

A GLOSSARY OF HERALDIC TERMS

- Achievement:** a complete display of armorial bearings, including the shield with arms, the crest displayed on the helm, the supporters which flank and hold the shield (rarely shown on brasses), the mantling, and the motto, if any.
- Addorsed:** two animals, birds, etc., back to back.
- Annulet:** a ring or circle with an open center; as a mark of cadency, it indicates a fifth son.
- Argent:** the heraldic color silver.
- Armed:** descriptive of claws, horns, talons, etc.
- Armorial bearings:** a heraldic achievement.
- Arms:** applies to the shield and its charges.
- Azure:** the heraldic color blue.
- Bar:** one of the ordinaries: a horizontal band narrower than a fess; usually used when two or three are charged on a field.
- Barbed:** descriptive of leaves between petals, or of the head of an arrow or spear.
- Barry:** covered with equally spaced horizontal bars.
- Bar sinister:** a diagonal bar running from the top right to the lower left; the mark of bastardy. The word "sinister" means left.
- Bar-wise:** horizontally.
- Base:** the bottom third of a shield.
- Basilisk:** mythical monster resembling a wyvern with a dragon's head at the end of its tail.
- Bend:** one of the ordinaries: a broad diagonal band from the dexter chief to the sinister base of the shield.
- Bendlet:** a narrow band (see above).
- Bendy:** covered with equally spaced bends.
- Bezant:** a gold roundel.
- Billet:** a small rectangular figure placed vertically. A field strewn with billets is billety.
- Blazon:** the technical description of armorial bearings.
- Bordure:** a narrow border around the edge of a shield.
- Bottony:** three circular knobs on the limb end of a cross.
- Cabossed (caboshed):** an animal's or bird's head without neck, facing the viewer.
- Cadency marks:** a means of distinguishing between brothers or between descendents of various brothers. The most often encountered are the label, crescent, mullet, martlet, and annulet.
- Canting arms:** armorial devices or compositions that allude in a punning way to the bearer's arms (e.g., a lion for Leon).
- Canton:** a small square, almost always in the dexter chief (to the viewer the upper left corner).
- Charge:** any design placed or superimposed on a field of a coat of arms.
- Chequy:** a pattern of squares in alternating colors, like a checkerboard.
- Chevron:** one of the ordinaries: a broad inverted "V" across the shield.
- Chief:** the upper third of the field of a shield.
- Cinquefoil:** a five-petaled leaf or flower.
- Conjoined:** joined together.
- Cotised:** a narrow band on each side of a charge such as a bar or bend.
- Couchant:** of an animal (usually a lion or dog): lying on its stomach, forelegs stretched out, hind legs curled beneath, and head erect.
- Counter-change:** a reversal of the tinctures.
- Counter-compony:** two adjacent rows, checkerboard pattern.
- Couped:** cut off with a straight edge (as of a head).
- Courant:** running.
- Crescent:** a half moon pointing upwards; as a mark of cadency, the sign of a second son.
- Crest:** an identifying device on top of a helm.
- Crosses:** one of the ordinaries: a composite of a pale and a fess.
a) Calvary cross: a long cross placed on steps (on a blazon the number of steps or degrees must be stated).

- b) Cross-crosslet: a cross with each of its limbs crossed.
- c) Cross flory: a cross, the ends of which are fleur-de-lis.
- d) Cross moline: a cross with limbs splayed at the ends.
- e) Cross paty: splayed cross with straight ends.
- f) tau cross: a cross that has no upper limb with others slightly splayed.

Crusily: spattered with cross-crosslets.

Dancetty: continuous line of broad zigzags.

Dexter: the right side. When applied to a shield, it refers to that portion which would be to the right for a person carrying it. Thus, it is that portion to the viewer's left.

Diaper: a pattern or design that covers otherwise plain areas of the field or charges.

Differencing: describing various methods of altering a coat of arms to distinguish it from similar arms.

Embattled: a battlemented line (also termed crenellated).

Engrailed: a line of semi-circles, points outwards.

Ensign: a square flag.

En soleil: displayed over the rays of a sun.

Erased: cut off raggedly; the jagged ends of a neck, usually of an animal or bird.

Erect: in a vertical or upright position.

Ermine: one of the heraldic furs: white, powdered with black ermine tails.

Escallop: seashell of a scallop pattern.

Escutcheon: a small shield.

Estoille: a five-pointed star with way edges.

Fess: one of the ordinaries: a broad horizontal band across the middle of the field.

Fess point: the point in the center of the shield.

Field: the basic surface of the shield on which are placed the charges. When blazoning, the field is always stated first.

Fitchy: pointed end to the lower limb of a cross.

Fleur-de-lis: the cadency mark of a sixth son.

Fleury: spattered with fleurs-de-lis.

Flory: fleurs-de-lis at the limb ends of a cross.

Foliated: having leaves.

Fret: a mascle interlaced by a bendlet dexter and a bendlet sinister, i.e., a voided diamond with diagonal bands running through it.

Fretty: a field covered by interlaced bendlets and bendlets sinister.

Fusil: an elongated lozenge; a pattern of horizontal fusils is fusilly.

Garb: a wheat sheaf.

Gorget: a collar, chain, etc. round the neck of an animal or bird.

Griffin: a mythical monster: eagle in front, lion behind. The female griffin has wings, the male has none.

Guardant: looking toward the viewer.

Gules: the heraldic color red.

Gyron: a triangular sector of the shield formed by half a bend line and half a fess line meeting in the middle of the field.

Gyronny: the field is divided into eight segments by lines in pale, fess, bend, and bend sinister.

Hauriant: position of a fish in vertical position, head upward.

Helm (helmet): a traditional part of a heraldic achievement.

Impaled: dividing the field vertically into two halves. On a shield, the husband's arms are displayed to the viewer's left, the wife's to the right.

In bend: diagonally.

Indented: continuous line of narrow zigzags.

Inescutcheon: a shield placed as a charge on another shield.

In fess: horizontally, across the center of the field.

In orle: following along the inside edge of a shield.

In pale: centrally, one above the other.

Invected: a line of semi-circles, points inward.

Jessant: issuing from.

Label: horizontal band at the top across other charges, usually with three pendant ribbons. It has been used as a mark of difference. As a cadency mark, it is the sign of an eldest son.

Langued: descriptive of the tongue of an animal or bird.

Lozenge: a diamond-shaped figure.

Lozengy: a field covered with or divided into lozenges.

Luce (lucy): a pike fish.

Mantling: originally a cloth cap worn from the back of the helmet to protect the metal from the sun. It is shown on an achievement as drapery hanging from the helm, falling away on either side of the shield of arms.

Marshalling: combining of more than one coat of arms.

Martlet: a mythical bird without legs, like a martin or swallow. As a mark of cadency, it signifies a fourth son.

Mascle: a lozenge with an open or voided center.

Maunch: a lady's sleeve with a long pendant lappet or cuff.

Membered: descriptive of a bird's legs.

Mullet (molet): a five-pointed star with straight rays. As a mark of cadency, it signifies a third son. The word is derived from Moulette and original meant the rowel of a spur.

Naiant: descriptive of a fish swimming.

Nebuly: curved or wavy lines.

Nimbus: a halo.

Octofoil: a double quatrefoil. A cadency mark for the ninth son.

Ogress: a black roundel.

Or: the heraldic color gold.

Ordinaries: the ten simplest and oldest charges (e.g., chief, fess, pale, bend, chevron, pile, cross, saltire, pall, bar).

Orle: a bordure inside the shield that does not reach the edges.

Pale: one of the ordinaries; a perpendicular band down the middle of the field.

Pall: one of the ordinaries; a T-shaped figure.

Pallet: covered with pales or pallets.

Party: divided, as in party per fess.

Passant: animal in walking position, three paws on the ground, right forepaw raised, head forward, tail curved over the back.

Paty: splayed cross with straight limb ends (also formy)

Pellet: a black roundel.

Per: in the direction of.

Per bend: the field is divided diagonally from top left to bottom right in terms of the viewer.

Per chevron: the field is divided by a chevron.

Per fess: the field is divided horizontally across the center.

Per pale: the shield is divided vertically up the middle.

Per saltire: the shield is divided X-wise.

Pheon: an arrow head with its inner edges engrailed.

Pierced: a charge with a round hole in the center.

Pile: one of the ordinaries: a wedge-shaped figure usually issuing from the top of a shield.

Plate: a silver roundel.

Proper: in natural appearance and color.

Purple: the heraldic color purple.

Quarterly: divided into four or more sections.

Quatrefoil: a four-petaled leaf or flower.

Queue fourche: having a forked tail.

Raguly: a line in the pattern.

Rampant: an animal depicted erect, one paw on the ground, three paws raised, head forward, and tail erect.

Rampant guardant: the rampant position but with head towards the viewer.

Rampant regardant: rampant position but with head looking back over the shoulders.

Roundel: a circular disc. Roundels have been given different names: Bezant, a gold roundel; plate, silver; torteau, red; pomey, green; pellet, black; golpe, purple.

Sable: the heraldic color black.

Salient: position of an animal ready to leap with both hind paws on the ground.

Saltire: one of the ordinaries: two crossed diagonal arms, like the letter X.

Scallop: see escallop.

Seeded: descriptive of seed vessels of a flower.

Segreant: descriptive term for a rampant griffin.

Semée (also semy or powdered): splattered or strewn with an unspecified number of charges.

Sinister: the left side, but on the right to the observer since it refers to the point of view of the person carrying the shield.

Sixfoil: a flower-like charge with six petals.

Slipped: torn off but with its stalk.

Statant: an animal standing, all feet on the ground.

Sun: usually shown with long, wedge-shaped rays that are alternately straight and wavy, and with a human face. Typically it is blazoned "a sun in his splendor."

Talbot: a hunting dog with hanging ears.

Tau: a splayed cross without an upper limb.

Tincture: term referring to colors, metals, and fur in a blazon.

Torteau: a red roundel.

Trefoil: a three-petaled flowerlike figure.

Trippant: descriptive of a stag passant.

Tun: a barrel, frequently used in canting or punning arms for a name ending in "-ton."

Undy: wavy.

Vair: one of the heraldic furs, meant to depict a squirrel skin. Conventionally shown by an alternate bell-shaped pattern in blue and white.

Vert: the heraldic color green.

Vested: clothed.

Volant: flying.

Water-bouget: as a charge, a stylized version of two leather water bags supported by a yoke.

Wavy: undulating.

Wreath: a cord of six twists of alternate colors between helm and crest.

Wyvern: similar to a dragon but without rear legs, its hind quarters being those of a serpent and ending in a barbed tail.