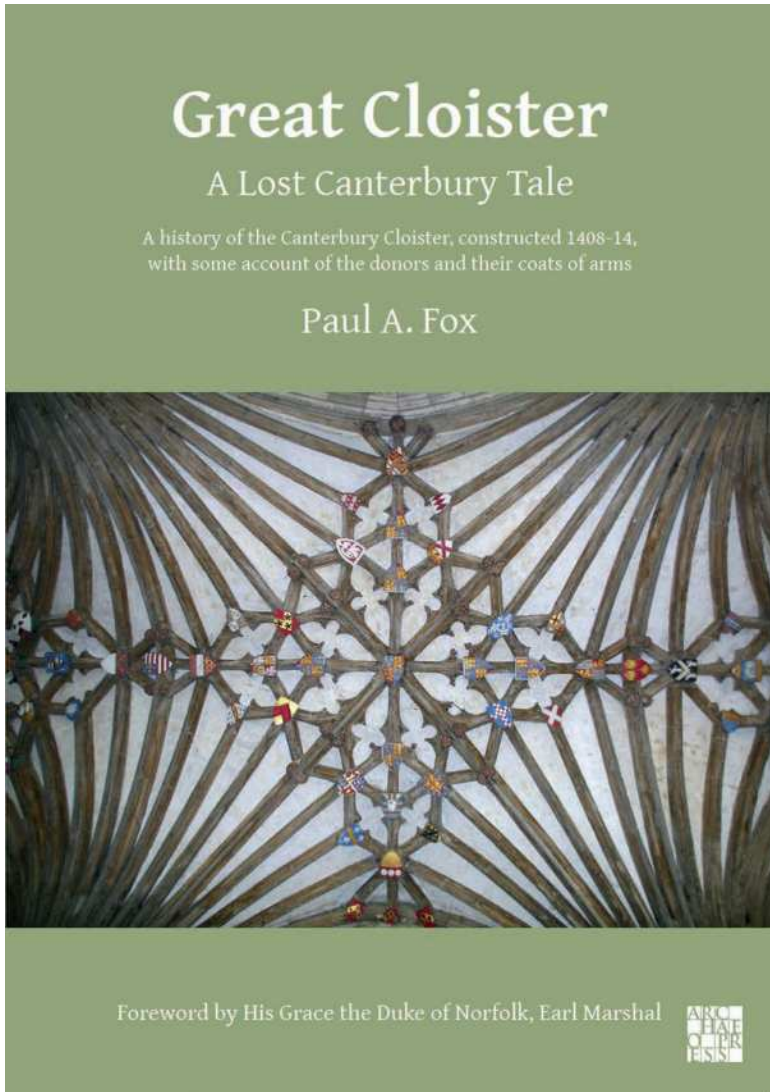


BOOK REVIEWS

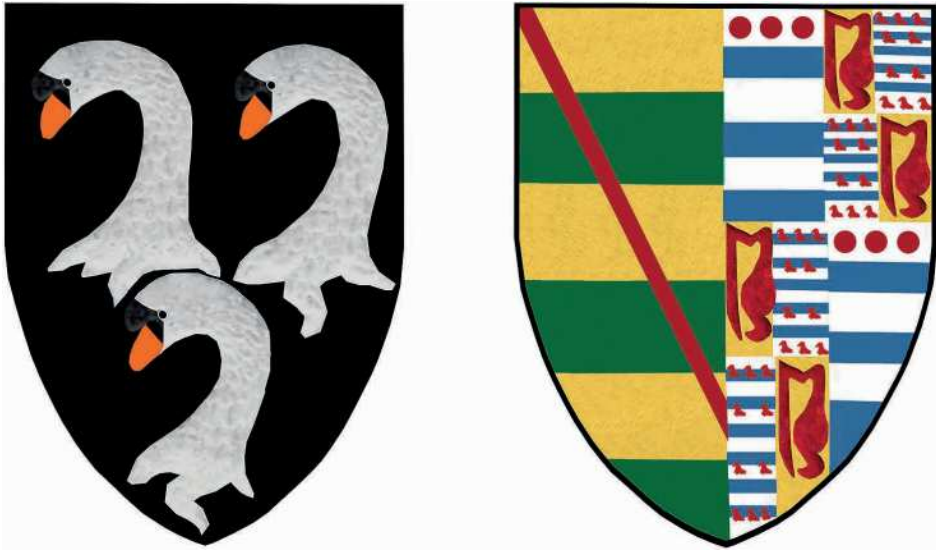
Paul A. Fox, *Great Cloister: A Lost Canterbury Tale. A history of the Canterbury Cloister, constructed 1408–14, with some account of the donors and their coats of arms.* Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020. iv+694pp. 771 illustrations (679 in colour, 55 in black and white and 37 pedigrees). Softcover ISBN 978-1-78969-331-7. £65; E-book ISBN 978-1-78969-332-4. £16.



Thomas Arundel was the son of an earl, an intimate of Henry IV, Chancellor of England, Archbishop of Canterbury, and also – as Paul Fox shows in this monumental work – the guiding hand behind the heraldic decoration of the Great Cloister of Canterbury

THE COAT OF ARMS

Cathedral. Although the cloister was constructed some 600 years ago, there has not been a comprehensive study of those whose arms are there recorded, until now.



Typical illustrations from the book drawn by the author based on photographs of the Cloister arms. Left: arms of Colley (p.219); right: Poynings impaling Grey of Ruthin (p.543).

© Paul A.Fox

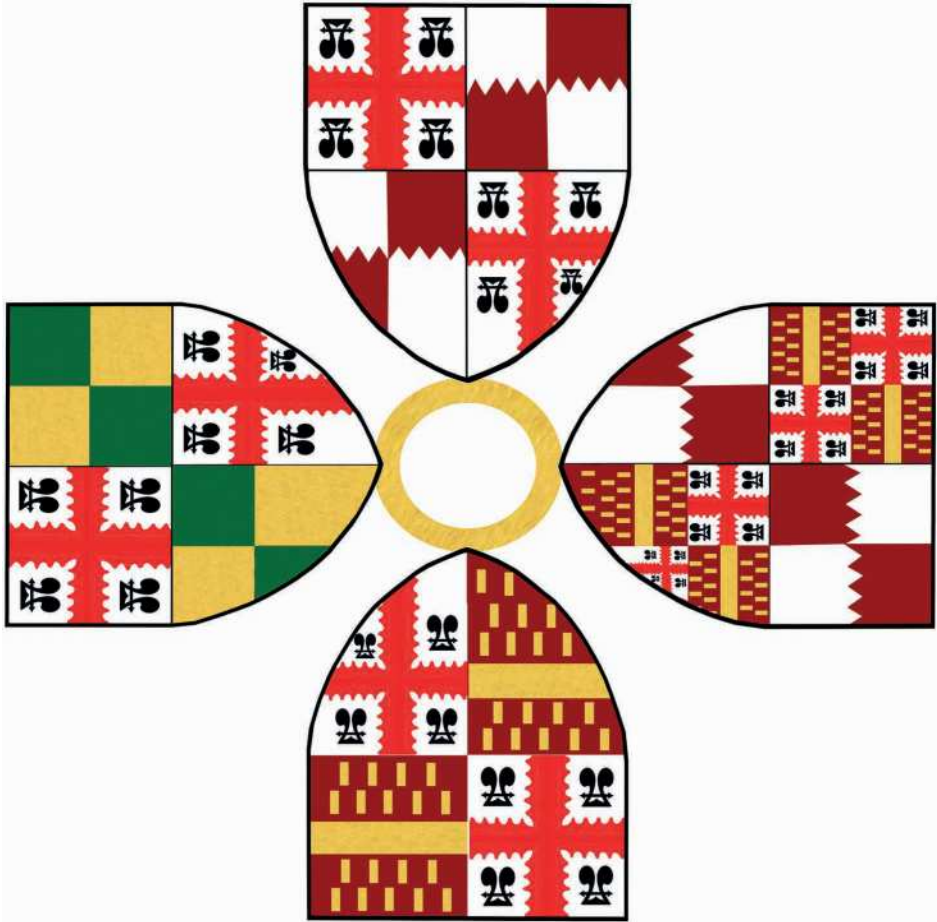
Fox begins by dating the construction of the cloister to the period 1408–1414. In a convincing chain of reasoning he uses surviving building accounts, historical events, and artistic style to determine the dates and order in which each section of the cloister was constructed. This evidence points strongly to Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, as the instigator of the heraldic decoration. Another suggestive piece of evidence is that the last bay of the cloister was completed after Arundel's death, and is the only bay to duplicate the decoration of an earlier bay. Chapter Two provides a biography of Arundel.

The heraldic decoration of the cloister has long been considered a record of donors to the Cathedral; Fox goes further and proposes that it is a roll of arms of distinguished donors with whom Arundel was personally acquainted, and from whom he had solicited donations. He links 33% of the donors directly to Arundel, 13% to Henry IV, and 48% to the Duchy of Lancaster, individuals whom Arundel plausibly encountered through his position in the Lancastrian court. Fox also advances the interesting hypothesis that the King's father, John of Gaunt, was deliberately omitted from the heraldic scheme, because he had sentenced Arundel's brother Richard to death for treason.

Fox's identification of themes to the decoration in several of the bays both enabled, and was enabled by, his correct determination of the owners of the arms. This is where much of the detective work in the fifteen-year span of this project has come in. Colours are of course necessary to work out the blazon of a coat of arms, but the arms in the cloister have been repainted, and whitewashed, and repainted throughout its life. In

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Chapter Four Fox discusses the four written accounts from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries that comprise his sources, and provides numerous case studies which illustrate



Arms of Thomas, Cardinal Bourchier and his brothers, drawn by the author, p.145.

©Paul A.Fox

how he reconciled their information. Fox concludes this introductory section with a discussion of heraldic innovations of the period, including impalement, and reversal of arms, some of which can be seen in the cloister.

At this point we have what would normally be end matter – a bibliography, and tables listing the shields alphabetically, and numerically. Each entry in the bibliography begins with the short form of the reference in bold type, which certainly facilitates finding the work, though the author has an idiosyncratic system for choosing the abbreviated form (whence we have *Wagner*, *Wagner 1939*, *Wagner CA*, *Wagner Man*, and even *Wagner*:) I am not entirely sure of the reasoning for the placement of these sections, as the works

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in the bibliography are also referred to the rest of the book, and the index to the book is placed, as expected, at the end. The tables of shields at least serve as a table of contents to the section that follows, comprising the bulk of the book – 600 of its 700 pages.

It is this section which will perhaps prove most useful as a work of reference. For each coat of arms in the cloister (and there are many coats which appear more than once) Fox provides either a biography of the individual who was a donor to the cathedral, where this is reasonably obvious, and/or a history of the family leading to the family member most likely responsible for the inclusion of the arms in the Cloister. Where relevant, a pedigree chart is also included. Each section is illustrated with a colour image of the arms. It appears, though it is not stated, that these are photographs of the arms as they currently appear in the Cloister.

With 365 unique coats of arms to research, it is clear that a mammoth amount of work has been involved. A side effect, however, of such a long period immersed in the subject, is that there are occasions where what is obvious to the author is not necessarily obvious to the reader. For example, following Chapter 5 is a list of more than twenty ‘lost shields’, complete with bay numbers and ascriptions of ownership. Earlier in the text we are told that of the 856 coats of arms present in 1414 ‘only three ... are irretrievably lost, while for another three the form is known but not the colours’ (p. 29). It is not immediately clear how to reconcile these facts – are the arms lost if we know what they were? And which are the three irretrievably lost? The answer seems to lie in the numerical list of shields on pp. 66–73; there were 30 shields recorded as lost in Willement’s nineteenth-century account of the cloister. Most of these have been apparently identified by Fox with the help of earlier written sources, though in half a dozen cases, only ‘intrusive’ arms, not the original, can be identified. The three coats which have been completely lost (numbers 20/27, 25/27, and 28/33) are not in fact recorded in the list of lost shields. A short paragraph would have sufficed to clarify this for readers. There are also a few places where the non-specialist may lack context, e.g. the difference between Archbishop’s knights, King’s knights and King’s esquires.

Minor infelicities of capitalisation and spacing can occasionally be found, the latter resulting in a hyperlink being created in the digital version of the book. The few typos which I spotted were by the genius of Titivillus located in the introduction. The abbreviations used are sometimes opaque – for example ‘Nland’, is not immediately recognisable as Northumberland, until one reads a reference like ‘Percy of Nland’. Column headings on the tables of shields, particularly for the numerical identifiers, would enhance their utility, but these are minor quibbles. Despite the large volume of information, this work is eminently readable, with the author’s wit showing through in phrases like ‘a long and unbroken series of Richards’ (p.74). This book will prove a valuable reference for those interested in the Cloister.

Philip Allfrey

Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard, *Nordiske Heraldiske Exlibris*. Copenhagen: Heraldiske Studier 7, 2019. 97 pp, 85 figures. ISBN 87-88313-08-5. Paperback. Price 80 DKK (11 €) for members of the Scandinavian Heraldry Society and 100 DKK (14 €) for non-members, plus postage.

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President

His Grace The Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal

Honorary Secretary

John Tunesi of Liongam

e-mail: honsecheraldrysociety@googlegmail.com

Membership Secretary

Jane Tunesi of Liongam

e-mail: membership@theheraldrysociety.com

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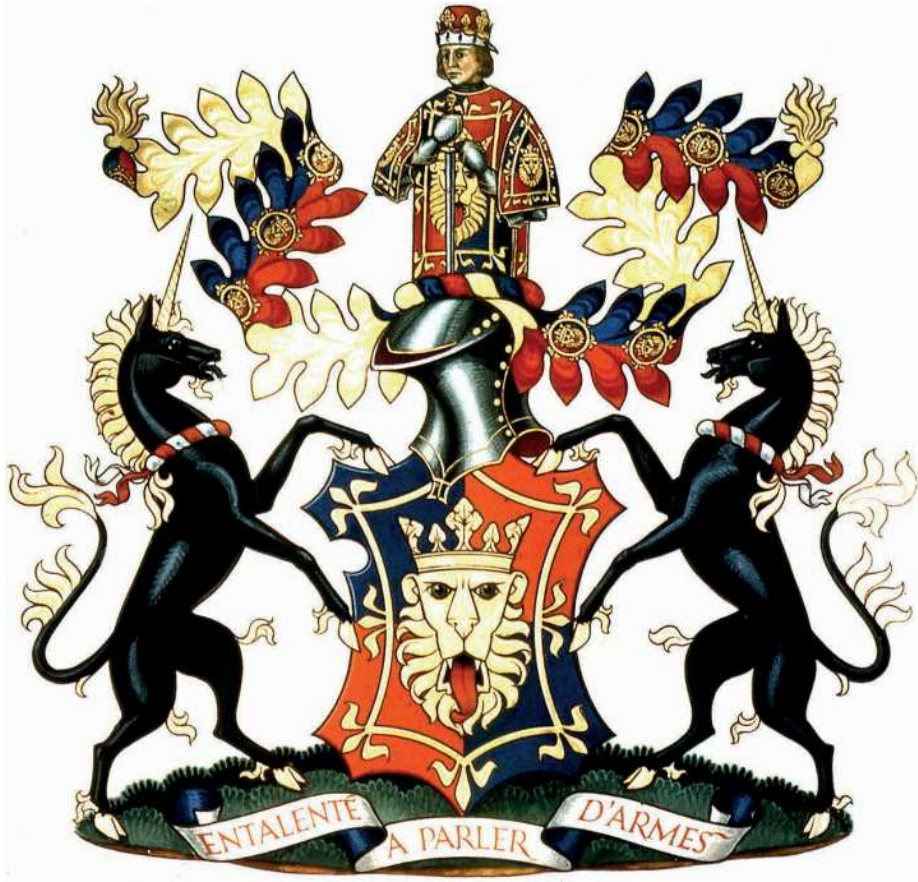
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