

Article

Did John Lydgate Write the Original for the “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry”?

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Abstract: Evidence is presented, from heraldic, linguistic and political–historical evidence, that the original author of the “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry” was not Adam Loutfut ca. 1494 but the earlier English writer John Lydgate, possibly drawing from French heraldic sources. A new transcription from the Harleian MS 6149 is given with a comparison to the text from a copy in Queen’s MS. 161, plus a modern-language “translation” and critical commentary.

Keywords: Heraldry; Scots; Scotland; Lydgate; Loutfut; poem

1. Introduction

The so-called *Scotch*¹ *Copy of a Poem on Heraldry* survives in two manuscript (ms.) versions, one in the British Library’s Harleian collection of heraldic tracts (Harley MS. 6149, folios 151r–155r; see Cart. Harl. MSS., 332) here referred to as H, and one in Queen’s College, Oxford, part of *A Chivalric Compilation, in Scots and Latin*, (MS. 161, s. xv–xvi, folios. 110r–113v), here called Q. The Queen’s ms. (Q) is most likely copied from the Harley ms. (H) as there are obvious transcriptional and other blunders.

A direct comparison was made between the images of H provided by the British Library and the version Q in Oxford (no images available here).

The scribe/compiler, of H at least, was Adam Loutfut, Kintyre Pursuivant, as we know from the colophon dated 1494 at the end of the second text (Figure 1): *Explicit iste liber honorabili armigero Wilelmo Cummyn de Inverellochy alias marchamond heraldo p[er?] Ad[am] Loutfut. Anno dm mo cccc nonamo quarto [...] ?xxix Septembrii*’ (f. 44). The H version was written for (and is part of a book belonging to) Sir William Cummyn of Inverallochy, Marchmond Herald at the time the poem was copied or translated into Scots and later Lord Lyon (from 1512 to 1519, knighted in 1507).² It has appeared in transcript since, as one of the tracts reprinted in Part I of a collection of instructional material (including Sir Humphrey Gilbert’s *Queene Elizabethes Achademy*, written some time after 1562 for the better and reformed education of Elizabethan youth), for the Early English Text Society (Furnivall 1869), and in Byles (1926).

What is less than clear is whether H is:

- (a) an original poem in Scots (there is no suggestion here, and no evidence, that Lotfut was composing an “authorial draft”);
- (b) a copy of such an original poem, now lost to us; or
- (c) a translation into Scots of a pre-existing work in English, French, Latin, etc., or a copy of such.

Loutfut has been generally considered by Scottish heraldists to be the original author, but without any real evidence.³ There are clues as to the country of origin and the authorship in the language of the poem and the heraldry it contains. Even if this poem was originally in Scots, it may still be the earliest treatise on Scots heraldry (as opposed to armorials, which are collections of coats of arms), predating McKenzie of Rosehaugh⁴ by some 200 years. Thus, it has historical interest to heraldists and mediaevalists. But the poem is almost unknown to Scots literature specialists. We should also note that Loutfut (in his



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accompanying manuscript, *The Deidis of Armorie*) is the first known writer to use the terms “Scottis” for his native tongue, not Gavin Dunbar as is often claimed (Houwen 1994).

(Furnivall (1869) and the accompanying heraldic notes by G. E. Adams, a Scottish heraldist of the time, though no expert on mediaeval heraldry (Houwen 1994, p. liii n. 36, p.) accept an English origin translated into Scots. In 1936, R. H. Bowers of Yale presented some thoughts, a comparison of the H and Q texts and a suggested glossary (Bowers 1936) and found little to convince himself that the poem was English in origin. There the matter has rested for almost 75 years.



Figure 1. Loutfut's Explicit from H (f. 126).

2. Methodology

This paper presents a new transcription by the present author (BD) of the H version, noting **Q** variants—as in l. 4: discrepancies [discrepance]—and alongside is a rendition in modern language, also by BD. “Difficult” words are dealt with in footnotes, as an aid to immediate reading. The nature and language of heraldry is (briefly) explained, so that terms and arguments in the text of the poem may be understood. Following the transcription are Modern English summaries/paraphrases of the stanzas, with additional explanation. An analysis of the language and of the state of heraldry and politics at the time (ca. 1500) in Scotland, England and France, is given, plus clues as to authorship from these. The punctuation has been modernized.

The poem was composed some time before H was compiled in 1494, by (says Adams as a preface to the poem in Furnivall) “one of that unwise class of writers on Heraldry, who, not content with assigning to that science its proper place as a handmaid to History (which, by enabling the ownership and dates of various buildings, charters, monuments, &c., to be identified, the matrimonial alliances of noble families to be proved, &c. &c., it certainly is) by claiming for it a fabulous origin, and one so manifestly capable of disproof, brought the whole subject into such contempt and ridicule, that the study of it in later generations was almost entirely neglected”. He includes, rightly, Sylvanus Morgan, who in 1661 ascribed arms to Adam, Eve, Noah, “Duke” Joseph of Egypt and others (See Lower 1845, p. 7 ff.).

However, the copies, at least, were made by a close associate and subordinate of Cummy of Inverallochy, possibly working on Cummy's behalf. He could not be considered a heraldic *ingénue* which makes some of the howlers all the more puzzling if Loutfut were indeed the author. The prolific 15th Century Benedictine poet and translator, John Lydgate, is suggested as the originator in English, but possibly from a French text.

The Figures are mostly redrawn from Elvin's *Dictionary of Heraldry* (Elvin 1889).

3. The Poem

A transcription from **H** (made by BD) is on the left, noting **Q** variants in [square brackets], with a modernized "translation" on the right. The page images of H 151r–155r are reproduced at the end of this article.

First as the erth incresith populus, So convalit variance and vicis, Amang men materis maliciouse, So that few mycht laubour for discrepancies [discrepance], quhill nobilnes in armes, lordly pusancis, and of heraldis þe werschipful ordour, Of quham I think to tret [treit], set weyis sure.	Line 1 Stanza I	First as the earth increases populous, So grow discord and vices, And malicious matters among men, So that few work for distinctions, which nobleness in arms, lordly powers, which heralds, the worshipful order, Of whom I intend to treat, arrange.
In werris of thebes, athenis, and troyis tounis, with otheris mo of gret antiquiteis, Banneris, standeris, gittovnis, pensalis, penonis, borne by princis, nobillis, and commyniteis [commoniteis], In ferre [feir] of were [weir], pes [peace], or ony degreis, I find thai war most merkis, as merchandis Beris toknis [toykinnys] or signetis on ther [þair] handis.	8 II	In wars of Thebes, Athens, and Troy [towns], with others of greater antiquity, Banners, standards, getouns, ⁵ pencels, pennons, ⁶ borne by princes, nobles, and communities, In warfare, peace, or any degrees, I find they mostly wore marks, as merchants Bear tokens or signets on their hands.
Quhill efter euer the langest leving men heris, speris, and lernis more [onore] felle and wit, Diuerse folkis ingenyouse fyndene thene In well degest myndis considerit, Be celestial inspiring part tuk it, To set armes in metalis and colouris [metellis and cullouris], ffor seir causis bering sertyn [certane] figouris, Sum sonne, sum monne, sum sternis, sum elementis, Sum best [beist], sum bird, sum fische, sum frut, sum flouris, and mony mo siclik; Sum with defferentis, Sum alterit, als sum in ther awin nature; Sum, not the hole, bot part in raschit figouris, As my simplest consate [consait]sal suin mak clere [cleir], With correctioun, and now quha likis heir.	15 III 22 IV	While ever after the longest living man hears, asks, and learns more [honour] intelligence and wisdom, Various ingenious people then being Of well organised minds, Inspired by God, decided To set arms in metals and colours, For several reasons bearing certain figures, Some suns, moons, stars, elements, Some beasts, birds, fish, fruit, flowers, and many more such; Some with differences, ⁷ Some altered, as well as some natural; ⁸ Some, not whole, but erased figures, ⁹ As my simplest conceit shall soon make clear, With correction, and now who likes, hear.

The eldest, gret, most populus, mortal were, wes at thebes, quhiche at lenth [lenth] I did write,	29	The eldest, great, most populous, mortal war,
Quhare palamonne and arsite, woundit there, Be ther cotis of armes knawin parfite, Be heralds war, sum sais, bot that I nyte, ffor in thai dais [dayis] heraldis war not create, Nor that armes set in propir estate [estait]. Bot eftir that troy, quhar [quhair] so mony kingis war Seging without, and other within the toune, So mony princis, knyghtis, and peple there, as this my buk the most sentence did soune, all thocht spedful [speidfull] in o conclusioune, That nobillis bere merkis, to mak be knawin, ther douchtynes in dedis [deidis] of armes schawin: The fader the hole, the eldast son deffer[e]nt quhiche a labelle; a cressent the secound; third a molet; the fourt a merl to tent; ¹² fift anne aglot; the vj a flour had fond, Clepit delice. Than fader or we the suld grond Armes to mo, gif thai be with difference As plesit him: thus armes begon from thens.	V	was at Thebes, which at length I did write, Where Palamon and Arcite, wounded there, By their coats of arms were identified, ¹⁰ By heralds, some say, but that I deny, For in those days there were no heralds, Nor were arms properly established.
	36	But after that Troy, where were so many kings
	VI	Sieging without and others within the town, So many princes, knights, and people there, as this my book ¹¹ the most sentence did sound, all immediately concluded, That nobles bear marks, to make known, their doughtiness in deeds of arms shown:
	43	The father the whole, the eldest son different ¹³
	VII	Which are a label; a crescent the second; third a mullet; the fourth a martlet; fifth an aglot; ¹⁴ the sixth a flower had found, Called de Lys. Then the father or we they should grant Armes to more, if they be with difference As pleases him: thus arms began from then.
Than troy distroyit, the werris endit, the lordis I seir landis removit; and so brutus (his lif and dait my buk efter recordis,) Come in brutane with folkis populus, And brocht [brot] with him this werly merkis thus, quhiche succedis in armes to this date [dait]; Bot lang efter troy, heraldis war noch [not] creat.	50	Then Troy destroyed, the wars ended, the lords
	VIII	To several lands removed; and so Brutus (his life and times my book after records,) Came in Britain with many folks, And brought with him these warlike marks thus, which succeed in arms to this date; But long after Troy, there were no Heraldis.

Goullis, ruby; asur, saphire excedis Vert, emerautis; and amatist, purpur; therof gold is moche rich in werely [weirly] wedis. ffowr thingis in armes brekis thaim in ther nattu:	92	They exceed (in worth) Gules, ruby; Azure, sapphire
Bendis, sic, cheveroune, and barris sure; Thaim blazon [blasoun] first, gif therin [pairin] the feld [field] be; quhat euer he bere [beir], and be it quarterlie. Than to begin at colour in the rycht sid: and it is said, non armes may be cald propirly set, bot therin be to-gid Gold or siluer in the sammyn to behold [behold]. And for repreve [repreif] to blase, men wise be schuld [schold]. ffowr thingis in armes bot onys suld namyt [nemmit] be, Onis of, onis in, onys withe, and onys to see; Quhiche [Quhilk], gif he may forbere [forbear], it is the bet. and als in armis ar sertene rondis [roundis], as ball, Metalis, colouris [metellis, cullouris] forsaide figourit [figurit] and set, Gold, besentis; siluer, plateis [platis] to call; Sable, poletis; goulis, tortes at al; Asur, hurtis; verte, pomme [pomen]; wyndows, purpur. 3hit four thingis longis to armis in colour [cullour], That is, pales, bendis, feces, cheveronis. perpale, evin down extendis through the myd feild; perfess, ourthwert [orthwert] from sid to sid it gone Is; perbend, from rycht corner to left it held; per cheveroune, part devid wnto iij the feild; Oune bastone is contrary to a bend: The tonne frome left, the tother frome rycht sid tend.	XIV	Vert, emerald; and amethyst, Purpure; thereof gold is rich in warlike clothes. Four things in arms divide them in their nature: Bends, sic, chevron, and bars; ²⁰ Blazon these first, if they are in the field; whatever he bears, even if quarterly.
	99	Then begin at the colour in the right side: ²¹ and it is said, no arms may be called properly set, unless there are together Gold or silver in the same to see. And to blazon, men should be wise. Four things in arms but once should be named, There are: of, in, with, and.
	XV	
	106	Which, if he may forbear, it is better. and also in arms are certain roundels, like balls, Metals, colours aforesaid figured and set, Gold, besants; Silver, plates; Sable, pellets; Gules, tortes; Azure, hurts; Vert, pommes; wounds, Purpure. ²² Which four things belong to arms in colour, ²³
	XVI	
	113	That is, pales, bends, fesses, chevrons. Per pale, extends down through the mid field; Per fess, across from side to side it goes; Per bend, from right corner to left; per chevron, divides the field into three; A baton is contrary to a bend: One from the left, the other from the right side.
	XVII	

Non bot gentillis suld cotis of armes were [beir], Cummyn of stok noble, or maid be king[is]; 3it fold wil say of men hernest in gere, “llo men of armis!” thai is wntrew seyng, bot al be gentil; therfor see suthfast thing, “llo armit men!” 3it to knaw neidful is xv maneris of lionys in armys, ²⁴	120	None but gentlemen should wear coats of arms, Coming of noble stock, or made by kings; ²⁵ So fools will say of men harnessed in armour, “Lo, men of arms!” which is untrue, as all [armigers] are gentlemen; therefor say more correctly, “Lo, armed men!”. It is needful to know fifteen attitudes of lions in arms,
ffirst, a lionne [statant]; on-vthir, lyone [lioun] rampand; Third, saliant; the fourt, passand I-wis; the v seand; vj mordand; vij cuchand; the viij dormand; the ix regardand is; The x endorsit; xj copray schawis; The xij copy conter changit aduert; xiiij in nomer [morné]; xiiij, lioun cowerit;	127	[the author lists] a lion statant; rampant; saliant; passant; sejant; mordant; couchant; dormant; regardant; addorsed; copray; ²⁶ counter-changed; mornay; ²⁷ lion coward;
And the xv cambatand, als to see. xv maner of crocis armis bere [beir]: The first, hole croce; the tother, engrelit be The third, awndi; the iiij, paty in feir; the v. a crois; vj, crois flarait cleir; vij botand; viij crosolat; ix batone; x fovrmie [sovraunt]; xj crois fichye;	134	And the fifteenth combatant, also to see. Fifteen manner of crosses arms bear: [The author lists]:whole cross; engrailed Undy; pateé; <i>à crois</i> ; ²⁸ cross flory;
xij sarsile fere; demolyn xiiij; xiiij regle; xv sucyllye, sey. quhat maner of best [beist] or bird goith rond to sene, About the feld blase it heroune verray. Twa thingis in armis sal end in schewis a[l]wey;	XX	bottony; crosslet; batoné; formy; fichy; sarsile; moline; raguly; sucyllye. ²⁹
Gif ther [pair] be mo off thaim than ij that schewis; As lionne-sewys, to sey, and heronwe-sewis; Bot onne or ij call lion or heroun. Armis vindois [windois], ij strakiss myd feld devid, ffet [ffeir] ar in armis, and ij thingis compone lik to vther, barr and fete [fece] brode to-gid. Als certane [certaine] thingis plurar in armis go, As flouris to blase, and pellettis with thoo	141	If beasts or birds go around the field Blazon it heron verray. ³⁰ Two things in arms always show; [But] if there are more than two of them; Say lioncels, and heroncels; ³¹
	XXI	
	148	But one or two call lion or heron. windows, ³² two streaks mid field, divide Arms, fret[s] are in arms, and two things are compony ³³ like to each other, bar and fess brought together. Also certain things are plural in arms, Such as flowers, and pellets although
	XXII	

Not be to namyt, gif he beire mo than ij, Bot thus flowris florate to blase rycht. thre thingis in armes 3it be ilk vtheris evin, Tortes, tortell pellettis, pellett hecht, Fussewis, masklewis, and losingis thus plicht. Be ther [pir] mony fussewis, masklewis thaim call, And losengis 3it in armys with-all.	154 XXIII	They are not be to numbered, if he bears more than two, But thus: flowers florate, to blazon correctly. there are three things in arms that are equal, Tortes, tortell pellets, pellet by name, Fusils, mascles and lozenges thus plaited. Be there many, call them fusilly, masculy, And lozengy, in arms. ³⁴ To blazon beasts, say 'armed', and all birds, safely say 'membered': A gryphon, both bird and beast, we should call it To blazon, 'membered and armed' both justly. ³⁵ Pikes [fish] and dolphins ³⁶ are seen in arms. There are billetty, humetty, and two indentures, ³⁷ Perpale chevron, perpale glondes ³⁸ to see.
Ale maner of best [beist] to blase, sey 'be armit', and al birdis, sey 'membrit' sauflly: Girphinwe, baith bird and best [beist], we suld call it To blase, "membrit and armyt" both Iustly. 3it in armes, pictes and delphes espy. Billettis, hewmatis, and ij indenturis be, Perpale cheveroue, perpale glondes to se.	161 XXIV	There is also erased, ³⁹ as a leg or head, which gyronny vairy and byally told: ⁴⁰ In what metals or colours that they stood, what things they be, full attently behold: figure, form, flower, or anything on the field, ⁴¹ Set in arms, and so blazon carefully; And study well who bears such.
Thire [thair] be also raschit, as lege or heid, wiche gerondy verry and belly told [cold]: [?] In quhat metallis or colouris that thai sted [steid], quhat thingis thai be, ful attently [autently] behold: ffigour, forme, flour, or quhat mater on mold, In armes set, and so blase discretly; And quho siche beris, study well, and espy. 3hit sum haldis in armis ij certane thingis, Nothir metallis nor colouris to blasoune, Ermyne and werr, callit panis, bestly furring, And haldin so without other discripcioune. All attentik armys of hie renoune Of al estates, and general of al manis [maneris], Bene set in this metallis, colouris, and panyis. Quhiche honorable in al armis forsaid, war first fundyn eftir the precieuse stanys, In nombyr few, and so costly araid, That al noblay may not gudly at anys Actene [attheyne] therto: than law of armys disponys ffor theme be sett and portrait with pictouris, In feildis, the seid metallis and ther colouris;	168 XXV 175 XXVI 182 XXVII	Some hold that in arms two certain things, Blazoned neither as metals nor colours, Ermine and vair, called panns, bestly furring, And are without other description. ⁴² All authentic arms of high renown Of all ranks, and generally of all men, Are properly given in these metals, colours, and furs.
		Which honorable in all arms aforesaid, were first found after the precious stones, In number few, and so expensively arrayed, That all nobility may not properly Attain them other than the law of arms allows For they arranged and portrayed with pictures, In fields, the said metals and their colours;

The quhiche [quhilk] stanis come first frome paradise, thairfor thai ar so precyus singlar.	189	The which stones came first from heaven, therefore they are so preciously singular.
quha will study his wittis, and conterpace The hie planetis, and signis of the aire, Symylitudis of thaim he may fynd there ffor to blasoun, and also in bestiall, In erbis, foullis, and fischis therwithall;	XXVIII	He who will study his mind, and contemplate The high planets, and signs of the air, Similitudes of them he may find there For to blazon, and also in bestiaries, In herbals, fowl, and fish as well;
How thai be born, in quhat kindis, and quhare, also be quhom, and eftir in excellence, That I refer to my lordis to declair, kingis of armes, and heraldis of prudens, and persewantis, and grant my negligens thai I suld not attempe [attempine] thus to commoune, Bot of ther [pair] grace, correctioun,	196	How they are borne, in what kinds, and where, also by whom, and according to rank, That I refer to my lords to declare, ⁴³ Kings of Arms, Heralds of prudence, and pursuivants, and pardon my negligence that I should not attempt thus to discourse,
and pardoune, ffor, as I red, princis of nobillest [Q adds in] mynd, And specialy this seid Iulius cesar, ther attentik [autentik] worthi ordour did fynd, fful honorable in erth, and necesser [necessair], To bere [beir] armes, blasoune, and to prefer Vthir officiaris in honour, as I schall [sall] Schaw causis quhy of this ordour regall, Quhiche [quhilk] ascendis, create be greis thre: first, persewant; syn, herald; and than king; Ichone of this being gre abone gre, Be land and age preuilegit [preuilegit] in al thing, In werre [weir] and piece [pece], batell, province and ring, Ceté, castellis, parliamentis prerogative, Amang princis trew reuerendanis to schrive. Oure al the world, and erast Amang the best, thir preambulis and discripcionis procedis, all thingis be takin [taiken] treuly as thai attest, ay liscenciat and lovit with al ledis, Noblis, vergynis, and wedois in ther nedis, Of holy [haly] chirche the sure feith thai support, At ther poweris causing to al consort.	XXIX	Except by their grace, correction, and pardon, For, as I read (or advise?), princes of noblest mind, And specially the said Julius Caesar, their authentic worthy order did find, Full honorable on Earth, ⁴⁴ and necessary, To bear arms, blazon, and to prefer Other officers in honour, as I shall Show causes why of this regal order,
	203	
	XXX	
	210	Which ascends, created be three degrees: first, pursuivant; then, herald; and then king; Each one ⁴⁵ of these being degree above degree, By land and age privileged in all things, In war and peace, battle, province and realm, ⁴⁶ Cities, castles, parliaments prerogative, Among princes true reverence to confess.
	XXXI	
	217	Over all the world, and earliest among the best, these preambles and descriptions proceed, all things be taken truly as they attest, always permitted and loved by all men, Nobles, virgins, and widows in their needs, Of holy church the sure faith they support, At their powers causing all to consort.
	XXXII	

III

Thereafter, ingenious people, inspired by God, arranged arms with metals, colours and charges

“Thereafter” sets the origin of arms, in the author’s opinion, post-Troy (see Stanza VI).

IV

There were heavenly bodies and figures from nature, depicted in different ways, some like nature and some not.

Early arms, he contends, were figurative or representative, rather than using “ordinaries” (see below).

V and VI

The myth (here denied) is that arms were borne at Thebes, but there were no heralds then.

The author confuses ancient legend with Chaucer’s *The Knight’s Tale*, in which he says: “But by here Cote Armures/and by hir gere/The heraudes/knewe hem best in special”. In the classical telling, Palamon and Arcite were cousins, both knights of Thebes and prisoners of Theseus, king of Athens. They both fall in love with Emily, sister-in-law of the king, and compete for her. Palamon is defeated, but victorious Arcite is thrown from his horse and killed, so Palamon marries Emily.” Chaucer, as befits his time, puts them in a mediaeval joust, complete with a King-at-Arms. Shakespeare committed much the same error in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* co-written with John Fletcher.

Historically, there is good evidence that Eochaid the Venomous, King of Argyll, (747 AD–819 AD) and father of Alpin, entered into an alliance with Charlemagne (c. 747–c. 814) who conferred on the Scots the familiar double-tressure flory-counterflory (Strathern 1859). It is also a matter of record that Malcolm II (1005–1034) established by statute the practice of adding distinguishing seals to contracts (Reg. Maj. Book III, c. 8). Robert III (r. 1371–1390) required barons and others holding land of the sovereign to have seals, under penalty of law (Acts, cap. 7, No. 5).

Between these times, matters are murkier. There is no heraldry as such on the Bayeux Tapestry (which, properly, is an embroidery). The earliest seal with arms on it in Scotland is from Duncan II, (r. 1094) while the equivalent in England dates from Richard I, a century later. Stewart arms on seals of the latter half of the 12th and early 13th Centuries show the fess chequy, still a feature of Stewart arms today, and familiar from policemen’s hats. The earliest arms in England as we now understand them—heritable symbols borne on shields and surcoats—seem to be those granted by Henry I of England to his son-in-law Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou, father of Henry II, in 1127. This became systematised in the time of Richard II and Richard III (who established the College of Arms in 1483). The 13th Century *Herald’s Roll* shows a well-developed Anglo-Norman system of arms (see Cecil Humphery-Smith’s (1973) *Anglo-Norman Armory*).

In Scotland, when William ascended the throne (r. 1165–1214) he assumed the lion rampant surrounded by Charlemagne’s double tressure, and the soubriquet “William the Lion”. There is no real evidence of a Lion King of Arms and Heralds until the coronation of Robert II in 1371. However, nobles certainly bore arms before this time, as shown by the illustrations in the 14th Century Balliol Roll (see Bruce McAndrew’s (2002) *Balliol Roll*). Arms, however, were back-attributed to Norman and Saxon kings by later heralds.

The references to “Thebes, which at length I did write”, Troy (l. 39) and Brutus (ll. 51–52), as well as familiarity with Chaucer, are clues as to authorship.

VII

Sons’ arms are differenced from their father’s.

Cadency, or differencing of sons’ arms by adding a distinctive charge, is a particular feature of British heraldry, invented about the time of Richard II. The first son bears a label of three points, the second a crescent, the others in sequence a mullet (five-pointed star), martlet, fleur-de lys. Gerard Leigh (1562) later added rose, cross moline and double-quartrefoil (an eight-petalled flower) to make it up to nine—see notes to Stanza X). After the father’s death, the eldest son inherits his sire’s undifferenced arms (in Scotland) and

other sons who matriculate arms lose these temporary brisures in favour of a system of “bordures” (borders). See Figure 2.

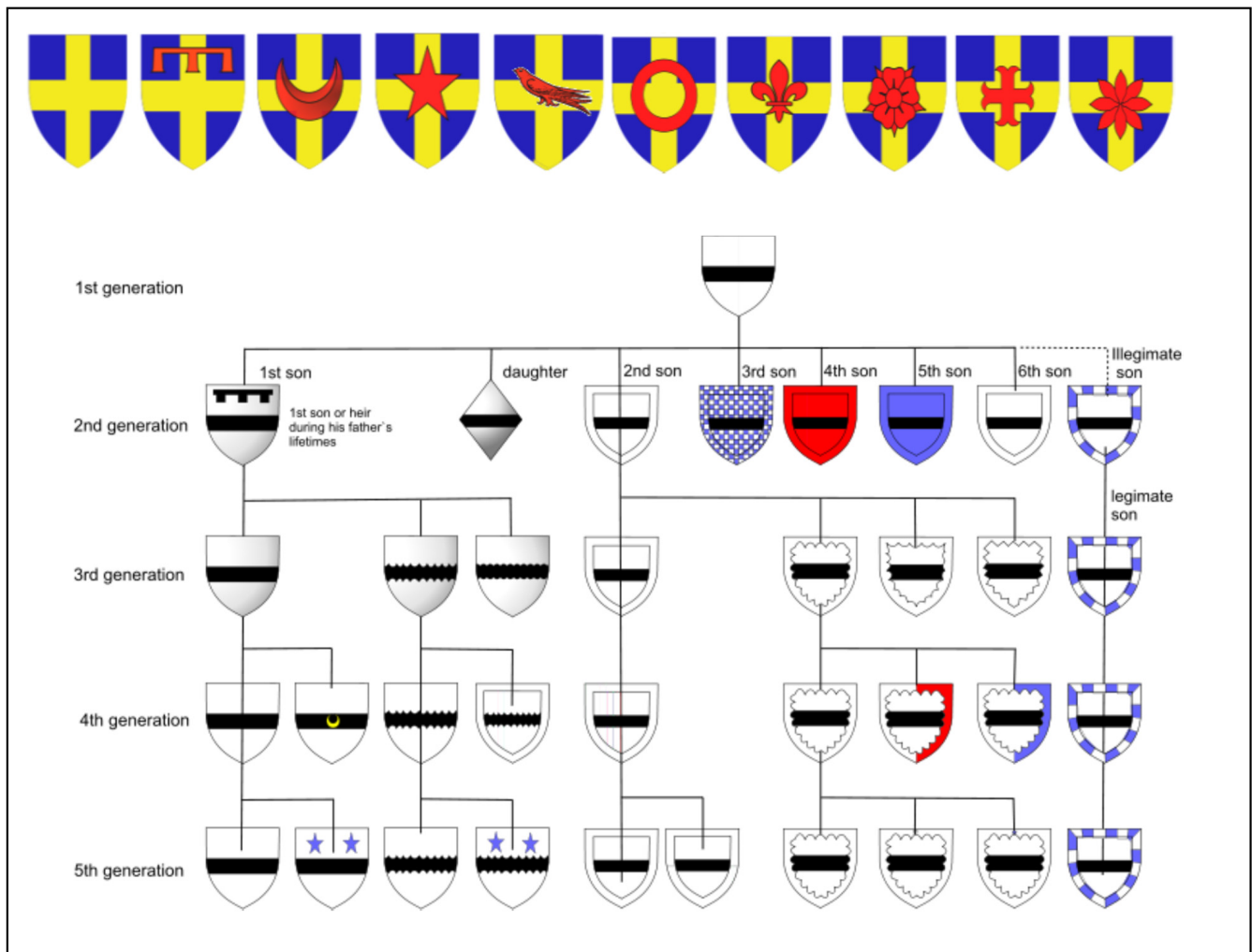


Figure 2. The English system of cadency by brisures (top) and Stodart’s Scottish system of differing by bordures and lines of division (bottom).

VIII

Brutus imported the idea of battle-marks into Britain.

Furnivall and Adams dispute that any Scot would refer to the “British” origin legend of derivation and descent from Brutus of Troy, as the Scots claimed descent from Scythia, as repeated in the Declaration of Arbroath, or from the Princess Scota, daughter of a Pharaoh. But perhaps all the author here is saying, is that the Britons brought with them into the British Isles insignia of arms, not heralds or heraldry per se.

IX

Many say Julius Caesar was the first to blazon arms correctly, and I consider he had wisdom enough to do so, based on precedents and later developed.

See also 1. 204.

X

There are two metals and four colours in heraldry, plus purple which, although not a primary colour, becomes honourable when used heraldically.

Note that, in modern Scots heraldic practice (and pretty much universally), the tinctures are given capital letters, largely to disambiguate the use of the conjunction “or” for

the heraldic word Or (gold). The permitted tinctures also include the rare Tenné (tawny) and Murrey (maroon or sanguine), largely there to make up the total number to nine, to chime with the nine virtues, nine muses and (according to the English *Boke of St. Albans*) the nine orders or angels (see notes to Stanza XXVII). Technically, Tenné and Murrey are “stains”, used as rebatements—a change in colour to indicate a dishonour (hence “a blot on the escutcheon”). Purpure (purple), though not a primary colour, is allowed in heraldry. Among the few extant examples are the arms of the Scottish Rugby Union, and the purple lion of the Earls of Lincoln in the arms of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London. Gules is said to be from the French *gueule*, a reference to the colour of a throat (specifically the *goules de martre*, the reddish skin from the throat of a marten, used as a trimming) but may derive from the Persian *gul*, meaning “rose”. French heraldry until the early 1400s blazoned red as Sinople, derived from the city of Sinop in modern-day Turkey (historically Sinope, on the Black Sea), whose red-ochre clay was used by medieval mural artists to make the red pigment sinopia. Perversely, Sinople replaced Vert in French heraldry and now indicates a dark green. This was probably to disambiguate *vert* and *vair* (fur), just as Charles Perrault is said to have confused Cinderella’s fur slippers for glass (*verre*)—see <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language/og/archives/002886.html> (accessed on 9 December 2023) This is also a potential confusion between *vair* and counter-*vair* (fr. *vairé contre vairé*) in which the squirrel skins are placed top-to-top (see Figure 3) The arms of Monsire John de BEAUCHAMP de Somersetshire are given as *verre* in a Roll from the time of Edward III.

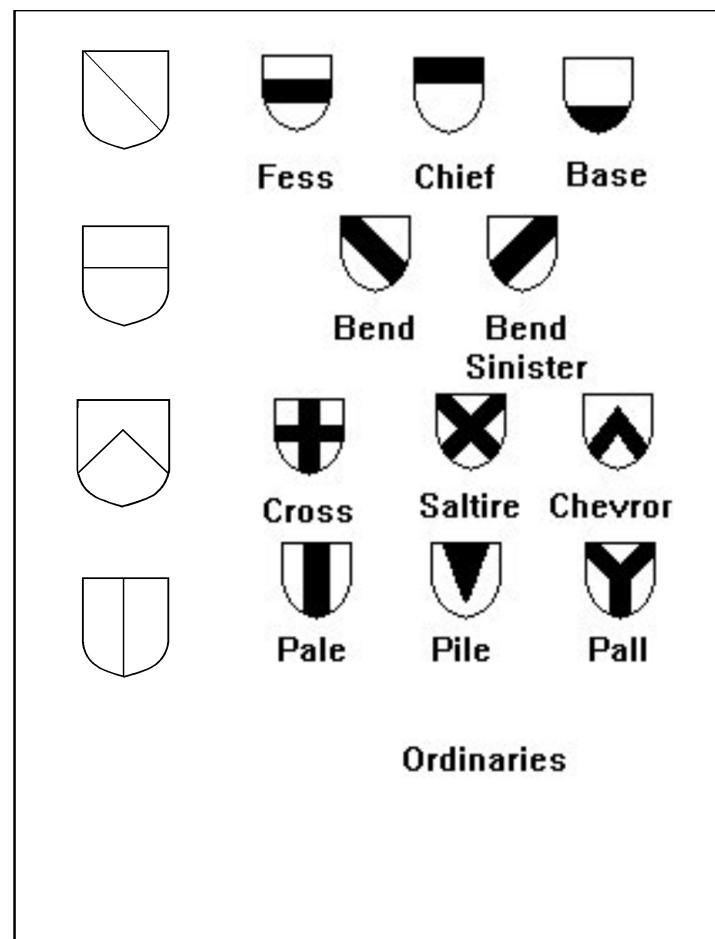


Figure 3. The partitions of the field (top: per bend, per fesse, per chevron, per pale) and honourable ordinaries (right) mentioned in the poem.

XI

Precious stones represent the heraldic tinctures.

In the Arms of nobility, the colours were called by the names of precious and semi-precious stones from ca. 1458. Thopasis is a gold-coloured stone. Cassidony is not a reference to French lavender (the modern usage in French), but to chalcedony which has reddish variants, such as sardonyx (banded agate). Randle [Cotgrave \(1611\)](#) gives the contemporary meaning in French as: “Cassidonie, a base and brittle stone, of small value, though it shine like fire”. Jacinth is a red transparent gemstone, a variety of zircon, but is also a hyacinth, whose flower is reddish blue or deep purple. Later (from ca. 1600) in naming heavenly bodies for colours in nobles’ and sovereigns’ Arms, the Renaissance heralds lacked Neptune and Pluto and had to resort to “lunar nodes”, the points where the moon’s orbit crosses the ecliptic. The full assignment is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Equivalences of heraldic tinctures, heavenly bodies and gems.

Tincture		Planet	Gemstone
(English)	(French)		
Or	Or	Sun	Topaz
Argent	Argent	Moon	Pearl
Azure	Azure	Jupiter	Sapphire
Gules	Gueules	Mars	Ruby
Purple	Pourpre	Mercury	Amethyst
Vert	Sinople	Venus	Emerald
Sable	Sable	Saturn	Diamond
Tenné	Tanné	Dragon’s Head	Jacinth
Sanguine/Murrey	Sanguine	Dragon’s Tail	Sardonyx

XII

Silver and sable are said to be the richest. The Duke of Brittany bears them.

This is an intriguing reference. Up until the Wars of the Roses (1453 to 1487) Brittany had links with the English Crown, as John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond had died without heirs ca. 1399. The Crown took Richmond, which was held from 1414 to 1435 by Henry V’s brother, John Plantagenet, Duke of Bedford (who supported England’s claims to France), and from 1453 by Edmund Tudor, half-brother to Henry VI and father of Henry VII (r. fr. 1485). Before his death in 1422, Henry V named his brother, John, Regent of France in the name of his son Henry VI as heir to the French throne. During this period, Richmond allied itself with the House of Lancaster and the Tudor Earls were supported by the then Duke of Brittany, Francis II (d. 1488), and by Margaret of Anjou, Henry VI’s powerful queen.

Margaret went to Scotland in 1460/61 to negotiate with Mary of Gueldres, Queen Consort to James II, for a Scottish army. (James’s sister, Isabella Stewart, was by then married to Francis I, Duke of Brittany, and their daughter Marguerite married her cousin, Francis II, Duke of Brittany, in 1455). Mary agreed provided that Berwick upon Tweed came to Scotland and that her daughter was betrothed to Prince Edward. The Scots looted their way through England and helped defeat Warwick at the two Battles of St Albans. However, the Yorkists won other battles and Henry and Margaret had to flee to the court of James III in Scotland and eventually Margaret and her son exiled themselves in France.

We can assume, then, that the author was a supporter of Lancaster, Tudor and/or Brittany. That would be an uncomfortable position for an Englishman from 1461 to 1485 (the reigns of Edward IV, Edward V and Richard III) but politically correct after this with Henry VII on the throne. A Scot perhaps would not care throughout, given the “auld

alliance” with France, the Brittany links and the betrothal in 1474 of Edward IV’s daughter Princess Cecily of York to the future James IV (who eventually married Margaret Tudor in 1503). Furthermore, Scotland and England were at war in the early 1480s. The entire 16th Century was taken up squabbles between Scots and English, Stewarts/Stuarts and Tudors. Henry VII’s “Rough Wooing” (1543 to 1551, also known as the Eight Years’ War, during which Henry tried to force a dynastic marriage between his heir apparent Edward and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots). Despite England’s machinations to keep (Catholic) Mary out of circulation as a threat to (Protestant) England, it was Mary’s son, James VI of Scots who succeeded Elizabeth I as James I in 1603. The Scots had prevailed.

XIII and XIV (to l. 93)

Writing is in silver (paper) and sable (ink) and most kings have gold and silver in their arms, which are costlier than precious stones or pearls.

Sables would, at this time, be one of the most expensive furs and therefore the highest-ranked tincture, after the metals. Dame Juliana [Berners \(1486\)](#) lists “Golde, Asure, Sable & Siluer” as the four “Royall coloreis”.

XIV (from l. 94)

The four divisions of the field are bend, sic[?], chevron and bars. Blazon these first, even if the shield is quartered.

This is somewhat confused. The main (“honourable”) Ordinaries, which are charges on the field, are bend, fesse, chevron and pale. Compare these with the divisions of the field in Stanza XVII (from l. 114).

XV

[Even if the shield is quartered] begin with the colour or metal at the dexter side.

No arms are correct unless they have gold and silver in them.

The words “of”, “in”, “with”, “and” should only be used once in a blazon.

Not all arms contain both Or and Argent, nor is there any necessity for this. The author’s injunction against using these pronouns more than once was indeed a simplifying principle of early heraldry but has been abandoned as designs have become more complex.

XVI (to. l. 111)

Arms may bear roundel or balls with the following colours and names.

Roundels are discs given names which indicate their colours without further elaboration: besants (from a Byzantine coin) are gold (Or); plates are silver (Argent); pellets (musket-balls) are Sable (black); tortes or tarteaux (“tarts”) are Gules (red); hurts (indicating a bruise, but see below) are Azure (blue), pommes (apples) are Vert (green); and wounds or golpes (said to be derived from *golpa*, Old Spanish for “wound”) are Purpure. Unknown, it seems, to the poem’s author is the fountain, a disc with seven wavy lines, alternately Azure and Argent. French heraldry does not use all of these tincture names—Vert is Sinople (see Stanza X). According to [Nisbet \(1722\)](#), [Leigh \(1562\)](#) derives the word hurt from the mark “of some violent stroke” while [Guillim \(1610\)](#) “will have them to represent hurtle-berries”. The hurtleberry (also called whortleberry, blueberry, bilberry and Huckleberry) is indeed blue, although the dye traditionally made from it is mauve-purple. But the Old French noun *heurte* and verb *heurter*, both have the sense of “blow” or “strike”. It is often said that Scottish heraldry deprecates the term “roundel”, but it does appear, with a distinguishing colour, in, for example, [Balfour-Paul \(1893\)](#), though not in [Nisbet \(1722\)](#). There is an exhaustive treatise on the origin and distribution of roundels in five issues of *Notes and Queries* by [London \(1950\)](#).

XVII (incl. l. 112)

Arms have pales, bends, fesses, chevrons (Ordinaries) and divisions named similarly.

The Ordinaries are charges, while the divisions reflect their shapes. A pale (as in paling fence) is a vertical strip down the centre of the field; a fess is horizontal; a bend is a stripe from dexter to sinister; a chevron points upwards; and what the author calls a baton

is now known as a bend sinister; today a baton sinister does not extend across the whole field, and is taken to indicate illegitimacy, as in the arms of the descendants of bastard royal dukes. When the field is divided vertically is per pale, paly or palewise. When a charge lies horizontal it is fesswise. Per chevron is like a tripod, dividing the field in three.

XVIII (to l. 125)

No-one but nobles should wear arms. Do not call armed men “men of arms”, which indicates armigers, who are all noble.

This says arms are restricted to “nobles” (meaning with a peerage title), which is not the case in Scotland. The Lyon Court will grant arms to the “virtuous and well-deserving”, and arms in Scotland have always been available to “Noblemen, Barrons and Gentlemen”, so there is no presumption of a noble title.⁵⁰ Other jurisdictions took and take a different view.

XIX (incl. ll. 126 and 134)

There are fifteen “attitudes” for lions (named).

There are many more than 15 attitudes for beasts of prey, including lions, but early heraldists found a certain symmetry in the numbers four, nine and fifteen, such as the four main ordinaries, the nine colours and, as here, the fifteen attitudes of lions and (from line 135), the fifteen forms of cross. See Figure 4, and also Stanza XXI for multiple lions.

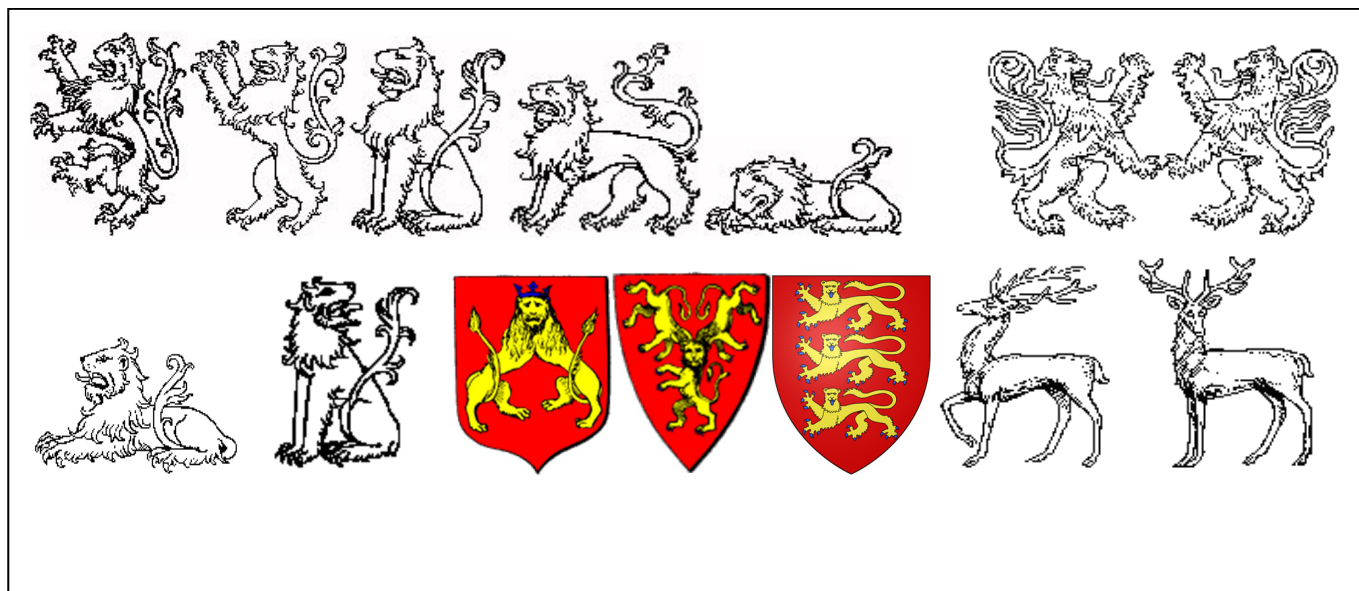


Figure 4. A selection of the heraldic lions named: rampant, salient, sejant, statant, dormant, combatant, couchant, sejant regardant, bicorporate, tricorporate and the three lioncels passant guardant (or leopards) of the arms of England; stags trippant and at gaze.

XX (to l. 143)

There are fifteen types of cross (named)

Again, there are many more than fifteen. There is much confusion in heraldic texts between *re cercelé* (voided, as shown) and *cercelé* (encircled) See Figure 5.

XXI

If animals surround the field (in a bordure) blazon them “verray”.

As mentioned, this should be “enurné” or possibly enaluron, both corruptions of “in orle”. When three lions appear on the field itself, as in the arms of the Sovereign of England, they are blazoned “lioncels”. The theory is that, as the lion is a noble beast, it can only appear once on the shield (or twice, if paired in some way such as addorsed or combatant) and so three of them must be something else. hence “lioncels”. Strictly speaking in ancient heraldry, a lion passant guardant was a heraldic leopard—French heraldry still uses the

term *leopardée*—so the lions in the arms of England may be blazoned as: *Gules, three leopards in pale Or* (Figure 4).

XXIII (incl. ll. 152, 153)

When there are more than two of a charge, do not number them, but say, for example, floriate for multiple flowers. Torteax, tortell pellets and pellets are equal. Multiple fusils, mascles and lozenges together are blazoned fusilly, masculy and lozengy

The author shows some confusion here. A tortell pellet is a roundel divided horizontally, red at the top and black in the base. See Figure 6 for fusilly, etc. When the field contains many of a charge in a pattern it is blazoned *semé* as in the arms of William of Orange, which had: *Azure, semé of billets, a lion rampant Or, armed and langued Gules, for Nassau*.

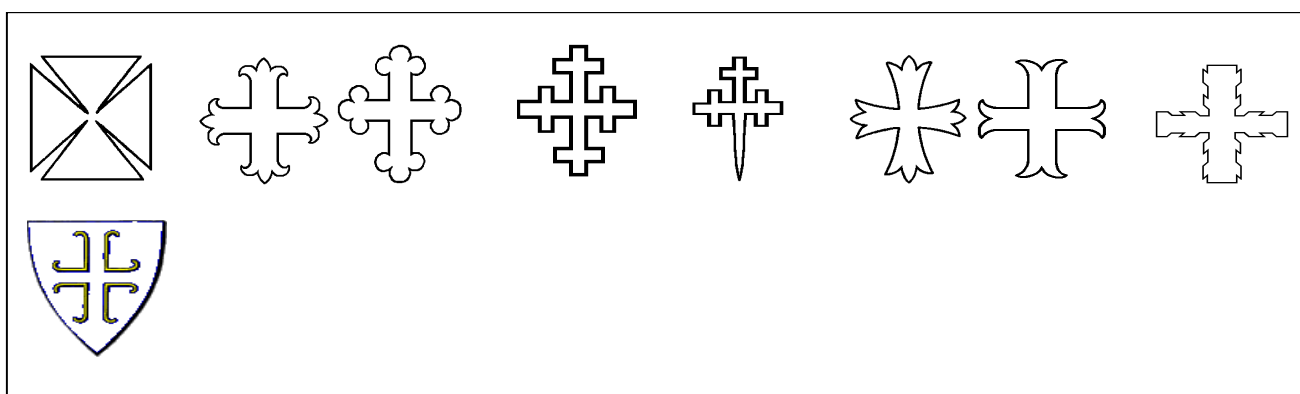


Figure 5. Some of the crosses in the text: pateé (or formée); flory; bottony; crosslet; crosslet fitchy; patonce, moline; raguly; recerclé.

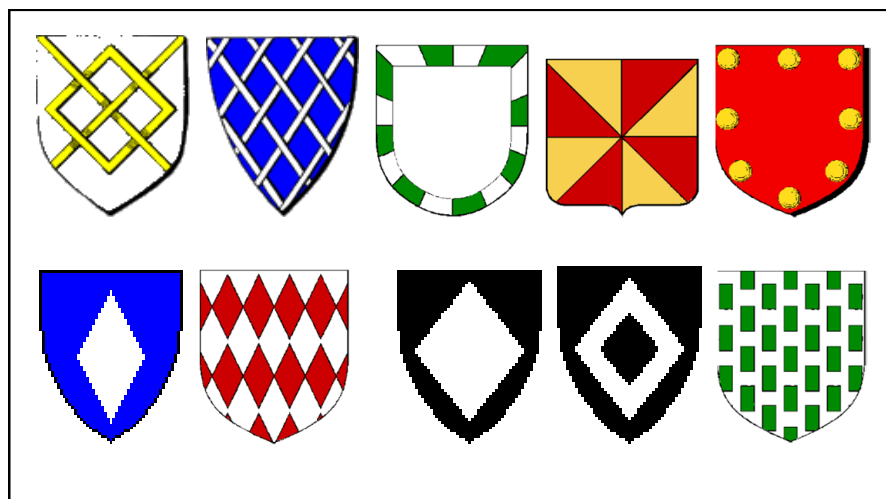


Figure 6. A fret, fretty, a bordure compony, gyronny of eight, in orle, a fusil, fusilly, a lozenge, a mascle, billetté.

XXII (ll. 149 to 151)

There are windows (?), frets and when two colours alternate, this is compony.

Refer to Figure 6.

XXIV

Beasts are blazoned “armed”, birds “membered” and a gryphon is both. There are pikes and dolphins. Charges may be billetté, humetty or indentured.

Not exactly. All beats of prey can be “armed”, which refers to claws and teeth. The lion rampant of Scotland is “armed and langued” (tongued) Azure. By contrast, a non-predatory

animal or bird would be “membered”, but individual animals have their own terms, such as a stag being “attired” when its antlers are coloured, “trippant” rather than “passant” and not “guardant” but “at gaze” (Figure 4).

XXV

A leg or head may be erased. Gyronny, vairy and byally partition the field. Blazon carefully, and study who bears which arms.

The utter confusion of this stanza suggests the author is less familiar with the deeper aspects of heraldry. He might have taken his own advice given in the last five lines of the stanza. Gyronny can be of any number above four, but four, six, eight and nine are commonest (see Figure 6).

XXVI

Apart from metals and colours there are furs, ermine and vair, which need no other description. Only these (above) metals, colours and furs appear in arms.

In fact, there are many variants of furs. For instance, ermine is black on white, ermines is the reverse and erminois is black on gold. Counter-vair (white on blue, in the shape of a stretched-out squirrel skin) is the reverse of vair. See Figure 7.

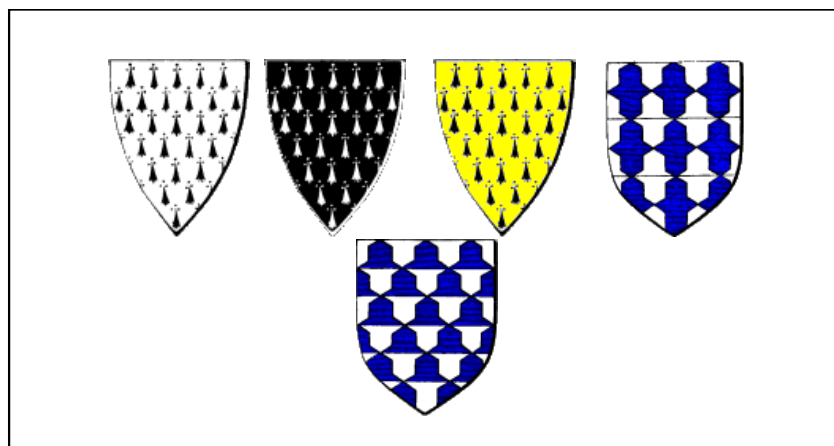


Figure 7. The furs mentioned in the poem: ermine, ermines, erminois, vair, counter-vair.

XXVII and XXVIII

These metals colours and furs arose after the precious stones, which came from heaven. Arms also have representations of planets, plants and beasts.

The author here repeats the heraldic “wisdom” that the tinctures commonly used on earth are reflections of precious stones, and those the representers on earth of heavenly bodies. Dame Juliana [Berners](#) (1486), writing her *Boke of St. Albans* (sometimes called *The Book of Sports and Heraldry*) deals with angels and Arms. “At hevyn I will begin where were v. orderis of aungelis, and now stand but iv., in cote armuris of knowlege encrowned ful hye with precious stones, where Lucifer, with mylionys of aungelis, owt of hevyn fell into hell and odyr places, and ben holdyn ther in bondage. And all were created in hevyn of gentill nature.” This curious text contains three tracts, dealing with the pleasingly alliterative Hawking, Hunting and Heraldry (possibly a later addition) and a *Treatyse Of Fysshynge Wyth An Angle* which may or may not have come from Dame Juliana’s hand but was printed by Wynkyn De Worde in 1496 (though the manuscript is perhaps half a century earlier). The tracts were first printed by a “Scolemaster Printer” who worked in St. Albans from 1479 (according to [Blades](#) 1901) and the *Boke* is perhaps the first example of colour printing in England. It also contains some previously unrecorded collective nouns, such as: a malapertness of pedlars, a business of ferrets, a drunkship of cobblers, an unkindness of ravens and a superfluity of nuns. We should note that Dame Juliana is said to have been Prioress of Sopwell, but there is no real evidence for this. However, the lists of

Prioresses are incomplete. Perhaps she merely lived there (Page 1902), among, presumably, a “superfluity”. Heraldry makes a distinction between heraldic beasts and their “natural” forms. An example is the dolphin (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Heraldic dolphin.

XIX–XXXVI

The decrees of Heralds are obeyed by all, Heralds are beloved by all, protectors of all needy, the support of the Church, . . . , etc.

These stanzas are a somewhat oleaginous encomium to heralds and pursuivants. Granted, Loufut was a Pursuivant, writing for a Herald who became Lord Lyon, but even so the obsequious nature of this is cloying in the extreme. However, if Loutfut was not the original author, at whom was this aimed? Henry V instituted the office of Garter King of Arms (the senior heraldic officer, under the Earl Marshall) in 1415 just before sailing for France. The earls and dukes of Lancaster retained a Lancaster Herald from at least 1347, but on Henry IV’s accession this became an office of the Crown and made King of Arms of the northern province. This arrangement continued under Henry V and VI, but by 1464 Lancaster again had the lower rank of Herald. Similarly, there was a Richmond Herald to John, Duke of Bedford from 1421, and until 1485 to George, Duke of Clarence, and Henry, Earl of Richmond after which Henry VII in 1485 elevated the then Richmond Herald, Roger Machado (a great supporter of Henry Tudor) to Clarenceaux King of Arms until his death in 1510. The author may therefore have known the holders of these heraldic offices.

5. Computational Linguistics

Of the 136 individual plural forms scribed by Loutfut, 124 take the Scottish plural ending—*is* but 12 have the English—*es*. Some of these are the same word (e.g., “armes” occurs 20 times and “armis” only 11, whereas “princis” occurs frequently and “princes” once). This strongly suggests copying from an English original into more familiar Scots, but without complete translation.

The rhyme couplets were examined in the form given in the poem, and as they would be in Middle English, but there are too few examples of pronunciational differences to determine whether the rhymes work best in either language. Those worthy of consideration include write/parfite/nyte (Stanza V), sammyn/am (Stanza XII) and godhead/manheid/proceed (Stanza XXXV).

6. John Lydgate (ca. 1371–1449)

The most widely-known and prolific writer of his day, John Lydgate (ca. 1371–1449) had the support and patronage of royalty and the wealthy. He is best remembered for his translations (the *Troy Book*, the *Siege of Thebes*, and the *Fall of Princes*), dream visions, love poetry, a Life of Our Lady and translations of French religious parables. Lancastrian in sympathy, Lydgate started the trend for English literature to reflect national cachet, distinct from French, and with an identity of its own. He may well also have invented the Valentine's Day poem, when his king was concurrently at war with France and courting Catherine Valois, daughter of Charles VI and instructed John Lydgate to write a love note and send it to her on February 14th. Lydgate was, in every way, Henry V's Poet Laureate.

Born ca. 1371 in Lydgate, Suffolk, Lydgate entered the nearby Bury St. Edmund's Benedictine monastery as a boy and was ordained into holy orders in 1397. Later, studying at Gloucester College (the Benedictine house at Oxford) Lydgate met the then Prince of Wales (later Henry V), and Thomas, son of Geoffrey Chaucer, a man of wealth and influence as well as Lancastrian leanings. Lydgate associated with the Lancastrian kings Henry V and Henry VI, and in 1412 began the *Troy Book* (finished in 1420), translated from Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae*, commissioned by the Prince (who would ascend the throne in 1413) in "oure tonge" (vernacular English). The *Troy Book* underlined the origin myths of "Brutane" (Britain) as deriving from Brutus of Troy, legendary descendant of Aeneas. Lydgate is often criticised today as an imitator of Chaucer's, and indeed the rhyme scheme of the "Scotch Copy" is "Rhyme Royal", an iambic pentameter septet a-b-a-b-b-c-c, exactly as in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, although the "Scotch Copy" seems to omit a line after l. 151, which would rhyme with "to-gid". But he introduced to the familiar iambic pentameter an idiosyncratic "broken-backed line" in which the unaccented syllable is omitted after the medial caesura (pause). Lydgate used rhyme, but also the Old English alliterative form. Both are clearly seen in Stanza XII.

Immediately the *Troy Book* was finished, Lydgate began the *Siege of Thebes*, finished in the year of Henry's death (1422).

7. Conclusions

Lydgate fits the bill as the author of the original to the "Scotch Copy" on the grounds of:

1. Lancastrian sympathy, especially if written after 1421 when there was a Richmond herald and also a Lancaster King of Arms to be pleasant to, at the instructions of Henry V or VI;
2. Imperfect understanding of heraldry (unlike, we presume, Loutfut);
3. Chaucerian inspiration, as witness the Royal Rhyme and metre;
4. Authorship of works on Troy, Thebes and the Brutus myth;
5. Ability to translate from French, either from an original work, or using French sources for a new poem.

Authorship by Lydgate did occur to Dr F. J. Furnival, Founder and Director of the Early English Text Society (Furnivall 1869, p. xviii) to whom Lydgate was no stranger—Furnivall edited the Society's 1901 publication No. LXXXIII, Lydgate's *DeGuilleville's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, Part II, and many other 15th Century works.

It seems certain that the poem started as English, and Loutfut transcribed this, or another Scots version now lost. It may be derived or be based on a French source. If Lydgate were the author, the original may predate the "Scotch Copy" by as much as a century. It would certainly date from before 1449 and political considerations suggest is placed in the 1420s. Thus, it predates the *Boke of St. Albans* and Nicholas Upton (1440) (See Figure 9).⁵¹

Quyer palamond and arse woundit the
 the y rotte of armes finallid pite
 the herald war sung sive bot y t myte
 for in yu dme herald war not vnt
 Nor y armes set in proper state

Got after it tray quyer so many thing war
 Gygung rotte of o y rotte y t pmy
 So many fust fust e pte the tye
 it tege my bnt y t most sentent did pme
 all y t pteful in o pteful
 That nobilit be indit to mte be finallid
 y dourtynt in dte of armes pteful

The fad y t hote y t dte pteful
 pteful alibelle a pteful y t pteful
 tye a mte y t fust a mte to tte
 fte and agte y t by a fte had fte
 tte dte y t fad in the tte fte pteful
 fte to mo gte y t be tte dteful
 te pteful y t y t armes tte pteful

y t tte dteful y t tte tte y t tte
 y t tte tte tte pteful
 tte tte y t tte y t tte
 tte tte y t tte y t tte
 tte tte y t tte y t tte
 tte tte y t tte y t tte
 tte tte y t tte y t tte

Homy hald y t tte y t tte
 fte e dte tte tte y t tte
 tte y t tte y t tte
 tte y t tte y t tte

Figure 9. Cont.

152

In bread fild & bed & to blaspem
 On purpall I trust was his pudent
 No othe no pudent him & sent
 Gold & silv in pious metallit pind
 Spun colour of Cune ppy & tye I trust
 Galle gould asu I trust ppy
 The nump as ppy ye tye
 In it apper duncif colour best
 For it is not o ppy colour
 Bot sufficient so in duncif of gound
 To Glasne duncif duncif gold so
 mod pind yau onest it ma be put
 In it bot found gold as tye ppy
 Silv is ppe silv duncif of duncif
 Galle indy asu ye ppy ppy
 Vnt duncif ppy ye duncif
 Reddy colour ppy ppy duncif
 Guncif ppe silv & silv as ye tye
 For in ye two most tye duncif ppy
 Indy & Galle of duncif ye ye tye
 & que ye tye hound duncif or ppe tye
 Ye ppe in silv & silv it indy duncif
 and of duncif ye duncif duncif ye duncif
 duncif duncif is at duncif
 All ppe in world most be as silv & silv
 ye duncif duncif ppe it al duncif for most ppe
 duncif & duncif duncif gold & silv al
 duncif of duncif duncif ppe
 & most noble for no colour affect
 So ppe as gold to ppe in it
 For ppe ppe most duncif ppe

Figure 9. Cont.

154

Wherfor in this metallie colour & pamp
 Quenche honorable ydall arme pishid
 war first findinge of ydall pious strengt
 In number fute and so costly maids
 That all nobles may not gredly at anye
 stonem ydall ydall of armye dypom
 fte ydall be put & pout not poutom
 In fute of ydall metallie & ydall colour

The quenching stonem ydall first stonem pishid
 ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 quenching stonem ydall ydall ydall ydall
 The ydall pishid and signe of the ydall
 Or ydall ydall of ydall ydall ydall ydall
 fte & blasing & all ydall ydall ydall
 In ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall

How ydall be ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 also be ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 That ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 and ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
 ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall ydall
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Figure 9. Cont.

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Figure 9. Cont.

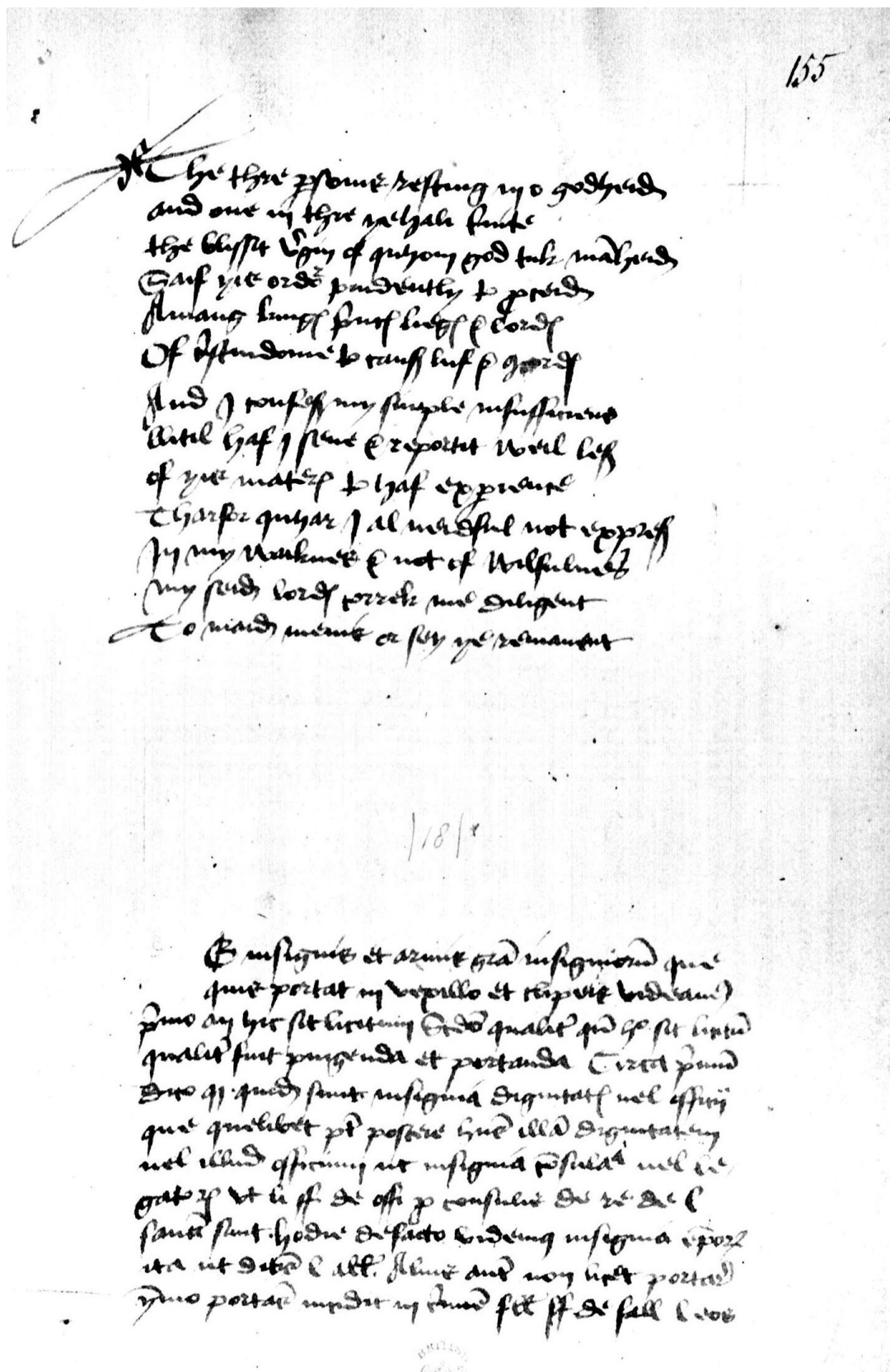


Figure 9. ff 151r–155r from the Harleian ms. (H) converted to JPEGs, page-cropped for reasons of space and contrast-enhanced for legibility where necessary.

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Notes

- ¹ Nowadays, the adjective “Scotch” is deprecated as a synonym for Scots (language) or as the adjectival Scottish, except as a prefix to “whisky”, but it was a common form, even in Scotland, until the early 20th Century.
- ² Cummyng is thoroughly given his character by Sir James Balfour-Paul (1900) who reminds us that the office derives from Marchmont or Roxburgh Castle and dates from 1436. The office of Lord Lyon is held in high regard today, but in Cummyng’s time it was a treasonable offence to lay hands on Lyon. In 1515, Cummyng made an unwise slight against the Red Earl of Angus in the hearing of his grandfather, the first Lord Drummond, 5th Chief of Cargill and Stobhall and one of the most powerful men of the time. Belying the clan motto, “Gang Warily”, Drummond struck Cummyng a blow, for which he was arrested for treason, confined in Blackness Castle for a year and saw his lands forfeit. Drummond had been trying to promote a marriage between the Earl of Angus and Queen Margaret, widow of James IV. Lord Strathallan (also a Drummond) tells us in his 1681 history of the family: ‘This marriage begot such jealousy in the rulers of the State, that the Earl of Angus was cited to appear before the Council, and Sir William Cummin of Inneralochy, Knight, Lyon King-at-Arms, appeared to deliver the charge; in doing whereof he seemed to the Lord Drummond to have approached the Earl with more boldness than discretion, for which he gave the Lyon a box on the ear; whereof he complained to John, Duke of Albany, then newly made Governor to King James V.; and the Governor, to give an example of his justice at his first entry to his new office, caused imprison the Lord Drummond’s person in the Castle of Blackness, and forfeit his estate to the Crown for his rashness. But the Duke, considering, after information, what a fyne man the lord was, and how strongly allyed with most of the great families of the nation, was well pleased that the Queen-mother and Three Estates of Parliament should intercede for him, as he was soone restored to his libertie and fortune.’ (Taylor 1887).
- ³ Personal communications, Mrs. Elizabeth Roads, then Lyon Clerk and Carrick Pursuivant (from 1992) then Snawdoun Herald (2010 to 2021), and other colleagues in the Heraldry Society of Scotland.
- ⁴ Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (1636–1691) was a lawyer and politician from Dundee, educated at St. Andrews, King’s College, Aberdeen and Bourges. He became an advocate in 1659, a Member of Parliament ten years later and Lord Advocate in 1677. As Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, he established the Advocate’s Library in Edinburgh, which became the National Library of Scotland in 1925. “Bluidy Mackenzie” was ruthless in his prosecution of the Covenanters, using the law where John Graham of Claverhouse used armed men in support of Charles II and the Bishops. However, in the present context, Mackenzie of Rosehaugh is remembered as one of the “institutional writers” of Scots law and as the author of *Scotland’s Heraldry* (the only text on heraldry which has legal authority in Scotland).
- ⁵ Guidon (from *guide homme*)—a small flag attached to the head of a spear or lance, carried by a leader. It was “the first colours that any commander of horse can let flie in the field” . . . three feet deep at the staff, and six feet long, tapering to a point which is split “into two peaks a foot deepe”. See Gervase Markham’s (1974) *Souldier’s Accidence*.
- ⁶ Pencil or pennocel—a narrow ribbon-like pennant at the tip of a lance. It is distinct from a pennon, a small triangular flag on a knight’s lance, and bearing his arms; as a mark of honour or distinction the point was cut off, thus making the pennon a banner and the bearer a Knight Banneret. Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* describes how: “. . . by his baner was borne his pynoun Of gold ful riche, in which ther was i-bete The Minatour which that he slough in Crete.”
- ⁷ This refers to cadency, the differencing of arms of younger sons and their descendants. See l. 43 and notes, below.
- ⁸ Heraldry makes a distinction between heraldic beasts and their “natural” forms. An example is the dolphin (Figure 8).
- ⁹ Erased—a head or limb torn from the body (as opposed to *couped*, or cut).
- ¹⁰ Not exactly. See notes to Stanza V.
- ¹¹ This is a clue as to authorship.
- ¹² “Tent” is in the sense of “Tak tent” (pay attention, take heed) which is the motto of the Heraldry Society of Scotland.
- ¹³ “Differencing” distinguishes the “undifferenced” arms of a father during his life from those of his sons.
- ¹⁴ The word “aglot” caused Furnivall and Adams some pain. Properly, it is a metal barb on a lance, but here is more likely an annulet (a voided roundel), one of the marks of “cadency”, or differencing of sons’ arms. See Stanza VII
- ¹⁵ Or “tried”, “tested”.

- Or “almost”.
- The heraldic tinctures are: the metals—Or (gold) and Argent (silver, but usually depicted as white, or the colour of the underlying medium)—and the four colours: Sable (black), Gules (red), Azure (blue) and Vert (green); plus Purple (purple, see below). Tenné (Tawny) and Murrey (Sanguine) are rare.
- “Thopasis” is topaz, a gold-coloured stone. The silicate used as a gemstone today was possibly unknown to the ancients, but the stone then called *topazos* and the “topaz” of the Old Testament was chrysolite or peridot.
- The arms of Brittany are based on Ermine, which is white (Argent) with black (Sable) ermine spots.
- The divisions of the “field” (the main body of the shield). The word ‘sic’ in this context is a mystery but could be a mistranscription for “fec” (fesse). If so, pale has been omitted.
- “Right” should be *dexter*, i.e., from the point of view of the armiger holding the shield.
- What the author calls “windows” are wounds or golpes and are Purpure.
- These following are the “ordinaries”, the commonest charges found on the field, and their related partitions.
- This word is cancelled out in Q.
- By convention, therefore, everyone who bears arms is “noble” (in the sense of “virtuous”).
- Presumably, corporate, where two or three lions’ bodies share one head (bi-corporate, etc.).
- Morné, without teeth, claws or tongue.
- Possibly a patriarchal cross, with an extra, smaller horizontal bar.
- Possibly *cerclée* (*recerclée*).
- This is “enurny”, where a bordure is charged with animals, in which case it “goes round”.
- The French is *heroncel/heronceaux*. Shakespeare’s editors were clearly unaware of the term when they “corrected” it as: “I know a hawk from a handsaw”, in *Hamlet*. Act ii. Sc. 2. See [Addis \(1872\)](#).
- This may refer to “undy”, wavy lines across the field.
- Compony is two tinctures alternating.
- This is utterly confused. Simply put, when a number of mascles (voided lozenges) are put together the blazon is “masculy”. The fusil (from the word for “flint”, hence the shape) is narrower than the lozenge.
- When a predator (lion, eagle) has coloured claws and teeth, the term is “armed”.
- Heraldic dolphins, as with many heraldic beasts, are unlike their “natural” counterparts (see Figure 8).
- The modern terms are billetty (small oblongs set in a pattern), humetty (couped, or cut off at both ends), and indented (two indentures, e.g., at the end of the arms of a cross).
- “Glondes” are a complete mystery. The nearest Scots word is “glondure”, meaning bad temper or a sulk, as: “The Quene, with whome the said Erle was then in the glondouris, promised favouris in all his lauchfull suytis to wemen”; *Works of John Knox* vol. I (1546), p. 143. In this context, “glondes” may mean per pale and per bend sinister.
- Erased is as if torn off, as opposed to “couped”, cut off.
- A partition line may be erased or couped (does not touch the sides of the shield), as with a leg or head. Byally is gyronny of six. For vair and vairy (here, *verré*) see the notes to the Stranza.
- “Mold” has the sense (in verse) of the earth we stand on, but in heraldry is the field of the escutcheon; cf. “All men on mold ar markit for to de” ([Sempill 1573](#)) and “Syne in asure the mold A lyoun crovnit with gold” Holland n.d., ca. 1450). Holland was a careful heraldist, and in *Howlat* wrote what is possibly earliest poem of any length in the Scottish alliterative revival. See [Riddy \(1986\)](#).
- There are called “furs” rather than “pans”, which denotes cloth. They require no tincture, as this is implicit (as roundels).
- Here he lists the three ranks of “lords of arms”: Kings of Arms, Herald and Pursuivants. These are still in use.
- We might here have expected the Scots word “erd(e)”, more common before 1550 when the Middle English word replaced it. However, according to DSL it is found earlier, in Records of the Earldom of Orkney (1480): “With all fredomis, profeits, and richtwis pertinans, under erth and abov”.
- Scots would likely be “ilkane”. However, “ichone” is used in earlier scots poetry, at least as far back as James I (r. 1405–1437); see [Jamieson \(1808\)](#) and DSL.
- This usage of “ring” (related to “reign”) indicates sovereignty, or the territory so ruled. There are numerous examples in DOST, not least in a line from Wallace (1327): “Eftir the dayt off Alexandris ryng”.
- A reference to the unmolesable status of heralds in their ambassadorial function. See n. 2 for a description of the consequences of assaulting Cumyng himself, when Lord Lyon.
- The normal Scots word would, at this time, be “trowth”, even with the irregular extra vowel, rather than the English “troth” and “truth”.
- “Luf” could also indicate praise, honour.

- ⁵⁰ Lyon King of Arms Act 1672; *Acts of the Scottish Parliament* 1672 c. 47.
- ⁵¹ Upton, a canon of Salisbury Cathedral, wrote *De studio militari*, about 1440. The only earlier significant heraldic writer in England was the first, John of Guildford (Johannes de Bado Aureo) whose *Tractatus de armis* appeared about 1394. There was a Welsh armorial treatise by John Trevor, the *Llyfr arfau* (Book of Arms, 15th Century).

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