

**A BRIEF HERALDIC GUIDE TO THE
BRITISH ARMORIAL BINDINGS DATABASE**

The heraldic achievement

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INTRODUCTION

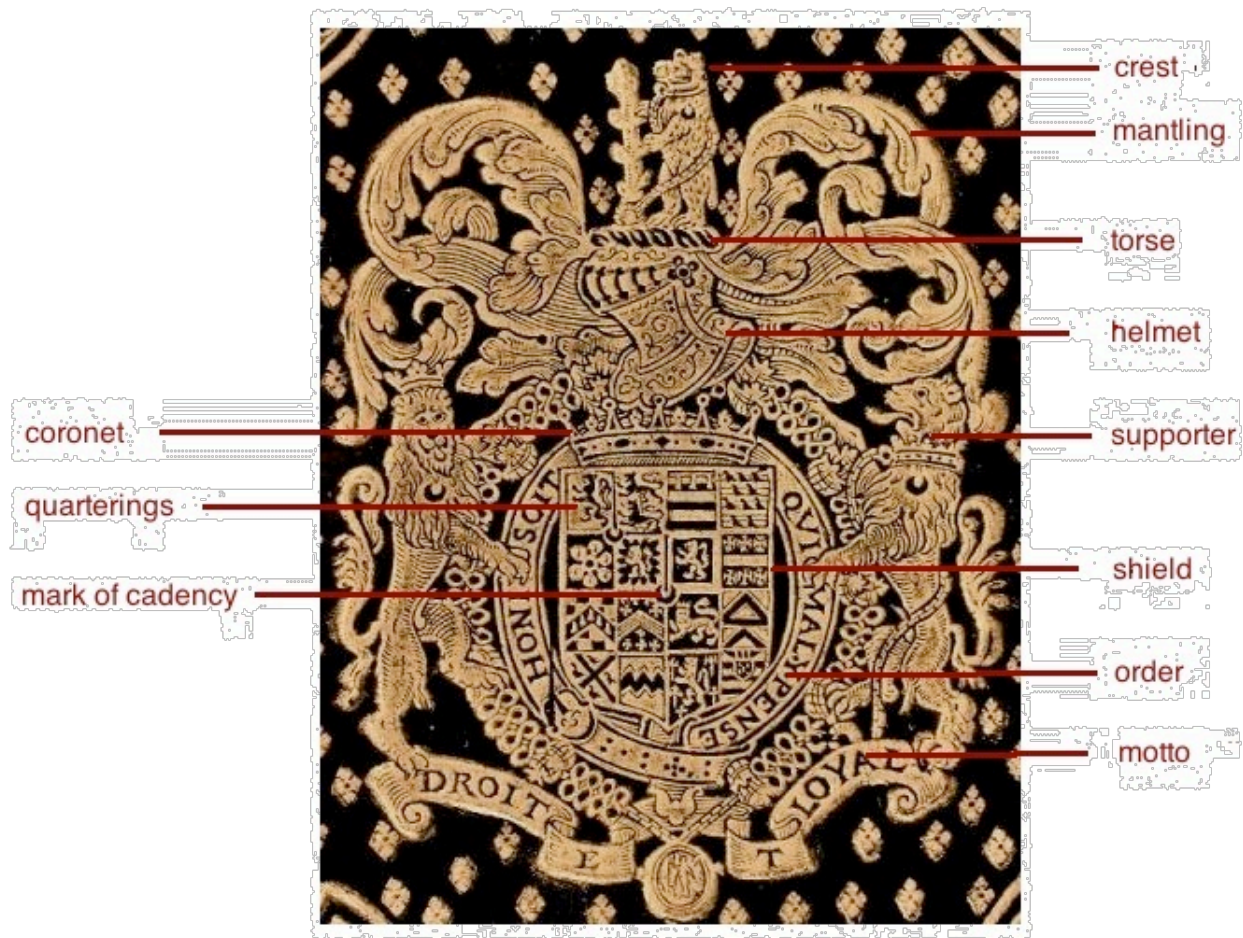
To the uninitiated, heraldry can be an intimidating subject. Its vast literature, and unfamiliar lexicon, can appear to be insurmountable obstacles to the novice. This brief introduction to heraldry is intended for those with little or no knowledge of the subject, who, it is assumed, will form the majority of users of the armorial database. The language of heraldic description, known as blazon, has been simplified as much as possible, and some of the arcane names for heraldic devices have been replaced by more familiar equivalents. In other instances the traditional heraldic term has been preserved, especially where an armorial device is a canting allusion to the name of an owner (i.e. a pun on a name). It is hoped that this simplified approach to heraldry will be excused by those who are well versed in armory.

It should also be emphasized that the material presented here is no way intended to be a comprehensive guide to heraldry, but relates only to those elements that are encountered in the armorial catalogue.

HERALDIC ACHIEVEMENT

Shown here is the full heraldic achievement of the sixteenth-century stamp of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532-1588), which includes most of the elements that may be found in armorial stamps: shield, arms, crest, mantling, supporters, motto, helmet, coronet, and order of knighthood.

It is important to bear in mind that in heraldry arms are described from the point of view of a person standing behind the shield. To the onlooker, therefore, right and left, or **dexter** and **sinister**, as they are referred to in heraldic language, appear reversed.

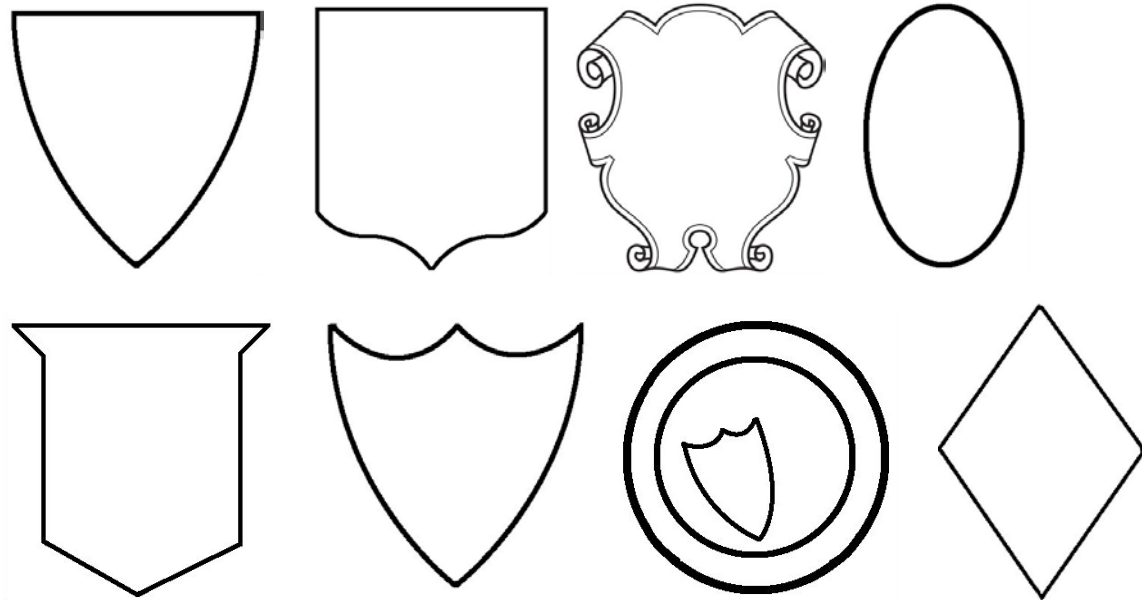


THE SHIELD

The most important element of the heraldic achievement is the shield, for it carries the armorial charges that identify the owner.

Shape of the shield

Shields come in a large variety of shapes and sizes, reflecting prevailing tastes and fashions. By the sixteenth century heraldic shields, having long shed their military function, had become purely decorative adjuncts. Yet because many different styles of shield may co-exist at a given time, it is difficult to ascribe a shield to a particular period based on its shape alone. Moreover, there is a tendency in heraldry to repeat styles from earlier periods. The so-called "heater" shield, with its curved sides and flat top resembling the base of a flat iron, was widely used in the earliest period of heraldry, and enjoyed a resurgence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the sixteenth century when there was a vogue for elaborate heraldic display, a squarer shaped shield with a slightly curved base evolved, in order to accommodate the large number of acquired or assumed subdivisions. In the seventeenth century the sides of the shield became ornate, with scalloped and scrolled edges, resembling carved wood. Another popular form of the period was the circular or elliptical cartouche. The eighteenth century sees the arrival of the tablet shield, with its square appearance, and its characteristic "ears". The tablet shield continues into the nineteenth century, until it is superseded in popularity by the spade shield, a variant of the heater shield but with concave indentions along the top edge. Another popular shield of the nineteenth century, especially during the period of Gothic revival, was the seal stamp, with the shield tilted at an angle within a circular frame.

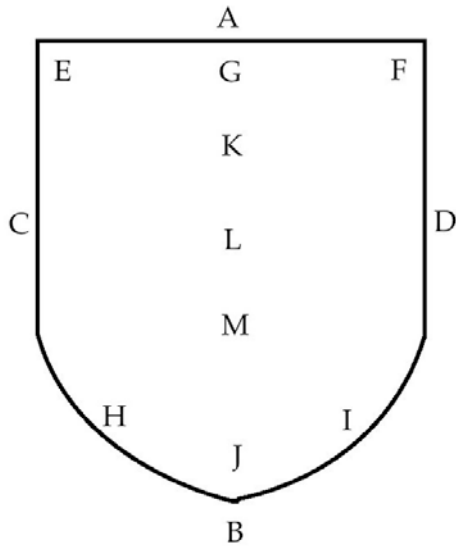


If a shield is replaced by a lozenge, an unmarried woman or widow is denoted.

A wife is entitled to use her husband's arms in the normal fashion while he is still alive, but once he is dead, they should, under the rules of heraldry, be displayed on a lozenge.

Parts of the shield

The uppermost and lowermost parts of the shield are referred to as **chief** and **base**. Various points on the shield have specific names:



- A = Chief
- B = Base
- C = Dexter side
- D = Sinister side
- E = Dexter chief
- F = Sinister chief
- G = Middle chief
- H = Dexter base
- I = Sinister base
- J = Middle base
- K = Honour point
- L = Fess point
- M = Nombril point

Field

The background of the shield is known as the **field**. Normally it consists of a single tincture, but sometimes may be parted or varied in some way.

Tinctures

The tinctures fall into three categories: **colours**, the **metals**, and the **furs**.

Colours

In the early period of armorial bindings, colours were largely ignored, and the only way they could be represented was by paint applied after the stamp had been impressed on the leather binding. This was rarely done, and only a few examples have survived.¹ In the seventeenth century

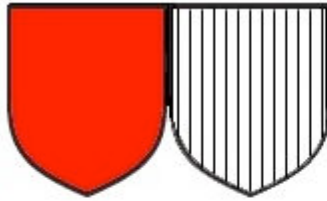
¹. George Carew, Earl of Totnes [ICAR001_s1]; Henry Fitzalan, 18th Earl of Arundel [IFIT001_s1]; Henry Hare, 2nd Baron Coleraine represented the gules of the field of his arms by using red leather onlays.

several systems of hatching were devised to represent the tinctures in uncoloured illustrations, especially in armorial bookplates, which by now had become widespread. The system created by the Italian Jesuit, Silvester Petra Sancta (1590-1647),² eventually became the method universally accepted, and is still in use by engravers today. By the 1650s the system was well known in England³, and from the second half of the seventeenth century was occasionally employed in the execution of armorial binding stamps. The practice, however, was inconsistent and far from universal [see ...]

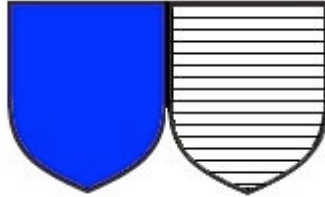
The five principal colours of heraldry are **gules** (red), represented in the Petra Sancta system by vertical lines; **azure** (blue), which is hatched with horizontal lines; **vert** (green), shown as diagonal lines from dexter chief; **sable** (black), horizontal and vertical intersecting lines; and much less frequently, **purpure** (purple), diagonal lines from sinister chief. The three remaining colours in the system – sanguine (blood red), murrey (mulberry), and tenné (tawny) - are rarely encountered.

² Silvestro Pietrasanta. *Tesserae gentilitiae ex legibus fecialium descriptae* (Rome, 1638)

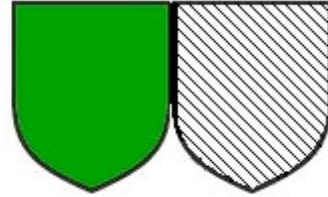
³ See Nicholas Upton *De studio militari* [ed. Sir Edward Bysshe] (London, 1654), the Pietrasanta system is reproduced in a rather poorly executed engraving in the address to the reader; see also Sylvanus Morgan, *The sphere of gentry* (London, 1661) p. 2-5].



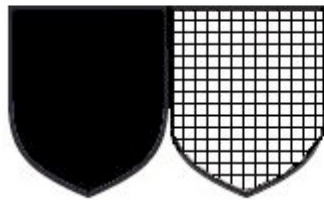
Gules



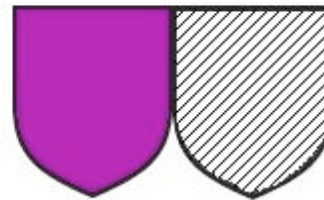
Azure



Vert



Sable

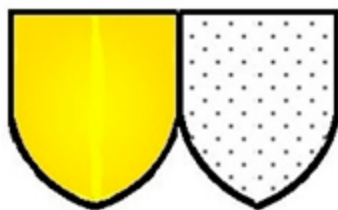


Purple

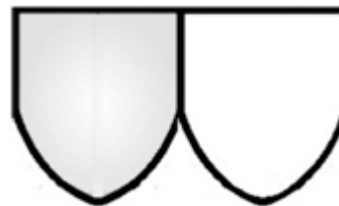
Metals

Two metals are used in heraldry, namely **or** (gold), and **argent** (silver). Or is represented by a series of small dots; argent is shown as a plain field.

When reproduced in colour, they are depicted as yellow and white respectively



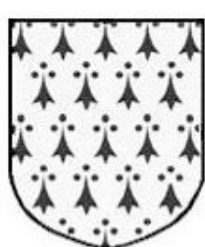
or



argent

Furs

The two furs used in heraldry are **ermine** and **vair**. Ermine is represented by characteristic black ermine tails against a white field. There are several variations of ermine: they are **ermines** (white tails on a black background); **erminois** (black tails on a gold field); and **pean**, (gold tails on a black background).



ermine



ermines



erminois



pean



Vair represents the fur of the blue-grey squirrel, which has a white underbelly. When several furs were sewn together they produced a handsome design of blue-grey and white, configured in five alternating rows; this is how vair is almost always depicted. A variation of this is when the rows are lined up in such a way so that the azures of one line are adjacent to the azures on the next line, producing a pattern known as **counter-vair**.



vair



counter vair

The so-called “rule of tincture” forbids certain combinations of tinctures. While there are frequent violations of the rule, in general metals may not be placed on metals, nor colours placed on colours. The rule does not apply to the furs.

Lines of partition

The field may be divided by one or more lines to form geometrical segments, each segment being of a different tincture. These lines of partition are named according to the appropriate geometrical heraldic charge to which they correspond.⁴ For example, a vertical line down the centre of the shield, dividing it into two equal parts, is known as **party per pale**, or simply **per pale** [the shorter formula is employed in the database]. Similarly, one that divides the shield horizontally is described as **per fess**.

⁴ See the section on “Ordinaries” below



per pale



per fess



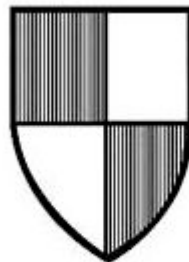
per bend



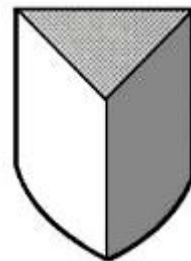
per chevron



per saltire



per cross (quarterly)



tierced in pairle

Other variations of the field

Another method of varying the field is to powder the space with repeated small charges distributed evenly to form patterns. Such patterns are known as **semy** (or *semé*). There are many possible semy fields, some of which have specific names, the most common of which are **crusilly** (made up of small cross crosslets); **bezanty** (consisting of roundels); **fretty** (an overall fret design); **gyronny** (a field composed of a number of gyrons). A semy of fleurs-de-lys is known as **semy-de-lys**.

A field consisting of alternating squares forming a checkered pattern is described as **checky**, while one of alternating squares set diagonally is

called **lozengy**. One with alternating lozenges set diagonally is described as **barry bendy**.



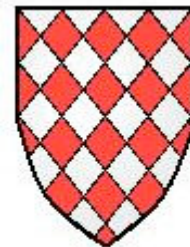
crusilly



semy-de-lys



checky



lozengy



barry bendy



gyronny of eight

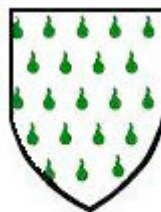


gyronny of twelve

Another variation of the semy fields consists of drops, called **gouttes**, which have specific names according to the colour of the drops:



goutty d'eau



goutty de poix



goutty de sang

Tinctures, lines of partition, and other variations are used not only to describe the field of the shield, but are also applied to the charges placed on the field.

Marshalling of arms

Many shields consist solely of the paternal arms of the bearer. In other instances they are obliged to accommodate more than one set of arms. The arrangement of different arms to form a single heraldic composition is known as *marshalling of arms*. Depending on certain factors, the principle methods of marshalling are by **dimidiation**; **impalement**; an **escutcheon of pretence**; **two shields side by side**; or **quartering**.

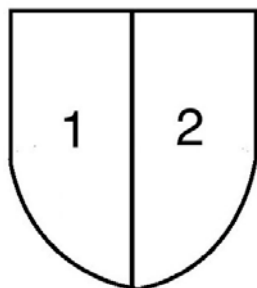
Dimidiation

The earliest method of combining arms was known as dimidiation. The shield is dimidiated when it is divided palewise by a line; the dexter side bore the dexter half of the husband's arms, while the sinister side displayed the sinister half of the wife's arms.⁵ It was rarely used, and eventually gave way to impalement.

Impalement

⁵ There are three examples of dimidiation in the armorial: Richard Drake [IDRA001_s1]; Barbara Yelverton, Viscountess de Longueville [IYEL001_s1]; and Pembroke College Cambridge [IPEM002_s1]

When a shield consists of two complete but different coats of arms set side by side, separated by a vertical line, the practice is known as *impalement*. The wife's arms are placed on the sinister side while those of her husband occupy the dexter portion ⁶



Because impalement is used to denote a union in which the wife is not an heiress, her arms are not transferable to her children who inherit only the paternal arms. If the wife dies the husband usually ceases to display his wife's arms, though if he remarries he may, if he desires, display both wives' arms.⁷

If a man belongs to any order of knighthood, his own arms cannot be impaled with those of his wife within the garter, collar or ribbon of the particular order. Instead they must be displayed on two shields.⁸

HOLDERS of certain offices, such as high ecclesiastical ranks, may impale their family arms, placed on the sinister side, with the arms of the office, on the dexter side.⁹ By their very nature impaled arms of this kind are also non-hereditary.

⁶ Wodhull impaling Ingram; Michael Wodhull married Catherine Ingram in 1761 [IWOD002_s1]

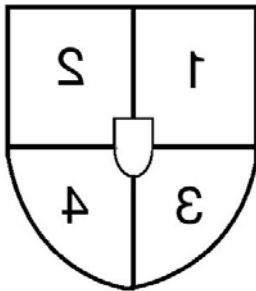
⁷ Balthasar Gardemau [IGAR001_s1]

⁸ William Proby, 5th Earl of Carysfort dexter shield Proby, surrounded by the Order of St Patrick; sinister shield Heathcote [IPRO002_s1]

⁹ See for example George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury [IABB002_s3]

Escutcheon of pretence

If the wife is an heiress in her own right, her arms are displayed on a small shield, known as an “*escutcheon of pretence*”, placed in the centre of her husband’s arms at the fess point.¹⁰ To qualify as an heiress, her father must be dead. If she has brothers, all of them must have died without male issue.



Two shields side by side

When two prominent families, such as members of two royal households are joined in marital union, it is common to display two shields side by side, with the husband’s arms in dexter position, the arms of the spouse, or the impaled arms of both spouses, in sinister.¹¹

Quartering

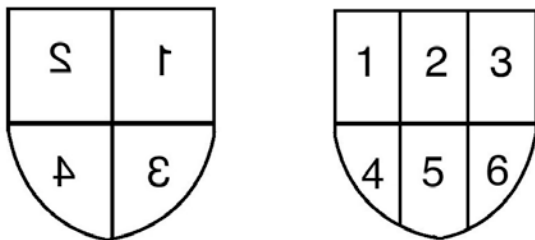
The most common method of marshalling arms is by *quartering*. Here the shield is divided into “**quarters**” – a slightly misleading term as it can signify more than four segments. The shield bearing the Dudley arms has

¹⁰ Thomas Stanley married Dorothy daughter and coheir of Sir James Enyon Baronet of Flower in Northamptonshire [ISTA024_s1]

¹¹ Mary of Modena [IMAR007_s5]

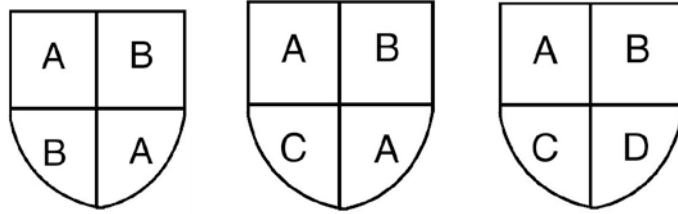
sixteen quarters. The first quarter, in the position of dexter chief, is the most significant, as it displays the paternal arms of Dudley. The remaining quarters signify the accumulated marriages of male ancestors to heraldic heiresses. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an age when a great deal of prestige was attached to family pedigrees, quarterings were sometimes overstated and extended to many subdivisions of the shield.¹²

In quartered arms each quarter is designated a number row by row, beginning with the dexter chief, and progressing from dexter to sinister, and from chief to base. Thus if the shield has four quarters, the second quarter is in sinister chief. The third is in dexter base, and the fourth in sinister base.



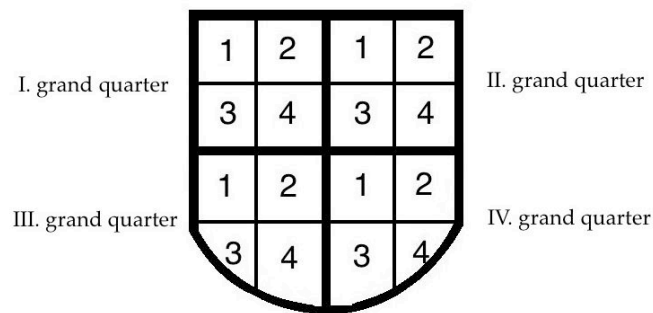
If quartering represents two families the fourth quarter repeats the first, and the third repeats the second. If the arms of three families are displayed, the first and fourth quarters represent the paternal arms

¹² The arms of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1593-1641), for instance, has thirty quarters [IWEN003_s1]; those of Sir Edward Dering



Quartered arms are permanent and are inherited by the children of the union. On the mother's death, therefore, they are entitled to quarter their paternal arms, with those of their mother's

Sometimes one or several of the quarters are themselves quartered. They are referred to as "**grand quarters**", and if there is more than one, they are designated by roman numerals.



HERALDIC CHARGES

In very rare instances a shield may carry no charges at all, and consist of a simple partition of the field into two tinctures.¹³ But in the vast majority of cases the field contains a wide range of possible adornments, from a simple single charge, to an elaborate heraldic display.

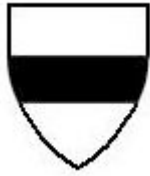
The heraldic charges that are placed on the field of the shield are traditionally divided into three categories: the so-called “ordinaries”, “sub-ordinaries”, and common charges. The division is not particularly useful, and writers on heraldry hold differing opinions on what constitutes an ordinary and a sub-ordinary.

Ordinaries

Most authorities agree that the common geometrical shapes that occupy a shield, and around which other heraldic elements of the shield are arranged, are classed as the ordinaries, or “honourable ordinaries” as they are sometimes referred to. They are: the **fess**, the **bend**, the **pale**, the **chevron**, the **chief**, the **cross**, the **saltire**, and their diminutives. Some heraldic authorities include the **pile**, and the **pall** among the ordinaries. The proportions of the ordinaries in relation to the dimensions of the shield are prescribed as being one-third or one-fifth, but in most cases they are dictated by artistic or aesthetic considerations, such as the shape of the shield, and the placement of accompanying charges around the ordinary.

Fess

¹³There is a single example in the database: the arms of James, Earl Waldegrave [IWAL001_s1]



In its basic form the fess is a broad horizontal band across the centre of the shield. The diminutive of the fess is the **bar**, which may occur singly, or in groups of odd numbers (i.e. 3, 5, 7, 9). Thus a field of three bars will have seven stripes. Fields that consist of an even number of divisions are described as **barry**, with the total number of stripes stipulated. Thus a field divided into eight stripes is described as **barry of eight**, and not as four bars.

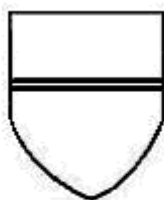


three bars



barry of eight

The bar itself has a diminutive known as a **barrulet**, almost always found in pairs, and known as a **bar gemelle**. When a barrulet is placed each side of a fess, or other geometrical shape, it is described as **cotised**.¹⁴



bar gemelle



fess cotised

¹⁴ “A fess cotised” is preferred to “a fess between two cotises” which is found in some armorials.

Bend

A bend is a broad diagonal band from dexter chief to sinister base, or in the case of the less common **bend sinister**, from sinister chief to dexter base. The diminutive of the bend is known as the **bendlet**, which like the bar, occurs only in odd numbers, as distinct from **bendy** which consists of an even number of stripes.



bend



two bendlets



bend sinister

Pale

The pale is a broad vertical band down the centre of the shield. In its diminutive form it is known as a **pallet**. **Paly** consists of an even number of vertical stripes.



pale



four pallets



paly of six

Chevron



The **chevron** has the shape of an inverted V, its members touching the sides of the shield.



A diminutive chevron is sometimes called a **chevronel**, and usually occurs in pairs or in threes, and may be interlaced. Where two chevrons occur in the database, they are described as "*two chevrons*"

Chief



A broad band occupying the top part of a shield is known as a chief. It can only occur singly, and has no diminutive.

Cross



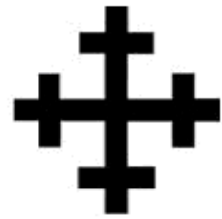
cross (basic)



bottonny



flory



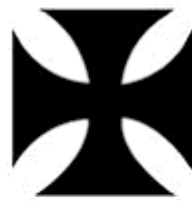
cross crosslet



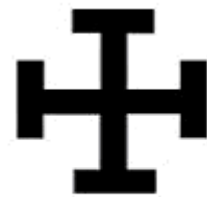
moline



patency



patty or formy



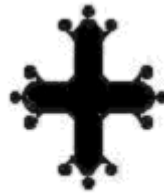
potent



recercely



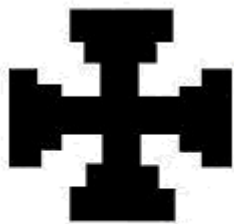
tau (St Anthony's)



urduy bottonny



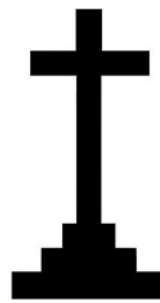
couped



degraded



Latin



Calvary cross



lined



quarterpierced

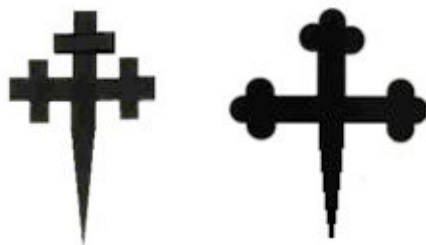


voided

Of all heraldic charges, the cross has the largest number of variations. It has been estimated that four hundred different forms of the cross have been used in heraldry, though only a small number are in regular use. The large number of crosses may be due to the close association between heraldry and Christianity dating from the times of the Crusades.

Both the Greek (or St George's cross), with limbs of equal length, and the Latin cross, with extended lower limb, are commonly found, but the limbs of a large number of crosses terminate with an ornamental shape. They include the **cross bottonny**, the **cross flory**, the **cross moline**, the **cross patency**, the **cross patty** (or **cross formy**), the **cross potent**, the **cross recercely**, and the **cross urdy**.

If the downward limb of certain types of cross, such as the cross crosslet, and the cross bottonny, ends in a point, it is described as "*fitchy*".



Saltire



The diagonal cross known as a **saltire** (also known as the cross of Saint Andrew), is considered an independent charge, quite distinct from the cross.

Pile

The pile is a triangular form issuing from the top edge of the shield and converging towards the base point. It has no diminutive, but may occur in multiples of two or three.



Pall

The pall has the shape of a letter “Y”, the limbs extending to the edges of the shield. When the limbs are coupé, the charge becomes a **shakefork**.

The pall should not be confused with the pallium, or **archiepiscopal staff**, a common charge whose shape it closely resembles



pall



shakelfork



**archiepiscopal staff
or pallium**

The ordinaries may stand alone on a shield, but in many instances they are combined with secondary charges. Ordinaries may occasionally be combined with other ordinaries,¹⁵ especially the cross. They may also combine with certain subordinaries (described below).

Subordinaries

To the class of subordinaries belong the **bordure**, **orle**, **tressure**, **quarter**, **canton**, **escutcheon**, **gyron**, **flaunches**, **label**, **lozenge**, **fret**, **billet**, **roundel**, **annulet**, and **crescent**.

Bordure

¹⁵ The arms of Horace Walpole are On a fess between two chevrons three cross crosslets



The bordure is a border adjacent to the edges of the shield. It may be plain, or varied in a number of ways. It can also be charged with other heraldic devices.



Orle



Another kind of border is the orle, which is basically a voided escutcheon. It usually appears in the form of a narrow band that runs parallel, but not adjacent, to the outline of the shield. An arrangement of small charges, usually eight, around a central charge is also referred to as an orle, for example,

an orle of martlets, or eight martlets in orle



Tressure



tressure



double tressure

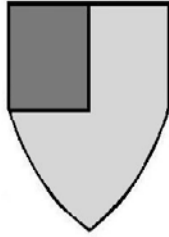


double tressure flory
counterflory

The **tressure** is essentially a diminutive of the orle, and is usually encountered in pairs. A common version of the double tressure is decorated along its edges by fleurs-de-lys, arranged in such a way as to show head and tail alternately. This is the **double tressure flory counterflory**, found in the arms of Scotland, and of many Scottish noble families.¹⁶

Quarter

¹⁶ For example, Stuart (or Stewart), Murray, Middleton, Maitland, Buchanan.

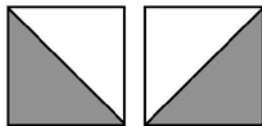


A quarter, as its name implies, occupies one quarter of the field of the shield, namely the dexter chief. Its diminutive version is the canton, which is regarded as a separate charge.

Canton



The canton, a smaller version of the quarter, takes up one third of the chief, invariably the dexter portion. The canton is usually employed to denote an augmentation to the arms. It has no diminutive, but when it is divided in half diagonally the lower half is termed a **base esquire**, which is usually found in pairs.



Escutcheon



The **escutcheon** or ineschutcheon (the terms seem nowadays to be interchangeable) is a small shield, usually charged, and placed in the centre of the field. It may be used as a simple device, but often has a special function, notably as an "*escutcheon of pretence*", which is used to denote the arms of a married heiress. The escutcheon may also be used as an **augmentation of honour**, an addition or modification to the arms, awarded by the monarch in recognition of a meritorious deed in the king's or country's service.¹⁷

Gyron

The lower half of a quarter dissected diagonally is called a **gyron**. Never appearing in isolation, the gyron most frequently appears in divisions of eight or twelve, when they are described as *gyronny of eight*, or *gyronny of twelve*. [see above].

Flanches

¹⁷ Charles Richard John Spencer-Churchill, 9th Duke of Marlborough



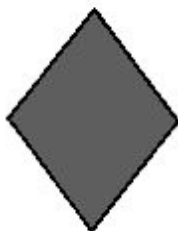
Always appearing in pairs, **flaunches** consist of a concave arc of a circle on each side of the shield. The diminutive of the flaunch is called a voider, but it is rarely encountered.

Label



The oddly named **label** consists of a narrow horizontal band from which hang three (or sometimes more) vertical short pieces, or “points” , which are either straight or in the shape of dovetails. Once commonly used as a charge, it is now almost exclusively used as the mark of cadency for a first son or heir [see **marks of cadency** below]

Lozenge



The **lozenge** is a diamond shaped charge, closely resembling the smaller elongated version known as the **fusil**. For the sake

of simplicity only the term “lozenge” is used in the database to describe both charges.

Mascle



A voided lozenge is called a **mascle**

Fret



Another variation of a voided lozenge is the **fret** which is composed of a mascle interlaced with a saltire. The fret is sometimes referred to as a “Harington knot”.¹⁸

Billet



The **billet** is an erect rectangular figure, which may occur alone, but usually appears in multiples.

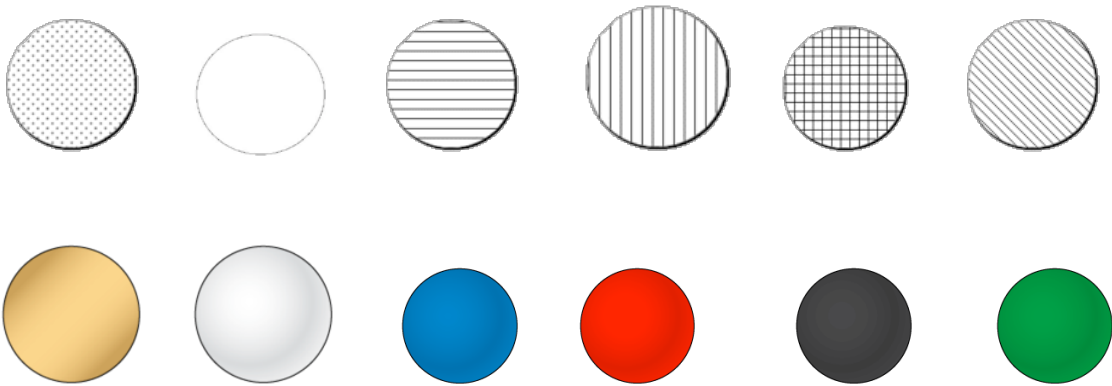
¹⁸ Named after the fret that appears in the arms of the Harington family.

Roundels

Roundel is used as a generic term to describe any solid circular shape.

Roundels also have specific names according to their colour or metal.

Thus a roundel or is called a **bezant**; a roundel argent is known as a **plate**; gules as a **torteau**; azure as a **hurt**; sable as a **pellet** or **ogress**; and vert as **pomeis**.



or (bezant) argent (plate) azure (hurt) gules (torteau) sable (ogress) vert
(pomeis)

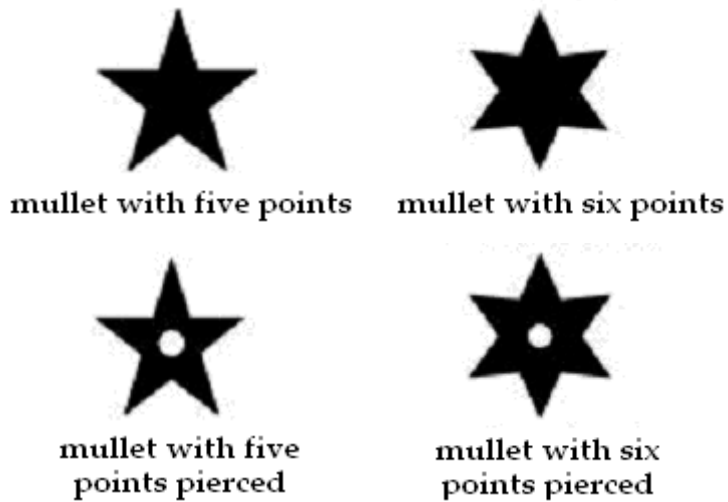


One further type of roundel is the **fountain** which is depicted as barry wavy azure (representing flowing water) and argent.

Mullet

The star-shaped **mullet** (or molet) is in fact not a star, but a spur rowel, although in Scottish heraldry it is referred to as a "star". When a mullet

has a hole in its centre, it is described as "*pierced*". The mullet normally has five points, but is sometimes found with six.



Annulet

The **annulet** is a plain ring, not to be confused with a gemmed ring, which is also a heraldic charge. Annulets may appear singly, or in multiples, often interlaced.



Crescent

A very common charge is the **crescent**, which is mostly displayed with its points (“horns”) uppermost. When the horns are pointing to the dexter it is called an **increscent**; when to the sinister, a **decrecent**.



crescent



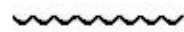
increscent



decrecent

Varied lines

In their simplest forms most of the charges described above are geometric shapes, formed with straight or curved lines of demarcation. They may, however, be altered or embellished by varying the lines that define them.



engrailed



invected



wavy



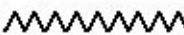
embattled



nebuly



raguly



indented



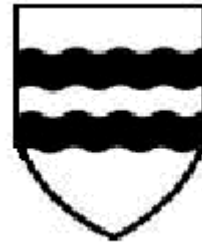
dancetty



fess engrailed



saltire invected



two bars wavy



bend wavy



chevron embattled



bend nebuly



cross raguly



chief indented



chief dancetty

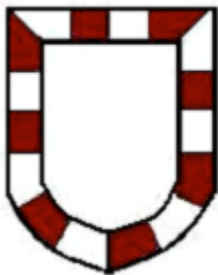
Crosses may be varied by other ornamental treatments, producing the fimbriated or **lined cross**, the **voided cross**, and the **quarter pierced cross**.



Other variations

Another type of variation is achieved by alternating tinctures. Certain geometrical charges such as a fess, a bend, a bordure, when displayed with a single row of alternating checkers, are described as *compony* (or “gobony”). A double row is called *counter-compony*. Three or more rows of checks are described as *checky*.

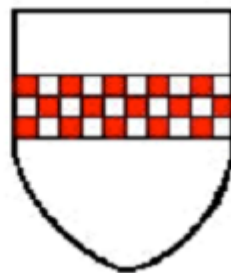
When the field and the charge it contains are divided by lines of partition such as per pale, or per fess, where the colour scheme is altered in two directions, they are described as *counterchanged*. For example, *per pale gules and argent a chevron counterchanged* signifies that the part of the chevron that lies on the argent side is coloured gules, and the part that lies in the gules side is coloured argent.



bordure
compony



bend
counter compony



fess checky



chevron
counterchanged

Common charges

Common charges may be just about any object from the material or imaginary world, including human figures, fauna, flora, mythical creatures, everyday household items, various kinds of implements, weaponry, and celestial bodies. They are usually represented in a symbolic form.

A particular charge may be chosen, as it expresses some kind of association with the armiger's family history, or suggests a canting allusion to the family name.

Human figures

Humans, usually adult males, are depicted in a variety of guises. It may be the whole figure, nearly always shown facing the onlooker, or more frequently, parts of the body, notably the demi-figure, the head, arm, heart, and occasionally the leg are all found as charges.

Human head

Although the possibilities for depicting the human head are virtually limitless, certain types of head have become standard charges. Particular common are the heads of **savages**, **moors** (or blackamoors), and **saracens** (perhaps dating from the times of the Crusades). Saracens are bearded, wreathed about the temples and habited. Savages are also bearded, wreathed around the temples and loins, but otherwise they are naked, and carry clubs. Moors are black and wear a wreath of twisted cloth around the forehead.



saracen



savage



moor

Other figures, both male and female, are drawn from classical mythology and the Bible. To the latter category belong the **Holy family**, the **Virgin Mary**, and **Moses**. Saints often feature in civic arms as the patron saints of particular towns. Mythological figures include the **centaur** (or sagittarius), the **triton**, and **Apollo**, and the female goddesses **Athena** and **Minerva**.



centaur



Triton



Apollo



Athena



Minerva

Human arm

As various forms of the human arm occur so frequently in heraldry, its description requires a more detailed treatment than usual. The first point is to distinguish between dexter and sinister arm. The second point to note is whether the whole arm from just below the shoulder is displayed, or from above the elbow to the hand, when it is described as a *cubit arm*. The attributes of the arm should also be noted. It may be naked, clothed (*"vested"* or *"habited"*), or *"armoured"* (or *"vambraced"*). Perhaps because of the military origins of heraldry, the arm in armour is the most common variety. Finally the attitude of the arm is described: if the arm is flexed at the elbow it is referred to as *"embowed"*. Cubit arms are usually erect, but occasionally are shown fesswise, oriented towards the dexter side. In most cases the hand is shown clasping an object.



cubit arm



cubit armed vested



cubit arm
in armour



arm embowed



arm vested embowed



arm in armour
embowed

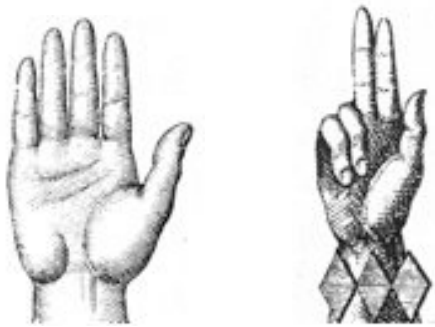


arm embowed fesswise

Human hand

The hand is usually shown with the palm facing the onlooker. This aspect is known as "*appaumy*". Occasionally the hand is found with the thumb,

index and second finger extended, the others bent on to the palm; this gesture is described as "*raised in benediction*".



The hand appaumy displayed on an escutcheon or canton is the badge of a baronet.

Fauna

Animals provide a major source of heraldic charges, and are often associated with the name of the bearer of arms (canting arms).¹⁹ It is almost always the male of the species that is depicted, i.e. **boar, bull, lion, stag, fox, wolf**. They may be depicted entire, or dissected at the waist to form demi figures, or at the head or limb.

When the whole animal is depicted, it is usually shown in profile, facing dexter. In blazon its posture, or *attitude*, is described, along with its *attributes*. For most animals the various attitudes are described in much the same terms. The exception is the stag for which special descriptive terms are used.

¹⁹ Three conies (an old name for a rabbit) are found in the arms of Coningsby [ICON001_s1]. A boar statant is the crest of Francis Bacon [IBAC001_s1]. The dog known in heraldry as a talbot forms part of the crest of the Talbot family [ITAL001_s1]

Lion

The most familiar animal charge in heraldry is the mighty lion, king of the beasts, and symbol of strength and power. The lion appears in many guises, but most commonly as a lion rampant.



rampant

The lion is *rampant* when he is standing on his back sinister foot, the dexter raised, the spine angled, and the front paws raised, the dexter higher than the sinister, the tail erect, and the tongue protruding.

If standing on three feet, with the dexter front paw raised, he is described as *passant*. If he has all four feet on the ground, he is said to be *statant*. If shown standing with his hind legs together, his front paws stretched out in front, in a pose that suggests he is about to spring, he is *salient*. If sitting on his haunches, front paws on the ground, he is *sejant*. If sitting with his front paws raised he is *sejant erect*. If lying down on all fours with the head and tail raised, he is *couchant*. If in a similar posture but with the head lowered as though in slumber, and the tail lying alongside his body, he is *dormant*.



passant



statant



salient



sejant



sejant affronty



couchant

Another attitude, not usually associated with the lion, is *courant*, where the animal has both front legs and back legs extended outwards, as though running at speed.

The position of the head is also significant. Unless otherwise stated, the head is assumed to be facing dexter. If the head is turned to face the viewer, the animal is described as *gardant* (sometimes spelt *guardant*). If the head is completely turned looking over its shoulder, it is *regardant*.



passant gardant



rampant regardant

When two rampant animals face each other, they are said to be *combatant*.



rampant combatant

The normal position of the lion's tail is flexed along the animal's spine, and then back again in the opposite direction, like a long letter "s". If the tail is lowered and placed between the animal's legs, it is described as *coward*. If straightened out horizontally, it is *extended*. If curled into a knot it is *nowed*. If the lion is shown to possess two tails, it is *double-quequed*.

Lion's head

When appearing alone, animals' heads appear in two principal forms. If the head has been severed by a straight cut, it is described as *couped*. If the head has been torn off, leaving a jagged edge on the neck, it is *erased*. A similar distinction is made with regard to the legs (also known as **gamb**s).



The neck is sometimes encircled by a collar, to which a chain or lead is usually attached. Here the lion's head is described as "*collared and lined*". If the neck is surrounded by an object other than a collar, the most common being a coronet (almost invariable a ducal coronet), or a bar gemelle, it is described as *gorged*. For instance

a lion's head erased gorged with a bar gemelle



a bull's head erased
ducally gorged



a lion's head erased
gorged with a bar gemelle

Leopard

After the lion, the second most popular heraldic feline is the leopard, usually depicted statant. The leopard's head is also a frequent charge, as is the leopard's face, which is always displayed affronty. One version of the leopard's face has a fleur-de-lys springing from its mouth; this is described as "*jessant-de-lys*".



leopard statant



leopard's face



jessant-de-lys

Cat-a-mountain

This creature is based on the wild cat, and not its domestic relative which it closely resembles.

Two further members of the feline family in the heraldic menagerie, the **tiger** and the **panther**, bear no resemblance to their natural namesakes, and will be dealt with below.

Deer

Various species of the deer family, such as **bucks**, **hinds**, **harts**, **elk**, **reindeer**, **antelopes**, and **stags**, form an important group in heraldry. The stag is by far the most common charge, and with the buck and hart is shown with a full head of antlers. The buck has broad flat antlers, while the stag's antlers are branched and pointed. However, this distinction is seldom made in heraldic art. The hind has no antlers. The reindeer, elk, and natural antelope (as distinguished from the heraldic antelope, discussed below) are drawn true to nature, and are described as "*proper*".



buck's attires



stag's attires



antelope (natural)



hind



reindeer

There are special terms to describe the attitudes and parts. When a stag is standing on all fours with his head turned towards the observer, he is *at gaze*. When running at full tilt, he is *courant* or "*at speed*". When walking, he is *trippant*. A stag in a couchant position, i.e. lying down, is described as *lodged*. The terms used to describe a stag's head are the same as for the lion and other beasts. But if the stag's head is affronty, with no neck showing, it is called *caboshed*, - a term that is also applied to domestic animals like cattle, sheep or goats.



at gaze



trippant



salient



lodged



The stag's antlers, or "**attires**", may also be displayed alone.

Dogs

Apart from the wild wolf and the fox, there are two breeds of domestic dog that predominate in heraldry: the **talbot** and the **greyhound**. The talbot is described as a medieval hunting dog with a muscular body and long drooping ears. The greyhound closely resembles its natural counterpart, and is usually shown running at full speed. Other breeds of dog feature in heraldry but rarely. In the database there is a solitary example of a **spaniel**.

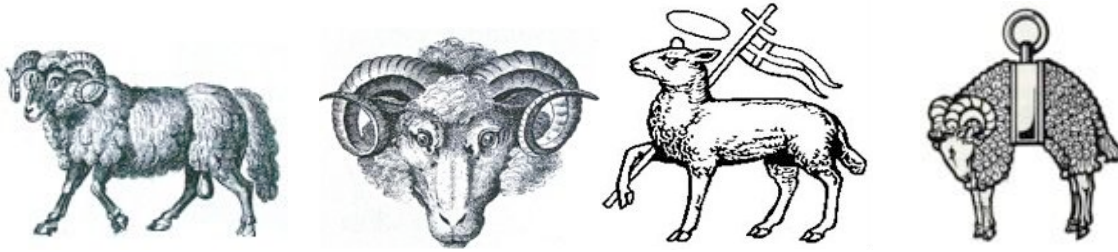


Horses

Given the military and agricultural roles played by the domestic **horse** throughout history, it became a fairly common heraldic charge. The horse's (or "nag's") head also occurs frequently, and is usually bridled. Another equine, the **mule**, makes a rare appearance in the database. More common are the fabulous creatures of the **pegasus**, the **unicorn**, and the composite **sea horse**, all of which are dealt with below.

Sheep and goats

The **ram** is the principal representative of the sheep family, depicted with spiral horns. His head is sometimes shown caboshed. The lamb also occurs frequently, most familiarly as the **Paschal lamb**, which is passant, with a halo above its head, its dexter fore leg wrapped around a staff which extends over the animal's shoulder in bend sinister, and which terminates in a cross. Just beneath the cross flies a swallow-tail pennon charged with the cross of St. George. The lamb is also often shown as a **fleece**, suspended from a belt with a ring around its middle, its head and limbs drooping.



Goats are depicted with long ogee horns and beards.

List of animal charges used in the database

Antelope

Bear

Beaver

Boar

Buck

Bull

Camel

Cat-a-mountain

Cow

Elephant

Fox

Giraffe

Goat

Hedgehog

Hind

Horse

Lamb

Lion

Leopard

Marten

Monkey

Mule

Otter

Porcupine

Rabbit

Ram

Reindeer

Rhinoceros

Squirrel

Stag

Wolf

Birds

A large number of species of birds are encountered in the heraldic aviary, by far the most prevalent being the **eagle**.

Eagle

As the lion is king of the beasts, so the eagle has dominion of the air, and occupies an appropriately exalted place in heraldry. It is found in a variety of attitudes, most of which relate to the position of its wings.

The most common attitude is the eagle *displayed*. In this classically conventional pose the breast is affronty, the head turned to the dexter, tongue protruding, the wings fully opened and raised, the claws extended, and tail pointing downwards. Occasionally the wings are *inverted*, that is, pointing downwards. If the eagle's wings are not opened but folded by its side, it is said to be *close*. If the eagle is about to take flight, the wings raised and folded back ("*addorsed*"), the eagle is *rising*. An eagle, or any other bird in flight, is described as *volant*.

The **double-headed eagle**, symbol of imperial power in Continental heraldry, is occasionally found in British heraldry.



displayed



displayed
wings inverted



close



volant



wings addorsed



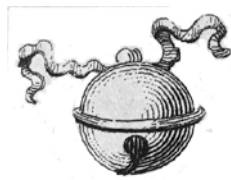
wings elevated



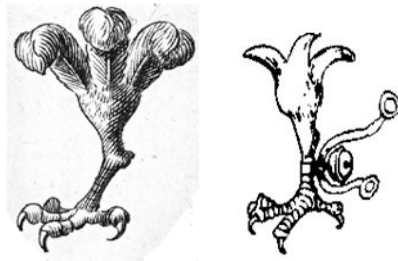
double-headed displayed

Parts of the eagle, such as the **demi-eagle**, the **eagle's head** and **eagle's leg** are also common charges.

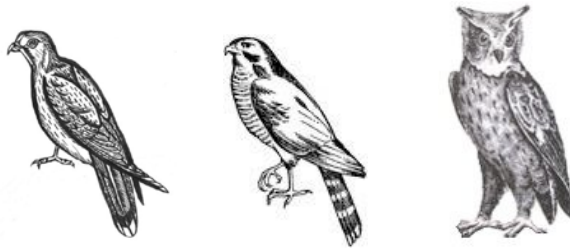
Other birds of prey that appear commonly are the **falcon** and **hawk**. If either has a bell attached to its legs by small straps called "*jesses*", it is described as "*belled and jessed*". The falcon may also be hooded.



The erased leg of the falcon can be difficult to distinguish from that of the eagle, but the attachment of a bell will always denote a falcon.



The **kestrel** and **sparrow hawk** also make a rare appearance. **Owls** are occasionally found, and are always shown affronty.



An essential accessory in training hawks is the **hawk's lure**, which consists of two wings pointing downwards joined by a line and ring. It occurs a number of times in the database.



After the eagle the most popular bird in heraldry, is in fact not a real bird



at all. The footless **martlet**, which has tufts of feathers in place of feet, is based on the swallow, which in popular belief spent its entire life on the wing. Oddly, the martlet is rarely depicted other than with wings close, despite its legendary reputation for permanent flight.

Long-legged varieties of bird include the **stork**, **crane**, and **heron**, which are sometimes difficult to distinguish. The crane is usually depicted "*in its vigilance*", that is, with a pebble held in its raised dexter foot, the purpose of which is to keep him awake during vigil. Should he fall asleep, he would drop the stone and wake up²⁰. The heron is often depicted holding an eel in its bill²¹



crane



heron



stork

²⁰ As in the crest of William Petyt [IPET006_s1]

²¹ See, the stamp of Joshua Brrokes [IBRO006_s1]

The **ostrich** is most often seen with an iron object in its mouth, usually a horseshoe or a key.²²



The **peacock** is shown affronty with its head turned to the dexter and its tail feathers displayed – a posture described as “*in its pride*”.



The **pelican** is a common heraldic charge, but differs from the natural bird by virtue of its straight bill. The pelican is always seen standing on her nest, wings elevated, and wounding her breast (“*vulning herself*”)²³ in order to feed her young with her blood. More usually, the nest is full of

²² As in the crest of various members of the Coke family; see [ICOK004_s5]

²³ The arms of Richard Foxe as incorporated in the stamp of Corpus Christi Oxford [ICOR009_s1]

chicks their beaks open, gazing up at her in expectation. In this attitude she is blazoned "*a pelican in her piety*"²⁴.



pelican vulning herself



pelican in her piety

Parrot is the preferred name for what is often termed a popinjay.



The corvine family is represented by the **crow**, the larger **raven**, and by the little known relative, the **Cornish chough** which is black with red legs and bill.



raven



crow



Cornish chough

²⁴ As in the stamp of James Thomson Gibson-Craig [IGIB002_s1]

The **cock** is usually of the farmyard variety, complete with comb, and jelloped with wattles. The wild version, the **heathcock**, also features in the database.



The **dove**, symbol of peace, is traditionally depicted holding in its beak a leaf of olive or laurel.



Three species of the duck family, the **mallard**, the **shoveller**, and the **sheldrake** are represented in the armorial. Other aquatic birds include the **swan**.



List of birds included in the database

bittern

lapwing

coot

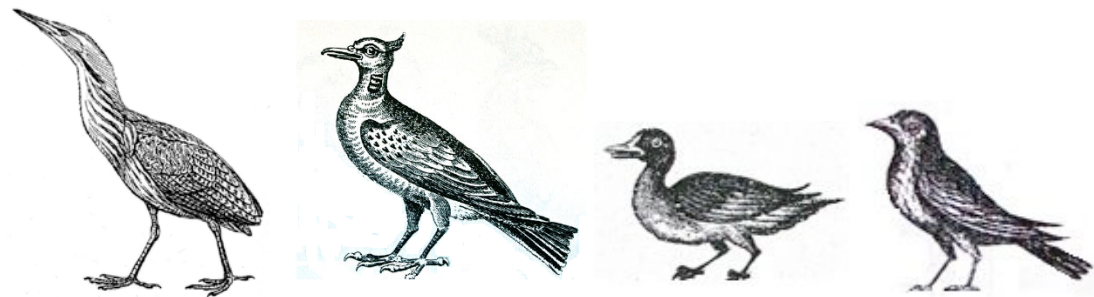
goldfinch

canary

moorcock

pheasant

swallow



Wings and feathers

Wings often appear as charges, either singly, or as a pair. When the wings are joined and pointing upwards, they are described as “*two wings conjoined in lure*”.



Ostrich feathers occur frequently in heraldry, most famously as the badge of the Prince of Wales, accompanied by the motto “*Ich dien*”. Most often found as crests, feathers are arranged in groups of two, three or four, when they are called a *plume of ostrich feathers*. Five or more feathers are described as a *panache*.



Marine creatures

The most common marine creature in heraldry is the **dolphin**, usually depicted with its back arched or “*embowed*”. If the dolphin is swimming in a horizontal position it is described as “*naiant*”. If it is diving it is

“urinant”, and if swimming up towards the surface, it is *“hauriant”*. The same attributes also apply to fish, of which several species, either whole or in parts, appear in the armorial catalogue. Other marine mammals are the **seal** (head), and **otter**.



bowed and naiant



hauriant



urinant



Species of fish that appear in the database

Besides the generic image of a fish (labeled a “stockfish”), the following specific varieties appear at least once:

barbel

conger (head)

eel

gurnard

herring

luc

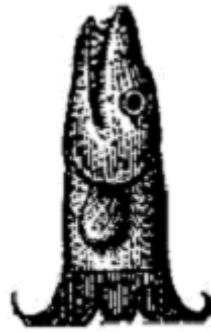
roach

salmon

turbot (demi-)



barbel



conger's head



eel



gurnard



herring



luc



roach



salmon



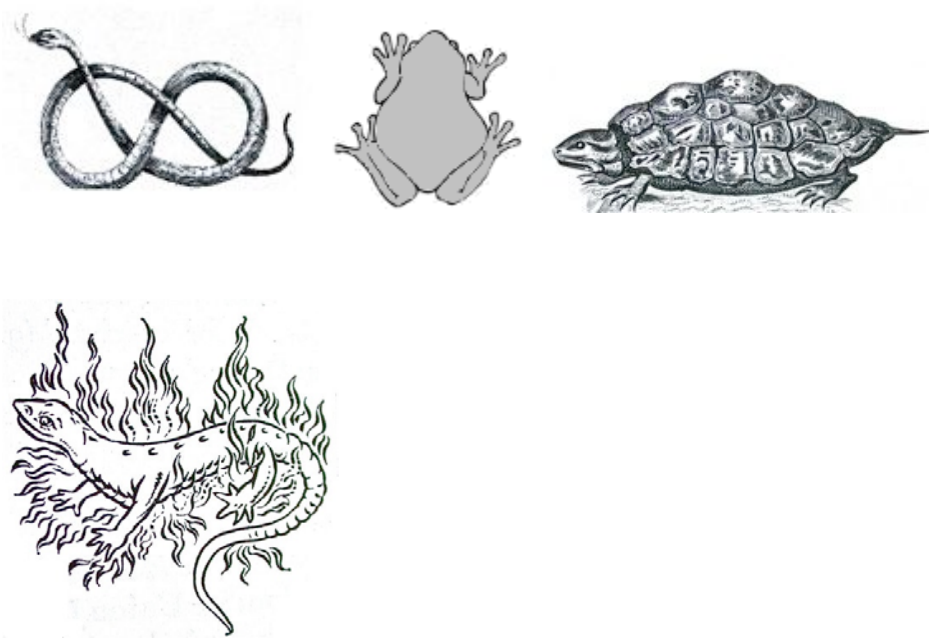
demi-turbot

Shellfish are relatively rare in heraldry, the conspicuous exception being the highly decorative scallop, known under its French name of **escallop**. The outside (convexity) of the shell is always displayed.



Reptiles

From the reptilian world come the snake, usually referred to as a **serpent**, the **toad**, the **tortoise**, and the **salamander**. Serpents sometimes appear either in the form of a figure eight ("*nowed*") or with their own tail in their mouths, an ancient symbol known as an *Ouroboros*. In heraldry the salamander is unlike the salamander of nature, but is a fictitious lizard, always surrounded by flames, reflecting the creature's mythical resistance to fire.



Insects

Few insects appear in heraldry, but the **bee**, the **fly**, and the **beetle** are all represented in the armorial.



Mythical creatures

Creatures of myth and imagination play a prominent role in heraldry. Some of them, such as the **unicorn** and winged **pegasus**, are well known and require no further explanation.

One of the most common mythical creatures is the **griffin**, a hybrid figure with the hindquarters and tail of the lion, the wings, fore limbs and head of the eagle, with the ears of the lion added. The griffin is displayed in a variety of postures. When depicted in a rampant attitude with wings raised, it is said to be *sergeant* – a term reserved exclusively for the griffin.



sergeant

The **phoenix** is much like an eagle. It is always depicted as a demi-creature rising from flames with wings elevated and displayed.



The **dragon** and the **wyvern** are close relatives, but whereas the dragon possesses four legs, the wyvern has only two. The wyvern's tail is usually curled or "*nowed*".



dragon



wyvern

Lesser known creatures of imagination are the **cockatrice** and **basilisk**, fearsome monsters with the head of a crested cock, forked tongue, dragon's wings, and a serpent's tail. The basilisk, the offspring of the cockatrice, has a serpent's head at the end of its tail.



cockatrice



basilisk

The **harpy** has the head and breasts of a woman, and the body of a vulture.



Another mythical female figure is the **mermaid**, holding a mirror (“**glass**”) and **comb** in her hands.



Some heraldic animals bear little resemblance to their natural counterparts. The heraldic **tiger** (or tyger), for example, has the body of a wolf, a thick mane, a lion’s tail, and a pointed snout and large tusks protruding from its powerful jaws.

The **heraldic antelope** has the head of the heraldic tiger, serrated horns, an antelope’s body, but tufted down the spine, and a lion’s tail.



heraldic tiger



heraldic antelope

The **heraldic panther** is depicted rampant, its body covered with spots, and breathing flames from its mouth (*"incensed"*).



The **allerion** is an eagle without beak or legs, usually shown with wings raised and inverted.



Another chimerical creature from the heraldic imagination is the half-dog half-fish **sea dog**. Other composite creatures combining animal and fish are the **sea horse**, and the **sea lion**. Like the sea dog, the upper body resembles a horse and lion respectively, but with a series of dorsal fins, and webbed feet, joined to the lower half of the body of a fish, with a nowed tail.



sea dog



sea horse



sea lion

Flora

Flowers

The primary flower of heraldry is the **fleur-de-lys**, a stylized version of the lily, represented by three separate leaves held together in the middle by a band. The conventional lily also serves as a heraldic charge.



The heraldic **rose**, a variety of dog rose, has five petals, and is usually barbed (i.e. with sepals) and seeded. The Tudor rose represents the white rose of the House of York laid over the red rose of the House of Lancaster, symbolizing the peace that ensued following the War of the Roses. Often used as a badge, the rose is quintessentially English. The Scottish equivalent to the English rose is the **thistle**.



rose



Tudor rose



thistle

Non-generic stylized flowers with three petals are named **trefoils**. **Quatrefoils** have four petals, and **cinquefoils** five. Only the trefoil is stalked. The cinquefoil is sometimes described as a **narcissus**, a **primrose**, or a strawberry flower, or "**fraise**"²⁵, all of which appear in the armorial in their own right, as do the **daisy**, **lily**, **marigold**, **pansy**, and **sunflower**.

Flowers that feature in the database

narcissus

²⁵ It is commonly called a fraise when it appears as a punning allusion to Fraser.

primrose

fraise

daisy

lily

marigold

pansy

sunflower



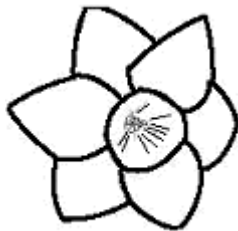
trefoil



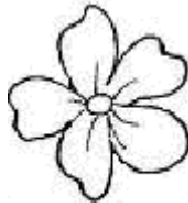
quatrefoil



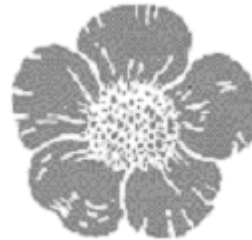
cinquefoil



narcissus



primrose



fraise



daisy



lily



marigold



pansy



sunflower

Trees

Several species of tree appear in arms and as crests, the most common being the **oak**. Others include the **ash**, and **olive**.



oak



ash



olive

Trees are often shown with their roots exposed, a state described as "*eradicated*". When depicted with their fruit or seed, they are "*fructed*".



**oak tree fructed
and eradicated**

Bushes in the database include **holly** and **laurel**.



holly bush



laurel bush

Parts of the tree - the trunk, branch, sprig, leaf, and fruit, too, are frequently used as charges. Six types of branches appear in the armorial – **beech, honeysuckle, laurel, oak, olive, and palm**; and several kinds of leaves – **birch, holly, laurel, and oak**.



beech branch



honeysuckle



laurel branch



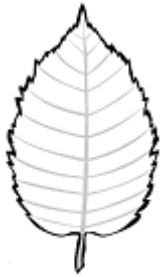
oak branch



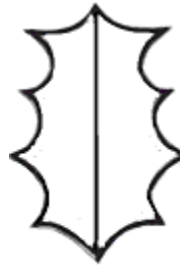
olive branch



palm branch



birch leaf



holly leaf



laurel leaf

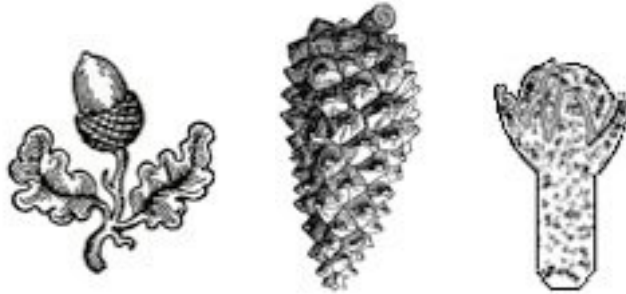


oak leaf

Fruits of various kinds are also common charges. The **apple**, **orange**, and **pear** are as they appear in nature, and are normally pendant. The **pineapple** (sometimes termed "*ananas*", in order not to confuse it with a **pine cone**), is also true to nature. The **pomegranate** is shown slipped and leaved, with a strip of its skin torn away to reveal its seeds.



Among seeds the **acorn** is the most common charge. It is always depicted in its cup, with a short stalk bearing two leaves. Other seed bearers are the **pine- cone**, and the **clove**.



The **fern** may appear alone or as a clump when it is known as a fern-brake.



The circular **wreath** may be composed of various types of foliage, such as oak, laurel, and olive leaves, often with stems crossed at the base, and tied with ribbon. A garland of roses is known as a **chaplet**.



The Military

The military origin of heraldry is reflected in the widespread use of weapons, which form a conspicuous part of the heraldic repertoire. Swords of various kinds – the **scimitar**, **falchion**, **cutlass** - are all represented.



scimitar



falchion

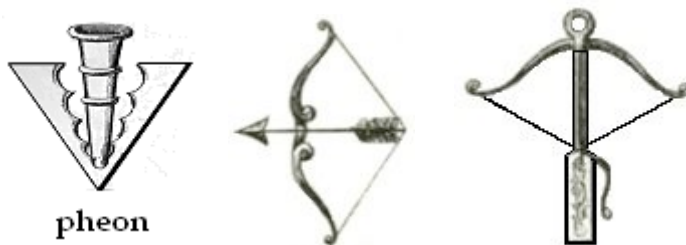


cutlas

Arrows, usually in multiples of three, five, and seven, are common, and are displayed with their heads down, and arranged with one arrow palewise, the remainder in saltire.



Another common charge is the arrow head, which is known as a **pheon**. The **bow and arrow** and the **crossbow** may appear as single images, or in combination with the arms of the archer.²⁶



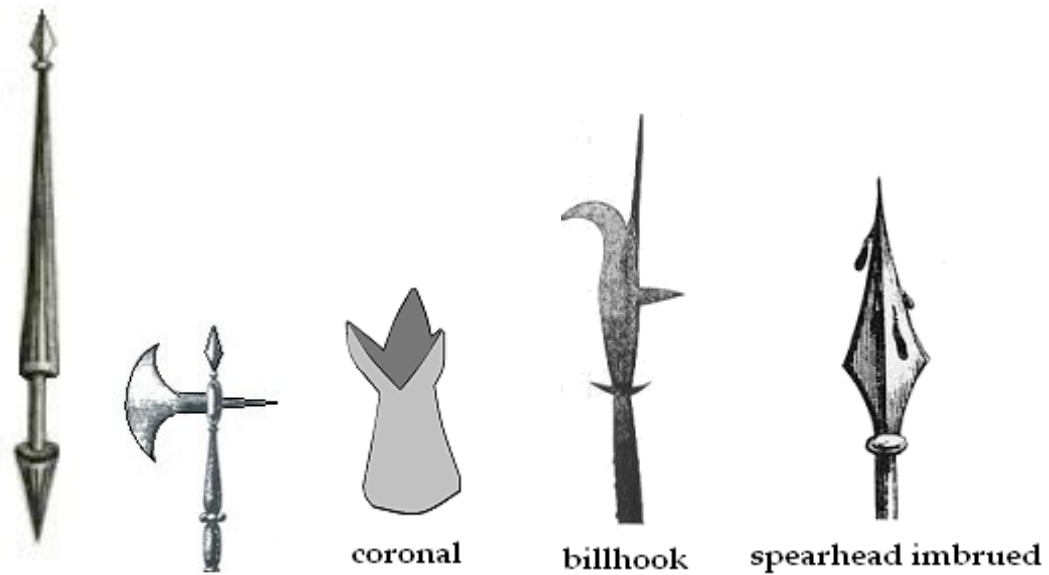
For the sake of simplicity, all types of axe, including the woodman's axe, the battleaxe, and poleaxe, have been subsumed by the single term of **axe**. The lance of the tournament is known as a **tilting spear**, and the tip of the

²⁶ George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen [IGOR002_s3]; Sir William Wilson Hunter [IHUN008_s1]

lance is called a **coronal** or coronal - a crown shaped metal cap consisting of three blunted metal prongs.

A **billhook** is a type of spear with a cutting head, stabber, piercer, and gouger.

A spearhead with drops of blood is said to be "*imbrued*".



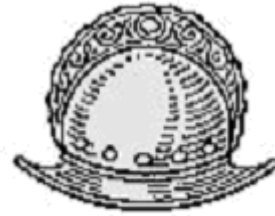
Among the articles of military costume are the **coat of mail**, **gauntlet**, and various types of **helmets**, including the **morion cap**, a steel helmet with a brim at front and back, and with a high ridged crown.



coat of mail



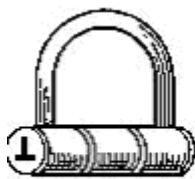
helmet



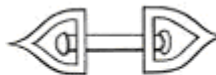
morion cap

The **Catherine wheel** consisting of eight spokes, each ending in a curved blade, was used as an instrument of execution, and so named after St. Catherine's martyrdom.

Various instruments of restraint, notably the **fetterlock** and **shackles** are occasionally found. A fetterlock, a manacle in the form of a semi-circle hinged at one end, is often shown enclosing another charge, such as a heart.²⁷ (Lockhart).



fetterlock



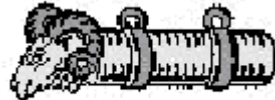
shackles

²⁷Archibald Inglis Lockhart [ILOC002_s1]

Shields of various shapes and forms also feature as heraldic as charges, as does the **escarbuncle** – the central ornamental boss of a shield, from which radiate eight decorative spokes, each ending in a fleur-de-lys. Other weapons of the field include the **battering ram**, depicted with the head of a horned ram, and the **caltrap** – a four-pointed metal weapon strewn across the battlefield to maim horses.



escarbuncle



battering ram



caltrap

Other weapons include various forms of artillery. Although the **cannon** and **gun** are very similar, the former is always set upon its carriage. The **mortar** (or “culverin”) is a wide bore short barrel gun used to hurl projectiles on to the roof of a castle or other structure. In heraldry a **grenade** is a fireball or bombshell, issuing flames of fire, and not the modern weapon of the same name.



cannon



gun

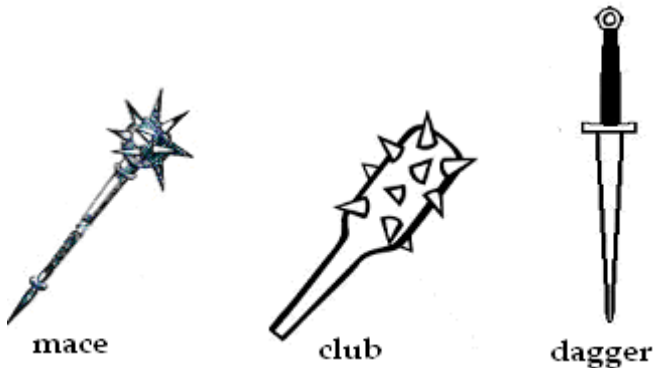


mortar

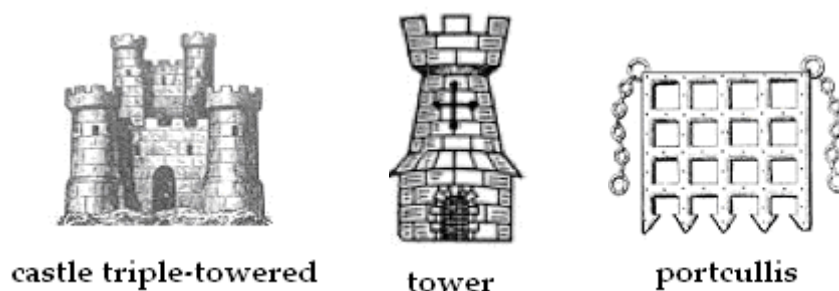


grenade

Other miscellaneous weapons include the **mace**, **club**, and **dagger**.



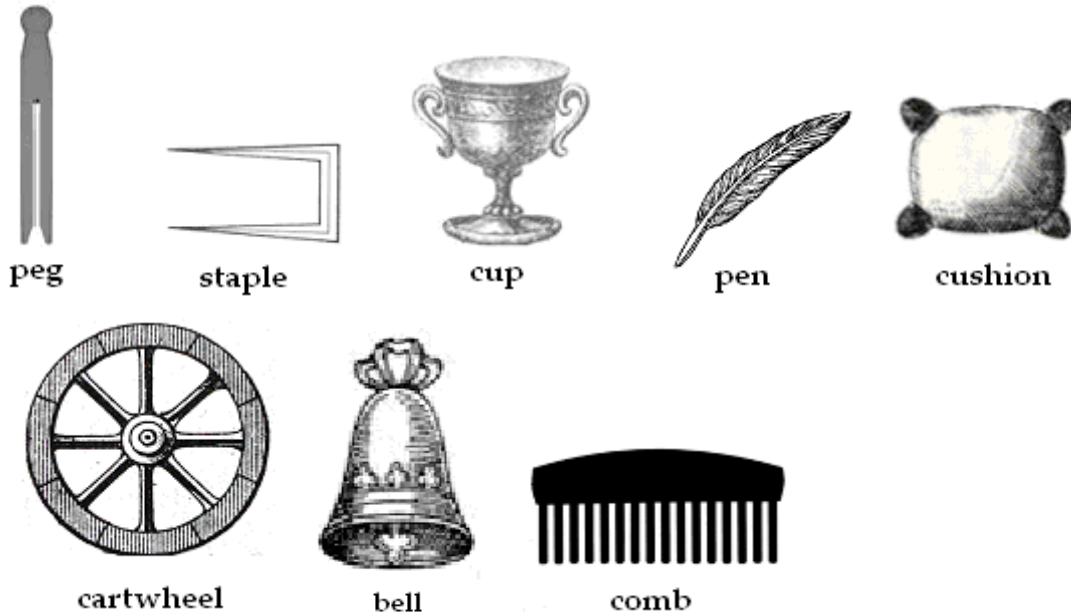
Fortified structures continue the military theme. If the charge is a **castle**, the number of towers is stipulated, and described thus, e.g. "*a castle triple towered*". **Towers** standing independently are also frequent, often with a demi-creature emerging from it.²⁸ In common use as a crest and a badge is the **portcullis**, usually shown with four horizontal and five vertical bars, with chains ending in a ring pendant from each side.



²⁸ See for example the crest of Philip Stanhope, 1st Earl of Chesterfield [ISTA009_s1]

Common household items

In contrast to the military theme, peaceful rural life finds expression in such common household items as **pegs**, **staples**, **cups**, **cushions**, **cartwheels**, **pens**, **bells**, and **combs**.

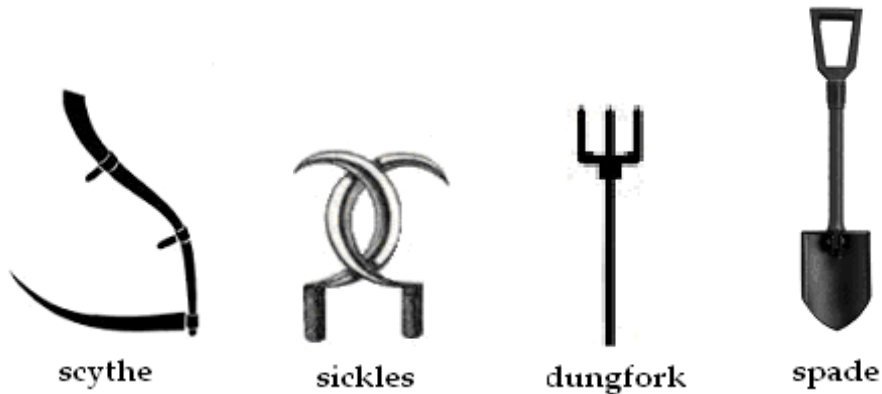


Agriculture

Agrarian life is reflected in the fruits of agricultural labour. The wheatsheaf, known in heraldry as a **garb** is a very common charge. The single **ear of wheat**, and **ear of rye** are used much less frequently.



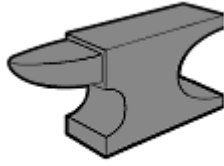
Agricultural implements include **scythes**, **sickles**, **dungforks**, and **spades** are also commonly found.



The manufacturing side of husbandry is represented by **windmill sails**, and the water **millstone**, which is secured to the shaft of the wheel by an iron plate pierced in the centre, its ends bifurcated, known as a **millrind** (or “fer-de-moline”). As a charge the millrind is seen both attached to the millstone and on its own.



Other country pursuits and trades are reflected in the blacksmith’s **anvil**, the bee-keeper’s **hives**, the **dovecot** of the dove-fancier, the vintner’s or brewer’s **tun**, the woodman’s **frame-saw**, and the assayer’s **balance**.



anvil



beehive



dovecote



tun



frame-saw



balance

Architecture

From the realm of architecture come the **arch** and the **column**.



arches



column

Clothing

Various articles of clothing are used as charges. The oddly named **maunch** is a sleeve of a woman's garment dating from the eleventh century, with a long lappet hanging from the cuff. **Belts, buckles, and gloves** are other common charges.



maunch



belt



buckle



glove

Musical instruments

The **buglehorn**, invariably stringed, the **hunting horn**, and the **Irish harp**, are among the popular musical instruments found in heraldry. The **clarion** (also known as an “organ rest”, or “sufflue”) is a stylized instrument akin to the panpipes, and consisting of a series of cylinders attached to a block to which is fixed a handle



buglehorn



hunting horn



harp



clarion

Nautical objects

The nautical theme is well represented in heraldry. Various kinds of boat, will be found in the database under the general heading of **ship**, with the exception of the **ark** which is given its own name, and is treated separately. Parts of the ship, such as the **anchor**, are common devices. The boatswain’s

rudder, which is perhaps not immediately recognized for what it is, also features, but rarely.



ark



ship



anchor



rudder

Equestrian

The various accessories associated with equestrian sports are very well represented, and include the **spur**, **spur rowel**, **stirrup**, **saddle**, **hame**, **horses** **bits**, and **horseshoe**.



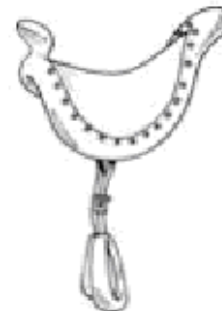
spur



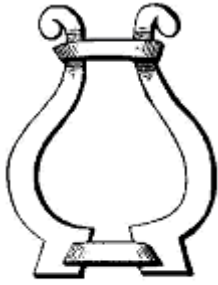
spur-rowel



stirrup



saddle



hame



horses bit



horseshoe

The Church

Ecclesiastical accoutrements include the **altar**, **crozier**, **mitre**. However, the altar is not the conventional Christian altar, but a pagan column with a crest of fire rising from its top. The pallium, or **archbishop's staff**, has already been discussed. Another charge with religious symbolism is the **key**, particularly when borne in pairs in saltire, representing the keys of St Peter.

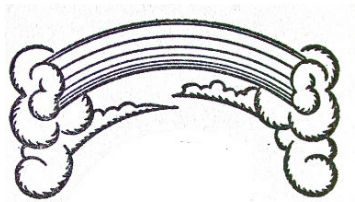


Natural phenomena

Estoile is the heraldic name for a star. The charge is conventionalized and consists of six wavy rays. As mentioned earlier, the star-shaped mullet is not a star at all.



A **rainbow** is depicted as arched between two clouds



Both the **sun** and **moon** are anthropomorphized. The sun is usually charged with a smiling visage affronty, or an eye, the surrounding corona made up of alternating wavy and straight rays. It is described as the "*sun in splendour*". The moon most often appears in one of its phases, but in order to distinguish it from the subordinate crescent, it is endowed with a slightly sombre visage, shown in profile along the inner concave edge. A full moon is described as "*in its plenitude*". A **sunburst** shows the rays of the sun issuing from behind a cloud.



Geological motifs include the **mount**, which is a grassy hillock, invariably used in crests as a base on which usually stands an animal. Another manifestation is a **mountain inflamed**, which is not a volcano, but a hill from which shoot large flames.



Miscellaneous

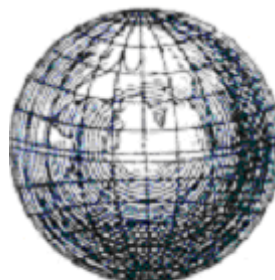
Familiar miscellaneous items used as charges include the **cornucopoeia**, **urn**, **sphere**, **orb**, and **sceptre**



cornucopoeia



urn



globe

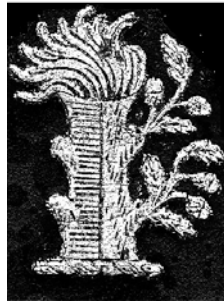


orb



sceptre

Other less familiar miscellaneous items, are the **brazier**, depicted as a square metal fire basket. The motif of fire is also present in the **torch**, the **brand** (a burning tree trunk or log), and the **beacon**, an early warning system against the approach of the enemy. It is depicted as a fire basket on a pole with a ladder leant against it.



The **fleam** is a blood-letting instrument used by barber-surgeons. The **chessrook** is a stylized chess piece, resembling a castle tower, but with a forked top. Another stylized charge is the **water bouget**, a vessel for carrying water, consisting of two leather bladders, with a wooden yoke to enable transportation on the shoulders. The **wrestling collar**, as its name implies, is a special device used in the sport of wrestling.



Some of the more obscure terms in heraldry have been discarded in favour of a more familiar vocabulary. Thus the familiar **parrot** replaces the lesser known popinjay. **Hedgehog** is preferred to urchin, **rabbit** to coney, and **giraffe** to the obsolete camelopard. The lymphad, a type of sailing ship, is subsumed under the generic category of **ship**.

In other instances the conventional heraldic term, even though unfamiliar to most people, has been retained. Thus **luc** is used to describe the pike (fish); a barrel is termed a **tun**; a star becomes an **estoile**; and a **garb** is used in place of a wheatsheaf.

Cross references

When the user is uncertain of the term under which a particular heraldic charge is indexed, the following tables may help find the appropriate term.

The first table provides a link between a term that is not used and the term that is

not used		used
arrow head	→	pheon

arundel	→	swallow
barrel	→	tun
battleaxe	→	axe
bezant	→	roundel
boat	→	ship
camelopard	→	giraffe
cat	→	cat-a-mountain
chalice	→	cup
child	→	infant
coney	→	rabbit
drops	→	gouttes
duck	→	mallard; sheldrake shoveller duck
elk	→	stag reindeer buck
fountain	→	roundel
frame saw	→	saw
fusil	→	lozenge
golpe	→	roundel
hart	→	hind; stag
hurt	→	roundel
<u>inescutcheon</u>	→	escutcheon
lance	→	tilting spear
lancet	→	fleam

lymphad	→	ship
nag	→	horse
oak	→	tree (oak)
ogress	→	roundel
organ rest	→	clarion
pellet	→	roundel
pig	→	boar
pike (fish)	→	lucy
pine marten	→	marten
plate	→	roundel
pomeis	→	roundel
popinjay	→	parrot
sagittarius	→	centaur
scales	→	balance
sheep	→	ram
	→	lamb
	→	fleece
snake	→	serpent
star	→	estoile
sufflue	→	clarion
swine	→	boar
sword belt	→	belt
syke	→	roundel
torteau	→	roundel
urchin	→	hedgehog
wheatsheaf	→	garb

The second table links similar charges (see also)

allerion	↔	eagle
annulet	↔	ring
ark	↔	ship
arm	↔	hand
arrow	↔	pheon
	↔	bow and arrow
	↔	crossbow
	↔	centaur
banner	↔	flag
	↔	pennon
basilisk	↔	cockatrice
beacon	↔	brazier
Bible	↔	book
book	↔	Bible
bow and arrow	↔	arrow
	↔	crossbow
bird	↔	bittern
	↔	blackbird
	↔	canary
	↔	cock
	↔	Cornish chough
	↔	crane
	↔	crow

←→ dove
←→ eagle
←→ falcon
←→ goldfinch
←→ hawk
←→ heathcock
←→ heron
←→ kestrel
←→ lapwing
←→ mallard
←→ martlet
←→ moorcock
←→ ostrich
←→ owl
←→ parrot
←→ peacock
←→ pelican
←→ pheasant
←→ phoenix
←→ raven
←→ sheldrake
←→ shoveller duck
←→ sparrow hawk
←→ stork
←→ swallow
←→ swan
←→ beacon

brazier

buck	↔	stag
buglehorn	↔	horn
	↔	hunting horn
bull's head	↔	cow's head
cannon	↔	mortar
	↔	gun
canton	↔	quarter
cap	↔	hat
	↔	morion cap
	↔	helmet
	↔	chapeau
castle	↔	tower
centaur	↔	arrow
chaplet	↔	wreath
child	↔	infant
cockatrice	↔	basilisk
cow's head	↔	bull's head
crossbow	↔	arrow
	↔	bow and arrow
cutlass	↔	falcion
	↔	scimitar
	↔	sword
dog	↔	greyhound
	↔	talbot
	↔	spaniel
	↔	sea dog
eagle	↔	allerion

	↔	falcon
	↔	hawk
	↔	kestrel
	↔	sparrow hawk
escutcheon	↔	shield
estoile	↔	mullet
falchion	↔	cutlass
	↔	scimitar
	↔	sword
falcon	↔	eagle
	↔	hawk
	↔	kestrel
feathers	↔	wing
fish	↔	barbel
	↔	conger
	↔	dolphin
	↔	eel
	↔	gurnard
	↔	herring
	↔	luce
	↔	roach
	↔	salmon
	↔	turbot
flag	↔	banner
	↔	pennon
fleece	↔	lamb
flower	↔	daisy

	←→	fleur-de-lys
	←→	fraise
	←→	lily
	←→	marigold
	←→	narcissus
	←→	pansies
	←→	primrose
	←→	rose
	←→	sunflower
fox	←→	marten
gauntlet	←→	glove
globe	←→	sphere
glove	←→	gauntlet
griffin	←→	eagle
gun	←→	cannon
	←→	mortar
hand	←→	arm
hat	←→	cap
	←→	morion cap
	←→	helmet
	←→	chapeau
hawk	←→	falcon
	←→	kestrel
	←→	sparrow hawk
hedgehog	←→	porcupine
helmet	←→	morion cap
hind	←→	stag

horn	↔	buglehorn
	↔	hunting horn
horse	↔	mule
	↔	pegasus
	↔	sea horse
	↔	unicorn
hunting horn	↔	buglehorn
kestrel	↔	hawk
	↔	sparrow hawk
lamb	↔	ram
	↔	fleece
leopard	↔	lion
lion	↔	leopard
lozenge	↔	mascle
marten	↔	fox
mascle	↔	lozenge
morion cap	↔	cap
	↔	helmet
mortar	↔	cannon
	↔	gun
mule	↔	horse
mullet	↔	estoile
pegasus	↔	horse
pennon	↔	flag
	↔	banner
pheon	↔	arrow
porcupine	↔	hedgehog

quarter	↔	canton
ram	↔	lamb
reindeer	↔	stag
ring	↔	annulet
roundel	↔	fountain
rye, ear of	↔	wheat, ear of
scimitar	↔	falchion
	↔	cutlass
	↔	sword
scythe	↔	sickle
sea horse	↔	horse
shield	↔	escutcheon
ship	↔	ark
sparrow hawk	↔	hawk
	↔	kestrel
spear	↔	tilting spear
sphere	↔	globe
stag	↔	buck
	↔	reindeer
	↔	hind
tilting spear	↔	spear
tower	↔	castle
tree (oak)	↔	sprig (oak)
	↔	leaf (oak)
unicorn	↔	horse
wheat, ear of	↔	rye, ear of
wing	↔	feathers

wreath	↔	chaplet
wyvern	↔	dragon

Marks of cadency

In English heraldry the system of adding brisures, or **marks of cadency** to distinguish similar coats of arms belonging to members of the same family, and at the same time to indicate the place in the order of succession of younger sons, was introduced in the fifteenth century, and is still in use. The system is also known as *differencing*. The eldest son (the heir apparent) displays a **label**²⁹ on his father's arms, while each of the younger sons (cadets) bears a distinguishing charge: a **crescent**³⁰ for the second son, a **mullet**³¹ for the third, a **martlet**,³² for the fourth, an **annulet**³³ for the fifth; a **fleur-de-lys**³⁴ for the sixth, a **rose**³⁵ for the seventh, a cross moline for the eighth, and a double quatrefoil for the ninth. If, say, the fourth son dies during the lifetime of his father, the next brother in line, formerly the fifth son, moves up into fourth place, assuming the appropriate mark of cadency. For the daughters of peers there is no equivalent system. The devices used to mark cadency are smaller versions of the common charges on which they are modelled, and occupy a relatively inconspicuous place on the shield, usually on the principal charge. Marks of cadency come at

²⁹ John Harington, 2nd Baron Harington [IHAR013_s1]

³⁰ Sir Walter Raleigh [IRAL001_s3]

³¹ Henry Stanley [ISTA021_s1]; William Wynn [IWYN003_s1]

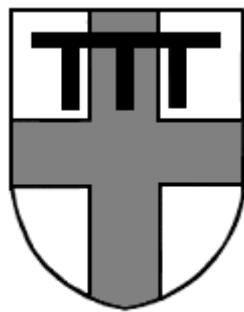
³² Henry Compton, Bishop of London [ICOM003_s1]

³³ Sir Nathan Wright [IWRI002_s1]

³⁴ George Sandys [ISAN006_s1]

³⁵ Thynne or Botfield [ITHY001_s1]

the end of the description of the arms in blazoning, followed by the words "*for difference*". The marks of cadency themselves are not indexed.



eldest son



second son



third son



fourth son



fifth son



sixth son



seventh son

In Scottish heraldry a different system is used, based on bordures each with a distinguishing tincture, subdivision, or charge.

CRESTS

The most important accessory to the arms in the heraldic achievement is the crest. Originally an appendage to the helmet which identified the wearer in battle or in the tournament, the crest subsequently evolved into an integral decorative

element of the heraldic achievement. The crest usually rests on two pieces of rolled silk known as a **torse** or wreath, composed of six alternating bands of metal and colour, almost always argent and gules. It is drawn edgewise either straight, or with a slight curvature.

In blazon, the torse is not mentioned, but if its place is taken by another object, typically a crown, coronet, or chapeau, the substitute is specified.

out of a ducal coronet a lion's head erased



In the earliest period of armory, crests were often assumed from some charge in the arms

Crests draw largely from the same broad armorial repertoire as arms, and practically any subsidiary or common charge can feature as a crest. With the exception of the cross, ordinaries are never used for crests.

BADGES AND DEVICES

Another kind of heraldic insignia is the **badge**, which exists quite independently from the shield. Badges are associated with a particular family or individual. They often resemble crests, but lack the distinctive torse on which the crest rests.

CROWNS AND CORONETS

A large array of crowns and coronets is found in heraldry, either as indicators of rank, or as integral parts of the crest. As marks of rank they are the exclusive headwear of monarchs, princes and peers. A crown is distinguished from a coronet by having bars or diadems arched over the top, and are worn solely by the monarch and the heir apparent. On coronets the arches are absent. Both crowns and coronets may be depicted with or without a velvet cap, tassel, and ermine.



The **royal crown** of Great Britain, as worn by the reigning monarch, comprises a circle of gold, set with jewels, and bearing on its upper edge four crosses patty alternating with four fleurs-de-lys. In heraldic depiction three crosses, and two fleurs-de-lys are visible. From the top of the crosses extend four diadems set with pearls which form a double arch, on top of which is an orb (or mount) surmounted by a cross patty. The cap is made of purple velvet, and is lined with ermine, which appears around the base of the crown.



The crown of the **Prince of Wales** (the heir apparent) differs from the monarch's crown by having only a single arch; the cap is made of crimson rather than purple velvet.

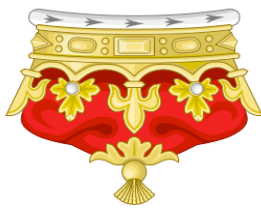
Junior members of the royal family wear coronets of various configurations. The base of the coronet of the **brothers, sisters, and children of the monarch** (other than the first son), and the **first-born son of the heir apparent** resembles the monarch's crown (i.e. crosses and fleurs-de-lys), but differs in that the cap is topped by a golden tassel. The circlet is chased as though jewelled, but not actually set with gemstones.

The coronet of the **monarch's nephews and grandchildren** of the male line



substitutes the fleurs-de-lys with strawberry leaves.

The coronet of the sovereign's **grandchildren** of the female line is similar to the previous, but around its rim the cross patty is replaced by four fleurs-de-lys and four strawberry leaves.



The peerage

The coronets of the peerage, in descending order of seniority, begin with the coronet of a **duke**, which has a circle of gold chased and jewelled, with eight strawberry leaves around its rim, of which five are shown wholly or partially in heraldic representation.

The coronet of a **marquess** has four strawberry leaves alternating with four pearls (or silver balls) set on low points; three leaves, and two pearls are shown. The rim of the coronet of a marquess, as well as the coronets of an earl, a viscount, and a baron, is chased but has no jewels.

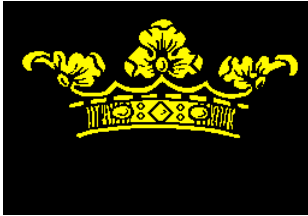
The coronet of an **earl** has eight pearls on lengthened points that reach to the same height as the cap, alternating with eight strawberry leaves; five pearls and four leaves are shown.

The coronet of a **viscount** has from sixteen to twenty closely set pearls on its rim, of which seven, eight, nine, or eleven are shown in heraldic depiction, the most common number today being seven.

Finally the coronet of the lowest stratum of the peerage, a **baron**, bears six pearls on the rim, four of which are shown.



In addition to the coronets of rank described above, there are coronets that are found as charges in arms, or more usually, as part of a crest, and although clearly modelled on the coronets of peers, they in fact have no actual relationship to rank. By far the most common form of crest coronet is the **ducal coronet**, which is always placed at the base of the crest, replacing the **torse**³⁶. Out of the coronet issues the main charge that makes up the crest. Other crest coronets that resemble coronets of rank are occasionally found.



When a coronet encircles the neck of an animal, whether in arms, crests, and supporters, it is described as "*gorged*"

a bull's head erased and ducally gorged

³⁶ The torse or wreath is the piece of twisted fabric that is attached to the top of the helmet and beneath the crest. See below



Other types of crowns or coronets found in the armorial are the **mural coronet**, the **eastern crown**, and the **naval crown**.



The coronet of a **King of Arms** has sixteen oak leaves around its rim of alternating size, nine of which are shown in representation. Around the circle are the words, taken from the 51st Psalm: "*Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*". The cap is of crimson satin topped by a gold tassel.

The **mural** coronet, which occurs frequently in civic heraldry and occasionally in the arms of distinguished military men, is made of gold and is divided by lines resembling masonry or brickwork, with an embattled top.

The **eastern** or ancient crown consists of a circle of gold from which rise eight or ten pointed rays, of which five or six are visible.

Less common is the **naval** crown which has the sterns and sails of ships displayed alternatively around the rim of the golden and jewelled circle. It occurs most frequently in the heraldic achievements of naval men.

When these crest coronets are accompanied by another charge, the coronet is mentioned first.

out of a mural coronet a boar's head



mural coronet



eastern coronet



naval coronet



out of a mural
coronet a boar's head



Other heraldic headwear includes the **chapeau**, also known as a “**cap of maintenance**”. It is made of red velvet and lined with ermine which is turned up to form a brim, ending with two swallow tails at the back. It is used in much the same way as a crest coronet and is usually seen surmounted by a charge.



on a chapeau a
falcon's head erased

The **electoral bonnet** is rarely found in British heraldry, but occurs in the royal arms of the House of Hanover between 1801 and 1816, ensigning the Hanover escutcheon; it was replaced by the royal crown from 1816 to 1837, when the Electorate became a kingdom.³⁷



Hierarchs of the Church of Rome

The arms of a **cardinal** include his family's arms, surmounted by a patriarchal cross, and a prelate's hat from which hang cords and fifteen tassels on each side.³⁸

³⁷ It also appears in the arms of Francis Henry Egerton, 8th Earl of Bridgewater [IEGE004_s1], and of Charles Spencer, 3rd Duke of Marlborough [ISPE002_s2] who were Princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

³⁸ Four cardinals are represented in the database. The arms of Christ Church Oxford also contain the prelate's hat and cardinal's tassels.

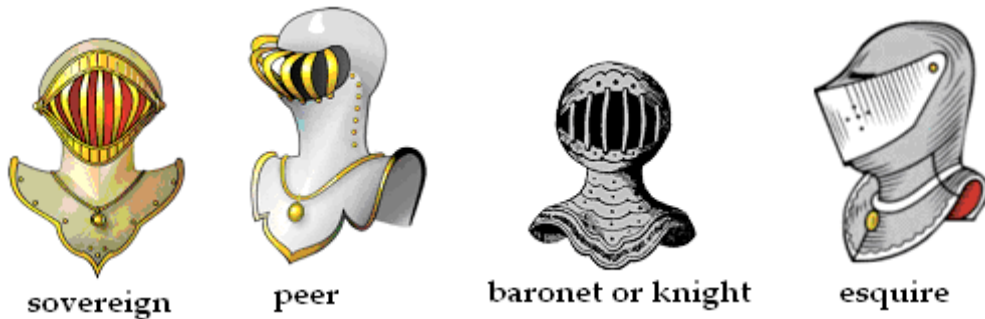
The arms of an **archbishop** are similar to a cardinal's, but only ten tassels are displayed on each side. In the arms of a **bishop** the patriarchal cross is replaced by a Latin cross, with only six tassels on each side.³⁹



HELMET

The helmet appears above the shield, immediately below the torse and crest which it supports. Although the shapes of helmets have changed many times over the centuries, four basic types, based on the orientation of the helmet, and whether the visor is raised or lowered, are used to indicate rank.

³⁹ Some of the stamps of Henry Benedict Cardinal York, son of the Old Pretender, depict him in the rank of bishop [IHEN005_s1 IHEN005_s2]



The **monarch's** helmet is made of gold and is set full-face or affronty. The face is protected by a grille of gold bars. The helmet of a **peer** is silver, set in profile facing dexter, with a grille of gold bars. **Baronets** and **knights** have steel helmets, set affronty, with an open visor. Finally **esquires** and **gentlemen** have steel helmets facing dexter with the visor closed.

MANTLING

The **mantling**, or lambrequin, has its origins in the piece of cloth pendant from the helmet, which is supposed to have protected the warrior's head and neck from the hot rays of the sun during battle. It gradually developed from an expedient piece of headgear during the Crusades, to assume a purely decorative role in heraldry. Several stylized forms of mantling developed at various times. One style resembles great billowy curling waves, supposedly representing the slashing and hacking that a mantle would endure in battle, and frequently terminating with tassles. In some instances the mantling provides a decorative frame for the arms,⁴⁰ in other cases it almost overwhelms them⁴¹. In a later style the scrolls are stiff, as though carved from wood, while in another they are elaborately curled and foliated.

⁴⁰ James Cecil, 5th Earl of Salisbury [ICEC003_s1]

⁴¹ Heneage Finch, 3rd Earl of Winchilsea [IFIN002_s2]

Although certain styles of mantling are discernible, it is difficult to ascribe a particular style to a definite time period, as fashions changed, and older styles were regularly revived. Mantling is not described in the armorial database.

Mantling should not to be confused with the **mantle** (also known as a “robe of estate”, or “robe of dignity”), worn by monarchs, princes, and peers on ceremonial occasions, and which occurs occasionally as part of the heraldic achievement. Resembling a large canopy kept open by tassels, it forms the background on which the shield is placed.⁴²

SUPPORTERS

Supporters are the figures that appear to be holding up the shield for view. In England only royalty, peers, knights of the Garter, the Thistle, and St. Patrick, and certain corporate bodies are permitted to display supporters. They can be human or semi-human figures, animals, or imaginary beasts. As a rule there are usually two supporters, sometimes mirror images of the same creature, and sometimes two quite different figures. On rare occasions the shield is held up by a single supporter.⁴³

⁴² See for example Sir William Bolland [IBOL002_s1]; Francis Henry Egerton, 8th Earl of Bridgewater [IEGE004_s2]; Richard Grosvenor, 2nd Marquess/Westminster [IGRO004_s2]; and Thomas Hope [IHOP004_s3].

⁴³ See the impressive examples of Sir Edward Dering [IDER001_s1] and William Wynn [IWYN003_s1]

MOTTOES

Mottoes are usually aphorisms expressing a noble, pious, sentiment or virtue. Equally they may also be a word play on the armiger's name. Mottoes may be in any language, but Latin and French are the most popular. In England it was the norm to inscribe the motto on a ribbon or banner positioned beneath the shield. In Scotland two mottoes were standard, one beneath the shield, the other above. The latter is believed to be a war-cry – a remnant from the days of the clan system.⁴⁴ Mottoes may also be inscribed on a strap or circle surrounding a crest or arms.⁴⁵

Mottoes provide the most expedient means of identifying armorial stamps. However, caution should be exercised, as several families may share the same motto. Moreover, while Scottish families retain the one motto through succeeding generations, in England, a family is not obliged to adhere to the same motto, and may at some time decide to change it.

ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

Various orders of knighthood and chivalry commonly appear as part of the heraldic achievements.

⁴⁴ Patrich Home [IHOM002_s1]; James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl of Crawford [ILIN009_s1]; William Stuart [ISTU009_s1]. An English example is Charles Barclay [IBAR001_s1]

⁴⁵ Alfred Robert Denison [IDEN001_s1]; Archibald Acheson, 3rd Earl of Gosford [IACH002_s2]



Order of the Garter

The Most Noble Order of the Garter is the oldest and most prestigious of the orders of knighthood for England and Wales. Founded by Edward III in 1348, the Order consisted of the monarch, his heir, and twenty-four knights companions of noble birth. The garter resembles a buckled belt rather than a garter, and bears the motto of the Order, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. Within the garter is a red cross against a white field (argent a cross gules) of St George. The collar is composed of twenty-six miniature garters containing a red rose, alternating with interlaced knots. From the collar hangs the image of St. George mounted on a white steed slaying a dragon.



Order of the Thistle

The Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle in its present incarnation was inaugurated by King James II of Great Britain in 1687. After James fled the country in 1688, the Order was reconfirmed by Queen Anne in 1703. The original number of eight knights was increased to the sixteen knights that since 1827 has made up the Order. The order's badge, the figure of St. Andrew holding a saltire, is surrounded by a cartouche bearing the order's motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*. The breast star has in its centre a thistle within a circlet bearing the motto.



Order of St. Patrick

The Most Illustrious order of St. Patrick was founded by King George III in 1783, and was made up of the monarch, the Grand Master and twenty-two knights. It was reconstituted by King Edward VII in 1905. The emblem is a saltire surmounted by a shamrock. The motto *Quis separabit*, is followed by the date MDCCLXXXIII, the year of its founding. The breast star also bears the same emblem and motto.



Order of the Bath

The Most Honourable Order of the Bath, instituted in 1399, is the second oldest order of knighthood. Its name comes from a medieval ceremony of

bathing a candidate entering knighthood. The Order fell into disuse under Cromwell and during the Restoration, but was revived by George I in 1725, and was further modified in 1815, 1905, and 1912, and was given new statutes in 1925. It consists of thirty-six knights, divided into three classes: Knight Grand Cross, Knight Commander, and Knight Companion. The order's emblem is three golden crowns, and its motto is *Tria juncta in uno*.

When the four principal orders described above are added to the heraldic achievement, it became common practice to encircle the bearer's arms , crest, or monogram with the cartouche (or garter) inscribed with the order's motto, Occasionally the collar and star of the order are also shown.⁴⁶

The French chivalric **Order of St. Michael** (*Ordre de Saint-Michel*) was founded by Louis XI in 1469. The badge of the order shows Archangel Michael killing a serpent with a spear. The motto of the order, "immensi tremor oceani" is a reference to Saint Michael gazing over the Atlantic Ocean from Mont Saint-Michel.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ ISAC004_s1 ISTI003_s56 IDAW001_s3 ICLE004_s2 ILAM003_s2 IMCD002_s1

⁴⁷Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester was received into the order in 1566 on the invitation of Charles IX [IDUD002_s1]



Ordre de Saint Michel

The oldest military order of knighthood is said to be The **Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem**, a Roman Catholic order, which traces its origin to the capture of Jerusalem which ended the First Crusades in 1099.

⁴⁸ Enjoying Papal support throughout its long history, the order carries out and furthers the cause of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land.



Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur is a French order established by Napoleon Bonaparte on 19 May 1802. The highest decoration in France,

⁴⁸ IBAI003_s2

membership is normally restricted to French nationals, but foreigners who have served France may receive a distinction of the Légion.⁴⁹



Legion d'honneur

BLAZONING ARMS

Some blazons contain puns on the family name, not always obvious because the punning word is no longer be in common usage. For example the name Newton has been represented by a "new tun" ie a new barrel (see below). Again bendlets on the arms might suggest the name Bently (see right).

Order of blazon

THE LANGUAGE OF HERALDRY

⁴⁹ The single example in the database is George Charles Bingham, Earl of Lucan [IBIN001_s1] who became a chevalier of the Legion d'honneur.

The formal description of a heraldic achievement is known as blazon - a precise vocabulary, drawn largely from Norman French. Blazon dispenses with punctuation, and employs a simple syntax in which adjectives follow the nouns they qualify. The result is a succinct and accurate description from which the reader is able to reconstruct the appropriate image.

Blazon follows a prescribed order, beginning with the shield.

Shield

1. Field

The first element to be described is the background of the shield, known as the **field**. Usually of a single tincture, the field is described simply by the name of the tincture alone (the word "field" is never used in the description), unless it is parted, varied, or peppered with semy charges. If the field is parted, the partition is described first, followed by the tinctures used:

checky gules and argent

per pale argent and vert

quarterly argent and gules

semy of crosses azure

2. Charges

The second element of the achievement to be described is the principal charge. In most cases this is an ordinary, but is sometimes a subordinate or common charge.

- i) The name of each charge is given, followed by its tincture. If the charge has varied lines, the variation is mentioned before the tincture

a chevron gules

a bend engrailed azure

- ii) The position of the charge is assumed to be in the centre of the shield (at fess point), and need not be stated. If, however, the position is elsewhere, the description should begin with a phrase indicating its location

in base a billet

in chief a rose

- iii) The principal charge is followed by a description of any other charges placed on or around it. The arrangement of the charges accompanying an ordinary has various formulations.

- a) If a charge is placed above an ordinary, it is described as being *in chief*, and follows the description of the ordinary

a fess in chief a fleur-de-lys



Indexed as *fess and in chief*

- b) Similarly, if the charge is placed beneath the ordinary, it is described as being *in base*:

a fess in base a fleur-de-lys



Indexed as *fess and in base*

- c) If a charge is surrounded by other minor charges, it is described as being "*between*". The primary charge is mentioned first, followed by the minor charges.

a chevron between three roses



a bend engrailed azure between three martlets argent

Indexed as *bend between*

- d) If a charge carries other charges upon it, the primary charge is named first, preceded by the preposition "*on*", followed by a description of the minor charges:

on a chevron three cross crosslets



on a bend engrailed azure three martlets argent

Indexed as *bend, on a*

- e) If there are charges both on and between the principal charge, the description begins with “on” plus the name of the principal charge, followed by “between” and the name(s) of the secondary charges, and ending with a description of the charges that are laid on the principal charge

on a chevron between three roses three cross crosslets



*on a bend engrailed azure between three crosses sable
three martlets or*

Indexed as *bend, on a, between*

- f) When a common charge is placed over another common charge, the underlying charge is described first, followed by

the phrase "*surmounted by*", or "*surmounted of*" and the name of the second charge.

a broken globe surmounted by a rainbow

Indexed as *globe, on a*

- g) When a charge (usually an ordinary) is placed over an entire field, it is preceded by the word "*overall*" and the name of the ordinary.

quarterly 1 & 4 a griffin sergeant 2 & 3 a chevron gules

overall a fess gules

Here **griffin sergeant** and **chevron** indexed separately

- h) When the charge is an animal on which an ordinary has been superimposed, extending across the entire field, the phrase "*debruised of*" follows by the name of the charge, and is followed by the name of the ordinary

a lion rampant debruised of a bend

Indexed as *lion rampant, on a* and *bend*

- i) When common charges appear in threes, it is assumed two are in chief and one in base, and this need not be stated. When they are in multiples of more than three, the number and arrangement are specified, and also, where appropriate, their orientation. For instance the description

an escutcheon between six roundels three, two and one

indicates that the roundels are arranged in rows, the uppermost consisting of three roundels, the middle row two,

and the bottom row one. The description *seven lozenges three, three and one* indicates the arrangement of the lozenges. *Seven lozenges in fess*, on the other hand, indicates their orientation.

Indexed as *lozenges (7)*



- j) If several charges are disposed geometrically, their orientation is defined according to the ordinary to which they correspond
- three roundels gules fesswise* (or *three roundels gules in fess*)
- five crescents or in saltire*
- three greyhounds courant palewise*

- k) If a bordure, orle, or tressure is present, it is described after the other charges have been blazoned. The principal charge in the centre of the shield is described first, followed by the bordure
- a bend a bordure*

Indexed as *bend within* and *bordure*

If the bordure is charged, the charges are mentioned last
a lion rampant on a bordure eight crosses

- iv) If a charge is a bird or beast, its attitude is described, followed by its tincture. The attitude and attributes of certain creatures, such as the lion, stag and eagle, because of their frequency, require more detailed description. If any of the individual parts of an animal are of a different colour to its body, they should be described, using the appropriate terminology. Thus a black lion with red claws and tongue is described as

a lion sable armed and langued gules

A black horse with golden hooves and mane is described as

a horse sable unguled and crined or

A white stag with red antlers is described as

a stag argent attired gules

argent a lion statant regardant rouge tail extended

or three lions passant sable langued and armed gules

- v) When a shield is quartered the description begins with the words "*quarterly of*" followed by the number of quarters, if greater than four. Unless stated otherwise, the number of quarters is assumed to be four. Each quarter is described in order beginning with the dexter chief, and ending with the sinister base.

vi) If the shield is impaled or dimidiated, the dexter arms are described first, followed by the phrase "*impaling*" or "*dimidiating*" after which the sinister arms are described

vii) Finally any marks of cadency are mentioned followed by the phrase "*for difference*"

on a bend three roses a crescent for difference

Crown or coronet of rank

See above. The description begins with *crown of ...* or *coronet of ...*

Helmet of rank

See above. Described as *helmet of a ...*

Crest

The same rules that apply to the description of charges, are equally valid for describing crests. The majority of crests rest on a torse which is omitted from the description. However, if the crest is sitting on or issuing from something else, such as a coronet or chapeau, they should be mentioned first

on a mural coronet a swan

out of a ducal coronet a demi-lion rampant

Supporters

The dexter supporter is described first, then the sinister. The supporters are not indexed.

Motto

Mottoes are transcribed as they appear (upper or lower case). They are indexed in lower case

Orders of knighthood

“Order of”+ name

Order of the Garter