

# *Chronique*

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*The Journal of Chivalry*

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*Articles, Essays, Reviews*

**Issue #11**

*Heralds & Heraldic Display*

# *Chronique*

## *The Journal of Chivalry*

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# Chronique

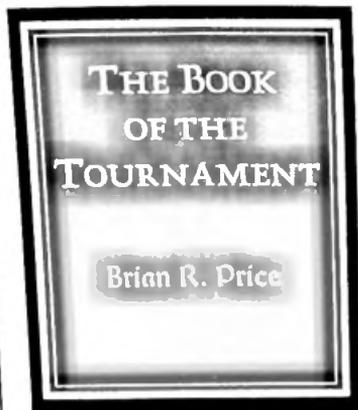
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THANK YOU!



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Brian R. Price

AKA SCA Brion Thornbird ap Rhys, Earl & Knight

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# FORUM

## **Question # 1: What should a knightly combatant know about heraldry? Is it important? Why or why not?**

“Knights and those who aspire to be knights should have at least a passing familiarity with armory such that they can identify important devices in their region and can blazon their own arms. In period a knowledge of heraldry was expected of princes, and several books of arms exist that were made for young princes to learn from (especially *Prince Arthur's book*). This knowledge was important in period because heraldry identified a man or a man's patronage of some project and heraldry was displayed on buildings, chests, and art objects as well as being simple combat identification. To be conversant with heraldry was not just a survival skill for a military man, it indicated that you were educated and sophisticated.”

-Thomas Barnes

AKA SCALothar von Katzenellenbogen  
Middle Kingdom

“One should endeavour, when trying to take part fully in the SCA experience, to learn as broad a range of things as possible. A moderate knowledge of basic heraldry will help one identify opponents, to lucidly explain to others a nameless gentle, and to get down to brass tacks, no grounding in a wide range of matters counts against you if you come up for knightly discussion, I'm sure. Also, the more you can interact with different people in other fields, the more different friends you can make, and the more fun you can have. You can pass on knowledge to interested parties, and people won't think of you as a one-track stick jock. Personally, I believe that it is a crucial aspect of any SCA combatant who wants to get into the real spirit of things. If you show up in your carpet armour, or plastic, it just detracts from the entire event if it's obvious. The spirit, the joy, the sense of occasion, is so much derived from ALL the participants putting in a group effort and making the occasion special - one can't just hope for the 'other guys, probably the knights' to make up for their deficit. Naturally, we should cut slack to novices, beginners and people who just don't have much experience or money, but we can help them together, just by being a little charitable and helping them achieve their goals.”

-Peter Martin

AKA SCA Lord Cormac the Traveller

**Question#2: When was heraldry introduced into Europe?**

“Introduced is the wrong word. Heraldry as we know it is a European invention. Experts disagree about when, where and why it was introduced but most would agree that the antecedents of heraldry appear on the Bayeux tapestry and other Norman artifacts and that by the 1200s the use of regularized hereditary symbols (heraldry) was a regular feature of European tourneys and military campaigns.”

-Thomas Barnes

“A much-disputed topic, to be sure. I hereby summarize the discussion of the origins of armory in Pastoureau’s *Traité d’Héraldique* (Paris, 1993).

“From the 14th to the 20th c., many hypotheses have been made about the origin of armory in the Western World. Three leading theories are now all abandoned: a direct origin in classical antiquity, or in runes and family emblems of German-Scandinavian populations, or in Muslim countries via the Crusades. He states that it is now accepted that the emergence of armory is due to the evolution of military equipment from the late 11th to the mid-12th c, with fighters unrecognizable under their helmets (there is a nice illustration from the Bayeux tapestry showing William lifting his helmet so as to be recognized by his troops in battle). This led fighters to paint emblems on their shields. The question is then to establish a proper chronology of this emergence and of the transformation of these emblems into armory, i.e., constant use of one design by the same person and application of strict rules in the design itself. (This last point the most puzzling, and which sets apart European armory from most other systems).

“Pastoureau summarizes Galbreath’s opinions (which he thinks have been confirmed over time). Armory resulted from the combination of several pre-existing elements into one system. The elements pertain to insigms, banners, seals and shields. Insigms have contributed certain figures and the collective character of some arms. Banners brought colors as well as some geometric elements (ordinaries, partitions, semys) and the link of arms to fiefs. From seals come a number of family emblems already in use by some families in Germany, Flanders and Italy, canting arms, and the hereditary aspect. Shields contributed the shape of the design, furs, and some ordinaries (border, pale, chief).

“This combination did not take place uniformly over time and space. It does seem that banners played a predominant role, and textiles in general, in shaping the way colors were used, as well as yielding a number of terms (more than half of the heraldic terms common in the Middle Ages come from the vocabulary of textiles).

“The three main sources of emblems are thus the individual’s own distinctive marks, used in battle for recognition, the family’s emblems, probably in use for some time, and the fief’s rallying banner, which served as a flag for vassals in combat. Elements from these three sources combined to form armory, which tries to play all three roles at the same time: identify individuals, be transmissible within a family, and represent ownership or claims to fiefs. In order to fulfill these contradictory goals, heraldry has developed mechanisms such as differencing (which allows to reconcile individual marks with hereditary emblems) and marshalling (which allows for the expression of property rights as well as lineage).

“The Bayeux tapestry provides a terminus a quo: no heraldry there. The usual first example is the Le Mans enamel from the tomb of Geoffrey Plantagenet. The enamel is now dated to 1160-65; the chronicle of Jean Rapiçault which narrates the gift of the shield in 1127 is itself also from a later date, 1170-75. Furthermore, the only extant seal of Jeffrey (on a 1149 document) shows no arms. So there is no contemporary evidence for the 1127 ‘birthdate’ of heraldry.

“A recension of all seals dating from before 1160 and displaying unmistakable heraldic elements, about 20 in all, show that the emblems appear on the banner before they do on the shield, they appear all across Western Europe in a short period of time (1120-1150) and until 1140 geometric patterns dominate floral or animal motifs. The oldest exactly dated seal with a coat of arms is a seal of Raoul of Vermandois from 1146; an earlier seal, dated ca. 1135, shows the same arms on a banner.

“Pastoureau thus distinguishes 2 phases: the transformation of decorative motifs painted on shields into permanent and individual emblems (1100-1140) and the transformation of the latter into hereditary emblems subjected to precise rules (1140-80).

“He suggests a number of alternative sources: illuminated manuscripts, sculptures, everyday objects (textiles, eating instruments) though they all suffer from a problem of dating. Texts may yield information. Fi-

nally, coins, especially *bracteates* (one-sided thin silver coins from Germany) present a promising avenue of research: pre-1160 coins show some fluctuation in shield designs, but remarkable stability of banners for the owners of a given fief.

“It seems clear to him that, throughout the 12th c., individuals used motifs on their shields primarily based on taste, but banners presented a constant emblem for rallying, linked not to the individual but to the fief. Seals and miniatures show us the banners of some major fiefs around 1150, and they are all geometric and bi-color: Luxemburg (*barry*), Vermandois (*chequy*), Savoy (*cross*), Burgundy (*bendy*), Aragon and Provence (*pallets*), Flanders (*girony*), Hainaut (*chevronny*).”

-François Velde

Dept of Economics

John Hopkins University

<http://128.120.1.164/heraldry/intro.html>

**Question #3: Should combatants be allowed to display their devices upon their shields before they receive an Award of Arms?**

“I’m fairly neutral on this point. I guess it’s because we’re all already assumed to be noble from the day we join that I don’t mind the idea of immediate submissions. On one hand, the more devices we have on the field, the more opportunity for pageantry and splendour is open to us. On the other hand, it could look quite good as well, though perhaps not as good, if beginners were allowed to display simple colours and field divisions instead of arms.”

-Peter Martin

“This varies by local custom and the wish of the King. Conventional SCA wisdom says ‘no.’ Historical evidence suggests otherwise. Many if not most arms were assumed at the whim of the bearer and that noble status was not necessary to bear arms. By the 14th c. there are merchants and peasants who bore arms. The first formal college of arms to take a monopoly on granting arms was created in England in 1483. That meant that for most of the ‘heraldic period’ from ca. 1200 on, anyone could display arms and there was no centralized regulation of what arms you could display. In light of this it would be more authentic recreation to ignore both the restriction on who may display arms and not bother to register arms with the SCA College of Arms.”

-Thomas Barnes

The following response was taken with permission from a very interesting WWW page: <http://128.120.1.164/heraldry/intro.html>

"The question of the right to bear arms (who has the right to bear which arms) is a controversial one. What follows is an exposition of my own opinions, supported, I think, by a lot of evidence, but be aware that others think differently.

"A common prejudice has associated heraldry exclusively with nobility or gentry. This has no foundation in fact, law or history of European armory. Although heraldry began with the feudal nobility, it quickly extended to all classes of society, and self-assumption was the only way (along with inheritance, of course) to acquire arms until the mid-14th c. After that date, sovereigns began to grant arms (the first known grant of arms was made in 1338 by the Emperor) but self-assumption remained a normal way to acquire arms, and it was in no way restricted by status. In fact, even in England grants of arms to individuals remained very rare until the end of the 15th century. The only restriction on self-assumption acknowledged by jurists was against consciously assuming arms already borne by another family within a given jurisdiction. The problem of conflict of arms between knights is what brought heraldry into the jurisdiction of the Court of Chivalry in England in the late 14th century.

"Since heraldry was unregulated, arms could and were adopted by all sorts of people, and arms borne by peasants or tradesmen weren't necessarily different from noble arms, either in style or in appearance. Only in the 16th century does one see some attempts at regulating heraldry, in two ways: by limiting the acquisition of arms to grants, and by restricting the right to bear arms to certain social categories. Most attempts were half-heartedly enforced, and whole-heartedly ignored. Some countries never experienced either: Switzerland, as well as France save for two minor and short-lived episodes. England and Scotland stand out as historical exceptions in this regard. The regulation of heraldry in Scotland is based on a statute of 1672 and is enforced to this day by the Scottish judicial system. The situation in England is rather more complex, and the extent to which regulation is actually enforced, or enforceable, is a matter of debate.

"In the Middle Ages, anyone could bear arms. This is a simple fact, which is abundantly clear from the following citations.

"*Bartolo di Sassoferrato*, famous jurist (recipient of a grant of arms from the German emperor Charles IV), wrote a *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis* ca. 1350, the first treatise on heraldry: there, he writes

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*'arma autem quidam et insignia sibi assumunt propria auctoritate, et istis an liceat videndum est: et puto quod licet, sicut enim nomina inventa sunt ad cognoscendum homines... Ita etiam ista insignia ad hoc inventa sunt...sed talia nomina cuilibet licet imponere sibi ad placitum...ita ista insignia cuilibet portare et impingere in suo, tamen non in alieno.'*

'anyone can assume arms of his own authority and display them; I think this is allowed, just as names were invented to distinguish men, so were arms invented; and just as anyone can choose a name at his pleasure, so can anyone choose and bear his own arms, though not those of others.'

"The only advantages he sees to a grant of arms is that a) they have more prestige, b) their bearing cannot be prohibited, c) in case of conflict of arms a grant will give preference, d) a grant gives precedence, e.g. in the army.

"*Honoré Bonet*, a French prior, wrote a treatise of the law of war between 1382 and 1387. He recognizes that there are arms '*lesquelles chacun a pris a son plaisir*' (which each has taken at his pleasure), which can also be changed at will, subject to the same proviso about not injuring others.

"*Nicholas Upton*, canon of Salisbury, repeats the same ideas in 1440: '*as in these days we see openly how many poor men through their service in the French wars have become noble, some by their prudence, some by their energy, some by their valour, and some by the virtues which, as I said above, ennoble men. And many of these have upon their own authority taken arms to be borne by themselves and their heirs.*'

"He recognizes them as valid, though of less authority and dignity than arms granted by the prince (he denies heralds the right to grant arms). Note that this is written 23 years after the writs of 1417, which shows that these writs must not have been enforced very well, even for soldiers fighting in France (let alone the rest of society, which they did not cover in any case).

"*Diego de Valera*, a Spaniard, wrote a treatise on nobility in 1440:

*'we see a common usage in France and Germany for burglers to take arms as they please, which they put on their houses and in the churches of which they are parishioners, in which they keep a distinction with noblemen, because noblemen display their arms wherever they want and wear tunics of arms.'*

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“When discussing the several ways of acquiring arms, he mentions the ‘fourth and last kind are self-assumed arms, as do burghers, rich landowners and powerful merchants.’

“So we have texts from Germany, France, England attesting the fact that self-assumed arms were common, and deemed perfectly legal, without regard to distinction between nobles and commoners, which shows that, as of 1350 at least, the law was in accord with actual practice, since seals show arms borne by commoners as well as nobles, with no visible difference (even the use of helmets is not consistent: some merchants use it, some nobles don’t).

“It is strange, indeed, that Anthony Wagner, in *Heralds and Heraldry* (where I got some of these quotes) acknowledges that ‘the notion that arms belong to the nobility seems here entirely absent...this may perhaps be characteristic of the juristic as against the chivalric point of view.’ However, the evidence he cites to expound the ‘chivalric point of view’ show no such notion that arms belong to the nobility, and he makes in essence a logical mistake: since arms were required to enter into tournaments, he reasons, only those who participated in tournaments could bear arms. True, heralds asked for arms to be displayed so they could verify the nobility of the participants; heralds knew, or had listings of, the armorial bearings of the nobility and knightly class, and showing one’s arms was like showing an identification document. But, if it is true that, in the US, one must be 21 or older to drink beer, it is not true that all those aged 21 or more drink beer. Likewise, the texts which Wagner cites from 14th c. grants of arms show that ennoblement carried with it a grant of arms, but that does not prove that arms were an exclusive mark of nobility. If it were, wouldn’t find evidence to that effect in royal regulations? But there is none to be found before the 16th c. *anywhere in Europe*, with the only exceptions are Savoy in 1430, and Portugal in 1466, and those regulations had no immediate effect.

“In practice, all sorts of people had arms in the Middle Ages. There is no doubt that heraldry originated with the feudal nobility in the mid 12th century, but the spread to other classes of society was rather rapid.

“The following is translated from Galbreath and Jéquier’s *Manuel du Blason* (Lausanne, 1977):

*‘The theory that, in order to bear arms, it was necessary to have a specific quality or ability, a kind of lesser nobility, cannot stand when confronted with the facts. A few figures are more eloquent than any other*

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argument. In Artois, between 1285 and 1401, among 136 seals of burghers one finds 75 armorial seals, without even counting aldermen among whom the proportion is even higher. In Picardie, out of 107 burghers and citizens cited as craftspeople, 42 have armorial seals, among whom two executioners. In 1380, 71 burghers of Grammont in Flanders seal the act of submission to the king of France: 64 have armorial seals. The ratios do not vary much from country to country. Out of 163 seals of burghers of Hildesheim, in Germany, dating from 1286 to 1449, 142 are armorial. In 1408, the 57 breadmakers of the city of Lucerne, on the occasion of the construction of their common hall, have their 57 arms painted in a small book, which is our first burgher armory. From what precedes, one can conclude that, as early as the end of the 13th century, burghers and craftsmen regularly bore arms.

*'Peasants began bearing arms in the 14th century. Less rare than was once believed (the Livre des Aveux du comte de Clermont en Beauvaisis, from 1375, has several hundred), peasant arms became common in the 17th and 18th c., especially in Switzerland, Frisia and Lower-Saxony. [...] Everyone was free to adopt arms at his pleasure, as long as they were different from those of others. Cases of fortuitous resemblance were settled by arbiters. The possession of a coat of arms did not rest on any right, but came out of a social habit. Just as today that of a top-hat, the possession of arms was, in the Middle Ages, unchanging and inevitable among the higher classes of society; going down the social scale, arms became rarer and indicated at the same time social aspirations.'*

"Here are a few marker dates for the spread of heraldry to other classes, according to Pastoureau:

- 1130-60: feudal lords
- 1160-1200: knights banneret
- 1180-1220: all knights
- 1220-60: squires

"He says the speed might have been a bit greater in England; conversely, the spread from nobles to milites takes place after 1250 in the Low Countries and Germany.

- 1220-30: women
- 1210-20: ecclesiastical sees and priests
- 1230-40: towns
- 1250: burghers, peasants
- 1300: religious communities
- 1350: corporations"

-François Velde

**Question#4. What purpose did heraldry serve in knightly society during the Middle Ages?**

“It either said ‘I’m here!’ or ‘My money is here!’ Heraldry was used to display a knight’s wealth and patronage as well as his presence. On a basic level heraldry was a sort of ‘team colors’ which the knight wore in the tournament and in battle. It wasn’t so much meant to be an ‘identification friend or foe’ system as something that looked lavish and cheerful, like the brightly colored silks that jockeys wear or gaudily painted race cars. On another level, any art object or building project funded by the knight would show his arms on it. This would guarantee that everyone knew of the knight’s largesse and *bonnehomie*. Finally, heraldry was a knightly fashion that quickly became to be associated with nobility. By the 1200s if you did not have arms you were not seen as being noble (or at least the pretense to being a noble).”

*-Thomas Barnes*

**Question#5: What purpose does heraldry serve in our own tournaments?**

“Pageantry and authenticity. Heraldry is the one thing that can make an ugly suit of armor into a passable suit of armor and a so-so suit of armor into something breath-taking. Heraldic bunting and banners, surcoats and shields, and heralds in tabards are things that simultaneously make our tournaments more beautiful to see and more realistic.”

*-Thomas Barnes*

“Identification. Protection from friendly attack. Pageantry.”

*-Peter Martin*

**Question #6: What latitude should be granted to a combatant in the display of his arms? How precise need the renditions be?**

“The Laurel Sovereign at Arms has traditionally registered the emblazon (the picture) not the blazon (the written description of the arms). Historical evidence and sheer practicality suggests otherwise. Period rolls of arms show the same arms drawn in different ways. As artistic fashions and shield shapes changed, necessarily the style and shape of the charges on the shield changed. Sometimes variants of a coat of arms were adopted (e.g. ‘France’ vs. ‘Ancient France’; that is, ‘Azure, three fleur-de-lys Or.’ vs. ‘Azure, seme of fleur-de-lys Or.’) In the SCA

most people work from the blazon found in the SCA armorial when they make a drawing of a device and most people never see the drawings on the forms that they turned into the heralds when they registered their arms. Because of this there will obviously be variation between the 'official' emblazon and the emblazon that people actually use. Some people wish to add elements to their arms that are unregistrable, draw their charges in an unregistrable way, or subtract charges that they only added to get their arms registered. If these practices result in greater authenticity or beauty then there is no harm in them. The most important thing is that the arms be authentic, attractive, and well-executed, since for them to be otherwise would go against the values of our group. -Thomas Barnes

**Question #7: Did historical knights ever run into device conflicts? What did they or would they have done, do you think?**

*This is an interesting question. Mr. Barnes has brought up a good encapsulation of the famous Scrope vs Grosvenor case, and while this one is well documented and helpful, there are other ways to solve the dilemma that add to the color of our re-enactments rather than contribute to the beurocratization of the heralds. Consider the following passage, taken from the introduction of Sir Guy Laking's famous book on armour, A Record of European Armour and Arms Through Seven Centuries:*

"Franco Sachetti, writing in the second half of the XIVth century, tells how a certain knight of the great Florentine banking house of Bardi, being appointed Podestà of Padua, had to supply himself with the armour and equipment needful for him to enter into on his office with solemnity. Now he was an exceedingly little man, not expert in horsemanship, nor used to warlike exercises. Lacking a crest for his helmet, he consulted his friends what he should choose for it. They, putting their heads together said, 'he is very stumpy and unimposing looking and we cannot give his height as women do by putting it under his feet, so let us add to his stature by putting it on top of his head. They therefore went out and found him a very tall crest representing a demi-bear rampant, with its claws raised, and beneath a motto which said, 'Jest not with the bear lest you be the but.' And this and all his other war harness he set out very honorably from Florence to travel to his new post.

"Passing through Bologna he made a considerable display with his new equipment, but on arriving at Ferrera, feeling that he was nearing the seat of his office, he made a much more magnificent entry, sending on before him his bascinet, his surcoat, and his crest with the bear. As these were passing through the great square of the town, which at the time was full of the Marquis' soldiers, a German knight, espying the crest with the bear, bounced up from the bench upon which he was sitting and exclaimed, 'Who is this who dares wear my crest?' Then calling his squire, he ordered him to bring at once his armour and his war horse, as he must fight the man who had the terminity traitorously to bear his crest. Now this German, Messer Scindigner by name, was of gigantic size and a very valiant warrior. The onlookers, both German and Italian, attempted to appease him, but all to no effect, so two of them went

to the hostelry with the Florentine lodged, to tell him that he must either give up his crest or fight a German knight, Messer Scindigner, who claimed the crest as his own. The Bardi knight, not at all used to this sort of business, replied that he had not come to Ferrara to fight but to pass on to his Podestàship of Padua, that he regarded all men as friends and brothers and that no more could he say. Returning to Messer Scindigher they found him already completely armed, fuming more than ever and calling loudly for his charger. The peacemakers, having in vain attempted to pacify him, returned to the inn and said to their friend, 'it were better that you should come to terms with this German, for we left him fully armed, raging with fury, and we verily believe that by this time he has mounted his war-horse and is coming to fight you.' 'He may arm himself and do as he will,' replied the Bardi knight, 'but I am not a fighting man and fight I won't.' In the end, after much discussion, he suggested, 'let us settle it with florins, so that honour may be satisfied on both sides and I may immediately continue my journey. This German declares that I am using his crest, but I swear on God's Gospel that I had it from the painter Lucchino at Florence and it cost me five florins. If he wants it, let him send me five florins and he is welcomed to it.' When this was reported to the German he summoned his servant, and giving him five florins bright from the mint, ordered him to fetch the crest, which was brought to him wrapped in cloak, and when Messer Scindigher received it he felt as glorious as through he had conquered a city. Now the Podestà who was going to Padua, remaining without a crest, sent a friend to search all over Ferrara for one to replace the bear. By chance he found in a painter's shop a crest representing a half baboon dressed in yellow with a sword in its hand. So returning to the knight, he said to him, 'You are in luck's way, I have found just what you want, we will have the sword replaced by a big red pike and that shall be your coat of arms.' The Podestà rejoiced, the crest cost him only a florin, and the repainting of some targes and the other accoutrements with his new blazon perhaps another florin. So, whilst the German knight kept the bear, the Bardi knight with three florins to the good and the baboon displayed on all his equipments, went his way in state to assume his high office as the Podestà of Padua."

"Medieval knights like SCA fighters have run into device conflicts. In Period they resolved them like SCA fighters have done; they ignored the conflict if it was not a problem and they temporarily differenced their arms if it was a problem. The notion that all arms must be unique and that all arms must have two 'clear differences' from each other is an invention of the SCA College of Arms that has no basis in fact. Period heraldic writers make no bones about the fact that arms in different heraldic jurisdictions (usually different countries) could freely conflict and that even the arms of men living in different cities could directly conflict. The medieval standard for 'differencing' arms was far less strict than the College of Arms standard. At most one 'clear difference' was required and that could be quite small by SCA standards. For example, a *'lion queue forchée'* (that is, with a forked tail) would be seen as being different from a plain lion. The addition of a bordure would be seen as being different from the same device without a bordure.

"The famous case brought before the Earl Marshall of England in 1385, *Scrope v. Grosvenor* is usually cited as an example of protection of unique heraldry in period. In fact, it is the exception that proves the rule. In this case, the rising knight Scrope successfully sued Grosvenor

over the right to use 'Azure, a bend Or.' However, the Earl Marshall allowed Grosvenor to use 'Azure, a bend within in a bordure Or.' (One clear difference by SCA standards, which would be insufficient difference for that device to clear conflict). Furthermore, the Earl Marshall ruled that the Cornish knight Carminow could also use 'Azure, a bend Or' since his family had borne those arms since the time of King Arthur whereas Scrope has borne his arms since the time of William the Conqueror. (Obviously medieval rules of evidence aren't what they are today.) The Earl Marshall effectively decided that Cornwall was a separate heraldic jurisdiction. A more concrete example of conflicting arms can be found in Papworth's Ordinary, a large Victorian listing of British arms arranged by charge. I have counted over 100 different *English* families who bore the arms 'Or, a lion rampant gules.' This also ignores the fact that these arms were also used by the Hapsburgs in Germany, the Counts of Hainault in Flanders, and that they are only one clear difference (by SCA heraldic terminology) from the royal arms of Scotland. There are doubtless other families in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere would have also assumed such arms. As the old French quote has it 'He who has no arms adopts a lion [on his arms].' -Thomas Barnes

### Question #8: What was the Medieval, symbolic meaning of a knight's pennant?

"None that I am aware of except that a knight's banner was considered as important a knightly accoutrement as his lance, horse, sword, and spurs."

-Thomas Barnes

Editor: There was indeed no particular 'meaning' attached to the Pennon. Raymon Lull, writing at the end of the 13th century, added the following:

*'To a knight is given a spear to signify truth, for truth is a thing right and even. And that truth ought to go before falseness. The iron or head of the spear signifies strength, which truth ought to have above falseness. And the penon signifies that truth shows faith to all, and has neither dread nor fear of falseness nor of treachery. And Verité is sustained of Hope and also of other things which have been signified by the spear of the knight.'*

Lull's full text has been translated and is offered in a preliminary edition from *Uþe Uþiþalry Bnokshelf*—see the back cover for details.

**Question #9: Who could bear a pennant, a banner, or flag in war during the Middle Ages?**

“Traditionally, a knight could bear a pennant, a knight banneret (a leader of a band of men) could bear a banner, and a count, duke, prince or king could bear a flag. Like many formal regulations I have no way of knowing if that was really the medieval practice or if it was an invention of 17th c. heraldic encyclopediasts (who were notorious for making up rules of heraldry and heraldic display) or Victorian heraldic writers (whose research was often patchy).”

*-Thomas Barnes*

**Question #10: What was the role of a herald in the context of Medieval court? Tournaments?**

“The answer depends on what time period you are talking about. Early heralds were hired help, paid to organize and run a tournament, rather like referees for a football game. In status they were no better than any other travelling performer and they seemed to have been shabby fellows. The first known reference to a herald comes from a romance of *Launceot* where the herald is described as having pawned his shoes as surety that he would pay his bill at the inn. They would have had no place at court. By the middle of the 14th century heralds had gained considerable status and were diplomats and staff officers as well as being mere tourney organizers. They were part of the tiny mandarin class that served princes and kings as senior administrators and bureaucrats. Herald from this time on were trusted with sensitive diplomatic missions, organized state ceremonies, and carried private messages for their Lord. Herald of this period were well paid, had a highly developed code of professional ethics, and were an essential part of every lord’s court. The idea of a herald speaking for a king in court seems to have been an SCA invention. Even today heralds of the English College of Arms have speaking parts in state ceremonies, but they do not speak for the queen when she is present. What heralds do is to speak for their lord when the lord is not present. To be authentic, the only time that a herald should speak for the king is when he is announcing an edict of the king when the king is not present.”

*-Thomas Barnes*

**Question #11: What should our heralds do to help further the chivalric message transmitted from the field to the gallery?**

“In period one of the duties of a herald was to make ‘good and true report of all acts of chivalry that he may see.’ Heralds were expected to record rolls of arms and histories of gallant deeds done in tourney and battle. In war they were to serve as negotiators between the warring parties as well as recording the course of the battle, identifying the dead and ‘awarding the field’ to the victor. In this capacity they combined the roles of liason officers, graves registration, and war correspondents. Heralds were also expected to serve as neutral intermediaries between the principals in a duel. They served as referees as well as mediators. A nice example of a herald in action is the character of Mountjoy in *Henry V* (both the Brannaugh movie and the play). Mountjoy acts as diplomat from the Dauphin and a messenger for Henry. He then acts as a ‘peace negotiator’ for the Dauphin before retiring. True to his profession ethics he tells nothing that would compromise the military ability of either side. Then, in keeping with another professional duty of the herald (‘keep peace among gentlemen’) he soothes tempers between the Dauphin and the Marshal of France. Finally, he comes back to Henry with a roll of the dead and tells Henry that he has won the day. It is typical of military and heraldic customs of the day that he gives Henry the ‘right’ to ‘name the battle’ since Henry is the victor.”

-Thomas Barnes

### **Question #12: What are the qualities that make a good herald?**

“Historically, a herald was expected to be a gentleman with the educational achievements and financial means to justify his status. He was expected to be whole in body, not grotesque of face, literate, loyal to his lord, able to keep secrets for anyone who might confide in him, unbiased in his reports, free of vices, and moderate of temper. He would also have a good memory and a good voice.

“In the SCA a herald need not be so much diplomat as showman. He should have a good voice, a dramatic flair, and enough familiarity with heavy weapons combat that he can serve as a secondary marshall and not be unsafe around the lists. As a neutral non-combattant, a herald should also be relied upon to hold things for fighters, to help the list mistress, and to bear water to the fighters as necessary. In a way, the job of herald is redundant since most of what a tourney herald would have done in Period is done by the marshalls in the SCA. If the marshalls were to show the same vocal ability that the heralds do then the black tabard would banish the green tabard from the lists.”

-Thomas Barnes



## QUESTIONS

1. How are the authentic tournament formats different from our modern ones? Which format is better?
2. Why do you fight in modern tournaments?
3. How important is prowess to the character of a modern knight? Compare this to our Medieval predecessors...
4. Tell of something you have seen upon the field that inspired you greatly, and thus credited the renown of the combatant in question.
5. Tell of something you have seen off the field that inspired you greatly—how did that gentle lord or lady earn your respect?
6. What is renown?
7. In a tournament, a knight is struck in an illegal area that wounds him and forces him to withdraw from the field. Who should be the victor of the fight?

*Question 8 assumes a 14th century ransom tourney:*

8. A knight parades into a tournament, completely armed, including a magnificent destrier. Later, it looks as though the knight's company is about to be overrun, and at the same time his squire brings him an inferior horse. The knight trades mounts, and is captured. Which mount should go to the victor?

## CALENDAR

- 16 Aug. *Pas des Sept Treveaux, Pennsic Wars*  
Karl Lieder, 612.824.1535  
Cooper's Lake, Pennsylvania
- Sept. 95 *King Rene Tournament*  
Toronto, Canada  
Dana Cushing 416.730.1325
- 30 Sept. Deadline for *Chronique #12*  
*Geoffry de Charnay & the Black Prince*  
*Knighthood in the 14th century*
- 20-22 Oct. *Challenge of the Seven Deadly Sins*  
Blacksburg, South Carolina  
Ted Monnich 803.772.1914
- 30 Nov. Deadline for *Chronique #13*  
*The Knightly Sword*
- November *Company of Saint George Fall Pas d'Armes*  
Southern California  
Brent Jenkins 909.881.8629
- 15 Jan. 1996 Deadline for *Chronique #14*  
*Consorts, Ladies & The Gallery*

Are you planning your own tournament?  
Feel free to contact the editors or the  
Companies listed at the back of this book  
for assistance. All are eager to lend help or  
to provide advice!

## CHALLENGE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Karl von Nord Mark  
The Company of Saint Mark

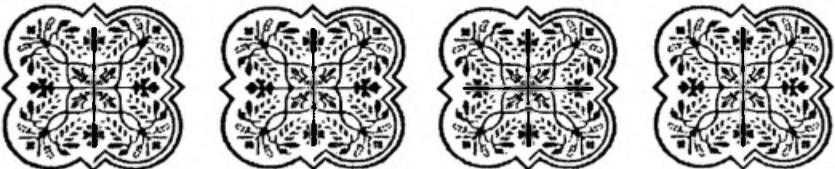
To be held on the 20-22 October, 1995, the Company of Saint Mark will on these days hold the bright fields of King's Mountain Park.

Seven "knights" will represent the Seven Deadly Sins. They will hold the field and accept challenges from all other combatants in attendance. Each combatant will be permitted at least three challenges. Each will endeavor to defeat their "sins" through skill at arms, but also through honor and courtesy.

Judging the tourney will be seven of the most genteel and noble ladies representing the seven corresponding virtues. A combatant must invoke, and thus exhibit these virtues in order to overcome the vices. Thus, a combatant may not defeat Pride boastfully, or Wrath with anger.

After all challenges have been fought, those deemed by the virtues as having not overcome their sins must then accept the challenge from the figure "Denial of Vice," a particularly formidable, though honorable knight. Only then can they have truly faced their sins. The Company of Saint Mark will thus hold the field, representing the sins.

*Ted Monnich / Master Karl von Nord Mark*  
803.772.1914



# ON HERALDS

## HERALDS AT TOURNAMENT

Brian R. Price

What is it to be a herald at tournament? From the earliest references, the office of *héraut* has been associated with the conduct of tournaments. And from these records, it is clear that there were, as today, heralds whose quintessential embodiment of grace and nobility earned them enough respect to be installed in a new office—the King of Arms—from the hands of the Sovereign themselves. Other heralds earned but scorn and ridicule, as has been recorded in the thirteenth century song the *dit des hérauts*, where the author extols the flagrant shortcomings of layabout men who do nothing and earn their way by gilded tongues of flattery and deceit.

Through the years the office of herald has grown to encompass a good deal more—and less—than the ancient heralds themselves achieved. In this *Chronique* we shall look narrowly at the role of the herald in connection with the tournament, both medieval and modern.

And this returns us to our question—what is it to be a tournament herald? For surely it is more than a loud voice. There is such honor to be found in a fine herald, a man (and these days, a woman too) of knowledge and grace, of tact and humor, of charisma and talent. For the heralds focus the light of chivalry on the tournament field, frequently bathing at the very apex of that bright light, and at that moment all attention is on them—their success or failure will set the tone for what is to follow or can color what has already taken place. There are great burdens placed upon the herald, great rewards for success, and damage to the reputation for failure.

Without a fine herald, the tournament drifts towards entropy, towards yet another “practice in arms” session that is of little interest to the spectators and carries less import and impression to the tourneyers themselves. And thus this is the first duty of a tournament herald, to shine. They must bear themselves with a nobility of carriage, almost but not quite snobbery, to support and focus the pageantry desired by the spectators, the sponsors, and the tourneyers. They should bear themselves, on and off the field, as ambassadors of honor, of gentility, of fairness and of respect. They should array themselves, at the expense of themselves or their patron, in fine cotes of arms, brilliantly emblazoned and of the richest cloths. All of this should

serve to support a studied grace, an eloquence, built on literature and the other gentle arts. This grace is the preeminent quality that should be sought by all who venture onto the tournament field, a grace borne of confidence and skill; it is an ennoblement of the baser human spirit that the herald, shining as he must, should underline and embody.

**T**he second great duty of a tournament herald is to act as the liaison between the sponsor, the spectators, and the tourneyers. As in history, they should know about the characters and natures of the tourneyers themselves, the stories concerning themselves and their companies, and of course, of their blazonry and titles. Before a great tournament, the heralds should assist the noble lords and ladies who are gracious enough to sponsor the tournament, taking care of the details in terms of the location of the tournament, the food to be served, the teams to attend, and other things required to see the event through.

**T**hey should become experts in, and take an active part in, the development of ceremony and pageantry necessary to communicate something of the importance of the tournament on the reputations of the tourneyers, and see to the entertainment of the spectators. There should be diversions of music and stories, rendered in the original or read from the accounts of the past. There should

be a brilliant array of color to entertain the eyes of fair ladies and gentle lords of court, and some heralds should make this kind of art their specialty, becoming the finest experts available in heraldic interpretation and art. Other heralds should cry the bans of the tournament far and wide, bearing the cotes of their patrons, so that men of honor and nobility may come to know of the tournament, and might thus attend.

**O**n the day of the tournament, arrayed in the fine cotes of arms, they should direct and lead the procession of the sponsors and the great captains of the tournament itself, bearing themselves with the grace that is appropriate to the office, as was said above. They should cry the tournament itself, bearing the words of their patron or tradition as seems appropriate. Their words should be solemn, occasionally with a hint of mirth or of gravity, as needed. Finally, as the combatants take to the field and the tourneyers begin their chivalric exchanges, the heralds should retire to the gallery, where, in the fair company of the ladies of the court, they should bring their experience and knowledge to the ladies for their pleasure. This should be a pleasant duty, with those few, but talented female heralds having the opportunity to share their knowledge and companionship as well.

**A**ncestral heralds also cheered on particular combatants, as Marshal's herald was wont to cry,

'God aid the Marshal!' And yet, today, these cheers seem out of place unless they are aimed at acts of chivalry and courtesy, in equal measure. For indeed today we honor a different kind of chivalry than was known in Marshal's day, yet it a kind of chivalry well known in the 14th and 15th centuries, and one that gave birth to the very kind of tournaments we now see more and more often: the pas d'armes, the round table, and the emprise. So you heralds who want to cry, cry out and draw attention to the fine acts of gallantry and generosity, of courage and prowess, of humility and the worship of ladies, of honesty. Make it known to the gallery when a noble combatant has earned a little piece of renown, for by your own hand his reputation might be increased in measure to his deeds.

And at the same time, a good herald will bring the foul deeds of tournaments to the attention of the sponsor, that they might affect whatever solution seems appropriate. They should never give fame to a tourneyer who has done a foul deed—the fame merely distorts the real renown of the tourneyer, good or bad, and is the rightful purview of the sponsor, be they Crown or nobleman.

As the action of the day draws to a close, the heralds should continue to wear the fine cotes, bearing banner and pennant of their patrons (if they should be fortunate enough to have a pa-

tron!), mixing through the spectators, tourneyers and sponsors to further the renown of the tourneyers. They could compose songs or write accounts of the day. This is the final, most important element of their role as communicator. They must see that justice and fairness is done as the dust settles and the renown of the tourneyers is being discussed and recorded.

They should not, under any circumstances, allow the fair reputation of a tourneyer to be marred by ill will, and should work as a champion against deceit of all sorts. They must do this that their own reputations be unstained, for truly it is only thus that they can bear the credibility necessary to fully fulfill their office.

If the herald works to further the cause of chivalry, shining in the sincerity of their beliefs in the ideals of knighthood, and communicate the justice done by the tourneyers, their ladies, and the noble tournament patrons, then I hold them in the highest esteem. Without heralds, without the pomp and circumstance that the best of them are capable of offering to our endeavors are but a pale imitation of what our ancestors expected, and we, five hundred and more years later, should expect no less.



# ON NOBLES AS HERALDIC PATRONS

Brian R. Price

**N**ow that we have spoken of the conduct that I think a tournament herald should aspire to, I should like to offer a few comments concerning the proper treatment of heralds by the members of the gentility and the spectators of tournament re-enactments. I am speaking here only of tournament heralds, not 'book' heralds—these arguments do not apply to them as they fall outside my experience and are largely unassociated with the tournament proper.

**F**irst let me say that no one should have more respect than they have earned; and yet, until one's character is well known, a person of noble bearing ought to offer the highest possible regard for another, until such time as that other has proven their unworthiness. As to heralds, the nobleman or woman should bear in mind the difficulty of the position in question, and consider

carefully before they leap to the attack on the character of a herald who strives with the courage of a lion, but achieves poor results. For although the success of a herald is won on a reputation earned from a nobility of carriage and graceful demeanor, there is surely some virtue to be held for those gentles of a quieter nature who strive with all their energy to achieve that nobility, and who, being human beings, fall short of the ideal. Honor is no doubt due to these individuals, and I implore gentlemen and women to take heed, considering these words when next they observe a failing herald. When considering the herald who is mired in self-glorification or deceit, no honor is due save what they can give to themselves until such time as they mend their affairs.

**T**hat being said, the herald who achieves his office through the finest traditions of the service, and who shines with particular brilliance upon the stage of the tournament field, earns more honor. They should be held in great esteem, and rewarded with fine words and gestures appropriate for one of their station. I should like to see, in the SCA and other re-enactment organizations, a far greater emphasis played on the proper conduct for the heraldic office, with greater reverence and visibility offered for those who actually achieve something resembling that distant ideal. This should not be a question of seniority, of precedence, or of rank; al-

though certainly heraldic ranks ought to be earned through the virtue of excellence rather than attendance. I have been privileged enough to meet a few of these noble persons, brilliant examples of what a herald can be. They have built a charismatic presence, a magnitude of excellence, and have brought something really special without trying to build the tournament or court around themselves. I salute these tournament heralds and offer the lion's share of my respect for them. Certainly they are our *Kings of Arms*. Those who strive with a honest heart but who fall short of this hold the rest of my respect, and the others I try to ignore.

**W**ithin our re-enactment groups, it would be a good thing if we could work something of the authentic relationship between tourneyer, patron, noble and herald. If you hold a title within the nobility, then you should attempt to find a herald, perhaps someone who is new (a minstrel?), and take them into your service. You should provide them with a cote of arms in your fashion, made of a material according to your rank. Perhaps you can afford to patronize several young heralds; they should carry your banners, wear your cotes, and can offer something special to companies or households. It should be possible for them to earn positions of esteem consummate with their skill and their length of service—perhaps offices within the house or com-

pany for those who are interested. It should command respect, and should have the duties associated with the arrangement of persons at feast and on promenade, with messages given and received between noblemen, and work towards a continuing of education so that one day they might add their expertise to the construction and spectacle of the tournament. Perhaps a sort of feudal contract similar to those held by squires might go far to encourage this authentic relationship—it is something I feel we have cheated ourselves out of and something which would add a great deal to our tournament endeavors, while including those not disposed to the sword closer to the focus of our activity.



# THE RISE OF THE HERALDS

Anthony Richard Wagner



**Editor:** In all major references to the tournament, Anthony Richard Wagner's fine treatise, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Amorial Function of Heraldry* is taken as the primary reference. By kind permission of the Oxford University Press, we are able to reprint here chapter IV, 'The Rise of the Heraldry,' in order to present the most complete picture I have seen regarding the role of the herald as it applies to our main interest, tournaments. I must apologize in advance, for there are untranslated passages in French, included in the chapter, which we were unable to translate in time for publication.

For any who are interested in the role of heralds, I highly recommend this work, available through inter-library loan and in major university libraries.

Heralds seem not to occur in our records before the reign of Edward I, but for a full century earlier mentions of them in French romances and poems are common enough to give us a fair notion of their duties and status. Almost all these mentions link them with tournaments, of which the conduct seems to have been their special province. In regions where the tournament was not in use, we find, according to Paul Meyer, no mention of heralds. They were sent beforehand to proclaim tournaments. Thus, in October 1285, Maigniens, the King of Heraldry, was sent from Chauvency to Montmedy by his master Louis de Looz, Count of Chiny, to proclaim the jousts shortly to be held at the former place. His message done, the King of Her-

alds returns home with his answer, which in turn is proclaimed by a herald before the assembled throng. Heralds would proceed or accompany their lords to the joust. Thus Guillaume de Dole is described as escorted by no less than two hundred. They proclaimed the name of each combatant at his entry.

*A dont oïssiés les hiraus  
Crier le nons des deus vassaus*

writes Jakemes.

*Li hera  
Qui des vaillanz crie le ban,*

Chrétien de Troyes calls them.

If the poem can be trusted, their proclamation often included laudatory comment. They cheered the combatants as they fought. They were expected to recognize them and to know their characters and their histories. The author of the Chauvency poem tells us how he questioned Bruiant the herald, asking 'who each one was, and of what land.' While the jousts were in progress the heralds would talk amongst themselves of the combatants' merits. They would attend the ladies who were watching, and answer their questions about the knights. Nor were their duties confined to the joust itself. They would act as familiar counselors and masters of ceremonies to their lords and to the knights of their company.

When the Chatelain of Coucy had spent a whole night in singing and diversion, his herald told him to go to bed for he would be calling him early in the morning. And when morning came, the heralds roused up the whole company of knights and told them to go to church.

Throughout their early history the heralds and the minstrels are closely linked, as colleagues or as rivals. In the poetical life of William the Marshal, written before 1226, we read of them assisting together at a fight in Normandy in 1173. And though, as the editor, Paul Meyer, observes, '*On voit que nous somees ici en pleiné fantasie. Le poete raconte un tournoi et non une action de guerre*', the association of heralds and minstrels, in the tournament if not in war, is none the less historical. In our own records, heralds and minstrels are regularly classed together for payment of wages and liveries, the exchequer clerks not always troubling to distinguish one from the other. The *Statutum Amorum*, whereby at the request of the Earls, Barons, and Knights of England new laws for the conduct of tournaments were laid down in 1292, contained a clause forbidding any King of Heralds or minstrels to carry hidden arms or any arms save pointless swords, and bidding the Kings of Heralds to wear their coats of arms only.

A household account of 1277 records a gift of twelve pounds made by the king to Hertelin, King of Heralds of Germany, a fiddler of the King of Germany; and a herald of arms of Germany; while another of 1290 shows payments to several foreign heralds present in England for the celebration of the marriage of the king's daughter to the Earl of Gloucester. In 1338 a wardrobe account records a payment to Master Conrod, King of Heralds of Germany, and ten other minstrels of divers and other great lords of Germany, for making minstrelsy before the king at Christmas. In the same year Andrew Norris or Norreys is mentioned as a King of Heralds, yet in 1348 we find a payment to a Master Andrew Roy Norreys, Lybekin the piper and Hanekin his son, and *six other minstrels* of the king. In spite of this close association of heralds and minstrels, we shall see that there were at times bitter rivalry between the two professions.

At Chauvency the author of the poem was told by a herald that the knights, minstrels, heralds, all spoke well of him. If Meyer's interpretation of an incident in the poetical *History of William the Marshal* be accepted, the good or bad opinion of the heralds was something to be reckoned with. About 1182 attempts were made to estrange from the Marshal his patron the young king Henry. One of the calumniators is trying to convince a certain Raoul de Hamarz that the Marshal's

great reputation for valor is undeserved and springs only from a certain Henry le Norrois, supposed by Meyer to be a herald, follows him crying 'God aid the Marshal'.

After the Marshal is banished from court and spends his time in jousting. The young king hears of his prowess from an eye witness, Baudouin de Bethune. 'But', says he, 'have you not seen le Norrois cry after him, 'God aid the Marshal?' 'No, sire, nor was he present.' 'But is the Marshal then capable himself of deeds of chivalry?' 'What, sire? He is one of the best knights in the world.'

Meyer thinks that, though the explanation of the Marshal's success given to Hamartz is '*assez peurile*', it is likely that the Marshal had made a point of enlisting the support of heralds, '*qui contibuaient certainement pour beaucoup a repandre le renom des chev-aliers....Les herauts etainet les journalists de l'epoque, et il pouvait etre avantageux de se concilier leurs bonnes graces.*' As we shall see, many heralds led a wandering life from court to court and even from country to country, mingling always in what may be called chivalric circles; so that their opportunities both for collecting and spreading news of feats of arms and those who performed them would be ample. Froissart bears ample witness to the use made by heralds in his day of their opportunities in this direction. That the Marshal had cultivated heralds is

suggested by an incident earlier in the poem. About 1180, at the time of his estrangement from the young king, the Marshal attended a tournament at Joigny. When it was over, the ladies joined the knights in dancing to a song which the Marshal sang:

*O simple voix et o doz son*

When he had done, a young singer (that is, perhaps, a minstrel) newly made a Herald of Arms, began to sing a new song with the refrain, 'Marshal, give me a good horse!' The Marshal had one of his own brought, and as a party of the jousts came up, rode at one of them, unhorsed him, and gave his horse to the 'little herald'; who thereupon returned to the dance, saying, 'See, what a horse! It is the Marshal who has given it to me.' Meyer at one time suggested that this herald might be identical with the author of the poem, and both perhaps with Henri le Norrois. But if the author, as he seems to, refers to himself as Jean, he can scarcely be Henri le Norrois. In his edition of the poem Meyer drops this suggestion, but thinks the author may have been present at a tournament about 1180, which he says he say either as a jongleur or herald.

Other poems of this kind have been attributed to heralds. Faral believed that Jaques Bretel and Sarrazin, authors respectively of *Le Tournoi de Chauvency* and *Le Roman de Ham*, were heralds;

while Langlois suggested that Jakemes, author of *Le Castelain de Couci*, might be one, and Scheler discussed the possibility of Adened le Roi having been a King of Heralds. In all these cases the principal ground was the familiarity thought to be shown with matters armorial.

Later writers, however, tend to take another view. Delbouille, the latest editor of *Bretel*, and Jakemes, thinks the former more probably a minstrel and the latter '*un petit seigneur sans grande fortune*'; and the general view seems to be that Adenet was minstrel and not herald. A later poem of undoubted heraldic authorship is the life of the Black Prince by the herald Chandos.

The chief reason against thinking Jaques Bretel a herald is his moderate but evident dislike for men of that profession. He is friendly indeed with Bruiant, their king, and occasionally speaks well of others, but his comments in the main are disparaging. They are boorish and deceitful, he says, and no one is greedier than an herald in pursuit of his perquisite of broken armour. He speaks in complimentary terms, however, of the minstrels, and in particular of a certain Henri de Laon. The special interest of this reference is that Henri de Laon is known as the author of a satirical poem, the *Dit des Hyraus*, consisting mainly of abuse of the heralds. The tournament, he complains in effect, has become professionalized. Jousts

now think of their prowess and capacity for the responsibilities of war. Tournaments now resemble parliaments, and soon advocates will be wanted to appeal against the sun or weapons, as they do for hired champions at judicial combats. They last so long that poor knights are ruined and can no longer compete, nor can they approach the great lords on account of the size of their retinues. Worst of all, every knight has to maintain three or four heralds and cannot get rid of them. So, says the author ironically, one must be enterprising, and it is his own wish to become a herald; for their is no profession more convenient for an idle, greedy man, nor any in which one may talk so much and do so little. The growing elaboration of tournaments was evidently bringing the heralds, who specialized in their conduct, into increasing request and prominence at the expense of their more old-fashioned rivals the minstrels.

**A**nother poem of the later thirteenth century, *Li Contes des Hirus of Baudouin de Conde*, has a similar burden. The author tells how on a journey he was hospitably received at the house of a rich knight who was a great patron of minstrels. The knight's servant has told him how hard it is to find true minstrels now, and how many impostors there are going by the name of heralds. At the house a herald who sees that Baudouin is received with more warmth than himself shows resentment. He was dressed, says

Baudouin, in canvas like the windmill, which formerly only most favored heralds wore. In those days heralds used to roam all over hill and dale ill clothed in their coats of arms, suffering heat in summer and cold in winter, to wherever tournaments might be held, to Denmark, Scotland, or Ireland, from Holland, Flanders, or Brabant. But now they have put aside their rags, their 'hiraudie', and dress as well as knights. When the herald had abused him thoroughly, Baudouin asked him who he was. 'What is that to you?' answered the beast, 'I am a herald.' The argument turns to blows, of which Baudouin has the better, whereupon he is rewarded with presents by the master of the house.

**N**ot the least interesting point in the poem is the evidence that heralds, like minstrels, often led that wandering life which bore such fruit in medieval life and letters. Fixed employment they no doubt preferred when they could find it. The Marshal's young herald, Bruiant and his brother kings, who enjoyed this security, can be taken for types of successes in their profession. Indeed, it is likely that the dignity of King of Herald was normally associated with fixed allegiance. How, at this date, it was attained or conferred, we cannot tell. In the fourteenth century, as we shall see, there were ceremonies of creation and coronation which only a sovereign or his deputy could perform. Similarly, there were oaths and

initiation ceremonies for the lower ranks of pursuivant and herald. It is possible that the words in which the Marshal's herald is brought to the scene—

*un(s) chantereals  
Qui ert lurauz d'armes noveals*

indicate something of the sort as early as the twelfth century. The later investitures included putting the herald of a coat (tabard) or escutcheon of his master's arms. Now Baudouin de Conde seems to refer to the wearing of a armorial coats when he writes of herald's 'cotes armoires'; and at Chauvency

*Bruiant despoille sa garnache  
Que d'armes  
A dont oisses les hiraus  
Crier le nons de deus vassaus*

Anstis thought that the '*houces des armes*' of the *Statutum Armorium* were no other than the 'Surcoats of Arms', worn by the heralds 'in the same form that their founders used them in Battles and Feats of Arms'.

We shall have later to discuss a charter of Peter, King of Heralds North of Trent, dated the 18th of March, 1276. Here we need only note that the attached seal when complete showed a shield charged with three crowns. Later instances suggest that it was customary for early Kings of Arms to bear crowns in this was an en-sign of their office, which it seems unlikely they could venture upon

without some royal or princely warrant such as their own formal creation or coronation would afford. Bois Robert, King of the Heralds of France, sealed with three crowns in 1318; while Guiot, King of the Heralds of Champagne, attached to a receipt for wages dated the 18th of November 1355 a seal of a banner of three crowns impaling a lion—perhaps an early instance of the impalement of personal with official arms. These indications, although singly slight, give, when taken together, some ground for thinking that the conception of heralds as a distinct order, which prevailed in the fourteenth and later centuries, may have been older than this and even perhaps coequal with the first notices we have of these of ficers' existence.

Seyler, who collected the ear-ly German references to heralds, was unable to find any occurrence of the actual word 'herald' before about 1367, when Peter Suchen-wirt in his poem of *Leutold von Stadeck* writes that

*Fürsten, grafen, freyen  
Der namen hört chreyen  
Von der eralden, persewant,  
Der wappen volger Tribliant.*

He came, however, to the con-clusion that the same offic-ers are certainly intended by the names of 'Garzûne' (i.e. 'gar-çons'), 'Crogiere', and 'Wappen-knaben' or 'Knappen von den Wappen'. The two former names appear as early as the twelfth cen-

tury, but from about the third quarter of the thirteenth century are superseded by the latter two. Seyler's German quotations are parallel with the French ones given above, but perhaps rather less informative. Like them they relate mainly to tournaments.

**W**e have noticed the entries of gifts made by Edward I in 1277 and 1290 to visiting foreign heralds. The earliest notices yet found in the household accounts of this king's own heralds belong to the latter year, and record payments made for their summer and winter robes (twenty shillings for each) to little Robert and Nicholas Morell, Kings of Heraldry. It is possible that exhaustive searches in the Liberate Rolls and Pipe Rolls might produce somewhat earlier entries.

The next development of the heralds' status and duties belongs, so far as our evidence goes, to the reign of Edward III. So far their activities seem to be confined to the tournament and its accessories. For the usual later view—that heralds were from the first messengers of war and peace—we have found no evidence at all. From Edward III's reign on, however, we shall see them entrusted, though sparingly at first, with military and diplomatic duties of steadily growing importance. Our public records and the pages of Froissart tell the same story. On the first page of his Chronicle the latter acknowledges obligation to *'acuuns rois d'armes et leurs*

*mareschaus qui par droit sont et doient sont et doivent estre juste inquisiteur et raporteur de tels besonges'* for much information respecting the noble deeds of arms performed in the great war between France and England. Elsewhere he cites heralds' authority for particular incidents, as when he tells the story of how March King of Arms brought news of the peace of 1394 to Richard II, *'si comme le héraut nommé Marche ou le Roy Marche me dist depuis a grant loisir en chevauchant avec luy ens ou royaulme d'Angleterre'*.

**I**t is clear how what we may call the heralds' primary function first led to their employment as messengers. On St. George's Day, 1344, Edward III celebrated his determination to found an order of knighthood by holding a joust at Windsor, *'et pour ce que la feste fuist sceue et conneue par toulte marches li roys engles l'envoya publier et denunchier par ses hiraux en Franche, en Escoce, en Bourgoingne, en Flandres, en Braibant, en Allemagne, et partout jusqu'en Lombardie'*. In April 1366 Froissart was at Brussels and met there the heralds of the kings of Denmark, Navarre, and Arragon, and the Dukes of Lancaster, Bavaria, and Brunswick, who had come to a joust which the Duchess of Barbant was holding.

The first instance that I can cite in which an English herald figures as a messenger of war is not an unworthy one. It is no less than

the opening scene of the Hundred Years War in Froissart's narrative. On the morning of Monday the 13th of April 1338, Edward III was at Westminster with Robert of Artois, the Earls of Lancaster, Pembroke, and Kent, and others, when there came a herald well known to the king and that barons; and he was English and was called Carlisle (Froissart writes it Cardoeil), for the king had made him herald during his expedition in Scotland and had given him that name. This herald had been out of England five years traveling through the world, and had been in Prussia, in Flanders, and at the Holy Sepulcher, and had returned by Barbary to Spain, where he had stayed some while with the King of Spain during his expedition in Granada, and now brought with him letters from the King of Spain to the King of England. He had come thence by way of Navarre and the King of England's territory in Gascony, where he found a state of war subsisting between the vassals of the Kings of France and England. The lords of Gascony '*qui pour Englès se tenoient*' and the town of Bordeaux gave him letters to the king, whereupon he had made such good speed that, embarking at Bayonne, he had come in five days and four nights to Southampton, and thence had ridden in a day and a half to London and to the king.

*'Liquels roy et tout li baron orent au premier grant joie, car bien il savoient qu'il avoient de lui*

*pluiseurs nouvelles. Quant li roys englès vit le hiraute devant lui que, grant temps a, n'avoit veu, se dist: "A bien vieigne, Cardoeil. Or nous dittes de-dela le mer et des lointains pays où vous avez estet depuis que nous ne vous veymes, car moult en désirons à savoir." "Monseigneur," dist li hiraute, "vous lires ou ferés lire, s'il vous plect, ces lettres, et puis je vous en diray de pluiseurs, car il y en a de telles qui moult vous touchent." Lors ouvri li roys aucune des lettres et regarda ens.'*

This is our first evidence (so far as I know), not only for the employment of an English herald in this way, but for the calling of one by a name of office. The evidence happily, is as plain as possible. The king had given this man the name of Carlisle when he created him herald in the course of a Scottish campaign (probably that of 1327 when he passed near Carlisle, for that of 1333 is excluded by the statement that in 1337 this herald had been abroad five years). Froissart has, however, an earlier notice of a Scots herald. In 1333, when the king was at Alnwick, '*uns hiraute d'Escoce, qui s'appelloit Dondee*', came before the king and his lords and announced that he was sent by some of the prelates and lords of Scotland to ask for parlay. None of the heraldic authors whom I have consulted can cite earlier authentic mentions in any country of heralds by their names of office.

In England they appear one by one as Edward III's reign proceeds. In 1338 payments were made to Andrew Norreys or Norrois, King of Heralds, and it is likely, though not certain, that this is equivalent to the later title Norroy, which at all events makes undoubted appearance in letters patent of the 12th January 1386 granting fees and robes to '*Johannes March unus heraldorum nostrorum ad arma Rex Noreys*'. We have seen Lancaster Herald proclaiming the decision in the Lovel and Morley case in or before 1348. From 1354 we meet with payments to William Volant, King of Heralds, a title probably identical with the later Vaillant. Froissart mentions '*un heraut qui s'appelloit le Roy Faucon*' and was '*hiraus au roy d'Engleterre*' in 1359; and our own records have numerous later references to Falcon King of Arms. In 1364 the news of the battle of Auray was brought to Edward III, Froissart tells us, by

*'ungs varles poursieuevans armes, qui avoit estet a la bataille et que li roys englès fist tantost hiraut, et li donna le nom de Windesore, et moult grant proffit: par lequel hiraut nommet Windesore je fui enfourment deceste bataille et de l'ordonnanche, sicomme cous avez oy chy-dessus recordes, car j'estoie a Douvres au jour qu'il y vint et que les nouvelles y furent premierment scueues.'*

Chandos herald, author of the Poetical life of the Black

Prince, who was first in the service of Sir John Chandos but after his death in that of the king, is first mentioned by Froissart in 1366. In 1377, he tells us, Richard II, after his own coronation at Westminster, '*fist che jour quatre contes et neuf chevaliers..et fist Camdos le hiraut roy d'armes d'Engleterre*'. This is not only our oldest notice of the creation of an English King of Arms, but seems to further imply that Chandos was given a pre-eminence over other English Kings of Arms, such as Garter was later accorded here and Montjoye enjoyed in France. Of the latter office, the first mention I have found is a statement, in a document to be discussed later, that Charlot, who had been King of Arms first of Cyprus and then of Artois, was crowned *Montjoye roi d'armes de France* by Charles V, who reigned from 1364-1380. There are, however, one or two earlier references to Kings of Heralds in France.

In 1377 Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, appears to have created John Othelake his herald by the name of March. On Edmund's death in 1381, Richard II took him into his own service, and in 1386 we find him referred to as '*Johannes March unus heraldorum nostrorum ad arma Rex Noreys*'. In 1394 Froissart, who knew him personally, calls him '*ung herault qyue on appelloit March et roy d'armes d'Angletette*'. It appears that prior to the institution of the office of Garter King of Arms in 1417 the status of the principal King of Arms of En-

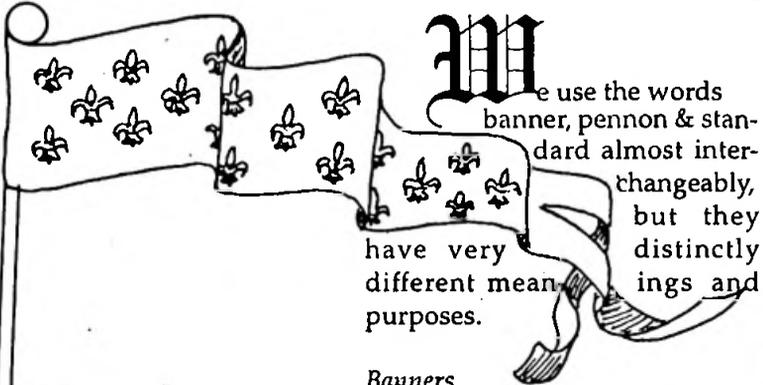
gland existed but was not attached to any one office, depending perhaps on royal favor on individual seniority, as the precedence of the heralds' and pursuivants' places does to this day. In France down to the middle of the fifteenth century the title 'roy d'armes de françois' seems to have been borne as often as not by another king than Montjoye.

The heralds' advance in status during this period is marked by a gradual increase in the importance of the duties entrusted to them. Dundee, in 1333, is merely sent to ask a parley; no letter or statement of terms is entrusted to him. Carlisle, in 1338, is entrusted with important letters, but perhaps for no other reason that he was personally reliable and was traveling in the right direction. In the same year, however, we find a payment to Edward III to William herald of the Duke of Gelderland, '*misso ad diversas partes Allemagniae in negotiis regis*'. In 1339, at Buironfosse, the same herald was sent to the king of France with verbal challenge of battle, which being accepted '*se donnèrent grans dons et biaux draps, et s'en revint en l'ost des Engles et recorda tout ce que vous avés oy*'. In 1359, before the battle of Cocherel, the Captal de Buch, meeting with King Falcon by chance, sent him to parley for him with Prie the herald of the Archpriest. In 1376 Hereford herald is sent to Flanders '*in secretis negotiis regis*'. Hereafter such entries are frequent. Heralds are regularly sent

with letters to foreign sovereigns, and with instructions to, or in the retinue of, ambassadors. From 1425 onwards Gilles le Bouvier, Berry, was often employed by Charles VII of France as a fully accredited ambassador, while in England William Bruges was employed as a diplomat and his father Richard Bruges may well have been. In 1449 Henry VI speaks of sending John Smert, Guienne, afterwards Garter, '*in oue Ambassade into divers Countries out of this Our Reaume*', while Roger Machado, Richmond, Norroy, and Clarenceux, was employed as an ambassador by Henry VII. His own memorandum tells us how, for example, on the 12th of June 1489 '*le Roy envoia monsieur Robert Clifford chevalier et Richemond Roy d'Armes de Norroy en embassade vers monsieur de Rieu: Marichal de Bretagne*'.

### EDITOR'S ENDNOTE

Mr. Wagner, Richmond Herald, has given us a magnificent opening into the early functions of heralds as they were employed in tournament, tracing their development into diplomats and court functionaries. Unfortunately, space does not permit us to examine his study further, but I highly recommend his book, **HERALDS AND HERALDRY IN THE MIDDLE AGES** Oxford University Press, 1956. Reprinted here by kind permission of Oxford University Press. ❖



**W**e use the words banner, pennon & standard almost interchangeably, but they have very different meanings and purposes.

# BANNERS, PENNONS, STANDARDS & MOTTOES

Tobi Beck  
AKA SCA  
Countess Elina  
of Beckenham,  
Order of the  
Laurel



### *Banners*

Banners were reserved for kings, princes, dukes, counts and barons. A few knights were given the right to carry a banner, in recognition of their prowess on the field and these were known as "knights banneret." Banners were usually two to three feet long and half as wide and would be wherever its owner was.

### *Pennons*

The pennon was a small flag carried on the lance head of a knight, or a prominent squire if they had sufficient followers. The flag was about a foot long, had swallow tails and would carry the arms of the knight. In granting the elevation of banneret, the swallow tails would be cut off, and the result was a small banner.

### *Standards*

The standard was most commonly used in battle and was borne by peers, knights and above. There were two main varieties, the full standard and the informal one. The informal one would be used to mark the headquarters tent of a group or possessions of a household and

would usually be no more than six to seven feet long. The formal standard size depended on rank, a duke's was seven yards, the count's six yards, the baron's five yards, the knight banneret's was four and a half and a knight's was four. When riding to battle under someone's standard, you rode UNDER their standard, and met justice under their rules. This may have been where we get the phrase "Being held to a different standard." The standard did not bear the arms of the owners, but rather their badges. These same badges were usually worn by the soldiers who marched under that standard. Between 1300-1500 standards usually had the cross of St. George in the section nearest the staff. The body was often split lengthwise with the persons livery and usually carried mottoes.

#### *Mottoes*

There is a great variety in mottoes. For the most part they are not registered, inherited or part of one's arms, unless you are Scottish. A family may have had several, they could change on a whim and may have had one of several origins.

Many undoubtedly began as war cries such as "Fight," "Forward," "Through," "Lead on!" or "Not for King or Country but for Both." Others came from specific events such as "Agincourt" from the obvious battle or "The day of my Life" taken by a knight after the battle of Poitiers. Still others were the fancy of the bearer or perhaps some inside joke such as "He who

looks at Martin's ape, Martin's ape shall look at him" or "Let Curzon hold what Curzon held."

When placing a motto on one's standard it is usually done on a bend of white or written on the standard between two thin bends of white. Often one motto was divided between two bends or two mottoes were displayed on the same standard.

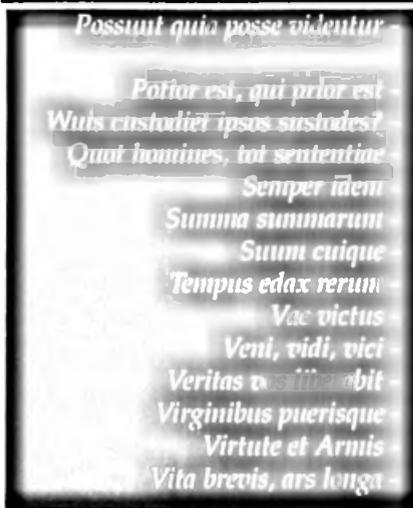
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*"The formal standard size depended on rank, a duke's was seven yards, the count's six yards, the baron's five yards, the knight banneret's was four and a half and a knight's was four."*

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Following are several examples of mottoes any of which you may wish to use for your own:

<i>Abeunt studia in mores</i>	Pursuits pass over into habits
<i>Alea iacta est</i>	The die is cast
<i>Alis Volat Propriis</i>	She flies with her own wings
<i>Animis Opibusque Parati</i>	Prepared in spirit and wealth
<i>Morituri te salutant</i>	Those about to die salute you
<i>Carpe diem</i>	Seize the day
<i>Cedant Arma Togae</i>	Let arms yield to the darty
<i>Crescat scientia</i>	May knowledge increase
<i>Cui Bono?</i>	To whose advantage?
<i>Cum grano salis</i>	With a grain of salt
<i>De mortuis nil nisi bonum</i>	Of the dead nothing but good
<i>Deo volente</i>	God willing
<i>Dira necessitas</i>	Dire necessity
<i>Disiecta membra</i>	Scattered body parts
<i>Docendo discitur</i>	We learn by teaching
<i>Dum Spiro, Spero</i>	While I breathe, I Hope
<i>Eheu fugaces anni</i>	Alas, the fleeting years
<i>Errare humanum est</i>	To err is human
<i>Esse quam Videri</i>	To be rather than to seem
<i>Factum fieri infectum non potest</i>	You can't undo what's done
<i>Fere libenter homines id quod</i> <i>voluntate credunt</i>	Men gladly believe what they wish
<i>Festina lente</i>	Make haste slowly
<i>Finis coronat opus</i>	The end crowns the work
<i>Fortes fortuna adiuvat</i>	Fortune favors the brave
<i>Fortuna ceca est</i>	Fortune is blind
<i>Imperium in Imperio</i>	An Empire within and Empire
<i>in hoc signo vinces</i>	In this sign thou wilt conquer
<i>In medias res</i>	Into the midst of things
<i>In medio tutissimus ibis</i>	The middle course is the safest
<i>Ipsi dixit</i>	He said it himself
<i>Labor omnia vincit</i>	Work conquers everything
<i>Laudator temporis acti</i>	A praiser of times gone by
<i>Licentia poetica</i>	Poetic License
<i>Lupus in fabula</i>	The wolf in the fable
<i>Mens sana in corpore sano</i>	A sound mind in a sound body
<i>Nec possum tecum vivere,</i> <i>nec sine te</i>	I can't live with you nor without you
<i>Nil homini certum est</i>	Nothing is sure to man
<i>Nomen et onera</i>	The name and the portent
<i>Non omnia possumus omnes</i>	We can't all do everything
<i>Non omnis moriar</i>	I shall not wholly perish
<i>Omnia mutantur</i>	All things change
<i>Periculum in mora</i>	Danger in delay



They can because  
 they think they can  
 First come first served  
 Who shall watch the watchers?  
 As many opinions as people  
 Always the same  
 The ultimate total  
 To every one his own  
 Time, the devourer of all things  
 Woe to the vanquished  
 I came, saw, conquered  
 The truth shall make you free  
 For girls and boys  
 By Valor and Arms  
 Life is Short, art long

Manes were not exclusively in Latin, they can also be found in old English and French. A medieval army on the march would have had banners, pennons and standards fully displayed. Not only did the show help locate specific groups and people on the march and in battle, it also must have made a formidable impression upon the enemy.

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# CREATION OF AN EARL

1337

Nobles and the Noble Life, C. 1950

*Kind permission of the Oxford University Press*

The king, to the archbishops, etc., Greetings.

**W** know that, because much of the grace of the state lies in the wisdom and eminence of those men tioned hereinafter, and in particular the throne of the realm is elevated and the rule of the kingdom is strengthened when there are many men of noble status and lofty excellence.

Therefore, we, at the request of the prelates and peers and the commons of our realm in the present parliament assembled at Westminster, in our wish to enhance the order of the kingdom and to bestow new honors as much as to restore the old ones, and to secure the safety of the state and to add to the number of nobles by whose counsels we are directed, and for support in times as adversity;

Have presented our most dear first born Edward, by our prerogative and for his special merits, to the Duchy of Cornwall, which Duchy we have given because it is vacant to the deaths of its former holders, and we have invested him and girded him with the sword, as is customary.

Furthermore, considering the others whom we might promote to an earldom, we chose for his probity, vigor and wisdom as well as for the renown of his ancestor our beloved and faithful William de Monte Acuto. We do this because of the

promptitude with which he has submitted himself to danger on our behalf, and that this honour will add to his wealth as to the love he bears us, and in grateful commemoration of the service and use which he has devoutly provided for us.

We gird him with the sword and invest him with the county of Salisbury, to him and his heirs of his name, and we freely concede the authority of said county to the same earl and his heirs, and in support of this grant the decision of parliament is pleasing to us and in accord with our own counsel.

And to support the burden we give and concede and confirm in this charter to the same earl and his heirs £20, returned from the profits of the county of Wiltshire each year at the Feasts of Easter and St. Michael in equal proportions, to be received from the hand of the sheriff who be there, in perpetuity.

Wherefore we will and specially affirm by us and our heirs that the aforesaid earl and his heirs shall receive the aforesaid £20 returned from the profits of the said county, each year at the aforesaid feasts, in equal portions, receiving from the hands of the sheriff of that county who will be in that time, in perpetuity, as is stated above.

In witness of this: our venerable father, John, Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, our cancellor...

Given by our hand at Westminster, 16 day March.

By the king himself and all the commons in parliament.



## THE PERQUESITES OF ELEVATION

24 April, 1337

**T**he King, to the collectors or keepers of the stampage of tin in the county of Cornwall, greetings:

**W**ishing to honour our beloved and faithful William of Monte Acuto, we have recently in person given him the name and honour of the earl of Salisbury and we award him in the county of Salisbury and we gird him with the sword, as was shown.

**A**nd among other things in which county, by which this honour shall be sustained and in every way supported, we concede from us and our heirs, in the aforesaid county, 1,000 marks. Each year, at the feasts of Easter and St. Michael, in equal portions, from the profits of the tin aforesaid, by your hands and those of other collectors and keepers of the same stampage, now and in the future, it will be paid.

**H**e shall have and hold in the same county, and his legitimate male heirs begotten of his body, 800 marks thus, until the Castle and Manor of Trowbridge and certain other manors which our beloved and faithful John of Warenne, earl of Surrey, and Joan his wife hold for the term of their lives; the reversion of which is to go to the said earl of Salisbury after the decease of the said earl of Warenne and Joan, under the form we have conceded, and it shall come to the hands of aforesaid earl of Salisbury, or his heirs male.

And the remaining 200 marks, which is also for the said earl of Salisbury or to his said heirs, it shall be of 200 marks of land and annual rent, in a fitting place within our realm, as will be provided by us or by our heirs, in perpetuity, in the form as is contained in full in our letters patent.

Therefore we order to you the aforesaid earl of Salisbury receive 500 marks at the Easter term next, from the profits of aforesaid stampage, to be paid according to the tenor of our aforesaid letters.

The aforesaid earl of Salisbury shall receive his letters patent testifying to the aforesaid 500 marks, and we shall allow the payment in your account in our Exchequer.

Witnessed by the king at Windsor, 24 day of April.



## DUCHESS IN HER OWN RIGHT

1398

Item: Our lord the king wishes to honour, enhance, and increase the name and estate of his honorable cousin, Margaret Marshall, Countess of Norfolk.

On this same day, in full parliament, in the absence of the countess, the countess is made and created a duchess, and she is given the style, title, honour and name of Duchess of Norfolk, to have for the term of her life.

The charter will be sent on this aforesaid matter.

## INDENTURE IN PEACE AND IN WAR

John of Gaunt's Register, 1379-1383

**T**his indenture is made between John, king of Castile and of Leon, duke of Lancaster on one part and John Skargull, esquire, on the other part:

**W**itnessing that the said John is retained resides with the said John, king and duke, for the term of his life, in time of peace and in time of war, in the manner which follows.

**T**hat is to say, the said John shall be held to serve the said king and duke in time of peace and in war, for the term of his life, and to work with him in such matter as shall please the said king and duke, and to be well and properly arrayed for war.

**A**nd the said John shall receive in time of peace wages and food at court at diverse places whither he shall be sent and ordered by letters of the said king and duke. And the said John shall take 20 marks each year in time of war, as his fee of war, plus food at court, from the hands of whoever shall be the treasurer for war of the said king and duke.

**A**nd if it happens that in the future the said John changes his estate and takes the order of chivalry then he shall take, in time of war, for himself, his esquire, and his men at arms, well and properly arrayed for war, 40 marks per year as their fee for war, from the hands of the aforesaid treasurer for war, plus food at court for himself and his said esquire.

And in regard to the horses of war taken and lost in the service of the said king and duke, if there are any from the moment of the beginning of the year at war, and regarding prisoners or other profits of war taken by him or won by his men, and for the freight and harnesses of horses used for the said king and duke, it shall be done for him as it is for other esquires of his estate and condition.

In witness, etc., Given in London, the 23rd day of June, the year, etc., four.



## THE BURIAL OF AN EARL

1463

**T**he interment of the earl of Salisbury at Breshall, in the shire of Buckingham, [was made] the fifteenth day of February, in the second year of King Edward IV, and Sir Thomas his son, in two coffins, in one chariot with six horses in trap pings, the first in St. George's arms, the other covered in black, a banner of St. George before him, and two behind. First, before the conveying of the body and bones of the said earl and his son, the earl of Warwick, son and heir of the said earl, rode after the chariot, Lord Montague on the right side afoot, Lord Latimer, his son, on the left hand with many knights and esquires afoot on every side to the number of sixteen; the earl's banner and standard came next and immediately after the chariot; and before the earl of Warwick, meeting with the corpses a mile without the town, came two heralds and two kings of arms, bearing the coat of arms of the said earl at every corner of the chariot...At which place [of interment] they received the bones and bodies so coffered. The bishop of Exeter, chancellor of England, the bishop of Salisbury, the bishop of St. Asaph, and two other abbots mitred, in solemn procession accompanied by Lord Hastings, the king's chamberlain, the Lord Fitz-Hugh, and many other knights and squires in great number, conveyed the corpses, the son before the father, into the choir, where the hearse of said earl was prepared and ordained in solemn and honorable wise...On the right side of the banner stood Garter King of Arms in the coat of the said earl's arms; on the left side [of] the standard there stood Clarencieux king-of-arms; and at the corners of the feet of the said hearse were two other heralds, Windsor and Chester, in coats of the said earl's arms, with many other heralds and pursuivants, during the observance of the dirge till the void was done...

# Hints on How to Make More Authentic Shields

for SCA combat

Brian R. Price

AKA SCA Master Brion Thornbird Ap Rhys  
Earl, Knight  
West Kingdom

One of the least most difficult elements of medieval harness to recreate is a more authentic looking shield. Often these shields were made of bonded wood and gesso, materials that will demonstrate a marked dislike for repeated contact with our *behourd*-style weapons.

Can you imagine the hours of work destroyed as the gesso splinters off in all directions? It must have made quite a show for the spectators of medieval tournaments, and since the knights and esquires had only to purchase more of them, and since labor was cheap, acquiring more of them was probably not very difficult.

For us, however, it is another matter. An SCA shield, made of aluminum or flat plywood, edged in hose, wrapped in wire or cord. Yuck! The admirable element is generally not the shield itself, but rather the artistry sometimes displayed by heraldic artists on the face. This is often truly inspirational and certainly worthy of the knights we went before us.

In this article I present you with another alternative—a way to give that modeled appearance that many period shields have, and pointers on how to dress the edges, back and face of your shield and escape that rag-tag aluminum / rubber look that can be so distracting. It is truly the details that count; for a bit of care can highlight the artwork on the face rather than detracting from it. I will concentrate on shields from the 12th - 15th centuries, since they are what I am familiar with and they are the ones used in medieval tournaments.



Shield of the Landgrave Konrad of Thurgia died 124. Notice the bends of color that seem to indicate that it was painted in colored bands over the charge.

## The Shield Base

No start, very few medieval shields appear to have been flat. (refer to Theodore Monnich's article [Ch#8]). Shield presses are very easy to make, however, and the resulting curved heaters offer both defensive advantages and a superior appearance. Curved shields can either be made or purchased from any of a number of dealers.<sup>1</sup>

By itself, plywood makes a very unsatisfactory shield; often they are too light, they have a tendency to splinter and later crumble apart, the surface must be heavily prepared in order to achieve a workable surface for painting. It does have the virtue of being inexpensive, however, and it is probably the most common material for shields.

In order to strengthen the shield, several things can be done. Traditionally, within the SCA, the edges have been covered with aluminum edging and then rubber hose, both

<sup>1</sup> See the listing for dealers who sell pre-pressed shield blanks—and feel free to send more other sources if you have them!

of which serve to protect the shield on its most vulnerable surface—the edge.

*Reinforcing a plywood shield with fiberglass*  
**A** method that was popular in the Midrealm was to cover the front surface and edges with fiberglass; using several layers on the edge and being careful not to include air bubbles. This was more expensive—\$20 or so per shield, but had the virtue of creating shields that lasted for a very long time (if the work was carefully done). I strongly recommend the use of fiberglass to reinforce the shield, for although it is not period, it is a sort of resin, and can be sanded and painted to appear very authentic.

Fiberglass kits can be purchased at automotive supply shops, and cost in the vicinity of \$25 or so. In the kit you will receive resin, hardener, and fiberglass cloth (do not use the mat; it is messy and fragments too easily). If you carefully and closely follow the instructions included therein, you can reinforce your shield. First apply a layer around the edge, using cut-out “v”s along the edge so that everything lays perfectly flat. Allow no air bubbles. Go back while everything is still wet and put on another layer. Next put a large section over the face of the shield, still remaining careful not to include air bubbles. Be sure the workplace is well ventilated and do not eat any of the fiberglass. Some people are allergic to the stuff—use caution!

A better way, in my opinion, is to open your yellow pages and seek out commercial fiberglass houses in your local area. They have a specialized tool called a “chop gun” with which they spray out fiberglass mat and a resin / hardener mix, allowing them to “spray paint” your shield with fiberglass. Tell them what you are going to use it for—the usual price will be between \$10 and \$30.

While you are at the fiberglass shop, you might consider something that we did: we took in a plywood master, and had the fiberglass shop make a mold on it. It is reasonably expensive—on the order of \$75-\$100, but from there on out you can have duplicates made of your shield, completely out of fiberglass, for only \$10 to \$50. And

they will endure a very, very long time. Use care to inform the fiberglass house how you will use the shield, that the shield is thicker on the edges than in the middle, and that they should not weigh more than you want. Tell them this in advance—it is better to put it in writing. Needless to say, the price goes down if you order more at once.

*Modeling the surface—  
adding charges and backgrounds in relief:*  
**R**ead through the previous articles on the shield, you will notice that many of the shields have a modeled surface. This was accomplished by the use of gesso, but as we have said this will not work well for SCA shields. I wanted to increase the authenticity and impact of our shields within the Company of Saint George, and hit upon the following as a solution:

1) Sculpt your charge out of Roma Plastalina, Plaster, or potter's clay (fire it afterwards). If your device only has a single charge, you are in luck; while the material is still soft place it on a shield blank (to get the curve), and then fire it. Sometimes you can fire it while it is on the blank—it depends upon the material you use. If you use Roma Plastalina, you will not be able to fire it; I recommend that you make a mold and use a plaster or urethane copy.

2) If your device uses several charges that are the same, it is worth your while to make a mold. Stick with a simple one-piece mold, one that can be made from plaster or from mold kits available at craft stores. If you use plastalina, seal it with Krylon Crystal Clear coating before you make the mold! If you are using a hard mold, like plaster, you cannot have any undercuts or the master and copies cannot be taken out of the mold. I often recommend turning the mold over to a ceramics house—or seeking them out for assistance when you try to make the mold.

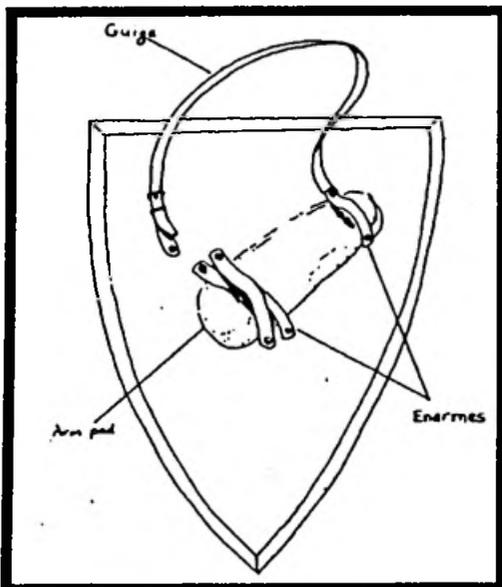
Once you have the copies of your charge affixed the shield, you can then send the shield back to the fiberglassers, have a mold made, and have copies of your shield, in fiberglass, that can be replicated easily many times. There is even evidence for the use of plaster or stone molds for use on



Left: The author's shield prior to molding. It was a fiberglass master used for several years before the paint was stripped and the clay dragons applied. One could also cast the dragons in Uretheyne or a heavy duty plastic or fiberglass and then apply them to an already completed shield.

From this piece, a plaster mold could be made, and an authentic gesso /wood shield built. Perhaps next summer!

Right: The arming straps for an authentic shield, showing the guige, enarmes and the grip. Illustration by Ted Monnich in his shield article in *Chronique* #8.



Below: The Roma Plastilina dragon piece done for the shield above. Each piece was traced out onto a rolled sheet of the clay, cut out, and then modelled. The final pieces were sprayed with shellac and then placed on the shield, and a mold was taken. Now many fiberglass copies can be made and dressed at leisure.



gesso (think of the fiberglass as really butch gesso). Additionally, you can use the plaster mold to make a real wood and gesso shield—but that is another article.

Some people have suggested coating the shield blank with a thin layer of plaster, and then using a tool to model the surface before the master is sent in for mold-making. An excellent idea, but I have not done it as yet. Very rich effects can be achieved by the use of texture and color: there is evidence that geometric patterns, like the diapering found on 14th - 15th century manuscripts, was used on shields and other things treated with gesso.

If you do not want to have a wholly fiberglass shield, then you could have a fiberglass mold made only for your charges, and then affix these by glue, etc. to the shield. It could also be done in urethane (the kind that prop houses use to make models in Hollywood), but this has not yet been done.

I currently have access to small tournament heaters (20" x 22") that are made in this fashion—blanks run \$50. A larger heater is currently in progress (22 x 28"); they should run \$65 or so.

#### *Preparing and painting the shield*

You should get a shield back from the fiberglassers that has been coated with a sort of paint—gel coat—that facilitates painting. It is a good idea to rough the surface with fine sandpaper before painting, however, and then to seal it with a thick layer of varnish (polyurethane, available from paint stores, works great!). If you want to be decadent, if you have gold or silver in your device you can treat the raised area with gold or solver leaf, and achieve striking effects.

#### *Backing*

The back of the shield should be covered with a cloth or with leather; there is evidence for this during the 14th and 15th centuries, and it adds greatly to the finished look of the shield.

The cloth should be affixed with adhesive, (Scotch-77 spray adhesive, Barge cement, etc.), and should extend to the edge of the shield. It should be put on after the shield

has been painted and final coated, and before the holes are drilled in the edge. Make sure that it is fully bonded to the wood, and that the face is completely dry before you attempt this.

#### *Enarms and Guige*

The "grip" and the "shield strap" are more properly called the *enarms*, and their placement is very personal, depending upon your instruction and your fighting style, not to mention the shield itself. An additional strap, the *guige*, was used to carry the shield over the back. I wish that more people would try it—especially with the small tournament shields—because being able to strap the shield over the back is a definite advantage.

The enarm itself should usually be in two parts—the grip or *upper enarm* and the lower arm securing point, or, predictably, the *lower enarm*. Some combatants prefer the hard grip, while others prefer a strap. If you use a hard grip, be sure that its diameter is wide enough for your hand to grip comfortably and that your hand is in a comfortable position vis à vis the shield. The hand, when at rest, has a slight cock to it, and the enarm should reflect this for maximum comfort and efficiency. The lower arm piece is often buckled so that it can be tightened and loosened at will, to accommodate differing arms, arm defenses, and the like.

If you use a *guige*, be sure that it can be secured and does not fly loose during combat—it can hang up on knee cop wings, spaulders, your opponent's sword, and be really frustrating.

All straps should be affixed with wide enough washers so that they do not tear out easily—Sir Corwyn Greyrider of the Midrealm offered an elegant solution with large leather washers that are punched on the edges with a simple leather hole punch to give texture. If done in rich colors, over the shield backing, the effect can be striking.

The tip of the lower enarm can also be finished with a plate of etched brass, which will both hold the tongue within the buckle so that it doesn't escape during arming and

offer another element of finish. All straps should be edged using an edging tool, and finished with dye and waxed.

#### Hand Protection

**S**ome places in the SCA, the hand must be guarded by bars or some solid defense covering the whole hand, and part of the wrist. This defense is usually answered by legions of armourers who offer "shield baskets." Unfortunately, they usually look very unmedieval, and can unbalance a really nice shield.

Another way to answer the problem is to make a boiled leather box of thick leather that does the same thing, but is not quite so modern. This should be made from no less than 1/4" leather, boiled in wax, and stitched together with waxed thread. It can then be affixed to the shield with rivets or with cleverly disguised bolts (carriage bolts do indeed have round heads). I have seen the inside covered with a leather washer to remove all evidence of the modern unit, and the effect is really neat. Be sure to trim back the bolt using bolt cutters and a file, or to purchase short enough bolts where this is not necessary. Usually 3/4 - 1" bolts with a 3/8" diameter suffice well.

This idea is based on sword hilts designed and tested by Jay Hoffman, AKA SCA Viscount Sir Alfred of Carlyle. He has to my knowledge not made any shield guards, however, so I can't say that he endorses this.

#### Edging

**W**as we said before, the SCA tradition has been to cover the edge with aluminum and rubber hose; all of this held in place with wire, nylon secures, or simple rope.

For a better look, leather can be used, cut into embattlements (or not), and worked around the shield. It must be heavy, of 1/4" or more, and should be bolted down rather than tied. If the edges are all nicely finished, the bolts covered, and the leather dyed, the effect is dramatically different from the old method, although it takes more time (but less maintenance!).

CONTINUED ON P. 66

### Wooden Shield Blanks

#### ALL SAINTS ARMOURY

Tom Huguenin  
4069 Suisun Valley Rd  
Suisun, CA 94585  
(707)-864-5402

### Fiberglass Shield Blanks

*Editor: I have found it a great pleasure to use one of these 14th century tournament heaters--the are very agile and teach excellent offensive technique.*

*I currently have a mold for the small tournament shield, and soon there will be a new mold for the larger one as well. These fiberglass blanks are ready for painting, edging, and finishing.*

Mid-14th century heater  
20" x 22": \$50 + shipping

15th C. heater  
22" x 28": \$75 + shipping

Brian R. Price

415.961.2187

# THE GRAND COMPANY OF THE PEACOCK

*A Modern Tournament Society  
within the SCA*

Editor: *In what I have seen of the 'chivalric renaissance', tourneying societies seem to fall into one of two groups—either they form companies loosely based on the secular, princely orders (the Order of the Garter, Order of the Star, etc.), or the more unknown but attractive tournament societies, popular in Germany at the close of the 14th century.*

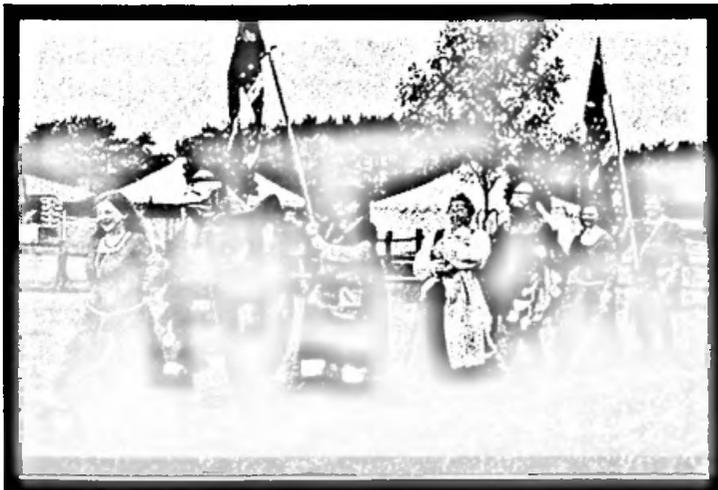
*The Grand Company of the Peacocks, based in Illinois and Wisconsin (Middle Kingdom), is one of these societies. In the following interview, the commander of the Peacocks, Talbot MacTaggart, Knight and Laurel, discusses who the Peacocks are, what they are trying to accomplish, and how they believe this will enhance the SCA and the tournament experience.*

*The interview took place on Monday, July 3 1995.*



Brian: Who are the Peacocks?

Doug: "We started because we were a group of people who were all interested in doing medieval style tournaments—and since there was a pas de René to be held, we decided to get ourselves together. We formed around people who had similar armour and similar interests. That's how we started. Who are we now? We've evolved into a group of people



*Members of the Peacock Company make their entrance to the Roi du Rene III in Minneapolis (Nordskogen)*

*September  
1994.*

who like to put spectacle into medieval tournaments."

**Brian:** When were you formed?

**Doug:** "The Peacocks formed in 1991, just before the first René tourney held in Nordskogen [Minneapolis] by the *Tenans of Noble Folly*."

**Brian:** That's interesting—most of the tourney societies formed with a specific event in mind, be it one that they would hold or one that they would attend. What are the Peacocks trying to accomplish?

**Doug:** "We're trying to show people that having a sense of style, that you can do things that are glorious, chivalrous, and in the grand style of medieval tournaments and still have fun—And we're trying to promote this through example."

**Brian:** How are you going about this?

**Doug:** "By making ourselves look as good as we can when we go to the pas, on and off the field, and also by talking it up to as many people as we can keep still enough to listen."

**Brian:** Do you think you're being or have been successful?

**Doug:** "Yeah I think so. There have been, not purely from us, a surge of people interested in this in the Midrealm. Obviously there are outside influences—*Chro-*

*nique* being one of them—that have had impact on people wanting to do this. And with a couple of other René style tournament groups in the Midrealm, it sort of catches on. But yes, I think we've had success—especially in our local group. Another group has formed, and are using us as their model, but are going off in slightly different periods—and doing a good job of it. They're [doing an] earlier period than we are."

**Brian:** This would be the *Compagnie du Soleil*, right? Since you provided their model, let's talk about models for a moment. What is your model?

**Doug:** "The basic idea is the German tournament society, although none of us are well versed in the [history] of the German tournament societies. We don't know all that much about them—but what we see we like."

**Brian:** Too little research has been done in English on these societies. More needs to be found, and translated, because it seems that the model is nearly perfect for what you're trying to do. What would you say is and has been your inspiration?

**Doug:** "In the beginning, it was because we wanted to go play in a tournament that looked like a lot of fun. And we all like to have that sense of style, of pomp and circumstance....But for keeping going, we just received so much positive reaction to what we had

done—stuff we didn't expect—it seems people really enjoyed it. And we experienced a real sense of reward out of that, I think, and a feeling that 'My, this is having an impact! And lets keep going with it.' From the first pas that we attended to the second one, we almost doubled the amount of 'stuff' we had in terms of matching livery and matching things. That's one of our big things—is that we all match. Other tournament groups are interested not so much in matching, but we want to be as identical as we can be, within reason."

Brian: So your armour, accoutrement and consorts match! I believe you and the *Tenans of Noble Folly* are the only two companies that have been successful with this, at least in a period motif. How did you come to associate the name 'Peacock' with your company?

Doug: "Well, it evolved from two things. We all had either blue or green in our heraldry. So we decided that our colors would be blue or green—and we started looking for things that were blue and green. We thought about the sea, and that was all right, but then somebody realized that peacocks really fit with what we're doing—because peacocks are proud, have great plumage, and are a noble medieval sort of beast. We decided that that really fit with who we were—sort of form over function and style over substance, perhaps? Not that we purposely

try that, but you know, we put a lot of effort into looking good on the field. Even if we die, we die wearing pigfaced visors on, and we die because we cannot see! We encourage the look of the medieval tournament, on the pageantry. The peacock really fits with that—a proud bird with brilliant plumage."

Brian: Do you have any sort of charter, like the companies of *St. George*, *St. Michael*, or the *Star*?

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*...Peacocks are proud, have great plumage, and are a noble medieval sort of beast. We decided that that really fit with who we were...*

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Doug: "Absolutely not. We have nothing in writing. There's sort of an unwritten understanding of what we're doing. We very loosely organized in terms of whose responsible for what. I think they elected me as commander because I wasn't at the meeting where this was decided. Also I brought it together—and so they kind of put me in charge of it. But don't take this too seriously because it doesn't mean anything.

We're all doing our own jobs and everyone finds their own niche. We don't have any assigned roles, assigned duties, and we don't have anything in writing. And I think it works well for us, though it wouldn't work well for other groups."

"I know the *Sun company*, the one that's here forming in our own local group—they're working on a charter because it's necessary for organization. They have a team bank account, they're much more organized than we are.

"But we're also pretty well scattered—except for a few couples—we're based around husband/wife couples—other than that we don't have anyone who's based in the same city. Except for the two brothers. We live in every part of two states—Wisconsin and Illinois. Nobody is near each other, and so I think this sort of disorganization works pretty well for us.

**Brian:** You said that you're organized around couples—so the ladies are part of your company also?

**Doug:** "Yes—we did this so that we could have a tournament. But it worked out nicely because it allowed us to have the show of the ladies jobs for tournaments—the ladies are often described as leading their men into the lists by gold chains—and stuff like that—it really emphasizes that it's not just a bunch of people beating each other up. That it's glory,

honor, chivalry. And we think is a noble and worthy thing to do. It's definitely men and women, equal voices (there's no voting or anything), but everyone has an equal say in what we do."

**Brian:** What do the Peacocks do as a group?

**Doug:** "Whenever we can find a pas to attend—so far there haven't been many—we try to go to those. We've tried to do small things for demos, if we can get some of us for one that we're supposed to be at—we try to be in all of our Peacock stuff, because it looks really good for the public. We did a miniature pas at Jubilee a few weeks ago, it wasn't really much of a pas, just sort of the normal demo, but we did some fights against the new company, the *Sims*. It worked out pretty well, showing the audience what some of the other medieval tournaments might have been like."

**Brian:** Where would you like to see the tournament companies go in general?

**Doug:** "Not just ours—all of them? Well, we'd like to see this be a much more widespread thing—that other people pick up the idea of doing pas, and doing some more spectacular ones—the big pas, the round tables, and some of the more focused pas on a wider scale, where it's not just a Middle Kingdom thing, like at Pennsic, I think that's going to be a lot of fun. I'd like to see some of

the big pas taking the place of some of the wars—I'm not really fond of wars—I don't think they reproduce what we're all about—I want to do a tournament fight, not a war. If I want to do a war it's a Field of the Cloth of Gold, a war of peace, not a knock-down drag out killing people / taking prisoners sort of thing. So I'd like to see more authentic tournament styles being used to replace some of the large melee go-slug-it-out battles we do. But I really like the idea of them being part of the SCA as opposed to something outside the SCA."

Brian: Why do you think that's important?

Doug: "Because I love the SCA. I think it's a great organization—its very easy to join, easy to be in, and as much as I like it, it needs to be spruced up. And I think that the tournament companies can do some of that sprucing up. It could benefit from the pageantry and style that the tournament companies offer."

Brian: What direction would you like to see the SCA go?

Doug: "Personally I'd like to see it go more away from wars more towards tournament combat. More based on individual honor—keeping your honor intact. One of my problems [with the SCA] is active marshaling. I prefer that my honor be left intact, and not questioned by a marshal. If I made a mistake, it's my prob-

lem and I should be sorry for that mistake. But not have some marshal stop the fight every 30 seconds, checking every blow, when my opponent and I know that these blows weren't good. I would like to see the sense of honor returned a bit more—placed back on the individual. I think that would help."

Brian: How do you think that the tournament companies can help with that?

Doug: "Because the sense of individual honor is part of what they're about. Where they're individual or team glory, or having a sense of honor and chivalry. It's part of the main focus—part of the ideal. The tournament companies seem to be going more towards an idealized version of honor and chivalry, maybe a little bit Victorian—and that's all right, as long as it helps people to remember that they're on their honor, and that honor's an important thing

Brian: How is that different from the concept of knighthood within the SCA? People often ask this of the tournament companies—how is what you're doing different from what the knights are doing?

Doug: "Well, perhaps it is a parallel. They are going along similar lines, but the tournament companies are open to anybody, not just the people who know the right people, or who put into the right amount of time, and met all of those various requirements that

the chivalry seems to put on people. Some of the guys in the Sun company are fairly new—they've been in two, three or four years—and they're having a great time with it. It allows them to start off on the right foot. When I started fighting, I lived in a group with two fighters, there was nothing going, we didn't have anything to see or emulate and we felt alone. We didn't know what to do.

“And some of these guys, they've been in a lot longer, they're able to see this, to get the idea from the start, and so it provides more examples of what the SCA can and should be, in my opinion.

**Brian:** Do you see any potential for conflict between the SCA knights and the tournament companies?

**Doug:** I don't. I can't see any problem arising, but that doesn't mean it won't. I tend to be a little naive about those things. I think that what we do is a good thing—and I think the knights will think it's a good thing, I hope, and the fact that many of the participants within the companies are knights, that should help some. Although when we started, we weren't. Roughly half of us are knights now. We had only Bardolf, and sort of me, who was a Laurel. But now we're up to 4 or 5. So it has, maybe, helped legitimize what the tournament companies are doing. It's coming from the top down, since many of the tournament companies are based around

knights.”

**Brian:** What advice would you give others who want to organize a similar group?

**Doug:** “Just do it. I think the most important thing is don't be daunted by how much work it looks like. Try it out on a small scale. The team that formed in our area decided they would try it out by making a few things for the René pas that they had last year. And they really enjoyed it, so they radically changed everything about the team that they did, but they tried it, and found out that they liked it. If you try it just once, you'll probably find that you like it; it's very rewarding.

“Try to be organized if your going to assign tasks between people. Make sure they're evenly distributed. That's not as much a factor with the groups where the emphasis is on individual appearance—just try to look as good as you can within your frame—getting yourself organized at one or two meetings before you start—setting priorities, deciding what you absolutely have to have and what would be nice. We had a huge list for our first time—and we got about half done. For the second time [when we were better organized] we got virtually everything done, except for one thing that I didn't get done.”

**Brian:** There seems to be a spectrum represented in the various

tournament companies—although it's not a zero sum game, there is a difference in emphasis between the various groups. Some seem to emphasize the re-enactment aspects while others emphasize the knightly conduct, perhaps the romantic ideal, more than the actual. Where would you put the *Peacocks* in this spectrum?

Doug: "I don't think we're trying to have an impact on the SCA, we're doing it because we like to do it. And we're trying to do as good a job as we can, so I guess we're more toward the former than the latter. We try to do as good a job as we can do, but our stuff isn't perfect. We strive to set an example of what can be done, but we've a lot of room for growth. We'd like to be as authentic as we can with what we have."

Brian: Do you advocate a more 'authentic' or a more 'romantic' vision?

Doug: "More towards the first than the second. We want to do a medieval style of tournament. We want the knightly conduct—but our idea is to really put the pageantry into it. We do as good and as fun a job as we can. That's the most important thing. If it wasn't fun, we wouldn't do it. And this is a lot of fun, so we want to do as good a job as we can to recreate medieval tournaments, using what we have, within the SCA. If we really wanted a strict re-enactment, we'd do it outside the SCA. Get some whalebone, and make

some swords, or whatever. But that's not what we want."

Brian: What do you find most useful in terms of resources?

Doug: "We're very object oriented—very stuff oriented. The best books for us are the best books on the stuff of the period—books on armour, shoes, etc. As far as the tournament stuff, since we haven't run one, we haven't focused on that, yet. Barber and Barker's book on tournaments, Elizabeth Bennet's *René* book (everyone has that, I think...) But that hasn't been the focus, although it is becoming more so as we move towards doing a tourney of our own."



And the *Grand Company of the Peacocks* certainly is moving towards an event of their own. It should prove to be highly successful, a play of pageantry and "really cool stuff." I look forward to it—as I think our readers will as well.

In closing, I would point the reader to our last *Chronique*, in the article on the *Pas du Roi René III*, in which the Peacocks wrapped a knighting ceremony for one of the number into the invocation of the bi-annual tournament. It was quite a sight—but then Peacocks always are. ♦

# THE INFLUENCES OF ROMANCES ON TOURNAMENTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Ruth Huff Cline

Reprinted (by permission) from  
Speculum XX, 1945

**Editor:** *Given the debate in tourneying circles concerning the proper roles of romance and recreation, I offer the following as food for thought. Ruth Huff Cline's article appears in the bibliography of almost every modern work on chivalry, and as it is hard to obtain, we have included it here for your consideration.*

*I must say that I disagree with a few points that Ms. Cline makes concerning the tournament and romances. She goes to great effort showing the influences of the romances on the tournament, but then in her conclusion states that this indicates the death of the tournament spirit. I think that this imitation is an essential element of chivalry, one that has been present since the earliest manifestations in the 12th century and one that strongly influences our own tournaments today.*

*I have eliminated most of the footnotes, because they dealt mostly with historical details only distantly related to the topic, and are more technical than the interests of most of our readers. We have worked hard to see that nothing of substance has been cut.*

Though authorities on tournaments and similar combats have been aware that by the middle of the fourteenth century tournaments had begun to lose their real vigor and were seeking their motifs in tournaments described in literature, notably Arthurian, they have not observed the extent nor early beginnings of this imitation.<sup>1</sup> It is my purpose to show that tournaments found their models in literature even during the first half of the thirteenth century and continued to do so increasingly to the end of the Middle Ages.

Perhaps the most significant imitation of romance in the Middle Ages was that of the round table.<sup>2</sup> Though

<sup>1</sup> F.H. Cripps-Day, *The History of the Tournament in England and in France* (London, 1918), *passim*, and R.C. Clephan, *The Tournament: Its period and Phases* (London, 1919), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Though the nature of the round table will become clearer as the discussion progresses, a brief indication of its distinguishing characteristics follows. According to Cripps-Day the four features which distinguish the round table from the tournament are 1) that the round table was purely a pastime for sport, 2) that it was a series of jousts which took place on a circular field, 3) that arms of courtesy, that is, blunted weapons, were used, and 4) that round table sports were always followed by the feasting of the guests at the expense of the noble who enterprised the fête (*op. cit.*, pp. 15-16). Perhaps the first feature mentioned is of little significance, since tournaments, likewise, were ordinarily held for sport. Furthermore, the last feature of Cripps-Day's definition is not well supported by the information obtainable on early round tables. The second and third features seem to be the only essential features for distinguishing round tables from tournaments. **EDITOR:** For a much sharper definition of round tables, see JULIET BARKER, *The Tournament in England, 1100-1400*, pp. 85-99.

the nature of the first two round tables mentioned in history is not known, the later association of the sport with Arthur leaves little doubt that these tables were of Arthurian origin. The first round table that has attracted general interest amongst scholars is that of 1279 held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth. Mr. Hulbert says that 'Roger Mortimer is the first person who is known to have held such festivities.' Miss Griffen has used Mortimer's round table in order to show that Mortimer was attempting to establish his line of descent from King Arthur.

In 1242, forty five years before Mortimer's round table, Henry III forbade the nobles' taking part in a round table while he was journeying to settle differences with his brother and law, Llewlyn, Prince of North Wales and Lord of Snowdon. One would like to believe that this proposed round table was to have taken place in Wales where the Arthurian tradition was well known, but in the absence of evidence no such conclusion can be drawn.

Another round table, occurring in 1235, shows that this form of combat was known not only in England but also in Flanders. On this occasion knights from Flanders and elsewhere convened at Hesdin and after participating in a round table pledged themselves to a crusade. Since, as we shall see later, the round table had Arthurian associations, Flanders was a likely spot for such an adventure as this. The Arthurian tradition was not unknown to the counts of Flanders. Philip of Flanders, who died in 1190, as the patron of Chrétien de Troyes, had commanded Chrétien to write Perceval and had furnished him his source. Furthermore, that interest in chivalric deeds continued in Flanders

to the end of the Middle Ages is well borne out by Oliver de a Marche.

Shortly after this round table at Hesdin, in 1240 to be exact, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, a minstrel knight of Bavaria, instituted another round table of a slightly different sort. In this instance the term round table was applied not to the joust but to the jousts, who were allowed to become members of the round table if they were able to 'play' three spears with Ulrich without missing.<sup>3</sup> The Arthurian character of these jousts is indisputable as we shall see later.

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*"...As men realized that feudalism was dead, did they attempt to revive the glories that they believed attended it, through an appeal to Arthurian tradition."*

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One other round table, which took place well before the well known round table of Kenilworth, gives us further information about its nature. At this one, which occurred at Wallenden in 1252, knights assembled from the north and south of England and from the continent. Matthew Paris, the thirteenth-century historian, tells us that this was not the sport vulgarly called tournament but the chivalric sport of the round table. One of the ways in which this 'chivalrous

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<sup>3</sup> Ulrich von Liechtenstein, Frauendienst, ed. Reinhold Bechstein (Liepzig, 1888), stanza 1429; cf. *ibid.*, stanza 1458.

sport' differed from the tournament was its use of the blunted weapons. Paris' anger is aroused because at the Wallenden tournament, Roger de Lemburn, through his failure to use a blunted weapon, killed his opponent, Arnold de Montigny.<sup>4</sup>

For further clarification of the nature and origin of the round table we may turn to two romances of the period, *The Prose Tristan* (about 1232) and *Sone von Nausay* (1235). Both of these romances have thrust into their midst material which appears to serve as propaganda against the barbarities of ordinary tournaments. The *Prose Tristan*, written about the time of Henry III's prohibition of a round table in 1232 states that the banner of the round table is not that of a mortal battle.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, *Sone von Nausay* insists, as if the matter were not generally understood, that the round table was a strictly regulated joust.<sup>6</sup> These two romances bear out the conclusion that one may draw from Matthew Paris that the round table was a better regulated form of combat than the ordinary tournament.

If one remembers that Philip Augustus made his sons Louis and Robert promise not to take part in tournaments because the danger of them, and, furthermore, if one remembers that the general feeling against the barbarities of the tournament, one will not find it difficult to imagine that in order to establish a

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H.R. Luard ('Rolls Series'; London, 1872-1883), v. 318-319.

<sup>5</sup> *Le roman en prose de Tristan*, ed. E. Löseth, (Paris, 1891), p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> *Sone von Nausay*, ed. Moritz Goldschmidt ('Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart'; Tübingen, 1899), I, 12.

better regulated tournament, nobles appealed to the tradition of Arthurian chivalry. In fact, more and more as men realized that feudalism was dead, did they attempt to revive the glories that they believed attended it, through an appeal to Arthurian tradition. Consequently, it may well be that the appeal to Arthurian chivalry had begun to be used for a specific purpose even as early as this.

By the time of the next recorded round table, that held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth in 1279, the round table, as has already been observed, was known and practiced from England to Bavaria. Mortimer's round table, however, appears to have been unusually festive. For this occasion a hundred knights and as many ladies rode to Kenilworth singing songs. At the end of the festivities the bravest knight was rewarded with a golden lion. Mr. Hulbert says of this entertainment that chroniclers 'state that the term, "round table: was derived from the fact that the place of the jousting was surrounded by a wall; but as that fact does not account for the use of the worked "table" an association with Arthur is fairly certain.

Shortly after Mortimer's round table, Edward I, in 1284, celebrated his conquest of Wales by holding a round table in Carnarvonshire where the knights of England and the continent fought. At this time Edward was presented with the crown of Arthur, which had luckily just been discovered.

Though round tables continued to be practiced to the end of the Middle Ages, they reached their peak in 1344 when King Edward III undertook a round table at Windsor in order to imitate chivalry as he believed to have



A survey of the feats of arms described or mentioned above will show Arthurian imitations to have been well entrenched in England and on the continent. By the end of the fourteenth century, before the middle of the thirteenth century the round table had been undertaken twice on the continent, once at Hesdin in 1235, and once in 1240 in Bavaria. In Britain by the middle of the fourteenth century five such round tables had been taken place culminating in the Windsor tournament of 1344 and the establishment of a permanent round table. Many more round tables have occurred which historians did not take the trouble to set down. Furthermore, since continental history is not so fully recorded for this period as English history, the fact that only two round tables are recorded for the continent does not mean that the occurrence of round tables there was less frequent than in England. It is also to be noted that the round table at Hesdin occurred only three years after the first mention of a round table in English records. Furthermore, Ulrich does not indicate that he is doing a new thing in instituting a round table. In addition to round tables, four other imitations of Arthurian romances took place on the continent; one such imitation occurred in 1225 and another in 1240, one at Ham-sur-Somme in 1278 and one at Magdeburg in 1281. It is clear then that Arthurian tradition influences strongly the tournament in Britain and that of the continent during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Arthurian romances were not, however, the only romances which furnished motifs for the tournament. In fact, the earliest known imitation was probably drawn from the romance Guy of Warwick. In this instance,

1226, a knight, Waltman, made it known that he would joust in the honor of his lady against all comers at Mercersberg. He promised to deliver as prizes to whoever overthrew him, his young lady, palfrey, and his hawk, as well as his hound and horses. The young lady, however, was not, as in romance, to become the mistress of her captor, but free herself by the gift of a gold ring. Whomsoever Waltman conquered was to give him and his lady each a ring. This incident recalls distinctly the situation of Guy of Warwick in which Guy offers his falcon, his milk-white steed, two hounds and the maiden herself. The redemption by means of the rings may have been a necessary compromise because of the conventions of the time. Similarly a lady was the price of the Magdeburg tournament in 1281. On this occasion an old merchant of Goslere won the girl but, providing her with a dowry, gave her away in marriage instead of keeping her as his mistress. Since in romance the lady was a prize of a tournament is almost a stock character, and since in the two instances just cited, a way out is provided for the lady, apparently for the sake of convention, it would appear that the romances are being imitated in these two combats.

Non-Arthurian literature also provides for the tournament which took place at Valenciennes in 1344. The prize, a peacock, and the names of the winning band of knights, those of Alexander's knights', suggest a romance about Alexander, such as the *Les vœux du paon*.

During the fifteenth century, though the old forms of imitation continued, several new elements, born in the Renaissance, were present in a number of tournaments. The most important of these were a pastoralism, simi-

lar to that found in Renaissance literature, and an allegorical element bearing the marks of Renaissance thought. For example, a description in *Le pas d'armes de la bergière* shows that the pastoral literature of the Renaissance found expression in a joust cried for Phelippe de Lenoncourt and Philebert de L'Aigue. There at each end of the lists under a tree stood a "gente pastourelle" guarding her 'brebiettes.' To each tree was attached a shield which those wishing to joust might strike.<sup>7</sup> Cripps-Day says of this pas d'armes that the whole setting was pastoral: the gallery was a thatched cottage, and the two challengers were shepards. The damsel, though she did not give out the lances to her love, reminds one of the amie who often went about this with knights in the tournaments of the romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Thus we find in this feat a combination of medieval and Renaissance motifs.

Another element, the allegorical element, though common in the Middle Ages, in its use in connection with tournaments has a decidedly Renaissance flavor. Allegory here has lost its seriousness of purpose and has become a mere plaything carrying with it an artificial air similar to that of pastoralism. The allegory is obvious in King René of Sicily's emprise of the dragon in which knights had to go through a narrow pass called 'la gueule du dragon.' Claude de Vauldray, in an elaborate tournament called himself "le compaignon de la

Joyeuse Queste' and his mistress 'Dame Savaige.' He allegorizes his adventure in the following manner: '*Vray est que ledit entrepreneur, pour sa première bonne aventure, se partist, n'a pas gramment, du riche royaume d'Enfance, et entra en un pays gasté, maigre et stérile, que on appelle Jonesse.*' The description of the joust itself goes on in the same allegorical fashion.

On another occasion, in 1468, Jehan de Chassa, knight of Burgundy sends a letter to the ladies gathered at the marriage festivities of Margaret of York requesting permission to joust. He calls himself a slave knight born in the realm of slavery—in other words, he has long suffered from loving a lady without pity. Though the motif on which the allegory is based is common in medieval romance, the use it is put to here is more suggestive of the Renaissance spirit than of the medieval. At the same festivities, another knight calls himself the 'serviteur de la dame de l'Isle celee'—again certainly a device of the Middle Ages but likewise Renaissance in its lightness and artificiality.

Though, as we have just seen, new elements entered into the imitative procedures of the tournament of the fifteenth century, other motifs continued to be sought as formerly in the literature of the Middle Ages.

A feat of arms, which was undertaken at Calais in 1416, by Richard Beauchamp against the Red Knight, and White Knight, and the Black Knight,<sup>8</sup> was no doubt reminiscent of the three-day tournament of romance. In the last adventure at Sandricourt the participants imitated the knights errant of Arthur. Other features, such as instituting a tournament for a lady secretly loved at René's tournament at Saumur for Jeanne de Leval may

<sup>7</sup> *Le pas d'armes de la bergière*, ed. G.A. Crapelet, Paris, 1828, vv. 54-89.

<sup>8</sup> *The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick*, ed. William Earl of Carysfort for the Roxburghe Club, (Oxford, 1908), p. ix.

have had literary origins. In 1467, when Lord Scales was leaving for high mass, some ladies placed upon his thigh a gold 'collar' with a flower of souvenance, thus requesting him to perform some great act of chivalry. Getting permission from the king, he challenged the Bastard of Burgundy to joust. The extreme consciousness of chivalric motifs at such a late date suggests that this emphasis comes from the imitation of the romances. Especially is this a legitimate conclusion since, as we were just shown, the knights did definitely attempt to model their tournaments on those of romance.

But the clearest expression of the



completeness with which the period had turned to the earlier literature for its ideals is found in a little book of the latter part of the fifteenth century called "*a forme des tournois au temps du Roy Uter et dy Roy Artus*",<sup>9</sup> a work which writers of the tournament proper appear to be aware of only through a partial summary made by Colombière. A letter from Jehan de Bourbon to his brother, Pierre, which precedes the work, describes the composition as:

<sup>9</sup> *La forme des tournois au temps du Roy Uter et du Roy Artur servivie de l'armorial des chevaliers de la table ronde*, ed. Compte de Blagny, (Caen, 1897), p 10.

*...ung petit licret ou est la forme que on tenoit aux tournois et assemblees que l'on faisoit du temps du Roi Artys au Rayaulme de la Grant Bretagne.*

This publication, sometimes called "Le petit formulaire," consists, as the letter suggests, of rules for tournaments collected from Arthurian romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. An examination of the thirty-two pages will show that the author really sets up a form for tournaments by making generalizations from the tournaments of romance. For example, the tournament field and its surroundings in the time of Arthur are described as follows:

*"Se lieu estoit esleu pres de ville ou chasted ou grant cite assis sur riviere et boys et tellement que la ville estoit volentiers fermeure d'ung coste et le boys ou riviere daultre. Apres fermoit les deux boutz des lices et derrier les dites lices estoient les tentes et pavillons des deux princes qui devoient frapper le tournoy et chacun avoit loy dentrer dedans la dicte ville pour querir armes et chevaux et aultres choses ad ce necessaires."*

Imitation had become complete, and the real life and the spirit of the tournament was dead when the tournament sought its life form or combat in literature centuries old.

Finally, William Caxton, bemoaning the decline of chivalry and wishing to inspire knights to valorous action, advises them to read about Lancelot, Galahad, Perceval, and other Arthurian knights and to imitate their action. ❖

*Lawrence College, 1945*

## REVIEW

### The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury

*John Butler*

In September 1538, King Henry VIII's Commissioners for the Destruction of Shrines came to Canterbury, dismantled the shrine of St. Thomas Becket, burned the bones, and scattered the ashes to the winds. Or did they?

In 1888, workmen digging near the original tomb of St. Thomas discovered a coffin buried only inches below the surface. The coffin, too small to contain an actual body, held instead a collection of bones belonging to a tall, middle-aged man. The skull had a long cleft on the left side of the crown. This discovery touched off a debate as to whether it was possible that the bones of the saint had survived the attentions of the commissioners.

The conventional wisdom that the saint's relics were destroyed seems to come primarily from contemporary Catholic sources. The Protestant sources are somewhat more vague, stating that they were "bestowed where they will cause no superstition afterwards." Each source had its own cause to promote, so who is to be believed?

In 1956, Canon John Shirley placed a red lamp (the symbolic color of martyrdom) in the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen. Only a few feet from the altar lay two graves, one unmarked, the other marked only by a stone nearly identical to the stone which marks the grave of Archbishop Stephen Langton, elsewhere in the cathedral.

In 1990, two men were arrested for breaking into Canterbury Cathedral and charged with attempted theft. They told the magistrate however, that they intended to open the tomb of Cardinal Châtillon, to prove that it was not the cardinal's remains housed there, but Thomas of Canterbury's. Why, they asked, would a Catholic cardinal be laid to rest in a Protestant cathedral? Why would an obscure French clergyman's tomb be placed amongst the tombs of English kings and princes and archbishops? Why did France never ask to have Châtillon's remains returned?

On the other hand, Becket was the chief symbol of religious defiance of secular authority. Would Henry VIII, caught up in his own church/state conflict, have allowed such a figure to be peacefully buried?

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## REVIEW

Rich as a history text, engaging as a novel, this book reads like the cracking good mystery it is. John Butler handles his topic with remarkable equanimity, favoring neither side of the debate. The reader never knows what the author will show him next.

Ann Marie Price  
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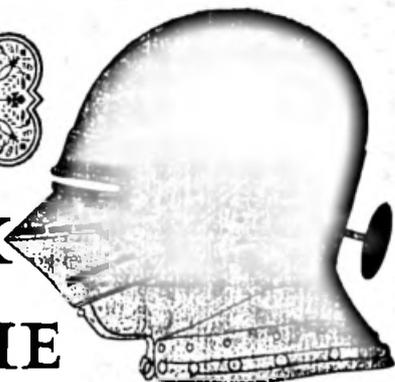
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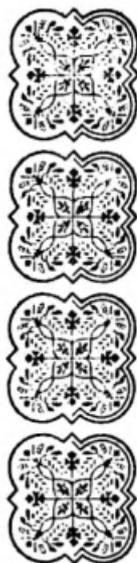
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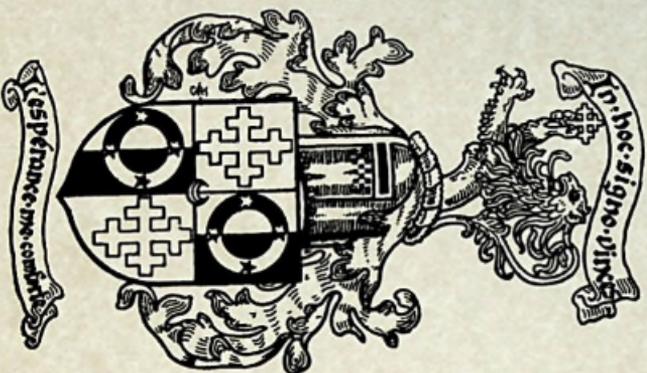
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