the low hall-vaulted Lady chapel, and transepts with aisles on both sides, is related to Salisbury; while some of the ornament, such as the little space-filling niches are more akin to Lincoln. The



*Dublin, St Patrick's Cathedral.
View of the nave looking NW
before the Guinness restoration.
By Robert O'Callaghan
Newenham c.1830.*

*Note the lack of a high vault
and exposed double wall-
passages at triforium and
clerestory level.*



NW tower was added under Archbishop Minont c.1370, which collapsed 1394 and immediately reconstructed. The tall granite steeple is of 1749.

Like Christ Church, most of the actual appearance of the building today is due to the efforts of the nineteenth century. The Lady Chapel internally is essentially entirely of the early 1840s. The building was extensively restored with a proverbial blank cheque from brewer Benjamin Guinness. The second storey arches of the nave and most of the vaulting (probably far more than existed in the Middle Ages) was added under him.

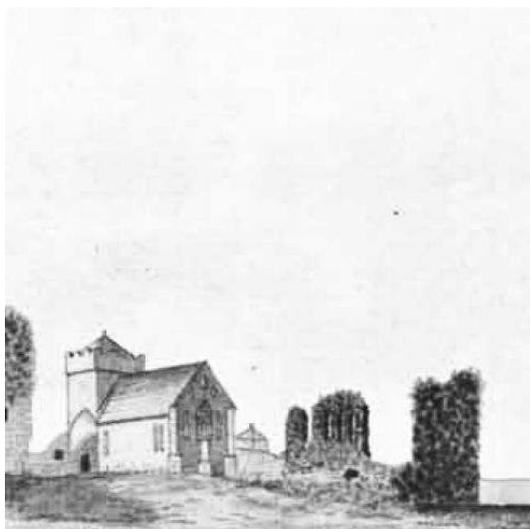
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Ferns

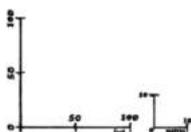


A very confusing church. The ancient capital of Leinster and the burial place of its kings, it is likely there was a substantial building here before the English Conquest. The chancel of the current cathedral church incorporates the original medieval E end, and then walls up the choir arcades. Abutting the E responds of the original crossing is a small nineteenth-century tower and tiny chamber of a nave that incorporates part of the S nave arcades. The extent of the original nave is unknown.

The most impressive part of the site, set some 20 m away from the current chancel E wall, is a ruined oblong structure originally of close-set lancets each side, although only five on the north side survive complete, and the E wall is lost. Speculation is usually that it was intended as a parish church or a private



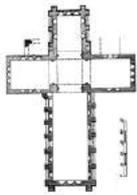
Engraving of Ferns Cathedral published 1786. The Augustinian Abbey is in the foreground to L, but I have cropped it out for clarity.



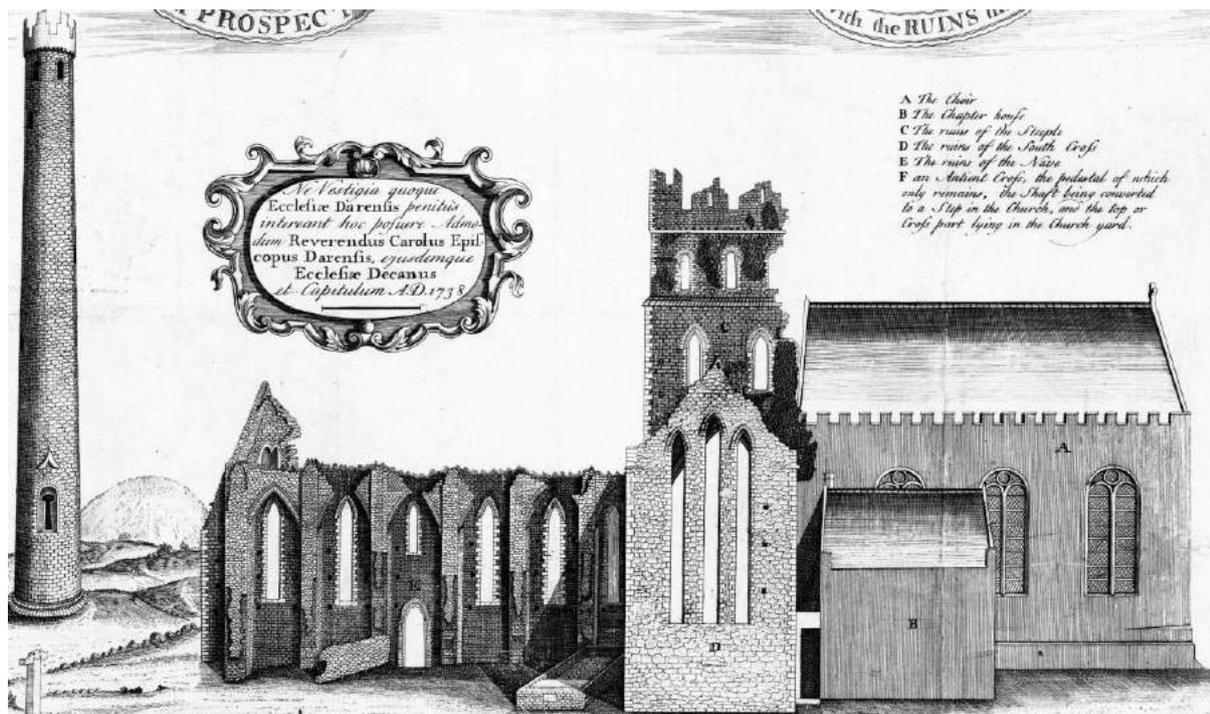
chapel, but its exceptional quality (it probably originally incorporated shafts of polished limestone) and that it is perfectly on axis with the rest of the building suggests that it was an attempt at rebuilding the choir on a larger scale that like so many Irish cathedral projects, was aborted.

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Kildare

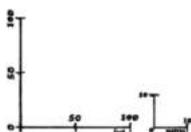


A simple unaisled cruciform church, built in the second quarter of the thirteenth century by Bishop Ralph of Bristol. The nave has the unusual feature of bracing arches between the buttresses. The crossing tower seems to have collapsed north-east during the War of the Three Kingdoms in the mid seventeenth century. A new chancel was built c.1686, and the rest of the church was roofless until restoration in 1875 under G.E. Street. N transept and chancel were completely rebuilt.



Kildare Cathedral, Jonas Blaymire engraved by L. Demsey, 1748.

[click for map](#)



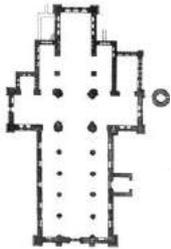
Leighlin



Unaisled thirteenth-century building with a pair of transepts (S has gone) and a N chapel. A short central tower was added in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The nave has no windows (only currently lit by the W window and roof dormers) and there is a set of trefoiled sedilia in the chancel.

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Ossory (Kilkenny)

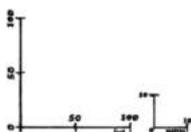


Built on an old monastic site (see the round tower to the south), this largely thirteenth-century building is relatively grand for an Irish cathedral, an aisled nave with transepts sporting staggered square flanking aisles and chapels, and a chancel with sedilia (albeit totally remade). The S transept chapel was enlarged and later totally rebuilt as a chapter house in 1866.



Kilkenny Cathedral, William Bartlett engraved by John Carter, 1841.

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Archdiocese of Tuam

Tuam



A significant but confusing building. The E cell of the mid-twelfth-century cathedral survives with its wonderfully decorated chancel arch. A new choir was built behind it shortly after 1289 under English bishop William de Bermingham. Although much restored, the new choir has elegant Rayonnant tracery and sedilia-piscina ensemble. A start was made on foundations for transepts, clearly with the intent of demolishing the Romanesque church for a proportionate nave, which evidentially never happened due to lack of funds. Instead a narrow tower was built between it and the old Romanesque eastern cell.



Tuam Cathedral, watercolour by Daniel Grose c.1820. Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin. Note the "chancel arch" serving as a W porch, and the vanished tower.

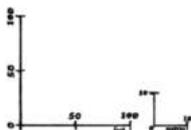
By the nineteenth century the Romanesque nave had been demolished and the chancel arch served as a grand W porch. In 1862-78 an aisled neo-Gothic church was built immediately adjoining the arch to the W, and the old tower removed. So now there are two former E ends behind the current one.

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Achonry

Rebuilt as a remarkably simple steeple/nave/chancel in 1823.

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Annaghdown



A now roofless stone box. The east window is an exceptional point-to-point chevron design with exceptionally intricate carving, but may have been taken from the nearby (70 m) Arroasian canons' church founded c.1140. The only other feature is a late medieval pointed doorway.

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Clonfert

The W portal is one of the best-known examples of Irish Romanesque: its striking carved gable a skeuomorphism more akin to Gothic microarchitecture. The church behind it is a rather bare two-cell rubble structure probably built in the thirteenth century, mostly refenestrated. The tall tower built inside the nave, along with the now unroofed S transept, was added likely after the fabric was noted as decayed in Papal Letters of 1414.

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Elphin

A small, probably largely eighteenth-century building with W tower, nave and polygonal apse was heavily damaged in a storm 1957 and now stands as low walls.

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Killala

Probably destroyed in the War of the Three Kingdoms. The current unaisled church was built from its masonry in the 1670s. The steeple dates from 1817 under James Paine.

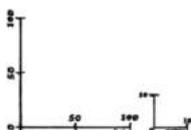
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Kilmacduagh

The *Teampuil Mor* of a Gaelic monastic complex founded in the seventh century. Now roofless. The western part of the nave is old, probably tenth century, and was extended in the early twelfth century and subsequently given an E cell in the later Middle Ages.

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Territories of the Teutonic Knights

These lands largely inhabited by unbaptised peoples on the southeast Baltic coast were gradually occupied by the military order of the Teutonic Knights during the Prussian Crusade of 1217-74. The order continued to occupy the territories as a monastic state and became quite belligerent against neighbouring Latin Christian states of Poland and Lithuania.

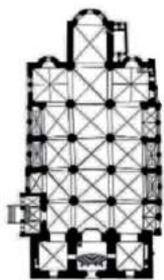
Archdiocese of Riga

Has its origins in the diocese of Üxküll, founded in the late 1180s as a suffragan of Bremen. The see was moved to Riga in 1202 which was confirmed as a metropolitan archbishopric in 1255. It was the base of operations for the Livonian Crusades and also took in the 1243 Prussian diocesan foundations by the Teutonic Knights.

Prince-bishoprics of Terra Mariana

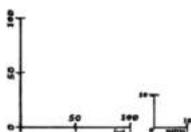
The Bishop of Riga founded the Livonian Brothers of the Sword in 1202 essentially as a well-endowed militia dedicated to the long campaign of bringing the various Baltic tribes under German control. The Brothers were incorporated into the Teutonic Knights in 1237. The nominal structure of Old Livonia was that of prince-bishoprics – prelates with both spiritual and secular power – and hence two of the four cathedrals were just essentially large chapels within fully-fortified castles.

Riga (Latvia)



The archiepiscopal church, being the earliest build, begun around 1211, is perhaps a little modest compared to its late Gothic suffragans. The plan is essentially its initial Romanesque form, a rounded apse, one-bay choir and transepts with apses. Brick predominates even this early construction, but stone is used for the plinth as well as somewhat erratically in the lesenes and quoins. Initially built as a hall church, the nave was reconstructed in the fourteenth century to have small side chapels and a basilican form, with a small clerestory with circular hexafoiled windows.

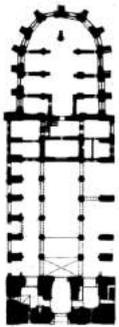
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Piltene (Latvia)

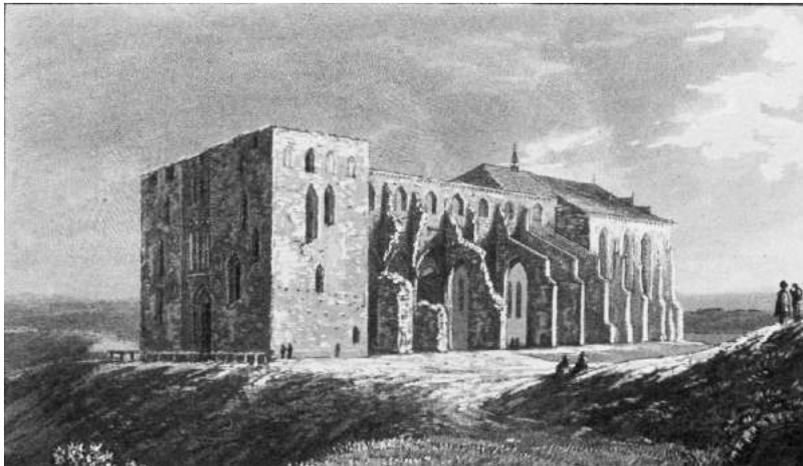
The prince-bishopric of Courland was based at a castle here, all that remains on site are fragments of masonry walls and indications of the overall plan.

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Tartu (Estonia)

The prince-bishopric of Dorpat was founded 1224. The church, an early backsteingotik basilica, was begun in the second half of the thirteenth century and in use by 1299: it has an articulated triforium and clerestory. By 1470 the E arm had been rebuilt as a hall church and subsequently the massive W towers were completed.



*Tartu Cathedral
(Die Bibliothek),
1821 engraving*

The church lost its vaults after the bishopric was dissolved in the wake of the invasion by Tsar Ivan IV. The choir became a library for the city university 1804-7, the nave remains a roofless ruin.

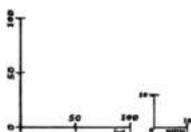
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Haapsalu (Estonia)



The bishopric of Ösel–Wiek was founded 1228. After some peregrination, the chapter was present at the castle of Haapsalu from 1279, to when the cathedral probably dates. Built of limestone rubble, it is a single vaulted vessel of three bays. On the S side, a round baptistery was built in the second half of the fourteenth, unique in this area but a common form in Italy.

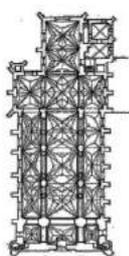
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Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights

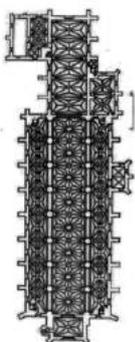
The Teutonic Order were granted territories in northern Poland to help the advance of their crusade towards the Baltic in what would later be known as Prussia. Using the episcopate was a key part of the Knights' state building and the four bishoprics of Culm, Ermland, Samland and Pomesania were established in 1243. All of the cathedrals for the new chapters were new foundations, usually on strategic sites formerly occupied by the Knights themselves.

Chełmża (Poland)



Cathedral of the Bishopric of Culm. Initially in the early fourteenth century there was influence from the Teutonic Knights-sponsored French-Gothic project at the Elisabethkirche, Marburg. However, after war damage between the Teutonic state and the Polish Crown in 1422, stellate vaults were installed over the choir. These were then continued over the nave, giving the cathedral the overall appearance of standard Baltic brick aisled hall-church.

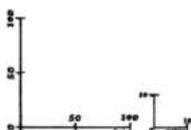
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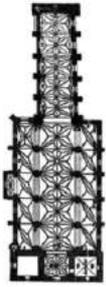
Frombork (Poland)

Cathedral of the Bishopric of Ermland, later known as Warmia. The current church was built on the fortified hill 1329-88. It is, naturally, a hall-church nave and five-bay aisleless chancel, all of brick. It is vaulted throughout with the typical stellar vaults of the Teutonic State, with the choir bays being installed after the fire of 1422. The current effect of the interior is largely from the embellishment of 1887-91.

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Königsberg (Kaliningrad, Russian Federation)



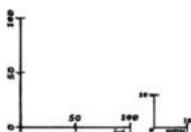
Cathedral of the Diocese of Samland. Current church was begun on a new site acquired by the new bishopric from the Teutonic Knights in 1322, complete by about 1380. Its nave is not quite a hall church – the central vault is higher than the aisles – but there is no clerestory.

The entire city was heavily damaged in the RAF air-raid of 26/27 August 1944 and further in the devastating Red Army offensive on the city in early 1945. The cathedral was a ruined shell until it began restoration in the early 90s after the break-up of the USSR. The vaults of the nave and the first bay of the chancel have been replaced to the original patterns, but the E four bays of the impressive long choir are walled off from the nave.

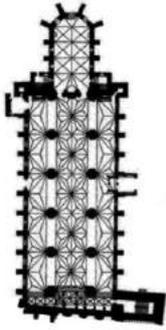


Königsberg Cathedral, photograph c.1950s, looking W before the restoration of its vaulting

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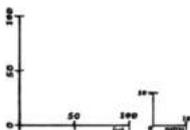


Kwidzyn (Poland)



Founded in 1243 as the diocese of Pomesania, the bishop tended to sit at Prabuty Castle (destroyed) and the chapter at Kwidzyn from 1285. The current spectacular brick cathedral was built, on the site of a former site of the Teutonic Knights, as part of a fortified complex typical of that order, although the castle itself was demolished at the end of the sixteenth century. The nave has a raised central aisle that leaves enough space for what looks like a blind clerestory, but the roof sits over the top like a hall church.

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Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

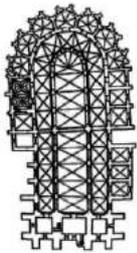
Poland became Christian with the baptism of Duke Mieszko I at Poznań, Greater Poland in 966. Lesser Poland and Kraków were obtained from Moravia in the 990s.

Archdiocese of Gniezno

The Polish archbishopric was founded in 1000, and later obtained two suffragans in the adjacent state of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Christianised 1387, with which it came to share a dynastic union. Also oversaw some dioceses onetime in the Holy Roman Empire (Wrocław and Furstenwalde) which are not included here.

All modern Republic of Poland except where stated.

Gniezno



A masonry domed rotunda was built in the second half of the tenth century for the relics of Saint Adalbert of Prague, and was succeeded by a basilica, subsequently expanded. After an attack on the city by the Teutonic Knights, the cathedral was rebuilt 1342-90 as a brick gothic basilica with an ambulatory with radiating chapels. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the cathedral

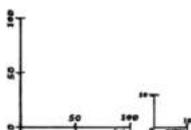
suffered fires and was thoroughly Baroqued, largely undone after its damage



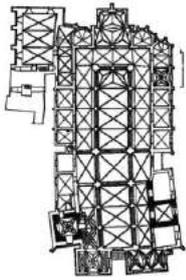
*Gniezno, Classified choir
looking E, pre-war
postcard*

during WW2, although the outer walls of the nave and the ambulatory are still classified.

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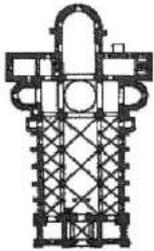
Kraków



The first cathedral was begun in 1036, of which the western part of the crypt survives, with another rebuilt consecrated 1136. The main church now was built from the 1320s in the “two-point-five-storey” brick Gothic style of Lesser Poland, and consecrated 1364.

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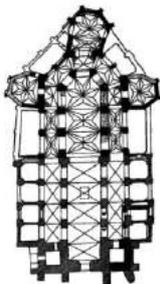
Plock



A Romanesque church consecrated 1144. Extensively rebuilt in Renaissance style after a 1530 fire. Extensively restored and internally painted with an extraordinarily thorough set of murals in the early twentieth century.

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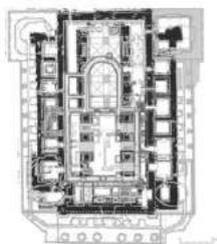
Poznań



The first Polish bishopric, with previous early and mature Romanesque builds on the site. First Gothic campaign on the E arm was 1245-62. The current nave, with a blank middle storey, followed in the fourteenth century, with the current ambulatory with a triforium built 1399-1406. 1636-50 it was internally remodelled in the Baroque, undone after WW2 damage.

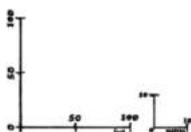
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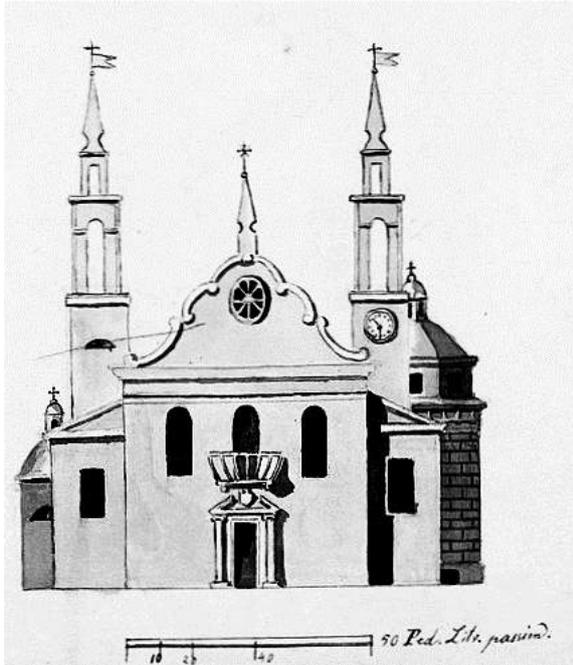
Vilnius (Lithuania)



The first cathedral after the first and only Christian king of Lithuania converted 1251. After his death in 1263 the cathedral reverted to paganism, most likely based around a courtly version of Eastern liturgy.

After the 1387 refounding of the see, the cathedral seems to have been quietly reappropriated as part of the palace of the Grand Dukes: there is no mention of throwing down idols or suchlike. A new hall-church was built from 1429. This was heavily damaged and extensively remodelled after fires in 1530 and 1610.





Vilnius Cathedral, the Baroque'd W front, drawing by Jan Chrzyciel Knakfus (d.1823?)

Jagiellonian Library, BJ Graf. IR 4615.

Peeking out on the R is the extant chapel of St Casimir.

After the collapse of the S tower in 1769 which brought down some vaulting and caused six deaths, the old church was demolished. The current larger Neo-classical building was built 1779-83, replacing everything above ground except the Baroque chapel of St Casimir, built 1626-36 with fine Swedish sandstone ashlar, which had a twin built on the opposite side to form the new monumental E end.

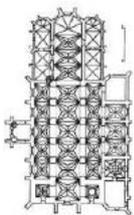
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Varniai (Lithuania)

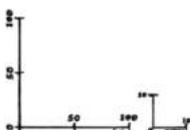
Founded as the diocese of Medininkai in 1417. The current Baroque cathedral dates from 1681 to 91.

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Włocławek



Foundation stone laid 1340, and the church consecrated 1411. An altogether more modest building than the other cathedrals of Lesser Poland, with no ambulatory or radiating chapels, and stark square piers in the nave. Much of its interior appearance today is from its Neo-Gothic polychromy of 1900-1, and the two soaring



belfries with copper-clad spires were added on top of the formerly stumpy W towers from 1891.



*Włocławek
Cathedral in 1863,
engraving by Adolf
Kozarski*

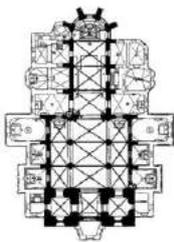
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Archdiocese of Lviv

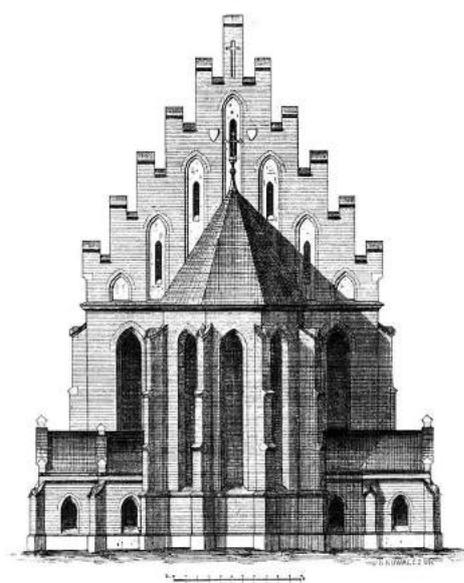
Lviv was founded in the lower part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Its eastern suffragans, reaching as far as the Rus'ian capital of Kyiv on the Dniper, were arguably over-ambitious: one diocese certainly never had a medieval cathedral.

All modern Ukraine unless stated.



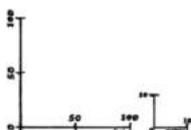
Lviv

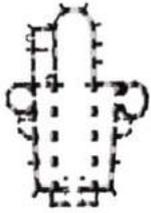
The diocese was founded 1358 and promoted to metropolitan archdiocese 1412. The first seat of the Bishop was probably St Mary of the Snows, but the current Lviv Cathedral was in building during the 1380s, and the nave was vaulted 1481. The initial plan was an apsed aisleless choir and a three-bay hall-church nave, but was later surrounded by Baroque additions. The nave still has an interior Baroque/Rococo appearance of 1760-78, the choir was re-gothicised 1892-9.



Lviv Cathedral, conjectural medieval appearance of choir with big nave stepped E gable, engraving by cathedral restorer Michał Kowalczyk (1892-4)

[Visit in Google Maps](#)



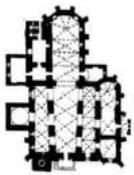


Przemyśl (Poland)

Latin diocese founded 1375, church built 1471-1545, on site of a Romanesque rotunda (of which the foundations can be seen in the archaeological crypt under the choir), with unaisled choir/hall church nave. Nave basically rebuilt 1728–1742 in Baroque style, Choir regothicised 1883-5.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Kamianets-Podilskyi



Again founded 1375. The initial fifteenth-century building, of which very little survives except the basic layout, had its apse elongated 1646-8, and from 1672-99 served as a mosque for the Ottoman Empire. It was redecorated 1737-55.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Kyiv

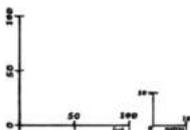
No permanent Latin cathedral in the city until the nineteenth century. The medieval Latin bishop resided with the Dominicans east of the walls when the see was reestablished 1321. The great cathedral of St Sophia, built in the early tenth century to make Kyiv the Constantinople of the north, is of course beyond the scope of this exercise.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (Site of Dominican Convent 1320-1648)

Lutsk

After Dominican missions in thirteenth century, diocese founded 1375 and brick church begun 1539. When it was damaged in the great fire of 1724, the seat was transferred in 1787 to the Baroque Jesuit church which serves as the current cathedral.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)



Kingdoms of Hungary and Croatia

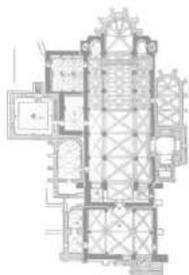
Hungary joined the Latin Church in 990 and their King Stephen, crowned 1000, was a major founder of new dioceses, establishing both the archiepiscopal sees of Esztergom and Kalocsa. The church buildings largely drew on a combination of Imperial German and Italian models, but any assessment of medieval architecture in central Europe is greatly hindered by Ottoman Empire that held much of the area from the mid sixteenth century until the territories were brought back into European Christian control by the Habsburgs in the eighteenth century.

Although the Ottomans did not destroy churches, often using them as mosques or even allowing them to maintain a Christian function, many of the cathedrals were on defensive sites that were heavily damaged during occupation and subsequently fell into catastrophic disrepair, leading them to be completely demolished and replaced when the Habsburgs came along in the eighteenth century.

Archdiocese of Esztergom

All modern Hungary unless stated.

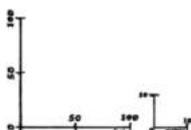
Esztergom

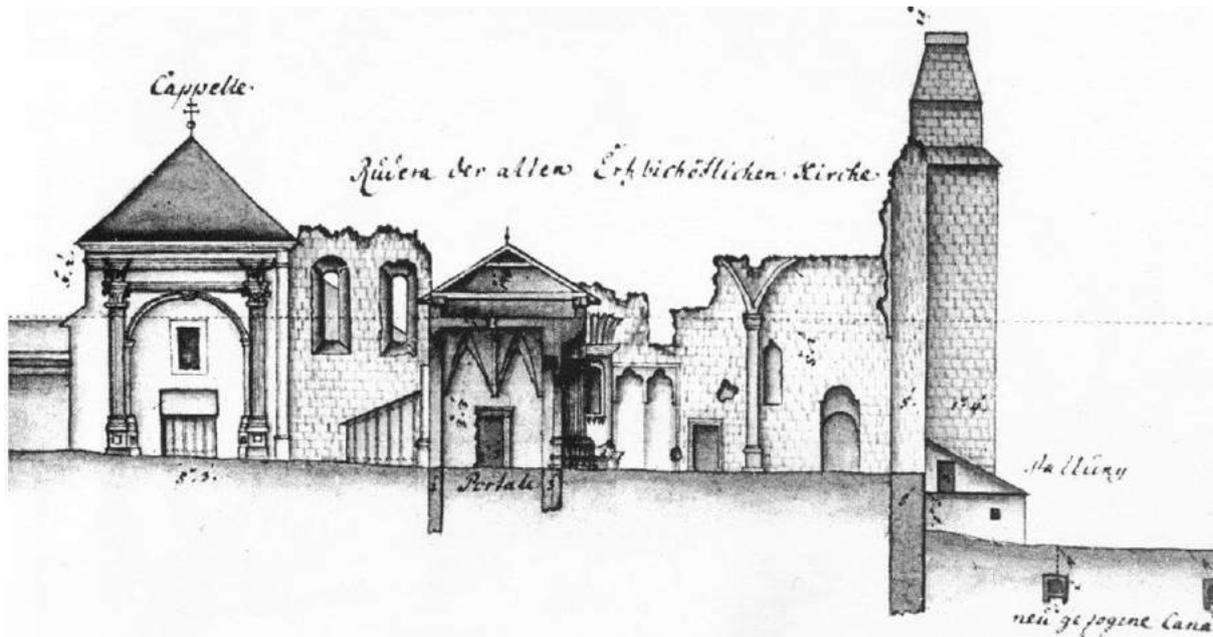


The medieval cathedral had been founded on top of the castle hill by King Stephen about 997, dedicated to St Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, who had been martyred that year. The main Romanesque church was built 1173x96. The church was vaulted throughout during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Under Ottoman Occupation the choir was demolished and the nave used as a mosque. Because of its defensive position, the cathedral was not returned to the archbishop until 1761, when it was in a parlous state, a tower collapsing in 1764. The ruins were demolished for a neo-classical church with a single enormous dome built 1822-69.

The only part of the old building to survive is the Bakócz Chapel of 1506, completely in Italianate all'antica style. It is implied by Giorgio Vasari to be designed by Andrea Ferrucci of Fiesole, but while the altar is of Italian Carrara marble, the interior is clad with local polished red limestone. It was disassembled and re-erected in a new position on the N side of the new cathedral.

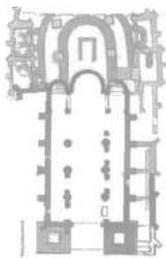




Cross section of Esztergom Cathedral during demolition c.1820. The Bakócz Chapel is on the left.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

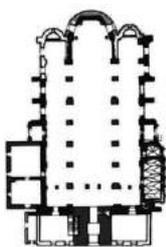
Eger



Like Esztergom, founded by King Stephen inside a fortified hilltop site, which meant it suffered under Ottoman military occupation. Its floorplan, an aisled basilica with triple apses, subsequently extended, has been excavated and is revealed within the castle grounds. A new neo-classical cathedral was built about half a kilometre south-west in 1832-7.

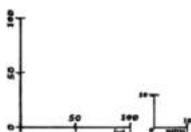
[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Győr



The current plan is that of a twelfth-century triple-apsed basilica. However, only the apses themselves and the footings of the external masonry are medieval, as the interior was reconstructed as a Baroque church in the late eighteenth century. Only the Héderváry Chapel, built in 1404 on the S side of the church, retains its medieval appearance, with tri-radial vaulting.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)

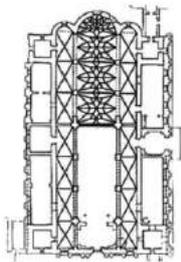


Nyitra (Slovakia)



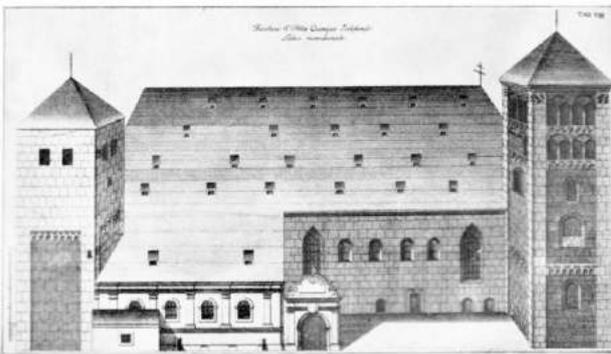
Again built as part of a fortification. Unaisled building, rebuilt 1333-55, and externally Gothic, but internally entirely Baroque'd 1710-36. The chapel of St Emmeram is a thirteenth-century building with vaulting, which was annexed to the fourteenth-century church with the "Lower Church" behind it. A fourteenth-century fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin was recently found on the east wall of the Lower Church.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

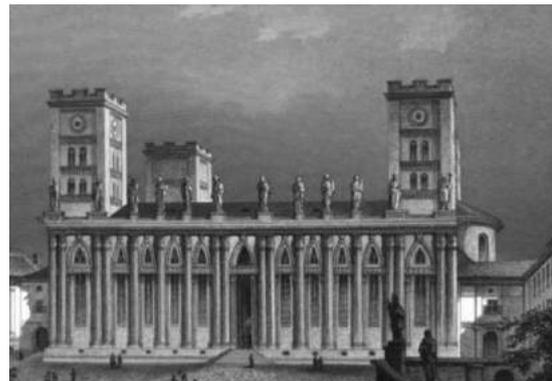


Pécs

Built in the twelfth century (in-building during the 1170s). Although the external extremely symmetrical appearance of the S front is massively smoothed out, the overall plan of the building – aisled with triple apses, towers outside each corner, oblong piers with half-columns, compound piers at the third bay carrying an arch, and a W gallery – is authentic.



Pécs Cathedral, S front in the 18thc

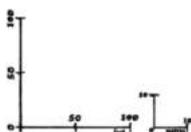


Pécs Cathedral, S front in the 1860s

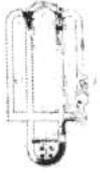
It is demonstrative of the combination of ideas of Italian (the three apse end and elevation, from Modena) and German Imperial (the towers at the four corners of the building, Augsburg) origins used by the Hungarian state in their churches, which often do not survive above ground.

The church was extensively restored to a heavily embellished Neo-Romanesque state in 1882-9 by stripping almost all later additions (the later Gothic vaulting shown on my plan was for instance not reinstated).

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)



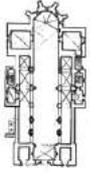
Vác



Very German Imperial features of a W apse and hall crypt, of the late eleventh century, excavated. This church was damaged in the Mongol raids of 1241, and collapsed into ruins during Ottoman occupation. A large Baroque church constructed on top 1761-72.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

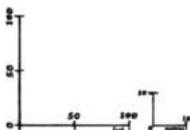
Veszprém



Initially an apsed rotunda was built north of the current cathedral as a reliquary for relics of St George, reconstructed as an aisled octagon in the thirteenth century. Its remains are visible in a covered visitors' complex.

The cathedral itself is essentially a Romanesque two-storey basilica, galleries over the transepts and W end, and an apsed choir added in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. It was Baroque'd in the eighteenth century and rebuilt in Neo-Romanesque 1907-10.

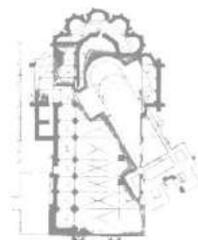
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Archdiocese of Bacs-Kalcsa

From 1085, the archbishopric was moved to Bacs (modern Bač, Serbia) by King Ladislaus I of Hungary (and King of Croatia from 1091), hence the dual name of the archdiocese. It moved back to Kalcsa 1135.

Kalcsa (Hungary)



An eleventh-century Imperial-style basilica on a different axis was replaced by a Gothic church in the late thirteenth century. This had an ambulatory with radiating chapels: like Uppsala in Sweden, a clear attempt to distinguish the archiepiscopal church by use of the French cathedral style. Evidentially dilapidated during Ottoman reign from 1529, it was demolished following

Habsburg occupation. The current church is a completely new Baroque rebuild of 1728x74.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Csanad (Hungary)

Established around 1030, ecclesiastical activity almost completely stopped under the Ottoman occupation 1552-1685. The town was destroyed and levelled at the beginning of the eighteenth century under the Habsburgs. The current cathedral of the diocese of Szeged–Csanád is 63 km away: the Votive Church in Szeged built over the site of the cathedral-scale medieval parish church of St Demeter 1913-30.

Site of the Gothic parish church of Szeged and the current cathedral:

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)

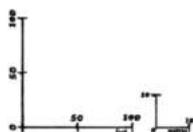
Approximate location of original site in Csanad:

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

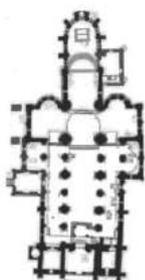
Đakovo (Croatia)

Initially the Diocese of Bosnia, with the bishop's seat in the village of Brdo 16 km east of Vrhbosna (Sarajevo), but moved to Đakovo 1252. Occupied by Ottoman Empire from 1536. Small Baroque church, rebuilt on a much larger scale in brick as new cathedral 1866-82.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)



Gyulaféhérvár (Alba Iulia, Romania)



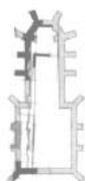
First cathedral probably begun under King Stephen in the first quarter of the eleventh century. Succeeding current building of hybrid Romanesque/Gothic built over its foundations from late twelfth to early thirteenth century: an Imperial-style two-storey elevation with double bays supporting a single quadripartite vault, with pointed arches in the arcades, indebted to Burgundian

Romanesque.

After damage from the Mongol Empire in 1241/2, the extended choir followed, probably from 1287, with Remois bar tracery, replacing a Romanesque choir that had the easternmost manifestation of Anglo-Norman chevron.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Szávaszentdemeter (Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia)



Sirmium was a thriving Roman colony and had a bishop at the beginning of the third century, and around 870 St Methodius (the "Apostle to the Slavs") was granted the title of archbishop there.

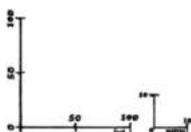
However the Hungarian status of the city was disputed by the Byzantine Empire. It was held by the Serbs in 1451, then was under Ottoman control from 1521. The Latin cathedral, recorded as dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, was discovered in 1981 and excavated in 2003. It consists of a thirteenth or fourteenth century crypt built into an Imperial Roman granary with a nave above, and a fourteenth or fifteenth century choir with a polygonal apse. There are many fragments of fourteenth-century frescoes in the crypt.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

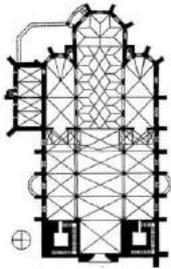
Várad (Oradea, Hungary)

The Gothic church, dilapidated under numerous sieges and Ottoman occupation, was replaced 1752-80 with a design by the Italian Giovanni Battista Ricca, in a wholesale Baroque rebuild of the city under the Habsburgs and Viennese engineer Franz Anton Hillebrandt.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)



Zagreb (Croatia)



The cathedral, founded as a see in 1093, owes its current plan to a wholesale Gothic rebuilding shortly after 1242 attacks on the city by the Mongol Empire. However, after a catastrophic earthquake in 1880, the church was almost completely rebuilt.

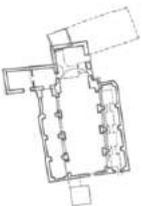
It has a high hall-church nave a choir with gallery openings but no clerestory, and an apse with traceried lancets with oculi above (which are not on pre-earthquake drawings). The one west tower was replaced by two giant Gothic steeples, which are currently being partly rebuilt after damage in an earthquake 22 March 2020.



*Zagreb Cathedral,
engraving by Johann
Weikhard von
Valvasor, 1689.*

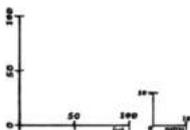
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Senj (Croatia)



The arcaded Romanesque façade of the unaisled church survives on front of the eighteenth-century aisled building, which occupies the same footprint.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

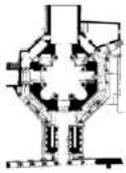


Archdiocese of Spalatum

The Kingdom of Croatia was at first an independent dynasty, then later came under the Crown of Hungary. Regardless, its cathedral architecture is largely associated with Italy. The largest diocese of Spalatum was based in Salona (Split) from Imperial Roman times.

All modern Republic of Croatia.

Split



After Siracusa in Sicily (an early fifth century BC Doric temple), Split is the oldest building used as a cathedral, built c. 295-303 AD as the mausoleum of Diocletian in his Imperial palace. It was converted into a church under archbishop John of Ravenna in the mid-seventh century, removing pagan idols and the emperor's sarcophagus.

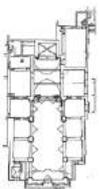
A Romanesque bell tower was added to the W front of the building in the twelfth century. The eastern sanctuary dates from the seventeenth century, but otherwise the antique building is essentially as it was put up around 300.



Split Cathedral, from NW. Early 20thc postcard.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)

Hvar



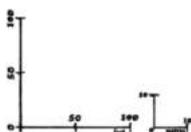
In appearance largely a Renaissance-Baroque building, but the plan is basically the medieval one, with three bays of a masonry pointed barrel vault in the choir, probably fourteenth century.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Knin

A cathedral was built from 1203 and consecrated 1270x2. I am assuming the site was inside or near the castle, but regardless, the diocese became titular after the town was occupied by the Ottomans in 1522.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (approximate location)



Krbava



See founded 1185, abandoned in the 1460s due to the advance of Ottoman territory. What survives is the revealed wall footings of an unaisled nave with a later polygonal apse. The plan is just me blowing out the Google Earth aerial photo (it wasn't easy to find, either!)

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Makarska

A newly-built small Baroque church from the early eighteenth century. In the Middle Ages the see was largely titular and the bishops were often resident in either Split or Omiš (equidistant from both).

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Šibenik

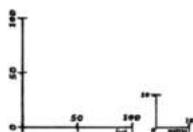


A remarkable building, now a UNESCO world heritage site. The diocese was established 1298. By 1473 new outer walls and nave arcades had been completed under Venetian master Giorgio da Sebenico. The completion from 1475 under Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino is heavily indebted to the Tuscan Renaissance style. It has a high pointed barrel vault of enormous equally-cut stone slabs, which, like a dome, also acts as the roof.



*Šibenik Cathedral, E end from SE,
engraving by J.F. Hamilton, published
1908*

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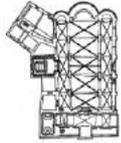


Skradin

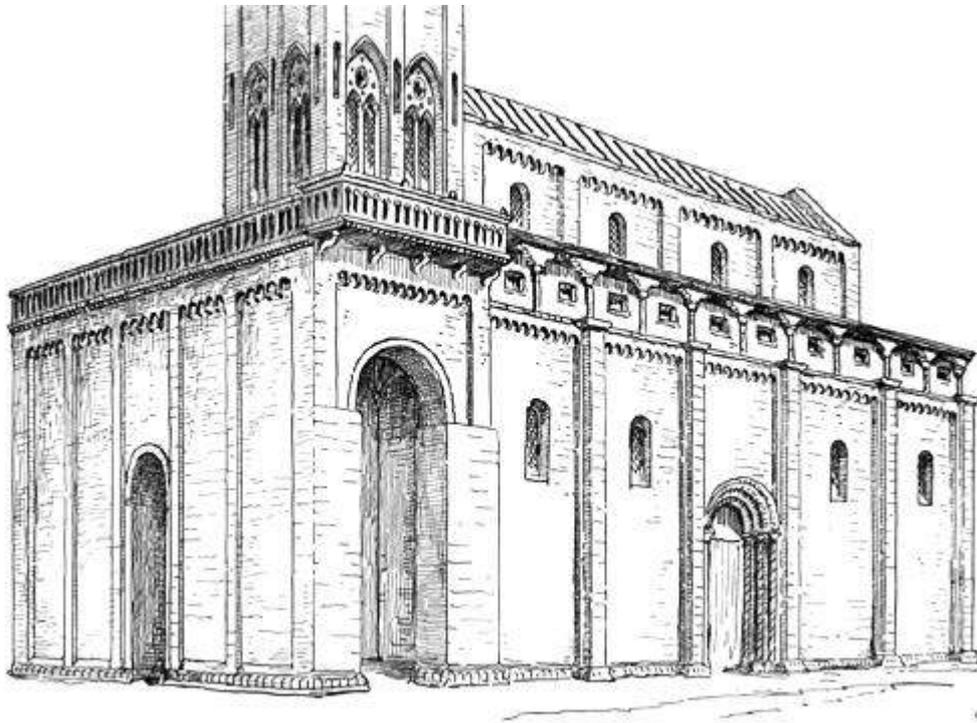
Destroyed during Ottoman occupation beginning 1522, a Baroque church built on its site 1747-57.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Trogir

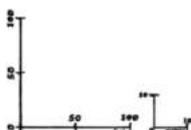


Initial construction of a Romanesque aisled church ending in triple apses 1213x51, with a masonry vault added in the fifteenth century. The bell tower stages date respectively from the fourteenth century, the 1420s with the belfry c.1600.



*Trogir Cathedral,
engraving by E.A.
Freeman, 1881*

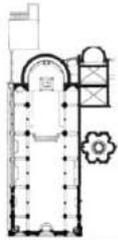
[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)



Archdiocese of Zadar

Broken off from Spalatum in 1154, based in ancient sees on the Dalmatian coast, and partly occupied by the Venetians. Early Croatian architecture, such as the St Donatus chapel in the cathedral complex at Zadar, was largely replaced by Italian Romanesque. However the tiny Nin is a good representation of early Croatia's use of Byzantine centrally-planned builds.

All modern Republic of Croatia.



Zadar

Largely a thirteenth-century three-storey unvaulted basilica in the Italian style, dedicated 1285. The nave elevation has alternating supports, dividing the arcades into double bays with six gallery arches above. Each gallery arch has three small arches inside it, their tops like a stone railing. The Pisa-style façade seems to have been a separate build and possibly involved raising the clerestory.

[Visit in Google Maps](#) (3D view available)



Biograd

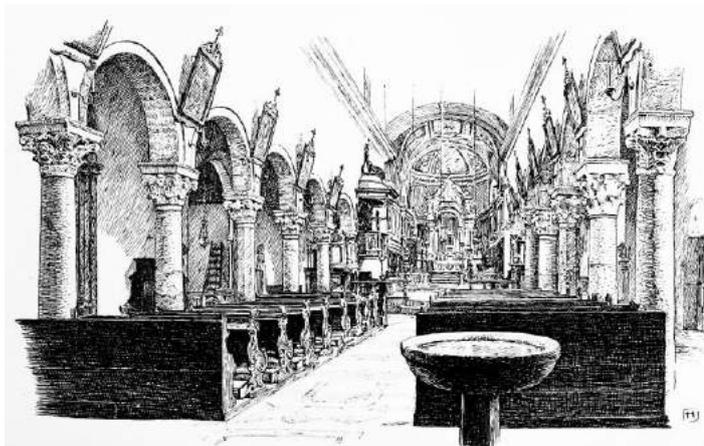
City captured and destroyed by the Venetians in 1125. The essentially ninth-century aisled cathedral survives as low wall footings.

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

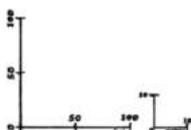
Krk



Low but long Romanesque arcade with ornately carved Corinthian-esque capitals ending in standard triple apse (Baroqued and a bay cut off). It is connected at the west via a low groin-vaulted passageway to



*Krk Cathedral,
interior looking E.
Engraving by J.F.
Hamilton,
published 1909*



the slightly earlier Romanesque (and north-south orientated) St Quinius, with a trio of apses (the eastern one above the passageway) at its S end and a sixteenth-century belltower at its N [not included on plan].

[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Nin

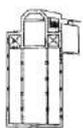
 Has a good claim as the “smallest cathedral in the world” (7.6 m internal width), and fascinating beyond that. The diocese of Nona was founded in the mid ninth century, but abolished by the Papacy c.928 when Bishop Gregorius tried to introduce Croatian language into the liturgy. The diocese was re-established c.1050 and ran till 1807.

The church, usually considered as tenth century, could be seen as a three-end apse with no nave and just a porch. However its immediate sources likely lie in the Byzantine Empire: centrally-planned Greek-cross form, enclosed centre apse, and masonry domes over each square bay. But to complicate, the domes are set on squinch arches, which are more common in Italian architecture.

The off-kilter plan has been argued as aligning the windows with the sun on the solstice and equinox. This unique combination of peculiar features temptingly points to the agency of maverick Bishop Gregorius.

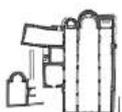
[Visit in Google Maps](#)

Osor



The original site of the cathedral outside the walls was attacked by the Saracens in the ninth century and in the fourteenth it was destroyed by the Genoese. The current church was built 1463-97, with Tuscan Renaissance-style arcades. The trefoil façade is perhaps a relative of Šibenik, although while that represents the curve of the stone roofs, this is but a mere façade.

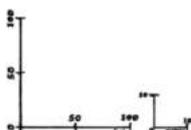
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Rab

A Lombardian basilica and bell-tower, consecrated 1177. Simple two-story arcade inside, with charmingly rustic Ionic capitals.

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Archdiocese of Dubrovnik

Split from Spalatum 1120, its suffragan dioceses sometimes overlapped with the former, and Bar further south down the coast.

All modern Republic of Croatia except where stated.

Dubrovnik



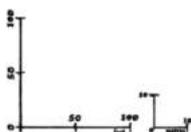
The plan, of a long and narrow Romanesque basilica with a single apse built over an earlier structure is well-known through archaeology after the 1979 earthquake. Tradition often connected its building to the arrival of King Richard I of England in 1192 on the way to the Crusades and a large donation made by him. That he contributed some funds to the building work is not impossible, but the Romanesque church was probably begun earlier in the twelfth century, shortly after its elevation to an archdiocese.



The Romanesque Cathedral of Dubrovnik in a large panorama of the city by an unknown early 17th-century painter, Franciscan Monastery Museum, Dubrovnik

The medieval cathedral was acclaimed for its lavishness and was influential as perhaps the first mature Romanesque building on the east Adriatic coast. The medieval church was heavily damaged in the catastrophic 1667 earthquake and demolished for a new Baroque build 1673-1713. Only a few representations were made of its appearance before its destruction.

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Korčula



See moved from Ston in the fourteenth century and this church subsequently built. Small but rather splendid three-storey basilica. The façade is similar to the Lombardian styles at Šibenik and Osor.



*Korčula Cathedral, W door.
Engraving by J.K. Hamilton,
published 1909.*

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Kotor (Montenegro)



Small ninth-century church (excavated plan shown top L of current church) replaced by a Romanesque basilica consecrated 1166. Two-storey double-bay vaulted elevation.

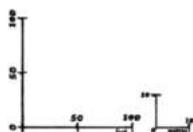
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Ston



Suppressed for Korčula. Almost certainly, the cathedral was the small basilica of St Mary Magdalene, part of a group of now abandoned early Christian buildings out in the hill south-west of modern Ston, probably first built in the sixth century and reworked in the Romanesque. Sadly the standing apse was destroyed in Allied bombings in 1944.

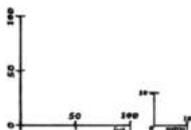
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Trebinje (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Never a strong see in the Middle Ages as for most of the time, the Latin bishop was expelled through Serbian favour of the Greek Rite, and then was under Ottoman rule by 1467. The current cathedral (raised as such in 1984) is a small building begun 1880.

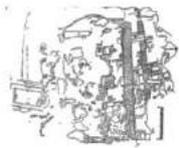
[Visit in Google Maps](#) (Current cathedral)



Archdiocese of Bar

The status of Bar (also known as Tivar or Antivari) as a Latin archbishopric wavered between 1089 and 1199. These are the Latin cathedrals I have been able to find which were certainly not built by the autocephalous eastern church of the Serbs (e.g., the impressive domed [cathedral at Prizren, Kosovo](#))

Bar (Stari Bar, Montenegro)



Old Bar is now an archaeological site about 3 km away from the modern city of Bar. From 1571 the fortified town was held by the Ottoman Empire and was heavily bombarded in the 1877/8 Ottoman-Montenegrin War. The cathedral of St George sat on the S edge of the town, and has been reduced to extremely scant ruins even by the standards of the rest of the site. The standing church of Svete Venerande 75 m to the north giving some idea of its appearance.

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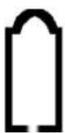
Svač (Montenegro)



A Romanesque building allegedly dated 1300 on the façade. Ruins, W façade basically to full height, in a deserted settlement.

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Lezhë (Albania)



Diocese founded 1400x5. Cathedral a simple nave and apse plan, with preserved fresco of St Nicholas. The building became a mosque under the Ottoman occupation, but was torn down during the Hoxha dictatorship. It is now covered by a concrete peristyle as a mausoleum to Skanderbeg (1405-68), leader against the Ottomans.

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Drisht (Albania)



On a hilltop site just downstream the Kir river of a major fortified site that was occupied by the Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman Empires. The church is a standard one cell-with apse, low wall footings.

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