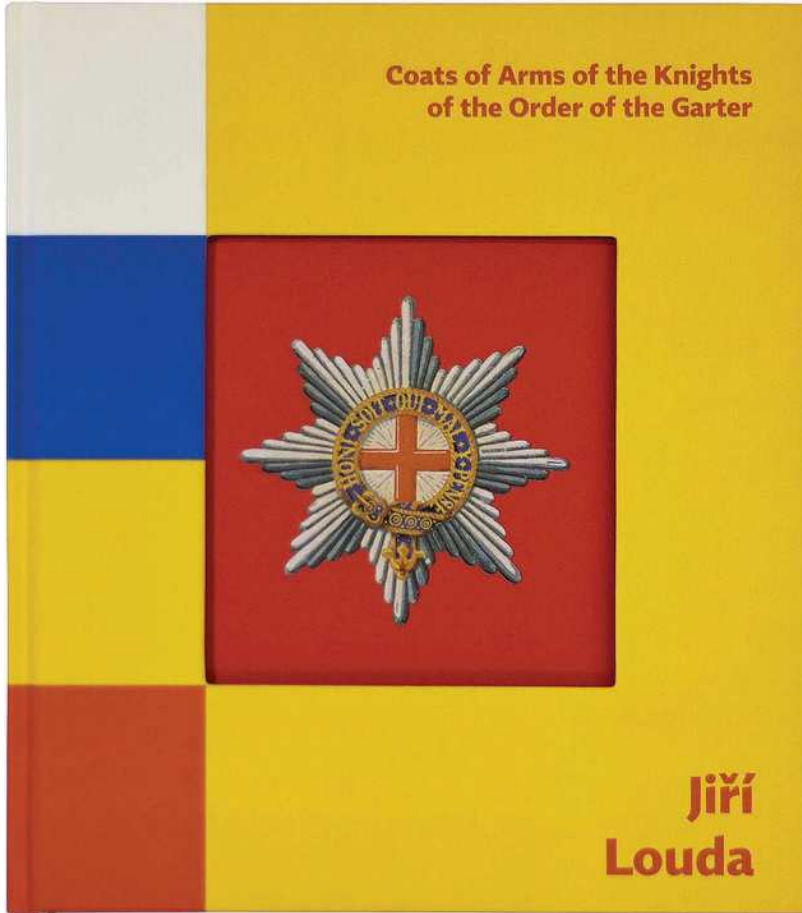


BOOK REVIEWS

Karel Müller, Michal V Šimůnek and Karel Podolský, (tr. Ashley Davies) *Coats of Arms of the Knights of the Order of the Garter by Jiří Louda*. Olomouc, Czech Republic: Palacký University, 2020. Hardcover 688pp, over 1000 colour illustrations. ISBN 978-80-244-5621-8, 3000 CZK.



Jiří Louda was one of the most significant armorists and heraldic artists of the twentieth century, a member of the Académie internationale d'héraldique, and Fellow of both the Heraldry Society and the Society of Heraldic Arts. He became enamoured of heraldry while in exile in England during World War II, serving with the allied forces. On return to Czechoslovakia, he was at first honoured, then fell under the shadow of the new Communist regime. From the 1950s however he led the revival of Czech heraldry, and from the 1970s developed his interest in the Most Noble Order of the Garter, for which his artwork was first displayed in Prague Castle in the 1990s.

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This work continued until 2011, four years before his death. By then he had painted 1036 achievements, for all the recognised Knights Companion, the modern Ladies of the Garter, and Sovereigns of the Order. His heraldic collections were bequeathed to Palacký University, which has chosen to celebrate his centenary year by reproducing the whole Garter series in a book of faithful facsimiles.

The main body of the book is prefaced with forewords by HRH Prince of Wales and the Rector of Palacký University, and an introductory essay by the editors outlining the history of the Order, Louda's interest in its heraldry, and how his artistic legacy was safeguarded by the University. If this seems too brief an account, the reader will find further narrative chapters at intervals throughout the book, preceding the plates for several of the Sovereigns of the Order. Together these make up a substantial biography of the artist and chronicle his many achievements, and they are illustrated with many other examples of his heraldic art. In the end-pages the reader will find a name index and a bibliography of the sources for Louda's research and of his own publications. The latter includes his autobiography *Svým Dějinám Neutečeme*¹, no doubt a major sourcebook for the compilers. Finally, there is a list of persons important to his life and work. His consultants in the College of Arms over the years are not included, but they are thoroughly credited in one of the biographical essays, with particular mention of the late Hubert Chesshyre, Clarenceux King of Arms 1997–2010 and Garter Secretary.

Undeniably the chief glory of this book is the Garter armorial itself. Jiří Louda's A4 artwork (**Figure 1**), which this reviewer has seen for himself at the artist's home, has been faithfully reproduced in roughly half original size, two achievements to a page. Louda had commissioned a complete set of colour copies, and the Heraldry Society borrowed these for its own publication²; but of course they cannot compete with the originals. The artistic style is consistent throughout the six and a half centuries, robust modern-medieval in character, bowing to contemporary fashion only by using couché shields in the first century of the Order.

There have been many sources for the lists and blazon of Companions of the Order over the centuries. The register was radically revised by George Beltz in 1841³, and this is the list and numbering now followed. Unfortunately, Louda has slightly confused this in the twentieth century by numbering ten Ladies of the Garter – members of our Royal family and foreign Queens Regnant – as if they were Companions, as later Ladies of the Garter indeed were. Another anomaly, explained in Louda's own notes, is his frequent choice to display a Knight's blazon as at the end of his career rather than at his investiture or installation. Both these questions are discussed in the editorial texts.

His choice of blazons will inevitably provoke some debate. Medieval achievements need not be consistent, especially in their choice of quarterings, but he has treated stallplates as a sound basis, where they survive. Baz Manning has recently undertaken an analytical study, or armory, of the visible Garter heraldry at Windsor, in which he generally finds Louda's armorial a good authority². Jiří Louda had hoped to see his Garter

¹ Jiří Louda, *Svým Dějinám Neutečeme (We cannot escape history)*, Edice Osoudy, 2010.

² Heraldry Archive (Heraldry sources on digital media): *Armorial of the Order of the Garter*, Heraldry Society, 2015; enlarged edition 2020.

³ George Frederick Beltz, *Memorial of the Order of the Garter*, London, 1841.

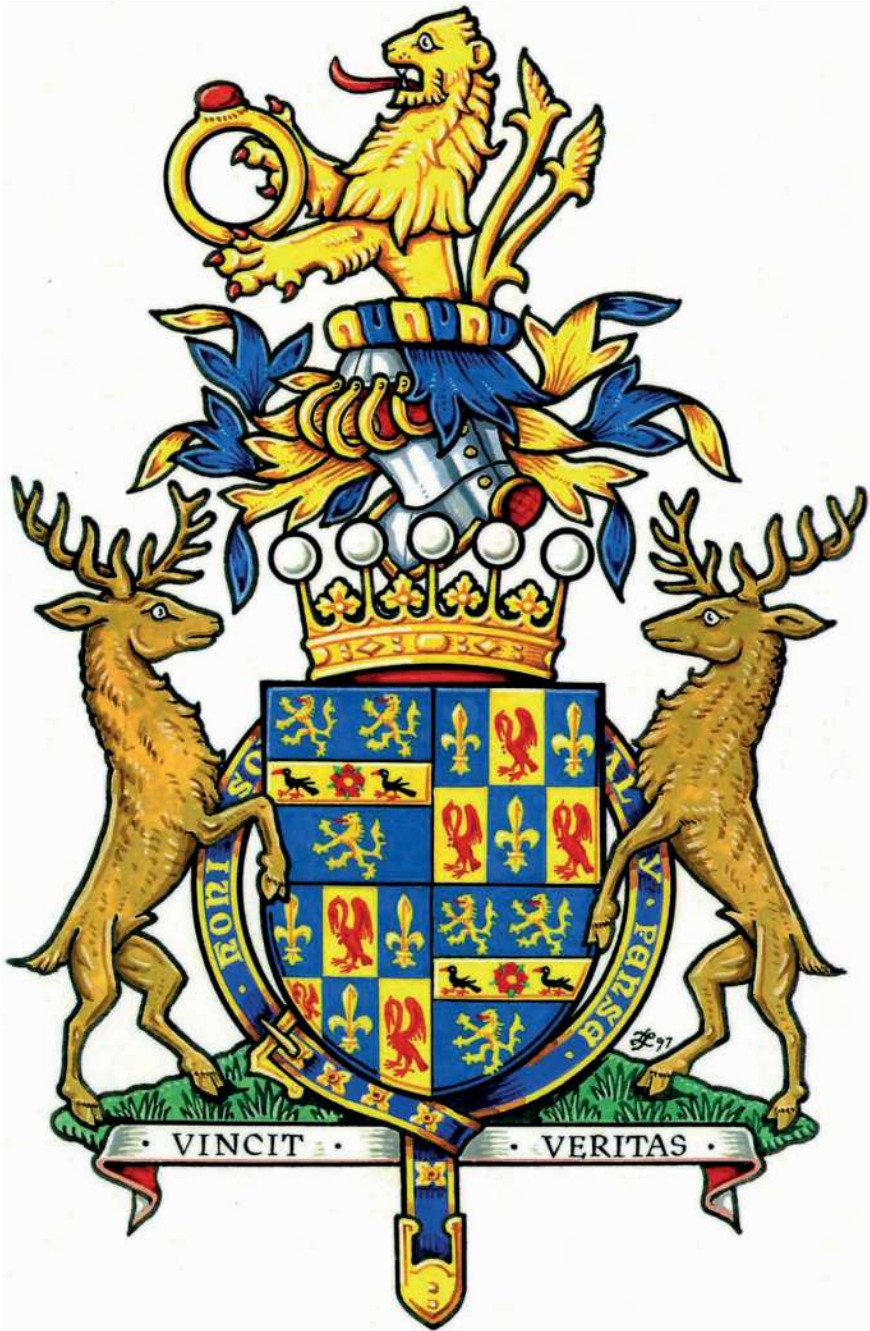


Figure 1: Louda's drawing of the arms of Thomas, Lord Cromwell of Okeham (d.1540) 1st Earl of Essex is no.300 in the book. This higher resolution version of the drawing ©The Heraldry Society is to be found on the CD-ROM published by the Society, see next review.

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work in print in his own lifetime. By realising this dream in his centenary year, Palacký University has paid a fitting tribute to one of the giants of heraldic art and scholarship.

Andrew Gray FHS

Dr Andrew Gray (ed.), *Armorial of the Order of the Garter*, The Heraldry Archive/The Heraldry Society, 2020. CD-ROM. ISBN 978-0-904858-99-0, £20.

The Garter Armorial disc is part of the *Heraldry Archive* series under the editorship of Dr Andrew Gray, which aims to make previously published works of heraldic scholarship more accessible. This is the second edition of the disc (it was first released in 2015) and has been updated with a list of medieval Ladies of the Garter, by Dr Gray, and original research by Baz Manning, shield painter to the Order of the Garter, on the arms of Knights of the Garter as displayed around Windsor Castle.

As an armorial one would expect to find a list of knights with their arms either blazoned or emblazoned. What we are presented with, and what the plural title of the disc alludes to, is seven separate armorials. The earliest is the so-called “Garter Book” of William Bruges, the first Garter King of Arms (British Library MS Stowe 594) containing paintings of the founder knights in armorial surcoats, and painted armorial shields of their successors, organised by stall, until circa 1450. The images provided on the disc are also available on the British Library website (**Figure 1**).

The second armorial is E. Alpertton Harrison’s *Armorial Registry of the Sovereigns & Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* published in 1871, which in many respects attempts to do what the present disc does, only in print, and 150 years earlier. It contains a list of Knights of the Order, and monochrome renderings of their arms. This is a rare volume – the editor notes the existence of only six, or possibly seven, copies in online catalogues. However, he appears to have missed a duplicate entry in WorldCat (“Armorial Registry” vs “Armorial Register”) showing a further three copies at Cambridge, Yale, and Newcastle Universities.

The third armorial is William St John Hope’s “Stall Plates of the Knights of the Garter, 1348–1485”, published in 1901. What this loses in terms of temporal coverage it gains by having life-size full-colour images of the stall plates, plus brief biographical notes about each knight.

The fourth armorial consists of photographs taken by Baz Manning of the “Dean’s Tables”. These are a set of panels kept in the Deanery in Windsor Castle on which the arms of each new knight are painted (by Manning since 2000). The current tables were started in 1635, replacing an earlier set which had decayed. This is arguably one of the more useful sections of the disc, as these tables are not publicly accessible. Manning also provides some notes on the history of the tables and the artists who painted them.

The fifth armorial consists of more than 1000 original colour paintings of knights’ arms up to 2011 by Dr Jiří Louda. These were copied with permission by the editor for the first edition of this disc, but have recently been published in *Coats of Arms of the Knights of the Order of the Garter* (Palacký University, 2020) as reviewed elsewhere in this issue. To bring the series of colour emblazonments up to date for the second edition, images of the arms of the knights since 2011 have been added, mostly from artwork