The Submissions Process

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Azure Dragon Herald

What are we going to discuss?

Overview of the Process

Why is there a process?

Who is involved

Who Does What?

Local herald / Consulting herald

Golden Dolphin and staff

College of Arms and Commenting

Laurel Sovereign of Arms and CoA Staff

The Details

Commentary Process

Customer Service

Heraldry in the SCA

Heraldry is the one of the most visible aspects of the SCA. Coats of Arms, banners, Court, announcements on the list field, people's names, titles, awards, ranks, and regalia. In short, most of the pageantry we associate with the Middle Ages and Renaissance is supported by the work of the heralds.

Our mission

Our mission, per the Board of Directors and the Laurel Sovereign of Arms:

Assist members of the SCA in registering unique names and armory that would plausibly have been used within the scope of the Society – i.e., Pre 17th century western Europe and cultures that would have had regular contact with western Europe.

And so…we have a process…

SENA

Standards for Evaluating Names and Armory provide the guidelines the SCA uses to determine whether names and armory are "plausibly period" and do not "conflict" with one another.

O & A

The Ordinary and Armorial is an online searchable database that contains all the names and armory registered or "protected" from conflict within the SCA.
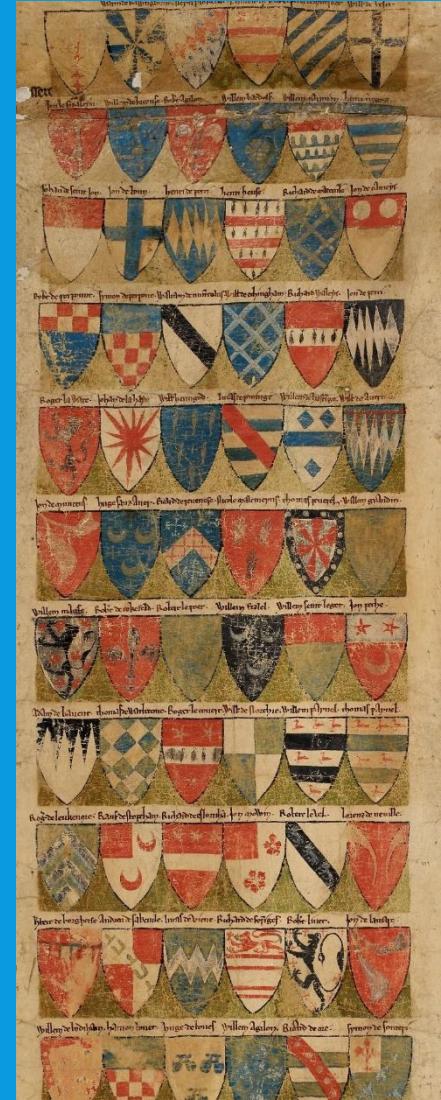
Organization of the College of Arms

Laurel Sovereign of Arms

Pelican Sovereign of Arms (names)

Wreath Sovereign of Arms (armory)

Kingdom Principal & Submission Heralds

Triton, Golden Dolphin

Laurel Staff

Morsulus, Ragged Staff, …

Commenting heralds
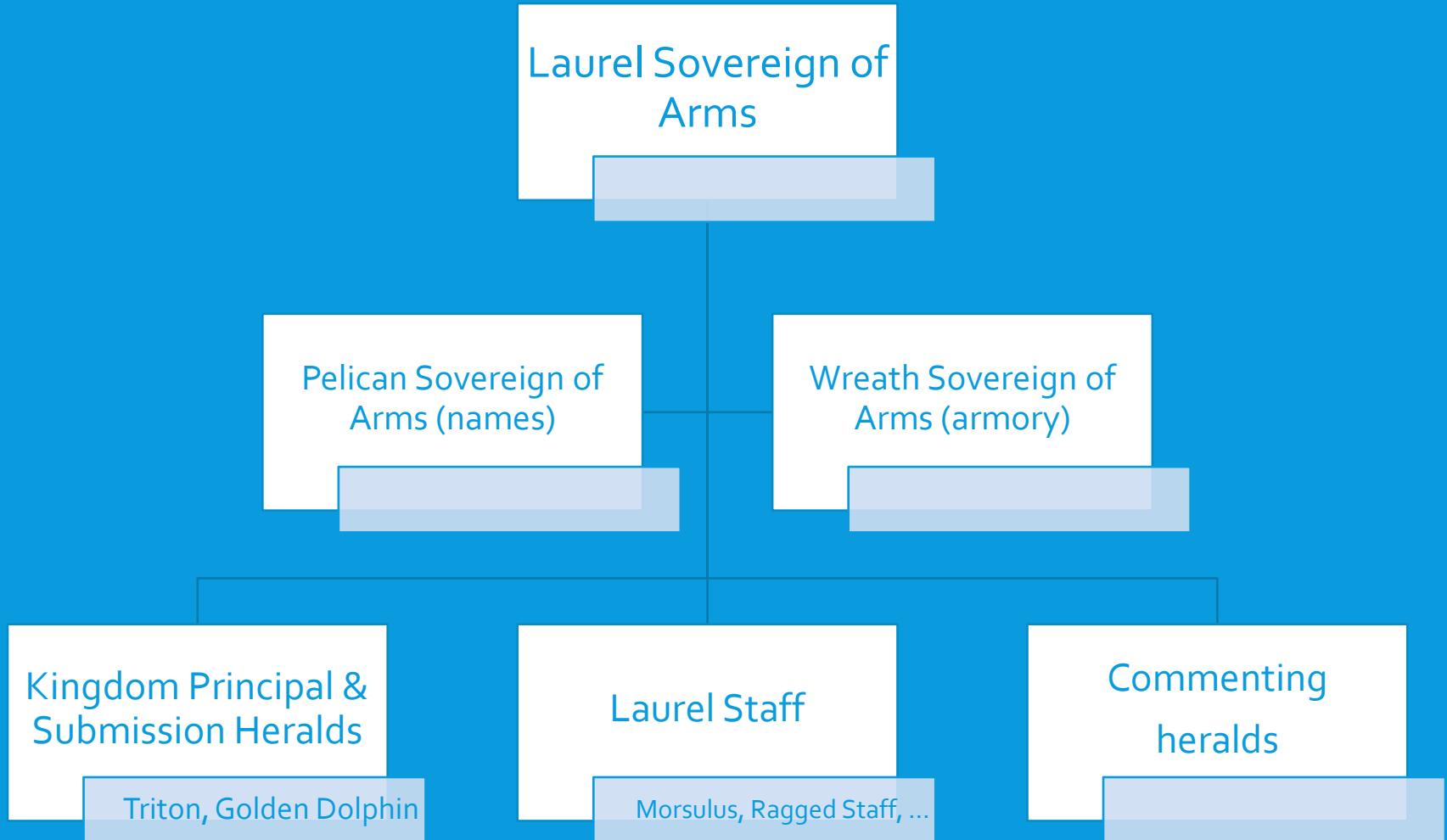
Atlantia's Submissions Staff

Office	Role
Golden Dolphin	Atlantian Submissions
Ibis	Process inbound Submissions
Opal	Client Notifications
Blue Shark	MD Consult tables
Red Shark	VA Consult tables
Green Shark	NC Consult tables
White Shark	SC/GA Consult tables
Sea Stag	Online Commenting group

Current Policy: Any Atlantian herald will be allowed to see and provide comment on Atlantian *Internal Letters of Comment*

Some Terminology

Armory

Any heraldic design that is used for the purposes of identification. The College of Arms registers these items for people who participate in the SCA so that each person's heraldic design is unique and is unlikely to be confused with another person's design.

Device
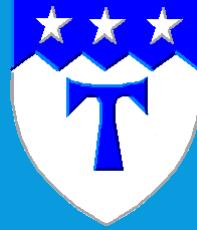
An heraldic design that is intended to identify an individual person.

Arms

When a person is elevated to the nobility (usually via an Award of Arms), their "device" becomes their Arms. It is usually just a technicality.

Badge

An heraldic design that is used to identify a possession or an association.

ARMORY	
Device/Arms	Badge

Uniqueness

Names and armory must avoid the appearance of unearned honors or false claims, and be different from those of historical or fictional persons. The goal is to prevent obvious usurpation of identity, and to prevent offense that could occur from that usurpation.

I would like to have the name "Richard Lionheart"

Like the 12th century King of England? Sorry, but no.
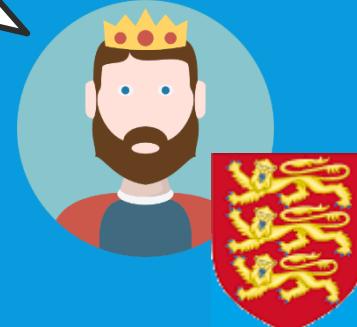
I say unto thee, NAY!

How about "Thor Odinsson"?

Why do we do it?

Registration does two things. First, it verifies that a submission meets the standards laid out by Corpora and the Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory. Second, it prevents others from registering anything that conflicts with or presumes upon the registered item without the explicit permission of the owner.

A simplified view of Laurel's Standards for Evaluation of Names and Armory(SENA), sections GP1, GP2, and GP3
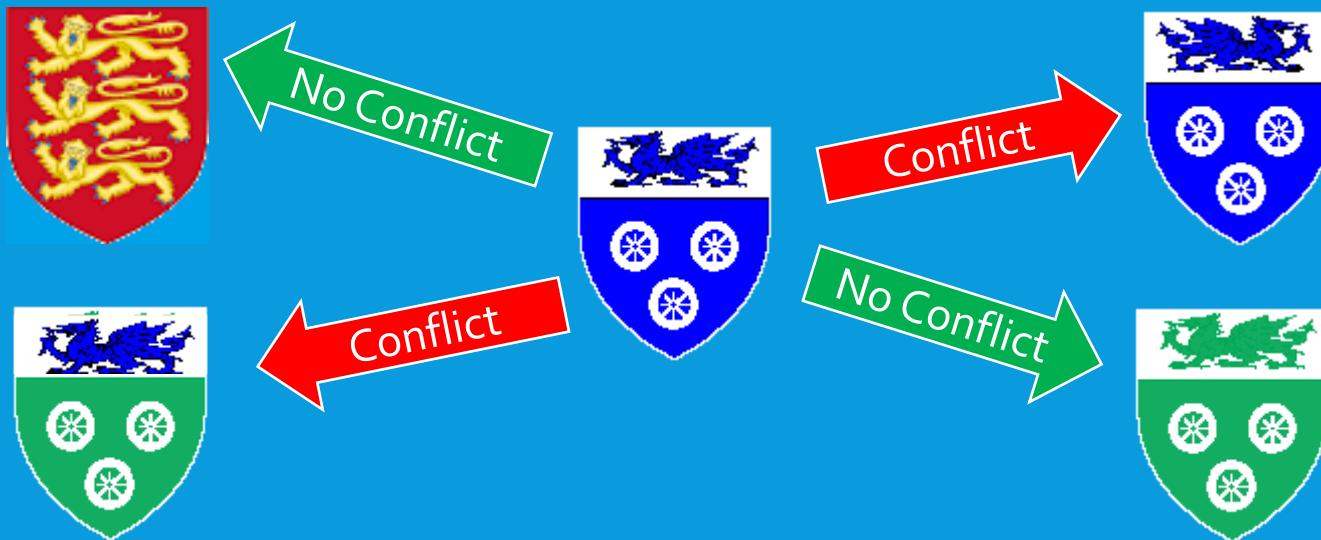
Thus, a herald's role is….

The College of Arms and the Kingdom Colleges of Heralds are essentially a means to facilitate research into "Period" names and armory.

Ultimately, the submitter's responsibility to demonstrate that a submission meets the standards. It is not the responsibility of the Laurel office to demonstrate that a submission does not meet these standards.

However, in pursuit of helping Laurel make decisions, we can do research and provide support for a submitter's name and armory.

In short, our job isn't to say "no", it is to help submitters find a way to "YES".

The Process Oversimplified:

The minimum amount of time to process a submission is about 6 months, assuming no missed deadlines, and no problems with the submission were encountered.

Herald accepts submission & payment	Submissions & payment sent to Ibis	Ibis prepares Letter of Presentation (once per month)	Internal Commentary (1 month)
Golden Dolphin prepares Letter of Intent and Letter of Decision (once per month)	External Commentary (3 months)	Laurel meets with Staff to make decisions (once per month)	Laurel prepares Letter of Acceptances and Returns
Ordinary & Armorial updated with new names and armory (month following LoAR)	Submitters notified by Opal		

Who does what?

Herald / Consult Table
- Assist in creating submissions
- Takes submissions & payments
- Should follows progress of submission

Golden Dolphin + staff
- Creates Letter of Presentation for Internal Commentary
- Evaluates commentary on LoP and creates Letter of Decision and Letter of Intent
- Informs submitter of decisions at each level of process

Atlantian College of Heralds
- Provide feedback and discussion on submissions in Atlantia's LoP
- Does the submission meet SENA?
- Does submission avoid obvious conflicts?
- May assist in improving documentation for submitters

College of Arms
- Provides feedback and commentary on submissions in all LoIs
- Does the submission meet SENA?
- Does submission avoid obvious conflicts?
- May assist in improving documentation for submitters

Laurel + staff
- Evaluates commentary on LoIs and creates Letter of Acceptances and Returns
- Creates Precedents
- Updates the Ordinary and Armorial with newly registered items

How is all of this supposed to work?

From the heralds' point of view, our clients can go to a local herald with their own forms (downloaded from our website) filled in, they can contact a local herald to help fill in the forms, or they can visit a consulting table at an event or Herald's Point at a War.

Avacal College of Heralds
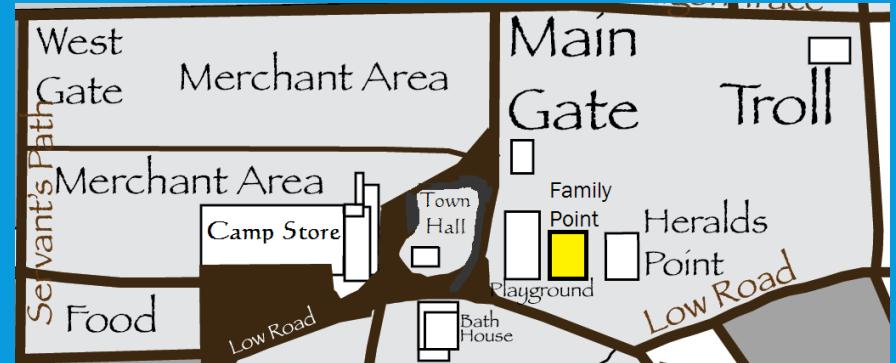
Pennsic War map

A client shows up...then what?

Bare minimum:
- Verify they have the right forms
- Verify the forms are filled out correctly
- Collect payment* by check ($10/element submitted) & *provide submitter with a receipt*
  - * Cash payment is discouraged, but here's how to handle it:
  - Give cash to an Exchequer (usually local) to deposit in an SCA group's account in return for a check made out to Atlantia College of Heralds, SCA, Inc.
  - **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES DEPOSIT A PAYMENT INTO A PERSONAL ACCOUNT AND WRITE A CHECK.**
- Forward the forms and payment to Ibis or Golden Dolphin within a week

Even if you have no interest in "book heraldry", you are expected to forward submissions and payments that are given to you to Golden Dolphin (or Ibis)
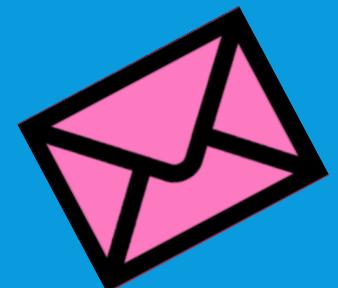
Taking the next steps into book heraldry

If we can identify potential issues or even help the client research their submissions, we should do it before they pay their money and send in their submission.

The Standards for Evaluating Names and Armory (SENA) will be your initial guide. Quick and easy problems to figure out are things like names that mix time periods, names that combine cultures that are too far apart, designs that cause offensiveness, or even poorly designed heraldry.

Books? Resources? Tell me more!

These days, an Internet connection can bring a lot of the resources you need to your fingertips in addition to building your own heraldic library. It can be cumbersome toting around boxes of books to events or A&S night.

However, if you want to purchase books, there is an appendix to the Administrative Handbook of the College of Arms of the SCA that is a good shopping list:

Appendix H - Sources That Do Not Require Photocopies to Laurel

https://heraldry.sca.org/admin.html#APPENDIXH

A herald is like the Smaug of books

Send off the forms and payment

Golden Dolphin or Ibis receive the forms and payment

The money is deposited and primarily used to fund the materials and overhead costs (computers, scanner, printer & ink, mail, etc.)

The submission forms are reviewed, scanned in, uploaded to *OSCAR (Online System for Commentary and Response)*, and once per month, the collected submissions are assembled and put on an *Internal Letter of Presentation.*

Internal Commentary

- A period during which heralds from within the Kingdom can comment on submissions

- Newer heralds are highly encouraged to comment and ask questions

- Names and device emblazons can be updated if a problem is found

- Names and devices that past muster are put into a Kingdom Letter of Intent (LoI) and External Commentary begins

1 month to comment and potentially make changes

Letter of Decision vs Letter of Intent

At the end of the month of Internal Commentary, Golden Dolphin prepares 2 Letters:

Letter of Decision:

In a monthly letter addressed to Triton Herald and the populace of Atlantia, Golden Dolphin indicates which names and armory have passed scrutiny at the Kingdom level, those that need additional review, and those which have outright failed to pass SENA.

Letter of Intent:

In a monthly letter addressed to the Laurel Sovereign of Arms and the College of Arms, Golden Dolphin indicates which names and armory are being sent to the College of Arms for further evaluation and potential registration.

External Commentary

- A period during which heralds from the entire SCA can comment on submissions
- Generally commentary is done by more senior heralds
- New heralds are encouraged to read commentary, but probably should not comment unless they have special knowledge
- Duration is 3 months
- Names can be changed, but device emblazons cannot

3 months of commentary, research and review by senior heralds

# A Comment on Commentary

All commentary details are private.

Let's be honest, not all commentary is going to be nice nor take the submitter's deep personal convictions or aesthetic sensibilities into account.

In order to have a frank and open discussion about whether a submission is plausibly period, scholarly debates are likely to occur, and to the overly-sensitive or uninformed, these debates may be hurtful.

What gets shared with submitters is whether the heralds believe it to meet the standards or not. If appropriate, what needs to be remedied will be share with the submitter.
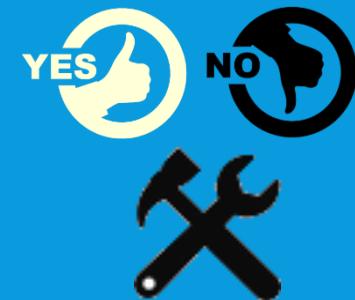
Laurel Decides

At the end of the three-month External Commentary period, Laurel, Laurel staff, and senior Heralds meet to decide what names and armory to register and what to reject.

Some decisions set what may be allowed or disallowed for future registrations. These decisions are referred to as *Precedents* (not to be confused with *Precedence*)

Laurel then issues a *Letter of Acceptances and Returns* (LoAR).

The Precedents set during the decision meeting are published as part of the LoAR and also published by Palimpsest Herald.

Morsulus adds the newly accepted submissions into the *Ordinary and Armorial* database.
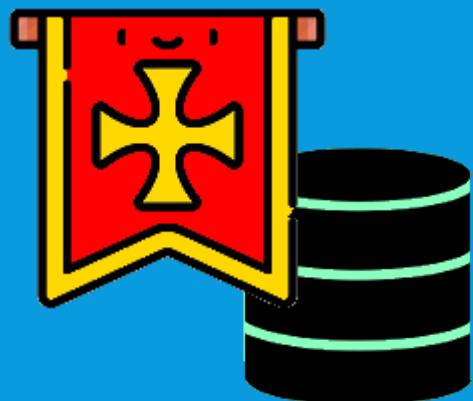
Notifications

Atlantia notifies individuals when their submission is accepted or rejected by Laurel:

Golden Dolphin's deputy, Opal, sends out the notifications:
- OSCAR automated email, or
- U.S. Mail

Customer Service

- We are here to make registrations happen, not prevent them from happening

- When consulting, help clients create registerable submissions *they* like

- When commenting, look for reasons to allow registration, not prohibit it

- Heralds want a reputation for being helpful, not obstructionist!

- Clients are happiest when they feel informed. Keep an eye on the submission as it goes through the process and let the client know if things are going smoothly or if there are issues to address
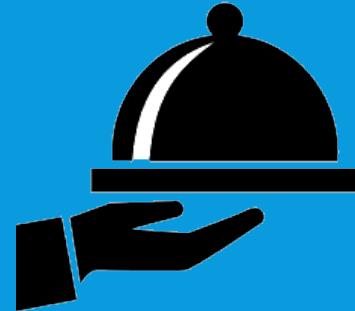
Enhanced from Master Yeshua ben Moshe's Book Heraldry 100

Registerable vs Authentic

- A submission must be registerable, it need not be authentic

- While we can encourage clients to design authentic names and devices, we cannot, and should not force the decision

- If a client is set on a registerable but not very authentic submission, you should still process it!

- We are also *NOT* the taste police. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Enhanced from Master Yeshua ben Moshe's Book Heraldry 100

Mailing Lists

- https://lists.andrew.cmu.edu/mailman/listinfo/sca-hrlds - SCA-HRLDS mailing list

- Kingdom Lists
  - Many are listed at http://heraldry.sca.org/kingdoms.html
  - AtlantianHeralds@yahoogroups.com – Atlantia's heraldry mailing list