

Durham Cathedral

Source A refers to the changes made in Durham cathedral since the 12th century. There are certain aspects that have remained the same. The north doors remain unchanged although they have replaced the real sanctuary knocker with a replica. Although the main structure and architecture of the cathedral have not changed, particular things have, for example in the source it shows pointed towers. As this is an interpretation of an idea of what it may have looked like at the time, it isn't based on any real fact so we don't know if the towers were indeed pointed, they may have been cones. But the towers now are not as they were in the 12th century; they are gothic, flat and have battlements. The towers were replaced after lightning struck the north tower and a fire broke out. They replaced all of the towers so that the north tower wouldn't look out of place.

The Romanesque window in the east of the north transept has been replaced with a large elaborate gothic stained glass window. They found that the pointed arch supported more weight therefore they could make it larger and more intricate.

The apse has been replaced by the chapel of the nine altars. The apse originally contained three apses, but was replaced in the thirteenth century they had become dangerous and were replaced

The Galilee chapel has been added on to the west of the cathedral. It is a ladies chapel as women were not allowed to mix with men in the chapel of the nine altars.

In conclusion the sketch of the 12th century cathedral is a good perception of what it may have looked like then, based on the sketchy facts provided, although there may be a few things wrong with it, but on the basis it is very accurate.

Source B relates to the theory that Durham cathedral was built by cowboy builders. Although it is true that the pillars in the nave are hollow and filled with builder's rubble, the doorway to the Galilee chapel you can find two mason's marks, one a Z with a line through it and the other an arrow pointing downwards.

This implies that the masons took pride in their work, it could also be some form of quality control; or a way of showing how much work that they had done and therefore how much they were to be paid.

There is a chevron pillar which has an altered pattern around the back of the pillar. Instead of the usual zigzag pattern, it continues downwards round the back of the pillar. This could be a result of too many of the wrong type of stone, as it was pre-made and assembled on site, but D. Cruickshank has a theory that it is a pivot through the important parts of the cathedral and also symbolised Christ. The pillar is

the heart of Christ, the transept is the arms the chapel of the nine alters the head and the nave downward the legs and feet. If you get a map of the cathedral and draw a circle from this pillar it goes through the important parts of the cathedral, such as where the monks ate, slept and prayed.

But one of the main contradictions to this theory is the plain beauty of the cathedral, there is amazing detail and stunning masonry everywhere you look in the cathedral, in the cat masks and the pillars, surely this is not the work of a bunch of cowboy builders? When one analyses the whole of the cathedral it is drawn to an exact plan, for example the pillars in the nave have the exact same height as circumference, and so if you cut and unfolded it, it would make an exact square. For many years beforehand masons had been trying to connect the spiritual world with the material, symbolised by squares and circles; and there it has been accomplished in those pillars. The source describes the cathedral 'crashing down' but what is to be understood is that they were working on something that had never been attempted before, so it was a trial and error way of things, so they were bound to get things wrong on a few occasions. Durham cathedral was one of the first buildings in Western Europe to have a stone roof, and after 500 years the oldest part of the roof's stone ribbed vaulting still resides in the north transept, showing no signs of collapsing.

So in conclusion, the cathedral was not built by cowboy builders as it is too elaborate and planned for someone to come to this conclusion without visiting the cathedral and experiencing its beauty and complexity for themselves.

Source c is a statement many agree with. It states that Durham Cathedral has been described as a beautiful building by famous architects and not many can argue with that.

There are many sources of its beauty, anywhere you look in the cathedral, from the cat masks at the bottoms of the stone ribbed vaulting, to the pillars in the nave, the breath-taking high altar, and St Cuthbert's shrine.

This statement can most definitely be classed as true, although some opinions vary; it is safe to say that Durham Cathedral is a very beautiful place.

Source D refers to the existence of the Neville chapel. The Neville's were an important local family and were the first secular burials.

Barely anything remains of the Neville chapel today; there is no screen, no altar, no per, no low stone wall, and no iron grating or iron partition.

But there is still evidence of its existence. There are holes where the iron pegs have been and there was a piece of iron still in the wall. There is a line of bricks not in pattern with the rest of the layout of the floor, which could be the foundations of the walls mentioned. There is also the remnants of the hole in the wall where items were stored that were required for mass.

Although the shrine is no longer there, there is evidence that it once was, the chapel did exist.

Source E describes the elaboration and the colourfulness of the screens, pyres, shrines and the stained glass windows.

From the rites of Durham, we can tell that Durham Cathedral was once a very bright and vivid place, but not much of its splendour survives today. In the Galilee chapel there are paintings over the altar in the second bay on the north side, thought to be of St Cuthbert and St Oswald. They are faded now but there is evidence that they once would have been quite vibrant. There is also some evidence of the spandrels of the arches could have been decorated with crucifixion scenes, cracked and disintegrating but existent none-the-less.

The shrines today are not bejewelled; the Neville shrines lack of jewels may be due to desecration by the Scots, but there are slight bits of evidence that there may have been jewels decorating the shrines, but the statement may have been an elaboration of the use of colour.

The 'fyne coloured glass' that it refers to can still be seen today in The Rose and all the other elaborate stained glass windows all over the cathedral.

I see no reason to disagree with this statement as there is definite evidence of the existence of intense, stunning colour all around the Cathedral.