Complexity in late period English heraldry

A statistical analysis of Insignia Anglica
Insignia Anglica

• Roll of arms created circa 1550
  • Exact date unclear
  • It gives the arms of King Henry VIII and all six wives which would suggest between 1543 and 1547
  • However, also includes the title of *Marquyss de Wynchester* awarded to William Paulet in 1551 (although this was added underneath his original title of *Conte de Wiltshire* so may be a later addendum)

• Available online in the collection of Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
  https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/bsb00001647/images/
Tudor Heraldry

• Well-known for a significant increase in complexity of arms

• Often ascribed to the development of “paper heraldry” since improvements to military technology meant heraldry was no longer required to be clearly comprehensible on the battlefield

• Registered SCA arms in Tudor style:
  • Winifride Barnes (April 2018, Northshield)
  • Juliana de Luna (July 2010, An Tir)
Aims of Analysis

• To assist SCA heralds to design devices, both simple and complex, in an authentic late period English style
• Assist with Individually Attested Pattern (IAP) documentation for complex designs that are consistent with Tudor heraldic style
• To determine where late period English heraldic style is inconsistent with SCA Core Style rules and may provide opportunities for other IAP documentation.
Data Collection

• Insignia Anglica contains 1,027 achievements of arms
  • Many marshalled with up to 13 “quarters”
• Analysis focuses on design of individual unmarshalled devices
• Data collection treats each quarter as an individual device
  • Repeated quarters in the same device ignored
  • e.g. from the arms of Viscount Hereford, Quarters 1 & 4 Argent, a fess and in chief three roundels gules, and Quarters 2 & 3 Vairy Or and gules, I recorded quarters 1 and 2 and ignore 3 and 4
Data used for analysis

• Original database of 1,687 devices
  • Blazoned by me in SCA style
• For the analysis, I removed:
  • 348 duplicate devices, mostly devices marshalled by multiple families
  • 15 arms of foreign monarchs
• Final database of 1,324 devices
Topics of interest

• Defining high complexity
• Examples of super complex heraldry
• Key points of data analysis
• “Do more” and “Do less” for authentic complex Tudor heraldry
High Complexity

- 198 devices with complexity 8 or more assigned to the “High Complexity” category
Examples of super complex heraldry

• Argent, a chevron wavy azure between three Moors’ heads couped at the breast proper vested Or, on a chief compony argent and gules a crescent Or between two roundels sable each charged with a talbotcourant Or

• Or, a cross counterermine between four popinjays regardant proper, on a chief azure a serpent erect argent crowned swallowing a naked baby between two roses Or
Examples of super complex heraldry (2)

• Gules, a saltire countercompony ermine and Or between a key, a lion's jambe, a martlet and a dolphin naiant embowed argent, on a chief Or a roundel sable charged with a talbot statant argent between a squirrel sejant and a bull's head couped sable

• Argent, a cross countercompony Or and gules between a water bouget, an eagle, a swan and an escallop sable, and on a chief azure a lion passant guardant Or
Examples of super complex heraldry (3)

- Argent, on a saltire between four martlets sable, a cinquefoil between four spear heads argent and on a chief gules a roundel Or charged with a rose gules between two roundels each charged with a fleur-de-lys gules

- Sable, on a fess argent three popinjays proper and on a chief argent, three roundels sable charged with a martlet, a rose slipped and leaved and a fret Or
Examples of super complex heraldry (4)

• Gules, a chevron countercompony argent and sable between three roundels argent each charged with a cinquefoil purpure and on a chief argent a bird between two columbines slipped and leaved proper

• Argent, on a saltire sable between four lion's heads erased gules, a martlet between four roundels Or and on a chief azure an anchor Or between two pallets argent
Examples of super complex heraldry (5)

- Paly gules and vert, on a chevron argent a hound's head erased between two cinquefoils sable and on a chief Or a roundel sable charged with a demi-lion argent between two crescents sable platy
Tinctures
80% of fields are Plain - this chart looks at the other 20%

- Plain: 87.9%
- Barry: 5.5%
- Quarterly: 5.0%
- Per pale: 3.0%
- Paly: 1.2%
- Bendy: 1.1%
- Checky: 0.8%
- Lozengy: 0.5%
- Party of six: 0.5%
- Per chevron: 0.5%
- Combination: 0.4%
- Per fess: 0.3%
- Per bend sinister: 0.1%
- Per saltire: 0.2%
- Gyronny: 0.3%

All: 80.0%
High complexity: 15.0%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across all devices</th>
<th>High complexity only</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncharged ordinary and secondary</td>
<td>Sole charged ordinary, u/c secondary &amp; charged p’ph’l</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group uncharged primary alone</td>
<td>Sole u/c ordinary, u/c secondary and charged p’ph’l</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole charged primary and secondary</td>
<td>Sole charged ordinary and u/c secondary</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole uncharged primary alone</td>
<td>Sole charged ordinary and charged peripheral</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole uncharged ordinary alone</td>
<td>Sole charged ordinary, u/c secondary and u/c p’ph’l</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole charged ordinary alone</td>
<td>Sole charged ordinary and charged secondary</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field primary, charged peripheral</td>
<td>Group uncharged primary and charged peripheral</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Popular primary charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Across all devices</th>
<th>High complexity only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chevron</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Chevron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fess</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Fess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bend</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Bend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltire</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Saltire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fret</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Roundel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinaries</strong></td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ordinaries</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Popular secondary charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across all devices</th>
<th>High complexity only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordure</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads - various</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds - various</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripherals</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Peripherals percentage higher than it appears here because most high complexity devices have a peripheral and a secondary charge group.
- Birds includes martlets, eagles, birds, cocks, swans, owls, popinjays, ravens, pheasants, storks, coughs, peacocks, shovellers, and ducks.
- Heads includes lions, griffins, boar, spear, goat, stag, dog, eagle, wolf, bull, unicorn, raven, dragon, swan, fish, wyvern, humans and deer.
## Popular tertiary charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across all devices</th>
<th>High complexity only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roundel</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds - various</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foils and flowers</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads - various</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escallop</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- High complexity devices account for ~40% of devices with tertiary charge groups
- Mixed tertiaries have been included once for each charge type
- Bird tertiaries also include pelicans, moorcocks and robins
- Head tertiaries also include peacocks and rams
- Foils and flowers includes cinquefoils, roses, trefoils, columbines, lilies, marigolds, pansies and pinks
Quaternary Charges

• Found on 20 devices (obviously high complexity ones)
• 40% are on roundels on chiefs
• 25% are on roundels on ordinaries
• 20% are quaternary roundels on crosses/saltires on ordinaries/chiefs
• Remaining 15% have a simple shape as quaternary or as charged tertiary (mullet/lozenge/roundel)
• Recognisability still important
High Complexity Tudor Heraldry - More

• Use of the five primary tinctures
• Plain fields
• Build up complexity with an ordinary, secondaries and a peripheral (usually a chief)
• Secondaries and tertiaries can be mixed or consistent
• Quaternaries on roundels on chiefs
High Complexity Tudor Heraldry – Less

- Divided fields
- Complex lines on ordinaries and fields
- Use of vert outside flowers or popinjays
- Small charges with indistinct shapes
- Maintained charges – only 2 in the data
  - Secondary swans maintaining crosses fitchy
  - Tertiary cloud-arms sustaining a horseshoe between them
At the end

• Questions?
• Suggestions?