

Laurel Letter of Pends and Discussion (LoPaD): March 31, 2004

Society for Creative Anachronism
College of Arms
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For the January 2004 meetings, printed March 31, 2004

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 2004 LoAR for CoA discussion. The text in this letter is copied verbatim from that LoAR; it is provided here for convenience. As with a March LoI, these matters are currently scheduled for the Laurel meetings in JULY 2004. **Original commentary must be in the College's hands no later than May 31, 2003. Responses and rebuttals to commentary must be in the College's hands no later than June 30, 2003.**

1. Jens Sveinsson. Device. Argent, a merman proper crined sable maintaining in his sinister hand a torch sable enflamed azure and on a bordure engrailed vert three escallops argent.

The merman was blazoned as *proper crined sable*. A proper merman has light pinkish Caucasian skin, as noted in the Glossary of Terms table of "Conventional 'Proper' Colorings" under "mermaid". However, the merman in this submission is drawn with dark brown skin (and long black hair and a small black Van Dyke beard).

The LoI stated that "Further correspondence with the submitter has determined that he *would really prefer* the merman not to be a typical 'Caucasian' merman, but rather *brown-skinned* (like an Islander, East Indian or Native American, population groups that Western Europeans were aware)." The LoI also discussed whether or not a merman proper (with Caucasian skin) had adequate contrast with an argent field. The blazon and discussions on the LoI caused the commenting College to believe that the merman in this submission had light pinkish Caucasian skin, not dark brown skin. This submission has been pended for further research and commentary under the correct tinctures.

The Cover Letter for the December 2002 LoAR discussed humans with dark brown skin found in period heraldry, which is to say, Moors and some Saracens (which do not represent the "Islander, East Indian, or Native American" ethnic groups mentioned in the Letter of Intent). This merman does not have the short curly hair and clean shaven features of the heraldic Moor, so he cannot be blazoned as a Moorish merman. He does not have the headgear (turban, torse, or crown) of the heraldic Saracen, so he cannot be blazoned as a Saracenic merman. This Cover Letter also mentions the fact that the default Saracen proper is Caucasian, and while we do know that there were occasional proper dark-brown-skinned Saracens found in period heraldry, the SCA has not yet decided how to blazon them.

When discussing this pended submission, please address the following issues:

- Is a brown-skinned merman with long black hair and a small black beard registerable?
- If such a merman is registerable, how should it be blazoned?

We are not ruling at this time on the issue of whether a Caucasian merman may be registered on an argent field, as that issue is not applicable to this submission.

Pray know that I remain

In service

François la Flamme
Laurel Principal King of Arms