



Medieval Cathedrals (Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Medieval World)

William W. Clark

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An introduction to the medieval cathedral, those churches that are regarded as the greatest achievements of medieval architecture. Details their social history, who built them, how they were built, and why. Forty photos and maps help to guide the reader through a narrated tour of these awe-inspiring churches.

When we think of cathedrals, we usually envision the great Gothic Buildings of 12th- and 13th-century Europe. But other than being a large church, a cathedral is neither a specific building type nor specifically medieval. What makes a large church a cathedral is the presence of a single item of furniture: the chair (in Latin: *cathedra*) or throne that is the symbol of the ecclesiastical and spiritual authority of a bishop. This book is an introduction to the medieval cathedral, those churches that are usually regarded as among the greatest achievements of medieval architecture.

While cathedrals were often the most prominent urban structure in many European cities, their construction was never a civic responsibility, but remained the responsibility of the clergy in charge of the day to day activities and services. Beginning with an overview of the social history of cathedrals, Clark examines such topics as patrons, builders and artists, and planning and construction; and provides an in-depth examination of the French Cathedral at Reims—a seminal building with significant technological advances, important sculptural programs, a surviving bishop's palace, and other structures. The volume concludes with a series of illustrations, a selection of original texts, and a selected bibliography for further study. A full index is also provided.

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