Armory 102 – Charge Group Theory and Style Rules

Presented by
Yehuda ben Moshe
Elmet Herald

1

Charge Group Theory

- SCA invention – SENA Appendix I
- A charge group is a group of charges of approximately the same size and visual weight that act as a single visual unit
- Most of our style and conflict rules are built around charge groups
- "Core" style devices must be organizable into charge groups

2

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group
  - Always placed directly on the field
  - Placed in the visual center of the field
  - Usually the largest charge group
  - Not all devices have a primary charge group
  - A central ordinary is (almost) always the primary charge group

3

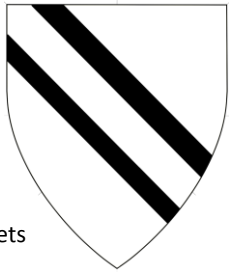## Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

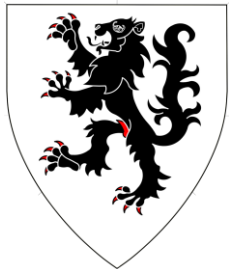- Bend

4

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

- Two Bendlets

5

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group
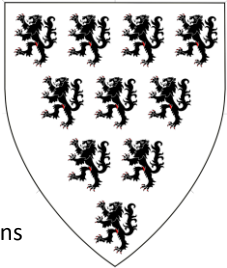

- A lion

6

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

- Three lions

7

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

- Semy of lions

8

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

- A cross

9

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group
  - On a divided field with no central charge, the charges on either side of the division are the primary charge group

10
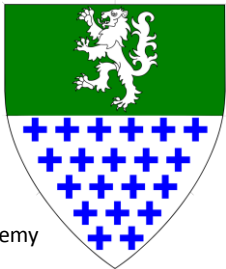
Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

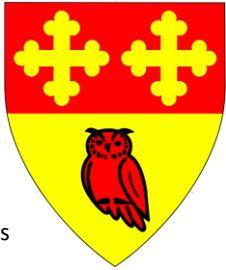- A lion and a cross

11

Charge Group Theory

- Primary Charge Group

- A lion and semy of Crosses

12

Charge Group Theory

• Primary Charge Group

• Two crosses
  and an owl

13

Charge Group Theory

• Primary Charge Group

• An owl

14

Charge Group Theory

• Primary Charge Group
  – A peripheral ordinary (chief, base, bordure,
    canton, orle, etc.) can never be a primary charge
  – Field-primary armory
    • Armory with no primary charge group is considered to
      be Field-primary, and has special rules
    • Two possible ways this can happen:
      – No charges at all
      – Peripheral ordinaries only

15

Charge Group Theory

- Secondary Charge Group
  - Always placed directly on the field
  - Generally "surrounds" the primary charge group
  - Cannot have a secondary without a primary group

16

Charge Group Theory

- Secondary Charge Group

- Primary: a chevron
- Secondary: three roundels

17

Charge Group Theory

- Secondary Charge Group – peripheral ordinary

- Primary: a bend
- Secondary: a bordure

18

Charge Group Theory

- Secondary Charge Group – semy

- Primary: a cross
- Secondary: semy of lions

19

Charge Group Theory

- Tertiary Charge Group
  – Placed on another charge, not on the field
  – A single charge may only have one tertiary charge group on it

20

Charge Group Theory

- Tertiary Charge Group - Ok

- Primary: a pale
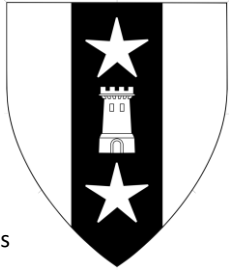- Tertiary: three mullets

21

Charge Group Theory

- Tertiary Charge Group - Ok

- Primary: a pale
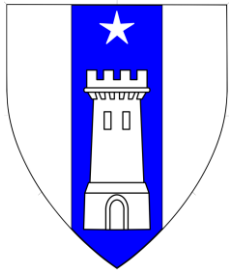- Tertiary: a tower between two mullets

22

Charge Group Theory

- Tertiary Charge Group – No

- Primary: a chevron
- Tertiary 1: tower
- Tertiary 2: mullet

23

Charge Group Theory

- Overall Charge Group
  – Crosses the center of the field
  – Placed partially on the field and partially on other charges
  – Underlying charge is the primary charge
  – Can only have one overall charge group in any device
  – In period, the overall charge is almost always a bend
  – Overall charge must be substantially on the field

24

Charge Group Theory

- Overall Charge Group - Ok

- Primary: a lion
- Overall: a bend

25

Charge Group Theory

- Overall Charge Group – "barely" overall - No

- Primary: a pale
- Overall: a mullet
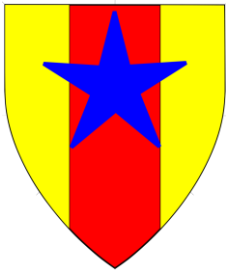
26

Charge Group Theory

- Maintained/Sustained charges
  - "Held" by another charge, usually a primary
  - Maintained charges are much smaller than the primary charge
    - Considered artistic detail
    - Do not count for difference
  - Sustained charges are more than ½ of the visual weight of the primary charge, but less that the total visual weight
    - Considered a secondary charge

27

Charge Group Theory

- Maintained/Sustained charges
  - Co-primary charge
    - "Held" charge has equal visual weight to the primary charge
    - Considered part of the primary charge group

28

Charge Group Theory

- Maintained Charge

- Primary: a dragon
- Maintained: a sword

29

Charge Group Theory

- Sustained Charge

- Primary: a dragon
- Sustained secondary: a sword

30

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Azure,
  three fleurs-de-lys
  Or.
- Arms of France

Images from St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, ca AD 1520

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Or
  semy of
  eagles azure,
  a cross gules.
- Sir (Thomas)
  Cheney, Lord
  Warden of the
  Cinque Ports

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Or,
  five mullets of
  eight points
  two, one, and two
  gules
  within a bordure
  azure.
- Arms of the
  Chefe Barbedo
  (Portugal)

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Gules,
  two swords
  in saltire
  proper
  between four
  roses
   in cross
   argent.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Argent,
  a lion gules,
  a bordure
  sable
  semy of roundels
  Or.
- Count of
  Cornwall

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Azure,
  on
  a bend gules
  between two
  mermaids argent,
  three fleurs-de-lys
  Or.
- Arms of the
  Chefe Ornelas
  (Portugal)

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Checky
  Or and azure.
- Count of Warren

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Barry
  argent and gules.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Or,
  three chevronels
  Gules.
- Count of Clare

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Or,
  a chief indented sable.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Armory Rules – Types of Armory

- Individual submitters are allowed six pieces of armory
  - Device
  - Badges
- SCA Branches may register any number of pieces of armory
  - Device
  - Badges

41

Armory Rules – Types of Armory

- Device
  - One device per submitter
  - Becomes "Arms" when granted an AoA
  - Identifies "This is me"
  - Submitted on a shield-shaped form

42

Armory Rules – Types of Armory

- Badge
  - Multiple badges permitted
  - A badge can be an alternate device
  - A badge is used to identify "This is mine"
    - Possessions
    - Household members
    - Retinue
  - Can have a field or be fieldless
  - Submitted on a square-shaped form

43

Armory Rules – Types of Armory

- Armory with a field (A3A1)
  - Field is specified – solid tincture or partitioned
- Fieldless badges (A3A2)
  - Do not have a defined field
  - Can be displayed on any background
  - All charges must touch one another
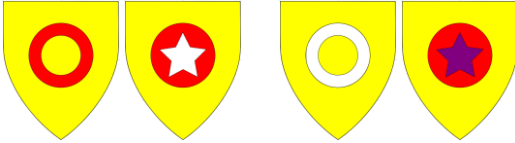   - "Cast out of metal" rule

44

Armory Rules – Contrast

- Rule of Tinctures (A3B)
  - Don't place a metal on a metal or a color on a color
- Good Contrast
  - Metal and color
  - Metal and neutral
  - Color and neutral

45

Armory Rules – Contrast

- Good contrast is required when a charge is placed on a background (A3B4)
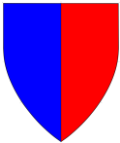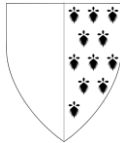 - Identifiability must be maintained

Good Contrast   Poor Contrast

Armory Rules – Contrast

- Divided fields (and charges) (A3B3)
  - Fields divided into two parts
    - Don't need good contrast
    - Can't have the same base tincture

Ok   No   47

Armory Rules – Contrast

- Divided fields (and charges) (A3B3)
  - Fields divided into three parts (per pall)
    - Need good contrast between one part and the other two
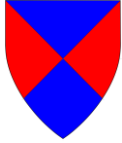   - No two parts can share the same tincture or base tincture

Ok   No   48

Armory Rules – Contrast

- Divided fields (and charges) (A3B3)
  - Fields divided quarterly or per saltire
    - Don't need good contrast
    - Can't have the same base tincture
  - All other field divisions must have good contrast

Ok   No   49

Armory Rules – Charge Groups

- Clarity of charge group (A3D1)
  - Charges must be clearly organized into charge group
  - Blurring the distinction between charge groups is not permitted

No   Ok   50

Armory Rules – Charge Groups

- Slot Machine (A3D2a)
  - A charge group may not contain more than two types of charges
  - Posture, tincture, etc. don't count

No   Ok   51

Armory Rules – Charge Groups

- Unity of Posture (A3D2c)
  - Charges in a charge group must be either
    - In identical postures/orientations, or
    - In a period arrangement which includes posture/orientation
  - Crescents are an exception

No   No   52

Disallowed Elements

- Restricted Charges (A6B1, GoT Table 3)
  - Charges which may not be used by anyone
  - Examples:
    - Red Cross/Crescent (Symbol of the IRC)
    - Crowned Rose (Symbol of England)
    - Swastika/fylfot (Offensive)
    - Etc.

53

Disallowed Elements

- Reserved Charges (A6B2, GoT Table 2)
  - Charges which may only be used by certain submitters
  - Examples:
    - White belt (Reserved for Knights)
    - Laurel wreath (Reserved for Society Branches)
    - Chaplet of roses (Reserved for Princesses)
    - Etc.

54

Disallowed Elements

- Unregisterable Charges (A2B5)
  - Charges which may not be registered as they are not period
  - Generally set by precedent
  - Examples:
    - Garden Rosebud
    - Ribbon
    - Selkie
    - Etc.

55

Disallowed Elements

- Step from Period Practice (SFPP) (A2B4, Appendix G)
  - One SFPP is permitted in a device, two or more are grounds for return
  - Non-European Armorial Elements
    - Islamic
    - Japanese
    - May require an IAP

56

Disallowed Elements

- Step from Period Practice (SFPP) (A2B4, Appendix G)
  - Non-European Plants and Animals
    - Except those used in period heraldry
    - Must be from a part of the world known to period Europeans
      - Interiors of Africa, North America not allowed
      - Northern Asia and Australia not allowed
      - Gray period is of limited use
 - Other charges and motifs listed in Appendix G or by precedent

57

Presumption

- Restricted or Reserved Charges (A6B)
  - Use of a restricted charge is prohibited as presumptive or offensive
  - Use of an un-earned reserved charge is prohibited as presumptive

58

Presumption

- Arms of Pretense or Augmentation (A6C)
  - A single charged escutcheon or charged canton may only be used by a submitter who has been granted an Augmentation of Arms (Augmentation of Honor)
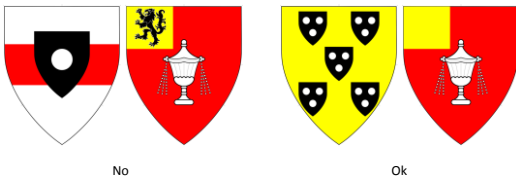
No   Ok

Presumption

- Marshalling (A6F)
  - Marshalling is the combination of two or more arms into a single design
  - Not registerable in the SCA
  - We are assumed to each earn our own arms

60

Presumption

- Marshalling (A6F)
  - Only occurs on a Per Pale field (dimidiation or impaling) or a Quarterly field
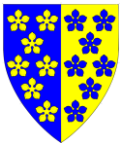 - Only occurs with a plain line of division

No   Ok   61

Presumption

- Marshalling (SENA A6F)
  - A single primary charge group over the whole field removes the appearance of marshalling

Ok   Ok   62

Presumption

- Combination of Name and Device (A6D)
  - Even if a name and device are independently acceptable, a combination of the two may be presumptuous
  - Examples
    - "York" and a white rose
    - "Lancaster" and a red rose

63

Final Thoughts

- Registerable vs. Authentic
  - A submission must be registerable; it need not be authentic
  - While we can encourage clients to design period-looking armory, we cannot, and should not, force the decision
  - If a client is set on a registerable but not very authentic submission, you should process it!

Final Thoughts

- Customer Service
  - It is our job to help our clients
  - We are here to make registrations happen, not prevent them from happening
  - When consulting, help clients create registerable submissions *they* like
  - When commenting, look for reasons to allow registration, not prohibit it
  - Heralds want a reputation for being helpful, not obstructionist!

About me

- Elmet Herald – I am the East Kingdom heraldic education deputy
- elmet@eastkingdom.org
- jgalak@gmail.com
- This handout can be found at:
  - http://www.yehudaheraldry.com/ekhu