

Armory in the Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory

Note: This covers the basics of armory in the Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory (the new name for the Rules for Submissions). If you need more details, see section A of the Standards for the exact rule.

Introduction

The Standards for Evaluation are available at: <http://heraldry.sca.org/laurel/regs.html>

They are built around four important ideas:

- These are the standards that Laurel, Wreath, and Pelican use to evaluate submissions, not a how-to on choosing or documenting names and armory or a how-to on the submissions process
- Most people interact with the Standards when they are working on a specific submission
- Most people want a simple set of standards, but not all period armory fits into a simple standard
- Appendices are awesome

The Standards are not a how-to on creating medieval armory, but there are resources for that:

- Armory articles on the Laurel website: http://heraldry.sca.org/laurel/armory_articles.html
Many useful articles about SCA heraldry practices and medieval heraldry
- The Academy of St. Gabriel: <http://www.s-gabriel.org/armory/>

Some Big Categories

There are three main kinds of armory in terms of the standards:

- Devices (primary armory) and fielded badges
- Fieldless badges (have a couple special rules)
- Augmentations of honor (have a couple special rules not covered in this handout)

The Standards for Evaluation break the standards down into several things:

- Content, the parts of armory
- Style, how armory can be put together (two options for this)
- Conflict, being too close to other armory (and you can get permission for)
- Presumption and Offence, making claims that nobody gets to make or are offensive

Several appendices exist to help apply these rules:

- **Appendix F:** Information on determining if an element needs to be documented
- **Appendix G:** A list of elements that are a step from period practice
- **Appendix H:** Information on registerable low-contrast complex lines of division
- **Appendix I:** A description of Charge Group Theory
- **Appendix J:** Information on documented and Forbidden Arrangements of Charge Groups
- **Appendix K:** A list of standard arrangements for charge groups of various numbers
- **Appendix L:** A partial list of postures and orientations (for comparable postures)
- **Appendix M:** Some commonly used precedent about comparability of some charges

What We Register

- We register the picture (emblazon) not the words (blazon), **however** ...
- It must be blazonable (describable in heraldic terms) and recognizable (without the words)

Style

Core Style Rules

In general, the Core Style matches most people's general expectations of what "armory" is - close to the "core" of armory, the Anglo-Norman style. The Core Style requires armory to:

- Use documented elements (charges, lines of division, tinctures, etc.)
 - This includes things from period armory, constructed like period charges, allowed by the grandfather clause, standard heraldic tinctures and furs, and more
- Have at most one step from period practice
- Be drawn in a period depiction and in a heraldic style so that all parts are identifiable
- Have good contrast:
 - A color plus a metal; a color plus a neutral (half and half); a metal plus a neutral
 - Things divided into two or four parts must have *some* contrast; more parts must have good contrast
 - Charges must have good contrast with the field or charge they are on
- Be drawn so that it is clear what the groups of charges are
- Be simple in overall design in period ways:
 - No more than two types of charges per charge group
 - Don't mix two types of ordinaries or mix ordinaries with other types of charges
 - All charges in a charge group must be in a unified posture/orientation
 - Charge groups arranged in period style
 - A complexity count of eight or less (number of charge types plus number of tinctures)
- But not *too* simple – cannot have *only* an undivided plain field or *only* letters or abstract symbols
- Not too far from period style
 - Not: excessively pictorial (like a picture of an everyday scene), excessively naturalistic, obtrusively modern, excessively counterchanged, cannot be adequately described in blazon terms
- There are a few special rules:
 - All elements in fieldless armory must be touching
 - Only central ordinaries and simple geometric charges may be voided or fimbriated

Individually Attested Patterns

Individually Attested Patterns are for people who want to register armory that closely follows a period style that is outside the Core Style Rules. In the Standards for Evaluation, this includes armory from outside of Western Europe. The entire design must match the armorial tradition of a single time and place, and all parts of the design need to be documented.

Conflict

Armorial conflict is based on the medieval idea of cadency – the ways that people in period modified their arms to show their relationships with their close relatives.

- All reasonable valid blazons for a piece of armory must be considered; “you cannot blazon your way out of a conflict”
- Changes that can be described as a single change must be treated that way
- To count as a change for conflict purposes, a change must generally affect half the charge group, and there are special cases in which changes to part of a charge group are considered "half"
- Sometimes designs that are technically clear by the rules for counting difference are still too visually similar and conflict
- Some changes to primary charge groups are substantial enough to clear a conflict on their own because they were not (or rarely) used for cadency. Not all changes are “substantial”, and they must apply to the **entire primary charge group**:
 - Adding or removing the primary charge group
 - Substantially changing the type of **all** charges
 - Substantially changing the number of charges (1, 2, 3, 4+)
 - Substantially changing the arrangement (limited cases)
 - Substantially changing the posture or orientation (limited cases)
- Field-primary armory (no primary charge) has some special rules for clearing conflict
- You may clear conflict by creating two changes equivalent to a cadency step, a type of change seen between related arms. These changes are called distinct changes (DCs).
 - Change the field that it affects half the field - a fieldless badge automatically gets this
 - Add or remove a charge group
 - Change the tincture of half of a charge group
 - Change the type of charges of half of a charge group
 - Change the number of charges within a charge group: 1,2,3,4,5,6+ and semy
 - Change the arrangement of a charge group or its location on the field (in canton, in base)
 - Change the posture or orientation of half of a charge group

Presumption and Offense

- Armory may not use a charge that is restricted (that is, no one can register it)
- Armory may only use a charge that is reserved if the submitter documents the right to use it
- Armory may not claim identity or relationship with non-SCA individuals who we consider important enough to protect; same standards as for conflict
- The combination of a name and armory may rarely create an inappropriate claim even if the armory itself is not important enough to protect
- Armory may not make a claim to a combination or inheritance of arms, known as marshalled arms, when using per pale or quarterly field divisions
- Armory must not be offensive to a modern audience; the standards are quite high