

# Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory: an Overview

Note: This covers the basics of names and armory in the Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory (the new name for the Rules for Submissions). If you need more details, see 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 or names fit into that kind of simple standard
- Appendices are awesome

For both names and for armory, the Standards for Evaluation are broken into several sections:

- Content, the parts that make up names or armory
- Style, how names and armory can be put together (two options for armory)
- Conflict, being too close to other names or armory (and you can get permission for)
- Presumption, making claims that nobody gets to make (and you can't get permission for)
- Offence, being are offensive to the general public or people in the SCA in general

## Names

Names in the SCA can be broadly divided into two big categories:

- personal names, which are for a single human being as a person
- non-personal names, which are "everything else" and come in four kinds: branch names, household names, awards/orders, and herald's titles

## Personal Names Content and Style

A personal name must be made up of two "name phrases" – a given name and some kind of byname. Some names consist of multiple words, like atte Wode, which is why we use "name phrase". A name phrase must be generally consistent with a single time and place, which means all in one language context. That generally means it is one or more of:

- a complete name phrase that is attested in period
- a complete name phrase constructed from attested pieces
- a translation into modern English of an attested or constructed period name phrase
- follows a pattern of borrowing literary or religious names
- a name phrase in the submitter's legal name
- a currently registered branch name
- eligible for the grandfather clause

The entire name as a whole must fit our standards for overall construction, which means it does all of several things:

- each name phrase matches a period pattern for its grammar and location in the name
- all elements are from in a single regional naming group and within 500 years  
**OR** all elements are from two compatible regional naming groups and within 300 years
- the name is not "obtrusively modern" – unavoidably dragging us back to the modern world

Regional naming groups are new in these standards – they simplify the many precedents on which languages can be mixed in a name, and are defined in Appendix C. For example, the Iberian naming group includes Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Basque, and Visigothic, and it is compatible with Arabic, French, and Italian naming groups.

## **Personal Names Conflict**

Personal names may not:

- Be too similar in sound or appearance: in general, differences to any two syllables or a substantial difference to one syllable in a word that is not an article or preposition is sufficient
- Claim unmistakably to be the parent, child, or spouse of a protected person

Either of these can be allowed with written signed permission to conflict with the owner, as long as they're not identical.

## **Personal Names Presumption and Offense**

Personal names may not (and permission cannot be given for):

- Claim a rank that we protect which the submitter does not possess permanently
- Make an unmistakable claim to be a member of an important family
- Make other claims to rank
- Make a claim to have superhuman or magical powers or imply divine origin
- Claim identity or a relationship with non-SCA individuals who we consider important enough to protect; same standards as for conflict
- Be offensive to a modern audience; the standards are quite high

## **Non-personal Names Content and Style**

A non-personal name must be made up of two parts: designators and substantive elements.

The designator says what kind of name it is and must match it in type. Most non-personal names have standard designators (like Barony, Order, Pursuivant), but some need to be documented. The substantive element says which one it is. It must be consistent with a single time and place, which means all in one language context. This generally means that it is one (or more) of:

- a complete substantive element attested in period
- a complete substantive element from attested pieces

- a translation into modern English of an attested or constructed period name phrase
- follows a pattern of borrowing literary or religious names
- a name phrase in the submitter's legal name
- contains a currently registered branch name
- eligible for the grandfather clause (branches get some special allowances)

A non-personal name must as a whole be consistent with a single time and place that names of that type were used. Non-personal names may not be "obtrusively modern" – unavoidably drag us back to the modern world.

## Non-Personal Names Conflict

- The substantive elements must not be too similar in sound or appearance: in general, differences to two syllables or substantial differences to one syllable in a word that is not an article, a preposition, or a conjunction is sufficient
- It must not unmistakably claim to belong to or be affiliated with any name we protect
- Either of these can be allowed with written signed permission to conflict with the owner (as long as they're not identical). A change to the designator is sufficient in this case, except:
  - Two branch names that only differ by designator
  - Award names, order names, and heraldic titles that only differ by designator

## Non-Personal Names Presumption and Offense

Non-personal names may not:

- Claim a rank that we protect which the submitter does not possess permanently
- Use the names of peerage orders or important mundane knightly orders in certain ways
- Use elements that would be presumptuous for individuals
- Make a claim to have superhuman or magical powers or imply divine origin  
Note: an entity may be named for a saint or deity without making such a claim
- Claim identity or be affiliated with non-SCA individuals who we consider important enough to protect; same standards as for conflict
- Be offensive to a modern audience; the standards are quite high

## Several Resources and Appendices exist to help apply the Name rules:

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

- Name articles on the Laurel website: <http://heraldry.sca.org/laurel/names.html>  
Check here first! Articles here are "no photocopy".
- The Academy of St. Gabriel: <http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/>  
Some items here are duplicated on the Laurel website. Articles here are **not** "no photocopy".
- The Cover Letter for the April 2009 LoAR, about summarizing name documentation:  
<http://heraldry.sca.org/loar/2004/09/04-09cl.html>

- **Appendix A:** Information on name style for many different cultures
- **Appendix B:** Background information on the types of bynames
- **Appendix C:** The languages in each Regional Group and allowed Regional Group combinations
- **Appendix D:** Information on handling non-Latin characters
- **Appendix E:** Information on designators for non-personal names

## Armory

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)

It's important to note up front that:

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

## Armory 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.

### Armory Conflict

Armoial 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

## Armory 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

## Several Resources and Appendices exist to help apply the Armory rules:

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](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/>
- **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

## In closing ...

The new Standards can appear overwhelming at first, but they're built to help newer heralds find the information they need and to be able to understand that information when they find it. The Appendices help Laurel keep the rules in sync with our current knowledge about names and armory.

If you have questions about the new Standards, ask! Your kingdom's heraldry list or SCAHRLDS are good places to ask, so that many people can help and learn. If you're not comfortable asking publicly, email directly to Palimpsest or Laurel also works. We're heralds and we're here to help. ;)