The Coat of Arms

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The Heraldry Society is an educational charity. Its purpose is to promote greater understanding and appreciation of heraldry and its related subjects. The society organises lectures, study days, congresses, dinners and other social activities. It offers a course in heraldry leading to examination for a diploma. It publishes a range of source material at modest cost. Members receive the *Coat of Arms* and the quarterly *Heraldry Gazette*.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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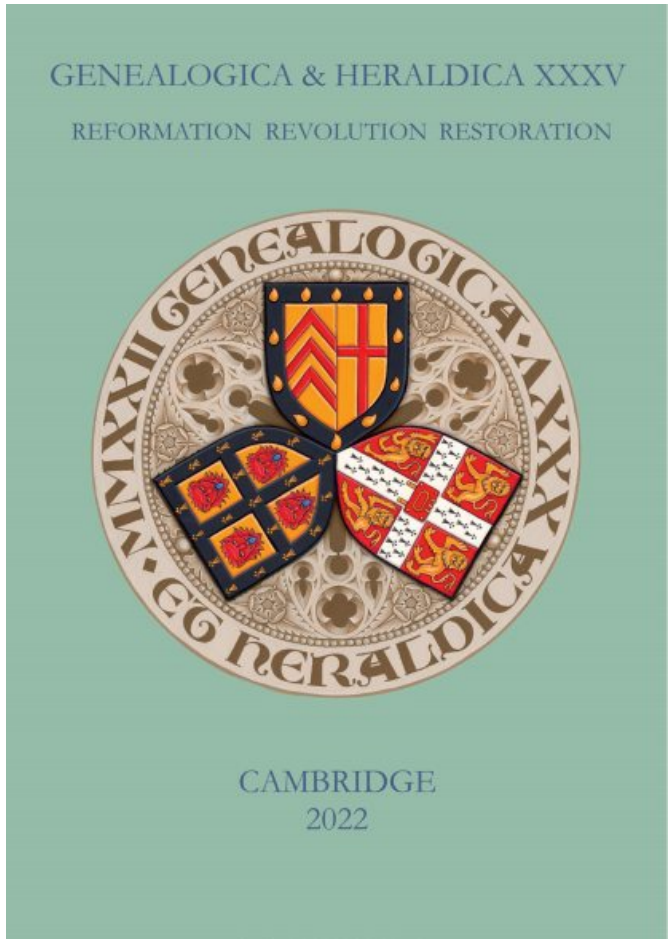
Paul A Fox (ed.), *Genealogica & Heraldica XXXV: Reformation, Revolution, Restoration. Proceedings of the 35th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences. Cambridge 2022*. London: The Heraldry Society, 2023. xvi+497 pp, colour illus. throughout. Hardcover 978-0-904858-07-5. £35. PDF available at https://www.theheraldrysociety.com/congress-proceedings.



In a feat of editorial celerity the proceedings of the 35th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences have already been published, a little over a year since the event took place in Cambridge in August 2022. The volume contains 39 of the 52 papers which were given, or scheduled to be given, at the Congress, 30 of which are heraldic in scope. The themes of this congress were Reformation, Revolution, and Restoration; the proceedings are accordingly divided into four sections, one for each theme, plus a section for papers which deal with all three. Although the congress was

held in an Anglophone country, slightly fewer than half the papers deal with heraldry of England, Scotland, or the USA; all the papers however are in English.

Reading through the proceedings, one finds papers can be broadly grouped into one of three types: scholarly argument with a definite finding, historical exposition of an element of heraldry related to the conference theme, and new techniques for heraldic research. This last category is the smallest, but perhaps the most interesting. Peter Howarth suggests returning to the approach of nineteenth century sigillographer Germain Demay, and comparing the date a family last used a non-heraldic seal with that of their first use of an heraldic seal. By doing so Howarth shows that heraldry appeared to have spread outwards from Flanders and the surrounding region from 1170, which is several decades later than the dates proposed by Wagner or Pastoreau for the 'origin' of heraldry. At the other end of the spectrum, both temporally and technologically, is the work by Torsten Hiltmann and Philipp Schneider on a digital heraldic ontology. Broadly speaking this is a formal model in which all elements of a coat of arms can be specified using a hierarchical controlled vocabulary, e.g. a lion is a sub-class of beast, which is a sub-class of charge; it can have one or more tinctures, attitudes, or charges of its own. The advantage of this over conventional blazon is that the concepts themselves can be stored in a database, and every instance of a coat of arms expressed in this way can be linked to each concept, or combination of concepts, that it contains, making it easy to search for patterns such "on a fess … between 3…" familiar from ordinaries such as Papworth. This is not a new idea – the National Archives of Finland produced a similar ontology a few years ago[1] and one can see echoes of the arrangement of Guillim's *Display of Heraldrie* from 1610, but Hiltmann and Schneider take it a step further by also defining ontologies for material representations of coats of arms, objects that contain or display these representations, and the entities represented by coats of arms. This approach to a systematic study of the heraldic record looks to have great promise.

The discoveries presented in those papers of the 'scholarly argument' type make for fascinating reading. Adrian Ailes with typical meticulous scholarship has identified that the so-called ordinances of the Rouen chapter meeting of English heralds are a later forgery. Luc Duerloo shows how the distribution of saints in municipal arms in the Low Countries reflects the geographic success of the Counter-Reformation. Klaas Evenboer uses similarity of artistic style to identify several unattributed manuscripts as having been produced by Hendrik van Heessel, 15th century King of Arms of the Ruwieren. Drăgan-George Basarabă (**Figure 1**) shows clerical grants of arms in sixteenth to eighteenth century Transylvania were made without discrimination by religious affiliation. Agnieszka Żurek finds that William Morris's use of heraldry in his high medieval romances declined over time as Morris's ideas moved more towards socialism. Nathaniel Nagar demonstrates evidence of collaboration between early modern English antiquaries and heralds. Andrew Gray examines the activity of the College of Arms during and after the English Civil War, and finds that one third of grants made during the Interregnum (and subsequently annulled) were later regranted.

The 'historical exposition' type papers range widely in time and space. The volume includes papers on the development of the arms of Habsburg-Austria (1740–1918), the royal family of Belgium (1831–2019), Gustav I of Sweden (1523–1560), the crown in the Hungarian arms (1878–1997), Lithuania (1345–present), and Spain (1808–1833). This last is particularly interesting as Gerard Marí i Brull takes for his source the 'sealed

[1] National Archives of Finland (2022), HERO – Ontology of Heraldry, https://finto.fi/hero/en.

Figure 1: ornate Transylvanian grant of arms in the National Archives of Hungary HU-MNL-OL-P 491-II.-XII.-22, from page 95 of the Cambridge Proceedings.

paper' of legal documents as preserved in notarial books. Without the printed seal of the monarch such documents were invalid; the seal was also updated each year, so could cope with rapid changes to heraldic insignia, such as in the turbulent period considered. There are also papers on medieval English, and modern Swedish, rolls of arms. The development of a Maltese heraldic authority is paralleled with efforts which, thus far, have not resulted in the same for Australia. The phenomenon of *damnatio memoriae* is considered in both the early modern Netherlands and twentieth century Spain. The current Lord Lyon surveys the early history of his office, and tantalisingly closes with a call for the removal of criminal sanctions for breaches of heraldic law, for the use of modern enforcement penalties, and for the succession to arms and dignities to follow the normal laws of inheritance. North America is represented by papers on the settlement of Nova Scotia, post-revolution arms of American States (**Figure 2**), American heraldic organisations and publications, and honorary grants of arms to American citizens. The remaining heraldic papers cover arms of Danish political figures, Swedish orders of Knighthood, and armorial graffiti in the keep of Norwich Castle.

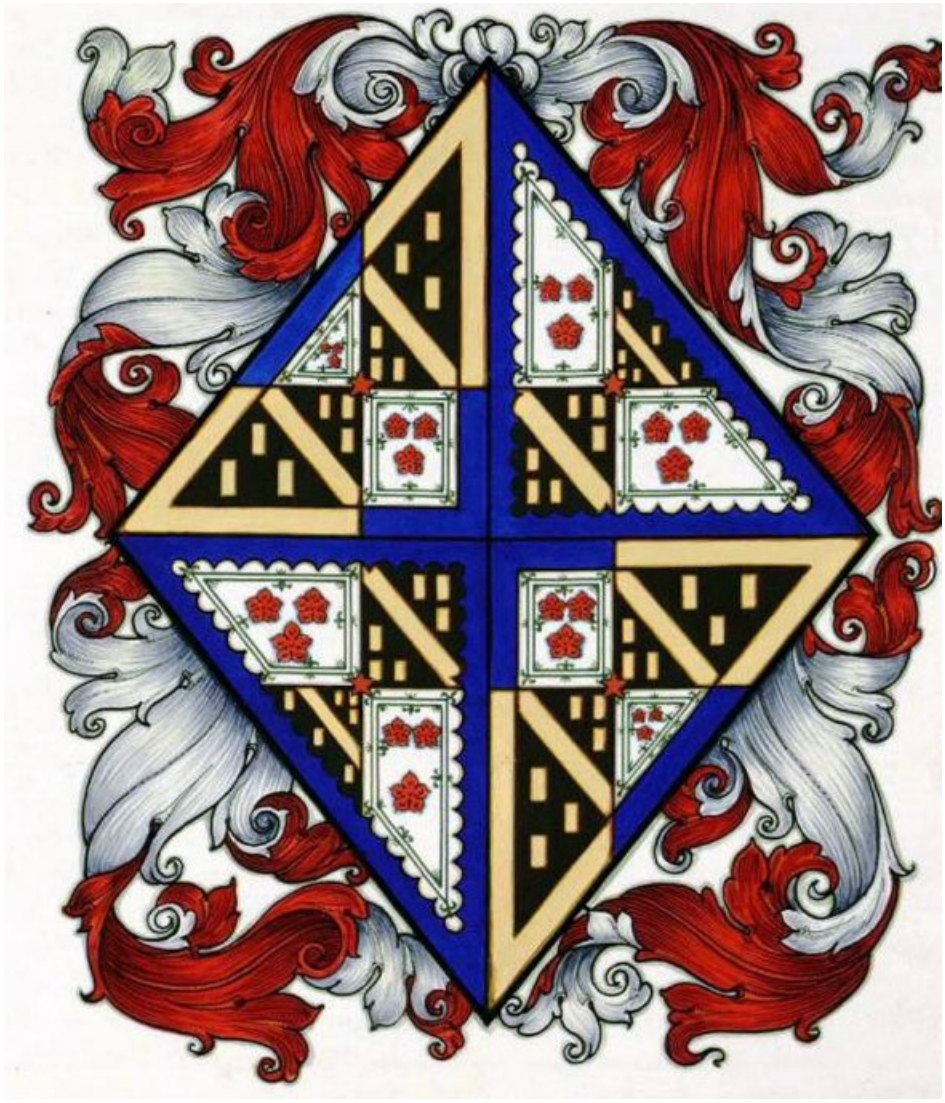


Figure 2: Lyon Office exemplification of arms matriculated for Mary Cleman Delafield née Livingston in 1916, from page 269 of the Cambridge Proceedings.

The papers themselves comprise 462 pages; the front and end matter make up another 50 pages containing the full conference programme with abstracts, a list of delegates, and photographs from the Congress. As will be evident from the foregoing discussion the topics of the papers are wide ranging, and their quality high. This volume is sure to be gratefully received by those who, like this reviewer, were unable to attend the congress, and a valuable reference for those who did.

Philip Allfrey