

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

Read More About It:
Heraldry

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Read More About It: Heraldry

First Edition
2021
Prepared by



Dr. Chev. Peter L. Heineman, GCTJ, CMTJ
2020 Avenue B
Council Bluffs, IA 51501
Phone 712.323.3531 • www.plheineman.net

Table of Contents

- Introduction 1
- Origins and History 2
- The Rules of Heraldry 3
 - Shield and Lozenge 3
 - Tinctures 3
 - Division of the Fields 4
 - Ordinaries 4
 - Charges 5
 - Marshalling..... 5
 - Helm and Crest 5
 - Mottos 6
 - Supporters and Other Insignia 6
 - Modern Heraldry 6
 - Granting of Arms..... 7
- Tinctures and Crosses 8
- Flags and Banners..... 9

INTRODUCTION



Heraldry

Heraldry has been variously described as “the shorthand of history” and “the floral border in the garden of history.” Heraldry in its most general sense encompasses all matters relating to the duties and responsibilities of officers of arms. To most, though, heraldry is the practice of designing, displaying, describing and recording coats of arms and badges. The origins of heraldry lie in the need to distinguish participants in combat when iron and steel helmets hid their faces.

The art of heraldry provides both a connection to the past heritage of our Order and an understanding of why the regalia and insignia of our Order evolved the way they did.

Origins and History

At the time of the Norman Conquest of England, modern heraldry had not yet been developed. The beginnings of modern heraldic structure were in place, but would not become standard until the middle of the twelfth century. By the early thirteenth Century, coats of arms were being inherited by the children of armigers. In Britain the practice of using marks of cadency arose to distinguish one son from another, and was institutionalized and standardized by the John Writhe in the fifteenth century.

In the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, heraldry became a highly developed discipline, regulated by professional officers of arms. As its use in jousts became obsolete coats of arms remained popular for visually identifying a person in other ways—impressed in sealing wax on documents, carved on family tombs, and flown as a banner on country homes.

From the beginning of heraldry, coats of arms have been executed in a wide variety of media, including on paper, painted wood, embroidery, enamel, stonework, stained glass, and computerized media. For the purpose of quick identification in all of these, heraldry distinguishes only seven basic colors and makes no fine distinctions in the precise size or placement of charges on the field. Coats of arms and their accessories are described in a concise jargon called blazon. This technical description of a coat of arms is the standard that must be adhered to no matter what artistic interpretations may be made in a particular depiction of the arm.

The idea that each element of a coat of arms has some specific meaning is unfounded. Though the original armiger may have placed particular meaning on a charge, these meanings are not necessarily retained from generation to generation. Unless the arms incorporate an obvious pun on the bearer's name, it is difficult to find meaning.

The development of firearms made plate armor obsolete and heraldry became detached from its original function. This brought about the development of "paper heraldry" that only existed in paintings. Designs and shields became more elaborate at the expense of clarity. The 20th century's taste for stark iconic emblems made the simple styles of early heraldry fashionable again.



Shields

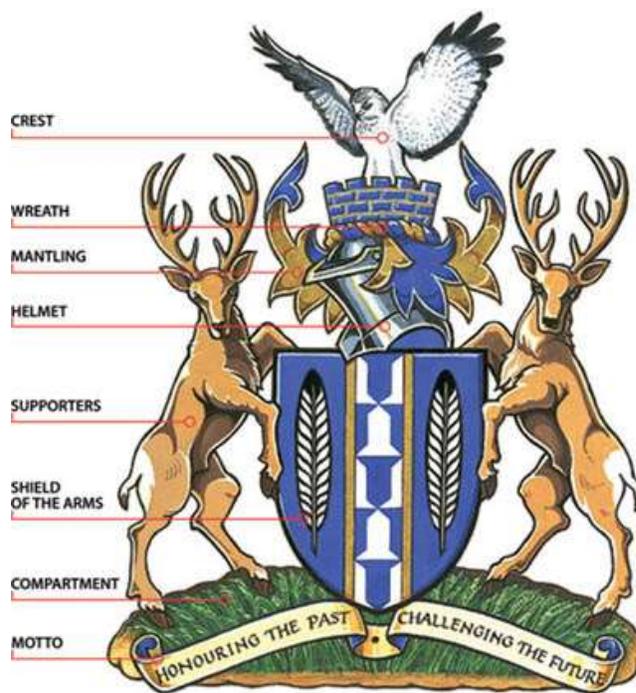
In heraldry, an **escutcheon** is a shield that forms the main or focal element in an achievement of arms. The word is used in two related senses. First, as the shield on which a coat of arms is displayed; second, a shield can itself be a charge within a coat of arms. The earliest depictions of proto-heraldic shields in the second half of the 12th century still have the shape of the Norman kite shield used throughout the 11th and 12th centuries. By about the 1230s, shields used by heavy cavalry had become shorter and more triangular, now called heater shields. Transitional forms intermediate between kite and heater are seen in the late 12th to early 13th centuries. Transition to the heater was essentially complete by 1250. The heater was used in warfare during the apogee of the Age of Chivalry, at about the time of the Battle of Crecy (1346) and the founding of the Order of the Garter (1348). The shape is therefore used in armorials from this "classical age" of heraldry. Beginning in the 15th century, and even more throughout the early modern period, a great variety of escutcheon shapes develops. In the Tudor era the heraldic escutcheon became more square, taking the shape of an inverted Tudor arch. Continental European designs frequently use the various forms used in jousting, which incorporate "mouths" used as lance rests into the shields; such escutcheons are known as *à bouche*.

The Rules of Heraldry

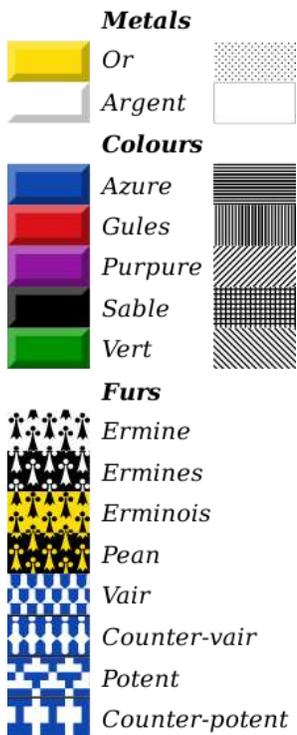
Shield and Lozenge

The focus of modern heraldry is the armorial achievement, or coat of arms. The central element of a coat of arms is the shield. In general the shape of shield employed in a coat of arms is irrelevant. The fashion for shield shapes employed in heraldic art has generally evolved over the centuries. There are times when a particular shield shape is specified in a blazon.

Traditionally, as women did not go to war, they did not use a shield. Instead their coats of arms were shown on a lozenge—a rhombus standing on one of its acute corners. This continues to hold true in much of the world, though some heraldic authorities make exceptions. In Canada the restriction against women bearing arms on a shield has been completely eliminated. Noncombatant clergy have also made use of the lozenge as well as the cartouche—an oval-shaped vehicle for their display.



Tinctures are the colors used in heraldry. Since heraldry is essentially a system of identification, the most important convention of heraldry is the rule of tincture. To provide for contrast and visibility metals—generally lighter tinctures—must never be placed on metals and colors—generally darker tinctures—must never be placed on colors. There are instances where this cannot be helped, such as where a charge overlays a partition of the field. Like any rule, this admits exceptions, the most famous being the arms chosen by Godfrey of Bouillon when he was made King of Jerusalem.



The names used in English blazon for the tinctures come mainly from French and include Or (gold), Argent (white), Azure (blue), Gules (red), Sable (black), Vert (green), and Purpure (purple). A number of other colors are occasionally found, typically for special purposes.

The names used in English blazon for the tinctures come mainly from French and include Or (gold), Argent (white), Azure (blue), Gules (red), Sable (black), Vert (green), and Purpure (purple). A number of other colors are occasionally found, typically for special purposes. Besides tinctures, certain patterns called furs can appear in a coat of arms. The two common furs are ermine and vair. Ermine represents the winter coat of the stoat, which is white with a black tail. Vair represents a kind of squirrel with a blue-gray back and white belly sewn together it forms a pattern of alternating blue and white shapes.

Heraldic charges can also be displayed in their natural colors. Many natural items such as plants and animals are de-scribed as proper in this case. Proper charges are very frequent as crests and supporters. It is considered bad form to use proper as a method of circumventing the tincture convention.

Division of the Fields

The field of a shield in heraldry can be divided into more than one tincture, as can the various heraldic charges. Many coats of arms consist simply of a division of the field into two contrasting tinctures. Since these are considered divisions of a shield the rule of tincture can be ignored. For example, a shield divided azure and gules would be perfectly acceptable. A line of partition may be straight or it may be varied. The variations of partition lines can be wavy, indented, embattled, engrailed, or made into myriad other forms.

Ordinaries

In the early days of heraldry, very simple bold rectilinear shapes were painted on shields. These could be easily recognized at a long distance and could also be easily remembered. They therefore served the main purpose of heraldry—identification. As more complicated shields came into use, these bold shapes were set apart in a separate class as the "honorable ordinaries." They act as charges and are always written first in blazon. Unless otherwise specified they extend to the edges of the field. Though ordinaries are not easily defined, they are generally described as including the cross, the fess, the pale, the bend, the chevron, the saltire, and the pall.

There is also a separate class of charges called sub-ordinaries which are of geometrical shape subordinate to the ordinary. According to Friar, they are distinguished by their order in blazon. The sub-ordinaries include the inescutcheon, the orle, the tressure, the double tressure, the bordure, the chief, the canton, the label, and flaunches.

Ordinaries may appear in parallel series, in which case English blazon gives them different names such as pallets, bars, bendlets, and chevronels. French blazon makes no such distinction between these diminutives and the ordinaries when borne singly. Unless otherwise specified an ordinary is drawn with straight lines, but each may be indented, embattled, wavy, engrailed, or otherwise have their lines varied.

Helms

In heraldic achievements, the **helmet** or **helm** is situated above the shield and bears the torse and crest. The style of helmet displayed varies according to rank and social status, and these styles developed over time, in step with the development of actual military helmets. The evolution of heraldic helmet shaped followed the evolution of helmet design, especially jousting helmets, from the 14th to 16th centuries. The armorials of the second half of the 13th century do not include helmets. Helmets are shown as integral part of coats of in the first half of the 14th century. These helmets are still of the "great helm" type, without movable visor. Heraldic helmets become diversified with the development of dedicated jousting armor during the 15th and 16th century. The development is halted with the abandonment of jousting as a courtly practice, in the early years of the 17th century. From that period, the various types of heraldic helmet are purely driven by convention, and no longer tied to improvements or fashions in armory. The practice of indicating rank through the display of barred or open-face helmets appears around 1615. The direction a helmet faces and the number of bars on the grille have been ascribed special significance in later manuals, but this is not a period practice. Historically, the helmet was not specifically granted in an achievement of arms, but was naturally assumed by appropriate rank as a matter of "inherent right", so a helmet with torse and mantling would not be misplaced even above a shield which had no crest to place above it.

Charges

A charge is any object or figure placed on a heraldic shield or on any other object of in an armorial composition. Any object found in nature or technology may appear as a heraldic charge in armory. Charges can be animals, objects, or geo-metric shapes. Apart from the ordinaries, the most frequent charges are the cross—with its hundreds of variations—and the lion and eagle. Other common animals are fish, martlets, griffins, boars, and stags. Dragons, unicorns, and more exotic monsters appear as charges but also as supporters.

Animals are found in various stereotyped positions or attitudes. Quadrupeds can often be found rampant—standing on the left hind foot. Another frequent position is passant, or walking, like the lions of the Coat of Arms of England. Eagles are almost always shown with their wings spread, or displayed.

In English heraldry the crescent, mullet, martlet, annulet, fleur-de-lis, and rose may be added to a shield to distinguish cadet branches of a family from the senior line. These cadency marks are usually shown smaller than normal charges, but it still does not follow that a shield containing such a charge belongs to a cadet branch. All of these charges occur frequently in basic undifferenced coats of arms.

Marshalling is the art of correctly arranging armorial bearings. Two or more coats of arms are often combined in one shield to express inheritance, claims to property, or the occupation of an office. Marshalling can be done in a number of ways, but the principal modes of include impalement and dimidiation. This involves using one shield with the arms of two families or corporations on either half. Another method is called quartering, in which the shield is divided into quadrants. One might also place a small inescutcheon of a coat of arms on the main shield.

When more than four coats are to be marshalled, the principle of quartering may be extended to two rows of three (quarterly of six) and even further. A few lineages have accumulated hundreds of quarters, though such a number is usually displayed only in documentary contexts. Some traditions have a strong resistance to allowing more than four quarters, and resort instead to sub-quartering.

Helm and Crest

In English the word "crest" is commonly used to refer to a coat of arms—an entire heraldic achievement. The correct use of the heraldic term crest refers to just one component of a complete achievement. The crest rests on top of a helmet which itself rests on the most important part of the achievement—the shield. The crest is usually found on a wreath of twisted cloth and sometimes within a coronet. The modern crest has evolved from the three-dimensional figure placed on the top of the mounted knights' helms as a further means of identification. In most heraldic traditions a woman does not display a crest, though this tradition is being relaxed in some heraldic jurisdictions.

When the helm and crest are shown, they are usually accompanied by a mantling. This was originally a cloth worn over the back of the helmet as partial protection against heating by sunlight. Today it takes the form of a stylized cloak or hanging from the helmet. Typically in British heraldry, the outer surface of the mantling is of principal color in the shield and the inner surface is of the principal metal. The mantling is conventionally depicted with a ragged edge, as if dam-aged in combat.

Clergy often refrain from displaying a helm or crest in their heraldic achievements. Members of the Roman Catholic clergy may display appropriate headwear. This takes the form of a galero with the colors and tassels denoting rank. In the Anglican tradition, clergy members may pass crests on to their offspring, but rarely display them on their own shields.

Mottoes

An armorial motto is a phrase or collection of words intended to describe the motivation or intention of the armigerous person or corporation. This can also form a pun on the family name as in the Neville motto "Ne vile velis." Mottoes are generally changed at will and do not make up an integral part of the armorial achievement. Mottoes can typically be found on a scroll under the shield. In Scottish heraldry where the motto is granted as part of the blazon, it is usually shown on a scroll above the crest. A motto may be in any language.

Supporters and Other Insignia

Supporters are human or animal figures placed on either side of a coat of arms as though supporting it. In many traditions, these have acquired strict guidelines for use by certain social classes. On the European continent, there are often less restrictions on the use of supporters. In Britain only peers of the realm, senior members of orders of knighthood, and some corporate bodies are granted supporters. Often these can have local significance or a historical link to the armiger.

If the armiger has the title of baron, hereditary knight, or higher, he or she may display a coronet of rank above the shield. In Britain this is usually below the helmet, though it is often above the crest in Continental heraldry.

Another addition that can be made to a coat of arms is the insignia of an order of knighthood. This is usually represented by a collar or similar band surrounding the shield. When the arms of a knight and his wife are shown in one achievement, the insignia of knighthood surround the husband's arms only, and the wife's arms are customarily surrounded by a meaningless ornamental garland of leaves for visual balance.

Modern Heraldry

Heraldry continues to flourish today in the modern day. Institutions, companies, and members of the public may obtain officially recognized coats of arms from governmental heraldic authorities. However, many users of modern heraldic designs do not register with heraldic authorities, and some designers do not follow the rules of heraldic design at all.

In Scotland the control of heraldry is fully legal and the Lord Lyon King of Arms retains powers—including imprisonment, fines, and defacement of illegitimate arms. His office has no equivalent in England and is closer to that of the Earl Marshal than that of Garter Principal King of Arms.



The full SMOTJ achievement, or Coat of Arms, features mantling or *lambrequin* around it, the tinctures of which are *gules* (red) and *argent* (white), the same as those of the shield.

Granting of Arms

Today's Templar of proven Scottish descent may petition the Lord Lyon King of Arms, R.M. New Register House, Edinburgh, Scotland, BH13YT for a grant of arms. Lord Lyon is a Crown Officer, and his word is law in Scotland. His counterpart in the rest of the United Kingdom is Garter King of Arms, The College of Arms, Victoria Street, London, England, EC4 V4BT. Both Courts of Arms have heralds and pursuivants who can do the necessary research.

Americans who are not of British descent may petition the Royal King of Arms of Spain, since Spain once claimed all of North America, and indeed ruled much of the southern and western United States. Thus, a U.S. citizen does not have to be of Spanish descent to petition Madrid.

Coats of Arms can also be granted by other heraldic jurisdictions in Ireland, Canada, South Africa, and Russia. When members of the Order need assistance in pursuing coats of arms, the SMOTJ Grand Herald can advise and help them on these matters.

Should any Priory wish to have its own Coat of Arms, there are procedures to follow to assure that what is developed is heraldically correct and in keeping with the registered marks of the U.S. Order. These procedures will ensure that the Order's requirement to protect its trademark rights is met. They will also grant rights of usage to the Priory, allowing the Priory to use the approved design on letterheads, crystal, programs, etc., as long as the Priory remains in good standing with the Grand Priory of the U.S.A. Priorities which have already developed a Coat of Arms should submit that design under these same procedures to assure registration and protection of the design.

The Priory should first develop the particulars it wishes to have in its Arms. The design should be drafted into an accurate presentation at scale, including colors (tinctures) desired. The new design should then be provided to the Grand Herald for his or her formal review and comment. Any changes or modifications directed by the Grand Herald will be incorporated into the design before it is forwarded to the Grand Armorer and Grand Avocat for further review and recording.

When this final review is complete, and the Grand Armorer and Grand Avocat have approved the design and found the use of the SMOTJ trademarks to be within the scope of appropriate usage, the Grand Avocat will issue a *Letter of Authorized Use* to the Priory that originated the design. This Letter of Authorized Use will be signed by the Grand Avocat and countersigned by the Grand Prior.

Tinctures and Crosses

Each of the crusading chivalric-monastic orders had its different tinctures used for crosses on mantles, flags, etc. Tinctures are the colors used in heraldry. The names used in English blazon for the tinctures come mainly from French and include Or (gold), Argent (white), Azure (blue), Gules (red), Sable (black), Vert (green), and Purpure (purple). A number of other colors are occasionally found, typically for special purposes.

The tinctures of the Knights Hospitaller, or Order of St. John of Jerusalem (founded ca. 1113) were white on black, or white on red. Those of the Knights Templar (founded in 1118) were red on white. Tinctures of the Knights of St. Lazarus (founded ca. 1130) were green on white. Those of the Teutonic Knights (founded ca. 1196) were black on white, as seen in the later German Iron Cross and naval ensigns.



The shapes of the crosses worn by members of these orders have varied, including Greek, Latin, Patriarchal, Tau, Patteé, or Maltese. Many identify the Maltese Cross with the crusading orders, with its eight-pointed form recalling the Eight Beatitudes. Today, the five officially recognized Orders of St. John (The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, the Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Knightly Order of St. John of the Hospital in Jerusalem, *Johanniter i Sverige*, and *Johanniter Orde in Nederland*) all bear it, as do St. Lazarus and the Scottish Knights Templar.

When the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem was organized in the United States, it chose the double-barred red patriarchal cross, as is borne in Switzerland, Portugal, England, and elsewhere. The official cross of the United States Order is a *modified* Patriarchal Cross *gules* (red) with two bars, the lower of which is the shorter. On the insignia, it is ensigned by the crown *or* (gold), which is used by the American Templars to emphasize the term “Sovereign”—a term that in the United States connotes “independent of church and state.” This cross is worn on capes, as neckwear, and appears as part of most other official insignia and regalia of the Order in the U.S.A.



In June of 2007, the Grand Council voted to replace the patriarchal cross patch worn on the robe with the more universally recognized emblem associated with the original Templars, the red cross patteé. This change only affects the cape, and the patriarchal cross continues to be worn as the neck device for members below the rank of Grand Croix.



In the United States, Knights Grand Croix wear, as a distinction of rank, a red cross patteé edged in gold, ensigned with a crown as a neck decoration. In addition, they wear the patriarchal cross at the end of a cordon (sash), which is used only with formal dress involving white tie and tails.



Heraldic banners at the funeral of Elizabeth I

Flags and Banners

Templar Order flags display a red patriarchal cross on a white field. Additionally, the Order of the Temple has a banner traditional and peculiar to it. The *Beauséant*, the square Templar battle flag, was divided horizontally into black and white rectangles, signifying the fight between good and evil. The Templar Knights bore it into battle against the Saracens. In the best heraldic tradition, the Templars' flag and the *Beauséant* should neither be confused nor combined. Each Priory is encouraged to have their own *Beauséant* and Templar Order flag (a red patriarchal cross on a white field) for use and display at Convents and Investitures.

Each Priory is also encouraged to have its own Priory flag or gonfannon. Every Prior is entitled to a personal flag, which they may retain as a Past Prior. The same is true for the Grand Prior. The flags should all be uniform in size. To ensure that flags are heraldically correct, all designs must be approved in advance by the Grand Herald. The preferred approach is to involve the Grand Herald in the concept and design of the device from the beginning of the effort.

GPUSA provides the following guidelines for the proper display of arms on banners and flags.

Arms are never placed upon a flag or banner as full achievement (see illustration). The crest may be borne alone upon a flag or banner. Only the image within the shield is depicted and fit into the format of flag or banner. Banners and flags may have fringe attached around the outer edges but not along the hoist.

A "flag" is a rectangular banner. Arms are displayed in the same manner on both flags and banners. Recommended sizes for Priory banners is 3'X3' or a maximum of 4'X4' square. Flags are recommended to be 3'X5' which fit properly on a normal 8' tall standard.

Also allowed is a form of banner called a vexillum or gonfalon. It is usually square and is suspended from a travers cross bar with a tasseled cord from each end of the cross bar to the center of the standard below the finial.

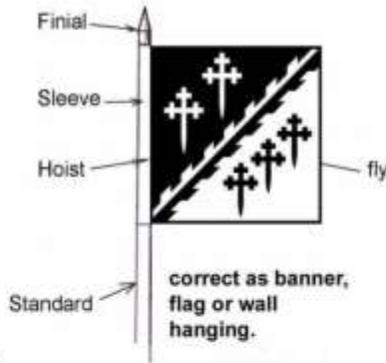
Only banners, flags and gonfalons of arms conforming to the above may be carried in procession and used in official GPUSA ceremonies. Other designs not of heraldic nature may be used with prior approval of the office of the GPUSA Grand Herald.

While the Grand Herald has no jurisdiction over personal arms it is strongly recommended that the above guidelines be observed in their display in official ceremonies.



WRONG

The full achievement of arms is never displayed on a banner, flag or gonfalon. It may be used as a decorative wall hanging.



correct as banner, flag or wall hanging.

BANNER

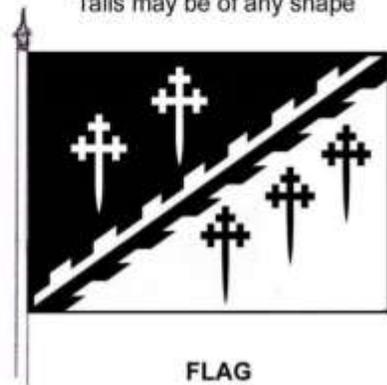


VEXILLUM OR GONFALON

Tails may be of any shape



ARMS AND BANNER PRIORY OF ST. BERNARD DE CLAIRVAUX



FLAG

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Read More About It: Heraldry
