

Society for Creative Anachronism
College of Arms
427 W Ave
Spokane, WA 99203
+1 509 570 4189
laurel@heraldry.sca.org

For the July 2018 meetings, printed September 29, 2018

To all the College of Arms and all others who may read this missive, from Juliana Laurel, Alys Pelican, and Cormac Wreath, greetings.

From Wreath: Symbols of Hate

The resurgence of white supremacist organizations and other hate groups has been in the news recently, and the SCA has not been immune to its effects. The use of Norse and Saxon symbols by such groups directly affects both submitters and the College of Arms.

Apart from the designs which are instantly recognizable as offensive (e.g., a swastika or a burning cross) it is nearly impossible to make a ruling on the offensiveness of an armorial motif that is objective, useful for consulting heralds, adaptive to the changing tactics of hate groups, and fair to submitters who have no malicious intent and merely seek to register armory. For this reason, the Laurel office has long been averse to making sweeping rulings on offense, preferring adjudication on a case-by-base basis.

Recently, Laurel and Wreath, with the assistance of Drachenwald's heralds, reviewed several European laws and policies to try to determine a path forward in evaluating armory for offense. Going forward, if a symbol is banned as hate speech in all of its forms in a jurisdiction in which the SCA has a substantial presence, that symbol will be unregistrable in the SCA (the swastika, long banned by Laurel precedent, falls into this category). If a symbol is banned as hate speech in some forms, but is exempted for others (especially heraldry), it will not be disallowed immediately in the SCA; however, it will be scrutinized for context.

This approach is not new. SENA A7B4 specifically states that "Some designs are offensive because of individual charges...Others are offensive only in the overall design." There have been several returns for offense over the decades, most recently in the January 2015 LoAR return of Nikolaus Grünenwaldt's device, *Gules, in saltire two cubit arms and on a chief argent three crosses formy sable*. In that return, Wreath noted:

In this case, both crosses formy and the red, white, and black color scheme were extensively used in German iconography, including during the Nazi era. These motifs are used today by white supremacist and Neo-Nazi groups in the United States. Additionally, the motif of two white objects (hammers or grenades) crossed in saltire is used in Neo-Nazi iconography, as is a raised white fist, often depicted with a substantial piece of arm, as found in a cubit arm). While any of these motifs is registerable, the combination of them here rises to the point of an offensive potential reference to white supremacist movements.

We continue to support this ruling. At the risk of establishing a "steps from appropriate practice" measure, we advise submitters and consultants alike that, while a single use of an a symbol or motif may be considered inoffensive, the use of more than one potentially offensive symbol in any piece of armory runs the risk of crossing the line into offense. This risk increases exponentially as a design becomes more complex.

As an example, a gules field, a roundel, and a sable charge are each individually inoffensive and innocuous. A plate on a gules field, or a sable charge on a plate might make people a little uncomfortable, depending on context. However, *Gules, on a plate [two long charges] in saltire sable* is evocative of the flag of the Nazi Party, despite being technically clear by change of the type and number of tertiary charges. *Gules, on a plate a wagon*

wheel sable would likewise be returned for presumption (only one DC from the Nazi party flag) as well as offense.

This brings us to the subject of Celtic crosses and Norse sun crosses. Both symbols have deep spiritual and cultural positive meanings for people around the world, and both are popular motifs in SCA heraldry. However, both have also been used by white supremacist groups for some time now.

The version of the "Celtic" cross used commonly by white supremacists in the U.S. and Europe is a cross couped conjoined to and surmounted by an annulet. As drawn, it resembles a gunsight. This design is among the more popular designs used by white supremacist groups, similar in ubiquity to the swastika. It was previously ruled unregistrable in the SCA in the January 2010 return of Sadb ingen Chonchobair's device, *Argent, on a catamount rampant vert a straight-armed Latinated Celtic cross argent* on the ground that the Celtic cross as so drawn is undocumented; we now rule that this rendering of the Celtic cross, both couped and throughout (the latter also being known as a Cross of Coldharbour) is also offensive and unregistrable in any format regardless of documentation. A more comprehensive discussion about appropriate Celtic crosses may be found in the next section of this Cover Letter.

Norse sun crosses are not offensive in their own right. They are used in several cultures throughout the world. However, the Norse sun cross is also a popular motif among white supremacists, sometimes used as a stand-in for a swastika, and so must be considered with care.

In closing, we advise consulting and submissions heralds to speak to submitters if they feel uncomfortable with a particular design. The ultimate decision of offense rests with Laurel. Kingdoms should not return any armory based on their concerns about offensiveness unless there is already a clear precedent on the issue (e.g., a device with a swastika). However, we do a disservice to submitters by not voicing our concerns about a design which may be registrable under current standards but would cause the bearer to lose face or be less trusted for their use of such symbols and motifs.

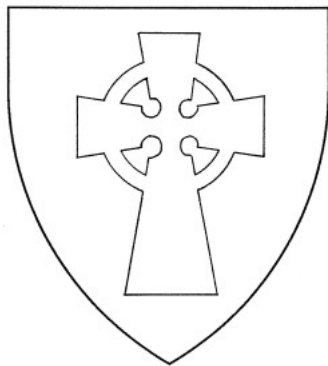
From Wreath: Celtic Crosses

Celtic crosses are allowed in SCA armory because they are artifacts found in Great Britain and Ireland. However, they have been poorly defined in the past, which has led to a number of different depictions of both equal-armed and Latin Celtic crosses. This loose definition has left submitters vulnerable to depicting non-documentable versions of the Celtic cross, including the "gunsight" version discussed earlier in this Cover Letter. In order to bring our understanding of Celtic crosses into line with period practice and SENA, the charge needs a tighter definition.

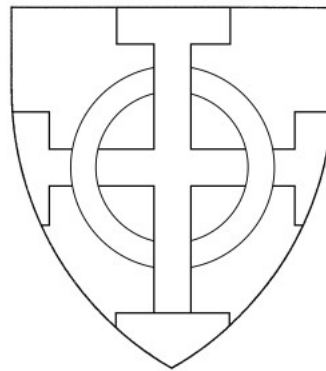
Extant examples of stone Celtic crosses have three things in common: wide arms which are straight or slightly tapered, with couped ends; semi-circular cutouts at each of the four angles at which the arms meet in the center; and an annulet that is thinner than the arms, centered on the central axes of the cross, with all four arms of the cross extending beyond the annulet. Artifacts following this pattern are found in both Latinated and equal-armed varieties. This form of Celtic cross will continue to be registrable. Crosses that do not have these three features are not Celtic crosses, and must be documented and defined separately.

The closest version of a Celtic cross yet found in period heraldry are the arms of Moresini, c. 1550: *Or, a bend azure, overall a cross throughout interlaced with an annulet argent* in *Insignia Venetorum nobilium III* (IP-Z) (BSB Cod.icon 273, 48r). A similar set of arms borne by Cardinal St. Marie found in the *Chronicle of the Council of Constance*, 1413, is cited by Bruce *Batonvert* in the *Pictorial Dictionary of Heraldry*; it differs from Moresini only in that the cross throughout has potent terminals at the edges of the shield. It is from these designs that we get the Cross of Coldharbour (now a banned motif for offense; see earlier in this Cover Letter) and the potent-ended Celtic cross as described in the *Pictorial Dictionary*. However, the documentable period motif is not a single charge, but two: a cross throughout potent (functioning as an ordinary) interlaced with an annulet. Said

motif is registerable, but moving forward it will be blazoned and treated as two separate charges (ordinary and annulet) in the same primary or overall charge group.



A Celtic cross



A cross potent throughout interlaced with an annulet

From Wreath: Tree Shapes

This month we were asked to consider a device including an alder tree, which was returned for conflict. In discussion it was brought up that an alder tree, per precedent from June 2003, is an elongated shape. Had the submitted tree, which was identified by the shape of its leaves, been elongated, precedent would have allowed for a second DC from trees with a rounder shape. But should there be a difference?

There are four alder trees registered in Society armory. Three are from the 1980s, and one is from 2015. The latest, the device of Sigvaldr Sviðandi, *Per pale argent and azure, an alder tree eradicated counterchanged*, has three small branches each with three leaves, in a vaguely rounded shape. The device of Thomas Woltaire of Alderwood, *Per chevron argent and azure, two Norse one-legged serpents combattant, each nowed in a Stafford knot, and an alder tree counterchanged*, has its foliage in a squat triangular shape that fills the space of the lower half of the field division. The device and badge of Ella du Vergne, *Gules, fretty and interlaced of eight endorses Or, overall a European Black Alder Tree couped proper. [Alnus glutinus]* and *Per bend Or and gules, in sinister chief two European black alder trees couped proper. [Alnus glutinosus]*, respectively, both have tall trees with round, amorphous clumps of foliage roughly forming a design that is three times as tall as it is wide. Thus, the description of the alder tree as elongated is only true for half of the registered examples.

There are similar issues for various other kinds of trees registered, whether they were properly depicted as round, elongated, or triangular ("pine tree shape" as it reads in the O&A).

Commenters are therefore asked to give feedback on whether we should continue to grant difference for the types of tree based on their expected shape. All commentary is welcome, but comments that use period depictions of trees in their arguments for or against continuing the policy are especially encouraged.

From Pelican: Gender-neutral titles

The April LoPaD asked for commentary on three possible gender-neutral English titles at the Award of Arms level: *Armiger*, *Gentle*, and *Noble*.

Armiger literally means a person who bears arms. The word was used after names in our period, as in "Garlof Ducheman, Armiger". We approve its use as a title in the form "(Given Name), Armiger" or "(Name), Armiger."

We approve *Noble* as a title used before a given name, as in "Noble Sampsoun" or "Noble Edwarde".

The majority of commenters opposed restricting use of the word *Gentle* to Society members of a particular rank. Therefore, we are not protecting that word as a title at this time.

From Pelican: Household names based on a person's full name

Previous precedent stated that the only attested pattern for English household names using a person's full name was *House of* + given name + last name. [Brigit inghean ui Dhomhnaill. Household name House of Hammer Fall, 11/2014 LoAR, A-East] However, new data has now been found in English and Scots for inn-sign names using a person's full name, including *Walter Chepmannis taveroun* (1526) and *the Eden Berys* [Tavern] (1483). Based on this new data, as of the date of publication of this Letter, we hereby expand the 2014 precedent and expressly allow English and Scots household names in the form given name + last name + *House*. Further, the designators *Inn*, *Tavern* or *Brewhouse* (or any period spellings thereof) can be used instead of *House* in English or Scots inn-sign names based on a person's full name. Where the person's full name comes before the designator, it should be in the possessive form. This ruling applies only to English and Scots household names; the use of this pattern for household names in other languages must be documented.

Society Pages

On August 4 at Midge Marsh Melee/Academy of the Sword in the Barony of Gryphon's Lair, Sionan Padraig Caimbeul, the former Golden Wing Herald of the Kingdom of Artemisia was recognized by Their Majesties Sean and Sigrid and elevated to Baron of the Court.

On August 8 at Raglan Fair in the Kingdom of Drachenwald, Their Majesties Vitus and Isabel did elevate Aryanhwy merch Catmael, Sans Repose Herald, former Pelican Queen of Arms and former Schwarzdrachen Principal Herald, to the Order of the Laurel. The Breakstone medallion, the College of Arms Laurel medallion for heraldic research, is in her keeping.

On the same date and at the same event, Arianhwy Wen, yet untitled Herald Extraordinary, Chancellor of Drachenwald, former Rockall Herald (principality herald for Insulae Draconis) was also elevated to the Order of the Laurel.

In sadder news, Stefanu de Mohacs, until recently Albion Herald, passed away on July 11. He served as submissions herald of Drachenwald until ill health forced him to pass it on to a successor a few weeks earlier. Only days before his death, on July 7, he was inducted into the Orden des Lindqustringes, Drachenwald's service order. Our thoughts are with his family in this difficult time.

Please send information about happenings to major heralds and major happenings to all heralds to Laurel, so that it can be published here.

Send What to Whom

Letters of Intent, Comment, Response, Correction, et cetera are to be posted to the OSCAR online system. No paper copies need be sent. All submission forms plus documentation, including petitions, must be posted to the OSCAR online system. While black-and-white emblazons must be included in the Letter of Intent, only colored armory forms need to be posted in the forms area.

Cheques or money orders for submissions, payable to "SCA Inc.-College of Arms" are to be sent to Stephanie Ray-Solum, Blue Bug Bookkeeping, 2144 Westlake Ave. North Suite F, Seattle, WA 98109.

Send roster changes and corrections to Laurel. College of Arms members may also request a copy of the current roster from Laurel.

For a paper copy of a LoAR, please contact Laurel, at the address above. The cost for one LoAR is \$3. Please make all checks or money orders payable to "SCA Inc.-College of Arms". The electronic copy of the LoAR is available free of charge. To subscribe to the mailings of the electronic copy, please see the bottom of <http://heraldry.sca.org/heraldry/lists.html#lists> for more instructions.

For all administrative matters, please contact Laurel.

Scheduling

Items listed below in square brackets have not been scheduled yet. For information about future scheduling, please review the status table located on the Web at <http://oscar.sca.org/index.php?action=137>.

The July Laurel decisions were made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, July 22, 2018 and the Wreath meeting held on Sunday, July 15, 2018. These meetings considered the following letters of intent: Calontir (08 Apr, 2018), Æthelmearc (11 Apr, 2018), An Tir (15 Apr, 2018), Caid (24 Apr, 2018), Ealdormere (24 Apr, 2018), West (24 Apr, 2018), Atenveldt (25 Apr, 2018), Avacal (25 Apr, 2018), Lochac (26 Apr, 2018), Artemisia (28 Apr, 2018), Atlantia (29 Apr, 2018), Ansteorra (30 Apr, 2018), Drachenwald (30 Apr, 2018), East (30 Apr, 2018), Gleann Abhann (30 Apr, 2018), Laurel LoPaD (30 Apr, 2018), Middle (30 Apr, 2018), Outlands (30 Apr, 2018), and Trimarís (30 Apr, 2018). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should have been entered into OSCAR by Saturday, June 30, 2018.**

The August Laurel decisions were made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, August 19, 2018 and the Wreath meeting held on Sunday, August 12, 2018. These meetings considered the following letters of intent: Meridies (02 May, 2018), Ansteorra (03 May, 2018), Calontir (04 May, 2018), Æthelmearc (20 May, 2018), Ealdormere (24 May, 2018), Lochac (25 May, 2018), West (28 May, 2018), Northshield (29 May, 2018), Avacal (30 May, 2018), Drachenwald (30 May, 2018), Laurel LoPaD (30 May, 2018), An Tir (31 May, 2018), Ansteorra (31 May, 2018), Artemisia (31 May, 2018), Atenveldt (31 May, 2018), Atlantia (31 May, 2018), Caid (31 May, 2018), East (31 May, 2018), Gleann Abhann (31 May, 2018), Meridies (31 May, 2018), Outlands (31 May, 2018), and Trimarís (31 May, 2018). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should have been entered into OSCAR by Tuesday, July 31, 2018.**

The September Laurel decisions will be made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, September 9, 2018 and the Wreath meeting held on Sunday, September 16, 2018. These meetings will consider the following letters of intent: Calontir (06 Jun, 2018), Æthelmearc (14 Jun, 2018), An Tir (15 Jun, 2018), Laurel LoPaD (16 Jun, 2018), Middle (17 Jun, 2018), An Tir (19 Jun, 2018), Ealdormere (24 Jun, 2018), Avacal (27 Jun, 2018), Lochac (27 Jun, 2018), Caid (28 Jun, 2018), Ansteorra (29 Jun, 2018), Artemisia (29 Jun, 2018), Atlantia (29 Jun, 2018), Atenveldt (30 Jun, 2018), Drachenwald (30 Jun, 2018), Meridies (30 Jun, 2018), Middle (30 Jun, 2018), Northshield (30 Jun, 2018), and Outlands (30 Jun, 2018). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should be entered into OSCAR by Friday, August 31, 2018.**

Not all letters of intent may be considered when they are originally scheduled on this cover letter. The date of posting of the LoI, date of receipt of the Laurel packet, or other factors may delay consideration of certain letters of intent. Additionally, some letters of intent received may not have been scheduled because the administrative requirements (receipt of the forms packet, receipt of the necessary fees, et cetera) have not yet been met.

REMINDER: Until all administrative requirements are met, the letter may not be scheduled.

Pray know that I remain,

In service,

Juliana de Luna
Laurel Queen of Arms