

**THE ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORY OF  
YORK CATHEDRAL**

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The Architectural History of York Cathedral by R. Willis

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**R. WILLIS**

**THE ARCHITECTURAL  
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THE

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

OF

York Cathedral.

BY THE

*Robert*  
REV. R. WILLIS, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

JACKSONIAN PROFESSOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

—  
READ BEFORE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,  
AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING, AT YORK, JULY, 1846.  
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## PREFACE.

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THE following history is drawn up upon the same general system as that which I have already adopted in the cases of Canterbury and Winchester, which I have had the honour of publishing under the auspices of the Archæological Institute.

In the first place I have collected together the chronicled history of the building, retaining the very words of the original whenever the building itself was the immediate subject of the paragraph in question. I have, in the next place, closely examined the structure itself, analyzing its various arrangements as they arose from time to time, and comparing them with the previous chronicle. Much however of the history of this cathedral is necessarily derived from fabric rolls, indulgences, and other chapter documents which do not admit of being completely separated as the passages of a written chronicle do, and therefore I have been compelled to scatter these memoranda throughout my analysis of the structural changes. Nevertheless I have always taken the greatest pains to separate my own hypotheses and explanations of these documents from the documents themselves, in opposition to the general practice of writers of architectural history, which is, that after having satisfied themselves of the meaning and application of the chronicles and other documents to the various parts and periods of a building, they proceed to interweave these documents into their histories in such a manner as to make it exceedingly difficult to discover other possible explanations.

I cannot pretend to any original research amongst the papers that are quoted in the following pages. I have merely taken those that I found ready to my hand in Stubbs, Drake, Britton, and lastly in the voluminous and elaborate work of Mr. Browne, who appears to have exhausted this source of information from the ready access which the liberality of the chapter and his residence at York has afforded him. I can only regret that my distance from York has prevented me from consulting the manuscripts; but the kindness of the Rev. W. Vernon Harcourt has enabled me to introduce many documents and quotations in the original language, of which he has obligingly furnished me with copies of his own, Mr. Browne having unfortunately adopted a practice of translating all his documents into English, omitting even the necessary and interesting illustration which is afforded by at least quoting the most important sentences in their original Latin. I have also consulted the manuscripts relating to these matters that are contained in the British Museum.

But for the explanation of these documents and their application to the building, for the description of its successive changes, and the operations that accompanied them, I am wholly responsible, and I can only regret that for the most part my chronology of the series of structures is so completely at variance with that of Mr. Browne, that I fear an incredulous smile may be extorted from the sceptics in the matter of antiquity, when they find two such opposite accounts deduced from the same authorities. I have much satisfaction in adding, however, that with this single exception, my chronology differs but little from that of every previous writer on this subject.