

BOOK REVIEWS

Hofman's book is an excellent study. He knows the manuscripts in question very well, he is thoroughly familiar with the scholarly literature (whether written in Dutch, English, French, or German), and he makes compelling arguments concerning the variety of forms, and purposes, of medieval armorials. Importantly in a book that relies so heavily on visual evidence, there are many high-quality illustrations. Readers who want to take a closer look at the manuscripts Hofman so frequently refers to will find very useful the list of digitized armorials at <https://heraldica.hypotheses.org/1770> – a list to which Hofman has contributed substantially but which he curiously does not mention in his book. Another feature sadly lacking are indices; in particular, a manuscript index and one for armorials would have been most welcome.

Yet these are minor issues given the overall quality of the book. Clearly both historians (who so often have neglected armorials) and heraldists (who all too often relied on imperfect editions) will profit from reading this book; it is a must-read for any future editor of pre-modern armorials. Hofman's book itself already marks considerable progress in the study of medieval armorials, and hopefully will inspire even more research into these manuscripts.

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Ioanna N. Koukouni, *Chios dicta est... et in Aegæo sita mari: Historical Archaeology and Heraldry on Chios*. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2021. 330 pp, 18 figures, 6 maps, 125 plates. Paperback ISBN 978-1-78969-746-9 £54.00 E-book ISBN 978-1-78969-747-6 £16.00

This volume on the archaeology and heraldry of Chios follows in the wake of another from the same publisher which dealt with medieval carved stone (much of it armorial) from the island of Rhodes¹ and the subject matter of both books shares similarities of geography, history, and presentation. The island of Chios is the largest Greek island in the eastern Aegean and is situated c. 290 km to the NW of Rhodes. Both Chios and Rhodes lie just off the Turkish coast and both have been affected by the despoliations of devastating earthquakes and conquest by the Ottoman Empire.

Chios has a well-harboured coastline, is agriculturally rich, and advantageously positioned for trade. It has changed hands many times. In 1304 the island was ceded from the Byzantine Empire to the Genoese, it was repossessed in 1329, and captured back again by Genoa in 1346. In 1566 it was invaded by the Ottomans. There was even a short-lived Venetian occupation of the island in 1694.

Following a comprehensive introduction in which there are useful discussions on the historical significance of lead seals, heraldry, and vernacular sculpture, the book is divided into two parts. The first, 'Historical Archaeology of Mount Amani', includes a broad and well-illustrated survey of the archaeology, historic topography, settlement patterns, defensive works, and material culture of rural NW Chios, centred around

¹ A.M. Kasdagli, *Stone carving of the Hospitaller period in Rhodes: Displaced pieces and fragments* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2016), reviewed by the writer (S. Ashley, 2019, *CoA* 4th series 2, no. 236, pp. 234–6).

THE COAT OF ARMS



Figure 1: a seventeenth-century marble slab bearing the arms of Sechiari, set in the outer wall of the Casino, an aristocratic club at Kampos, Chios.

Mount Amani. This section also contains an historiographic overview of research undertaken on the island in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The second part of the book, of particular interest to the present readership, ‘Heraldry and vernacular sculpture’, catalogues and discusses the decorative stone carving of the island. Just over a hundred examples are illustrated with photographs, of which around half are armorial or include armorial elements in their design. The catalogue is divided into three main periods:

(1) The Genoese occupation, from the fourteenth century, when the first coats of arms were introduced, to the sixteenth century, by which time the Chiot nobility had begun to intermarry with noble Genoese families and adopt their own arms. To begin with these arms were recognised by the Genoese and enrolled in their *Liber Nobilitatis*. This was superseded for Chiots by their own *Libro d’Oro*.²

² An image reproduced from the cover of Ph. P. Argenti *Libro d’Oro della Noblesse de Chio* (London, 1955) illustrates the arms of the ‘37 noble families of Chios’, although I counted 40 (excluding four shields that are named but blank).

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(2) The period of commercial expansion under the Ottomans, c. 1700–1822, where personal and professional symbols were adopted by the *nouveau riche*. Native Chiot held key posts in the Ottoman administration of the island and developed into an influential class of Phanariots,³ many of whom later settled in the largest and busiest ports, such as Smyrna (Izmir) and Alexandria.

(3) Nineteenth-century vernacular, involving a greater use of pictorial reliefs and inscriptions. Most of these carvings were commissioned by newly wealthy families who had little connection with the original nobility of the island, such as merchants and ship owners. They commemorated their success and newfound status with images carved in the naïve local vernacular, employing floral, figurative, and geometric designs, and protective and religious symbols, to accompany personal and family names, dates, and initials.

The catalogue begins with the arms of the Giustiniani, comprising those families who participated in the Maona, a mercantile company which ran the infrastructure of the island and had monopolies in mastic, alum from Phocaea,⁴ pitch, and salt. The members of the Maona abandoned their surnames at the end of the fourteenth century and adopted the clan name of Giustiniani, taking arms displaying: *A triple-towered castle*. In 1413 the German Emperor Sigismund granted the Giustiniani rulers of the island a chief of the Empire to create arms comprising: *A triple-towered castle on a chief a crowned demi-eagle displayed*. Some examples of these arms can be found in situ in defensive structures, others have been reused in the façades of secular buildings and churches. Both forms of the arms are recorded in a recently published armorial for Cyprus and the Latin East, along with the Chiot/Genoese arms of Zaccarria ('Lords of Chios'), and the possible arms of the family of Marchi of Famagusta (*On a bend indented a lion rampant*), present on the citadel in Chios town.⁵

The stonework includes arms carved on family chapels, funerary monuments, fountains, capitals, window drums, and door heads. Later work has inscriptions, depictions of saints, and other apotropaic symbols and motifs. Most of the stone employed was quarried on the island and consists of polychrome sandstone and marble. Ex situ examples of carvings can be found in the collection of the Byzantine Museum of Chios, some of which were derived from the earthquake of 1881, which destroyed much of past architectural glories. The armorial stonework which remains in place conforms to the popular Genoese (and wider) tradition of displaying family arms carved on lintels over doorways. Similarly, in the countryside there are many square towers which dot the rural landscape and have their origins with great landowners and magnates of the Byzantine Empire. These towers have few openings, and were used for storage and supervision of crops. They are set within citrus groves, the impressive gateways to which are decorated with arms carved in marble.

³ Prominent Greek officials and merchants who served under the Ottoman Empire, the name being derived from the Phanarion quarter of Constantinople where many of them lived.

⁴ On the NW coast of Anatolia.

⁵ J.A. Goodall 'An Armory for Cyprus and the Latin East' in S. Ashley (ed) *At the Roots of Heraldry: Collected Papers of John Archibald Goodall* Harleian Society New Series vol. 21, (London, 2018), pp. 27–74.

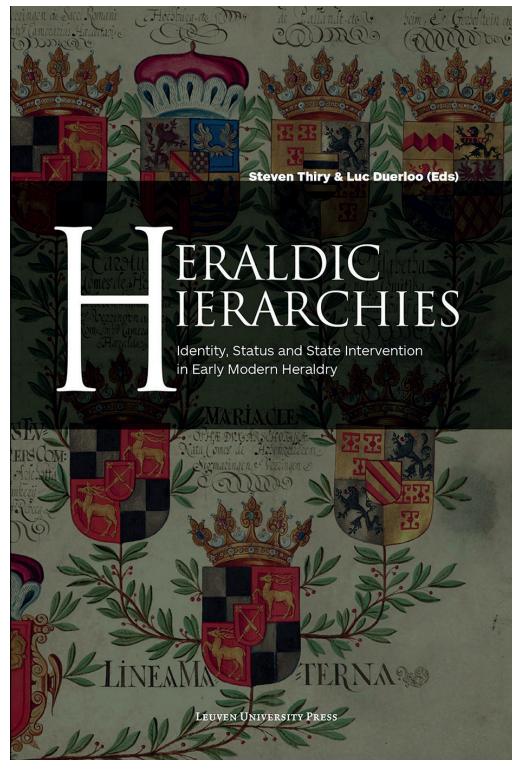
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One group of shields illustrated in the catalogue hints at a rather conservative approach, varying only slightly the composition of the arms. Carved stones for the families of Sechiari, Schilizzi, and Vouro all display arms comprising different numbers of stars between three (or in one case, four) bends sinister, probably to indicate familial relationship. However, one coat, displaying the arms of Sechiari (*Between four bends to sinister eleven stars (1,3,3,3,1)*), demonstrates rather more invention outside the confines of the shield, with its strange array of small supporters comprising a flanking pair of stylised leopards confronted regardant, a pair of birds perched on the upper angles, and a cypress tree (appearing here more like a elf's cap, or a cornucopia) as a possible crest (**Figure 1**).⁶

This volume contains much of interest, and not only for the student of Greek and Levantine heraldry. It is a timely and welcome addition to the steadily growing corpus of increasingly vulnerable armorial material culture in and around the Mediterranean Sea.

Steven Ashley

Steven Thiry and Luc Duerloo (eds.), *Heraldic Hierarchies: Identity, Status and State Intervention in Early Modern Heraldry*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2021. 274pp, 26 colour, 21 black and white illustration, 5 tables, 5 figures. Paperback. ISBN 978-94-6270-243-1. €55



⁶ Plate 8a.