

THE COAT OF ARMS

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his rural creation, Fonthill Abbey. Here, armorial stained glass abounded, while King Edward's Room recalled the memory of England's central chivalric figure, Edward III, with a painting of him that was copied from one at Windsor. This too is a substantial and enjoyable chapter, and, like Mattikala's, well repays careful reading.

Nigel Ramsay

Anna-Maria Kasdagli, *Stone carving of the Hospitaller period in Rhodes: Displaced pieces and fragments*. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2016. 213 pp 4 figures 31 plates. ISBN 978-1-78491-478-3. Paperback £35.00. E-book £35.00.

This nicely produced volume arises from an MA dissertation submitted to the University of Athens in 2010. It comprises a catalogue of c. 230 fragments and displaced pieces of carved stone, much of it armorial, in the care of the Ephorate of Antiquities in Rhodes, and discusses the historical, topographical and cultural backgrounds to the carvings, and their architectural and funerary contexts.

The majority of this carved stone was employed in buildings and monuments belonging to the Knights of the Order during their occupation of the island (as reflected in the title of the volume). The Order was formed in 1050, initially to provide help for poor, sick and injured pilgrims in the Holy Land. It became a Military Order following the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. Ejected from the Holy Land after the fall of Acre, the Order first moved to Cyprus in 1291, and then to Rhodes in 1309, remaining there until its expulsion by the Ottoman Empire in 1522.

Many of the pieces in the catalogue are the result of Italian restorations after Rhodes was taken from the Turks in 1912 and later destruction caused by Allied raids during World War II. Much stonework was recovered from debris cleared from the town at the end of the war and therefore lacks secure provenance. This material is now stored in a variety of locations on Rhodes, listed here in one of three appendices.¹³ Kasdagli sets this catalogued stonework in its broader context in her discussion.

Extant carvings belonging to the Hospitaller period show clear influence from Italian Renaissance sculpture. Much of the earlier, Gothic stonework, on buildings at least, was lost in the earthquake of 1481. Armorial decoration on buildings would have been especially vulnerable, as it is likely to have been placed in the upper stories. Public buildings, for example, would have displayed the arms of the ruling master in a prominent position. Nevertheless, there are occasional armorial survivals which antedate both the earthquake and the arrival of the Order of St John. One such remnant comprises half of the tomb slab of Ioannes Pitzos¹⁴ (d. 1306), who was probably an Italian soldier of fortune, and carries arms comprising *Per pale to dexter a fleur-de-lis [or an estoile]*. The earliest Hospitaller period armorial tomb slab recorded herein is incomplete and unidentified. It bears a shield *Per saltire a cross moline* and is dated by its fragmentary inscription to 1348. Another fragment represents the earliest slab of a known Hospitaller, Pierre Plantier, prior of the convent, c. 1330–1350, although the arms are missing.

¹³ The two other appendices comprise a list the masters of Rhodes and statistical tables of magisterial arms.

¹⁴ Who bears a Hellenized Italian family name.

BOOK REVIEWS

The broader discussion touches on the fate of other pieces of medieval carved stonework which are not in the catalogue. Many carvings suffered from deliberate effacement or reuse as building material following the Ottoman Conquest of 1522. Even so, armorial stones still remain in position on the Hospitaller fortifications.¹⁵ Recent Muslim popular belief held that the solidarity of the walls was dependent on the magical properties of the coats of arms built into their facades. Thus, a counterscarp in the Langue¹⁶ of Provence, re-built after collapse during the Ottoman occupation, has had its shields replaced, albeit upside-down in error. It appears, however, that such apotropaic superstitions were not shared by members of the Ottoman cavalry, who, whilst on their regular exercises in the moat, used some of the shields for target practice. A number of pieces have left Rhodes – the funerary monuments of five masters are now in the Musée de Cluny in Paris, having been sold to the French at the end of the nineteenth century by the then Italian consul.

According to a recent survey of the 860 or so medieval shields of arms surviving on the island, 807 shields are to be found in the town of Rhodes, of which 220 represent the Order of St John and 353 belong to 17 of its masters. 178 of the magisterial shields derive from the fortifications or are still *in situ*. Many of the arms that survive in standing buildings were recorded in the early twentieth century, and references to these surveys are included here in a useful bibliography of otherwise relatively obscure sources.

Various trends emerge from the discussion of the use of arms on monuments. The earlier tomb slabs carry an epitaph and a shield bearing personal arms of the deceased. Post-1309 Hospitaller slabs usually display two shields, one bearing the arms of the Order, the other displaying personal arms.¹⁷ From the 1470s a chief of the Order could be added to the personal arms of Knights Hospitaller thereby rendering the employment of two shields unnecessary. The more elegant and also better preserved examples of tomb slabs date from this later period. They are usually decorated in relief with a Renaissance shield of arms dominant and placed within a laurel wreath with incised ribbons.

Inscriptions also demonstrate broad trends that are useful for the purposes of dating, with the employment of Lombardic scripts in the fourteenth century giving way to black letter in the early fifteenth century and followed by the advent of Renaissance capitals in the 1470s. This later fashion was reinforced by the influx of Western craftsmen after the earthquake of 1481, when the rebuilding of Rhodes in Renaissance style began. Amongst many other subjects covered in the volume are the types of stone employed, inlays on monuments and inscriptions, styles of carving, context of burials and burial practises, the iconography of the Order, changing shapes of shields, Greek influence and graffiti. The general impression gained by the author when surveying this assemblage

¹⁵ Multiple armorial shields can be found on most buildings and fortifications belonging to the Order, see, for example, L. Butler (2015–16) ‘The Heraldry on the English Tower at Bodrum Castle – Turkey’ *The Castle Studies Group Journal*, no. 29, pp. 286–307.

¹⁶ ‘Tongue’ - The defence of different portions of the fortifications was assigned to different Langue of Knights Hospitaller, a rough ethno-linguistic administrative division of the Order’s members and possessions.

¹⁷ A practice also found in the Hospitallers’ previous home on the island of Cyprus; see the introduction to ‘An Armory for Cyprus and the Latin East’ in S. Ashley (ed.), *At the Roots of Heraldry: the Collected Papers of John Archibald Goodall*, Harleian Society, New Series vol. 21, (London, 2018). The chapter contains other stylistic parallels and armorial links relevant to the volume under review.

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of material is one of stylistic conservatism – conveying through the monuments of the Order ‘purposefulness, stability and austerity’.

A number of the photographs in the catalogue would have benefited from being shown at a larger size and some appear a little bleached-out. One such example is that of a basin derived from a fountain, which bears possible canting arms and is dated to c. 1500. The inscription names MIKAEL – CARBONVS and the arms are given as *On a bend between six [pieces of coal] in orle a lion rampant*. In this case, the object is so large and the catalogue illustration (7 (F112)) so small and lacking in contrast that little can be discerned of the surviving detail.

Kasdagli’s summing up, entitled ‘Problems and conclusions’, looks forward to a comprehensive review of all carved stones on the island of Rhodes. However, at least one of the problems with such a project noted by the author, that of access to pieces *in situ* high up on walls and fortifications for the purposes of measurement and photography, has, I would suggest, been solved in part by advances in technology. The ready availability of camera-carrying drones must be the answer to many an armorist’s prayer when considering the prospect of recording a loftily mounted escutcheon. Regarding the wish for a complete survey of the medieval sculpted stone of Rhodes, this volume is certainly a step in the right direction and Kasdagli’s efforts towards this end must be applauded.

Steven Ashley

David M Bertie, *The Heraldry of the Bishops of Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Heraldry Society of Scotland, 2018. With Armorial Illustrations by John Hamilton Gaylor. Hard Cover. ISBN 978-1-9999794-0-9. £25

This attractively illustrated and produced book, covers the heraldry of three different groups of bishops the bishops of the church in Scotland from the late 13th century to 1689, the bishops of the Episcopal Church from 1690 to 2000 and the bishops of the post-reformation Roman Catholic Church. Hitherto Dowden’s *Bishops of Scotland* (1912) has been the established work on the subject: it provides detailed career information while the heraldic data is limited to the relevant vesica, or pointed oval seals. Furthermore the monographs are arranged chronologically within sees. In contrast the present volume provides minimal career information and is organised alphabetically, which provides a clear indication of which Scottish families have contributed most to the Scottish church. The quality and quantity of the armorial information has increased enormously in the century since Dowden wrote, with the availability of material in Stevenson and Wood’s *Scottish Heraldic Seals* (1940), and items from armorials such as the Balliol Roll, the Scots Roll and the Toison d’Or Armorial prominent among them. The end result is more than 300 coats-of-arms are illustrated to accompany the text.

With Bertie’s organisation of the material, the importance of the Kinninmund family, a knightly family based in Fife, bearing *Azure, a chevron argent between three fleur-de-lys or*, becomes clear. It provided four bishops mainly in the 14th century. Likewise in the following century, three generations of the Beaton family furnished two Archbishops of St Andrews and an Archbishop of Glasgow whose numerous seals include a pointed oval over 10cm high.