Armory 101 - Basics

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Elmet Herald

Introduction

• Armory is vast
  – Dozens of lines of division
  – Hundreds (thousands?) of charges
  – Postures of quadrupeds, birds, etc.
• We cover only a tiny fraction of this
• Many resources for learning more

Resources

• SCA Heraldic Primer: http://heraldry.sca.org/armory/primer/
• A Grammar of Blazonry: http://heraldry.sca.org/armory/bruce.html
• Articles: http://heraldry.sca.org/armory_articles.html
• Parker’s Glossary: http://www.heraldsnet.org/saitou/parker/jpglossa.htm
Resources

• Arthur Charles Fox-Davies - A Complete Guide To Heraldry
  – http://archive.org/details/completeguidetoh00foxdrich
• John Woodward - A Treatise on Heraldry, British and Foreign
• Rodney Dennys - The Heraldic Imagination

Resources

• Period rolls of arms:
  – http://www.s-gabriel.org/heraldry/
  – http://www.yehudaheraldry.com/rolls

Terminology

• Emblazon
  • The actual drawing of the device
• Blazon A verbal description of the device
  • Written in a special language derived from Norman French
  • Follows specific grammar and construction rules
  • Not important to get right on a submission
• We register the picture (emblazon), not the words (blazon)
Terminology

- Directions are from the point of view of the person holding the shield

Terminology

- Field – base “layer” of the device
  - Lines of division
- Charges – anything placed on the field (or on top of other charges)
- Tinctures
  - Colors
  - Metals

Rules

- SENA
  - Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory
  - Found at: http://heraldry.sca.org/laurel/sena.html
  - Current rules for all submissions
  - Broken into 4 main sections:
    - General Principles
    - Personal Names
    - Non-Personal Names
    - Armory
  - Includes 13 appendices
Rules - Basics

• Reproducibility (A1C)
  – Given a written blazon, two different artists should be able to draw very similar emblazons of the armory
  – Armory must be describable in standard heraldic terms

• Recognizability (A1D)
  – Armor should lend itself to instant identification
  – Most of the period heraldic rules and styles arose out of this need
  – The viewer should be able to immediately identify the charges and arrangements

• Submissions should be reasonably period (GP1B1)
  – Period elements
  – Period combinations of the elements
  – “Core style” defines most common elements and combinations
  – Individually attested patterns allow submissions outside core style
Rules - Basics

• Core Style (A1A1)
  – Described in detail in A2 and A3
  – Not identical to the style of any specific place and time
  – Based on the Anglo-Norman style
  – For the most part, doesn’t require documentation

Rules - Basics

• Individually Attested Patterns (A1A2)
  – Armory that doesn’t meet “Core Style” requirements
  – Registerable if adequately documented
  – Described in detail in A4

Evolution of Heraldry

• Early devices were simple, designed for rapid identification of opponents.

Images from the Manesse Codex ca 1305
Evolution of Heraldry

- As warfare and technology evolved, individual identification became less important
- “Heraldic space” was filling up
- Heraldry became a perk of the nobility
- Devices got more complex

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Evolution of Heraldry

Images from the Armorial of the Order of the Golden Fleece ca 1560

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Evolution of Heraldry - Marshalling

- Noble families combined arms to show relationships
- Armigerous wives combined their devices with those of their husbands
- Children with two armigerous parents used devices combining those of
- Three types of marshalling – dimidiation, impalement, quartering
Evolution of Heraldry - Marshalling

Dimidiation  Impaling  Quartering

Images from Wikimedia Commons

Evolution of Heraldry - Marshalling

Tinctures (A3B1)

- Colors
  - Gules
  - Azure
  - Sable
  - Vert
  - Purpure

- Metals
  - Or
  - Argent
Tinctures (A3B1)

- Metals
- Neutral

Colors

Ordinaries

- Ordinaries are charges
- They are usually comprised of simple geometric figures running from side to side or top to bottom of the field
- Ordinaries can be classified as central or peripheral

Ordinaries

- Central Ordinaries
  - a Pale
  - a Fess
  - a Bend
  - a Bend Sinister
Ordinaries

• Central Ordinaries

- a Saltire
- a Cross
- a Chevron
- a Chevron Inverted

Ordinaries

• Central Ordinaries

- a Pall
- a Pall Inverted

Ordinaries

• Peripheral Ordinaries

- Chief
- Base
- Bordure
Lines of Division

• Divides the field into 2 or more sections
• Also known as:
  – “Lines of Partition”
  – “Field Divisions”
  – “Field Partitions”

Lines of Division

• Divisions into 2 sections

Per Fess  Per Pale  Per Bend  Per Bend sinister

Lines of Division

• Divisions into 2 sections

Per Chevron  Per Chevron Inverted
Lines of Division

• Division into 3 sections

Per Pall

Lines of Division

• Divisions into 4 sections

Per Saltire
Quarterly

Lines of Division

• Divisions into 6 or more sections

Party of Six
Gyronny of Eight
Gyronny of Six
Charges

- Geometrics
  - Roundels
  - Mullets (of five points)
  - Annulets
  - a Pile

- Animals
  - Lion Rampant
  - Peacock in its Pride
  - Eagle Displayed
  - Dragon Segreant

- Other
  - Bow and Arrow
  - Sword
  - Fleur de Lys
  - Ermine Spot
Complex Lines

- Lines of division and lines forming ordinaries shown so far were simple, straight lines
- Such lines can also be complex, using various patterns.

Images from Wikimedia Commons

Complex Lines

Embattled  Indented  Wavy  Rayonny

Images from Wikimedia Commons

Complex Lines

Invected  Engrailed  Nebuly  Undy

Images from Wikimedia Commons
Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Blazon utilizes a specific grammar structure
- Items generally follow the pattern “number, type, posture, tincture”, with tincture always the last
- “Arrangement” can come before the “number” or after “posture”
- We usually blazon from lowest to highest level, from center out, from chief to base, from dexter to sinister
  - Field is always blazoned first

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

- Argent
  - three cocks gules.
- Arms of Robert Cockburn
  - Note the cant

Images from St. Machar’s Cathedral, Aberdeen, ca AD 1520
Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

• Gules, six escallops three, two, and one argent.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

• Azure an open book within an orle argent.
• Arms of the King’s College of Aberdeen

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

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

• Gules, in pale three lions passant guardant Or.
• Arms of England

Images from St. Machar’s Cathedral, Aberdeen, ca AD 1520
Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

• Gules, in pale three lions passant guardant Or within a bordure argent.
• Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent

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

• 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

• 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

• 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

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Per fess
  gules and argent,
  six martlets
  three and three
  counterchanged.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C
Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Quarterly per fess indented azure and Or, four lions passant counterchanged.

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

Rules of Heraldry – Blazon

- Or, a fret gules and on a canton azure a cross flory argent.
- For info on crosses, see: http://coblaith.net/Heraldry/Crosses/

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

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

Images from Insignia Anglica, mid 16C

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

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• This handout can be found at:
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