

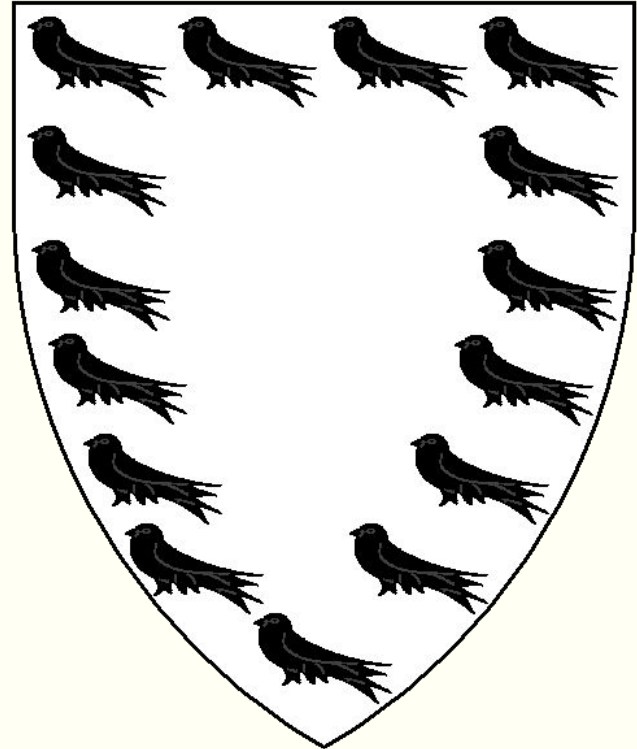
# Charge Group Theory

*An informal trip through SENA Appendix I, with diverse  
examples gleaned from the Lochac Roll of Arms*

Presented by Autrou Ollivier Le Floch

# Autrou Ollivier Le Floch

- Based in 15th century Brittany
- From the Barony of Innilgard
- Armorist since 2014
- Rocket (Lochac Submissions)  
2020-2022
- Ragged Staff Herald



A decorative border of grey birds, possibly seagulls or terns, arranged in a rectangular frame around the text. The birds are facing right and are evenly spaced along all four sides of the page.

## Special Thanks

- [Lochac Roll of Arms](#) - William Castille & Quarrel Heralds
- [Padraig Lowther](#)

## Alternative versions of this class

- [SENA Appendix I](#)
- [Assorted Lessons in SCA Heraldry, Lesson 4, Herveus d'Ormonde](#)
- [East Kingdom Herald University, Armory 102, Yehuda ben Moshe](#)
- [Introduction on How to Blazon, KWHSS 2020, Padraig Lowther](#)



# Assumed Knowledge

- Basics of SCA Heraldry
- Field Divisions
- Charges and Ordinaries
- How to talk!



## Why Charge Group Theory Doesn't Matter

- It's not period

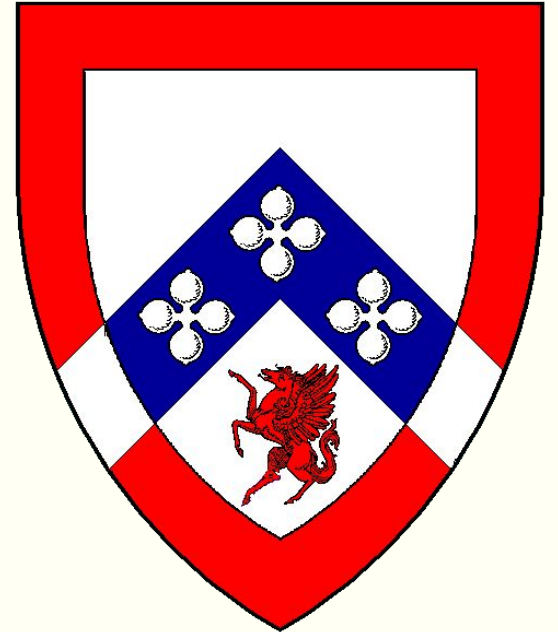
## Why Charge Group Theory Matters

- Blazonry
- Conflict checking
- Armorial style
- Mentioned in SENA 355 times!

# What is a Charge Group?

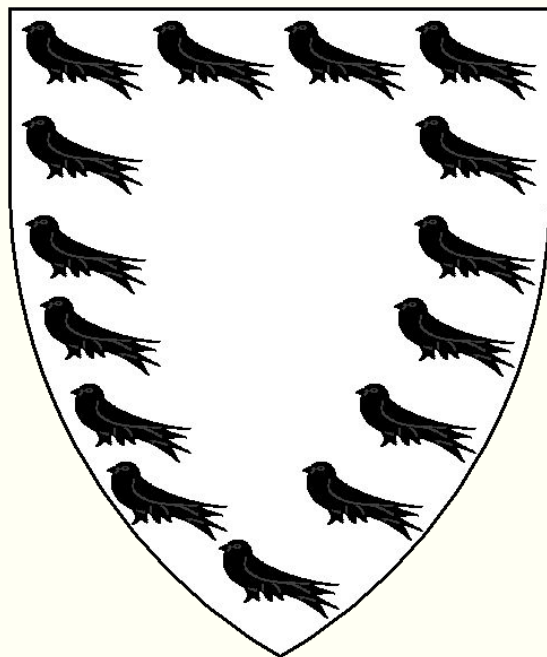
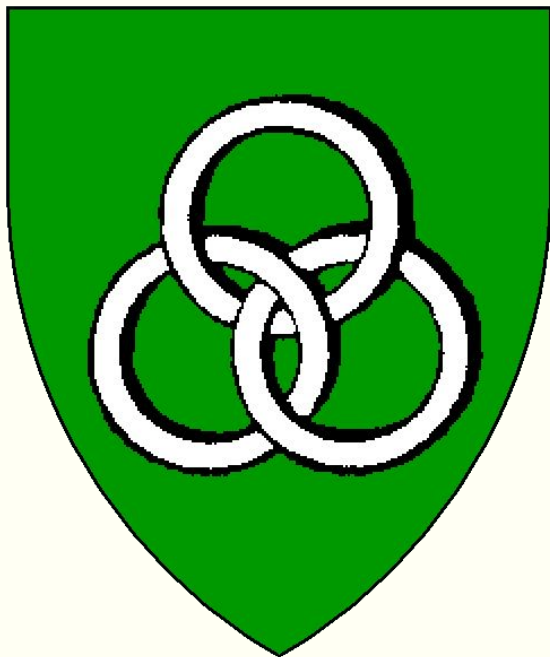
*A charge group is a group of charges of approximately the same size and visual weight that act as a single visual unit.*

- One or more charges
- They do not have to be the same
- They have the same 'visual weight'
- They fulfil the same function
- They're distinct from everything else.





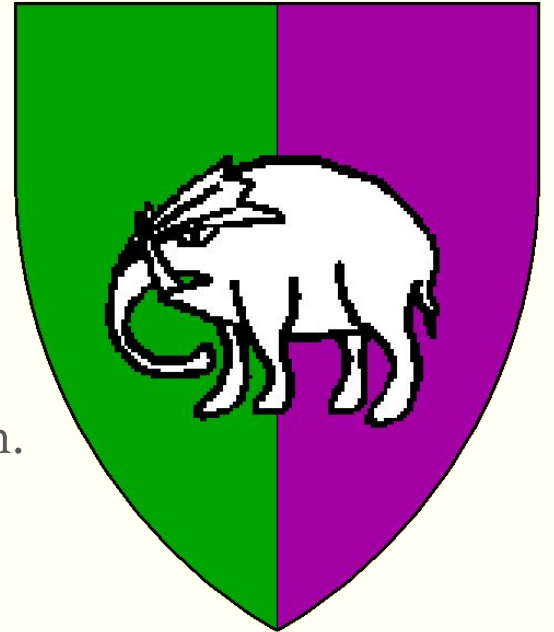
# What is a Charge Group?



## Primary Charges

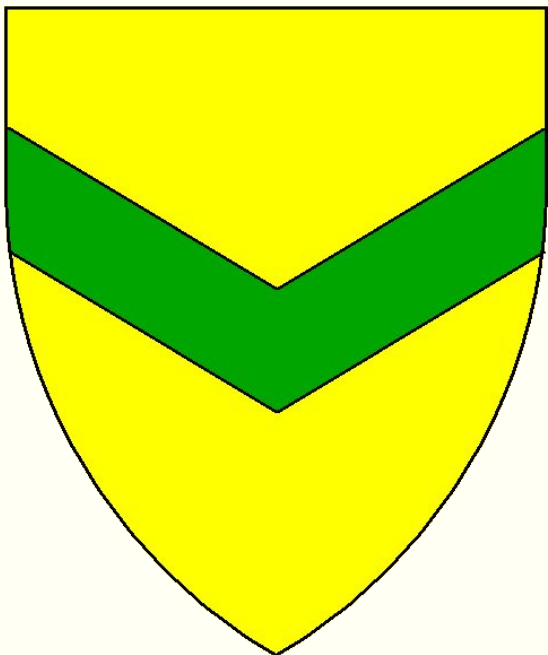
*The primary charge group is the charge or group of charges which are directly on the field in the visual center of the shield.*

- Directly on the field
- Have good contrast with the field
- Central ordinaries are always primary
- Usually the largest charges
- Usually in the middle, overlying line of division.

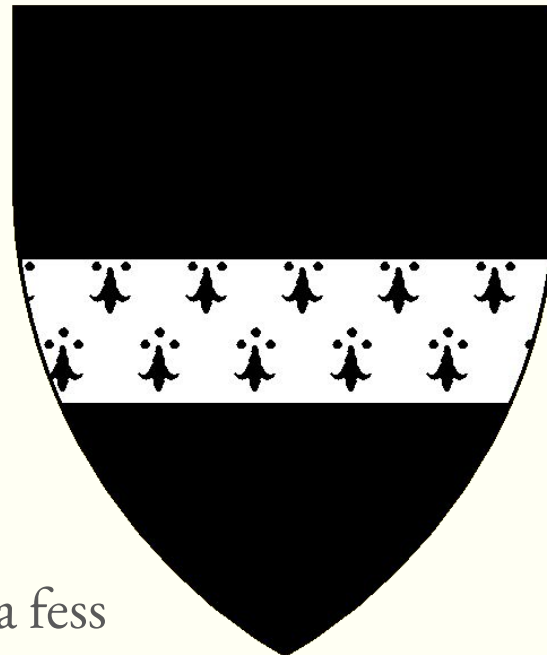




# Primary Charges

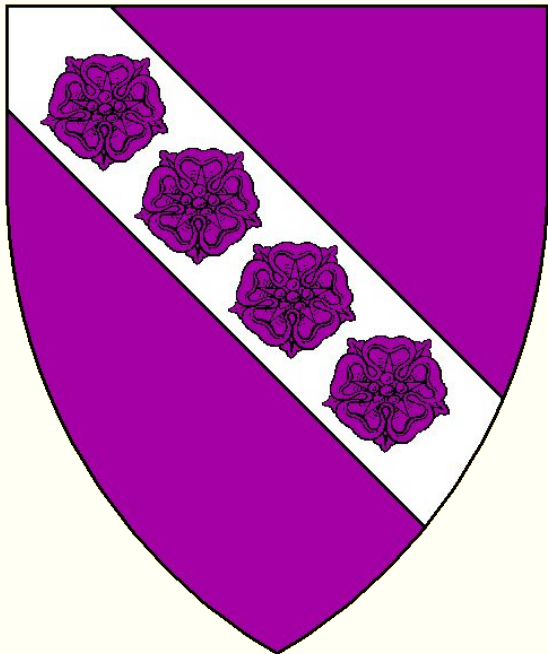


a chevron inverted

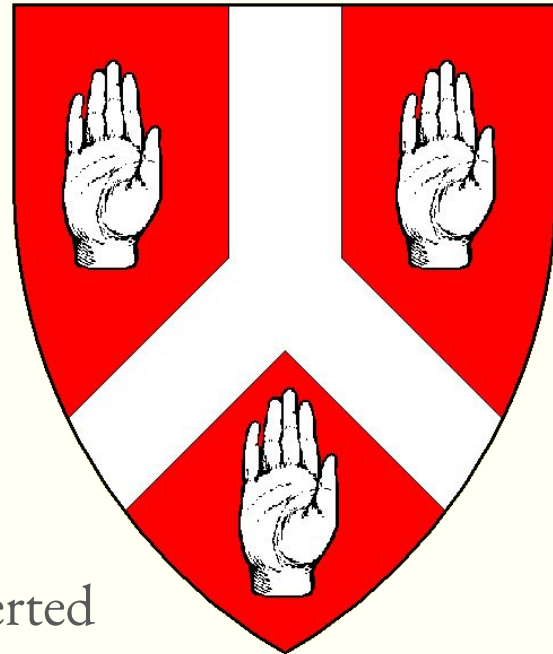


a fess

# Primary Charges

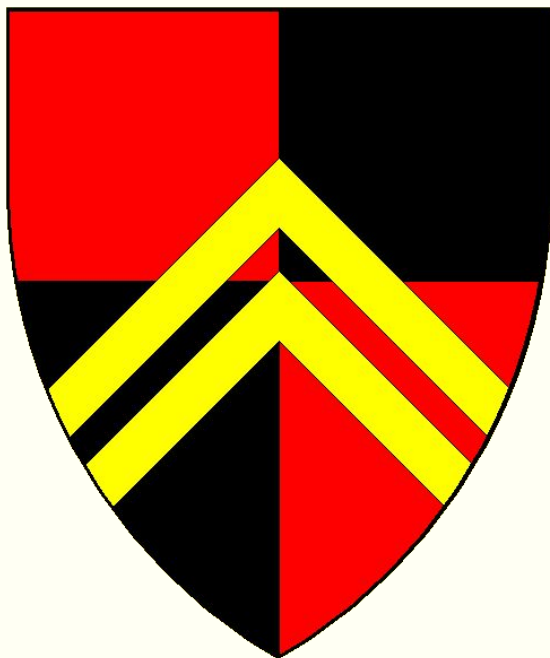


a bend

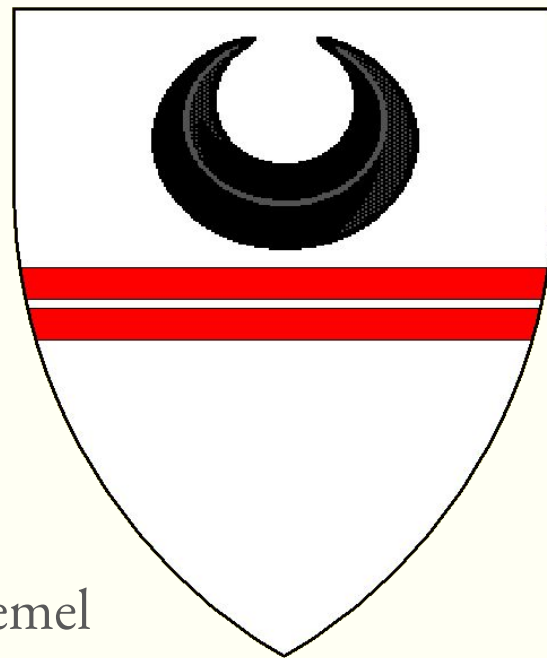


a pall inverted

# Primary Charges

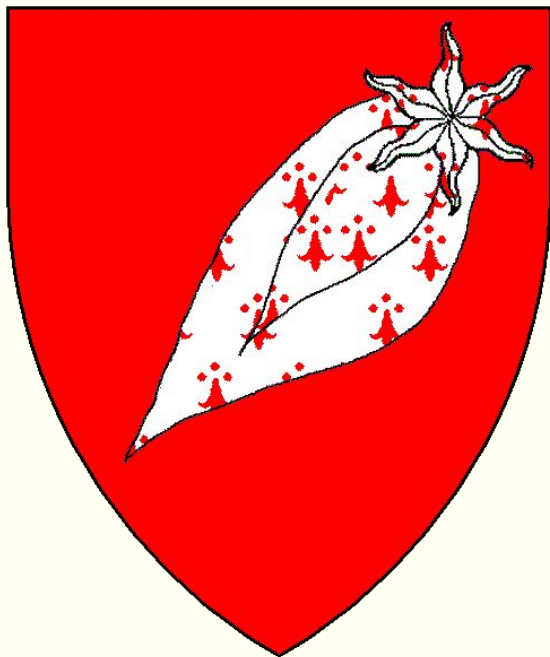


two chevronels

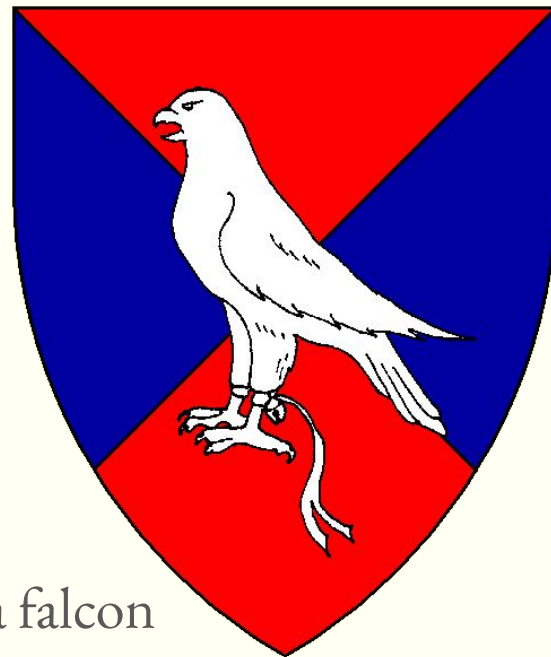


a bar gemel

## Primary Charges

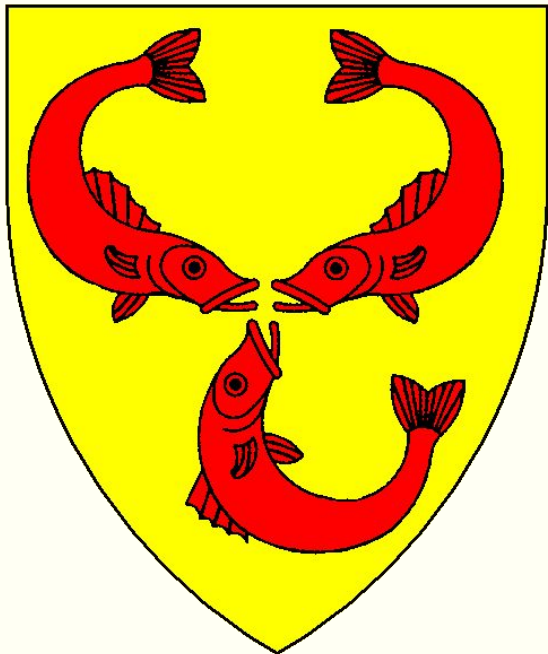


a comet

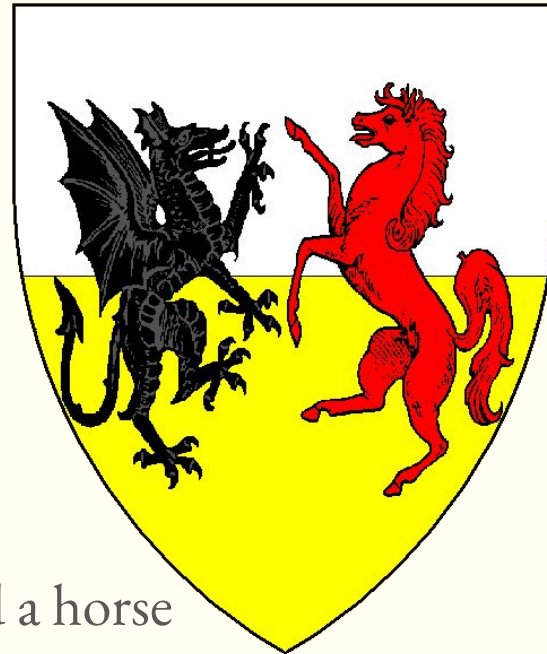


a falcon

# Primary Charges



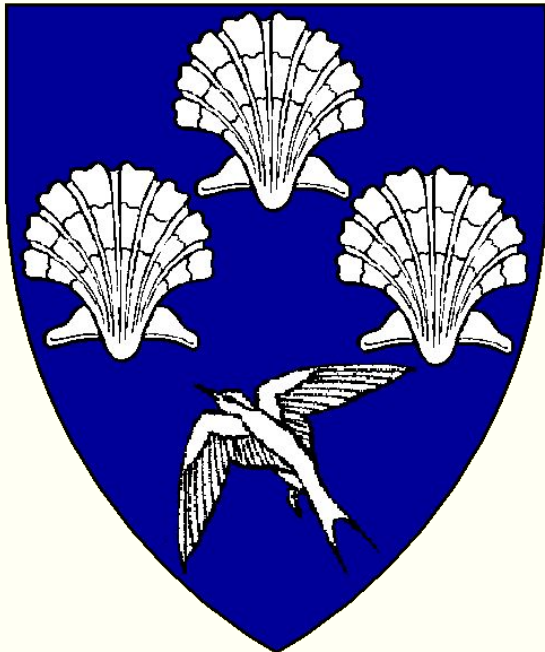
three fish



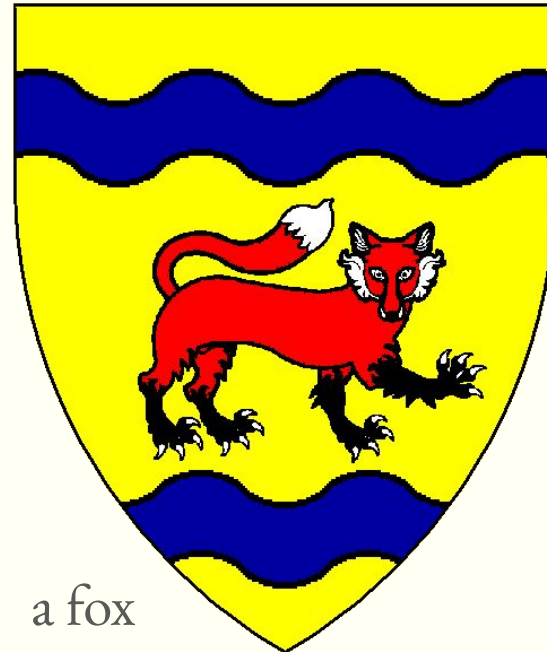
a dragon and a horse



## Primary Charges



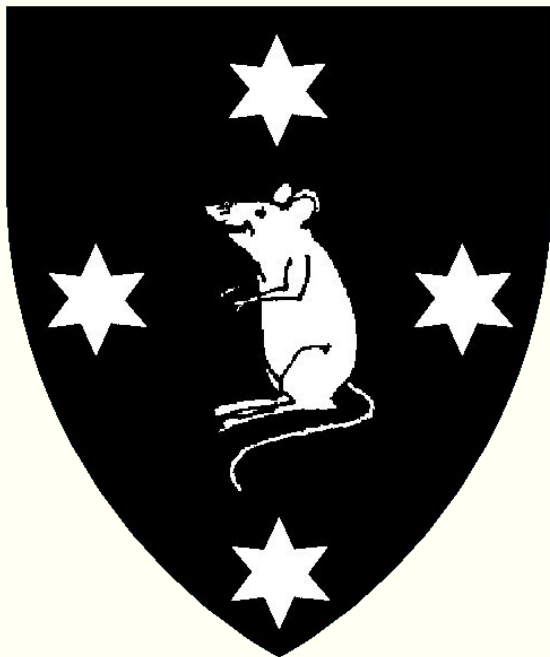
three escallops  
and a swallow



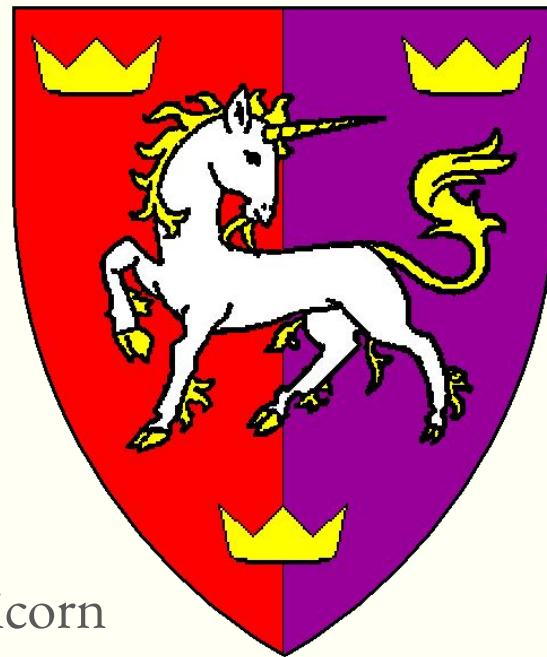
a fox



## Primary Charges

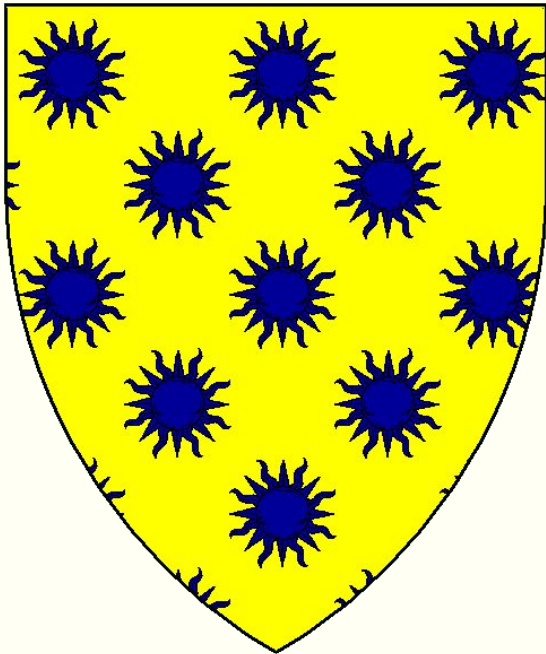


a rat



a unicorn

# Primary Charges



a semy of suns

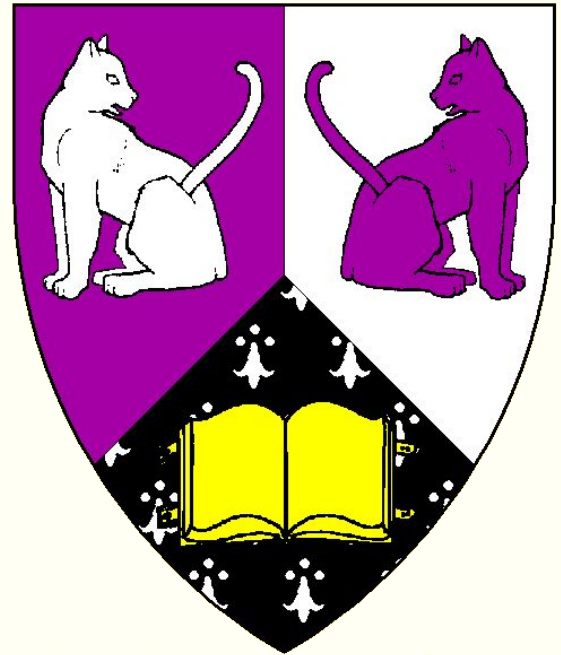


a chevron

# Primary Charges

*[Where] each of the charges is entirely in a single section of the field... the charges are collectively the primary charge group.*

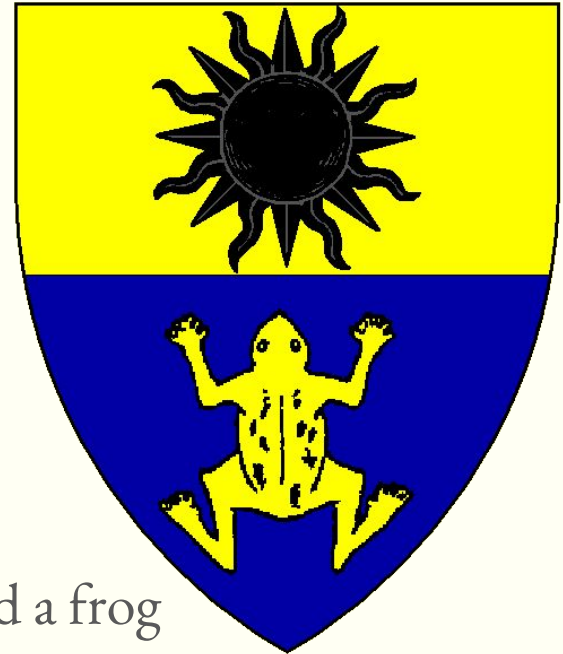
- Even when one is bigger than the others
- Even when one section contains a semy
- Even when one of the sections is empty.



## Primary Charges



two estoiles and  
a phoenix



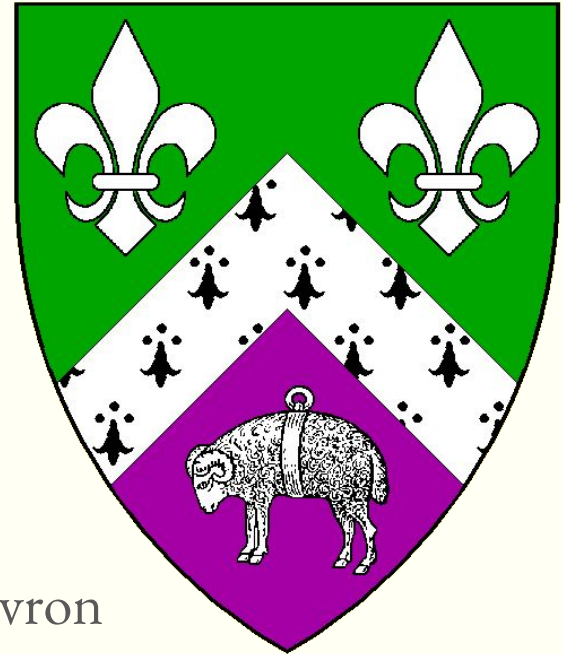
a sun and a frog



## Primary Charges

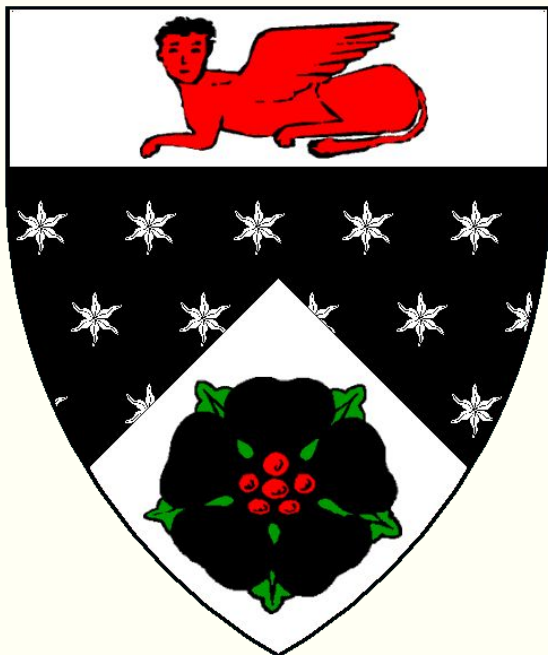


two sheaves of arrows  
and a triskelion of  
dragon's heads

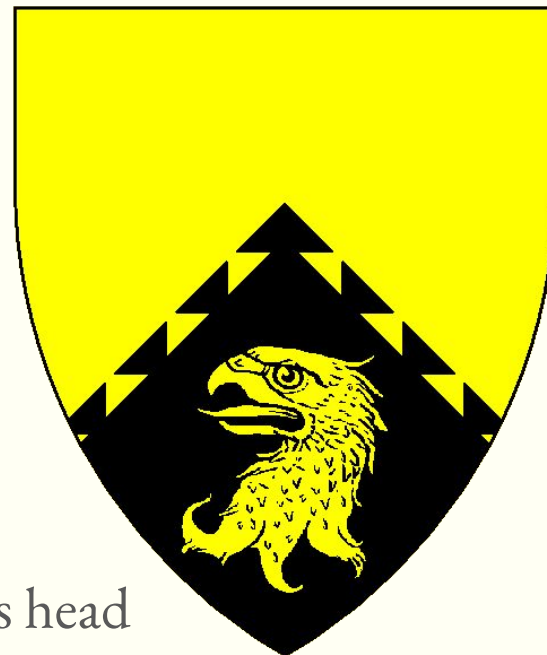


a chevron

## Primary Charges



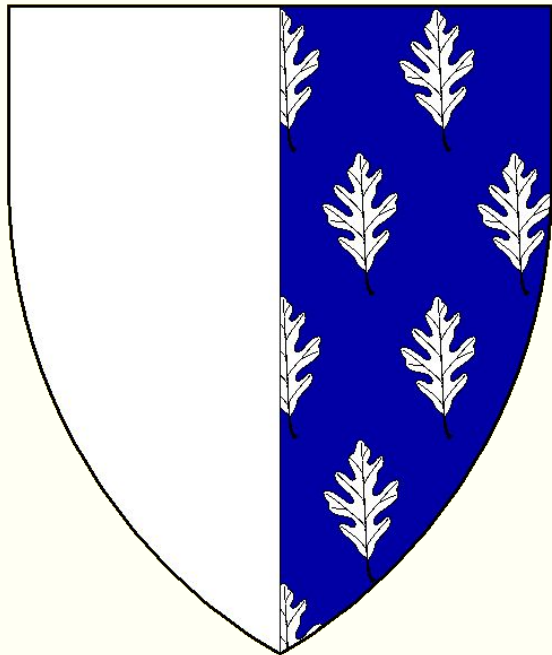
a semy of estoiles  
and a rose



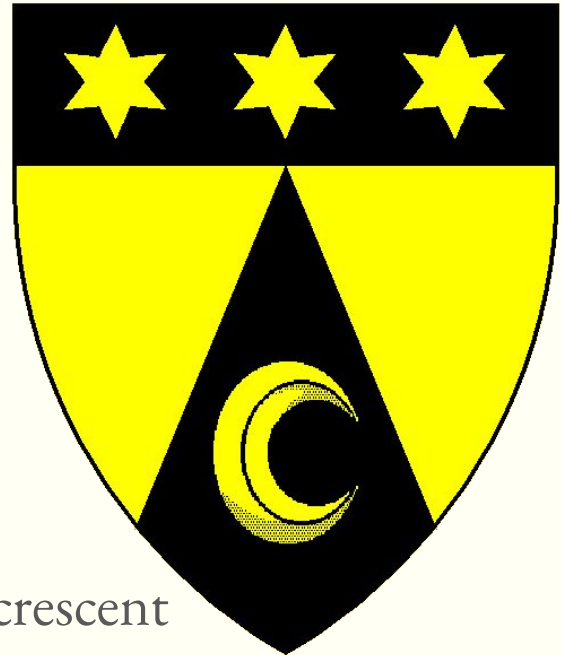
an eagle's head



## Primary Charges



a semy of leaves

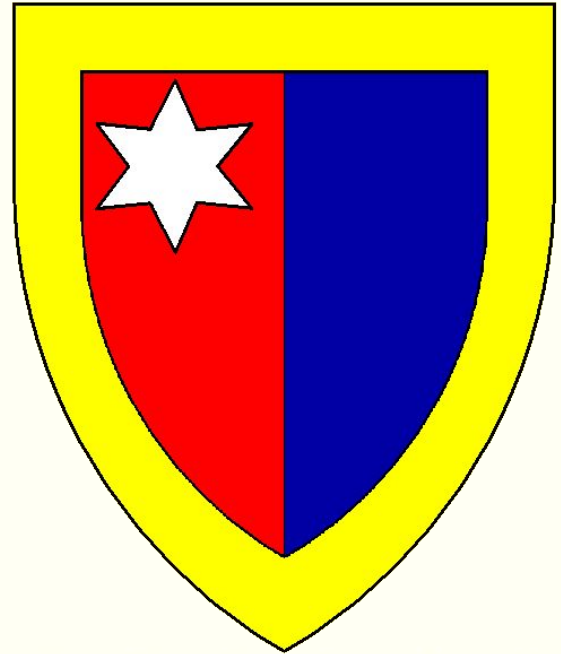


a decrescent

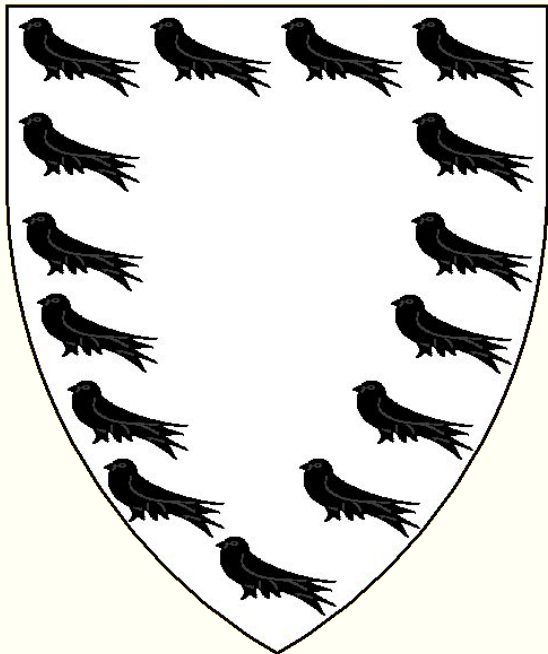
## Primary Charges

*If there are no central ordinaries or central charges, but there are non-ordinary charges in chief, in base, in canton, or in orle, they are the primary charge group*

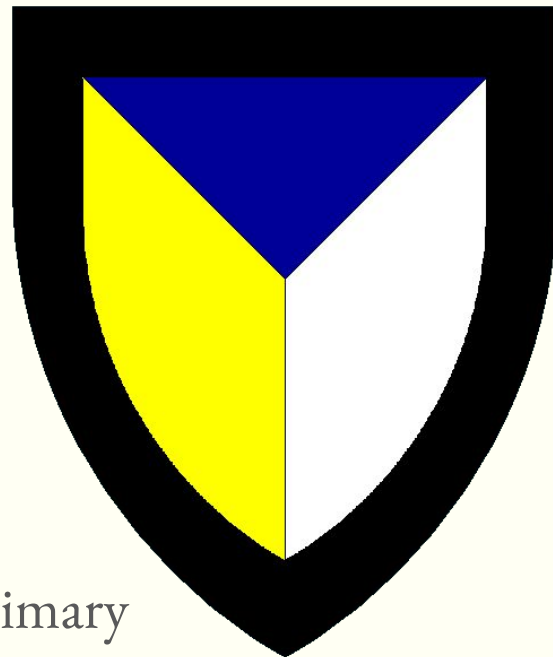
- Peripheral charges can be primary
- Peripheral ordinaries never are



# Primary Charges



an orle of martlets

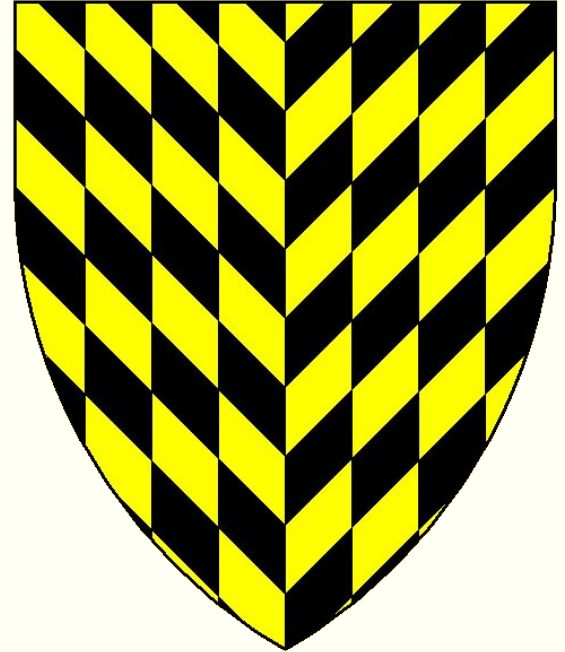


Field primary

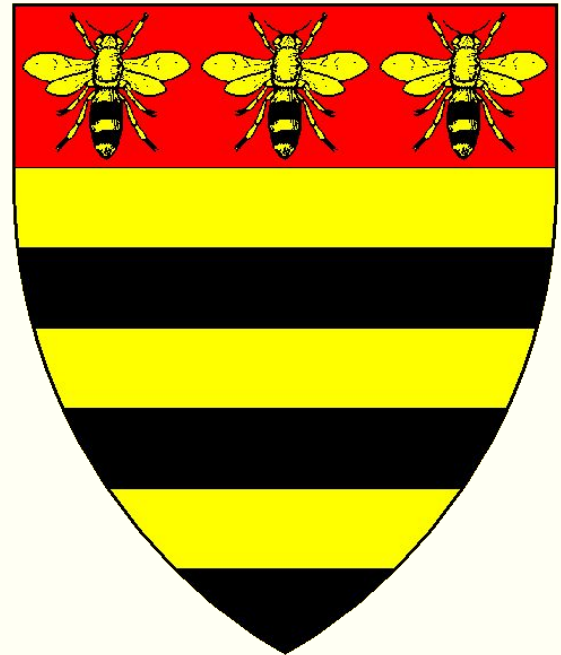
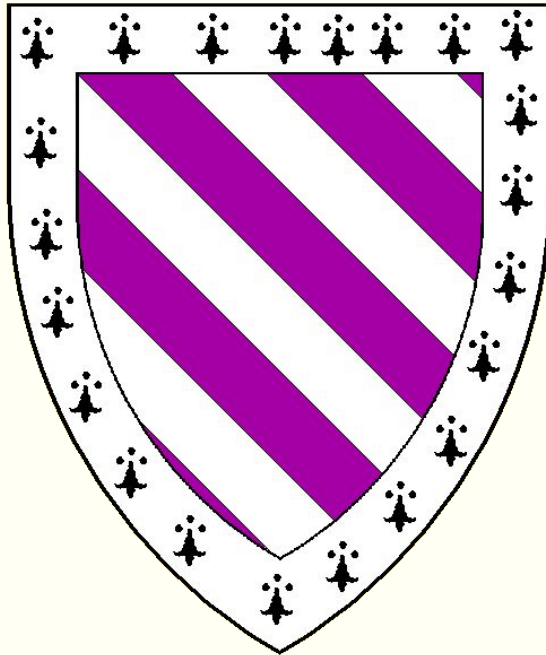
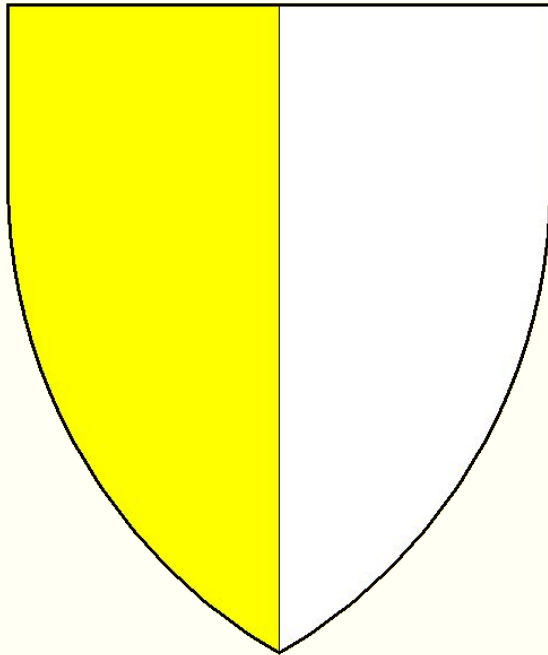
# Field-Primary Designs

*Not every device has a primary charge, but most do*

- Not all designs have a primary charge group
- Field-primary designs have different conflict rules



# Field-Primary Designs

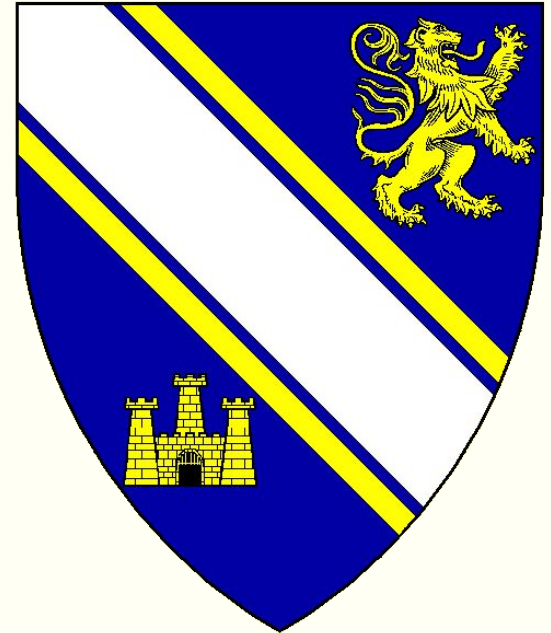




## Secondary Charges

*A secondary charge group is a single charge or group of charges directly on the field around the primary charges.*

- Are directly on the field
- Have good contrast with the field
- Are usually smaller than primaries
- There might be more than one secondary charge group.

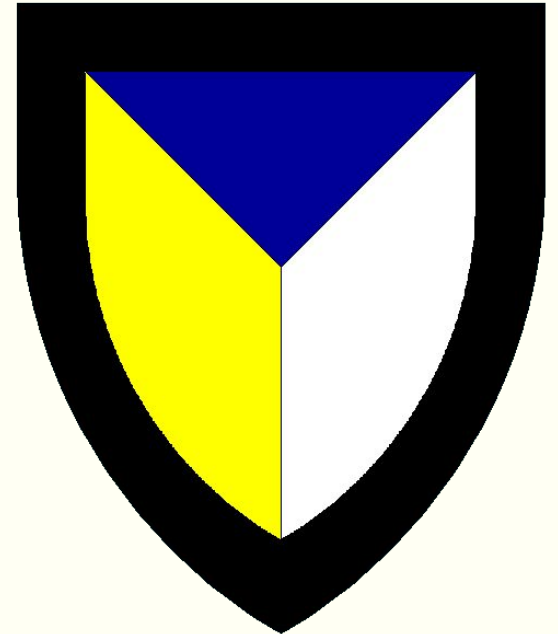




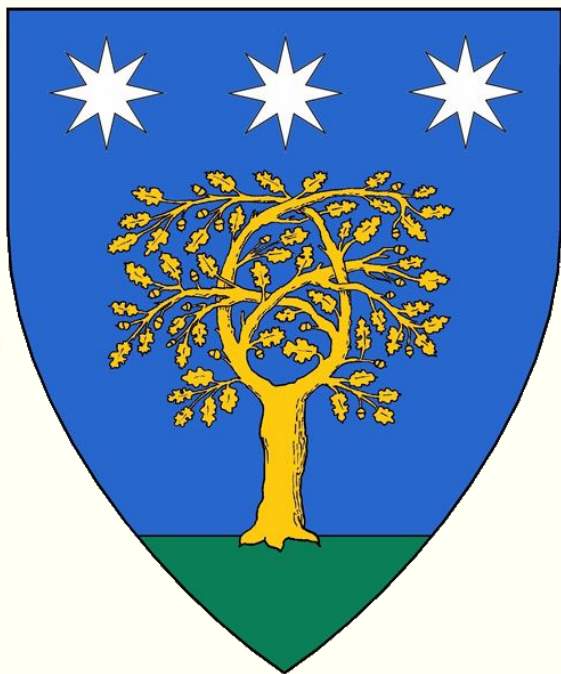
## Secondary Charges

*A secondary charge group is a single charge or group of charges directly on the field around the primary charges.*

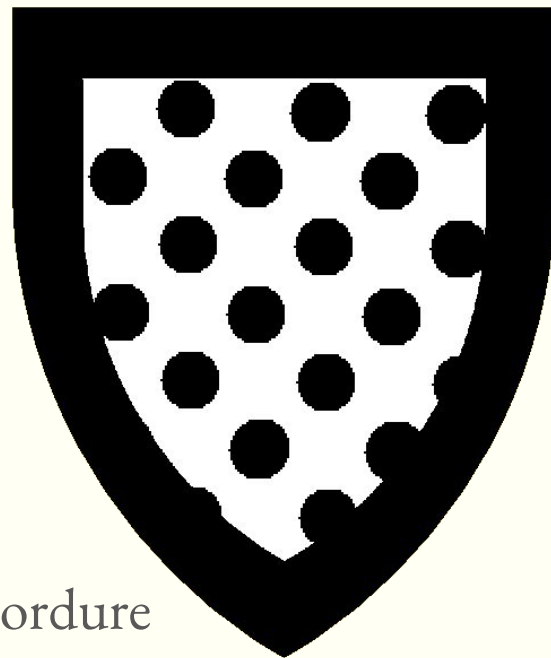
- Peripheral ordinaries
- Semy
- Cotises and endorses
- Other charges (around the primary)
- Other charges (in base, in chief, etc.).



## Secondary Charges

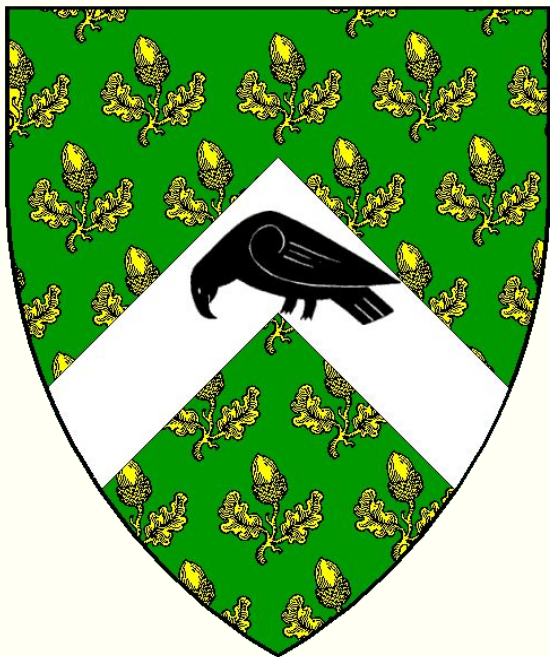


three mullets; a base

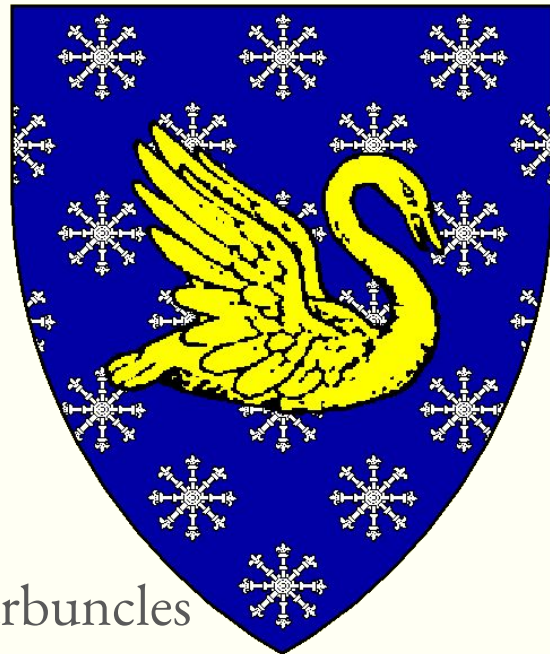


a bordure

## Secondary Charges

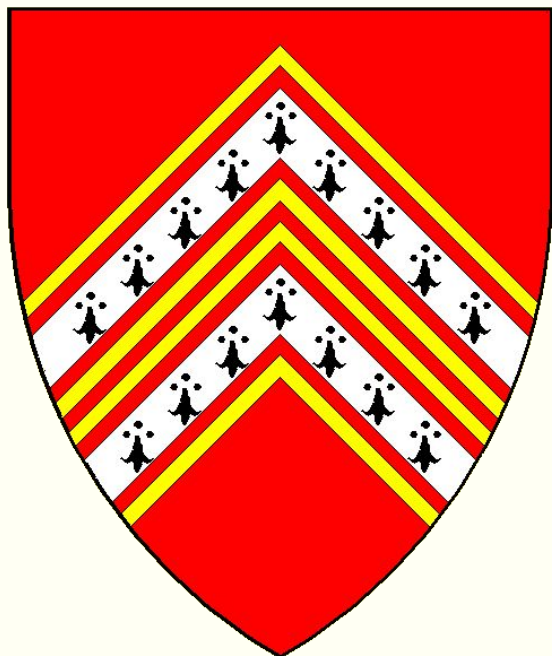


a semy of acorns

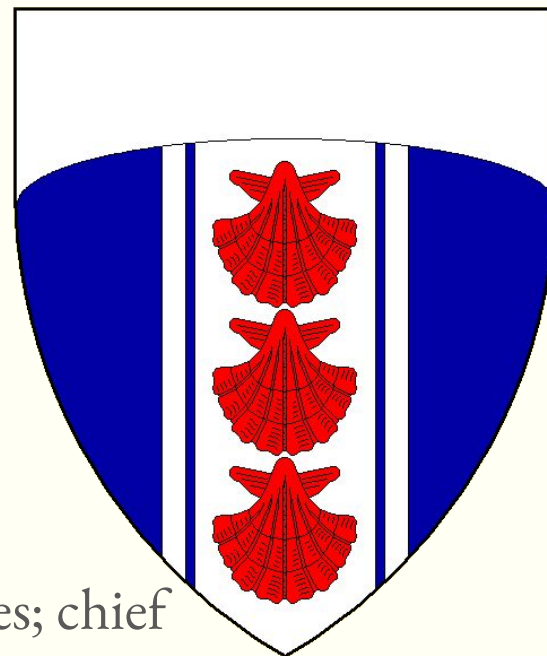


a semy of escarbuncles

## Secondary Charges



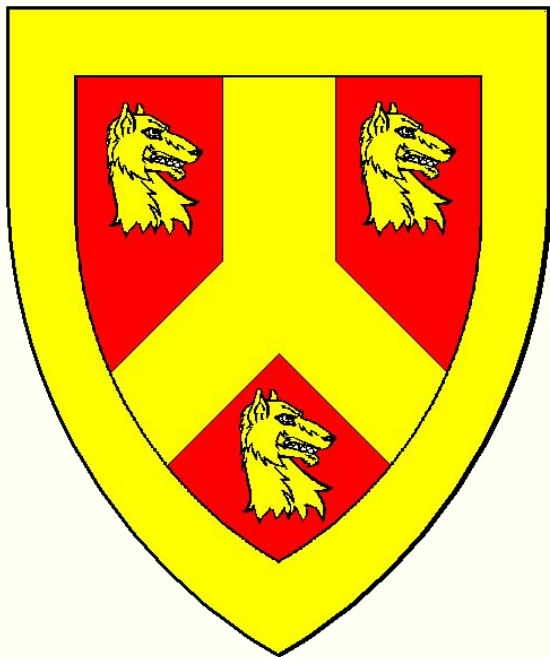
cotises



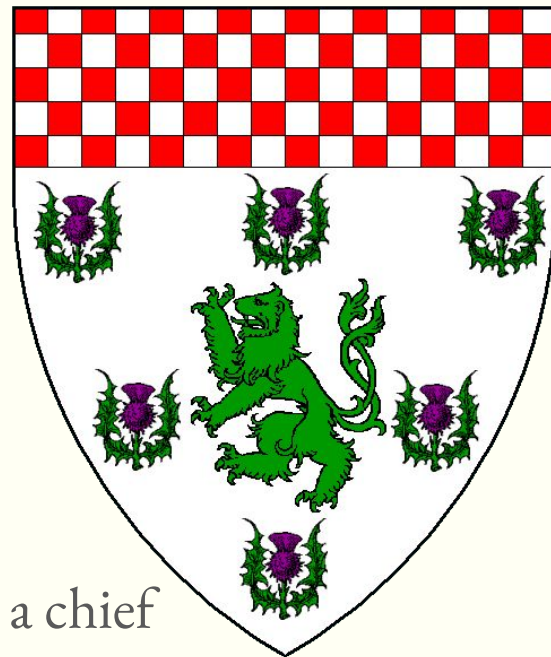
endorses; chief



## Secondary Charges

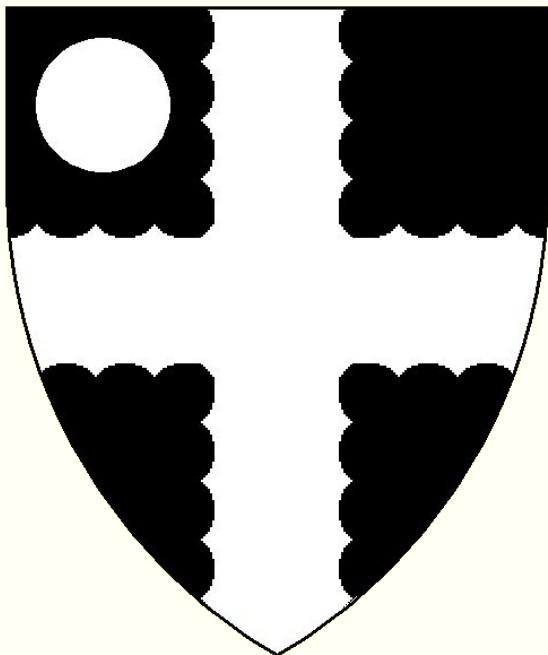


three wolf's heads; a  
bordure

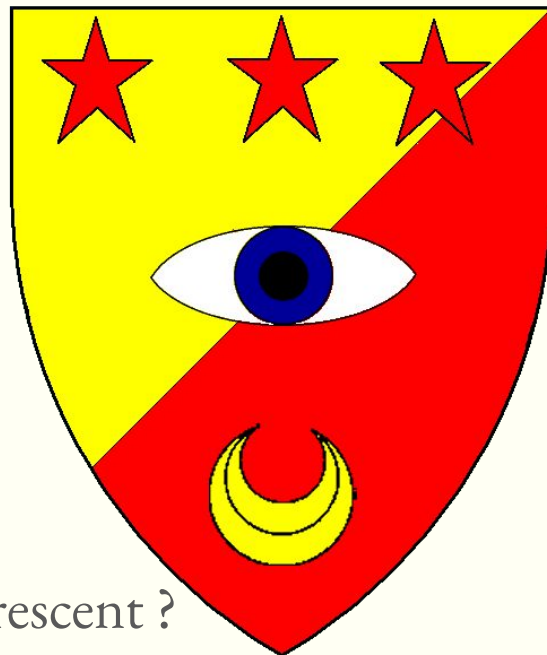


an orle of thistles; a chief

## Secondary Charges



a plate



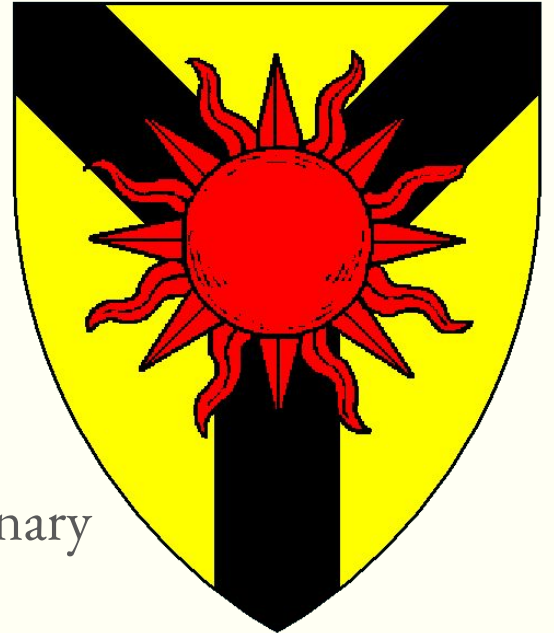
three mullets; a crescent ?



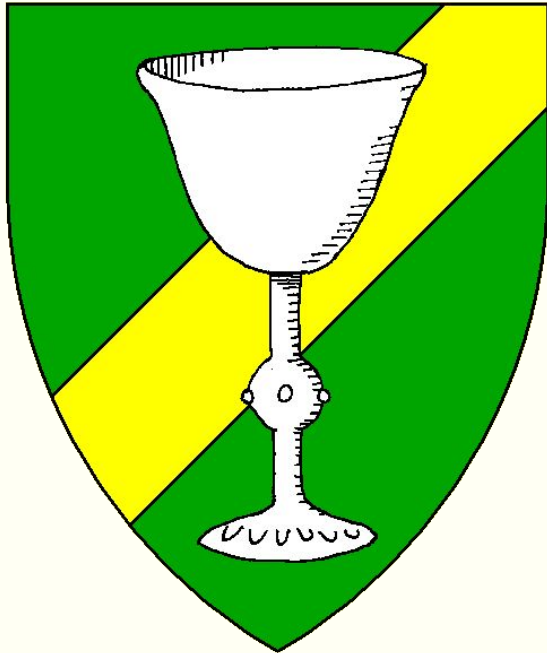
## Overall Charges

*A charge or group of charges which crosses the center of the field, lying partially on the field and partially on other charges*

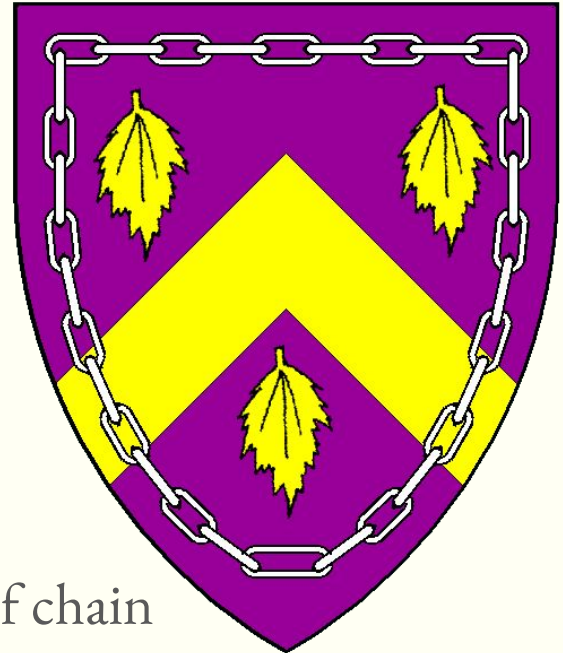
- Substantially on the field
- Partly on the primary
- Good contrast with the field
- Some contrast with the underlying charges
- Can't usually cross peripheral ordinaries
- They or the primary must be long or an ordinary
- Can only be one overall charge group.



## Overall Charges

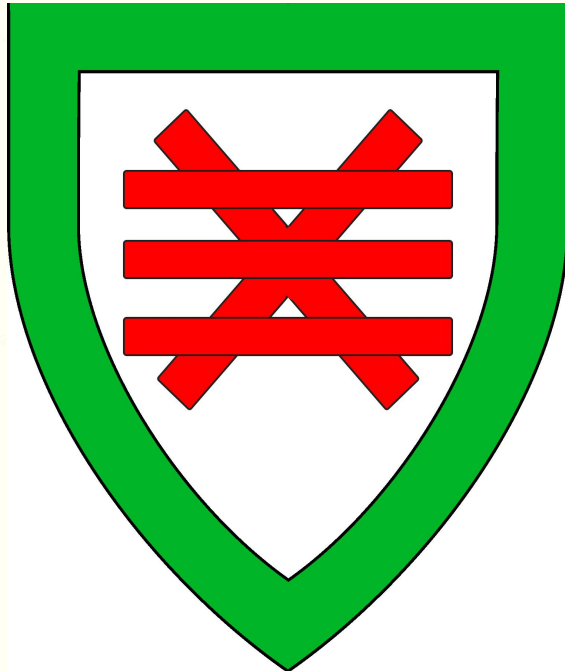


a cup

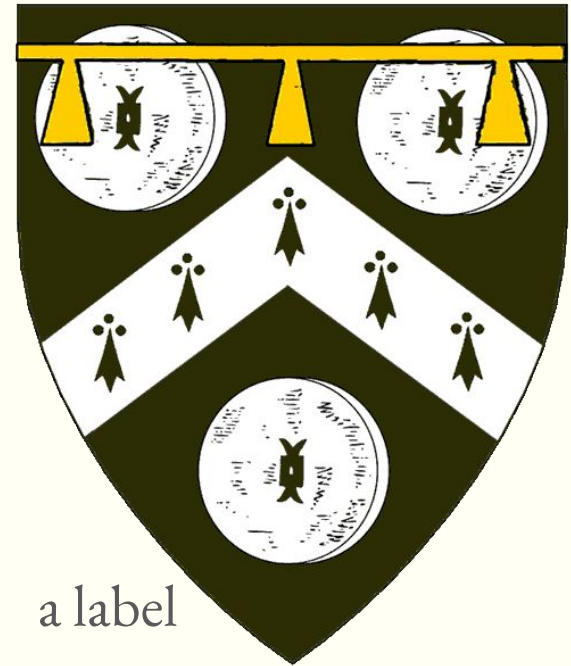


an orle of chain

# Overall Charges



three bars couped

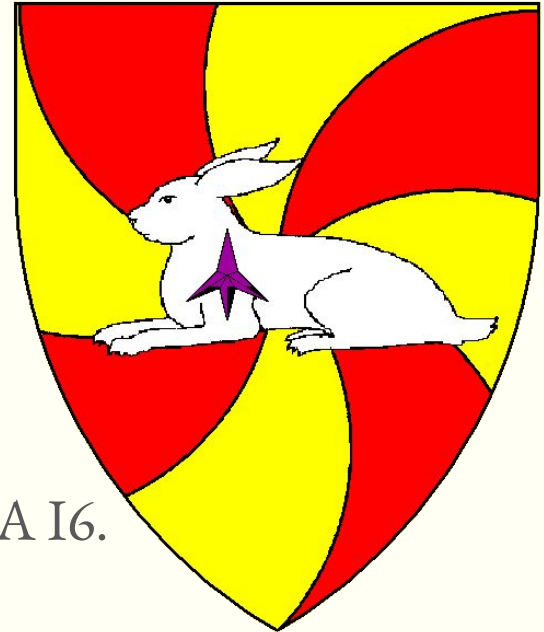


a label

## Tertiary Charges

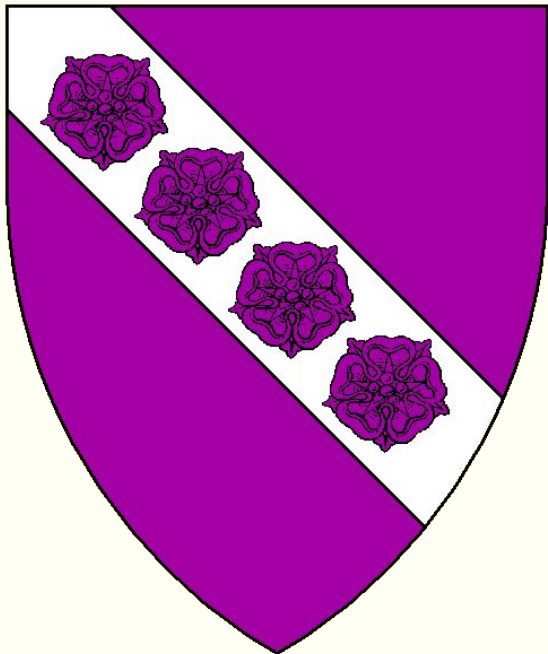
*A charge or group of charges which are entirely on another charge, not on the field themselves*

- On another charge group
- Can't be on other tertiaries
- Good contrast with the underlying charges
- Only one tertiary group per underlying charge group
- ...Unless 'closely associated charges' per SENA I6.

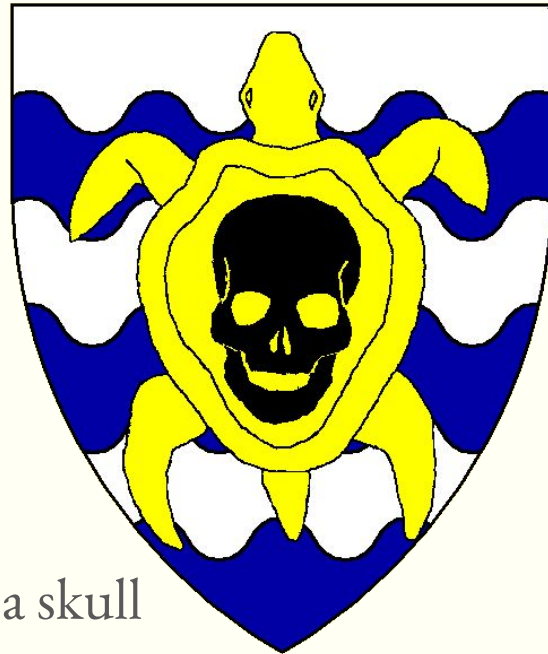




## Tertiary Charges



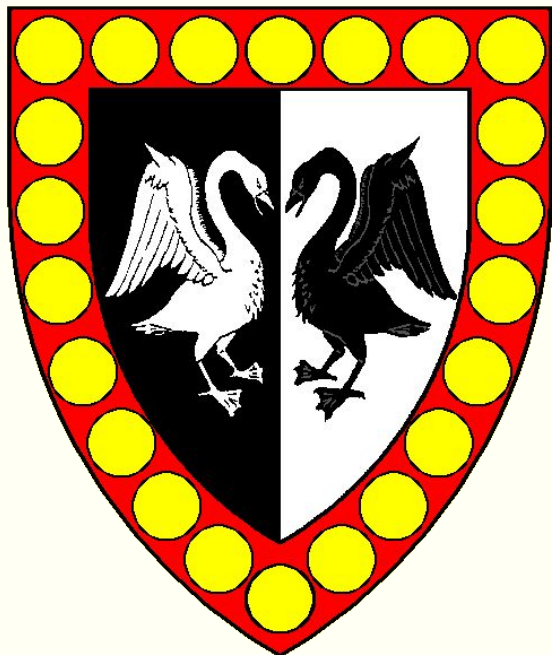
four roses



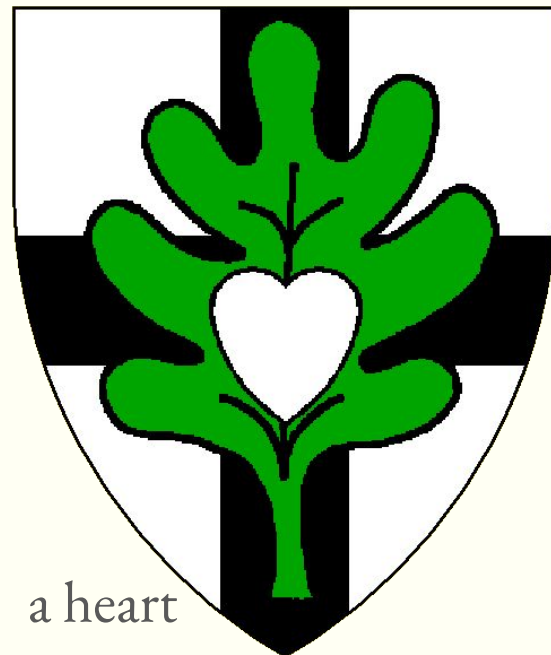
a skull



## Tertiary Charges

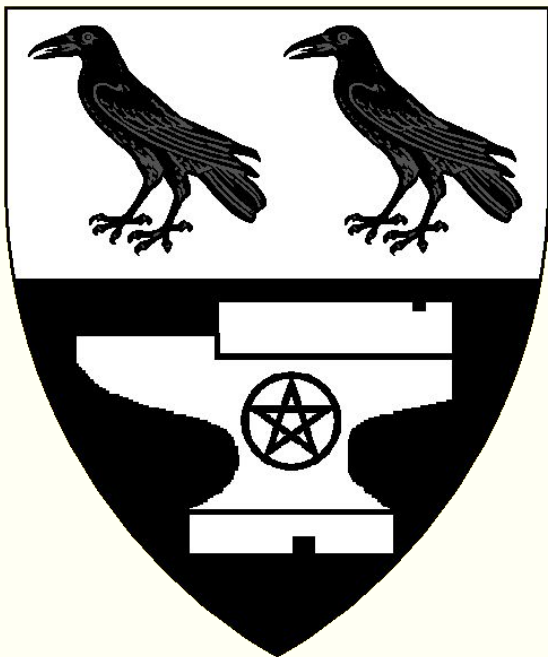


a semy of bezants



a heart

## Tertiary Charges



a mullet voided within  
an annulet

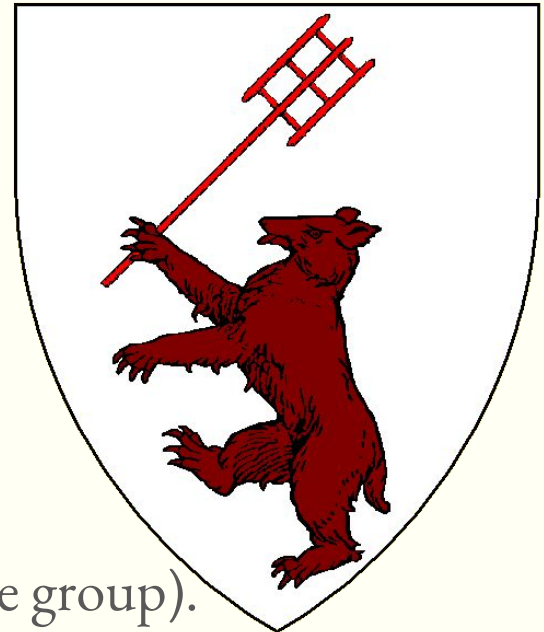


a crescent; three mullets

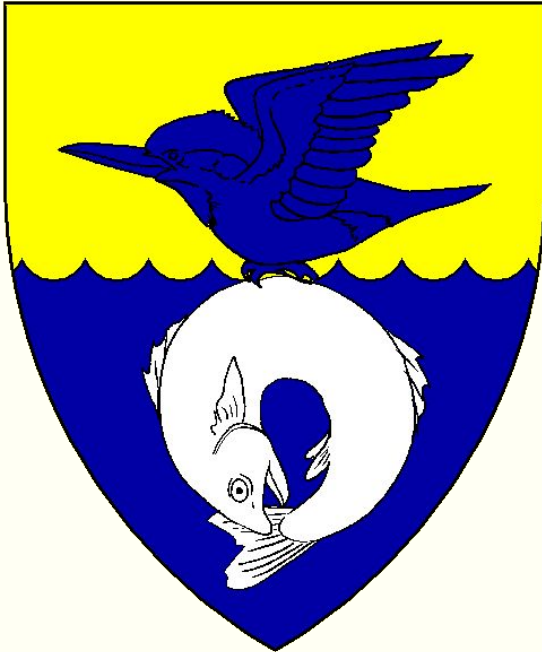
# Maintained and Sustained Charges

*Charges that are held by, suspended from, or are otherwise touching another charge*

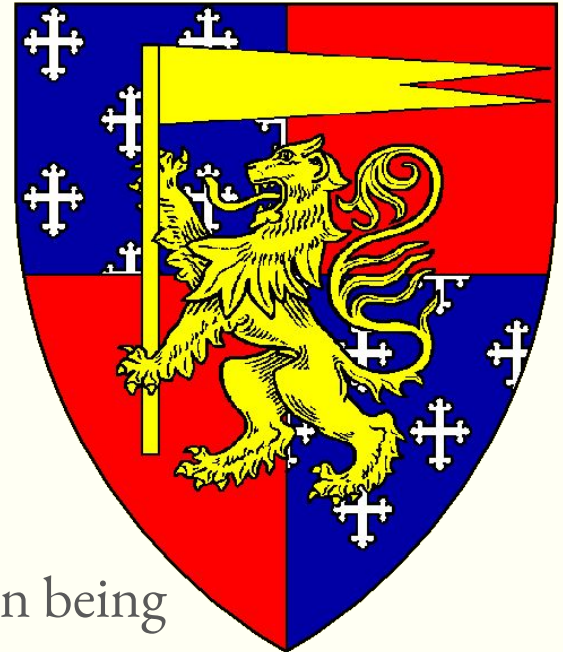
- As big = sustained (same charge group)
- Smaller = maintained
- Nearly as big = also sustained >:(
- Only primary or secondary charges can maintain things
- Primaries maintain secondaries
- Secondaries maintain other secondaries (same group).



## Maintained and Sustained Charges



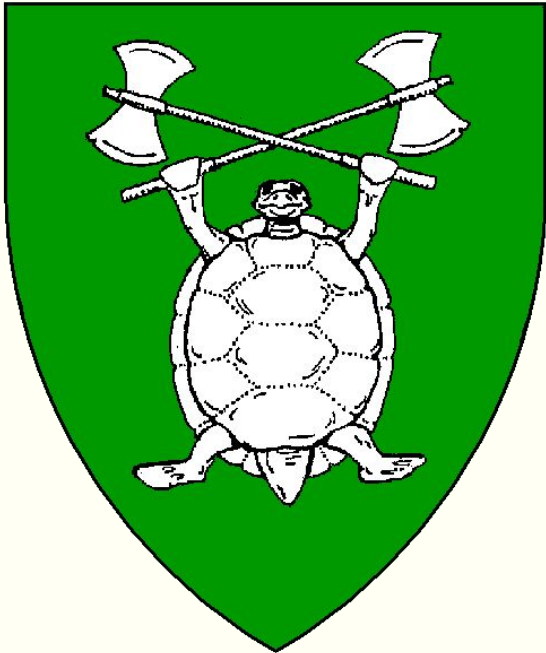
in pale a kingfisher  
sustaining a fish



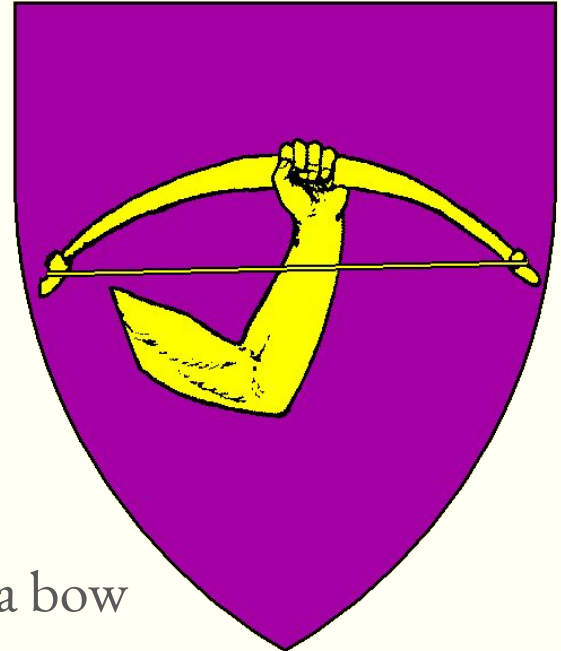
in bend a pennon being  
sustained by a lion



# Maintained and Sustained Charges



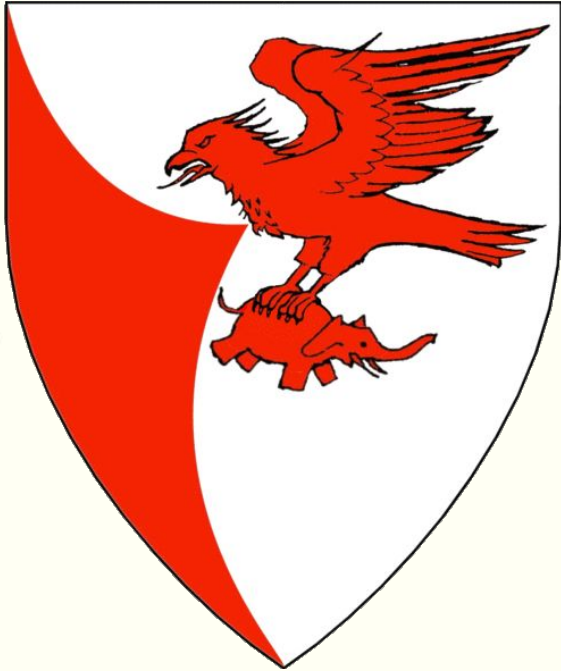
two axes



a bow



# Maintained and Sustained Charges

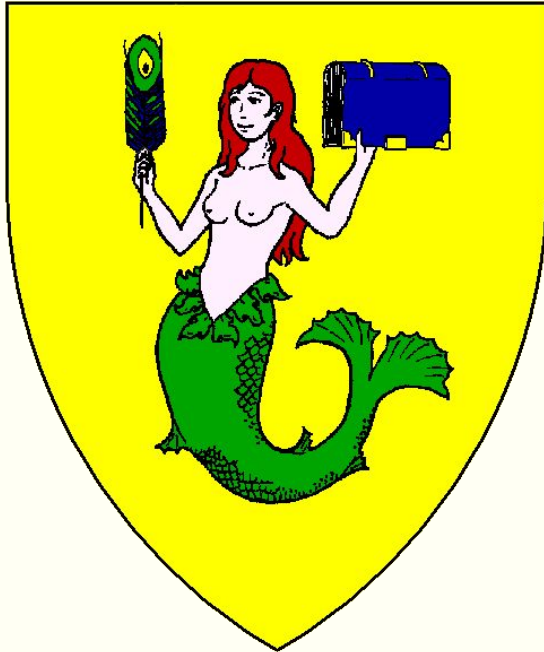


an elephant

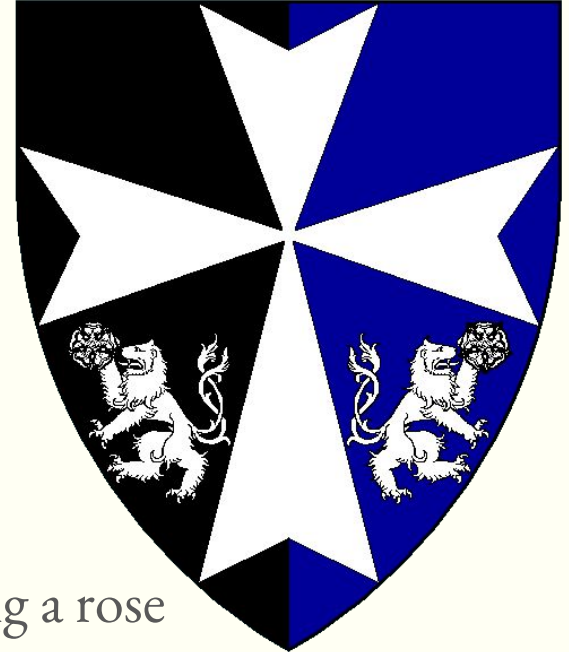


a hammer and a sickle

# Maintained and Sustained Charges



a feather and a book



two lions each maintaining a rose



## Why Charge Group Theory Doesn't Matter

- It's not period

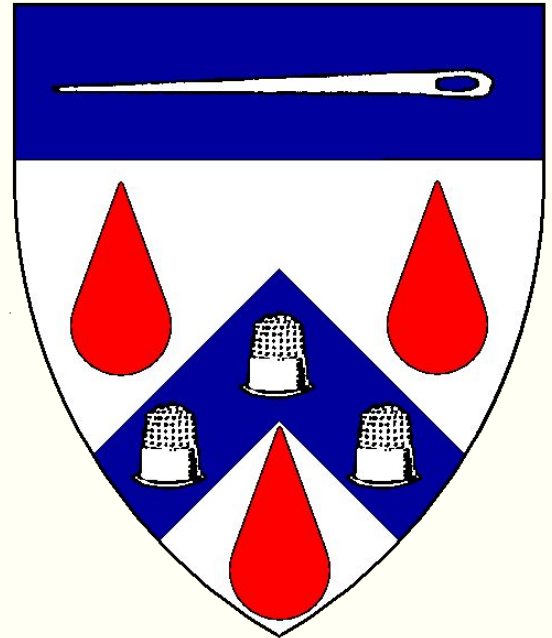
## Why Charge Group Theory Matters

- Blazonry
- Conflict checking
- Armorial style
- Mentioned in SENA 355 times!

# Blazonry

To steal from [\*Master Bruce's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Blazon\*](#)

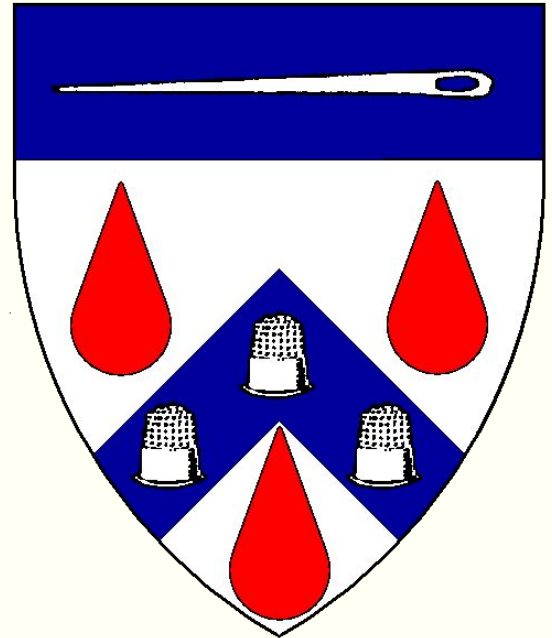
- (1) Field
- (2) Primary charges
- (3) Secondary charges immediately around (2)
- (4) Tertiary charges on (2) or (3)
- (5) Peripheral secondary charges
- (6) Tertiary charges on (5)
- (7) Brisures
- (8) Augmentations



# Blazonry

To steal from [\*Master Bruce's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Blazon\*](#)

- (1) Field
- (2) Primary charges
- (3) Secondary charges immediately around (2)
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- ~~(7) Brisures~~
- ~~(8) Augmentations~~

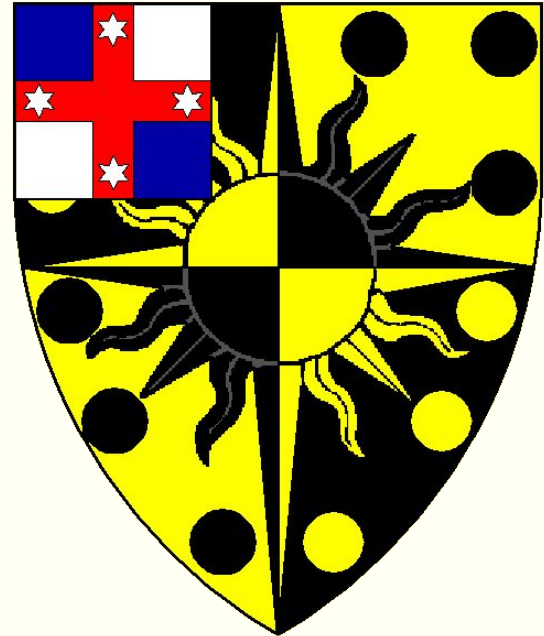




# Blazonry

To steal from [\*Master Bruce's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Blazon\*](#)

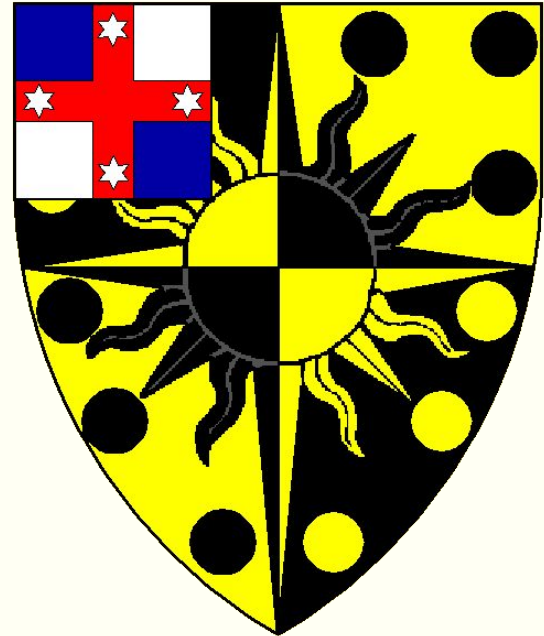
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# Blazonry

To steal from *Master Bruce's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Blazon*

- (1) Field
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- (7) Brisures
- (8) Augmentations



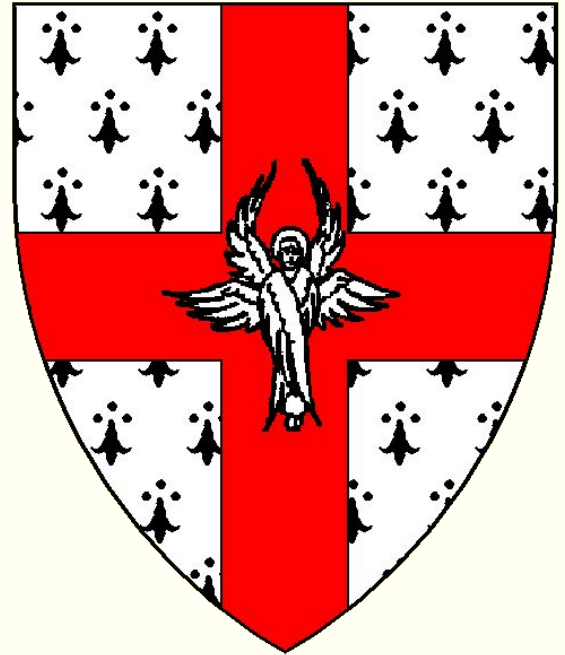
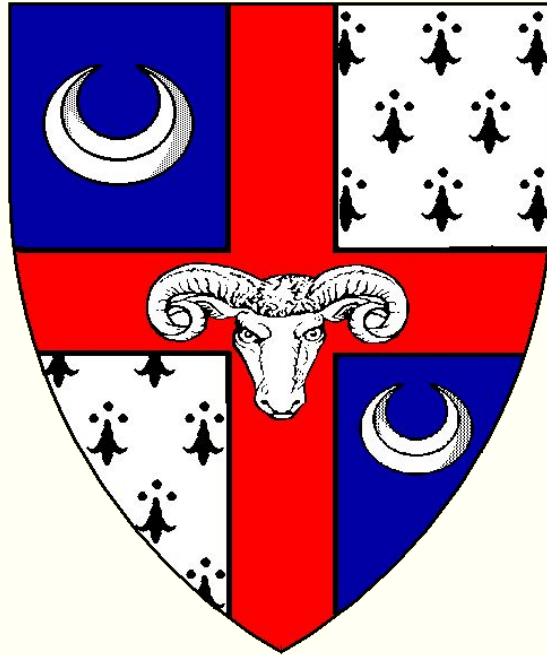


## Conflict checking

*In general, only charge groups that are comparable in type should be compared for specific difference*

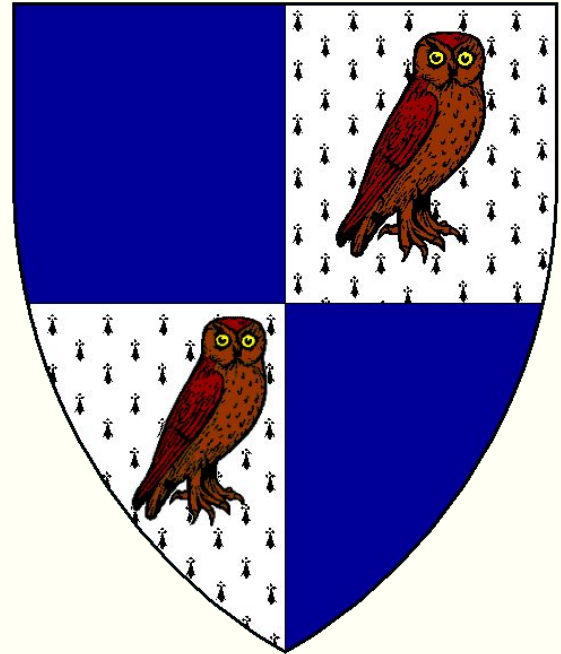
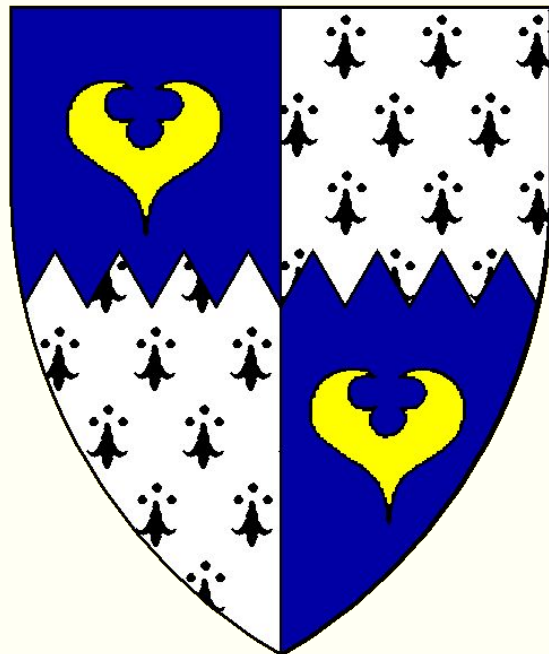
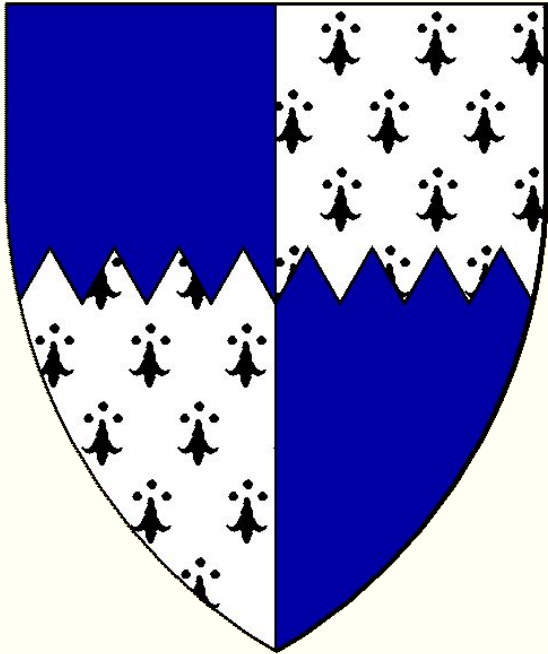
- Conflict checking is a whole class (or two) by itself
- Most rules are defined using charge groups
- Only compare primaries to primaries, secondaries to secondaries, etc.

# Conflict checking





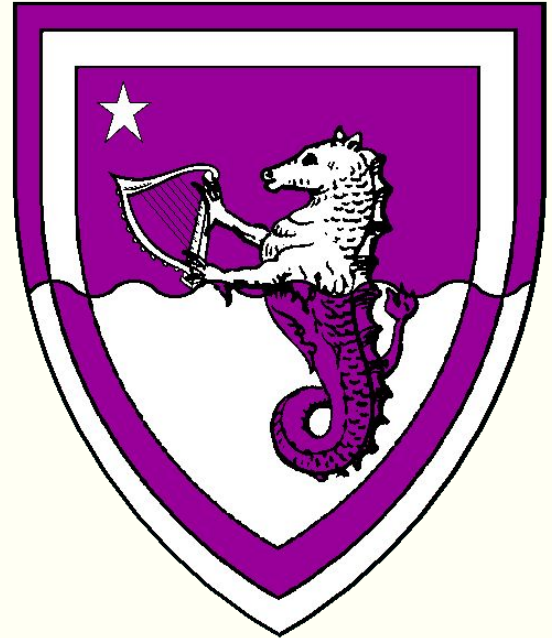
# Conflict checking





## SENA Appendix J: Arrangements

*All designs with three or more charge groups on the field must be documented to be registerable*



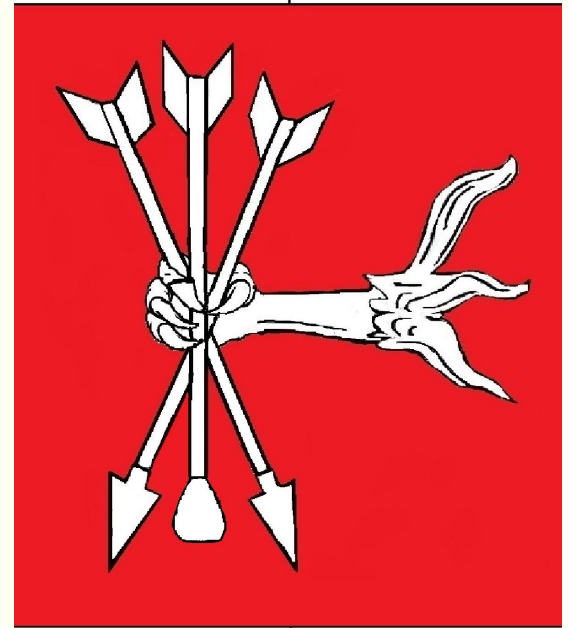
## Clarity of Charge Groups

*Having identical types of charges in multiple charge groups on the field blurs the distinction between charge groups.*



## Clarity - Sword and Dagger

*Depictions of charges that are artistic variants of one another ... are not allowed in a single armorial design*



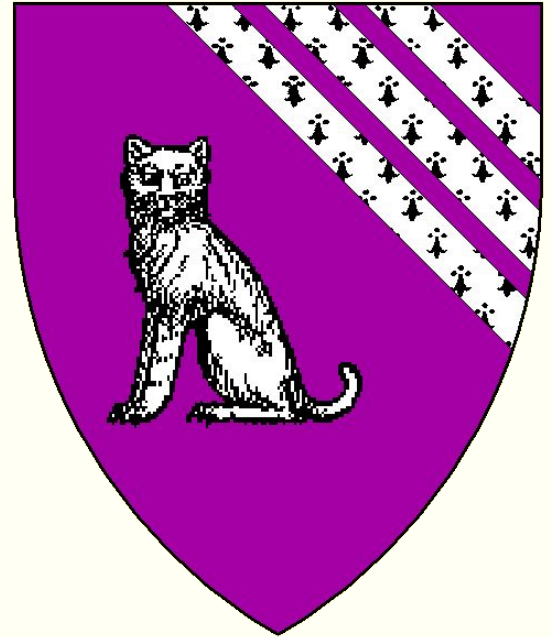
## Simplicity - Slot Machine

*A charge group with more than two types of charges is not allowed*



## Simplicity - Mixing Ordinaries

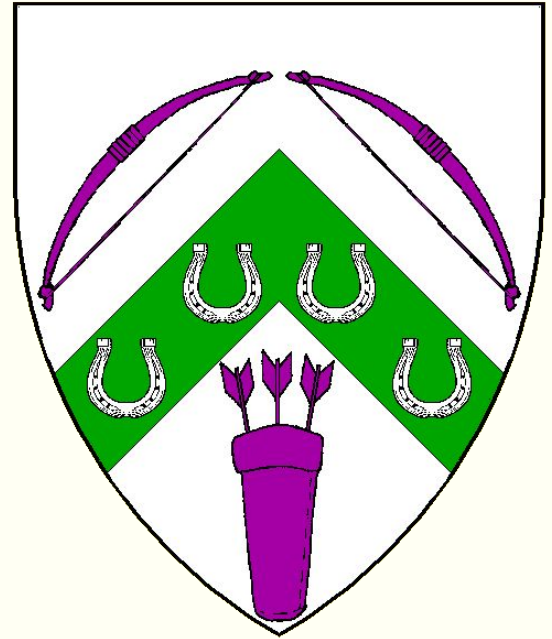
*A single charge group may not mix ordinaries with non-ordinaries or mix two types of ordinaries*





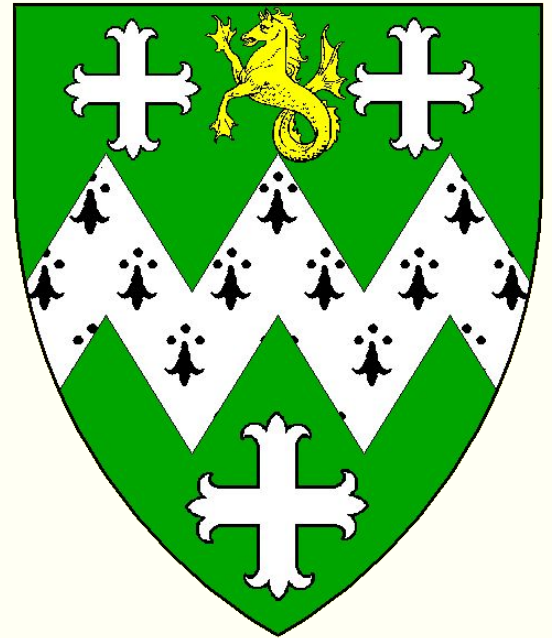
## Simplicity - Unity of Posture/Orientation

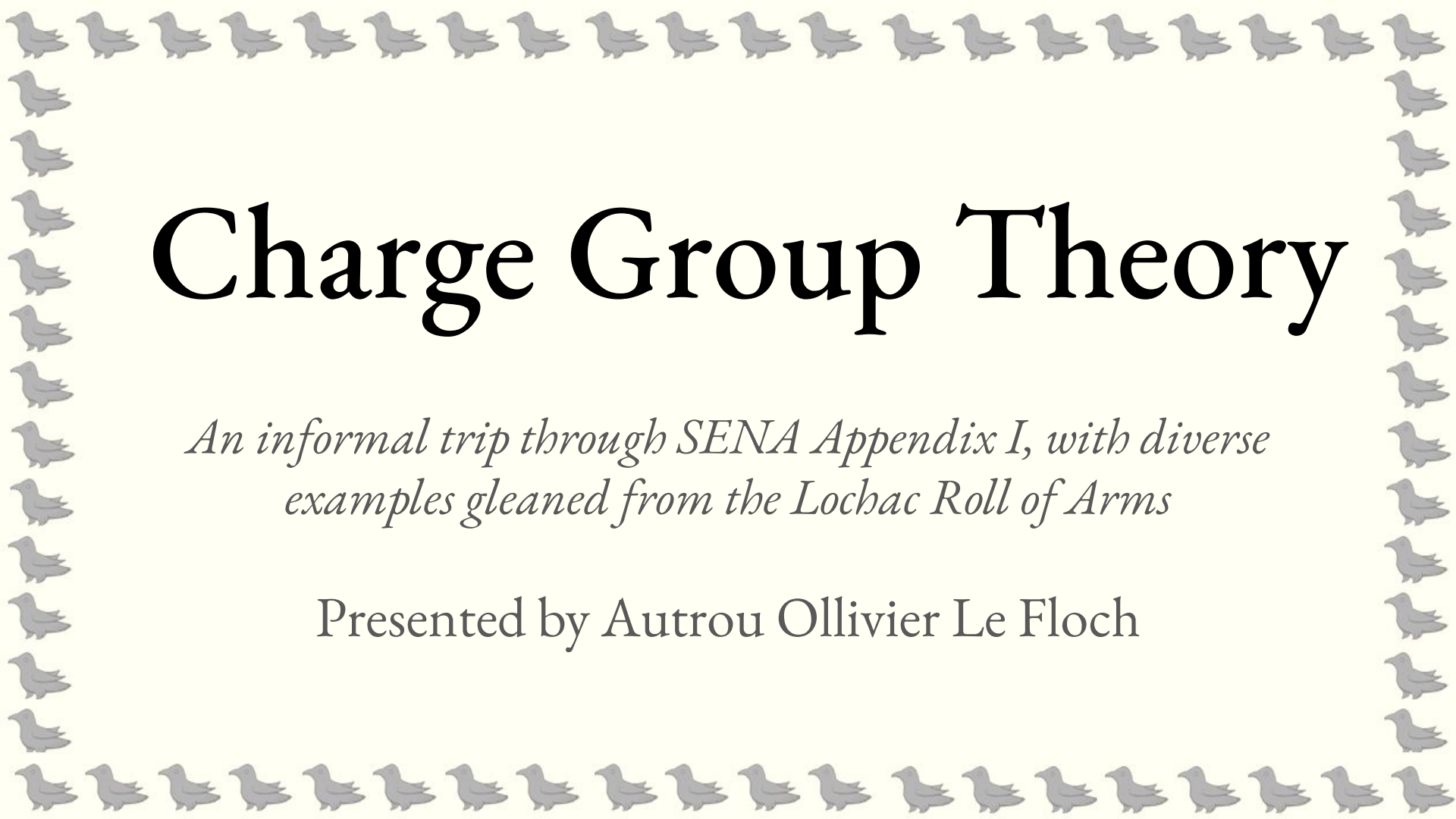
*Charges within a charge group should be in either identical postures/orientations or an arrangement that includes posture/orientation*



## Simplicity - Unity of Arrangement

*Charges within a charge group should be in an arrangement that can be blazoned with a single arrangement phrase*





# Charge Group Theory

*An informal trip through SENA Appendix I, with diverse  
examples gleaned from the Lochac Roll of Arms*

Presented by Autrou Ollivier Le Floch