



Arbroath Abbey
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Preface

This report focuses on the abbey precinct at Arbroath and its immediately adjacent appendages in and around the burgh of Arbroath, as evidenced from the documentary record. It is not a history of the abbey and does not attempt to provide a narrative of its institutional development, its place in Scottish history, or of the men who led and directed its operations from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. There is a rich historical narrative embedded in the surviving record but the short period of research upon which this document reports did not permit the writing of a full historical account.

While the physical structure that is the abbey lies at the heart of the following account, it does not offer an architectural analysis of the surviving remains but it does interpret the remains where the documentary record permits parts of the fabric or elements of the complex to be identified. This focus on the abbey precinct has produced some significant evidence for the daily life of the community over the four centuries of its corporate existence, with detail recovered for ritual and burial in the abbey church, routines in the cloister, through to the process of supplying the convent with its food, drink and clothing. Some evidence for the interactions between the monks of the abbey and the inhabitants of the lands around it and on its more widely dispersed properties is also considered, but this is not a social history and both the abbey's extensive estates and its relations with neighbouring landowners lie beyond the scope of this present study.

As one of the greatest monastic foundations in medieval Scotland and with a rich surviving documentary record, it is to be hoped that this present study of Arbroath Abbey can be built upon to produce the full historical and architectural analysis which it so richly deserves.

Introduction

Impressive though the ruins of Arbroath Abbey are still today, they constitute merely a fragment of the great complex of buildings that was developed on this site over a period of almost four hundred years after its foundation in 1178. The encroachment of the town of Arbroath onto the site, filling much of the southern and eastern part of the formerly walled enclosure, renders it impossible to visualise easily the scale of the buildings and their wider landscape setting, although the surviving remains still dominate the skyline of the modern community. We are fortunate to have an account, written towards the end of the abbey's functioning life, which gives detail of the layout of not just what remains but also of what has long since vanished. On 15 October 1517, Dom Arthur Boece, a priest of Brechin diocese, provided testimony to James Coutts, canon of Glasgow, of the physical layout. Coutts had this recorded in a written account:¹

Being interrogated concerning the title, order, site and condition of that monastery, a witness [Boece] declared that it was under the invocation of St Thomas, and of the rule of St Benedict, situated in the county of Angus, distant a mile as the arrow flies from the German Ocean. Close by runs a stream, which in their language is called Brodet, whence the abbey takes its name. The twon has about two hundred hearths, is under the regality of the Abbot, and inhabited by husbandmen, labourers and a few merchants. [The Abbey] was founded three hundred and fifty years ago by William, King of Scots, who was school companion of St Thomas, and a sharer of his tribulations in England. The form of the church is like that of St Maria del popolo, but nearly double its size. It is oblong, with a double line of pillars, almost all of square, dark stones. The pavement is similar, and the church truly is noble and royal work. It has four gates, the principal to the west, two to the south, whereby one enters the cloister, and a fourth to the north, which leads to the cemetery. It has three naves, the largest in the middle, and the lesser at the sides, and these lesser ones are formed of the same square stone. But the centre nave is roofed with wood. It is covered in the main part with lead, and the rest of it with wooden shingles. It has a splendid tower, with four sides, somewhat higher than the campanile of St Peter's at Rome, and it has many most excellent bells. The high altar is situated at the top of the church, near the east, at a little distance from the wall, and on it daily two, and frequently three, masses are celebrated with the chant. On the altar, for an ornament, there is a wooden tabernacle, gilt, in which are these sculptured images: the Saviour having the world in his hand; St Mary, the mother of God, with the child Jesus in her bosom; St Thomas the martyr; and King William, offering the church. Round the altar is an ancient wooden choir, with a double row of stalls. There are besides twelve altars, with their chapels, sufficiently decorated, at which daily masses are read. The sacristy, at the south side of the choir, possesses a silver cross, very many chalices, other vessels, and silver images of the saints, also many suits of vestments, of gold and of silk. In it are also preserved a pastoral staff and a mitre. At the right side of the church is a large and most beautiful organ. Outside the church, towards the north, is a cemetery encircled by a low wall. On the opposite side of the cemetery, to the south, is the cloister, the very ample habitation of the monks, square in form, and surrounded by very high walls. In this are two refectories, one for common days and one for feasts. There is also a dormitory. The chapter house, the infirmary, the hospice for pilgrims and strangers are ample and well furnished. There is a library, which contains two hundred and more books. They have many gardens, wide and fair. The house of the Abbot,

¹ The text is printed in R L Mackie and S Cruden, *Arbroath Abbey* (Edinburgh, 1954), 22-24.

though in the same cloister, is separated from the habitation of the monks. The tables of the monks and of the Abbot are united, and the Abbot freely administers all. There are various parochial churches under the monastery, to which the Abbot has the right of presentation, and receives from them tithes etc. In the monastery there is wont to be an Abbot, a prior of the cloister and a sub-prior, both removable at the will of the Abbot, and besides that forty monks, who live there in good report and most religiously worship God. They sing the nocturns at midnight, and chant the other canonical hours at the proper time. The revenues of the monastery may perhaps amount to two thousand ducats or thereabouts, and consist in the revenues and fruits of the churches and in those of their lands and possessions.

It is a remarkable record, giving detail that survives in no other source, and that are otherwise only recoverable through comparison with the position at other communities. The following report explores in more detail several of the features set out in Boece's narrative.

Foundation

On Saturday 13 July 1174, William, king of Scots, was captured by a force of knights loyal to King Henry II of England outside the walls of Alnwick Castle in Northumberland.² William had invaded northern England in support of a rebellion by Henry's eldest son and designated heir, Henry (the so-called Young King), who had promised to restore to him the earldom of Northumberland and lordship of Carlisle that had been his heritage but which Henry II had taken back into his hands in 1157. William had never been reconciled to that loss and spent the rest of his life seeking to regain his lost inheritance. The invasion of England under the pretext of support for the just claims of the Young King had seemed likely to deliver William his goal, for the English king was preoccupied with quelling the rebellion of his sons in the heartland of his realm in Normandy, Maine and Anjou. Henry's supporters in northern England, moreover, were few, scattered and unprepared for a major Scottish incursion. That, however, was until Henry secured saintly intervention to humble the Scottish king.



Figure 1: The chapter seal of Arbroath Abbey showing the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Becket at Canterbury on 29 December 1170 (collection of R Oram).

Returning from Normandy in early July, on Friday 12 July Henry had made humble penitence in Canterbury Cathedral at the shrine of St Thomas, the archbishop whom Henry's knights had brutally murdered in the cathedral on 29 December 1170.³ When news arrived that William had been captured the morning after Henry's penitence, it seemed to everyone that Thomas the Martyr had intervened to save England from the Scottish threat. The Scottish Chronicle of Melrose reported that:

Henry, the elder king of England, came to England during these turmoils (the Scottish invasion and the rebellion of his son's baronial supporters). Repenting of his sins, and begging for peace, he visited as quickly as he could,

immediately upon his arrival in the kingdom, the tomb of the blessed Thomas at Canterbury, with compunction in his heart, and contrition in his mind; clothed in woollen garments, and walking with bare feet, accompanied by a large number of bishops and nobles.

² *A Scottish Chronicle Known as the Chronicle of Holyrood*, eds M O Anderson and A O Anderson (Scottish History Society, 1938), 153-155.

³ For accounts of these events, see A O Anderson (ed), *Early Sources of Scottish History*, vol 2 (Edinburgh, 1922), 284-291.

And indeed, when morning broke, William, king of the Scots, was made prisoner at Alnwick; and he was led in grief to Richmond, and kept there honourably for a time in custody. But after the affair was made known to the king of England, by his command William was transferred to Normandy, and put for keeping, like a precious treasure, in the tower of Falaise.⁴

William eventually bought his release through the humiliating terms of the so-called Treaty of Falaise, which required both the Scottish king and his lords to make a formal submission to Henry II of England and to recognise his status as overlord of Scotland. Having submitted, in 1175 William returned to Scotland and probably almost at once began to plan the foundation of a monastery dedicated to the saint whom many already saw as responsible for his capture and humbling before Henry. The result was perhaps the greatest display of royal religious patronage seen in Scotland, the Tironensian abbey of St Thomas the Martyr at Arbroath.

Tironensian identity

King William formally founded Arbroath Abbey in 1178 and brought to it a colony of monks from

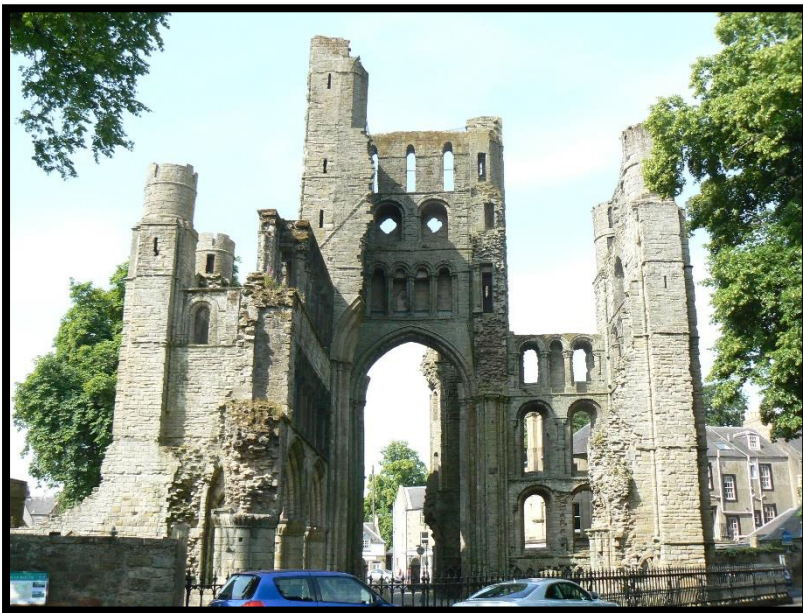


Figure 2: Kelso Abbey, mother-house of Arbroath, the first Tironensian abbey in Scotland (collection of R Oram).

Kelso Abbey in the Scottish Borders.⁵ Kelso was itself founded by William's grandfather, King David I, as a colony of the northern French abbey of Thiron-Gardais.⁶ The monastery at Thiron-Gardais was the head of what modern sources label 'an autonomous congregation of reformed Benedictine observance' founded c.1105 by St Bernard of Thiron and a group of monks from the older Benedictine abbey of St Cyprien at Poitiers.⁷ The status of Arbroath as a Tironensian monastery, however, is far from clear. The establishment of greater centralisation and

organisational structure for the Order occurred under William of Poitiers, abbot of Thiron-Gardais (1119-1147x60), who introduced annual General Chapter meetings, following the example of the Cistercians. While it is unclear if Kelso's abbot or representatives ever attended the Tironensian Chapter-General, papal bulls issued through to the 1170s confirmed Thiron as the head of Kelso, a

⁴ *Chronicle of Melrose* (facsimile edition), eds A O Anderson et al (London, 1936), s.a.1174.

⁵ For the outline details of the foundation, see I B Cowan and D E Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses: Scotland*, 2nd edition (London, 1976), 66-67.

⁶ *Ibid*, 68-69.

⁷ For the Tironensians' account of their order's foundation, see Geoffrey Grossus, *The Life of the Blessed Bernard of Tiron*, trans R Harwood Kline (Washington, 2009).

status which seems to have been accepted by the latter.⁸ As the Chronicle of Melrose records, however, in 1176 contention arose over Thiron-Gardais's right to superiority.⁹ It seems very likely that the context for this dispute was plans for the foundation of Arbroath, discussions for which probably started very soon after William returned to Scotland from his captivity in Normandy. The root of the dispute, then, was whether Arbroath was to be a daughter-house of Kelso, or a daughter-house of Thiron-Gardais (which would have given Arbroath equal status to Kelso).

The outcome of this conflict seems to have been the loss of Thiron-Gardais's authority in Scotland as in 1179 a papal bull issued to Thiron-Gardais, and entered into the cartulary there, listed every dependant abbey and priory of the Order but excluded Kelso (and, consequently, Arbroath).¹⁰ This exclusion is probably the reason for the distinct lack of Scottish material in the archives at Thiron-Gardais. The rupture of the bond with its mother-house also provides context for the various Scottish documentary references to the 'order of Kelso'.¹¹ While Kelso had provided the founding community at Arbroath, however, the relationship between the two appears to have been equally far from that of a typical mother- and daughter-house as Kelso's own with Thiron-Gardais. Upon its foundation, Arbroath was formally released from all kinds of subjection and obedience in charters issued by Kelso itself, suggesting that Arbroath lacked a formal superior and was intended by its founder to be a stand-alone institution.¹²

From the thirteenth century, successive popes failed to recognise the Tironensians as an independent order, reflected in consistent references in papal documents to Arbroath, and indeed Thiron-Gardais itself, as Benedictine.¹³ In 1326, the abbot of Arbroath was summoned by the abbot of Dunfermline, conservator of the General Chapter of monks of the order of St Benedict in Scotland, to attend the forthcoming chapter meeting.¹⁴ There are some indications, however, that the matter remained unsettled. The Augustinian chronicler, Abbot Walter Bower of Inchcolm, writing in the fifteenth century, recorded the dispute of 1176 and noted that 'the matter is still at hearing', perhaps suggesting that some effort to reassert Thiron-Gardais's authority was underway at this time.¹⁵ This fifteenth-century development is followed by a highly unusual documentary reference from 1485 to Arbroath as belonging to the Tironensian Order.¹⁶ Moreover, regardless of formal identifications, that is not to say that there was no sense of collective identity between Kelso and its daughter-houses (Arbroath, Fogo, Kilwinning, Lesmahagow and Lindores), expressed through common practices such as shared religious observances. A clear indication of this was the observance of the feast of St Machutus (15 November) at Arbroath. This saint was patron of Lesmahagow Priory, a dependant of Kelso that Bishop John of Glasgow and David I established in

⁸ A Smith, 'The Kelso Abbey cartulary: context, production and forgery' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011), 54-7.

⁹ *Chronicle of Melrose*, s.a.1176.

¹⁰ *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de la Sainte-Trinité de Tiron*, ed M L Merlet, (Chartres, 1883), no.CCCXXIII; Smith, 'The Kelso Abbey cartulary', 61.

¹¹ K Thompson, *The Monks of Tiron* (Cambridge, 2014), 89; *The Cartulary of Lindores Abbey*, ed J Dowden (Edinburgh, 1903), nos 2, 3; *Liber Sancte Marie de Calchou*, ed C Innes, 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1846), i, nos 8, 265, 266 [hereafter *Kelso Liber*].

¹² *Liber S Thome de Aberbrothoc*, ed C Innes, 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1848 and 1856), i, nos 2, 3 [hereafter *Arbroath Liber*].

¹³ Smith, 'The Kelso Abbey cartulary', 62. For example, *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.260.

¹⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.356.

¹⁵ *Walter Bower, Scotichronicon*, eds D E R Watt and others, iv (Aberdeen, 1994), 325 [hereafter *Bower, Scotichronicon*].

¹⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.291.

1144.¹⁷ An active cult of Machutus at Lesmahow is revealed in renders of cumin due on the feast day, and in a grant of ten marks given by Robert I to fund candles for the saint's tomb.¹⁸

Why William opted to establish Tironensians at Arbroath rather than the Cistercian monks whom his grandfather, David I, and brother, Malcolm IV, had favoured is rarely considered in discussion of the abbey's foundation. It was David I who had introduced the order to Scotland but, after Kelso, his religious patronage had moved firmly towards the Cistercian and Augustinian orders. Between the 1120s and his death in 1153, he founded four abbeys of the former order (Melrose (1136) and its daughter-houses at Newbattle (1147), Kinloss (1150) and Holm Cultram (1150)) and three of the latter (Holyrood (1128), Jedburgh (c.1138) and Cambuskenneth (c.1140)). Cistercian Coupar Angus had been added to this tally by Malcolm IV before 1164. By way of contrast, after David's favouring of the Tironensians at Selkirk/Kelso, patronage of the order shifted to the greater clerics and magnates of the realm, such as Richard de Morville at Kilwinning Abbey in northern Ayrshire, and it was only with William that royal patronage on a large scale returned to the order.

William in his youth and in the early years of his kingship after 1165 does not appear to have shared in his family's tradition of piety. Apart from confirmations of his grandfather's and brother's endowments, it was not until after 1174 that he began to show evidence for significant religious devotion on his own part. The link to Tironensians rather than to any other order appears to stem from the fact that it was at Kelso that William's father, Earl Henry, had been buried in 1152.¹⁹ Filial devotion to the man from whom he inherited his claims to the northern

English counties, claims that had led to his capture at Alnwick, may be the driving motive behind his patronage of the order to which Earl Henry had entrusted his soul's welfare in death. The fact that it



Figure 3: the south transept of Kilwinning Abbey, Ayrshire, founded probably in the 1160s or 1170s by Richard de Morville and colonised from Kelso (collection of R Oram).

¹⁷ Cowan and Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 69.

¹⁸ *Kelso Liber*, i, no.197; *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, v, *The Acts of Robert I*, ed A A M Duncan (Edinburgh, 1988), no.85 [hereafter *RRS*, v].

¹⁹ A O Anderson (ed), *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers* (London, 1908), 227-228 [extract from the chronicle of John of Hexham].

was the Tironensians whom William's younger brother, Earl David of Huntingdon, chose as the target of his patronage at Lindores Abbey serves only to reinforce that link.



Figure 4: Earl David of Huntingdon's Tironensian abbey at Lindores in Fife reinforces the link between the sons of Earl Henry and the order entrusted with their father's spiritual salvation (collection of R Oram).

The Site

Nothing in the foundation charter of the abbey of St Thomas the Martyr at Arbroath gives any indication why the monks from the mother-house at Kelso chose the site where the ruins of the monastery still stand. Plans

for the foundation of a new monastery might extend over several years, as we know to be the case from Balmerino Abbey in Fife, founded by King William's widow, Ermengarde de Beaumont, and would have involved inspection of proposed sites by delegations from the community from which the new establishment was to be colonised.²⁰ Selection of a suitable site could be a protracted process, as described by Geoffrey Grossus in his *Life* of Thiron-Gardais's founder, Bernard, who suffered the withdrawal of the initial location offered to him for his new community by their would-be patron.²¹ The initial site offered to Bernard by Rotrou, count of Perche, was at Arcisses, close to Nogent. Geoffrey Grossus described it as:

[having] fertile soil, surrounded by forests on all sides, watered by streams and springs, noted for its pleasant meadows, fit for cultivating vines and constructing buildings, and suitable for every need. There [Rotrou's] ancestors had built a chapel, dug a fishpond and planted orchards.

For some unknown region, Count Rotrou rescinded his offer of this place but, still wishing to support him, offered a second site. Bernard's companions reported to him that when the inspected the

²⁰ M H Hammond, 'Queen Ermengarde and the Abbey of St Edward, Balmerino', in *Life on the Edge: The Cistercian Abbey of Balmerino, Fife (Scotland)*, Cîteaux: *Commentarii cistercienses* (2008), t.59, fasc. 1-2, 11-36.

²¹ Geoffrey Grossus, *Life of the Blessed Bernard of Tiron*, 66-69, 71-73.

place, which was called Tiron, that ‘We have seen a place with virtually nothing required for human needs’. At this point, Bernard and his companions had been preparing to abandon their plans for a new community but, overnight a miraculous light appeared in the sky over Tiron, which was interpreted as a sign ‘To warn, indeed, order [Bernard] not to refuse the count’s gifts’. In the morning, Bernard went in person to inspect the site on foot. According to Geoffrey Grossus:

He was so well pleased with the appearance of the site and its location that he could not get it out of his mind. It did not linger in his mind because the region was pleasant, or its possessions were extensive, or its meadows and rivers were delightfully beautiful, or its vines were abundant, or its fertile, fruitful soil was productive, but because of the requirement imposed by the guiding revelation of Divine Providence.

What Bernard was looking for was the idealised spiritual ‘desert’ or ‘wilderness’ that was a central element in the monastic reform movements of the later eleventh and twelfth centuries. The vision was to recapture the solitude and isolation of the Middle Eastern desert areas in which the early Christian mystics and monks had found their communion with God. Such ‘desert’ areas were clearly absent from the physical and the socio-economic environment of twelfth-century Scotland, especially in a district which had seen continuous human settlement since at least the Neolithic period. But, at Arbroath, the Kelso monks evidently saw something that gave them the seclusion amidst the spread of resources that they needed to sustain their future community.



As King William’s foundation charter sets out, they had received the whole of the shire of Arbroath,²² which included the 8th- to 9th-century probably monastic site at St Vigean’s, which continued to serve as

Figure 5: Arbroath Abbey, on its terrace above the valley of the Brothock Water, still dominates the surrounding district. Visibility was perhaps the key element in the choice of site (collection of R Oram).

the parish church for Arbroath down to the Reformation.²³

The relatively level area above the valley of the Brothock, with its steady fall away to the south and west, is high above the flood risk of the valley bottom and set back from the seashore. It presumably afforded better prospects for the easy construction of a major church and its associated cloister than the sculpted gravel hillock and steep-sided valley at St Vigeans. Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that the nature of the site made the building located there visible from a considerable distance in all directions.

²² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.1.

²³ For the parish church of St Vigeans, see the Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158876>

As discussed below, the rising ground to the east of the precinct provided water-sources for the abbey's needs, both for flushing the latrines and for cooking and industrial processing. The drop to the south and east eased the disposal of waste towards the Brothock Water. The generally open aspect of the site, moreover, would probably have rendered it attractive for horticulture within the precinct and arable cultivation on the 'home grange' farms immediately adjacent to the abbey. Proximity to the Brothock also provided the monks with a convenient location for a mill, one of the major economic benefits awarded to them by King William and confirmed in the foundation charter.²⁴ Beyond these general factors, however, there is no more specific explanation offered for why the community chose their site at Arbroath rather than closer to the ancient ecclesiastical centre of the district at St Vigean.

Grants of Materials

At Thiron-Gardais, the initial phase of building-work saw the erection of a complex of timber structures.²⁵ Evidence for initial phases of timber construction have been identified at other monastic sites in Britain, with the best excavated evidence found at Sawley Abbey in Lancashire.²⁶ It is likely that Arbroath's first buildings were of timber and that they remained in use until work on the stone church had sufficiently advanced for services to commence therein and for the monks to move into their permanent dormitory. Recent excavation has revealed what might be evidence for the location of a masons' yard north-west of the abbey church but we have otherwise little evidence for the actual process or progress of construction on the site. Given the scale of the building, and the fact that construction was sufficiently far advanced for William to be buried in the eastern limb of the church in December 1214, we can imagine that he had maintained a major team of masons, other craftsmen and labourers on site. It is only from 1490, however, that the identity of personnel or an indication of the structure of responsibility for building and maintenance work survives. This is in an agreement instituted to secure the funds necessary for the rebuilding of the infirmary chapel, when a monk designated as 'master of works', John Dryburgh, was named alongside the granitor and cellarer as receiving funds necessary for the work in hand.²⁷ We know from the accounts of other major ecclesiastical institutions, such as the cathedral at Dunkeld, that these masters of works would have overseen teams of specialist artisans who were retained on a more or less permanent footing.²⁸ It is only in 1474 that the name of a craftsman retained by Arbroath survives in record materials. In July of that year, Stephen Lyle, carpenter, was retained for life by the convent to undertake all carpentry work on its buildings, including the buildings of its appropriated parish churches.²⁹ But these workmen were only part of the equation; they had to be supplied with the constant flow of raw materials necessary to build the permanent structures.

Few of Arbroath's early charters or other records provide much information concerning the physical development of the abbey complex proper, nor of its actual construction and maintenance over the four centuries of its operation as a monastery. Surviving records from the Benedictine priory at Coldingham (Scottish Borders) and from Cistercian Coupar Angus give an indication of how some

²⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.14. This was intended by the king's gift to be the only mill site, with the whole population of the shires of Arbroath and Ethie instructed to come there to have their grain milled.

²⁵ Geoffrey Grossus, *Life of Blessed Bernard of Tiron*, 76.

²⁶ G Coppack, C Hayfield and R Williams, 'Sawley Abbey: The Architecture and Archaeology of a Smaller Cistercian Abbey', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 155:1 (2002), 22-114.

²⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.331.

²⁸ *Rentale Dunkeldense*, ed R K Hannay (Scottish History Society, 1915), 79, 91, 93, 133, 140, 148, 166, 167, 170, 228, 259, 266, 267, 283, 285, 294, 295-296, 300, 354, 359

²⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.192.

communities managed, organised and supplied such operations.³⁰ The key material was, of course, stone. Unlike other monastic houses, such as Melrose, where there are references to the award of sites for quarries from which the main supplies of building-stone, slate, and other specialist stones for paving or ornamental work could be obtained, there is nothing in the surviving parchment record to indicate that the monks sourced their principal building-material further afield than Arbroath itself. The earliest reference to quarrying occurs nearly two centuries after the abbey's foundation in a grant in December 1466 of the right to have a quarry at Kellie, west of the burgh, to William Auchterlonie of that ilk.³¹ Auchterlonie's charter makes it clear that he was receiving the right to open quarrying operations, not that he was taking over a pre-existing site, and he was to pay the monks an annual rent of 10 merks Scots from the income from his entire lands for the right to run the quarry as a business venture. It is followed by a set of the lands of New Grange in 1485 that relieved the tenants, all members of the Brydy family, from certain customary obligations. One burden that the monastery retained, however, was that of carting tiles (*tegulas*) from an unspecified quarry 'whenever they are led from the quarry'.³² Some of these 'tiles' were presumably for the paving of the church and other buildings, as mentioned in the 1517 description. The obligation to cart roofing materials 'from the monastery's quarry' remained an element of most leases down to, and beyond, the Reformation.³³ Such carriage obligations are common to most Scottish monasteries; what is missing, however, is the detail of what was carried, from where, and for what purpose.

Amongst the materials being carted to the site was presumably sand and lime for the mortar used throughout the stone construction. Lime was probably also in heavy demand for lime-washing the exterior stonework and providing a base layer for internal surfaces. Much of this material was presumably obtained from Arbroath's extensive links system, stretching from west of the mouth of the Brothock to Buddon Ness. The lime was probably obtained through crushing and baking sea-shells in clamps or lime-kilns but, sadly, there is no record of these things anywhere in the surviving accounts.

The one material for which there is record of grants is wood, where gifts of sources of timber are a reflection of the largely treeless nature of eastern Angus by the twelfth century. These gifts were from relatively remote sites, principally in the country north of the Mounth. It is important to reflect on the ability of the monks to capitalise on these grants and to transport the timber from source to the abbey. Grants of timber from the oakwood of Trustach on the north side of the Dee, made in the early 1200s by Thomas Durward, were probably for roofing the major buildings of the church and inner court, but nothing in the grant specifically reveals the intended function of the materials. Given that the central compartment of the nave was described in 1517 as being spanned with a timber roof, we can imagine the volume of major timbers required for its structure; planks for sarking and flooring needs would have added even more to the timber requirement. Robert I confirmed grants of timber from the royal forests in 1314, but again the award goes no further in stating the intended use of the wood than for the monks' building work.³⁴ Timber shortages locally continued to be an issue, indeed, availability worsened in the later medieval period. One assedation of 1470, involving the whole of the almshouse toft, was set up in favour of John Chapman for his

³⁰ *The Priory of Coldingham* (Surtees Society, 1891); *The Register of Cupar Abbey*, ed C Rogers, 2 volumes (Grampian Club, 1880). The Cupar material gives details of the tradesmen employed by and resident at the abbey in the later 15th and 16th centuries.

³¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.172.

³² *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.266.

³³ See, for example, *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.617.

³⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.287.

work on behalf of the abbey, obtaining timber in Norway for work on the dormitory.³⁵ The trade in timber from Scandinavia and the Baltic regions of northern Europe was well established before the end of the thirteenth century. Its mounting importance in the later medieval period reflected the continuing erosion of accessible sources of substantial building timber, despite the repeated efforts of crown and magnate managers to arrest if not reverse that trend in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.³⁶

Alongside the stone and the timber, lead was probably the most heavily in-demand material required by Arbroath's builders. Boece's 1517 account specifies that the roof of the church was lead-sheathed, although other parts of the complex had wooden shingles rather than slates or tiles. Newbattle Abbey was fortunate to have extensive mineral resources beneath some of its properties, especially in Lanarkshire. There, the monks were probably extracting lead from the twelfth century but were certainly running a major lead-processing operation by the later Middle Ages. Arbroath was not so fortunate and it obtained supplies of lead, necessary for roofing, glazing and pipe-work presumably through purchase.

Amongst the major materials needs of the abbey throughout its functioning life was ironwork and this required associated smithing skills. Everything from window-bars, locks and hinges to iron tools and the shoes of the community's pack- and riding-horses would have been produced in the monastery's own smiddy. Given the major fire risk associated with a blacksmith's workshop, such an operation would have been located towards the periphery of the precinct or its immediate surroundings, where the prevailing winds carried fumes, smoke and sparks away from the living-quarters and church. The obvious location for this at Arbroath is to the north and west of the precinct and it is there that Smiddy Croft developed as an early suburb of the town in the post-Reformation period, presumably occupying the site of the medieval smith's fee-lands and his place of work. It is only in 1513, however, that surviving reference occurs to 'our' smithy and the tenement and smithy house. It was described as being 'near' to the monastery, bounded on the north side by William Brewster's land, on the west by the common vennel leading to the Brothock Water, the common way leading to the great cemetery on the east, and the open ground extending to the *Homlogrene* on the south.³⁷ The *Smiddie Croft*, mapped in the early 19th century, was a large block of property north of the abbey across from the Barngreen.³⁸

The Abbey Church

There must have been some temporary wooden buildings already on the site by the time that the first colony of monks arrived from Kelso in 1178, including a chapel sufficient for the community to perform the daily round of service. Construction of the stone buildings probably began immediately, but there is no record of how this progressed across the three-and-a-half decades down to the founder's death. Work on the church, however, was sufficiently far advanced by the time he died at Stirling in December 1214 for him to be buried with due solemnity in the choir before the high altar and for his son and widow to visit his tomb in January 1215.³⁹ Completion, however, did not occur

³⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.184.

³⁶ R D Oram, 'Public Policy and Private Practice: Protection, Management and Development of Scotland's Woodland Resources from the 12th to 17th Centuries', *Native Woodland Discussion Group papers* (2016).

³⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, no.541.

³⁸ John Wood, *Plan of the Town of Arbroath from an actual survey* (Edinburgh, 1822)
<https://maps.nls.uk/view/74400003>

³⁹ *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed W F Skene, facsimile reprint, 2 volumes (Llanerch, 1993), ii, 276 [hereafter *Chron Fordun*]; Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol 5, 3, 81.

fully until 1233, marked with its dedication on 8 May that year.⁴⁰ The plan of the building as laid out in the later twelfth century, with the exception of an additional sacristy appended to the south side of the choir, remained the same throughout its history. Boece's 1517 account describes the aisled buildings, with stone vaults covering the north and south aisles, and stone-paved floor, double-tiered wooden choir stalls and an organ on the 'right' side of the church. He identified the four existing doorways; the great western door, the two processional doorways to the cloister from the nave, and the doorway in the west end of the north aisle that led through to the cemetery.



Severe fire-damage was inflicted on this building in early January 1272, arising possibly from a lightning strike during the storm that Bower states started on 9 January.⁴¹ We do not know how extensive this episode of damage was, but the surviving structure shows no evidence for a substantial rebuilding in the late thirteenth century,

Figure 6: interior of the eastern limb looking east over the site of King William's tomb, where he was buried in December 1214 (collection of R Oram)

perhaps indicating that fire-damage was limited to the roof-structure, and the ruins that we see today are largely those of the church as completed in the 1230s. Further damage to the monastery is alluded to in letters of the Bishop of St Andrews, issued on 11 May 1350, which refer to frequent raids by sea-borne English raiders as having inflicted serious damage on the buildings and reduced

them almost to ruins.⁴² The bishop attempted to unite the revenues of the vicarage of Monifieth to the abbey to provide the revenue to effect repairs, but the repetition of that grant and with the same stated reasons, made in 1378, suggests that the union was ineffective.⁴³ An ordinance by Bishop Landallis in June 1380 referred to the recent burning of the church, speaking specifically of the re-roofing of the choir in 'tile' and repairs necessary to the nave and crossing.⁴⁴ This damaging event, however, was not the result of English raiders but appears to have been the accidental fire referenced in 1380 by Walter Bower.⁴⁵ Bishop Landallis imposed a strict financial regime on the convent, setting in place agents who would accompany the abbey's rent-collectors to ensure that proper lifting, receipt and transmission of the income. The abbot was also required to restrain his hospitality, being instructed to receive guests singly and privately in his own chamber rather than lavishly and publicly. Each monk, moreover, had his portion of the abbey's income limited to 12 merks annually. It is unlikely that the abbey remained unroofed until February 1394/5, when

⁴⁰ *Chron Fordun*, ii, 278; Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol 5, 147.

⁴¹ *Chronicle of Melrose*, s.a.1233; Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol 5, 385.

⁴² *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.23.

⁴³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.36. Further confirmations were received in 1422 and 1448, still citing sea-borne raiders as a cause of major damage to the church (ibid, nos 57, 88).

⁴⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.37.

⁴⁵ Bower, *Scotichronicon*, vol 7, 381.

William Plummer of Tweeddale, burgher of St Andrews, entered into an indenture with Abbot John 'to theke the mekil quer' (roof the large choir).⁴⁶ The roof was to be of lead, edged with guttering, and the wall head was to be allured with stone, for the cost of 35 merks. When work was completed to the abbot's satisfaction, William was to receive 5 merks cash in hand and a new gown. The work was completed by 21 May 1395, when William received a quittance for his outgoings and payment of his dues.⁴⁷

There appears to be a harking back to these earlier episodes of damage in the response by Pope Benedict XIII in August 1399 to what was evidently a supplication from the abbey for aid in undertaking repairs.⁴⁸ The supplication had evidently stated that the bell-towers of the abbey church had been struck by lightning, burned and collapsed. Their coastal position, moreover, meant



Figure 7: west front of the abbey, showing the remains of the two western towers. That on the north (left) was apparently heightened following damage in the late thirteenth century (collection of R Oram).

that the community was obliged to give hospitality. These two major burdens were made worse through the impact of war and general wasting of their resources, which meant that their existing income was inadequate to bear the cost of both the repairs and the obligation to receive guests. Consequently, they sought and were granted by the pope, the right to annexe the vicarage revenues of the churches of Fyvie, Inverness, Monifieth and Tarves to the abbey to provide the necessary injection of cash. Evidence for fourteenth-/early fifteenth-century repairs to the western towers is lacking and, of course, the crossing tower has entirely gone, but there is evidence for a late thirteenth-century heightening of the north-west tower. This occurred probably in the aftermath of the storm-damage recorded in 1272 and saw the tower carried up one stage higher than the south-western tower. If these western towers were in any sense bell-towers, however, it is striking that there were no internal floors and no evidence for any framework intended to support the bells

⁴⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.43.

⁴⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.45.

⁴⁸ *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Benedict XIII of Avignon 1394-1419*, ed F McGurk (Scottish History Society, 1976), 91 [hereafter *CPL Benedict XIII*]. A further supplication was made to the pope in 1426, referring again to 'the ruin and desolation to which [the abbey] was submitted by attacks of enemies' and the annexation of the fruits of the church of Monifieth to help make repairs: *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome 1423-1428*, ed A I Dunlop (Scottish History Society, 1956), 151-2. This fresh request was made to remove any charge of irregularity in the original annexation since it was made during the Great Schism by the 'anti-pope' Benedict XIII.

themselves.⁴⁹ The post-1272 heightening of the northern tower might have been intended to provide a bell-loft, but the remains of that work are too fragmentary to be confident in this regard. A bell was necessary at the very least for signalling the hours for prayer and services, and there is



mention of one in the context of elections of abbots when successful nomination was signalled by bell-ringing as the monks processed into the church. If a specific a 'bell-tower' existed, it is likely that the belfry was in the now lost central tower over the crossing. This appears to be confirmed by Boece's 1517 account, which describes the magnificent central tower in association with a mention of the 'many most excellent bells' that the abbey possessed.

In common with a general later medieval trend towards the

Figure 8: view looking SE across the site of the monks' choir to the south-east chapel next to the sacristy door, the likely site of the Lady Chapel. The piscina and aumbry are visible in the shadow to the left of the doorway (collection of R Oram).

proliferation of altars in major churches, the abbey church saw provision of multiple altars located in the transepts and the aisles of both the nave and the choir. One of the most important was the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is first referred to in a surviving document from the 1220s and again in 1242 (confirmed in 1245) when it received endowments to pay for a perpetual light burning before it.⁵⁰ It is likely that this was the earliest subsidiary altar in the abbey church, its provision reflecting the prominence of the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary as promoted by the papacy through the twelfth century. The earliest references give no indication of where in the church it was positioned but it was described in 1521 as 'near the door of the vestry', which places it in the south choir aisle, where a piscina and aumbry immediately east of the fifteenth-century sacristy door indicates the former presence of an altar.⁵¹ The south choir aisle was a common location for Lady Chapels, as for example in the church of St Giles at Edinburgh.

A further six altars in the abbey church are recorded in documents dating from the mid-fourteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries, but Boece in 1517 referred to a total of twelve subsidiary altars.

⁴⁹ R Fawcett, 'Arbroath Abbey', in J Higgitt (ed), *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of St Andrews* (British Archaeological Association, 1994), 61-9; J P McAleer, 'The West Front of Arbroath Abbey: Its Place in the Evolution of the Twin-Tower Façade', in *ibid*, 70-83 at 72-3.

⁵⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos 256, 271, 272.

⁵¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.569.

Endowments made to support these altars, provide for their lighting, or to physically repair them, were made exclusively by laymen and reveals a trend towards the increasing provision of services for private beneficiaries in the monastic church. Although there may always have been a greater degree of public access to the church due to the presence of a Becket relic and the monks' use of that relic to generate pilgrim revenue, the local focus of lay devotion was the parish church of St Vigean's. An altar of St Katherine the Virgin is first recorded in October 1343, when Margaret Stewart, countess of Angus, endowed it with certain lands for the saying of daily masses for the souls of her late husband, Earl John, and herself, and was again named as one of four altars in the abbey church dedicated by the Bishop of Dromore in August 1485.⁵² This group dedication in 1485 also included altars of St Laurence, St Peter and St Nicholas the Bishop. Further endowment of 5s was made to support a chaplain at the altar of St Nicholas in the abbey church in 1505 by Charles Brown, burgess of Arbroath.⁵³ Brown appears to have had a particular devotion to St Nicholas, as he founded a separate altar to him in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the western end of the bridge over the Brothock (see below). A further 5s, for the provision of wax for candles at the altar, was confirmed in 1513 as coming from the lands associated with the abbey's smithy.⁵⁴ Payment to the monk serving the altar of St Peter in the abbey church, for the repair of the altar and chapel, was made in 1465 from a tenement in the burgh through rents gifted by the burgess, Simon Tody.⁵⁵ Rents from a property in the Almory were assigned in 1531 towards the support of a monk serving at the altar of St James in the monastery.⁵⁶ An altar of St Mary Magdalene is recorded in the church in 1535, when it was identified as the location for the redemption of a cash payment made by Andrew Leslie to his father George, earl of Rothes.⁵⁷

It is likely that these altars and their associated chapels were the location for burials of patrons. The earliest records for such burials date from the earlier thirteenth century, beginning with a gift of an annual chaldar of grain to the abbey by Walter of Lundie and Christian his wife, who had chosen to be interred at Arbroath and who willed their bodies for burial there.⁵⁸ Such acts were not simply indications of the particular devotion of the donor to the church in question but were also a form of endowment, for it was expected that the heirs of the deceased would make further gifts for the souls' weal of their kinsfolk. The culture of burial and evidence for the elite burials within the abbey church is discussed in detail below.

One resource with a direct link to the abbey church occurs with some frequency in the records is artificial light. Provision of light for illumination of services, devotional practices and the spiritual symbolism of eternal flames is the purpose of the endowments made towards 'the lighting of the church. This was secured presumably with oil-lamps, given the differentiation in the same gifts between 'lighting/lamps', and beeswax for candles – such as the 10 merks from the fermes of Monifieth granted in 1247 by King Alexander II. It is likely that amongst the features of the abbey precinct would have been provision of beehives, not only to produce honey as a sweetener but also

⁵² *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 20, 267; RRS, vi, no.76.

⁵³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.48.

⁵⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, no.541. This property was described as being 'near' to the monastery, bounded on the north side by William Brewster's land, on the west by the common vennel leading to the Brothock Water, the common way leading to the great cemetery on the east, and the open ground extending to the *Homlogrene* on the south.

⁵⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.163.

⁵⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.753.

⁵⁷ *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regnum Scotorum, 1513-1546*, eds J B Paul and J M Thomson, iii (Edinburgh, 1883), no.2702 [hereafter *RMS*].

⁵⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.138.

to provide the beeswax that was needed for good-quality candles and for seals. Again, sadly, this is something that has left no trace in the abbey's written record.

The Cloister

Despite it being the location of the true heart of the monastery, the chapter house, and the place where the monks slept, ate, performed their ablutions, learned, wrote and received guests and produce, the cloister is amongst the most poorly recorded portions of the abbey complex. The following discussion looks at what evidence there is for the different buildings that were grouped around the garth south of the nave of the church but also looks at what can be inferred from the wider evidence for activities related to the abbey's institutional life, especially the production of its written records.

Dormitory

The earliest surviving reference specifically to the monks' dormitory on the upper floor of the east range of the cloister dates only from October 1470. A set of the whole toft of the Almonry and other properties was made in favour of John Chapman, who was reported to have obtained timber from Norway needed for unspecified work on the dormitory.⁵⁹ The scale of the grant to him suggests that this was a major refurbishment of the building but the total loss of the fabric of the east range other than the south-east buttress of the chapter house renders it impossible to determine the nature of the operation. In May 1471, the six-year set to the Bishop of Moray of the revenues of the church of Inverness for £340 Scots, specifically stated as contributing towards the building-costs of the dormitory, give some indication of the scale of the work.⁶⁰ Frustratingly, Walter Boece in 1517 simply mentioned the existence of the building but gives no detail of its form or internal layout.



Figure 9: looking N along the site of the east range of the cloister towards the south gable of the south transept. The dormitory occupied the upper floor of this range and the high pitch of its roof can be seen fossilised in the lower half of the gable. A door at this level entered the night stair down which the monks processed to their choir for the night offices (collection of R Oram).

⁵⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.184.

⁶⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.187.

Novices

The appointment in 1486 of Mr Archibald Lame to provide instruction to novices and youths, 'our confreres', points to the existence of a novices' day-room in the east range in which they would be schooled.⁶¹

Chapter House



There are very few references to the convent meeting in chapter or to the chapter house itself before the late thirteenth century, with increasing volumes of business referred to in the fourteenth century. Amongst the earliest is a charter of 1279, concerning the assedation of some of the abbey's lands.⁶² A document of 1312 concerning the ransoming of a monk taken captive in England, another of 1312 concerning a settlement between the convent and the Bishops of St Andrews, and a charter of 1365 agreed unanimously by the monks in chapter – their one daily opportunity to discuss business affecting their community – reveals the range of subject-matter

Figure 10: the remaining SE angle of the chapterhouse in the east range. The height of this fragment shows that it was entered by a low vestibule beneath the dormitory before rising into a high, vaulted chamber.

discussed in that assembly.⁶³ It was in the chapter house on September 1460 that David Dempster of Careston resigned the office of dempster of the abbot's court.⁶⁴ Boece simply mentions the chapter house in 1517 and gives no detail of its appearance.

Cellars

Although there are numerous indirect references to the abbey's cellarer, there are few that mention the cellars themselves or the good received into them. It is unclear if the main cellars were located in the undercroft of the west range of the cloister, their normal location in standard monastic plans, or if they were part of the kitchen court south of the refectory in the south range of the cloister. Both possible locations are well placed to provide easy access for delivery of supplies brought in from the granaries in the Barngreen or through the town via the main gate west of the abbey church or the Dern Gate at the south-east of the precinct.

More is known of what was brought to the cellars. One assedation of September 1486, dealing with the revenues of the church of Monifieth, required the beneficiary to deliver two barrels of 'red and sweet salmon' to the cellarer, in addition to the money rent.⁶⁵ The role of the cellarer and the nature of the provisions passing through his hands was set out in detail in 1488 in a 'rule' for the two

⁶¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.295.

⁶² *Arbroath Liber*, i, Appendix, no.vi.

⁶³ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos 297, 333, 334.

⁶⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.131.

⁶⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.298.

key officers overseeing the supplies of the community, the cellarer and the granitar.⁶⁶ Within this document, the abbot set down the volume of foodstuff, including gallons of honey and bulk purchases of spices – cinnamon, cloves, ginger, mace, pepper and saffron – supplies of almonds and rice, as well as meat, eggs, salt, vinegar and other necessities like candles and fuel. The cellarer was also responsible for buying materials for clothing the brethren and paying for the kitchen staff and table servitors. He also appears to have been responsible for providing equipment for other operations within the monastery; in 1497, Alexander Burnett of Leys was obliged to deliver annually to the cellarer from the lands of Glenfarquhar, six horse-loads of wooden staves suitable for making *gyrthsteyngis* (barrel-hoops) appropriate for use in the brewery.⁶⁷ In an assedation of 1501 to James Guthrie, it is revealed that the lands of Millhill had ‘of old’ been assigned to support the office of cellarer.⁶⁸

Refectory

There is a single reference in the abbey’s surviving records to the main dining area where the monks came together to eat their meals, dating only from the middle of the fifteenth century. An

agreement of October



Figure 11: view south-west from the S transept gable over the foundations of the refectory in the south range of the cloister (collection of R Oram).

1459 between the Tullochs of Bonnyton and the abbey (confirmed in a crown charter of 1586), included the payment to the monks in their refectory, at the entry of heirs into the disputed properties, of

a silver dish of two merks sterling weight. It does give us some insight into the opulence of dining in the refectory that is far removed from the image of primitive simplicity presented by Geoffrey Grossus in the early twelfth century. In the 1517 description of the abbey, Walter Boece referred to two refectories, one used for feast days and one for common days. Whether these were on different levels in the south range, or, given the account of how ‘the tables of the monk and of the Abbot are united’, linked through the end of the Abbot’s House to a refectory in the west range, is unknown.

Surprisingly, there is no reference to the arrangements for delivering food to the table beyond the most basic of information relating to the delivery of supplies to the cellars. Apart from the lists of staple foodstuffs and the more exotic spices used to flavour food in the later Middle Ages, the whole

⁶⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.324.

⁶⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.375. This burden remained on the Glenfarquhar property when it was leased to David Wood of Craig in May 1531: *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.755.

⁶⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.418.

of the kitchen operation has been lost from the record. It is interesting that there is no evidence in the record for the provision of 'pittances' (special dishes or meals served to the monks by virtue of gifts made by a benefactor), such as occurred at Melrose Abbey, where the 'king's pittance' was a special dish of rice pudding.⁶⁹

Scriptorium

It is one of the greatest peculiarities of the format of the surviving record from Arbroath that the place in which the bulk of that written record was produced – the *scriptorium* – is utterly invisible. We have a monumental (for a Scottish monastery) corpus of parchment, from the great and high quality charters produced by the monks and sealed by the king, their patron, down to simple writs and brieves, yet there is no detail of the work or names of the individual monks who produced it. Alongside the physical evidence of the parchment itself, there is also indication of other forms of written material possibly produced but certainly kept in the abbey, clearest to be seen in the book presses in the cloister walk wall just outside the south-east processional doorway from the nave. Boece is more expansive in his account, talking of a library with over two hundred books, but giving no location for it.



Figure 12: the book press in the east cloister alley (collection of R Oram).

The late Archie Duncan put together a compelling case for the royal writing office – the chancery or, in Scotland, the chapel - being based at Arbroath during the reign of Robert I, at least during the period that Abbot Bernard was his chancellor.⁷⁰ It is a highly plausible argument and the likelihood that Bernard gained his appointment in part due to the scale and quality of the scriptorium operation at his abbey renders it all the more frustrating that it is utterly invisible

in the record. Of course, the volume of production and the material needs to maintain that output required associated activities at the abbey, most notably the preparation of calf- and lamb-skins to produce parchment and vellum upon which the writing was done. That fact points not just to a tannery but also to a highly skilled group of craftsmen who were producing the fine writing materials and not just leather. Alongside this, we should expect to see the purchase of inks and pigments and, finally, there would be additional need for wax for seals.

Abbot's House

One of the most surprising near-total omissions from the surviving record is the major lodging building that was provided for the abbot from the thirteenth century onwards, which still constitutes the largest single component of the surviving complex beyond the gatehouse range and church.

⁶⁹ R Fawcett and R Oram, *Melrose Abbey* (Stroud, 2004), 39.

⁷⁰ For discussion, see the introduction to *RRS*, v.

Although it was clearly, from its surviving architectural detail, already present in the earlier thirteenth century, it has not presence in the abbey record before the middle of the fifteenth century, when the abbot's hall was recorded in November 1464 as the meeting-place of an inquest into the Hospital of St John.⁷¹ It is odd that the hall was used for this type of business when there were other locations within the building, including the

Figure 13: the Abbot's House from the north (collection of R Oram).



court-room used by the Regality Court, but it suggests that on occasions where the abbot was 'chairing'

sessions then his residence might have been regarded as the appropriate location. It is important, however, to reflect on what such use says about the function of halls in secular contexts, underscoring their use as places in which social relationships were negotiated, i.e. where all of the expressions of lordship, from ceremonial feasting through to quasi-judicial acts were performed. Although it was within his residence, the abbot's hall was not his 'private' space but a 'public' forum where different communities, both from within and outside the abbey's household, could interact.

There are some other occasional hints of activity that occurred in the building, most notably the fact that the poor at the abbey's gates were to be fed with the leftovers from the abbot's table. By the later medieval period, as well as no longer sleeping in common with his brethren in the dormitory, the abbot was no longer regularly dining with them there either. The positioning of the abbot's house, linked by the kitchen block to the refectory, may have preserved a fiction of coenobitic sharing, as stated by Boece in 1517, but the reality was far removed from the ideal of the abbot eating the same fare as the rest of the monks.

The scale of the abbot's house in its final form points to the very secular dignity and power of the men who led the abbey in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a structure, it has been analysed in detail elsewhere, but it bears saying that it is one of the most significant pieces of medieval secular architecture from a monastic context to survive in Scotland, ranking alongside the so-called Commendator's House at Melrose and the Abbot House at Dunfermline.⁷²

Referred to on 1580 as 'the palace house', the Abbot's House continued to function as the chief place of the lordship of Arbroath long after the demise of the monastery itself.⁷³

Infirmary

Evidence for the infirmary is very slender: the 1361 reference to a monk, Patrick of the Infirmary, who was appointed to the cure and keepership of the house of Fyvie, is perhaps the earliest surviving reference to the infirmary establishment.⁷⁴ The infirmary chapel is specifically mentioned in 1490 as having been destroyed in an extensive series of endowments made for its reconstruction.⁷⁵ Boece's 1517 account specifically identifies the infirmary as a still functioning

⁷¹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.160.

⁷² Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, 197-202.

⁷³ *RMS*, v, no.348.

⁷⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.29.

⁷⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.331.

entity. From what we know of the layout of the wider precinct at Kelso, it is likely that the infirmary lay to the east of the east range, where the fresh water first entered the complex from the conduit house. Identified remains of the Kelso infirmary reveal it to have been an aisled structure on a grand scale.⁷⁶

Gatehouse and Regality Court House

For all its scale and impressiveness, the great gatehouse of the abbey has left very little trace in the documentary record. There are, however, indications of its significance as a liminal place marking a transitional point between zones of greater or lesser spiritual significance and as a boundary between the semi-public space before the great west door of the abbey church and the zone within the precinct which represented the monks' withdrawal from the world. This liminality could also be



expressed in terms of the gate being used as a site for public displays of penance by monks, with individuals excluded from the precinct and standing in supplication before its great gate for all to see. Such circumstances are revealed in a letter from Pope Benedict XIII in 1405, which instructed the bishop of

Figure 14: the gatehouse range looking SW from the abbey visitor centre, showing the four main components – from left to right, guest-hall, gate pend, regality court-room and regality tower (collection of R Oram).

Glasgow to summon Abbot John (Gedy), abbot from 1384-1410, to answer charges brought against him by his own claustral prior, Walter Paniter. Gedy was accused that while he was a monk of the abbey he 'had lived with a married woman in adultery and apostasy and had worn secular dress'.⁷⁷ On being found out, Gedy had made public penance before the abbey gate and re-entered the community.

Regality court meetings are likely to have been held in a number of locations spread across the abbey's extensive estates. Known locations include at Fyvie and Nigg, 'Carnconon', the Almore and in the abbey precinct. References to the abbey's *iudex*, Kerald, occur from the late twelfth century, but it is only in 1370 that his descendants, the Dempsters of Careston/Caraldston, were confirmed in the hereditary office of dempster or doomster in the abbey's courts.⁷⁸ The meeting-place of the head courts of the abbey appears often to have been at 'Carnconon', approximately half way between

⁷⁶ C Tabraham, 'Excavations at Kelso Abbey', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 114 (Edinburgh, 1985), 365-404.

⁷⁷ *CPL Benedict XIII*, 146-7. The charges continued with an accusation of incest with his daughter of his first affair, resulting in several children by her, affairs with several other women, and misappropriation of abbey revenues and property. Paniter alleged that the initial adultery and re-admission to the abbey had happened before he and the other monks who were making the complaint had entered the monastery and so they had all been unaware of Gedy's past when he had been elected as abbot. Paniter was supplicating for Gedy's deposition and his appointment as abbot in his place. Paniter had a mandate for provision, should the charges be upheld, which included a statement that King Robert III supported his case: *CPL Benedict XIII*, 147. Gedy remained abbot until his death in 1410, whereupon the monks elected Walter: *CPL Benedict XIII*, 220.

⁷⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.33.

Arbroath and Brechin, which is specifically referenced in 1375.⁷⁹ Through the second quarter of the sixteenth century and down to the Reformation, there is a growing body of evidence for the meeting of the regality court at the abbey itself. Charters of confirmation issued to the monastery's leading tenants make specific reference to their attendance at court-gatherings and their obligation to bring business before it. In 1539/40, for example, one of the major local tenants of the abbey, Sir David Wood of Craig, received a confirmation of his properties and the obligations attached to them. Amongst his 'renders' owed to the abbey were three suits in three capital pleas heard at the abbey.⁸⁰ Similarly, in 1545 Alexander Burnett of Leys was confirmed in his tenancies with an identical three suits obligation requiring attendance at the abbey court.⁸¹



Figure 15: the Regality Tower at the western end of the long gatehouse range, viewed from the SW (collection of R Oram),

One feu-charter of 1582 referred to 'the tower or fortalice' of the monastery, in the hands of the family of the hereditary baillies of the regality, the Ogilvies of Airlie.⁸² The 'tower or fortalice' is presumably the rather martial-looking structure that is now known as the Regality Tower, whose wall-head is capped by elaborate but essentially decorative machicolations. The same charter describes 'the ruinous house called the *Nunehous* adjacent to the tower', which seems to be the space we know as the Regality Court-house. The final element of the gatehouse range controlled by the Ogilvies was the upper chamber of the entrance pend, which were called the *Belhous*. The regality court continued to meet also in open-air setting at the

cairn of 'Carnconon', as confirmed in 1567/8 in a charter to John Carnegie of Seatoun.⁸³

Despite its scale, the gatehouse range is not mentioned by Boece (except for his imprecise reference to the 'hospice for pilgrims and strangers' that was possibly located in the eastern section of the range). He spoke of the high walls which enclosed the monastery but there are otherwise few references to the precinct wall itself. A charter of assedation of February 1485/6 to William Scott, Agnes his wife, and John Scott, concerned land 'under the Red Wall' (*sub Rubeo Muro*), possibly part

⁷⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.35.

⁸⁰ *RMS*, iii, no.2741.

⁸¹ *RMS*, iii, no.3116. In 1555, Sir Robert Carnegie of Kinnaird received identical terms in respect of his obligations to the abbey (*RMS*, iv, no.1605).

⁸² *RMS*, v, no.453.

⁸³ *RMS*, iv, no.2516.

of the eastern stretch of the circuit.⁸⁴ The same charter refers to *le Dern Yhet* or gate, which was a gate into the precinct on the south east, adjacent to a tower at the angle of the precinct wall.⁸⁵ This yett and Red Wall are mentioned again as property boundaries in 1520, while a 1525 assedation refers to the lands of *Sklaterisbank* lying under the Red Wall.⁸⁶ In 1527, the abbot leased a croft 'next' to the *Darn Yet*.⁸⁷ A lease of March 1534/5 to Mariota Ogilvy of a small piece of land in the *Sandypottis*, for the construction of an oven (*ustrina*), described it as 'lying outside and near the wall of the monastery, commonly called the Red (Wall)'.⁸⁸ The abbey wall was still a major upstanding feature in the 1580s, when it was named in a feu of ground within the precinct as a boundary of the lands in question.⁸⁹

Precinct and burgh property

Our clearest indication of the character of the abbey precinct and pertinent property appears in 1567 when John, Lord Hamilton, commendator of the abbey, feued the precinct yards along with a range of nearby lands to James Hamilton of Ruchbank for a rent of twenty merks. The lands are named as the east and west muirs called the *Fyrth of Aberbrothok*, the meadows called *Tarrye Medow*, *Hall Medow*, *Kirkton Medow*, *Weit Medow* and *Collistoun Medow*, the ward and land called the common at the *Wairdheid*, the land called the *Cunyngar* and the *Hayis*, and a rig lying at the east wall of the monastery. Also named were the malt-mill of the abbey, the abbey dovecot and dovecot garden, and the barnstead of the great barn of the abbey, described as now destroyed.⁹⁰ Two elements of this document are very important as reflections of the wider socio-economic landscape, the *Cunyngar* or Coneygarth/Rabbit Warren and the doocot. The former points to the possibility that the monks had a maintained rabbit warren, which would have provided them with a supply of fresh winter meat and also a supply of skins for fur-trimming on clothing produced in the abbey or for sale on the open market. The doocot was an equally important source of fresh winter meat but also had another value as a source of guano used as a fertiliser but later as a component in gunpowder manufacture.

The burgh records reveal that James Hamilton of Ruchbank subsequently divided and sub-feued the precinct gardens, referred to as within the walls of the abbey, on 5 January 1586 to four burgesses of Arbroath: David Pearson, John Halis, Adam Mekeson and David Lyell. The gardens are described as bounded to the east and south by the abbey walls, and to the west by the wheat granary (*triticum granarium*) and the common way leading towards the boundary, referring to Rottenrow (the middle portion of the modern High Street between Lordburn/Abbey Path and Kirk Square).⁹¹ The abbey gardens recur in the hands of these four men in the burgh records throughout the 1580s and

⁸⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.292. For discussion of the gatehouse at Arbroath as the liminal zone in which the regality court met, see R D Oram, 'Monastic Gatehouses and Regality Jurisdictions: The Gatehouse as Representation of Secular Authority in Scottish Monasteries', in K Buchanan, L H S Dean and M Penman (eds), *Medieval and Early Modern Representations of Authority in Scotland and the British Isles* (London, 2016), 34-54 at 46-48.

⁸⁵ Darn Yett: <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/forfarshire-angus-os-name-books-1857-1861/forfar-angus-volume-06/35>

⁸⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 557, 595.

⁸⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.665.

⁸⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.804.

⁸⁹ *RMS*, v, no.348.

⁹⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, Appendix to preface: II. Note of Ethie charters, no.1.

⁹¹ NRS B4/1/2 fol 12v. The street identification is confirmed by a sasine of 1 December 1602 of land in Rottenrow described as bounded to the east by the garden of the abbey (B4/1/3 fol 19v).

1590s.⁹² The entries relating to their portions reveal that the northern extent of the gardens was bounded by an aqueduct (discussed further below).

The granary referred to may be the site of the great barn mentioned in 1567. On 31 August 1558 reference was made to an inquisition held in the *magnum horreum monasterii* (great store house of the monastery); if this is the same barn then its destruction must have occurred between these dates.⁹³ It was the centrepiece of an important portion of the outer court of the abbey, which lay to the north of the gatehouse range and extended from there north to the line still followed by the road leading to Montrose (East Road). Named the *Barngreen*, this area was the location of some of the key economic activities upon which the monastic community depended. As its name suggests, it was the site of the abbey's barns for the receipt of grain from its demesne estates and from teind income, the malt-barn where much of that grain was processed, and other quasi-industrial buildings including what might have been a rope- or thread-works for processing hemp or flax. Lying outside the main precinct, it was still enclosed and separated from the agricultural land of the surrounding properties by probably turf dykes or possibly hedges. Delivery of grain to the abbey granary from its estates is recorded in 1329 and in property rental agreements in 1483, when Alexander Gardyne was obliged to deliver grain from the land to the granary as part of the letting arrangement, and 1486 by Andrew Barry for the lands of Balgillo and Balmossie.⁹⁴ The granitar, one of the senior offices in the administration of the monastery, was recorded in 1485 as the receiver of the grain rents of the abbey's lands at Balmirmer and Skryne.⁹⁵ His role was defined in 1488 in a 'rule' drawn up by the abbot for the conduct and responsibilities of the cellarer and granitar.⁹⁶ From this document, it emerges that the granitar was responsible for ensuring that a year's supply of raw provisions was kept in-hand in the abbey's *gyrnalis* or storehouses. The main commodities stored at that time comprised 82 chalders of malt, 30 chalders of wheat and 40 chalders of meal. The 1561 Account of the General Collector reveals that, at the time of the Reformation, the contents of the abbey storehouses were brought from the girnells there to those of the burgh, before being sold and delivered to merchants to be shipped out of Arbroath. Payments were made to hire the burgh girnells for this purpose, and to the chamberlain and granitar of the abbey for their labour in gathering the carrying the victuals.⁹⁷

The Barngreen (*Barne-greyne*) was feued in 1578 by the then commendator, John, Lord Hamilton, to an Arbroath burgess, David Pearson.⁹⁸ The feu-charter gives a detailed boundary of the property, starting at the northern corner of the *Cuiks-yaird* and then running from there up the line of the Montrose road until it reached the *Hayis-dyk* on the march line between the Barngreen and Over Tarry lands. From there, it followed the dyke to the north corner of the *beir granell* or barley granary. At that point, including the granary, the malt barn and the *windinhus* (winding-house, possibly for hemp rope manufacture) as they were divided by their *auld wals* from the Granitar's Croft, the boundary returned on the line of that croft's dyke as far as the common kirk-yard of Arbroath. That kirkyard was the graveyard used by the townsfolk throughout the medieval period, lying on the north side of the nave of the abbey church, burials from which were located during the excavations in advance of the construction of the visitor centre. Although the parish church should have been the location for burials from within the parish generally, its remote location probably

⁹² NRS B4/1/2 fols 12v, 13r-v, 32r, 105v.

⁹³ W Fraser (ed), *History of the Carnegies, Earls of Southesk, and of their Kindred* (Edinburgh, 1867), vol ii, 531.

⁹⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 2, 219, 301. Such obligations continued thereafter.

⁹⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.260.

⁹⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.324.

⁹⁷ *Accounts of the Collectors of Thirds of Benefices, 1561-1572*, ed G Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1949), 102-3.

⁹⁸ *RMS*, iv, no.2846.

meant that most folk living in the developing burgh were buried closer to the abbey. As the appropriating institution of the parish church at St Vigeans, all revenue from burial dues would still have flowed to it. From the kirkyard boundary, still following the dyke, the property boundary ran on to the east corner of the Cook's Yard.

An 1822 map of the burgh shows the 'convent church yard' marked to the south-east of the abbey church.⁹⁹ This is probably the same 'waste plot' described in 1580 as adjacent to the ruined chapter house, 'in which the bodies of the Brethren of the monastery were customarily buried' (see below).¹⁰⁰ The east precinct wall ran along the boundary of this land towards the south, to the west of the lands called the Graniter's Croft, the Hays, and the Barber's Croft (the course of the modern streets Walker Place, Stanley Street and Barber's Croft).¹⁰¹ The Darn Gate was at the south-east corner of the precinct wall. The Darn Gate Croft was just beyond the precinct, bounded to the north by the 'red wall' of the abbey which ran west from there.¹⁰² Ponderlaw was just beyond this. All of these lands immediately beyond the precinct wall appear in the c.1550 rental of abbey property.¹⁰³ The southern wall ran as far as the modern High Street, which marks the course of the western wall (extending from Kirk Square to the top of the High Street). In 1603, stables are referred to on the outside of the west precinct wall.¹⁰⁴

To the north of the abbey on the east side lay the burgh cemetery. Beyond this was the Barngreen and the 'Smithy Croft'. The latter is named in the medieval records as the workshop (*fabrica*) of the abbey, with croft and house, or alternatively as the croft of the master of construction. It is described as lying between the common way extending west to the Brothock (Guthrie Port) and the common way extending east to the burgh cemetery (North Port), and *planum transitum* until the Homlogrene (Hamilton Green) to the south.¹⁰⁵ In 1527, the tenant of the croft and house of the workshop rendered 13s 4d to the master of work.¹⁰⁶ The master of work appears in 1380 in the context of a fire which had occurred at the abbey, to whom rents were to be delivered in order to finance the repairs.¹⁰⁷ In 1490, the master is named as John Dryburgh, alongside Richard Scot, the graniter, and Robert Gray, the cellarer.¹⁰⁸ Beyond the Barngreen was a portion of land called the Fisher Acre but no reference to it has been identified in the records to connect it to the abbey. The abbey also held the land extending to the north and west of here, as far as the Brothock: Warddykes, Guthriehill, Demondale, and the 'Cuningar land' (described as situated in amongst these lands and the mill aqueduct).¹⁰⁹

By the early 1580s, the feuferming of the precinct of the former monastery was proceeding rapidly. A 1580 feu-charter of Esme Stuart, duke of Lennox, perpetual commendator of Arbroath, to Mr James Melville, minister of Arbroath, effectively alienated several blocks of property within the enclosed area, the boundaries of which are recorded in relation to important elements of the old monastic layout.¹¹⁰ Melville received a 'waste' house called *Charterhous*, a waste plot adjacent to it

⁹⁹ Plan of the Town of Arbroath from actual survey, <<https://maps.nls.uk/rec/305>>.

¹⁰⁰ *RMS*, v, no.348.

¹⁰¹ NRS B4/1/5 fols 141r-142r, 203r-204r.

¹⁰² NRS B4/1/2 fols 68v-69v; B4/1/5 fols 203r-204r; *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.292.

¹⁰³ NRS RH2/8/81.

¹⁰⁴ NRS B4/1/3 fols 21r, 24v-25r.

¹⁰⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, vol II, nos.163, 398, 449, 469, 541, 569, 578; NRS RH2/8/81.

¹⁰⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, vol II, no.657

¹⁰⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, vol II, no.37

¹⁰⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, vol II, no.331.

¹⁰⁹ NRS RH2/8/81; *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.760; NRS B4/1/3 fols 38v-39r.

¹¹⁰ *RMS*, v, no.348.

‘in which the bodies of the Brethren of the monastery were customarily buried’, and a garden that was occupied by one Richard Craik. These were described as lying between ‘the palace and palace



Figure 16: the abbey from the E looking over the bowling green which is probably on the site of the monks’ cemetery. The chapter house and abbot’s house are on the left (collection of R Oram).

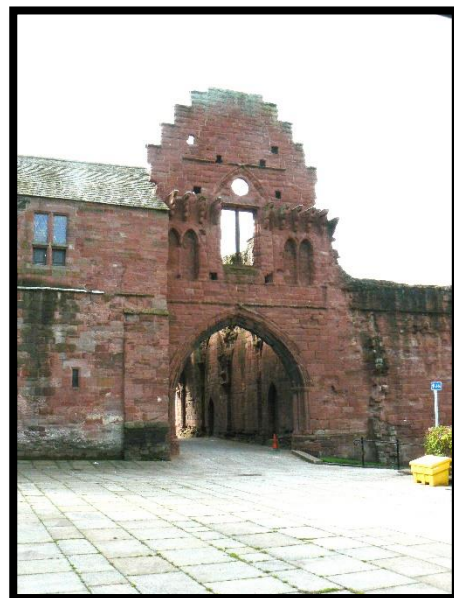
garden, the wall of the monastery, the church building, and the dormitory’. This general location suggests that the *Charterhouse* must be the chapter house. A second feu-charter of 1582 to James, Lord Ogilvy, and his wife, Jean Forbes, conjointly in life-rent, and to their son, James, Master of Ogilvy, relates to property at the west end of the precinct including at least the western end of the gatehouse range.¹¹¹ The charter confirmed the Ogilvies in possession of: ‘the tower or fortalice’ of the monastery, referring presumably to the building we know as the Regality Tower; ‘the ruinous house called the *Nunehous* adjacent to the tower; the upper house of its entry or gate, called the *Belhous*; areas of land within described as ‘waste’; the doocot and doocot garden; and all the gardens within the houses of the

Figure 17: the central portion of the gatehouse range, probably the *Belhous* of the 1582 feu charter to the Ogilvies (collection of R Oram).

monastery. Excluded from the grant was the garden of Mr James Melville, described in the 1580 charter, and ‘that part upon which the new church is built’.

The layout of medieval Arbroath had changed little by the 1700s. Its depiction on the Roy Military Survey of Scotland map (1747x1755) shows the abbey church at the north-east corner with the precinct lands (shown in green) to the south. The buildings of the burgh are situated to the west and south of the precinct, with further portions of green land at the south-east extent and between the western extent and the river.¹¹²

Missing here is Millgate, which lay to the west of the river. In 1787, James Bailey described the town as being composed of ‘the principal or High Street, with eight or ten smaller ones... and there is besides a tolerably good street on the west side of the



¹¹¹ RMS, v, no.453.

¹¹² NLS, ‘Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-1755’, <http://www.maps.nls.uk/roy>, British Library Maps C.9.b 19/3f.

water'.¹¹³ The abbey held property on the middle and lower parts of the High Street (Rottonrow and Copgate); Newgate and Seagate to the east; and Lordburn, Applegate, Old Marketgate (probably the modern Commerce Street), and New Marketgate to the west. Marketgate appears in an abbey lease of 1331.¹¹⁴ The distinction of 'auld' Marketgate is not made until the 1400s.¹¹⁵ By the 1500s the streets were referred to as Old and New Marketgate as standard. This timeline fits with the results of excavations which revealed that (New) Marketgate was surfaced with cobbles in the fourteenth century before being encroached upon by stone structures in the fifteenth century.¹¹⁶ The abbey also owned a portion of land to the north of New Marketgate, called Burnside. Across the river, the abbey held property on Millgate, and the lands of Dishland and Keptie.

The removal of stones from the abbey buildings began soon after the Reformation. In 1580, when arrangements were made for a new parish church to be erected in the south-east corner of the precinct, the commendator of the abbey granted permission to the burgh magistrates to utilise stone and timber from the abbey. This appears to have been taken from the east range.¹¹⁷ Likely of much greater impact was the theft of material by the burgh inhabitants. On 1 August 1702, Walter Ramsay in Barngreen was fined £50 Scots for demolishing the fabric of the abbey and taking away the stones, presumably to construct his house.¹¹⁸ At the same date, a note in the council minute book recorded that on 5 June 1702: Alexander Peirson of Smiddie Croft [was] fined £20 Scots for taking away abbey stones and building his house in Hamilton Green.¹¹⁹ It seems likely that there had been a major fall of a part of the ruin shortly before that, and the burgesses were taking advantage of the debris. A report of the sheriff of Forfar, dated 12 July 1814, noted that it was surprising to find anything left of the abbey at all due to the practice of making a quarry of these ruins in order to provide stones for building in the town of Arbroath and its vicinity.¹²⁰ Writing in 1876, George Hay noted that abbey stones had frequently been found on the removal of old houses. One notable example was 'an old mansion which stood where the British Linen Company's Bank now stands' which was found to be constructed almost entirely of these.¹²¹

Harbour and Custom Rights

The right to erect a harbour was among the earliest privileges of the abbey, alongside the right to found the burgh.¹²² It would appear that no such harbour was in existence in 1394 when an agreement was made between the abbey and the own burgesses regarding the construction of

¹¹³ NLS MSS 3294-5.

¹¹⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.13.

¹¹⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, 193, 223.

¹¹⁶ D Perry, 'A new look at old Arbroath', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*, 4 (1998), 260-78, at 274.

¹¹⁷ R Fawcett, 'Arbroath Abbey: a note on its architecture and early conservation history', in G W S Barrow (ed), *The Declaration of Arbroath: History, Significance, Setting* (Edinburgh, 2003), 50-85, at 80. Printed in G Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time: With Notices of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs* (Arbroath, 1876), 91. Before this date, the parish church was St Vigeans and the burgh chapel of ease was the Chapel of St Mary. A note in the council minute-book from the seventeenth century, (Angus Archives, A1/19/3 fol 108v) noted on 13 March 1633 that: The bailies and council for the sklaitis and other stones of the chapel and the timber thereof disposed by John Ouchterlony younger to the town's use; the gras of the Lady Loan set in tak and assidation to the said John. After the Reformation, Arbroath became a separate parish and remained so until 1895 when it was reunited with St Vigeans.

¹¹⁸ NRS GD16/36/19.

¹¹⁹ Angus Archive, A1/19/4 fol 86r.

¹²⁰ NRS E885/2.

¹²¹ Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 92

¹²² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.220.

one.¹²³ Prior to this, however, the regality of Arbroath (including the burgh) had been erected into an independent customs jurisdiction by King David II in 1351, the returns of which he granted to the abbey. Previously, the goods of the regality would have fallen under the jurisdiction of either Dundee or Montrose. The abbey's exclusive control of the regality's customs was theoretically very short-lived as new duties were introduced soon afterwards to raise the king's ransom. In reality, however, Arbroath rendered only one such account to the Exchequer, covering November 1358 to April 1359.¹²⁴

In fact, the change was not enforced until 1392 when the abbey's rights to the old customs were confirmed but the Crown's rights to the rest were asserted; for the abbey, this translated into receipt of a quarter of the total customs revenue for the regality.¹²⁵ In 1529, King James V re-established the abbey's control of the entirety of the customs revenue to allow the repair of the harbour which was stated to be destroyed and the burgh impoverished.¹²⁶ These changes represented shifts in the recipient of the customs income only, rather than any significant change in the pattern of export shipping. Goods from Arbroath continued to be routinely taken to the larger sea ports, and in any case the amounts involved were always relatively small. For example, in the final decade of the fourteenth century, an average of 26 sacks of wool a year were customed at Arbroath; the figure at Dundee was 495.¹²⁷ Evidently, the harbour was operational again by the 1540s, when victuals destined for St Andrews were lost in Arbroath harbour when a boat was wrecked by a storm.¹²⁸

Water supply

An account written in 1742 by David Mudie, town clerk of Arbroath, stated: "There are many springs of fine water on the east side of the enclosure. One of these was brought in lead pipes, parts of which have been lately discovered in digging, for the service of the houses; and the rest formed a canal which ran through the garden, or close, as the whole does now."¹²⁹ In 1876, George Hay added that the leaden pipes brought water from a spring from "about where the Hay's well now is...Parts of those pipes were discovered in 1850 during alterations that were being made on the well. The water of the neighbouring springs which was not required for the abbey flowed through the garden or 'closs' of the house. This was the water called the Lord Burn, which may have given its name to the street. The inhabitants of this street still obtain their water supply from the stream which, keeping much the same course still, flowed through the abbey garden towards the then pellucid Brothock."¹³⁰ The above is confirmed by the burgh records. The precinct gardens were bordered to the north by the aqueduct (noted above). The aqueduct is described as to the south of land to the north of Lordburn.¹³¹ The Greenyard, on the west of Lordburn, was bounded to the north by the aqueduct which was stated to run to the Brothock.¹³² It is also supported by a find in 1879 of a

¹²³ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.42.

¹²⁴ M Rorke, 'Scottish Overseas Trade, 1275/86-1597' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2001), 78-9, 110-12.

¹²⁵ *RMS*, i, no.863; Rorke, 'Scottish Overseas Trade', 78 n.131.

¹²⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.738.

¹²⁷ Rorke, 'Scottish Overseas Trade', 491. Based on the annual accounts rendered in 1393 to 1400. Total national exports averaged 3,945 sacks during this period.

¹²⁸ *Rentale Sancti Andree*, ed R K Hannay (Edinburgh, 1913), 195.

¹²⁹ Printed in J Sinclair (ed), *Statistical Account of Scotland*, XXI (Edinburgh, 1799), 196-204, and Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 35-6 (also repeated by James Bailey and G H Hutton).

¹³⁰ Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 35

¹³¹ NRS B4/1/4 fols 68v-69r.

¹³² NRS B4/1/3 fols 84r-v, 124v.

portion of lead piping, now in the possession of the Royal Museum of Scotland, recovered near the intersection between Abbey Street and Abbey Path during excavations.¹³³

Medieval monastic precincts were commonly supplied by water from springs situated at a higher level than the site. The water was usually gathered into a cistern, covered and enclosed within a small stone structure or conduit house; one of the earliest surviving examples of this is the conduit head dating from the 1160s which supplied the Cistercian abbey of Fountains in Yorkshire.¹³⁴ There are few surviving medieval records of such arrangements in Scotland. One example is set out in a late thirteenth-century charter of Hugh de Ever, lord of Kettins, to the Cistercian abbey of Coupar Angus. This gave the monks 'the spring called Bradewell, which is located next to the stones which are called Harstanes' on his land, and all of the water flowing from the spring, together with the rights to lead that water through an aqueduct to the abbey precinct and to enter his land unmolested to build and maintain it.¹³⁵ At Arbroath, a water-source called Hay's Well is marked on the 1865 Ordnance Survey Map about a quarter of a mile to the north-east of the abbey precinct (on the eastern side of the modern Hayswell Park).¹³⁶ An account published in 1887 records: "The cistern from which Hays Well is supplied is thirty yards east and eight yards south of the well. The cistern, being underground, is invisible. It was opened about forty years ago, and its construction was then examined. It had all the appearance of having been built at the same time as the Abbey, and was evidently used as a reservoir for supplying that ancient institution with water."¹³⁷

From such cisterns, water was conveyed to monastic precincts by closed conduits, that is, airtight pipes of either lead, ceramic or even wood. These were able to slope uphill or downhill at any angle, provided the outlet was at a lower level than the intake. If the cistern at Hay's Well is indeed the abbey conduit head then it is comparatively close to the precinct; medieval conduits commonly extended distances of between 2 and 5 kilometres (though rarely much further). Lead pipes in closed conduit systems normally had an internal diameter of between 2.5cm and 10cm.¹³⁸ The portion uncovered at the abbey in 1879 has a diameter of 5cm.

Water arriving at a monastery typically entered storage cisterns and from there was piped to various parts of the precinct. For example, at Glenluce Abbey the system of lead and ceramic pipes was found in situ during clearance in the 1930s.¹³⁹ Around the same time, excavations took place at Arbroath Abbey. On 14 February 1931 it was reported that "there are distinct indications of a stream of water from the direction of Abbey Green having run across this floor level through the building westward to a drain, obviously serving a reredorter, which stream was then directed underground towards Lordburn...at some period, this stream had been prevented from running through this portion of the dormitory building by being diverted through a channel, which passed southwards and then westwards, along the exterior walls to the course of the underground drain. The second

¹³³ Historic Environment Scotland, Site Records, <<https://canmore.org.uk/site/35641/arbroath-abbey-green>>.

¹³⁴ C J Bond 'Monastic Water Management in Great Britain: A Review', in G Keevil, M A Aston and T Hall (eds), *Monastic Archaeology: Papers on the Study of Medieval Monasteries* (Oxford, 2001), 91.

¹³⁵ *Charters of the Abbey of Coupar Angus*, ed and trans D E Easson (Scottish History Society, 1947), vol 1, no LXIII.

¹³⁶ NLS, Ordnance Survey, Six-inch 1st edition, Forfarshire, Sheet XLVI, 1865 <<https://maps.nls.uk/view/index.cfm?id=74426924>>.

¹³⁷ J M McBain, *Arbroath: Past and Present* (Arbroath, 1887), 35-6.

¹³⁸ Bond 'Monastic Water Management', 93-5. It is unusual in Britain to find 'open' conduits (stone troughs or mortared/clay lined channels containing air as well as water) employed for the main water supply.

¹³⁹ S Cruden, 'Glenluce Abbey; finds recovered during excavations, Part 1', *TDGNHAS*, 29 (1950-1), 177-94.

channel passes along the wall bounding Abbey Park, and it is surmised that below the street level foundations of other buildings, such as a reredorter would be found.”¹⁴⁰



Figure 18: the reredorter drain running beneath the south end of the east range of the cloister (collection of R Oram).

Water supplies brought in for urban monasteries were sometimes extended to allow distribution beyond the precinct; one such known purpose was for nearby hospitals.¹⁴¹ The aqueduct running from the precinct via Lordburn to the Brothock ran through the lands of the

almshouse (discussed below) and may also have been piped to serve various uses there. Such extensions could also serve town communities. A sophisticated medieval water supply is noted at the burgh of Dunfermline, where it is suggested that the abbey’s system of lead pipes connected with the town system.¹⁴² In Arbroath, however, the burgh seems to have been supplied quite separately from the abbey. The burgh records refer to various portions of land being bordering by an aqueduct which clearly refers to an entirely different system. If these disjointed references refer to the same conduit then its course appears to have run from ‘the Seaton Denheid’ near Ponderlaw,¹⁴³ north of Newgate¹⁴⁴ and Old Marketgate,¹⁴⁵ crossing Copgate (the lower part of the modern High

¹⁴⁰ NRS MW1/467.

¹⁴¹ Bond ‘Monastic Water Management’, 99.

¹⁴² P Dennison, ‘Living in medieval Dunfermline’, in R Fawcett (ed), *Royal Dunfermline* (Edinburgh, 2005), 10-11.

¹⁴³ NRS B4/1/5 fols 132v-133r; J Anderson (ed), *Calendar of the Laing Charters 854-1837* (Edinburgh, 1899), no.696.

¹⁴⁴ NRS B4/1/3 fols 111r-v, 118r.

¹⁴⁵ NRS B4/1/3 fol 149v.

Street to the south of Kirk Square) on a north-easterly line.¹⁴⁶ Land on the east of the Brothock, of an unknown location, is described as bounded by the aqueduct to both the north and south; it may be that this refers to the abbey conduit to the north and this second system to the south.¹⁴⁷

Milling

King William established multure rights for the abbey mill for the shires of Arbroath and Ethie.¹⁴⁸ It is unlikely that the bulk grain store lay far from the abbey's mill, yet there is little evidence through most of the medieval period for the mill's location. In November 1485, when the convent was setting the mill known as Wardmill (upstream on the Brothock north-west of the monastery), the charter makes reference to specific service dues still owed by the tenants at the abbey's own mill, lying near the burgh.¹⁴⁹ The Wardmill was leased by the abbey at several intervals along with the nearby cellarer's croft, saving for the mill £13 6s 8d to the cellarer and £4 to the monks, and for the croft 20s to the cellarer.¹⁵⁰ The mill, cellarer's croft and mill croft were assessed together in the rental of abbey lands compiled c.1550.¹⁵¹ After the Reformation, the mill and these lands came into the possession of the Ogilvies of Airlie.¹⁵² In 1634, a dovecot is mentioned on the land situated between the cellarer's croft and the river.¹⁵³ Wardmill was not, however, the only mill at Arbroath. The Nether Mill (at East Grimsby) may have been constructed later to serve the burgh's needs as the town expanded. The 'aqueduct of Grimsby', to the south and east of Millgate, appears in the burgh records.¹⁵⁴ In 1635, it is referred to as the aqueduct 'distending' toward the lower mill.¹⁵⁵ Both the Nether Mill and the Wardmill remained in use after the Reformation.¹⁵⁶

It also seems possible that an abbey mill used exclusively for internal purposes was situated beyond the precinct walls to east. The Graniter's Croft was situated here, and the abbey's main water conduit ran past this land. The abbey's malt mill is named in the 1567 feu charter (cited above) but no indication of its location is given. In 1534, an abbey tenant was instructed to construct a malt kiln (*ustrina*) beyond and near the northern wall of the abbey, between the common royal way toward the burgh extending to the west (Brechin Road) and other lands of the abbey to the east; this seems to describe the location of Barngreen.¹⁵⁷ The abbey's bakehouse (*pistrinam*) is mentioned in 1382.¹⁵⁸ Later records refer to the abbey's bakehouse situated at Burnside in the vicinity of the Nether

¹⁴⁶ NRS B4/1/3 fols 185v; B4/1/4 fol 100r-v; B4/1/5 fols 79v-80r, 165r-v, 264v-265v. Land on the east of Copgate had the aqueduct to the east. Certain land on the west part of Copgate also had the aqueduct to the east, while other portions had the aqueduct to the north. An aqueduct is also frequently mentioned to the south of Applegate. It is not clear if this refers to the same supply (B4/1/2 fols 85r, 96v, 113r; B4/1/3 fols 15r-v, 95v-96r, 126v-127r, 144r; B4/1/4 fols 56v-57v, 63v-64r, 64r-65r, 69r-70r, 77r-78v, 100v-101v, 101v-102r; B4/1/5 fols 84r-85v, 114v-115r, 148v-149r, 149r-v, 223v-224r).

¹⁴⁷ NRS B4/1/3 fol 151r-v.

¹⁴⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.14.

¹⁴⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.276.

¹⁵⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.485, 530, 735.

¹⁵¹ NRS RH2/8/81.

¹⁵² NRS B4/1/3 fol 38r-v; B4/1/5 fols 10v-12r, 107r-108v.

¹⁵³ NRS B4/1/5 fols 107r-108v.

¹⁵⁴ NRS B4/1/3 fols 47r-v, 66v, 85r-v, 146r-v, 151r-v, 196v-197r; B4/1/4 fols 55r-56r; B4/1/5 156v-157r, 209v-210r.

¹⁵⁵ NRS B4/1/5 fol 150r-v.

¹⁵⁶ NRS GD16/29/22.

¹⁵⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.804.

¹⁵⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.38.

Mill.¹⁵⁹ It may be, then, that the abbey utilised the burgh mill while the Wardmill served the surrounding rural district.

The almshouse or Almonry

A papal letter of Pope Alexander IV in 1259 referred to 'the multitude of guests and poor' who flocked to the abbey and the burden that placed on the community.¹⁶⁰ The guests would have been received either into the abbey's guest-house or, depending on their social status, into the abbot's house for hospitality and lodging. The poor, however, were the responsibility of one of the senior obedientaries of the convent, the almoner, who oversaw the charitable support of those who came to the gate of the abbey seeking alms. At some point before the fourteenth century, his office became associated with a distinct, physical establishment, the Almonry.

The best starting point for discussion of the Almonry is towards the end of its probable functional life in the record of an inspection made in 1464.¹⁶¹ The results of this inquest into its constitution, current state and buildings were:

- (1) Was the almshouse of royal or episcopal foundation or founded by a temporal lord or by the abbot and convent? Agreed that it was an almshouse but there was no record of its foundation.
- (2) Which king or lord founded it and what was its nature and purpose? Agreed that it was a house such as other monasteries have, in which the daily surplus of the common table is used for maintaining the infirm (*debiles*) and poor, but unable to say who founded it.
- (3) Were the letters of foundation known? No.
- (4) Were any poor kept in the house? The answer must have been self-evident as it is not recorded.
- (5) Were any annual rents annexed to it and, if so, what? Only a garden and croft known to be so.
- (6) What was their opinion of the Spittalfield and the chapel of St. John (the hospital of St. John the Baptist was first mentioned in June 1325)?¹⁶² The land was not thought to be the property of any, but the abbey, and the almoner received two merks from it annually.
- (7) What is the master, and how is the house governed and furnished inside and outside? The almoner is a monk of the monastery, elected by and removable at the will of abbot and convent, the house competently built, the chapel well adorned.
- (8) Why is the said almshouse sited outside the monastery with a chapel, barn, yard, court and great hall of its own? No reason given, except that it pleased the builders.
- (9) What is thought of the popular belief that the almshouse of Arbroath had as rich an endowment as the bishopric of Brechin? This opinion was not held by prudent or authentic persons.

It is clear from the responses that by the fifteenth century the early circumstances of the almshouse had been forgotten. By then, it functioned to provide for the poor under the direction of an appointed almoner monk, or purported to do so at least. It was situated beyond the precinct walls within a complex of its own which consisted of a chapel (of St Michael, discussed below), barn, yard,

¹⁵⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.475; NRS RH2/8/81.

¹⁶⁰ *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum Historiam Illustrantia*, ed A Theiner (Paris, 1864), 82.

¹⁶¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.160. Translation used here given in J Durkan, 'Care of the Poor: Pre-Reformation Hospitals', *Innes Review*, 10 (1959), 268–80, at 277-8.

¹⁶² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.309.

court and great hall. The dedication of the abbey church, which took place in 1233, was commemorated on 8 May, the Feast of the Apparition of St Michael,¹⁶³ it seems unlikely to be a coincidence that this same saint was the patron of the almshouse chapel.

The Almonry was the most important charitable and hospitable operation of the abbey and its development as a physical entity probably reflects the scale of the demand for alms placed upon the community. It was located to the west of the open area north of the gatehouse range. As an almshouse, it is possible that it was always outside the abbey's precinct enclosure proper. Although a differentiation has arisen in literature between the almshouse and an institution referred to as the Hospital of St John *iuxta* Arbroath, it appears likely that these are the same establishment.¹⁶⁴ Although specifically attached to the almshouse itself, the name *Almonry* or *Almory* became attached to the northern sector of the burgh, which was divided into burgess tenements by the later medieval period.¹⁶⁵ One tenement in the 'land of the almonry' was feued in 1423, and a second feu in 1427 provides interesting detail of the layout of the complex.¹⁶⁶ It takes as its boundary points the land of William Haggis on the south, 'the great wall of the garden of the Almory' on the west, and the chapel of St Michael with the house pertaining to the same on the lane leading to the chapel on the east side. In 1461, Abbot Malcolm feued a tenement on the west side of the 'street of the Almory' to Andrew Kirk and his wife.¹⁶⁷ A perch of land in the almshouse garden was feued in 1467.¹⁶⁸ The Almonry croft and Almonry garden continued to appear as distinct properties in sets of the various tenements in the Almory district thereafter, with revenues assigned to the 'monk almoner'.¹⁶⁹ The boundaries of the land were given as the land of James Wyot on the south, the almshouse itself on the north, the gable of St Michael's chapel on the west, and the house built by John Chapman at the west end of the garden of the Almonry chapel. The chapel of St Michael again appears as the Almory chapel, in a feu-charter of 1531, which give the two buildings as the west and north boundaries respectively of the feued property.¹⁷⁰ That sixteenth-century reference to the chapel and the 'house of the almonry' apart, however, there is no unequivocal evidence for the existence of the Almory itself as a functioning almshouse from the later fifteenth century onwards, although the office of monk almoner continued down to the Reformation and received the rents from the almshouse properties to support his function. By 1508, the Almonry – perhaps the almshouse rather than the general district - had become a meeting place for head courts for tenant of the abbey in lands west of the precinct; in 1602 the burgess David Ramsay and his wife, Janet Pearson, being obliged to give suit there in three capital pleas at the court of the almoner.¹⁷¹

There was evidently, however, another chapel west of the abbey: that of St John the Baptist, referred to in point 6 of the 1464 inquest. A set of the lands of Spitalfield (nowadays Hospitalfield) by Abbot Bernard in 1325 showed that St John's had been the site of a hospital or hospice at an earlier date, but there is a clear distinction made by the enquiry between this and the almshouse.¹⁷² Instead, the question and answer indicate that St John's was situated at Hospitalfield, around a mile

¹⁶³ J B L Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary used at Arbroath Abbey', *Innes Review*, 5 (1954), 104-18.

¹⁶⁴ Cowan and Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 169; D G Adams, *Celtic and Mediaeval Religious Houses in Angus* (Brechin, 1984), 16-17.

¹⁶⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.60, where it is specifically referred to as 'the place which is called the Almory'.

¹⁶⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 58, 60.

¹⁶⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.139.

¹⁶⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.174.

¹⁶⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 567, 801.

¹⁷⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.753.

¹⁷¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.469; *RMS*, vi, no.1325.

¹⁷² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.309.

to the south-west. During improvements on the estate in 1861 and 1889, over a hundred human inhumations were discovered along with the foundations of a building to the south-east. This seems to have been the chapel and its burial ground.¹⁷³ The existence of multiple hospitals in and around medieval burghs is not unusual; Dunfermline, for example, had three, while Stirling seems to have had five.¹⁷⁴ Although a separate institution, St John's and its land pertained to the abbey and was likely under the supervision of the same monk as the almshouse.

Figure 19: Hospitalfield House, Arbroath, is a largely 19th-century mansion that is believed to stand on or close to the site of St John's Hospital and incorporates portions of a later medieval building into its fabric (collection of R Oram).



Another point of note which emerges from the outcome of the inspection is that the details of the almshouse's foundation and its initial purpose were, by 1464, unknown. Why might it have 'pleased the builders' to construct the almshouse as a self-contained complex beyond the precinct, if its role was to distribute monastic alms to the poor? Considering the location of the almshouse, situated adjacent to both the abbey and to the burgh port where the royal road arrived, it seems likely that it had originally been founded to serve the needs of pilgrims. Arbroath was purposely established by King William as a magnificent Scottish cult centre for the enormously popular St Thomas Becket; large amounts of visitors will have been envisioned and provision made for. The belief alluded to in

¹⁷³ A T Simpson and S Stevenson, *Historic Arbroath: Archaeological Implications of Development* (Glasgow, 1982), 19.

¹⁷⁴ Durkan, 'Care of the Poor', 270.

1464 that the endowment of the almshouse was comparable to the bishopric of Brechin is perhaps evidence of just how well funded this operation had been in the past. By the later medieval period, however, the decline in pilgrimage had prompted a change in function for similar foundations, such as that at St Andrews.

The loss of their *raison d'être* and a lack of adaptation at some institutions was a contributing factor to financial abuses and neglect by the fifteenth century; this was the context for parliamentary legislation enacted in 1425 for a system of inspection, repeated in 1466. Inspectors were instructed to reform the hospitals in accordance with their deeds of foundation; if these were not available, the poor were to have the benefits of existing funds.¹⁷⁵ In 1469, Richard Guthrie, the royal almoner-general, was empowered to enforce this. Guthrie's close personal involvement in the inspection of the Arbroath almshouse is clear; not only was he one of the inspectors in 1464, but he had previously been abbot from 1449 to 1455.¹⁷⁶ It is likely that Guthrie's intimate knowledge of the workings of the almshouse led him to identify it as a target for inspection and potential reform. Significantly, Guthrie was in an excellent position to institute such change when he was reappointed as abbot in 1470. While there is no documentary evidence for this, we may speculate as to the nature of reform based on Guthrie's contemporary activities at St Laurence's Hospital in Haddington, the particulars of which survive in detail. The regulations laid out included: the poor were to be provided with beds and bedding, fuel for a fire, porridge, bread, and 'sufficient drink'; a respectable old woman was to be placed in charge of cleanliness and 'propriety', making up beds, washing clothes, and preparing and serving food; masses were to be celebrated three times a week in the chapel of St Laurence, plus on major feast days; and decent burial was to be provided for anyone who died.¹⁷⁷

The entire district surrounding the almshouse came to be known as the 'Almonry' and covered substantial ground. The north part of Lordburn formed the south-eastern boundary.¹⁷⁸ The south-western extent of the Almonry, however, was further south. The 'Haggus Yard', listed in the c.1550 abbey rental as rendering to the almshouse, was to the south of Greenyard (which was on the west of Lordburn, bounded to the west by the Brothock to the west and the aqueduct to the north).¹⁷⁹ The Haggus Yard can thus be identified with the land of Patrick Haggus referred to in 1457, described as lying to the south of land in the Almonry near the Brothock (itself described as to the south of 'Malkynnys Pvil').¹⁸⁰ The Mawkin Pool was where the river was dammed for the Nether Mill.¹⁸¹ Another portion of land in Almonry also took its name from the Haggus family: the 'Haghousched'. It is described as being on the eastern part of the Almonry, but with further land mentioned to the east.¹⁸² Haghousched was to the east of the gardens of the almshouse.¹⁸³ This fits with the description of the land of William Haggus in 1427, which was stated to be bounded to the west by

¹⁷⁵ Durkan, 'Care of the Poor', 272.

¹⁷⁶ D E R Watt and N F Shead (eds), *The Heads of Religious Houses in Scotland From Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Edinburgh, 2001), 6

¹⁷⁷ D E Easson, 'The medieval hospitals of Haddington', *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society*, 6 (1955), 9-18, at 12-15. Guthrie was named as abbot of Arbroath in the document which records this.

¹⁷⁸ NRS B4/1/3 fol 10r-v; B4/1/5 fols 80v-81r.

¹⁷⁹ NRS RH2/8/81; NRS B4/1/3 fol 124v.

¹⁸⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.111.

¹⁸¹ W H K Turner, *The Textile Industry of Arbroath* (Dundee, 1954), 6-7.

¹⁸² *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.751.

¹⁸³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.567, 801.

the garden.¹⁸⁴ This land, and that of Patrick Haggus in 1467 and 1482, was roughly south-west of land which had St Michael's chapel to the west and the almshouse to the north.¹⁸⁵

The gardens of the almshouse were walled during the medieval period.¹⁸⁶ That this remained the case long afterwards is revealed by an account of 1682 which reported that the almshouse had "many fyne gardens and orchards, now converted to arable ground, about which is a high stone wall".¹⁸⁷ The Almshouse Croft was to the west of the south part of the gardens.¹⁸⁸ It also lay to the west of further Almonry land to the south of the gardens.¹⁸⁹ The Almshouse Croft was closely associated with the Gast Meadow (unlocated); the two were routinely held together.¹⁹⁰ 'Gast' may be read as 'guest' and it has been suggested that this was where visitor's horses were sent to pasture.¹⁹¹ In 1993 excavations were carried out to the west of the High Street (Almonry Street) between James Street and Church Street, on and around the site of the demolished Palace Cinema. No remains of medieval features or structures were identified, but a thick layer of garden soil containing medieval pottery sherds was identified on the southern part of the site.¹⁹² Based on the evidence discussed above, this site lay some way to the west of St Michael's Chapel and thus perhaps represents the area in or around Haghousched.

The almshouse itself lay to the north of lands which had the gable (*gabulum*) of St Michael's chapel to the west and the 'common royal way' which passed to the monastery (Brechin Road) on the east.¹⁹³ A portion of land on the western part of Almonry Street (the upper part of the modern High Street from Lordburn/Abbey Path) was stated to have the entrance to St Michael's chapel to the south.¹⁹⁴ Since the mentions of the common royal way and Almonry Street are roughly contemporaneous (1482 and 1461, respectively), this may indicate that the almshouse lay further north than what was considered the start of Almonry Street. Almonry lands in this vicinity are indicated by Almonry Close and land which lay between here and the common way.¹⁹⁵ The great hall of the almshouse was to the north of land belonging in 1464 to James Wyat: this land was to the south (though not immediately) of the almshouse, and roughly south-east of St Michael's chapel.¹⁹⁶ This suggests that the great hall lay immediately south of the almshouse. A storehouse is listed among the annuals of the Almonry in the c.1550 rental.¹⁹⁷ In 1609, a storehouse and rood of land is described as lying to the south and east of the Croft.¹⁹⁸ It is unclear if either of these are the barn of the almshouse referred to in 1464. Courts held in the Almonry by the almoner monk are mentioned

¹⁸⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.60.

¹⁸⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.174, 214.

¹⁸⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.60, 801.

¹⁸⁷ 'Account of the Shire of Forfar, circa 1682, by John Ouchterlony, Esq. of Guynd', printed in: J Maidment (ed), *The Spottiswoode Miscellany: A Collection of Original Papers and Tracts*, vol I (1844).

¹⁸⁸ NRS B4/1/4 fol 28r-v; B4/1/5 fols 160r, 216r.

¹⁸⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.567; NRS B4/1/2 fol 79r.

¹⁹⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos 570, 700, NRS B4/1/2 fol 81v; B4/1/4 fols 65r-66v, 67v-68v.

¹⁹¹ D Miller, *Arbroath and its Abbey or the early history of the town and abbey of Aberbrothock including notices of ecclesiastical and other antiquities in the surrounding district* (Edinburgh, 1860), 66.

¹⁹² Canmore MS 957/7/1-6.

¹⁹³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.174, 175, 214.

¹⁹⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.139.

¹⁹⁵ NRS B4/1/2 fol 79r.

¹⁹⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.151, 753.

¹⁹⁷ NRS RH2/8/81.

¹⁹⁸ NRS B4/1/3 fol 91v.

in various leases of 1559.¹⁹⁹ In 1682 it was stated that the “Almes-house Chapple is now possest by James Philip of Almryclose, his house built of the stone thereof”.²⁰⁰

The Almonry lands also extended up to the north of the precinct. One portion of land was bounded by the burgh cemetery to the east, and by the road (Brechin Road) to the west, the abbey itself to the south, and the burgh gate (North Port) to the north.²⁰¹ Another portion on the north part of the Almonry is described as extending to the ‘lower gate’ (*inferiorem portam* - Guthrie port).²⁰² Other land was bounded by the Smithy Croft to the north, with the entry and exit to the south facing Hamilton Green.²⁰³ Land to the east of this was Guys Puyll (or Guysdub), listed in the c.1550 rental as Almonry lands, which rendered 4 shillings to St Mary’s altar in the abbey.²⁰⁴

Further afield, in 1325 the land of Hospitalfield was leased for 40s annual rent paid to the almshouse. The tenants were instructed to build two husbandry houses, namely a storehouse and byre, both 40 feet long.²⁰⁵ An entry in the burgh records dated 1615 refers to Hospitalfield with manor, storehouses, dovecot, gardens and orchards. It also came with rights to seaweed (*alga marinarum*) and passage to the beach (named in 1639 as ‘Warrhoup’) where it was gathered.²⁰⁶ Such tracks by which seaweed was transported from the beach were known as warrgates. The use of seaweed at Hospitalfield is also mentioned in 1682.²⁰⁷ Seaweed was utilised during the medieval period as fertiliser, and remained an important resource for the estate in later centuries. In 1846 the owners of Hospitalfield appealed to parliament against the planned extension of the Dundee and Arbroath railway line which blocked access to the sea.²⁰⁸

The role of the almshouse did not necessarily immediately cease in 1560. The evidence elsewhere in Scotland suggests that medieval hospitals continued to function into the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The establishment of the system of everyday poor relief carried out by the Kirk session was a gradual one, but appears to have been standard practice in urban parishes by c.1600. In certain instances, the Kirk session became involved in the administration of hospitals alongside its own relief work.²⁰⁹ An entry in the burgh court book dated 2 June 1570 records that Thomas Lindsay, at a meeting of the inhabitants of the eleemosynary, was appointed by the commendator of Arbroath Abbey as collector and administrator of the dues which were payable on heritages in that part of the burgh for the relief of the poor.²¹⁰ Thomas Lindsay, previously a monk of the abbey, was appointed reader in the parish in 1567, and is thus a good example of continuity

¹⁹⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.696; NLS Adv MS 20.3.9 fols 85-90.

²⁰⁰ ‘Account of the Shire of Forfar, circa 1682, by John Ouchterlony’.

²⁰¹ NRS B4/1/3 fols 9v, 79r; B4/1/5 fols 6r, 93r-v, 180v-181r.

²⁰² NRS B4/1/2 fol 41v.

²⁰³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, 449, 811.

²⁰⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, 578.

²⁰⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.352.

²⁰⁶ NRS B4/1/3 fol 141v; B4/1/5 fols 263v-264v. ‘Houp’ in the sense of bay/haven.

²⁰⁷ ‘Account of the Shire of Forfar, circa 1682, by John Ouchterlony’.

²⁰⁸ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol 101, Part 1, 363. Hospitalfield possesses its own archive which likely contains details of this and other aspects of the administration of the estate in this period:
<<http://hospitalfield.org.uk/about/collections/>>.

²⁰⁹ J McCallum, “‘Nurseries of the Poore’: Hospitals and Almshouses in Early Modern Scotland”, *Journal of Social History*, 48 (2014), 427–449; J McCallum, *Poor Relief and the Church in Scotland, 1560-1650* (Edinburgh, 2018), 77-8.

²¹⁰ Angus Archives, A1/19/2 fol 54r; Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 181. Hay also refers to a ‘roll of the eleemosynary’, dated 1748, which listed 65 people liable to pay on their respective heritages, amounting to £47 13s 5d Scots (272-3).

across the watershed of 1560.²¹¹ Aside from the church, secular town authorities also played a role in poor relief in their own right.²¹² In Arbroath, various grants were made in the early 1600s of amounts of annual rent *in favorem pauperum* to be collected by the burgh's bailies from properties beyond the Almonry lands on Copgate, Applegate, Lordburn, and New Marketgate.²¹³

Lay Religiosity

Gifts to religious houses expressed a belief in the redeeming power of the pious donation and its role in achieving salvation. Spiritual benefits were derived from the prayers of the monks; this was specifically articulated by certain donors whose charters stipulated masses to be said on behalf of named beneficiaries, sometimes at particular altars.²¹⁴ Numerous gifts to the abbey came with specific instructions as to the purpose they were intended to serve. In 1222, for example, William Comyn, earl of Buchan, granted the church of Bethelnie and one full toft in the villa for the clothing of the monks. The extensive nature of this grant indicates the expense involved; for comparison, it has been calculated that annual cloth requirements for clothing at thirteenth century Cistercian houses were 12.565 yards (at two yards wide) per monk.²¹⁵ It also suggests that the abbey had either not invested in an industrial fulling mill to produce cloth 'in-house', or that the abbey did not possess sufficient numbers of sheep to produce the raw wool (or, indeed, both).

Other donations were given to fund the lighting of the monastic church, such as that of King Alexander II in 1246 of ten marks annual rent, or the much smaller grant of 12d given by Thomas of Coffin in 1275.²¹⁶ This purpose was also served through the donation of wax itself. Such gifts held great symbolic value in supplying the elements required for mass and thereby allowing the donor to 'participate' in the celebration of divine office in the religious house.²¹⁷ These donations appear frequently in the abbey records to be delivered on particular dates, for example, at burgh fairs.²¹⁸ Much more commonly, they were rendered on particular feast days (discussed below). Gifts of grain can also be seen in this context, such as the grant of one chalder of wheat made by Walter of Lundin and his wife, Christina, in 1230x1240 and the same given by Robert de Montfort in 1364.²¹⁹ Contemporary donations made to English monasteries of amounts of wheat were stated to have been intended for wafers to be used during mass.²²⁰ In the case of Arbroath, the pious context of such practical gifts is made clear by the statement made in both charters that the grain was given in recognition of fraternity membership.

Admittance into confraternity involved the "spiritual incorporation" of a lay person into the house. The individual could be assured that intercessory prayers on their behalf in perpetuity had been

²¹¹ C H Haws, *Scottish Parish Clergy at the Reformation 1540-1574* (Edinburgh, 1972), 215. Thomas Lindsay was one of many new appointments made in 1567 in the Presbytery of Arbroath, the majority of which were readers and not ordained ministers. This has been cited as a factor in the witchcraft trials held in Arbroath in the following year, due to the hampering of the eradication of Catholic beliefs and practices (P G Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's conspiracy: magic and witchcraft in sixteenth-century Scotland* (East Linton, 2011), 52-8).

²¹² McCallum, *Poor Relief and the Church in Scotland*, 206-7

²¹³ NRS B4/1/3 fols 75v-76r, 164r, 212r-v; B4/1/5 fols 238v-239r, 246v-247r.

²¹⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.89; ii, no.20.

²¹⁵ J Oldland, 'Cistercian Clothing and Its Production at Beaulieu Abbey, 1269-70', in R Netherton and G Owen-Crocker (eds) *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, 9 (Woodbridge, 2013), 73-96, at 75, 79-80.

²¹⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.266; BL Add. MS 33245 fol 80r.

²¹⁷ D Postles, 'Small Gifts, But Big Rewards: The Symbolism of Some Gifts to the Religious', *Journal of Medieval History*, 27, (2001), 27-32.

²¹⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.309; BL Add. MS 33245 fols 61r, 132r-v.

²¹⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.138; RRS, vi, no.314.

²²⁰ Postles, 'Small Gifts', 27.

secured. Another benefit may have been burial within the monastery. Aside from donations of wax, charters establishing confraternity membership at Arbroath were occasionally accompanied by additional death-bed bequests, such as the twenty oxen promised by Earl Maelduin of Lennox. A very similar pledge was made in 1315 by David de Manuel of eight cows and a horse.²²¹ The types of dedicated documents which specifically recorded confraternity membership do not survive for any Scottish monastery, but the existence of an Arbroath martyrology(/necrology) is confirmed by thirteenth century charters.²²² The frequency with which confraternity membership appears in the abbey records is notable, and indicates that it was highly desirable to benefactors. By comparison, at the relatively nearby Cistercian abbey of Coupar Angus, for which substantial documentation survives, there are only three explicit mentions of confraternity for the entirety of the abbey's history. At Arbroath, there are seven in the 1200s alone, and a further six in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²²³ To this number should be added an unknown number of earls of Lennox: Earl Maelduin established membership for himself and his heirs in the earlier thirteenth century. That this was upheld after his death is revealed by a charter of Earl Malcolm in 1317 which commuted an annual of four oxen, given by previous earls for confraternity of the house, into two marks annual rent.²²⁴ Given the continuing evidence for membership of individuals after this date, it may be that the privilege continued to be extended to subsequent earls. This likely reflects differences between the Cistercian and the Tironensian/Benedictine Orders in the nature of their relationship with the laity and the modes of commemoration offered.

Burial was another important intercessory service offered by medieval monasteries, establishing permanent 'residency' within sacred space. As the founder of the abbey, King William was interred before the high altar and his death commemorated by the



Figure 20: the remains of the Frosterley marble effigy, believed to be that of King William, which would have been placed on top of his grave in the middle of the monks' choir (collection of R Oram).

community on 5 December.²²⁵ Aside from the king, the earliest known example of lay burial at Arbroath seems to be Gilchrist, earl of Angus, who died sometime before 1206. Writing in 1578x82, Holinshed noted that Gilchrist was buried, along with two of his sons, in front of the altar of St Katherine within the church of the abbey 'as the superscription of their tombs sheweth'.²²⁶ Unverified tradition locates this chapel in the south transept of the abbey church. Earl Gilchrist was certainly a generous benefactor to the abbey, giving the monks control of four parish churches: Monifieth, Murroes, Kirriemuir, and Stradightly Comitis.²²⁷ Grants of land were also made to the abbey by his successors, Earl Malcolm in 1211x1225 and Countess Matilda in

²²¹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos.133, 339.

²²² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.133; BL Add. MS 33245 fol 141v.

²²³ BL Add. MS 33245 fols 132r-v, 141v, 160r; *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos 63, 133, 138, 339; ii, nos 62, 105, 172; *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, vi, *The Acts of David II*, ed G W S Barrow (Edinburgh, 1971), no.314.

²²⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos.133, 342.

²²⁵ BL Add. MS 8930 fols 1r-3v; Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'.

²²⁶ *The Scottish Chronicle by Raphael Holinshed*, vol I (Arbroath, 1805), 383.

²²⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos 39, 41, 43, 44.

1242x1247.²²⁸ The presence of the bodies of dead ancestors was often a key factor in prompting future patronage. While Earl Gilchrist's burial at the abbey is not mentioned in the charter evidence, that it did take place, and in the location indicated by Holinshed, would seem to be confirmed by the grant made in 1343 by Margaret, countess of Angus, in her widowhood, of various lands in return for one mass celebrated perpetually at the altar of St Katherine in the abbey for the souls of herself, her late husband, Earl John, and all of their ancestors and successors.²²⁹ The heir to the earldom, their son Thomas, was a child at this time and so Margaret was acting under her own agency as countess. In doing so, Margaret may have been emulating Countess Matilda whose grant was also made during her widowhood.

There are only two other mentions of burial in the abbey records. In 1230x1240, Walter of Lundin and his wife Christina arranged their interment should they die in the Mearns, Angus or nearby.²³⁰ The other is vaguer: David de Manuel promised to render his deathbed bequest whether he was buried in the abbey or not.²³¹ This suggests that the option was open to him, but that he may decide not to take it. Both of these charters confirm confraternity in the abbey and so it may be that other such arrangements have gone unrecorded, the right to burial being implicit in their membership. It may also be, however, that burial was not a prominent feature of the lay-monastic relationship at Arbroath. Again, a comparison with nearby Coupar Angus is perhaps instructive. Lay burial at this abbey appears far more frequently in the documentary record and may be a reflection of the Cistercian reluctance to provide liturgical commemoration for individuals, something which was clearly much more available at Arbroath.

The abbey's history spans several centuries, of course, and lay piety was not a static entity. The consistent vitality of popular religion right through until the Reformation is evident, but there were significant shifts in the expression of devotion. In 1358, William, bishop of Arbroath, wrote to Canterbury to request a relic of Becket.²³² This may represent efforts to reinvigorate interest in the cult as lay interest in pilgrimage went into decline; several other major cult centres had a similar experience in this period and undertook promotional measures to combat this.²³³ The late medieval period saw an emphasis on much more personal, flexible forms of commemoration as compared to now out-dated monastic liturgical practices. This manifested in a greater focus on the parish church and the proliferation of altars and chaplainries. These trends are apparent in Arbroath. In 1506, John Brown of Lantham endowed a perpetual chaplainry in St Vigean's parish church at the altar of St Sebastian, which he himself had founded. John bestowed further lands and rents in 1521. The charter contains specific instructions regarding the services he wished carried out before the altar. The chaplain was to perpetually celebrate an anniversary, stipulating psalms and dirige (the office for the dead) with note and canto, at the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul with six priests and three boys (*iuuenibus*). The chaplain would receive 2s, the priests and boys 10d and 8d each, respectively, with 14s going to the poor.²³⁴

²²⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos.112, 155.

²²⁹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.20.

²³⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.138.

²³¹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.339.

²³² J B Sheppard (ed), *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ii (1888), no.851.

²³³ T Turpie, 'When the miracles ceased: shrine and cult management at St Andrews and Scottish cathedrals in the later middle ages', in M Brown and K Stevenson (eds), *Medieval St Andrews: Church, Cult, City* (Woodbridge, 2017), 84-98.

²³⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.458, 573.

Similarly, in 1505, Charles Brown, burgess of Arbroath founded an altar of St Nicholas in the Chapel of St Mary, the parish chapel-of ease, and instituted a chaplain with a substantial endowment of lands and rents, augmented further in 1513. Charles's particular concern was that the services should continue after his death; his charter laid out a detailed contingency plan for when the chaplain vacated his post. He instructed that the bailies and burgesses of Arbroath would have the initial right to appoint a successor, but if this was not done within a month then the right to nominate would go to his nearest in blood and family. Should they also fail, the responsibility would fall to the abbot and convent, though would require the consent of the majority of burgesses. The intention was that the vacancy would not last beyond 34 days.²³⁵ A further altar and chaplainry were established in the Chapel of St Mary by Robert Scot, burgess of Arbroath, in 1524, this one dedicated to St Duthac. This charter also stipulated instructions for services and selecting the chaplain, along with a huge *pro anima* list which, interestingly, includes seven monks of the abbey (three of whom share Robert's surname).²³⁶

There may be some indication that the abbey was attempting to adapt to the shift in the spiritual landscape. When the Smithy Croft was leased to Simon Tody in 1465, he was stated to render 8s shillings to the junior monk serving the altar of St Peter in the abbey church for repair of this altar and chapel.²³⁷ When the tenement was leased to Stephen Makaill in 1513, however, a render of 5s was paid for lighting the altar of St Nicholas.²³⁸ This is unusual. Rents paid from particular lands to fund certain altars were usually permanently associated as such, often acquiring the name of the patron. For example, the c.1550 abbey rental designates portions of burgh property simply as the lands of Sts James, Sebastian, Duthac, and Nicholas.²³⁹ The change at Smithy Croft may indicate that some element of choice was offered to the tenant.

It is also clear, however, that more traditional forms of monastic intercession were still valued. At Arbroath, the strongest indication of this is the continued importance of confraternity. Three fifteenth-century examples are mentioned in the records. Two of these appear within the context of dispute resolution and the maintenance of good relations. In 1428, a claim was made by the abbey to two shillings of annual rent and rights of hospitality owed by John Vernour, burgess of Edinburgh. It was agreed that John would fulfil these obligations during his lifetime and in return 'sal be brothiryt' in the abbey.²⁴⁰ In 1456, John Stewart, lord of Lorne, was persuaded to concede two portions of land which had been in dispute 'for his bruthirheid and the suffrage off Halykirk to hyme and hys successouris'.²⁴¹ These examples demonstrate that the draw of monastic confraternity was still appealing enough to function as an effective negotiating tool in the fifteenth century. In other cases, the threat of incurring the monks' displeasure seems to have been inducement enough; in 1457, William de Vldny quitclaimed all lands in dispute between himself and the abbey due to the danger posed to his soul and those of his ancestors and successors.²⁴² A further instance of confraternity membership occurs in 1466 when William de Ouchterlony and his wife, Janet, acquired this.²⁴³

²³⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, nos.448, 765.

²³⁶ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.583.

²³⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.163.

²³⁸ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.541.

²³⁹ NRS RH2/8/81.

²⁴⁰ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.62.

²⁴¹ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.105.

²⁴² *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.109.

²⁴³ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no. 172.

The material culture of burial

Burial at the abbey, both lay and religious, has left behind material culture which provides an insight into the practices surrounding death. In May 1938, several graves were discovered in the area which had been the chapter house, the customary burial place of abbots. One was described as containing 'the remains of the abbot's linen habit and long leather boots extending down from the knees and very well preserved', plus 'laurel wreaths which had been laid on the body'. Several others contained the remains of leather footwear.²⁴⁴



Figure 21: excavated graves in the chapter house (May, 1938), Canmore SC 1174315.

Various tomb fragments and effigies have also been recovered from the abbey ruins. On 20 March 1816, a discovery was made in the area of the high altar by workmen who were clearing the area.²⁴⁵ This was a damaged fourteenth-century recumbent effigy of a, now headless, robed figure with a lion at the feet.²⁴⁶ Four small figures are evident surrounding the figure, stretching forward to touch the effigy. These were a feature of medieval tombs known as weepers. One wears a long gown while others, though damaged, can be identified as mail-clad knights. The location of the discovery led to the contemporary assumption that the effigy belonged to King William's tomb. While this has been subsequently challenged, a convincing case has been put forward by George Henderson to support it. The vogue for this type of monument likely only arrived in Scotland in the late thirteenth century; at the time of King William's death in 1214, his grave may instead have been marked by a marble slab with epitaph. Henderson argues that this slab was the source of the Frosterley marble utilised in the later effigy and reworked for this purpose, something he suggests is evident in the effigy's

²⁴⁴ NRS MW1/1002.

²⁴⁵ Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 98-9.

²⁴⁶ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/3.

shape.²⁴⁷ The ‘recycling’ of earlier graveslabs for materials is known elsewhere, for example at Melrose Abbey.²⁴⁸ It has thus been argued that King Robert I was responsible for commissioning a new tomb for



Figure 22: tomb effigy of King William. The Frosterley marble effigy might be a 14th-century replacement of the original monument (collection of R Oram).

William in the contemporary fourteenth-century style. Michael Penman has suggested this formed part of a wider campaign of royal tomb refurbishment undertaken by Bruce, particularly at Dunfermline Abbey.²⁴⁹ King Robert’s interest in William’s tomb is certainly seen in two charters of 1315 which commanded that four marks from Kinghorn and ten marks from the thanage of Monifieth be paid for the maintenance of lights.²⁵⁰

The above effigy should be viewed within the wider context of tomb construction evident at Arbroath. Other small fragments include two pieces of a military effigy, one the upper arm from the shoulder to a plate of armour at the elbow and the other the lower arm and hand, both carved with a fish-scale pattern representing chainmail.²⁵¹ Another fragment is of a pair of lions facing in opposite directions, originally part of a recumbent effigy in the style of the above.²⁵² This popular feature is also seen on a highly eroded religious effigy, wearing a full length robe and a shorter garment on top, with an unidentified animal at the feet [Figure 23].²⁵³ Another religious effigy survives in with much more detail. The figure wears several layers of vestments, all richly

²⁴⁷ G Henderson, ‘A royal effigy at Arbroath’, in W M Ormrod (ed), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1986), 88-98.

²⁴⁸ I Fraser, ‘Medieval funerary monuments in Scotland’, in M Penman (ed), *Monuments and Monumentality across Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Donington, 2013), 9-17, at 15-17.

²⁴⁹ M Penman, ‘A Programme for Royal Tombs in Scotland?’, in M Penman (ed), *Monuments and Monumentality across Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Donington, 2013), 239-53, at 242-7.

²⁵⁰ *RRS*, v, nos.74, 75.

²⁵¹ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/4, 5.

²⁵² Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/12.

²⁵³ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/8.

embroidered [Figure 24]. The right hand was raised, perhaps in blessing, while the left hand likely held a staff or crozier, evidenced by the straight line of broken stone below the arm.²⁵⁴

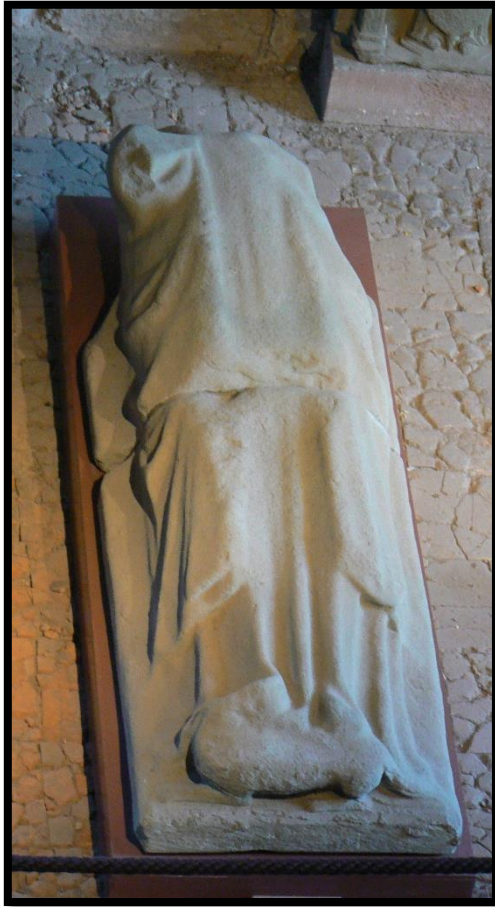


Figure 23: recumbent effigy of a robed prelate, probably an abbot (collection of R Oram).



Figure 24: standing effigy of a prelate, possibly a cult figure of St Thomas (collection of R Oram).

Church furnishings of all kinds became increasingly elaborate in Scotland from the late fourteenth century onwards. In terms of burial, the perceived eschatological value had become linked to the visibility and grandeur of the monument. A principal element of most was the tomb chest, upon which an effigy was often placed.²⁵⁵ An example of this is a surviving panel of a fifteenth-century tomb chest which features carved arches, within which are the figures of monks and an angel. The angel holds a shield which contained the arms of Paniter, an example of the heraldry found on many contemporary tombs, identifying this tomb as that of Walter Paniter, abbot of Arbroath (1410-1449) [Figure 25].²⁵⁶ The arms of this abbot are also found within the abbey sacristy on the arch of an aumbry in the west wall and on one of the wall shaft caps.²⁵⁷ All that remains of another fifteenth-century tomb, this one comprising a military effigy, is a damaged piece of the torso but some of the original detail can be made out [Figure 26]. It features plate armour across the arms and shoulders, with interlocking plates evident on the right hand side, and a

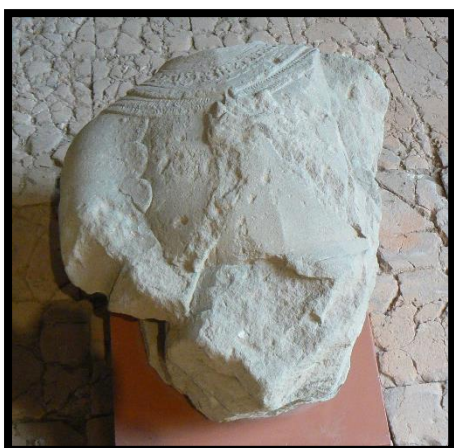
²⁵⁴ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/6.

²⁵⁵ R Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches: Architecture and Furnishings* (Stroud, 2002), 312.

²⁵⁶ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/7.

²⁵⁷ Fawcett, 'Arbroath Abbey: a note on its architecture and early conservation history', 68.

Figure 26: Alexander Gardyne effigy fragment (collection of R Oram)



narrow band of mail at the lower edge of the gorget. The gorget itself is inscribed HIC IACET ALER GARDI (here lies Alexander Gardin).²⁵⁸ This is a burial which does not appear in the documentary record. These personal elements reflect the nature of late medieval religiosity noted above. The general shift away from monastic intercession also applied to lay burial preferences as parish and collegiate churches grew in significance. A discussion of general trends is too simplistic, however, as the evidence suggests that these general shifts did not proportionally affect the choices of the nobility, many of whom continued to favour traditional practices of monastic interment against the prevailing fashions of the period.²⁵⁹

Figure 25: tomb-chest panel, probably from the monument of Abbot Walter Paniter (1410-1449)



Liturgical life

A view of the liturgical life of the abbey is offered by two monastic calendars: a thirteenth century manuscript, of which only a few leaves are extant, and an entire sixteenth-century printed breviary.²⁶⁰ While the latter is not a production specific to the abbey, it contains handwritten additions which reveal the feasts observed at Arbroath: printed feasts are either ticked or not, and numerous

additional saints are added.²⁶¹ A large proportion of these were patrons of parish churches under the abbey's control.²⁶² Several of the others represent cults of significance to the house.

²⁵⁸ Canmore MS 5155/1: Carved stone inventory, ARB/fs/9.

²⁵⁹ K Stöber, *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons: England and Wales, c.1300-1540* (Woodbridge, 2007), 111-46; J T Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise: The Social Function of Aristocratic Benevolence, 1307-1485* (London, 1972), 82-3.

²⁶⁰ BL Add. MS 8930 fols 1r-3v; Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'. The calendar remains unpublished but images of two of the folios are available online:

<<http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mlgb/book/285/>>. A full analysis of this manuscript would be hugely beneficial in understanding the development of the cult of saints at the abbey.

²⁶¹ Including: Kentigern (13 Jan), Julian (27 Jan), Dorothy (6 Feb), Duthac (7 Mar), Patrick (17 Mar), Cuthbert (20 March), Ambrose (4 April), Erasmus (3 June), Albani (22 June), Oswald (5 August), Ebbe (25 August), Translation of Cuthbert (4 September), Mauiani (12 Oct), Mernoci (21 Oct), Ebbe (2 November), Monidi (3 November), Edmund the martyr (20 Nov), and Fotini (12 dec). Others are discussed below.

²⁶² K J Stringer, 'Arbroath Abbey in context, 1178-1320', in G W S Barrow (ed), *The Declaration of Arbroath: History, Significance, Setting* (Edinburgh, 2003), 122, 137. These are SS Marnan, Ternan, Fergus, Bridget, Adomnan, Anglesius, Brendan, Constantine, Machonus, Murdoch and Nathalan, who represent the churches of Aberchirder, Banchory, Glamis, Abernethy, Panbride, Forglan, Tarves, Inverboyndie, Dunnichen, Inverkeilor, Ethie and Meldrum.

The most obvious of these is, of course, St Thomas Becket. In 1178, King William gave the land of the abthane of Old Montrose to Hugh of Roxburgh to be held of the abbey for annual payment of three stones of wax on the feast of St Thomas.²⁶³ In 1221, it was agreed that John, brother of the deceased Humphrey of Berkeley, would provide an annual render of a pound of incense to the abbey on the feast of the Translation of St Thomas in return for holding Hugh's lands.²⁶⁴ Becket's Martyrdom on 29 December is ticked in the monastic calendar (and observed with the octave in the thirteenth-century calendar), and his Translation on 7 July has been written in and accorded the status of *prime dignitaris*, the highest feast ranking given in the sixteenth-century calendar. Also added is the unusual feast of Becket's *Regressio*, his return from exile on 2 December, observed only at Arbroath and Canterbury.²⁶⁵

Royal efforts to link Arbroath to Becket's cult at Canterbury are evident in the annual payment established by King Alexander III of 100 shillings to be delivered by Arbroath to Canterbury for the feeding of thirteen paupers every Tuesday. The cult of St Thomas recognised Tuesday as the saint's special day. Its significance lay in 'Thomas Tuesdays': important life events, including his birth and death, recorded as having taken place on this day of the week.²⁶⁶ Arbroath was compensated for this out of the fermes of Forfar.²⁶⁷ The arrangement was confirmed by King Robert I in 1315.²⁶⁸ The additions made to the sixteenth-century calendar also include three further archbishops of Canterbury: SS Dunstan (19 May), Augustine (26 May), and Edmund of Abingdon (16 November). The latter was canonised in 1246, demonstrating interest in a figure who must have been seen as St Thomas' saintly successor. It is clear, however, that the basis for the liturgical link between Canterbury and Arbroath was the figure of Becket, rather than anything broader. A useful comparison here is found in the fifteenth-century calendar and litany of Dunfermline Abbey, a Benedictine monastery founded by a group of monks from Canterbury in the 1120s. The liturgical practices of Dunfermline were heavily influenced by this link, featuring saints such as the very unusual Wulganus whose body was at Canterbury.²⁶⁹ Such elements are absent at Arbroath.

Another cult of great significance was that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who features alongside St Thomas on surviving thirteenth- and fourteenth-century abbey seals.²⁷⁰ Two charters of King Alexander II which record symbolically significant donations made to the abbey name the BVM as joint beneficiary along with St Thomas: the first in his grant of the land of Nigg given on the occasion of the dedication of the monastic church in 1233, and the second in the grant of 1246 of ten marks to fund the lighting of the church.²⁷¹ There are various mentions in the abbey records of provisions made by the laity for her altar at the abbey. In the first half of the thirteenth century, Robert of London, half-brother of King Alexander II, rendered a stone of wax annually, while Richenda, daughter of Humphrey of Berkeley, funded a lamp from an oxgang of land next to Mill of Conveth

²⁶³ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.95.

²⁶⁴ BL Add. MS 33245 fol 147r-v; *Handlist of the Acts of Alexander II 1214-49*, ed J M Scoular (Edinburgh, 1960), no. 55.

²⁶⁵ Stringer, 'Arbroath Abbey in context', 116.

²⁶⁶ M Gelin and P Webster (eds), *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c.1170-c.1220* (Woodbridge, 2016), 189.

²⁶⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.265; *RRS*, iv part 1, no.127 with comment.

²⁶⁸ *RRS*, v, no.75.

²⁶⁹ P Leroquais, *Les Psautiers Manuscrits Latins des Bibliothèques Publiques de France*, vol I (Macon, 1940), 101; N Morgan (ed), *English Monastic Litanies of the Saints after 1100*, ii (London, 2012), 49-50.

²⁷⁰ W de G Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, iv (London, 1895), 129-30.

²⁷¹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, nos 101, 266.

given to the sacristan of Arbroath.²⁷² Alexander Comyn, earl of Buchan, made two grants: the first in 1255 of two stones of wax annually on Whitsunday, and the second in 1287 of one mark annual rent from land in Tarves to provide two candles.²⁷³ Grants made by King Robert I of the church of Kirkmahoe and land in Berwick also named St Thomas and the Blessed Virgin Mary as beneficiaries.²⁷⁴ A description of the abbey church given in 1517 described a gilded wooden tabernacle placed on the high altar, carved with three images: the Saviour holding the world in his hand; Mary with the child at her bosom; and St Thomas and King William offering the church.²⁷⁵

The four Marian feasts were: The Assumption (15 August), ticked in the sixteenth-century calendar along with the octave (22 August); the Nativity (8 September), ticked along with the octave (15 September); the Annunciation (25 March), ticked; and the Purification (2 February), unticked but clearly an accidental omission. The medieval development of the cult saw the adoption of the Visitation (2 July) and the Conception (8 December), both ticked in the calendar along with the octave of the Visitation (9 July). The calendar also contains another medieval Marian celebration, the Presentation (21 November), which has been written in. At Arbroath it was accorded the highest grade of *prime dignitaris*, one of only four feasts recorded with this status; aside from the Translation of St Thomas, the other two were the dedication of the abbey church (8 May) and the Translation of St Benedict (11 July). The feast of the Presentation was of eastern origin and only accepted by the papacy in 1372.²⁷⁶ Its observation was established at Arbroath before then, however; it was added to the thirteenth century in an early fourteenth-century hand.²⁷⁷ The feast of St Anne, mother of Mary, another cult of later medieval prominence, is also written into the sixteenth-century calendar along with its octave.

In 1517 it was reported that the abbey church contained twelve altars, besides the high altar.²⁷⁸ As discussed above, the dedications of only seven of these are known for certain: the Blessed Virgin Mary, SS Katherine, Laurence, Peter, Nicholas, James, and Mary Magdalene. A letter of William, abbot of Arbroath, dated 1358, stated the foundation date of the abbey to have been the Vigil of St Laurence (9 August) 1178, which may explain the existence of this altar.²⁷⁹ There are a few candidates for the remaining unknown altars who may be suggested here. St Vigean, as the patron of the parish, is a real possibility. The saint's feast on 20 January appears in the abbey's thirteenth century calendar and is an addition to the sixteenth century calendar celebrated *in cappis* (in copes), indicating the elevated ranking of the feast.²⁸⁰ St Columba is another likely contender based on the abbey's custody of the Breccbennoch, a relic of the saint gifted by King William.²⁸¹ While the reliquary was leased along with the land of Forglen from the early fourteenth century onwards, the feast of Columba on 9 June is also added to the sixteenth century monastic calendar and celebrated *in cappis*.²⁸² It would also seem that St John the Baptist was of some significance. The abbey

²⁷² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.256; BL Add. MS 33245 fols 145r-v, 152r-v.

²⁷³ BL Add. MS 33245 fol 160r; *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.319.

²⁷⁴ *RRS*, v, nos 203, 260.

²⁷⁵ Theiner (ed), *Vetera Monumenta*, 525-6.

²⁷⁶ P Jounel, 'The Veneration of Mary', in A G Martimort (ed), *The Liturgy and Time*, IV: *The Church at Prayer* (Collegeville, 1986), 134-41.

²⁷⁷ Stringer, 'Arbroath Abbey in context', 137.

²⁷⁸ Theiner (ed), *Vetera Monumenta*, 525-6.

²⁷⁹ Sheppard (ed), *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ii, no.851. There is no indication of a special commemoration for the founding date in the monastic calendar.

²⁸⁰ Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'.

²⁸¹ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.5.

²⁸² *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.340; ii, nos.39, 108, 208, 349, 236, 409; Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'.

observed the feasts of St John's Nativity on 24 June (plus the octave on 1 July) and that of his Beheading on 29 August.²⁸³ In the thirteenth century, Earl Maelduin of Lennox provided four oxen annually on his feast.²⁸⁴ Additionally, an inquest in 1432 into the land of Ethcarmor in Lanark noted that a half stone of wax was also rendered on this date.²⁸⁵ This is significant since these are the only renders associated with a particular saint who is not a confirmed patron of a chapel in the monastic church.

Another possibility is St Ninian whose feast on 16 September is another handwritten addition to the monastic calendar.²⁸⁶ Ninian has been described as the most popular non-scriptural saint in late medieval Scotland.²⁸⁷ Following the outbreak of the Wars of Independence in 1296, the cult developed a new function as the saint became associated with 'rescue miracles', whereby Scots were saved from harm at the hands of the English through his intervention.²⁸⁸ This newly developed protectionist element gave the cult immediate significance for all those affected by the prolonged warfare, which may be significant considering the damage done to the abbey by English attacks. The main focus for devotion to Ninian at Arbroath seems to have been the chapel of St Ninian situated to the east of the burgh, but that does not mean an altar did not exist in the monastic church. St Nicholas, for example, had altars in both the abbey and the Chapel of St Mary (the parish chapel of ease). The extent of Ninian's popularity in the burgh is evident in the post-Reformation context: the prevalence of the forename 'Ninian' is apparent in the burgh records, and in 1787 the three annual markets were named as St Vigean's, St Ninian's, St Thomas'.²⁸⁹

Post-Reformation significance of the site

There are several indications that, for some, the abbey continued to hold some form of intimate significance long after the buildings descended into ruin. Burial continued within the abbey church after the Reformation. It was noted in 1876 that the gravestone of a burgess with the surname 'Peirsoun', dated 1589, stood near the high altar.²⁹⁰ This was likely David Pearson who received a portion of the precinct gardens in 1586. In 1826, it was stated that 'a common use of interment' had existed for nearly two hundred years.²⁹¹ An undated ground plan of the abbey found in the 'Guynd Drawings' collection shows the south aisle marked off, with the note: 'a number of private burial grounds left here unmolested'. The placement of the monuments is sketched alongside this with names and dates, ranging from 1726 to 1814, with a portion towards the middle simply marked 'old gravestones'.²⁹²

Controversy over the practice erupted in the early nineteenth century. The roots of this conflict lay in events of the previous century. Burgh officials had obtained possession of the yard or orchard of the precinct for use as arable in 1753. Subsequently, however, the magistrates went far beyond the terms of this charter and sub-leased the land and buildings of most of the precinct, including a grant

²⁸³ Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'.

²⁸⁴ *Arbroath Liber*, i, no.133; BL Add. MS 33245 fol 141v.

²⁸⁵ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no.65.

²⁸⁶ Tolhurst, 'Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary'.

²⁸⁷ T Turpie, 'Scottish Saints Cults and Pilgrimage from the Black Death to the Reformation, c.1349-1560' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2011), 63-101.

²⁸⁸ J Higgitt, *Imageis Maid with Mennis Hand: Saints, Images, Belief and Identity in Late Medieval Scotland* (Whithorn, 2003); T O Clancy, 'Scottish Saints and National Identities in the Early Middle Ages' in A Thacker and R Sharpe (eds), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), 397-420, at 403-4.

²⁸⁹ NRS B4; NLS MSS 3294-5.

²⁹⁰ Hay, *History of Arbroath to the Present Time*, 135.

²⁹¹ NRS CS237/O/2/30/2.

²⁹² Canmore C 39275.

made in 1771 to John Ouchterlony of fifty-four square ells of ground in the east end of the abbey church for a burial place.²⁹³ This resulted in tenants making their own alterations to the ruins and further structures being erected adjoining the abbey buildings. Once discovered, substantial efforts were made to reassert the rights of the crown to the site, beginning a long process to bring the precinct back under state control which ultimately culminated in twentieth-century agreements which were made to transfer guardianship to the Ministry of Works.

On 12 July 1814, the following encroachments were reported by Adam Duff, sheriff of Forfar, to the Barons of Exchequer: buildings to the west of the church were converted into stables and warehouses; linen and thread manufactories stood in the yard and orchard; a door had been struck through the wall to the abbey pendent; the chapter house was used as a wood store; a heckling house had been appended to the south wall of the abbey but was now pulled down; a stable and pigsty were built into niches of the abbey wall to the north of the west gate; the ruins to the west had been altered with slate roofs and a brick chimney; and a slaughter house was appended to the north wall. It was also noted that burgh inhabitants were in the custom of burying within the interior of the abbey ruins, instead of the proper cemetery. The east end of the church was enclosed by a stone wall as a private burial ground of the family of Mr John of Ouchterlony; the family of the late Provost Andson, meanwhile, were in the process of enclosing their own private burial ground in the middle of the nave.²⁹⁴

Following investigation, on 2 January 1816 the King's Counsel found that that the burgh magistrates had violated the terms of the 1753 charter and that a Process of Declaration must be raised before the Court of Session to ascertain the rights of crown. A summons was prepared at the instance of the Officers of State against the magistrates and all others claiming rights to any part of the premises of the abbey. That spring, though the legal action was far from concluded, work began on clearing and excavating the ruins, leading to the discovery of the grave and effigy assumed to be King William. In alarm, John Ouchterlony contacted Adam Duff. The latter responded that the crown was entitled to dispute Ouchterlony's rights and expressed concern that no discoveries could be made in the east end of the church while the enclosure remained. Duff did, however, feel that a compromise could be found, namely that, once the wall was removed and the area cleared, the remains could be reinterred below the original abbey floor and the area enclosed by a railing instead which would not restrict the view of the abbey ruins. A protracted legal case ensued, the outcome of which was that Ouchterlony was found to be one of those in unlawful possession of crown property, a decision ultimately upheld by the House of Lords in 1825 following several appeals by Ouchterlony. By then, the 'rubbish' had been cleared from the rest of the church and the burial ground stood nearly ten feet above the ground level. Ouchterlony was instructed to remove the wall, but reassured that the burial place should not be disturbed.²⁹⁵

In 1835, however, the burial ground was indeed cleared. It was reported by Robert Reid, the King's Architect, that this was necessary for repairs and improvement to be carried out, and that he was 'unacquainted with any assurance said to have been given'. Moreover, Reid felt that 'Mr Ouchterlony labours under a total misconception on the subject', the burial ground having 'the appearance of nothing but a mass of rubbish which had accumulated in that quarter of the abbey'. This suggests that, by the early nineteenth century, the graves in question were not particularly recent and buried under fallen masonry. Human remains were uncovered during the clearance

²⁹³ NRS CS237/O/2/30/2.

²⁹⁴ NRS GD1/138/1.

²⁹⁵ NRS CS237/O/2/30/2.

operations and subsequently reinterred, but Ouchterlony's request for the erection of a railing was now denied.²⁹⁶

The Ouchterlony burial tradition at the abbey may have originated in the fifteenth century when William de Ouchterlony and his wife obtained confraternity membership.²⁹⁷ While the Reformation in 1560 may seem like a watershed moment for such practices, this was not necessarily the case. For example, the Frasers of Lovat continued their own tradition of burial at Beaulieu Priory well into the seventeenth century. Burials also continued in other types of now redundant religious buildings such as collegiate churches and chantries.²⁹⁸ The basis for such continuities was the ongoing importance of family tradition and status for the choice of grave location in the post-Reformation period. It is possible, then, that the grant obtained by John Ouchterlony in 1771 reflects a deliberate continuation of a known ancestral precedent. An interest in commemorating historic family graves is also seen in a petition made in 1844 by Mr Pearson to erect a tablet within the abbey in memory of his own ancestors.²⁹⁹ Such personal engagement with the site, particularly for burial, suggests that the abbey ruins had, in the minds of local inhabitants, lost any Catholic connotations. Ironically, in 1844 an unsuccessful bid was made to purchase a portion of the abbey grounds for the purpose of erecting a Catholic Church.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ NRS MW1/471.

²⁹⁷ *Arbroath Liber*, ii, no. 172.

²⁹⁸ A Spicer, 'Defyle not Christ's kirk with your carrion': burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland', in B Gordon and P Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), 154-9.

²⁹⁹ NRS MW1/471.

³⁰⁰ NRS RHP6511/2/1-2.

Conclusions

Although it was one of the greatest monasteries in medieval Scotland and one of the best documented in terms of its surviving parchment record, the buildings which represented the physicality of the abbey at Arbroath have left relatively few traces in the written sources. Indeed, other than in the words of the description of the buildings provided by Walter Boece in 1517, in many ways, significant portions of the medieval complex are essentially prominent through their invisibility. It is remarkable that even detailed information relating to the arrangement of the interior of the abbey at any point in its history down to the Reformation is almost completely absent, with the location of only one of the twelve subsidiary altars being positively identified in a written record. Boece's account, while mentioning that the high altar was not against the east wall of the church, that the choir stalls were in a double row, and that there was an organ on the 'right' side of the church, is disappointingly vague.

The location of all interments with the exception of that of the abbey's royal founder are equally vague. We can make guesses on the basis of likely disposition around the available space, e.g. in the north-eastern choir aisle and in the outer two bays of both transepts, but those spaces together with the known location of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary give us only six identifiable positions. What we can reconstruct from that, however, jointly with the surviving portions of monumental effigies and tomb chests, is that the interior of the church was divided by screens and rails and had numerous high-quality monumental tombs disposed around the spaces so formed. How, exactly, that space was configured remains the subject of conjecture based on analogy with other sites with a higher degree of physical survival or a differently detailed documentary record. Surprisingly, major portions of the fabric, such as the sacristy/treasury to the south of the choir, have left no trace whatsoever in the documentary record, despite bearing the arms of the prominent Abbot Walter Paniter (1410-49), whose career is relatively well documented.

The cloister and its components are equally poorly represented in the record. Most of our knowledge comes from the thumbnail sketch offered by Walter Boece. The chapter house, the veritable nerve-centre of the monastic operation, is present as the space within which business was conducted but, as a space, it is almost utterly absent from accounts. Indeed, it only really comes into its own as a place when it was already ruinous in the late sixteenth century. The dormitory in the space above the chapter house in the east range is only marginally better represented, with reference to repairs being undertaken there but with no detail on access arrangements, internal subdivisions or, importantly, relationship to the reredorter or latrine block. We can guess that the novices were educated in a space at the lower level of the south end of the east range, where the library mentioned by Boece might also have been located, but was the scriptorium which might once also have served as the royal writing office under Abbot Bernard also located there?

It is very intriguing that Boece speaks of two refectories used on different occasions. What is unclear is if these spaces were upper and lower levels of the south range or if one occupied the south range (possibly that for feast days) and one filled the west range. A 'common day' function for the west range space is perhaps better suited by its proximity to the pilgrim and guest accommodation in the neighbouring gatehouse. The Abbot's House stands at the junction of these two ranges and presumably communicated directly with both, so preserving the fiction of dining in common that Boece mentioned.

Strangely, considering how substantial and significant a role it played in the life of the monastery, the gatehouse range and its component parts has left little imprint in the pre-Reformation record. The precinct wall, too, is 'presently absent' from much of the discussion of the abbey, other than

when it begins to feature as a property boundary in respect of the neighbouring burgh and burgage plots within it. It is, however, clearly definable and its boundaries remained recognisable into the nineteenth century as major limiters on the development of the town's street-plan. We can map its outline and identify its major internal elements, but most of the space remains a blank canvas in our understanding of the internal operation of the monastic enclosure. Beyond the monks' cemetery, which lay to the south and east of the choir of the church, what little we know of the other components of the precinct points to gardens and yards, as mentioned by Boece.

More can be said of parts of the monastic complex that lay outside the later medieval enclosure. The chief elements that emerge from the records are the lay cemetery on the north side of the church, mentioned by Boece in 1517 but occurring in several other sources. Adjacent to that was the Barngreen, containing the main store complex of the abbey; it appears in the records throughout the later medieval and immediately post-Reformation periods. Although there is no clear evidence for these areas having formerly fallen within the precinct, their disposition and their contents suggest that they had originally been part of that space. It is likely that the pressure on them for lay access – both for delivery of grain to the granaries and burials in the graveyard – led to their separation from the remainder of the precinct enclosure. This is likely to have occurred in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century, when the great gatehouse range was being constructed, which created a 'public' space in front of the abbey's western façade. With the Smiddy Croft on the northern side of the road which bounded the lay graveyard and Barngreen, and the Almory to the west, we see traces of a wider religious or monastic landscape that was not closed within the precinct proper. When we add the mill, rabbit warren, outer yards and enclosures, chapels-of-ease and Hospital of St John to that cluster, we are presented with an extensive landscape shaped by and for the abbey. Together, it serves as a sharp reminder that 'Arbroath Abbey' was always much greater and more diffuse as an entity than the walled nucleus at its centre might suggest to us today.

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Appendix 1: Annotated map



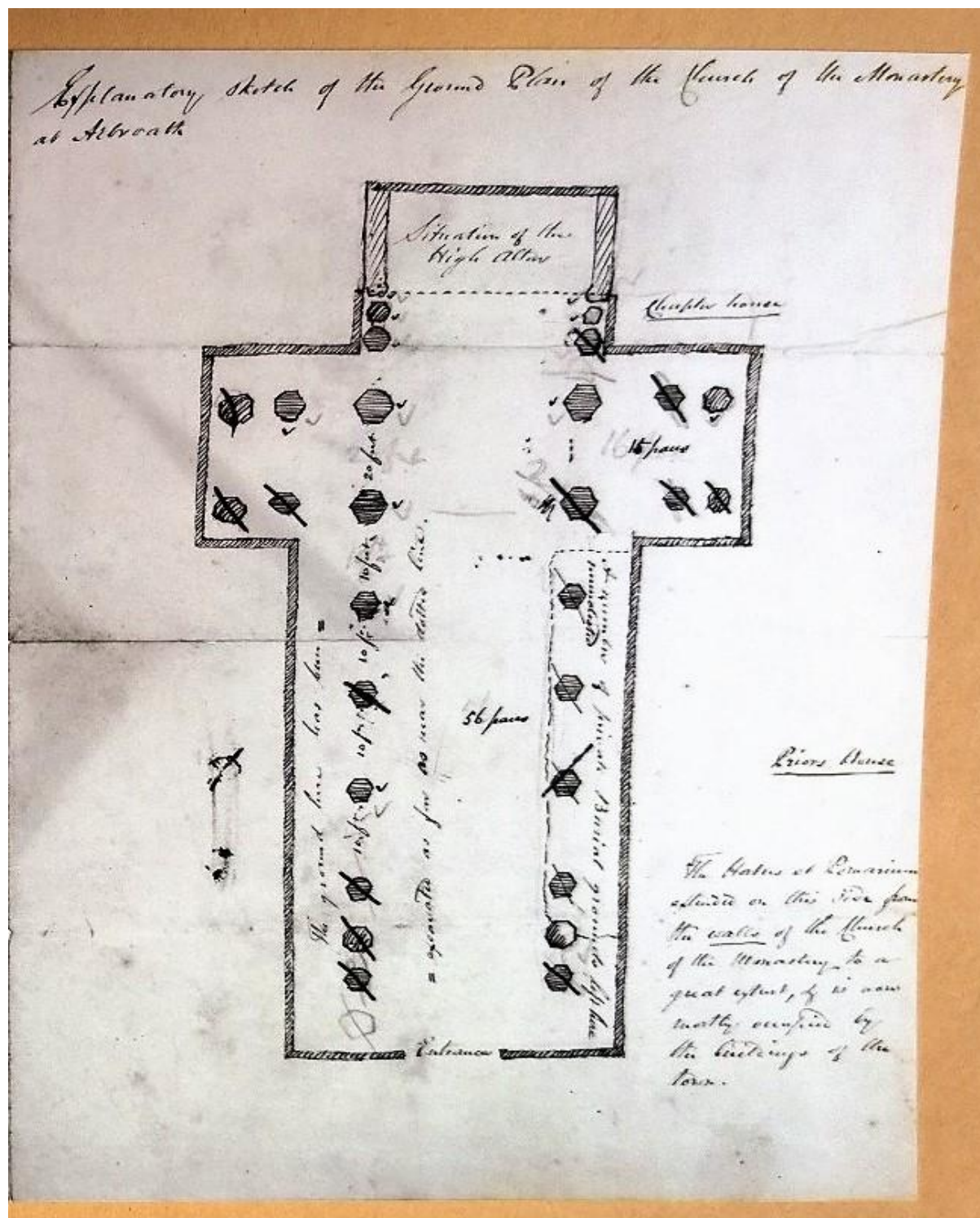
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Appendix 3: Abbey seal depicting BVM and St Thomas of Canterbury, Arb Liber vol II, p.xxxi



Appendix 4: Ground plan of Arbroath Abbey (undated), Canmore C 39275



Mr Ferguson's Monument 1726	Mr Mackie Mr Fergus 1787	Mr Adam 1796	P. Davidson 1806	Mr Thomson 1808	Robert of Kirkcaldy 1788	Mr Grant 1808	Mr Douglas 1801	Mr Dickie 1789	Table of Names of Burials 1706 & 88
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Inscription on Mr Ferguson's Monument in the Abbey
 This Burial place built Anno 1726 belongs to Mr John Ferguson Minister of the Gospel at Aberbrothock who was ~~born~~ of ordained Minister at Robertson in the Presbytery of Selkirk Anno 1696 & was ordained Minister at Aberbrothock Anno 1699