

THE ARMORIAL OF HAITI

SYMBOLS OF NOBILITY IN THE REIGN OF HENRY CHRISTOPHE



*Henry by the Grace of God and the Constitutional Law of the State King of Haiti,
Sovereign of Tortuga, Gonave and other adjacent islands, Destroyer of Tyranny,
Regenerator and Benefactor of the Haitian Nation, Creator of her Moral,
Political and Martial Institutions, First Crowned Monarch of the New World,
Defender of the Faith, Founder of the Royal and Military Order of St Henry.*



A remarkable survival from the

*From Peter Gwynn-Jones, CVO, FSA
Garter Principal King of Arms*

AS SENIOR OFFICER OF THE COLLEGE OF ARMS, I AM delighted to offer the public the chance to get to know one of the most unusual items in our rich collections. Whether you have an interest in the development of heraldic art and design, in the history of Haiti and the Caribbean, or in nineteenth-century regal, aristocratic and national symbolism, you will find this volume fascinating.

The *Armorial Général du Royaume d'Hayti* shows the heraldry of the short-lived kingdom of Haiti to have been intriguingly both like and unlike its European equivalents. Like them, it is replete with curious beasts and monsters, and the accoutrements of war both ancient and contemporary. The charmingly painted domestic animals and fowl, however, and the occasional, disarming appearance of more mundane items such as a watering-can, a bookcase or a rake, show that the European basis of heraldry has been taken and developed with considerable inventiveness and fantasy. The result, in its baroque and occasionally eccentric detail, is thoroughly worthy of that remarkable character at whose command it was produced, King Henry Christophe.

I am particularly happy to endorse this pre-publication offer whereby members of the public can place advance orders for the book and benefit from a 35% discount on the proposed published price of £45.

The armorial is often shown to visitors to the College of Arms, and it never fails to captivate and delight. I very much hope that in the form of this new publication, it will now have the chance of captivating, delighting and informing a much wider public.

Peter Gwynn-Jones

A beautiful treasure-house of unusual and eccentric heraldry

early days of Haitian independence

From the Publisher

HENRY CHRISTOPHE, HAITI'S ONLY KING, WAS ONE OF THE MOST colourful and interesting figures in nineteenth-century Caribbean history. Of obscure origins, he served under the famous Toussaint L'Ouverture in the Haitian war of independence of 1794–1803, and in 1807 he was elected President of a republic, heading a government largely made up of former slaves. Four years later, in March 1811, he made himself king.

One of Henry's first regal acts was to create a nobility, elevating his leading courtiers to the rank of chevalier, baron, count, duke or prince. Resonant titles (such as Comte de Limonade and the Duc de la Marmelade) were chosen from the picturesque names of the estates where their holders had once laboured as slaves, and which they now managed on behalf of the nation. So as to equip the new noblemen with armorial bearings appropriate to their rank, Henry

created a College of Arms; coats of arms were designed for every title-holder and painted in glorious colour in an official record volume, the *Armorial Général du Royaume d'Hayti*.

Since the mid-nineteenth century this volume has been in the possession of the English College of Arms in London. This year marks the bicentenary of Haiti as independent nation, and so it is fitting that for the first time ever, the *Armorial* is to be published in full and celebrated in this lavishly illustrated hardcover volume. As

Publisher I am proud to be working with the College of Arms and its Friends, the White Lions Society (whose generous support has enabled the production of this handsome subscription leaflet), to give this unique record of national and personal symbolism from the early, turbulent years of Haiti's independence the wider recognition it so clearly deserves.

Dan Giles, Managing Director, D Giles Limited

THE BOOK

Key features of the book will include:

- Hardcover binding with an extent of between 140 and 200 pages
- Full colour photographs of the entire volume, including 92 coats of arms of the nobility, the king and his family and the capital city of Haiti, Port-au-Prince
- The fascinating mix of standard western heraldic symbolism, classical French repertoire and traditional vernacular forms inherent in the designs of the coats of arms
- Complete transcriptions and translations into English of the verbal descriptions of the coats of arms, and notes on the men to whom they were ascribed
- A lengthy historical introduction by a leading scholar
- An essay on the heraldry of Henry Christophe's kingdom



Citadelle Laferrière – Henry Christophe's dramatic mountain fastness.

THE ARMORIAL OF HAITI

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Special subscription price £29.25, plus postage and packing. For UK and Ireland only add £5.00 per book; for continental Europe add £7.50 per book; all other international addresses add £12.50 per book.

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THE EDITOR

Clive Cheesman is Rouge Dragon Pursuivant at the College of Arms and was formerly a curator in the department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. He is author of *Rebels, Pretenders and Impostors* (British Museum Press, 2000) and of articles on heraldry, numismatics, antiquities law, and related subjects in specialist journals.

Henry
Christophe's
country palace,
Sans-Souci



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