

Laurel Letter of Pends and Discussion (LoPaD): April 21, 2003

Society for Creative Anachronism
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For the January 2003 meetings, printed April 21, 2003

To all the College of Arms and all others who may read this missive, from François Laurel, Zenobia Wreath, and Mari Pelican, greetings.

This letter contains the issues raised in the January 2003 LoAR for CoA discussion. The text in this letter is copied verbatim from that LoAR; it is provided here for convenience. As with an April LoI, these matters are currently scheduled for the Laurel meetings in August 2003. Original commentary must be in the College's hands no later than June 30, 2003. Responses and rebuttals to commentary must be in the College's hands no later than July 31, 2003.

Glossary of Terms Changes for Review

But before we get started with the LoPaD proper... This mailing includes proposed changes to the Glossary. Please have your comments in for consideration at the August 2003 decision meetings. They are not being done as a numbered item in the LoPaD, so just group those comments separately.

1. Beyond the Encyclopedia. Issue.

The College of Arms protects the names of people outside of the Society for two reasons: to limit sanctioned presumption and to limit names that "destroys any medieval ambience" when used. There have been many period style names that have been returned because they were also used by someone "in period" or since because they conflicted with a name with an entry in an encyclopedia. Few of these conflicting names would be considered significant by the average member of our Society.

The Administrative Handbook section concerning protection of names begins "Names of Significant Personages Outside the Society - Contemporary or historical personages will generally be considered significant if they appear in standard references such as an encyclopedia." The effect of using the encyclopedia as an indicator of the level of the person's importance is that we give the decision of who is significant to the encyclopedia's editor. To understand the implications of giving the decision to the editors of the encyclopedia, we must review the reasons we protect the names of people outside of the Society.

One of the tenets of our recreation is that we strive to be someone who could have lived during our period of study. There is no formal enforcement of this premise; rather, we let social pressure encourage compliance. The acceptance and registration of a name by the College of Arms is an official recognition of the name. If someone submits the wonderfully period name "Elizabeth Tudor", we do not wish to be in the position of giving her official permission to "be" Elizabeth I, Queen of England.

We protect names and limit registration of names that would intrude upon our recreation by recognition or association with a famous person. Although a good period name, most people's first thoughts are distinctly modern when they hear the name *Michael Jackson*. Traditionally the College has worked to protect such intrusion by limits on the names we accept for registration.

An entry in a general-purpose encyclopedia is the defined method for determining whether a name is significant enough to protect. This method has the advantage of accessibility so that most people can easily check for real-world conflicts before submitting a name. We can be assured the editors will include virtually everyone that we would consider significant. But the editors have a broader educational purpose that includes a wider scope than ours. This larger scope causes any general encyclopedia to include many entries for people that few in our society would recognize or consider significant.

Until recently, an editor was forced to balance the importance of a person with the cost associated with publication when considering including an entry. One effect of this balance is evidenced in the length of each entry. Typically, the more significant a person the larger the entry. The advent and proliferation of online and electronic publication has allowed the editors to widen the scope of entries with little or no additional costs. The reduced cost improves and broadens the usefulness of the encyclopedia as a general educational tool but does reduce its usefulness for our purpose.

In this letter you will find a name registered even though there is a conflicting encyclopedia entry. From the informal polling I have conducted, the name does not have the instant recognition that would be presumptuous or provoke thoughts outside the recreation to the average person.

In order to bring the decision back within the College of Arms and to realign with our scope of protection, we are refining the process by which we decide which names to protect. Beginning with this letter, each name will be evaluated individually. The initial factor will continue to be an entry in a general-purpose encyclopedia. However, now we consider the prominence of this person (including when they lived and the length and contents of their encyclopedia entry) when determining whether they are important enough to protect.

In the future, we would ask that commenters state whether or not they feel a person is important enough to protect when citing a potential conflict in the form of a person listed in an encyclopedia. Ideally this statement would be provided early enough to allow other CoA commenters time to provide input to Laurel as comments on comments. Until a metric can be developed for weighing the importance of an individual we will give the most weight to the existence of an entry in an printed encyclopedia.

I would appreciate your ideas for a consistent and repeatable method for determining if a person is significantly well known or significantly important historically to protect. Comments should be sent to the entire College of Arms. Please have your primary commentary complete by June and your responses to the primary commentary complete by July.

(Daniel, Laurel Clerk, reminds everyone that commentary on a LoPaD item should be included under the LoPaD header verbatim, in this case "Beyond the Encyclopedia", to keep the automated collation process from coughing up a hairball.)

2. Judith of Massan. Device. Azure semy of mullets of eight points Or, a unicorn rampant contourny argent.

The tincture of the unicorn was not specified in the Letter of Intent. This must thus be pended for further conflict research.

(This submission was item number 25 on Atlantia's LoI that was referred to as the "August 30" LoI, redated to September 30, 2002.)

3. Lachlan McBean. Device. Argent, a bird's leg erased bendwise sinister sable sustaining a thistle bendwise proper.

The Letter of Intent blazoned the bird's leg as *proper* but it is tinctured (and blazoned on the form) as sable. This therefore must be pended for further conflict research.

Note that a generic *bird* does not have a defined proper tincture.

(This submission was item number 17 on Atenveldt's LoI of September 15, 2002.)

4. RfS X.4.j. Issue.

The Cover Letter has a proposed change to RfS X.4.j, Changes to Charges on Charges, in a subsection of "**From Laurel: Rules Change Proposal**". The proposed rewording:

X.4.j. Changes to Charges on Charges - Changes to a group of charges placed entirely on other charges may create one clear difference.

No more than one clear difference can be obtained from changes to the same group of charges on other charges.

Significantly changing the type, number, tincture, or posture of the whole group of charges entirely placed on other charges is one clear difference. *Sable, on a chevron argent an escallop vert* is one clear difference from *Sable, on a chevron argent an escallop gules*, because the tincture of the whole group has significantly changed. *Gules, on a saltire Or four mullets gules* is not a clear difference from *Gules, on a saltire Or five mullets gules*, because the change in number from four to five is not significant by RfS X.4.f. *Vert, on a chief argent three cinquefoils vert* is not a clear difference from *Vert, on a chief argent a cinquefoil vert between two mullets gules*, because no change has been made which affects the whole group of charges on charges.

A change of arrangement of a group of charges entirely placed on other charges is one clear difference, provided that the change is not caused by other changes to the design.

The Cover Letter section has a philosophical introduction and rationale that may affect your opinions. Please see the Cover Letter for the full discussion. Please comment on it under the heading of "RfS X.4.j", as shown in this item (not "X.4.j" or other spellings).

5. Róis Bheag inghean Chiaráin. Badge. (Fieldless) A rapier argent surmounted by a rose vert.

The mini-emblazon was pasted in the LoI upside-down, leading most commenters to deduce that the rapier was inverted. One commenter did indicate that she checked for conflict both as the rapier was blazoned (in its default posture) and as in the emblazon (inverted). However, one commenter is not enough. We encourage the College to follow Sommelier's example and explain explicitly if they have checked for conflict on an ambiguous piece of armory under more than one blazon, so that we can avoid pending the armory if possible.

(This submission was item 46 on Atlantia's LoI that was referred to as the "August 30" LoI, redated to September 30, 2002.)

6. Yoshitomi Toshio. Device. Sable, on a fess cotised argent three mascles sable all within a bordure argent.

The cotises were not blazoned in the Letter of Intent. A number of commenters felt that they were unsure about the tincture of the cotises since they were not in the blazon. Only one commenter indicated that conflict was checked in the correct tinctures. Therefore, this must be pended for further conflict research.

(This submission was item 58 on Atlantia's LoI that was referred to as the "August 30" LoI, redated to September 30, 2002.)

Pray know that I remain

In service

François la Flamme
Laurel Principal King of Arms