

Society for Creative Anachronism
College of Arms
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For the January 2021 meetings, printed March 6, 2021

To all the College of Arms and all others who may read this missive, from Emma Laurel, Elisabetta Pelican, and Oddr Wreath, greetings.

From Laurel: Virtual Heralds Point Wrap-Up

As I write this, we are finalizing the last consultations from the Virtual Heralds Point. Signups ran for three weeks, and by the end we're looking at 616 items from 359 different individuals, from all twenty kingdoms! This is an amazing result, far better than we'd hoped for.

This was entirely a New Thing for us, and we do hope to do it again in the future. I have to give tremendous thanks to the team that took the idea and ran with it: Tanczos Istvan, Non Scripta Herald, for initial setup and then rapid-fire changes daily to the Pennsic forms program used -- without him, this wouldn't have been possible at all; Lillia de Vaux, Crampette Heralut, who said "sure" when I asked her to take on the task of organizing everyone, not realizing the incredible amount of work it would turn out to be; Porkell Palsson, Laurel Exchequer, for making electronic payments actually work!; Marie de Blois, Honnesteté Plus Que Tout Heralut, who assigned all the work to make sure everyone got to play; Owen Tegg, our artist wrangler, who did a fantastic job of making sure we had the best artists producing the best artwork possible; Juliana de Luna, Siren Herald, who as usual was amazing at managing the senior heralds and answering tricky questions; Joscelin le esqurel, who provided and managed the Discord server that turned out to be essential to all the behind-the-scenes work; Iago ab Adam, who did the bulk of the armory senioring work; the many clerks who handled the email account, spreadsheet, cross-communication and assignments (with a special thank you to Ollivier Le Floch who has been a machine); and the many many consulting and senior heralds who helped with names and armory and everything else.

In total, I believe we had something over eighty heralds working in various capacities. I cannot express how flooded I am by the amount of work done in a relatively short amount of time, and wish to commend each and every one of you for truly participating in this thing we call the Society College of Arms. Well done!

From Wreath: On Line Art

The past few months have seen some potentially discordant decisions regarding line art. The rise in digital art has only served to increase the incidence of issues:

- On the September 2020 LoAR we pended the device of Fionngualla inghean ui Murchaidh, because of charges rendered only as light grey fills with no outline.
- On the October 2020 LoAR we returned the device of Kitad-un Nere Ügei, because of the primary charge rendered entirely in grey-scale, ranging from medium dark to light greys.
- This month, we are accepting several pieces of armory having very light grey fills with outlines.

We wish to remind everyone that the "black and white" copy really means "line art": a "coloring book" version of the color art, where the only black areas are lines and (optionally) regions of solid black fill. While we do not intend to sample the pixel values to ensure that the inside of a charge is the same white as the outside, there are two things that we still look for:

- Obvious grey-scale copies of the color art are still returnable, which was the nature of the October 2020 return.

- Black outlines of similar weight for all elements of the design are still required on the line art, which on reflection was the actual issue of the September 2020 pend: Without these outlines, it is not line art. Submitters should keep this in mind if composing a design from clip art, and retrace lines as appropriate.

Correcting administrative issues like line art is not a good use of Pend for Redraw, which is intended to handle slight issues of style, and Kingdoms should take care not rely upon it.

With these clarifications in mind, future submissions with these issues should have those issues resolved before forwarding to Laurel. As usual, if corrected or otherwise edited at Kingdom, a note stating the submitter's consent to such edits or recolors is required as part of the item's inclusion on a Letter of Intent.

Kingdoms are also reminded that a scan of the line art form as a whole is optional for purposes of the packet. However, regardless of the form's inclusion in the packet, the line art of the emblazon itself is still required in OSCAR.

From Wreath: On Humans Proper

Effective immediately, we are retiring *Caucasian* as the definition of the *proper* color of human skin for any registrations made on or after this date. This affects not just humans as charges, but human body parts such as *arms*, as well as monsters composed from human parts, such as *centaurs* and *mermaids*.

Going forward, we will require specification of the intended flesh color. The use of existing charges such as the *Turk* and the *Saracen*, both of which include skin tincture as part of their definitions, remains unaffected. However, the following terms are also available, and represent the basic approach which we will build upon as needed for future submissions:

- *Black* or *dark-skinned*: *Sable* or a shade of black or dark brown; hair tincture must be specified. Due to the overlap in possible shades, no difference is granted between *brown-skinned* and *dark-skinned* humans or human parts. For purposes of contrast, this tincture is considered a color.
- *Brown* or *brown-skinned*: Any shade of *brown* except light tan (which is considered *light-skinned*); hair tincture must be specified. Due to the overlap in possible shades, no difference is granted between *brown-skinned* and *dark-skinned* humans or human parts. For purposes of contrast, this tincture is considered a color.
- *White* or *light-skinned*: *Argent*, light pink or light tan; hair tincture must be specified. For purposes of contrast, this tincture is considered a metal.
- Any standard heraldic tincture.

Following existing practice, the use of a term other than a standard tincture will entail the use of the term *proper*. We will also capitalize *Black*, *Brown*, and *White* when used on their own as terms describing human skin. For example, each of the following pairs are equivalent to each other:

- *a dark-skinned human arm proper*, or *a Black human arm proper*
- *a light-skinned maiden proper crined Or*, or *a White maiden proper crined Or*
- *a brown-skinned seraph proper crined gules*, or *a Brown seraph proper crined gules*

Because of the large number of existing registrations this affects, we do not plan to undertake a bulk reblazoning project for this and instead will reblazon opportunistically, as time allows and need demands.

We are working with Palimpsest to include this change as part of a larger update of the Glossary of Terms.

From Wreath: On Argent

Three related badges this month each generated a sizeable amount of discussion about whether *Argent* was protectable under several different approaches: (a) the Hague Convention, where it is one of the signals of an intent to parlay in war time; (b) a flag in use at various times by the Ancien Régime in France in various different and inconsistent capacities; (c) the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (1996-1997).

The historical use of a white flag is significantly longer and more varied than commenters noted. A simple perusal of the "White Flag" entry on Wikipedia shows use dating back two thousand years in a wide variety of European and Asian cultures both for identity and for signaling an intent to talk in peace. That no single nation or dynasty dominates its use in establishing identity is apparent when noting that the authors of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 saw fit to reinforce its use as a signal rather than a claim of identity. Article 32 reads: "An individual is considered as a parlementaire who is authorized by one of the belligerents to enter into communication with the other, and who carries a white flag." Given the lack of common association with specific political entities, we do not see reason to protect *Argent* on the basis of identity with either the Ancien Régime or with the short-lived Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Regarding the idea of *Argent* being protectable on the grounds that it's an internationally recognized protective sign, we quote the entirety of the registration of the badge of Chandranath Mitra (now Reis ap Tuder ap Wyn) in August 2003:

[(*Fieldless*) *An escutcheon Or*] One commenter asked whether we should protect the "naval signal flag for the letter Q: Or", and, if so, whether this badge conflicts with it. That commenter also suggested that all the signal flags deserve protection.

As an administrative note, we expect that the members of the College should provide documentation with any requests for the SCA to protect particular pieces of real-world armory. Unfortunately, this letter of comment does not provide any documentation in support of this request for protection, either for the specific signal flag for Q or for signal flags in general.

We did some research and found that Whitney Smith's *Flags* describes the International Signal Flags and Pennants on p. 86, and shows a square Or flag representing the letter Q. However, it is important to note that the contents of the signal flag listing implies strongly that the shape of the signal flags is significant, not just the armory on the flags. The signal flags have a number of different shapes. Some flags which have different shapes, but which otherwise "bear the same armorial display", have different meanings: both the flags for the letter T and the number 3 bear the same "armory" (*Per pale gules and azure, a pale argent*), but they differ in shape (the letter T flag is square, and the number 3 flag is a long pennant with the tip coupé flat.) None of the flags are shaped like escutcheons, which is the shape of this fieldless badge.

The identity of armory does not depend on the shape on which the armory is displayed. A period coat of arms or badge may be displayed on many different shapes (or, in the case of a fieldless badge, on no underlying shape at all) without losing its identifiability. Signal flags do not have this characteristic. We thus agree with Laurel's initial reaction that "signal flags are not armory."

Signal flags do not appear to fall into any of the categories of real-world insignia protected in the Administrative Handbook. They are not Armory of Significant Geographical Locations Outside the Society, Significant Personal and Corporate Armory from Outside the Society, or Copyrighted Images, Trademarks, Military Insignia, etc. They therefore do not require [sic] protection in the SCA Armorial and Ordinary under the current provisions of the Administrative Handbook.

In addition, Laurel Clerk has done research showing that the current "International" signal flags are neither an ancient nor a universal system of vexillological communications. At this time, the definitions of signal flags do not fully agree between the "International" signal flags, the NATO signal flags, and the U.S. Navy's signal flags. The meanings of the signal flags have changed significantly even in the past 50 years. The flag for the letter "J", in 1951, also meant "I am going to send a message by semaphore". In 1969 it meant "I am on fire and have dangerous cargo on board; keep well clear of me." There is thus no compelling reason to believe that the current signal flags have some special status as insignia that should cause us to consider adding them to the currently existing categories of protected items.

Beyond the Hague Convention, the flag has been used to signal for slow vehicles in NASCAR races. It also is used in some cultures to signal mourning, where some other cultures might use a black flag.

Each of these cases are clearly the use of the white flag as signal, not as heraldry. *Argent* does not fall into any of the categories of the Admin Handbook III.B.

Discussed in greater specificity in SENA A6, a charge which is a form of display of *Argent* -- such as a banner, a tabard, or an escutcheon -- does not necessarily presume upon *Argent* itself, from which principle Timothy of Glastinbury's badge of August 2003, (*Fieldless*) *A billet argent*, also silently benefits.

From Wreath: On the Orientation of Flags

A question was raised this month questioning whether the orientation of flags -- whether the hoist was to dexter or sinister -- should or should not be considered artistic license.

Cormac Beare has supplied evidence supporting the stance that the orientation of flags, inasmuch as what side of the fly the hoist is on, should be treated like the wards of keys: an artistic detail not worth difference and best left unblazoned. We accept that evidence and future submissions will not specify this detail.

In the same manner as keys, this does not impact the blazonability of the orientation of the pole itself.

From Wreath: On Heraldic Whales and Natural Dolphins, a Correction

On the March 2020 Cover Letter discussion regarding conflict between whales and dolphins, we stated in the final list item that "A heraldic whale conflicts with a heraldic dolphin". As should be apparent from the discussion, that item should have read "A heraldic whale conflicts with a natural dolphin".

We thank Jeanne-Marie Palimpsest for raising this error to our attention.

From Wreath: On the Use of a Gore with Another Charge Directly on the Field

Since the May 2014 Cover Letter, there has been a step from period practice held for the use of a gore or a gusset with another charge directly on the field. At the time, research leading to this decision had failed to produce any evidence of gores beyond their appearance in treatises. This month, evidence of their use has now been brought to our attention: *Wappen besonders von deutschen Geschlechtern*, 1475-1560 German (München, BSB cod. icon. 309), f. 40v (<https://app.digitale-sammlungen.de/bookshelf/bsb00002106>) shows arms which we would blazon *Gules, three cinquefoils and a gore argent*. With this evidence, we remove the step from period practice for the use of gores or gussets with other charges directly on the field, and thank Alisoun Metron Ariston for raising the question, Iago Coquille for a timely response, and Jeanne-Marie Palimpsest for quick work in locating the original decision.

From Pelican: Hungarian Alternate Titles

Ursula Palimpsest proposed changes to the list of alternate titles at <http://heraldry.sca.org/titles.html> on the Letter of Intent dated August 31, 2020. This proposal modifies titles in the Hungarian Titles table based on research done by Kolosvari Arpadne Julia.

We are making the following changes based on this research:

- For "Viscounty Masculine" and "Viscounty Feminine", no evidence could be found to support analogues to these titles prior to 1650. The current titles of *Viscomte* and *Viscomte felesége* are therefore released.
- For "Peerage Order Masculine" and "Peerage Order Feminine", *Tanár* and *Tanárnő* are released as they are post-period.
- For "Knight (title) Masculine" and "Knight (title) Feminine", no evidence could be found for titles limited to this rank in Hungarian. *Uram* is not even a feminine title at all. We hereby release the title *Uram*. See below for the disposition of *Ur*.

- For "Award or Grant of Arms Masculine", the current title of *Gyula* is a given name in Hungarian. As a title, its origins are Bulgar-Turkic. Therefore, this title is released. In its place, we hereby add *Ur* since this masculine title was used for noble men of all ranks in period in Hungary. This rank is used with the pattern *<given name> Ur*.

We wish to thank Julia for her hard work and contributions and direct Palimpsest to update the Alternate Titles table accordingly.

From Pelican: Adjectival Bynames in Old Norse

Based on several recent submissions, there appears to be some confusion about Old Norse descriptive bynames based on adjectives. In Old Norse, strong adjectives and weak adjectives are treated differently. So how does one tell the difference?

In Old Norse, strong adjectives usually end in a consonant. Weak adjectives usually end in a vowel, and this vowel is either *a*, *i* or *u*. Whether an adjective is weak or strong also depends on how it is used in a phrase.

Consider the adjective *red*. In English, *red* is in the strong position in the phrases "red hall" and "red halls". This same adjective is in the weak position in the phrases "the red hall" and "the red halls". What's the difference? In the weak scenario, the noun it modifies (hall or halls) is modified by another word (the) before we even get to the adjective (red). English does not modify adjectives depending on whether they are in the strong or weak position, but Old Norse does. This modification is called *declension*. In Old Norse, "red hall" would be *rauðr h{o,}ll* but "the red hall" would be *in rauða h{o,}ll*. The strong adjective *rauðr* declines to the weak adjective *rauða* after the article *in*.

How do we apply this to creating bynames with adjectives? Consider the two names *Red Helga* and *Helga the Red*. In the first name, the adjective *red* is strong. Therefore, the Old Norse form of the name is *Helga rauðr*, using the Old Norse strong form of the adjectival byname. In the second name, however, the adjective *red* is weak. The name then becomes *Helga in rauða*, using the feminine weak form of the adjectival byname and the feminine article *in/hin*.

Further complicating the construction of adjectival bynames is that in the weak position they must agree in gender with the given name they are being used with. If our imaginary submitter wanted the masculine name *Ketill the Red* in Old Norse, the name would become *Ketill inn rauði*, using the masculine article *inn/hinn* and the masculine form of the weak adjective.

In the past, we have not always been consistent about whether Old Norse bynames based on strong adjectives must match the gender of the given name. We request additional data and commentary on how we should handle this issue going forward.

Society Pages

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 Trent Le Clair, 928 Frazier Dr, Walla Walla WA 99362

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 January Laurel decisions were made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, January 10, 2021 and the Wreath meeting held on Saturday, January 16, 2021. These meetings considered the following letters of intent: Trimaris (01 Oct, 2020), Meridies (02 Oct, 2020), Calontir (04 Oct, 2020), An Tir (09 Oct, 2020), Palimpsest Other Letter (13 Oct, 2020), Laurel LoPaD (22 Oct, 2020), Ealdormere (24 Oct, 2020), Æthelmearc (26 Oct, 2020), Outlands (26 Oct, 2020), Atlantia (27 Oct, 2020), Avacal (28 Oct, 2020), Caid (29 Oct, 2020), Atenveldt (30 Oct, 2020), Ansteorra (31 Oct, 2020), Drachenwald (31 Oct, 2020), East (31 Oct, 2020), Northshield (31 Oct, 2020), Laurel LoPaD (05 Nov, 2020) (redraws), Laurel LoPaD (02 Dec, 2020) (redraws). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should have been entered into OSCAR by Thursday, December 31, 2020.**

The February Laurel decisions were made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, February 7, 2021 and the Wreath meeting held on Saturday, February 6, 2021. These meetings considered the following letters of intent: Meridies (01 Nov, 2020), Calontir (05 Nov, 2020), Middle (05 Nov, 2020), An Tir (09 Nov, 2020), West (17 Nov, 2020), Gleann Abhann (21 Nov, 2020), Ealdormere (24 Nov, 2020), Æthelmearc (27 Nov, 2020), Lochac (27 Nov, 2020), Avacal (28 Nov, 2020), Atlantia (29 Nov, 2020), Ansteorra (30 Nov, 2020), Drachenwald (30 Nov, 2020), East (30 Nov, 2020), Northshield (30 Nov, 2020), Laurel LoPaD (02 Jan, 2021) (redraws). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should have been entered into OSCAR by Sunday, January 31, 2021.**

The March Laurel decisions will be made at the Pelican meeting held on Sunday, March 7, 2021 and the Wreath meeting held on Saturday, March 6, 2021. These meetings will consider the following letters of intent: Meridies (01 Dec, 2020), Trimaris (01 Dec, 2020), Calontir (02 Dec, 2020), Laurel LoPaD (03 Dec, 2020), Middle (03 Dec, 2020), Palimpsest Rules Letter (08 Dec, 2020), An Tir (09 Dec, 2020), Artemisia (15 Dec, 2020), Æthelmearc (18 Dec, 2020), Palimpsest Rules Letter (23 Dec, 2020), Ealdormere (24 Dec, 2020), Atlantia (28 Dec, 2020), Caid (28 Dec, 2020), Palimpsest Rules Letter (29 Dec, 2020), Avacal (30 Dec, 2020), East (30 Dec, 2020), Outlands (30 Dec, 2020), Ansteorra (31 Dec, 2020), Caid (31 Dec, 2020), Drachenwald (31 Dec, 2020), Northshield (31 Dec, 2020), Palimpsest Rules Letter (31 Dec, 2020), Laurel LoPaD (07 Feb, 2021) (redraws). **All commentary, responses, and rebuttals should have been entered into OSCAR by Sunday, February 28, 2021.**

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,

Emma de Fetherstan
Laurel Queen of Arms