Advanced Heraldic Studies: An Introduction

Part II. The Terminology of the Field:
Its Nature, History, and Inadequacies

Division A. The First Two Periods, c. 1170 – c. 1335

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1. Heraldic Taxonomic Terminology: Its Nature and Current (Dismal) State

1.1. Introduction

I dealt in the first Part of this introductory essay with the general nature, material, and goals of the field we shall call 'heraldic studies', with the various approaches to it that we shall promote in this journal, and with their relationship to the approaches to what we shall call 'heraldica' both by earlier generations of heraldists and by those who are active today. In that Part, I also introduced the principal terms we shall employ to describe, analyze, and compare heraldic phenomena throughout the nearly nine centuries of their historical existence, and the many countries in which they have been used. In addition I indicated — at least by implication — the general approach we shall both adopt and encourage to the creation, definition, and use of what we shall call 'heraldistic' terms in general.

In this Part of the essay, I shall concentrate on the subject of heraldistic *classifying* or *generalizing* terminology: the whole body of technical and quasi-technical terms employed by the students of heraldica to permit them to deal verbally with the various *generic* phenomena peculiar to their field — both as that body of terms has been and is today, and as it can and should be in the future. To avoid any possible confusion, I should emphasize here that this terminology — largely the creation of armigers and poets before 1335, and of armigers and amateur armorists from that date to 1560, as we shall see — must be distinguished sharply from the one mainly created by heralds for the *description* of particular heraldic emblems, which in English is called 'blazon', and can be described as **blazonic**. It is with the non-blazonic, armoristic terminology of classification and generalization (including such traditional terms as

'arms', 'armorial', 'tincture', 'ordinary', 'armory', and 'armigerous') that I shall be primarily concerned in this part of my essay, though I shall also trace in a general way the history of the older, blazonic terminology. For the sake of brevity, I shall call this non-blazonic terminology **taxonomic**: the term normally used to describe such language in scientific contexts.

Let me begin by saying that in my opinion, the current state of the taxonomic terminology used by most armorists and heraldists is hopelessly primitive and ramshackle, and is the principal obstacle standing in the way of progress in the kind of advanced study of heraldic phenomena that we hope to promote in this journal. For a variety of reasons that I shall examine below, heraldists even on the most scholarly levels have so far failed to establish a conceptual-terminological structure that fully supports either advanced study of a *general* or *comparative* nature — whether on a cultural-geographical or a temporal-periodic axis — or that facilitates the *integration* of heraldic studies into the broader fields of cultural, social, and emblematic history and analysis. This failure lies at the root of the current confusion over the content of 'heraldry', 'heraldic science', and the equivalents of 'heraldics' discussed in Part I, and causes similar difficulties in practically every other area of the field of heraldic studies.

Despite the great advances in the techniques of research in narrow themes made by the new scholarly class of heraldists that emerged (like those in most of the other fields of study now recognized by universities) in the later nineteenth century, no comparable advances have been made to date in the ways in which the phenomena included in the field of heraldic studies are conceived or named. In consequence, we are still employing for such purposes an ill-assorted collection of terms and concepts assembled in a remarkably careless and haphazard fashion between about 1355 and 1690, though primarily in the half-century between 1560 and 1610. Not surprisingly, the current taxonomic terminology is severally marred (1) by wasteful and confusing redundancy, involving numerous concepts with two or more designations; (2) by frequently impenetrable ambiguity, arising from numerous terms with two or more (and sometimes many) senses; (3) by a complete lack of terms for many important concepts, impeding clear conceptualization and discussion; and (4) by generally vague and careless technical definitions, rarely even approaching scientific standards.

In this Part of my essay, I shall present first a survey of the origins and early history of our current taxonomic terminology, then a systematic analysis of its shortcomings, their origins, and their effects, and finally an explanation of the principles that I have proposed for the reform of this terminology to give it the qualities desirable for a truly scientific discipline of the sort we hope heraldic studies will become.

The length of this Part has obliged me to divide it into four Divisions, of which the first (A), presented here, will be concerned with the history of taxonomic terms and their contexts in the first two periods in their history that I shall define below, stretching from the first appearance of words designating arms and heralds in literary works around 1170 to

the appearance of the first works actually designating the elements of the achievement and teaching the art of blazon around 1335. Division B, dealing with the history of developments between 1335 and 1560, will appear in the next issue; Division C, dealing with developments since 1560, in the following issue; and Division D, including both the linguistic analysis and the proposed reforms, I hope to publish in the issue after that.

1.2. Heraldic Taxonomic Terms
in the Context of Heraldic Discourse

The history of armorial terminology in general is closely related to the history of **heraldic discourse** — the verbal description or discussion of heraldic phenomena by anyone in any context — and more especially the parts of that discourse that may be distinguished as **heraldistic erudition**. By the latter expression I mean discourse of a systematic nature informed by a professional or comparable level of knowledge of the subject, and intended to *explain* heraldic practices, their meaning, their history, or some aspect of these, either to a fellow expert, or to a non-expert listener or reader. Most of this discourse on both levels has always been concerned with emblems, especially armorial emblems, and is thus more precisely described as **armoristic**. In fact, as we shall see, before the later sixteenth century heraldic discourse was concerned almost exclusively with a single armorial emblem, the arms.

The vehicles for heraldic discourse on all levels have historically comprised various unwritten forms, including the cries and instructions of heralds, and the lectures of learned heraldists, but before the advent of modern methods of recording sound they could be preserved only in writing. For all but the most recent century, therefore, a student of the history of heraldic discourse in general is obliged to examine — and often in effect to mine — the texts of surviving written works of extremely varied types, composed for a similar variety of purposes. Some of these works were intended to convey knowledge of part of the corpus of heraldic emblems, others to explain their origin and the rules governing their composition, description, and use, and others still to explain some aspect of the profession of the heralds. The vast majority of such works, however, did no more than make casual mention of heraldica or one sort or another, in the context of a description of a battle, tournament, or the like, or of a list of knightly equipment, and the level of their discourse rarely rises above the basic.

For these reasons, both the history of heraldic discourse in general, and the history of the more or less technical lexicon in which it was expressed, can be divided into a sequence of Periods defined on the basis of the most important types of text in which heraldica are mentioned, described, or discussed. The texts in question fall into four broad classes: (1) **literary works**, historical, didactic, and fictional, of which those mentioning heralds or heraldic emblems of any species were mainly composed between 1170 and 1600; (2) **blazoned armorials**, or catalogues of arms or other armories described in technical language, composed (almost

exclusively in England and France) from at least 1254 onward;[1] (3) **legal documents**, especially letters conferring or alienating arms or other emblems (including badges and crests), composed sporadically from at least 1284 and regularly from c. 1350 onwards in Germany, sporadically from 1315 onwards in France, sporadically from c. 1300 and regularly from c. 1335 in England,[2] and from rather later dates in most other countries; and (4) **didactic treatises** on heraldic subjects — especially, but not exclusively, armory — of which the first was probably composed in England between 1341 and 1345. The composition of the four general types of text just identified was of course cumulative after their inception to at least 1600, and in the case of the last three types has continued to the present day. Works of all four types can usefully be mined for information about terms used to describe, designate, or categorize heraldic emblems and related phenomena throughout the period of their existence.

One might have expected that each of the newer types of text would supersede the older ones in importance as a source of knowledge for such matters, especially in the field of taxonomic terms and concepts. This was not always the case, however, and even when they did the process was often very slow. For that reason the beginnings of the Periods I shall define do not correspond neatly to the first introduction of each of the types subsequent to the broad category of literary works, but rather to the time when each successive type of text had come to be sufficiently important — which is to say rich in examples, distinctive in approach, influential, or some combination of those — to constitute a turning point.

In the case of didactic treatises, I found it useful to make two distinctions of general level important enough to mark a change of Period in the general history of heraldic erudition and discourse. The first of these was between the treatises that were written for publication exclusively in manuscript (the only possible form before 1450, and the normal one before about 1560), and those that were written for publication in print (normal from the 1560s or '70s). The former works were not only much less widely distributed (and thus influential), but were relatively primitive in their approaches to their material, their organization, and their conceptual-terminological usages.

The second distinction of level I chose to recognize was between that of the printed treatises of the antiquarian tradition that emerged in the sixteenth century, and the works of the academic tradition that emerged in the nineteenth. The antiquarian tradition has itself continued in the context of the popular introductory textbook or handbook on 'heraldry' (in practice almost exclusively armory), but was superseded in the last decades of the nineteenth century in the context not only of more advanced handbooks, but of all other forms of work related to heraldica (including various types of monograph, edition, census, and armorial) by a new approach, influenced by the emerging ideas and methods of academic historiography.

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[1] On these works, see below, pp. 10-12.
[2] On these documents, see Part I of this essay, pp. 21-22, and Pt. II.B, § 3.2.1.

The latter insisted on more systematic types of research and argument, a much heavier reliance on primary sources, and more extensive annotation.

On these bases, I have found it useful to recognize five distinct Periods in the history of heraldic erudition, each of which made distinctive contributions to the development of technical terminology of both general types: (1) the **Period of Strictly Literary Sources**, stretching in France and England (where all of these developments occurred first) from the 1170s, when the first romances to refer to heralds and arms were composed, to the 1250s, when the earliest known blazoned armorials were compiled; (2) the **Period of Blazoned Armorials**, lasting from that time to the 1330s, when the first written English *grants* of arms were made, and the first known *treatise* on armory may have been composed; (3) the **Period of Manuscript Treatises and Grants of Armories**, arguably lasting from that time only to 1486 in England and 1579 in France (when the first general treatises on armory were published in print in those countries), but more usefully terminated c. 1560, just after the last manuscript work produced in France was completed, in 1557, and just before the second printed work in England was published, in 1562; (4) the **Period of Printed Works of Antiquarian Erudition**, lasting from c. 1560 to c. 1870, and distinctively characterized by an increasingly sophisticated but still pre-scientific approach to heraldic matters in works of a variety of types composed by learned antiquarians; and finally (5) the **Period of Scientific Erudition**, lasting from c. 1870 to the present. I shall organize my discussion of the history of heraldic terminology primarily on the basis of these Periods, but shall ignore their precise boundaries whenever it seems sensible to do so. I shall also treat the first two Periods together, as the terms with which I am principally concerned were not affected by the emergence of written armorials, but developed independently of the language of blazon in the everyday speech of contemporaries.

In concluding this introductory section it will be useful to mention that until c. 1276 the only languages that seem to have been used for anything that could be regarded as technical armorial description were the standard French dialects of France and England: **Old French** in the former throughout the Period, and **Anglo-Norman** in the latter to c. 1440. [3] This is

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[3] Like that of most languages, the historical development of French (originally the language of northern France and its colonies) went through several distinct stages, characterized by different word-forms and grammatical structures. The name **Old French** (called by contemporaries the *Langue d'oïl* in contrast to the *Langue d'oc* spoken in the southern third of the kingdom, now called **Old Provençal** or **Old Occitan**) has been given by modern philologists to the stage of the language (and especially of the literary form based on the dialect of Paris and its northeastern hinterland called Francian-Picard) from the time of its emergence in a written form c. 875 to c. 1340. Around the latter date the loss of the nominative case of Old French (in which *bers* was the nominative singular form of *baron* and *hiraus* of *hiraut*) along with various other changes in syntax and lexicon, marked the emergence of the stage called **Middle French**. The latter form of the language (soon made the official language of the French kingdom) then persisted to c. 1611,

not really surprising, as the chivalric-nobiliary culture in which armigery emerged and evolved — and in which heralds were from the beginning intimately involved[4] — was very largely a product of the heartland of Old French speech, and even in England most elements of this culture continued to be expressed in the national dialect of that language long after it had ceased to be the mother tongue of the English nobility.

No doubt for that reason **Middle English,**[5] though by 1200 the ordinary language even of English nobles, and from c. 1350 the principal literary language of England, was rarely used for the description, designation, or discussion of heraldica of any kind before the 1440s, when it

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when the accumulation of further changes produced **Classical French**. The dialect of Old French introduced into England by the Normans, and from 1066 to 1399 the official language of the English court, is called **Anglo-Norman**. It differed in a number of ways from its continental analogue, especially in vocabulary (in which words created on the continent often were not adopted for more than a century), and by 1254 had become a non-native language that had to be taught to its speakers in England. For the histories of the words in Old and Middle French and Anglo-Norman I have relied primarily on the entries in the following dictionaries: F. GODEFROY, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française…* (10 vols., Paris, 1881-1902), hereinafter **GOD.,** *DALF*; Adolf TOBLER and Ernst LOMMATZSCH, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (11 vols., Berlin, 1925-), hereinafter **TOB.-LOM.,** *AW*; A[lgirdas] J[ulien] GREIMAS, *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français, jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Larousse, 1968); Algirdas Julien GREIMAS and Teresa Mary KEANE, *Dictionnaire du moyen français* (2nd edn., Paris: Larousse, 2001); *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (2009, online at www.cnrtl.fr/definition/dmf/), hereinafter *DMF-o*; *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (rev. edition, online at www.Anglo-Norman.net), hereinafter *AND-o*); Alain REY, ed., *Le Robert dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (3 vols., Paris, 1992), hereinafter *Robert DHLF*; Edmond HUGUET, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* (Paris, 1925), hereinafter **HUGUET,** *DLFSS*; and Randle COTGRAVE, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611).

[4] On this culture, and the place in it occupied by the heralds, see esp. Maurice KEEN, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London, 1984)

[5] The name **Middle English** is given by philologists to the stage in the history of our language between **Old English**, an archaic Germanic tongue written in England from c. 750 to c. 1100, and **Early Modern English**, which emerged c. 1470 with the generalization through printing of the London dialect called 'Chancery Standard', and persisted to c. 1650. Middle English was characterized by a steady replacement of Germanic words with words of French and Latin origin, which now make up more than half the lexicon of Modern English. Among these words were most of those used to designate and describe heraldic phenomena, all of which were closely associated with the French-speaking nobility. For the history of the English words cited in this essay, I have consulted the relevant entries of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. J. A. SIMPSON and E. S. C. WEINER (2nd edn., 20 vols., Oxford, New York, Toronto, etc., 1989), herein cited as *OED* **2**; and the *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Hans KURATH and Sherman N. KUHN, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, and London, c. 1953- c. 2001), hereinafter cited as *MED*. I have also consulted the online versions of both dictionaries, which I shall cite as *OED 2-o* and *MED-o*.

finally superseded Anglo-Norman as the language of courts and laws. The retarded development of English as an heraldic tongue was also related to the late flowering in England of some key elements of chivalric culture itself, where both the tournament that had long served as the dominant expression of that culture, and the heralds who began as criers at such events, only appeared in the reign of the knightly king Edward I (1272-1307). His reign also saw the emergence of the continuous practice of composing in English rather than Anglo-Norman works of the type now called 'romances' — stories of knightly heroism embodying the chivalric ideals of the Period that appear in significant numbers in England only after 1290 — and the appearance in those works of most of the words related to knighthood, (including *knyghthode* (1290) and *chyvalrie* (1300) as well as the first word related to heraldry: *herhaud* itself (c. 1300).

Similarly, **Medieval Latin**[6] — though the sole or principal language of higher *learning* throughout Latin Christendom from the time of its establishment in 395 to c. 1500; of *government* in most kingdoms to c. 1300; and of serious *literature* (including historiography) before c. 1200 — was little employed in chivalric or heraldic contexts anywhere before 1294. At that time it began to be used in the formal letters issued to transfer rights to existing armorial emblems or elements thereof, and later to grant new ones. The first Latin treatise on armory (Bartolo da Sassoferrato's *Tractatus de insigniis et armis*) was composed in Italy only in 1355,[7] a second (now lost) may have been composed in France around 1390, several were certainly written in England from c. 1395 onwards (beginning with the *Tractatus de armis*),[8] and a handful of other treatises were composed in Latin the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in central Europe. Nevertheless, the vast majority of treatises on all heraldic subjects in all countries were composed in the local vernacular language, often on a French model, and Latin continued to play a minor rôle in heraldic erudition in general before 1535.

Heraldic discourse of any kind also made a slow progress in the vernacular languages other than French and English, and terms of

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[6] **Middle** (or **Medieval**) **Latin** is the name given to the form of Latin written between c. AD 350 and c. 1500, which was distinguished from Classical Latin by a number of characteristics. These included a vocabulary that borrowed heavily from the Greek of the Bible and Christian theology, and from the contemporary vernacular languages of those who had to learn it as a second language. This borrowing involved both the introduction of new words, like *heraldus, heraldicus*, and *bannerium*, and the introduction of new senses for existing words, like *arma* and *crista*. For the history of the Latin words I have examined in this essay, I have relied principally upon the following works: J. F. NIERMEYER, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1976), hereinafter **NIERMEYER,** *MLLM*; R. E. LATHAM, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-list from British Sources* (London, 1965), hereinafter **LATHAM,** *RMLW*.
[7] Published by Evan John JONES, *Medieval Heraldry: Some Fourteenth Century Heraldic Works* (Cardiff, 1943). See below, Pt. II.B, § 3.2.1.
[8] Respectively discussed and published in *ibid*. See below, Pt. II.B, § 3.2.1

relevance to heraldica appeared in them almost exclusively in literary works before 1267/76.   In that year the oldest surviving document conveying arms was composed in **High German**,[9] but such documents were the only texts in that language to deal with heraldic subjects in a technical way until 1414, when the only German treatise composed before 1530 was completed.[10] Blazonic language in particular developed very slowly outside France and England, and appeared only in treatises rather than in blazoned armorials. The only blazons recorded before 1471 in **Old Catalan** (when the first treatise was completed) are to be found in the poem *Vesió* of 1382,[11] and the only ones preserved in **Middle Welsh** are in a contemporary translation of the *Tractatus* just cited, (probably by its author).[12] It was not until half a century later that these languages began to be joined by others: **Middle English** only in 1445/50 (in *John's Treatise*)[13] and 1446 (in letters patent granting arms[14]), **Castilian** (in the treatise *Blazon General*) in 1489,[15] **Middle Scots** (in the treatise *The Deidis of Armorie*) c. 1494,[16] and **Portuguese** (in the compendium *Tratado Geral*) soon after 1532.[17] So far as I have been able to discover to date, distinct blazonic terminologies in the other vernacular languages of Latin Europe would not appear until much later — between 1600 and 1900 — and those of all

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[9] **Middle High German** is the name given to the literary dialects spoken in southern Germany between c. 1050 and c. 1350, when they were succeeded by the dialects now called **Early New High German** (which itself persisted to c. 1650). Middle High German was used from c. 1180 for the composition of numerous chivalric romances on the model of those of the French poet Crestïen de Troyes, who in 1170 founded the Arthurian tradition.

[10] The first systematic discussion of armory in Middle High German, and the only one before 1530, seems to be that included in the more general treatise composed in 1414 by Johannes ROTH, *Der Ritterspiegel*, recently edited by Christoph HUBER and Pamela KALNING (Berlin, New York, 2009).

[11] See A. PAGÈS (ed.), *La 'Vesió' de Bernat de So et le 'Debat entre Honor e Delit' de Jacme March* (Toulouse, Paris, 1945). According to Martí DE RIQUER, *Heràldica Catalana des de l'Any 1150 al 1550* (2 vols., Barcelona, 1983), the earliest Catalan treatise to deal with armory at any length was Gabriel TURELL's *Arbre d'honor* of 1471, of which an edition by Francesc BLANCH was promised as ms. 302 of the Biblioteca de Catalunya.

[12] The *Llyfr Arfau* of John TREVOR, edited and translated by JONES in *Medieval Heraldry*, pp. 2-96. See § 3.2.1 below.

[13] *John's Treatise* was edited by JONES in *Medieval Heraldry*, pp. 213-220.

[14] The first surviving letters patent issued by an English king of arms in English seem to be those issued in 1446 to the Haberdashers' Company. See Pt. II.B, § 3.3.

[15] The first Castilian treatise was the *Blazon General* of Pedro DE GRAÇIA DEY, K. of Arms of the Catholic Monarchs of Spain, completed in 1489, and later incorporated into the Portuguese *Tratado Geral* of Antonio RODRIGES (as below, n. 16)

[16] This treatise, based on a French original that seems itself to have incorporated several earlier French texts, was published by L. A. J. R. HOWEN in *The Deidis of Armorie: A Heraldic Treatise and Bestiary* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1994)

[17] Afonso de DORNELAS, *Tratado Geral de Nobreza por Antonio Rodriges Principal Rei de Armas 'Portugal' de D. Manuel I* (Porto, 1931)

languages other than French and English remained relatively primitive throughout this period.

As was to be expected, given the early monopoly and continuing prestige of French in armorial matters and in nobiliary culture more generally, the lexicon both of armorial *description* and of armorial *classification* in all of these languages was closely modelled on the corresponding lexicon developed in French down to the time of its initial translation. After that point it generally developed along increasingly divergent lines, influenced in every case by the lexicon and usages of ordinary language — though armorists writing in Castilian, Catalan, Portuguese, and Italian would bring their own terminologies back into close conformity with the French one after it had achieved its classic form in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Only in English would either a *blazonic* or broader *heraldistic* (mainly *armoristic*) lexicon emerge that was both comparable in sophistication to, and in many respects independent of, its original French model.

For these reasons I shall concentrate hereafter primarily on developments in French and English — which by a happy coincidence are the official languages of this Country and this journal — and secondarily on those in Latin, in which many of the non-blazonic terms in use in France and England either originated (as *conoissance* did from *cognoscentia*) or gave rise to back-formations derived from vernacular words (like *heraldus* derived from *herault*).

My account of the history of heraldic terms in these languages does not pretend to be anything more than a preliminary survey, based largely on the most recent research of historical lexicographers in the literary sources,[18] and the even more recent research of heraldists on the various

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[18] The work of historical lexicographers is set out in historical dictionaries of various levels of precision, documentation, and temporal scope. The most thorough and comprehensive in any language is the *OED 2*, which covers the history of the English Language from the time of the Conquest in 1066 to the present, provides dated quotations from named contemporary works of all kinds to support its definitions, and prefaces each entry with a summary of the etymological history of the word in earlier and related languages. The *Robert DHLF* covers the history and etymology of the French lexicon from the beginning to the present, but does so in a much more compact manner, providing at least approximate dates of use, but omitting examples, and organizing the material under modern headwords in entries dealing with the whole family of related words. The other dictionaries available in English and French cover particular dialects (like Anglo-Norman in the *AND*) or historical phases (Old or Middle English or Old French and Early Middle French) in essentially the same way as the *OED*, except in omitting the dates of the quotations, which must be discovered by laboriously consulting the list of works cited. The specialized French-language dictionaries are essential for reconstructing the history of the French heraldic lexicon, as they provide the evidence in a form in which it can be evaluated by a specialist; I have often found dubious or clearly erroneous interpretations of the meaning of a word in a particular quotation. Unfortunately, they vary significantly

types of heraldistic work, supplemented by my own knowledge both of the history of the phenomena in question and of the history of the specialized lexicon. In consequence, it will undoubtedly require both corrections and extensions in the light of newer discoveries, editions, and specialized studies. Nevertheless, to my knowledge, my account is the first general survey of its type to be undertaken in any language. It should serve both to give the reader a sound general understanding of the progress of heraldic taxonomic terminology from its beginnings to the present, and to demonstrate the correctness of my position on the ramshackle nature of our current taxonomic lexicon, and the necessity of approaching its reform in a scientific spirit. If it achieves those goals I shall consider it a success.

2. Heraldic Terms Adopted in the Pre-Treatise Periods
c. 1170 – c. 1335

2.1. The Nature of the Sources, Literary and Technical

The first two Periods I have just identified corresponded to the phase in the history of armigery when the arms was the only species of emblem in general use outside Germany, and was not yet subject to the classic rules governing its transmission and combination. They also corresponded to the phases in the history of heraldry in which the heralds — not yet 'officers of arms' with permanent appointments and a full hierarchy of ranks — remained primarily criers and messengers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interest both of the heralds and of the tiny number of armorists in these Periods was concentrated entirely on the arms: a concentration that was to persist, as we shall see, to the end of the Third Period around 1560.

Equally unsurprising is the fact that before the end of the Second Period around 1335, what interest there was in emblematic arms was of a strictly utilitarian nature, and resulted from the need or desire to *recognize* numerous individual armigers — especially knights and squires in the context of jousts, tournaments, and battles — and to *describe* the arms they bore, in a manner that was sufficiently precise and concise to make it suitable for oral proclamation by heralds and instant comprehension by spectators. It was for these purposes that the older of the two technical

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in their thoroughness, and Old French (the main subject of both *GOD., DALF* and *TOB.-LOM., AF*) is still much better served than Middle French. The *MED* includes more quotations for our period than the *OED*, but it omits some of those the latter includes, so both must be consulted and their evidence weighed. When setting out the history of the more important words I have generally included at least one quotation representing each of its relevant senses, translated into Modern English. I have otherwise merely given references to the places in which the passages quoted may be found, in some cases indicating the edition of the work, but in most only the page or column in the dictionary or dictionaries. For the dating of works in Old French I have used esp. the *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises: Le Moyen Âge*, ed. R. BOSSUAT, L. PICHARD, G. R. DE LAGE, G. HASENOHR, M. ZINK (Paris, 1992).

languages of armory was created — probably by the heralds, as they had the greatest need for it — and was gradually improved over the course of the first four Periods in question. This essentially *descriptive* language long remained nameless in all languages, and remains so today in most of them, but since 1610 it been designated in English by the familiar name 'blazon'.[19]

In the First Period, ending around 1250, this language seems to have been employed almost exclusively for crying aloud, though a few contemporary authors used it to describe the imagined arms of their fictional protagonists.[20] The dominant literary genre of the period between about 1160 and 1520 was the chivalric romance, a tale of knightly love and adventure composed at first exclusively in verse (from 1150 to 1215/20) and later in prose (increasingly from 1215/20 and normally after 1250). From 1170 onwards such works were most commonly set in the court of the legendary ruler Arthur, King of Britain, and included numerous descriptions of jousts, tournaments, and battles in which the knights of his Company of the Round Table played a central rôle.[21] As the leading knights of this company were soon assigned distinctive arms by the authors of such works, there were plenty of opportunities to describe them in the text, along with the items of knightly equipment with which they were associated, and these works are therefore the most important type of source for blazonic terms before 1250.[22]

Similar descriptions also occur, but more rarely, in the epic poems called *chansons de geste*, in the shorter poetic works called *dits* and *contes* (which were often of an overtly didactic character), and in historical and biographical works of the Period. Indeed, the latter types of work written in the vernacular were in most cases composed by men whose status, position, and interests were essentially similar to those of the authors of the poetic works: secular clerics, often attached (like heralds after 1272) to the household of a particular king or prince, and interested primarily in recording the distinguished genealogies of their patrons, and the glorious deeds of their ancestors, kinsmen, and loyal vassals.[23] Their interests were thus not very different from those of the contemporary heralds, and at least some of the records of the arms of the lords and knights of this period were prepared by them rather than the heralds — most of whom were probably

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[19] It first appears in this sense in John GUILLIM, *A Display of Heraldry*, (London, 1610). (*OED* 2, II, p. 271) For the history of the word to 1335, see below, § 2.2.2.b.4.

[20] On its early history, see Gerard BRAULT, AIH, *Early Blazon: Heraldic terminology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with special reference to Arthurian literature* (Oxford, 1972).

[21] The best account of the 'historical mythology of chivalry' expressed in romances is that in KEEN, *Chivalry*, ch. VI, pp. 102-24.

[22] On the arms attributed to Arthurian knights, see BRAULT, *Early Blazon*; Michel PASTOUREAU, 'Héraldique imaginaire', in *L'Hermine et le sinople: Études d'Héraldique Médiévale* (Paris, 1982), chs. 16-20, pp. 261-314; and IDEM, 'Les armoiries arthuriennes', in *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Keith BUSBY, Terry NIXON, Alison STONES, and Lori WALTERS (2 vols., Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1993), II. pp. 245-47

[23] On these historians, see KEEN, *Chivalry*, p. 32.

illiterate.

The regular and systematic use of blazon in a written form was initiated shortly after 1250 in the first of the growing number of blazoned **armorials** or 'rolls of arms'[24] composed in England and France: *Glover's Roll* of 1253 and the *Bigot Roll* of 1254.[25] Like the other armorials of their type that have come down to us in manuscript from the next three centuries — long composed exclusively in the same two kingdoms — these were essentially catalogues of the real or imaginary arms of some set of rulers or noblemen, and consisted exclusively of descriptions (and sometimes representations) of individual arms, without any explanatory text. Only the first set of armorials of any kind — the purely illustrative armorials included in Matthew Paris' histories, composed 1244-59 — actually included references to the shields on which the arms were represented. [26]

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[24] The substantive use of the adjective *armorial* in the sense '*a compendium of arms or armories in any form*' was initiated in French c. 1690 and was eventually introduced into all of the other Romance languages as the standard term for collections of this general type. 'Armorial' in this sense finally entered the English heraldistic lexicon in 1753, but has only recently come into general use. In the meantime, at a date I have yet to determine, the peculiarly English phrase 'roll of arms' had come to be employed in essentially the same sense: in part no doubt because some of the earliest English armorials were in fact preserved in parchment *rotuli* or 'rolls', in which the sheets were sewn or glued in a series top-to-bottom, but probably also because 'roll' was the normal term in England for official records of all kinds, even when they ceased to be preserved in the form indicated.

[25] On the English armorials or Rolls of Arms, see Anthony Richard WAGNER, FSA, Richmond Herald, *A Catalogue of English Mediaeval Rolls of Arms* (Soc. of Ant., London, 1950); Thomas Daniel TREMLETT and Hugh Stanford LONDON (eds.), *Aspilogia II: Rolls of Arms of Henry III* (London, 1967, repr. Woodbridge, 2009), and Gerard BRAULT, AIH, (ed.), *Aspilogia III: Rolls of Arms of Edward I* (Woodbridge, 1997). On the French armorials, see J.-B. DE VAIVRE, *Orientations pour l'étude et l'utilisation des armoriaux du Moyen Age* (CNRS, Paris, 1974; *Cahiers d'héraldique* I.) On the earliest English armorials and their relationship to those of France in the same period, see TREMLETT and LONDON, *Aspilogia II*, pp. 89-114. The latter volume also contains (on pp. 260-65) a revised reference list of the armorials prepared in England before c. 1500.

[26] The principal (and only extensive) published study of the history of the language of blazon in any language (specifically Anglo-Norman) is Gerard BRAULT, *Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1972). The only other lengthy study was a continuation of Brault's work by his doctoral student A. M. BARSTOW, *A Lexicographical Study of Heraldic Terms in Anglo-Norman Rolls of Arms (1300-1350)*, written as a dissertation at Penn State in 1970, but never published. Nothing of a comparable nature has been published either about the later history of blazon in French, or about that of the equivalent technical terminology in any other language, but the terminology of the period 1395 to 1560 and its development can be seen in the original texts of the French and Francophone treatise-writers of that period published in Claire BOUDREAU, (Chief Herald of Canada), *Histoire des traités de blason 1. L'Héritage symbolique des hérauts d'armes: Dictionnaire encyclopédique du blason ancien (XIVe-XVIe siècle)* (3 vols., Paris, 2006), and arranged by term or subject for easy use.

The number of surviving blazoned armorials produced before the end of our Second Period was actually quite small, however, and in England the practice of creating them (or indeed armorials of any kind) seems to have taken off only after the accession of Edward I in 1272. Indeed, *Glover's Roll* was the only armorial known to have been created in England before about 1275, when the one now known as *Walford's Roll* was completed, but between that date and 1335 thirty-one additional armorials are known to have been created there, including (with *Walford's Roll*) twelve that were blazoned, either instead of or in addition to being painted. Eighteen of the thirty-two later armorials were completed under Edward I, eleven under his son Edward II between 1307 and 1327, and four in the first eight years of the reign of Edward III. In France the number of armorials surviving from this period is significantly smaller: a total of seventeen, three of them completed under Louis IX in 1254, c. 1260, and c. 1267, two under his son Philippe III between 1270 and 1285, nine under his son Philippe IV before his death in 1314, one under his second son Philippe V in 1322, and two under the latter's cousin Philippe VI — first of the Valois line — in 1330 and 1332. Once again, only a minority of them were blazoned, of which only two were composed before 1301. In Germany, no armorial composed as such is known from the period before 1335 (when the Zurich Roll might have been completed), and they appear even later in other countries.[27]

As this suggests, down to 1335 neither professional heralds nor the amateur armorists who almost certainly produced some of the earliest armorials displayed any interest in questions unrelated to the description of particular armal designs. Before that date, therefore, nothing resembling an historical or analytical discourse on any aspect of heraldica seems to have existed. This does not mean, however, that no words existed before 1335 in either French or English to designate heraldic phenomena other than the elements of armal design, or that we have no record of what those words were. On the contrary, from the language used to refer to them in the various types of literary work mentioned above (including histories), in

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[27] Armorials of any type were unknown outside France and England before 1300, and blazoned armorials seem to have been unknown in most other countries. On the German armorials, see Egon Freiherr VON BERCHEM, D. L. GALBREATH, and Otto HUPP, 'Die Wappenbücher des deutschen Mittelalters', *AHS* an. 38 (1924), 17-30 64-72; an. 39 (1925), pp. 97-107, 23-33, 80-93, 114-124, etc.; and IDEM, (revised by Kurt MAYER), *Die Wappenbücher des deutschen Mittelalters*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Heraldik, Schriftenreihe der Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung, Band III. The oldest surviving German armorial is the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift*, prepared between c. 1300 and c. 1320. Roughly contemporary with it are the *Weingartner Liederhandschrift* of c. 1300, (which like it includes the armories of famous German *Minnesänger* or troubadours), and the *Wappenfolge of Erstfelden*, which records the armories of those present at the Imperial Diet of Speier in 1309. None of these, nor any of the later armorials described by von Bechem et al., includes blazons. The same is true of an armorial of c. 1550, recently published as *Neustifter Wappenbuch. Aus der Bibliothek des Augustiner Chorherren-Stiftes Neustift*, ed. Harwick W. ARCH (Brixen, 2001)

the treatises on knighthood composed between c. 1210 and c. 1260,[28] and in such mundane sources as wills, inventories, and glossaries, we have at least an adequate knowledge of the contemporary names not only for arms and crests (the only existing species of emblem), but for the contexts on which they were habitually displayed — what we call shields, banners, pennons, helmets, surcoats, horse-trappers, and the like — and for the heralds and their analogues in the Primary Heraldic Region.[29] We also know what words were used to designate what we have called 'visual signs' in general, and (to the extent that they were differentiated) the functional types of sign we have called 'emblems', 'insignia', and 'symbols'.

Very few of these words, however, can be regarded as technical terms of any sort, let alone terms of heraldic erudition chosen or invented to represent some distinctly heraldic idea. They were simply the words used in ordinary language to designate or describe such phenomena, which were themselves elements of the common culture of the day. In consequence the words in question suffered from all of the liabilities of words in ordinary use in all languages.

These liabilities I shall examine systematically in Part II.C, but it will be useful to give a brief summary of them here, so that the reader can notice them as they arise. They include many words with meanings that shifted, expanded, contracted, and multiplied over time in unpredictable ways even in a single language, and sometimes did so in different ways when the words were transferred (often at widely separated dates) from one language (usually continental Old French) to another (including Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English). These characteristics may be technically referred to as **diachronic** and **synchronic polysemy**, both **intralingual** and **translingual**. Furthermore, most of the phenomena these words represented came themselves to be designated by a number of distinct words or phrases, which in their turn often differed from one language to another, and evolved along different lines at different rates: phenomena that constituted **polylexy** of the same set of types. Finally, as a result of a failure either of interest or of recognition in the minds of contemporaries, many phenomena that *could* have been given names were either unnamed at any time in any language, or named at some point in only one or two of many: situations best termed **universal** and **multilingual alexia**.

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[28] Treatises of this type often assigned symbolic meanings to everything from the knightly helmet to the knightly horse. I have identified six such treatises (one imbedded in a short Romance) composed before 1250, all in Middle French or its English dialect: (1) RAOUL DE HOUDENC, *Roman des Eles*, c. 1210/15; (2) GUIOT DE PROVINS, *L'Armëure du chevalier*, 1215/20; (3) Anon., *Ordene de chevalerïe*, c. 1220; (4) JOUHAM DE LA CHAPELE DE BLOIS, *Le Conte dou baril*, c. 1220; (5) Anon., *Traitee del chevaler De*, 1235/65; and (6) BAUDOIN DE CONDÉ, *Li Contes du Baceler*, 1240/80. There are several similar works associating the same virtues with noblemen under different designations.

[29] For a definition of this region, see Part I of this essay, p. 10.

We shall see many examples of each of these shortcomings — all fatal to scientific discussion — in the course of the surveys of the lexicon I shall present below.

2.2. Words used before 1335 to Designate or Classify Armorial Signs and Related Phenomena

In the remainder of this section I shall present a brief survey of the history in the first two Periods of the words used to designate signs of the armorial family. I shall begin my survey (1) with the words used as **generic terms**, applicable to signs of more than one species. I shall then turn to a more detailed examination of the history (2) of the words used to represent the original and always primary species of heraldic emblem, the **arms**, and of its principal underliers,[30] the knightly **shield**, **flags**, and **coat**; (3) of the one dependent emblem that emerged before 1335, the **crest**, and the **helmet** to which it was attached; and finally (4) of the **heralds** and their *mestier* or craft — which throughout the first two Periods were largely concerned with the recognition and description of arms, but were not yet identified with such emblems to the extent that they have since come to be. I shall normally divide my discussion of each of these phenomena between the words used in Old French and its Anglo-Norman dialect, in Middle English, and when relevant, in Middle Latin.

2.2.1. WORDS USED TO DESIGNATE VISUAL SIGNS OF MORE THAN ONE TYPE

1.a. Overview to 1560

OLD FRENCH came to include three words that were at least eventually used to designate visual signs of one or more of the general functional types of interest to us. In the order of their attestation in Anglo-Norman these words were the following: (1) *signe* (attested in continental Old French by 1000 and in Anglo-Norman in 1139), derived from the Classical Latin *signum* 'sign', and used in the very general sense of 'sign of any sort' from the beginning, but in that of 'emblematic flag' in Anglo-Norman from 1251/99, and in comparably specific emblematic and symbolic senses in Old French only after 1325;[31] (2) *enseigne*, (attested by 1095/1115 and 1139 respectively), derived from the related Classical Latin *insignia* meaning '*signs of status or identity*', used at the time of its first appearance in the epic poem the *Chanson de Roland* to designate flags and war-cries, but soon extended to all forms of emblem and insigne;[32] (3) *cunnuissance* or *co(g)n(n)oissance* (attested by 1095/1115 and 1175/99 respectively), derived from the Classical Latin *cognoscentia* 'knowledge', and used in continental Old French from the *Roland* down to at least 1453 and in Anglo-

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[30] I use the term **underlier** to designate a physical context, like a shield, banner, pennon, or tabard, which was entirely covered with the design of arms, and thus **underlay** it. The arms may therefore be said to **overlie** the context in question.

[31] *Robert DHLF*, III, pp. 3505-06; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IX, cols. 650-52; *AND-o*, 'sign'

[32] *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 1247-48; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, III, cols. 510-14; *AND-o*, 'enseigne'

Norman from c. 1180 to designate the designs set on knightly shields and comparable emblems.[33]

All of these words eventually gave rise, through the medium of Anglo-Norman, to words with similar semantic ranges in MIDDLE ENGLISH, though as usual the latter are recorded at significantly later dates. In the same order these words were: (1) *si(g)n(e)*, attested from 1225 in the general sense of 'sign', but rare before 1290, when it was first used to designate a coat of arms, and thereafter increasingly used of heraldic emblems in general;[34] (2) *ens(e)igne*, attested only from 1375, when it was used of a military signal or war-cry, and taking on the relevant sense of 'military flag' only around 1400;[35] and (3) *conysaunce* or *conoisaunce*, attested by 1292, but in the relevant sense of 'emblem' only from c. 1350.[36]

In addition to these words borrowed from Old French through Anglo-Norman, Middle English also inherited from Old English two additional words that came to be used to designate visual signs, especially those of an emblematic function. The first of these words was (6) *mearc*, *merk(e)* or *mark(e)*, descended from the Old Teutonic word **markâ* '*sign or trace*', which in Old English gave rise both to the strong feminine *mearc* meaning '*boundary, border-land, march*', and (via Old Teutonic **markom*) to the strong neuter *mearc* 'sign'.[37] In the latter sense *mearc* is attested in Old English applied to stones set up as monuments, to flags borne before bodies of warriors, and to the emblematic 'mark' adopted by the followers of the Antichrist. The second of these senses, that of rallying-flag, was preserved to c. 1200 in La3amon's Early Middle English *Brut* — a retelling from the English perspective of the Norman poet Wace's proto-Arthurian *Roman de Brut* — where he referred to the bearing of the *kinges marke*. The emblematic sense of the Middle English *marke* would be primarily preserved in reference to marks of adhesion either to Christ or Antichrist, and its use in a more generic sense of particular interest here is attested only from c. 1445, as we shall see.

The second word was *taken* or *token*, derived from yet another Old Teutonic word meaning 'sign' — in this case **taikno* — which gave rise to derivatives bearing that meaning in all of the Germanic languages in every stage of their historical development.[38] In Modern High German, indeed, its derivative *Zeichen* is the normal word for 'sign', 'symbol', and 'trademark' (a type of visual emblem), and the prefixed *Abzeichen* is the normal word for 'sign of status, insigne'. The Old English *tacon* or *tacen* is first attested c. 890 with the sense of '*sign or indication (of some condition or attitude)*'. By 1000 it had come to be extended to the rallying-sign of an army, making it a synonym of *mearc*, but does not seem to have retained

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[33] *Robert DHLF*, I, p. 853; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, II, cols. 702-05; *AND-o*, 'conoissance'
[34] *OED 2*, XV, pp. 449-51
[35] *OED 2*, V, pp. 280-81
[36] *OED 2*, III, p. 447
[37] *OED 2*, IX, pp. 377-78
[38] *OED 2*, XVIII, pp. 196-97

the latter sense much after that date. Surprisingly, its Middle English reflex *token* is not recorded in any other emblematic sense until 1472: a sense I shall examine in Part II.B.

1.b. Words for emblem in Old French to 1340: **enseigne** *and* **cognoissance**

As the dates of attestation in relevant senses just given indicate, down to the end of the Old French period around 1340 (closely coeval with the end of my Second Period in 1335) only two of the five words in the continental form of that language were actually employed to designate emblems of any sort: *enseigne* and *cognoissance*. Both of these words were used for this purpose from the time of their first attestation in the *Chanson de Roland* at the beginning of the twelfth century to the end of the Second Period and beyond it, and acquired almost identical semantic ranges in this area. In Anglo-Norman the emblematic use of these two words is recorded from slightly later dates: *enseigne* from 1139 and *conoissance* from 1176/99.

1.c. Words for emblem in Middle English to 1335: **signe** *&* (to 1200) **mearc**

In Middle English, by contrast, the word *enseigne* would not be employed in an emblematic sense before 1378, while *conysaunce* or *conoisaunce* would begin to be used in such a sense only in the 1350s. In the meantime, the word **signe** — though not known to have been employed in Middle French in a relevant sense — was increasingly applied to emblems, including heraldic arms, from 1290. Nevertheless, it continued to be used of signs in general, so it can hardly be regarded as being primarily a word for emblems. In fact, no such word existed in Middle English. The only indigenous Middle English word used to represent the concept '*sign of particular identity*' at any time before 1335 was **mearc** or **marke**, and it is not attested in that sense between 1200 and 1445. Clearly contemporary English writers felt little need for such a word.

2.2.2. WORDS ADOPTED BEFORE 1335 TO DESIGNATE EMBLEMATIC ARMS

I shall now turn from my consideration of the most general words employed to designate arms and related emblems before 1335 to the words used especially to designate heraldic arms as such: the oldest and most important species of heraldic emblem, and the only one actually discussed in any of the treatises written before 1560. The oldest of these words preserved in the written record was certainly the Old French *armes*, from which our terms in both Modern French and Modern English descend. *Armes* and its reflexes and equivalents would also remain by far the most common words for the species of emblem in question in all three of our Periods, and would become the normal terms of heraldistic discourse. Nevertheless, in the second of our two Periods several other words — all of them names for the shield on which arms were most commonly displayed before 1335 — were occasionally employed for this purpose, as we shall see, and one of them would come to be so employed on a regular basis in our Third Period. I shall consider their histories in a roughly chronological order.

2.a. The word *armes* and its equivalents

The term **armes** itself is perhaps the best example of a word used as a technical taxonomic term by heralds and armorists in the four and a half centuries between the beginnings of proto-armigery around 1130 and the publication of the first treatises on armory composed for printing around 1560. Significantly — like the names for the other elements of the armorial achievement — it was almost certainly a word adopted by knights rather than heralds, and functioned as a word of ordinary language for the better part of two centuries before it appeared in a work of heraldic erudition.

No doubt because of its origin, *armes* has always been a decidedly less than ideal term for its referent. This is true both because it is morphologically *plural* while its referent is singular, and because it has always designated various other phenomena, related to it only by physical or cultural association, so that it has always been an awkwardly ambiguous term in many contexts. This was especially true in the three Periods of its history before 1560, as we shall see.

In ordinary language the Old French *armes* (like its Latin source-word *arma* and its romance cognates *armas*, *arme*, and so on) originally designated either *armament* or *military equipment* generally, both offensive and defensive.[39] Like the oldest of the general words I just examined, the Old French *armes* is first attested in any sense in the *Chanson de Roland* of c. 1095/1115, where it refers primarily to knightly armour. By 1130 *armes* had been joined by the related word *armëure*, derived from the Latin *armatura*, from which it inherited the same broad sense as *armes*. However, since *armëure* (by 1250 reduced to *armure*) was from the first primarily applied to *defensive* equipment or 'armour', *armes* was increasingly applied to *offensive* weapons or 'arms' — though without actually losing its more general sense of 'armament' of all types. Both words also acquired other senses, often shared (including that of military emblem, attested for *armatura* in 1311), and retained many of those senses to 1500 or later.

As we shall see, in the phrases *d'armes*, *of armes*, and their analogues, the words of the *armes* family came to serve as the vernacular equivalents of the contemporary Latin adjective *militaris,* which itself acquired a wide range of senses related both to warfare and to knighthood.[40] The latter association — of considerable importance in the world of the heralds — itself arose from the fact that the Latin word *miles* had come by 1100 to mean both 'soldier' and 'knight', though only the

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[39] For the general history of *armes* and *armëure* in Old French, see *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 202 and 205. For examples of the use of these terms, see TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I, cols. 536-37, 538-39

[40] The expression *d'armes* long conveyed the same sense as the modern word *militaire* (attested only from 1355 and rare before 1500) and its cognate 'military' (attested only from 1585), and was more commonly used than its partial synonym *chevaleros*. Its Middle English equivalents — *of armes* and *at armes* — were similarly employed in the same sense well into the sixteenth century, and survive even today in such expressions as 'sergeant at arms'.

latter idea was represented by the corresponding vernacular words *chevalers* and *knyght*. Because of this, the abstract noun *militia* based upon *miles* came to be represented in Old French and Middle English by words derived respectively from *chevalier* and *knyght* (*chevalerïe* and *knyghtshipe* or *knyghthode*), and all of those words came to bear a wide range of senses including '*the status of soldier or knight*', '*the qualities of a good soldier or knight*', '*a body of soldiers or knights*', '*the military or knightly art or occupation*', and '*a knightly feat or deed*'. At the same time, the word *armes* itself in both languages came to take on the senses of '*the military or knightly art or occupation*' and '*military or knightly activities — including warfare and knightly feats or deeds*'.[41] Thus, the word *armes* and the ideas it represented linked the emblems so called ever more closely to the knights and others of the *mestier d'armes*, who actually bore emblematic *armes* on their functional *armes* as they engaged in the glorious *faits d'armes* (or *dedis* or *armes*) on which their reputations — proclaimed by the *hirauts d'armes* along with descriptions of their *armes* at tournaments — largely depended.[42] To contemporaries its very ambiguity, so irritating to modern scholars, must have been one of its principal virtues.

It is not clear when the OLD FRENCH *armes* was first used as the designation for the new, increasingly stable species of emblem adopted by princes in the 1130s. The word is not attested in this sense in any surviving text before c. 1170, when it was used in the narrative poem *Erec et Enide*[43] — the first chivalric romance of the Arthurian tradition, effectively invented by its author, the Champenois poet Crestïen de Troyes. His romances were also the first works to portray in detail (albeit in a highly idealized manner) the lives and activities of the contemporary nobles of northern France, including tournaments and knightly warfare, so it is not surprising that they introduced a number of new words of this sort — among which was the one ancestral to 'herald'. The passage in which the word *armes* first occurs in *Erec* (l. 3970 ff.) reads: '*Erec conut le seneschal Et les **armes** et le cheval, Mes Keus pas lui ne reconut; Car a ses **armes** ne parut veraie conoissance.*' ('Erec knew the seneschal, both his arms and his horse, but Kay did not recognize him, for true knowledge of his arms had not appeared to him.')

A word with the general sense of 'armament' must seem a very strange word to apply, without modification, to an emblem merely *displayed* on elements of armament: before 1220 especially the knightly shield and banner. It therefore seems likely that its use arose from a shortening of a phrase in which *armes* was preceded by a word meaning 'sign' followed by the preposition *de*: an arrangement which, in the absence

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[41] *Ibid.* and *AND-o*, 'arms'.

[42] On all of these lexical associations, and the history of the words of the *miles*, *chevalier*, and 'knight' families, see D'A. J. D. BOULTON, 'The Notion of "Chivalry" as the Social Code of the Later Medieval Nobilities: The Origins and Shortcomings of a Modern Historiographical Construct', forthcoming in *Chivalry, Honour, and Care*, ed. Warren T. REICH and Jonathan RILEY-SMITH (Oxford, 2011)

[43] On its history in Old French, see esp. TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I, pp. 536-37, in which the following citations appear. See also those in BRAULT, *Early Blazon*, pp. 108-11.

of a correlative adjective based on or related to *armes*, was commonly employed to express a relationship to the latter in one sense or another. Later phrases of this sort included *baniere d'armes*, *penon d'armes*, and *cot(t)e d'armes*, in all of which *armes* initially referred exclusively to military equipment rather than emblems set upon such equipment.

In the light of the history of the words for 'emblem' given in the last infrasection, the original name for the emblem called simply *armes* by 1170 was probably either *enseigne d'armes* or *conoissance d'armes* — either or both of which could well have come into use before 1130 to designate pre-armal scutal or vexillary emblems. In fact, learned men writing in Latin long found *arma* alone an unsatisfactory term, and either accompanied it by a more transparent word (*insignia* in the first Latin treatise of 1355, entitled *De insigniis et armis* 'On insignia and arms'[44]) or by including such a word in a phrase including *arma* (*armorum insignia sive arma* 'ensigns of arms, or arms' in the standard form used by the French royal chancery for the concession of an augmentation to arms in the fifteenth century[45]), and similar expressions would be used by contemporary English heralds.[46]

Nevertheless, at some time between the adoption of the original, lost, phrase and 1170, the sense of 'military emblem' that phrase had conveyed must have passed by metonymy to the word *armes* itself, as thereafter that word would normally (and in non-learned contexts invariably) appear alone in Old French in this otherwise inexplicable sense. More remarkably, so far as one can know or deduce from the very limited material that has come down to us from before 1335, *armes* used alone would remain the normal designation for the original species of armorial emblem in the usage of Francophone heralds and heraldists down to the end of my Second Period in that year, and for some time thereafter.

The *Altfranzösiches Wörterbuch* (the principal historical dictionary of Old French) includes numerous examples of the use of *armes* in our Period additional to the first one in *Erec et Enide*, two of which occur in phrases of special interest here. The display of arms not only on the shield but on the surcoat — relatively unusual before 1335, as we shall see — is attested in this passage of the epic *Gaydon* (composed after 1218): '***Armes*** *ot bonnes, bien les sai deviser:* ***Escu*** *d'azur, d'argent l'ot fait frazer, a un lyon de goules souzlever; Tout autressi fu sa* ***cote a armer***'.[47] (He had good arms, well do I

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[44] On this work, see below, Pt. II.B, § 3.2.1.

[45] This appears under the title *Don de fleurs de liz en armes* in the Formulaire d'Odart Marchesne, now preserved as Paris, B.n.F., ms. fr. 5024, on fol. 118v, published in Olivier GYOTJEANNIN, Jacques PYCKE, and Benoît-Michel TOCK, *Diplomatique médiévale*, L'Atelier du Médiéviste 2 (Turnhout, 1993), pp. 258-9

[46] This can be seen in the letters patent of armigeration issued in 1461 by Guyenne King of Arms to William Swayne, in which he initially designated the emblem granted as a '*Signe and a Cognisance of Armes*', and later in the document as a '*signe and armes*'. The letters in question can be found on line under *Fifteenth Century English Patents of Arms*.

[47] *Gaydon, chanson de geste publiée pour la première fois d'après les trois manuscrits de Paris par MM. F. Guessard et S. Luce*, (Paris,), 1862, l. 215

know how to describe them: a shield of azure had he had bordered, to raise a lion of gules; all the same was his arming coat.) The display of the arms on a banner used as a crest (a practice of the thirteenth century) is similarly attested in this passage of the mid-thirteenth century romance *L'Atre perilleux*: '*Sor li **hiaume** bien taillie ot une **baniere** de ses **armes** moult bien taillie Que s'amie li ot baillie*'.[48] ('On his well-made helm he had a well-cut banner of his arms, which his lady-love had given him'.)

As I observed at the beginning of this division, *armes* would also serve as the model for the normal name for the emblem in all of the other languages of Latin Europe, and these words in their turn would become in most languages the basis of a family of words referring to the species of emblem in question, and to the whole family of signs that came to cluster around it. Even its Latin source-word *arma* would come to bear the emblematic sense in both France and England by about 1250,[49] and in most other countries by 1400. *Armes* first entered MIDDLE ENGLISH (presumably through Anglo-Norman) just before 1300, initially in the sense of 'weapons', and by 1340 in the sense of 'armour'.[50] Its synonym *armure* (after 1387 increasingly written *armour* in the modern manner)[51] was introduced at about the same time, similarly retaining both its narrower and its broader sense. Both words retained these senses in English until at least 1800, but competed as the designations of offensive equipment with the indigenous *wep(p)en* (written 'weapon' in the modern fashion from 1559). *Wepen* was derived from the OLD TEUTONIC word **wæpnom*, from which the equivalent word in all of the Germanic languages descended (GERMAN *Waffen*/ *Wappen*, DUTCH and SWEDISH *wapen*, DANISH and NORWEGIAN *vaaben*). In all of these languages except English, the same word came to be used not only as the normal word for weapons,[52] but as the name for the military emblem called by derivatives of *arma* in English and the Romance languages: ITALIAN *arme*, OCCITAN and CATALAN *armes*, CASTILIAN and PORTUGUESE *armas*.[53] Under Germanic influence, words whose original sense was 'weapon' would eventually come to be used to designate the same species of emblem in the Slavic languages, beginning with the OLD CZECH *(h)erb* and its OLD POLISH derivative *herb*.[54]

In England the word *armes* in its emblematic sense must have entered ANGLO-NORMAN before 1200, but no doubt because of the nature

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[48] *L'Atre perilleux: Roman de la Table ronde*, ed. Brian WOLEDGE (Paris, 1936), l. 3625

[49] NIERMEYER, *MLLW*, p. 60, gives only 'S. xiii' for this sense of *arma*, but LATHAM, *RMLW*, p. 30, cites a use in c. 1250, and it is very unlikely that this preceded a corresponding use in France.

[50] *OED 2*, I, p. 634

[51] *Ibid.*, I, p. 639

[52] In the sixteenth century a distinction came to be made in the use of the previously synonymous dialectal variants *waffen* and *wappen*, reserving the former for the military senses and the latter for the emblematic.

[53] *Ibid.*, XX, pp. 44-45

[54] On the origins of the Slavic terms, see Józef SZYMENSKI, *Herbarz: Sredniowiecznego Rycerstwa Polskiego* (Warsaw, 1993), p. 8.

of Anglo-Norman literature, it is barely attested in surviving works, and those in which it does appear are very late. In fact it is first recorded (along with the word *heraudie*), in the treatise *De heraudie* (probably composed shortly after 1340) in the passage: '*oiseals qe pluys sount de custome portez en armes: egle et merle*').[55] It next appears only in the part of *Anonimalle Chronicle* composed on the basis of a Latin original that was itself written between about 1346 and 1376.[56]

In the meantime, as I noted above, the derivative MIDDLE ENGLISH word *armes* had been introduced both in its military senses and its emblematic sense by about 1300. It is first attested in the passage of the *Gloucester Chronicle*: '*Avirag vr kinges brother … dude him on the kinges armes…*', quoted in the *MED*.[57] The next appearances of the word cited therein date from c. 1330: one in the romance *Otuel* (in which it is declared that '*Karnifees knu3 Otuel/ By his armes swithe well*',[58] and the other in the romance *Sir Degare* (in which it occurs in the passage '*A sshelde he kest about his swere,/ That was of armes riche and dere*').[59] Since the next text cited was written c. 1378, it would appear that the word remained relatively rare in English before that date, though no other name for the emblem is known from the Periods before 1335.

As the foregoing account suggests, the word *armes* and its reflexes and equivalents are the oldest attested names for the oldest species of heraldic emblem in every language of Europe, and they have retained that sense in almost all of these languages from the time of their first introduction to the present day. In many of these languages, indeed, the word corresponding to *armes* has remained the *only* name for that species of emblem, at least in the language of heralds and heraldists. In a number of languages, however — unfortunately including both French and English — the original word of the *armes* family has been joined by one or more additional words or phrases, and through the carelessness typical of ordinary speech, these words and phrases have often taken on additional senses as well. These developments began before 1335, so their early history must be examined here.

2.b. Words for 'shield' extended to designate the arms, especially *blason*

No doubt because the arms were from the beginning displayed in the secondary, mimetic mode primarily on an image of a shield, several of the

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[55] On this treatise, see below, Pt. II.B, § 3.3.1.

[56] *AND-o*, 'arme'. On the chronicle, see Antonia GRANSDEN, *Historical Writing in England c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), pp. 110-11.

[57] *MED-o*, 'armes'. On the chronicle, see *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester,* ed. W. A. WRIGHT, *RS* 86 (1887)

[58] On the romance *Otuel*, see *The English Charlemagne Romances VI: The Taill of Rauf Coilyear, with the Fragments of Roland and Vernagu and Otuel,* ed. S. J. H. HERRTAGE, EETSES 39 (1882, reprint 1969).

[59] See *Sir Degarre,* ed. G. SCHLEICH, *ET* 19 (1929)

words meaning 'shield' came eventually to be used, through metonymy, to designate the emblem in question, but only one of them was certainly used in this sense before 1335. A number of the other words were certainly used to designate a shield that might bear arms. I shall examine them by language, beginning in this case with Middle Latin.[60]

2.b.i. The Latin word* scutum *and its derivatives. The contemporary LATIN words for shield that fell into this category included the Classical ***scutum*** and its various diminutives — including before 1335 ***scucheo*** (a 1210), ***scuticum*** (1285), and ***scutellum*** (p. 1300)[61] — and also (though much more rarely) the equally Classical ***clipeus***.[62] The words *scutum* and *clipeus* themselves were used to designate the large, heavy shield used by the heavy-cavalrymen called *caballerii, milites, chevalers,* or *knyghtes,* and the others seem to have designated the often diminutive representations of such shields, always charged with arms, that were an important part of the decorative vocabulary of the nobilities of France and England from about 1220 onwards. Their vernacular equivalents were used in the same way, as we shall see.

The use of both *scutum* and *clipeus* of most interest here is as a substitute for *arma* in designations of the arms. This does not seem to have been a very common practice in our current Periods, but it does appear in the very first collections of arms now treated by scholars as proto-armorials: the marginal illustrations included the histories of the English monk Matthew Paris, composed between 1244 and 1259. Matthew used *clipeus* in his captions to the very first images of escutcheons in his *Historia Anglorum* of 1245-51: *Clipeus Haraldi, Clipeus Willelmi ducis Normannorum,* and so on. He later employed *scutum* in exactly the same way, in alternation with it.[63] As the sole distinctive characteristic of the *clipei* and *scuta* thus depicted and identified was the arms painted within their outlines, he was clearly using those words in place of *arma* as a designation for the emblem itself. But of course he was a monk, not a knight or a herald, so it is difficult to know to what extent his practice, in learned

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[60] For a history of the shield in the two Periods before 1335, see Claude BLAIR, *European Armour, circa 1066 to circa 1700* (London, 1958, 1972, 1979), ch. 9, pp. 181-83. The main changes in the knightly shield in the two centuries following the emergence of proto-armal emblems in the 1130s were in its size and shape (from very large and almond-shaped to much smaller and 'heater-' or flatiron-shaped), and in the abandonment of the *umbo, bucle,* or 'boss' at its centre, and of the stiffeners that often radiated outwards from it.

[61] LATHAM, *RMLW,* p. 427; NIERMEYER, *MLLM,* pp. 949-40.

[62] See TREMLETT and LONDON (eds.), *Aspilogia II,* pp. 11 ff. For the semantic range in our period, including its use to represent the military service that in Middle High German was called *heerschild* (paralleling that of *scutum*) see NIERMEYER, *MLLM,* p. 192.

[63] The works of MATTHEW PARIS were edited by TREMLETT and LONDON, *Aspilogia II,* pp. 11-86. Representations of pages in the original manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, ms. 16), in which the captions are legible, can be seen in Pl. I, facing the title page.

Latin, reflected common usage in the vulgar tongues of his country.

Although *scutum* was most commonly employed throughout our current Periods in the basic sense of 'shield', Niermeyer's *Lexicon* lists a whole series of senses in which the meaning of *scutum* was extended by association to designate (1) the **military unit** commanded by a knight, (2) a **fee or fief** intended to support such a unit; and (3) a **body of knights**, otherwise called in Latin a *militia* and in Old French a *chevalerie*. The lexical family of *scutum* also included the derivative word ***scutagium***, bearing two distinct senses: that of '*the military service of one knight*' and that of '*a fine payable in lieu of such service*'. Both were probably back-formations from the Old French *escüage*, which bore the same senses. Finally, it includes two derivative words for 'shield-maker' — ***scutarius*** and ***scutator*** — and a synonym of *armiger* meaning 'shield-bearer' rather than 'arms-bearer': ***scutifer***. The last word was treated as an equivalent of Old French *esquier* in the sense of 'squire', though the latter was actually derived from *scutarius* in its older sense of 'shield-bearer'. The use of the same word to represent such different relationships to shields as 'maker' and 'bearer' was quite common in this period, as we shall see.

2.b.ii. The derivatives of* scutum *in Old French:* escu *and its lexical family.*[64]** In Old French the oldest word for the knightly type of shield was ***escut, a reduced form of *scutum*, attested fifty times (mostly in the plural form *escuz)* in the *Chanson de Roland* of 1095/1115, in such passages as '*tanz colps ad pris sur sun escut bucler*' ('so many blows did he receive on his bossed shield'). By about 1150 the word had lost its final *t*, and from that time to the early sixteenth century was normally written ***escu***. Down to 1325 it remained the most common word for the knightly shield, and continued to be used in literary works of all kinds, though in increasing competition after 1300 with the newer words *blason* and *bucler* or *bouclier*.

Only one of the historical dictionaries includes an example of the use of *escu* either with the phrase *d'armes* or in a way that suggests its increasingly common rôle between 1140 and 1220 as the principal underlier of arms. In the *AND*, under the headword *conoissance*, a very early example appears in the following passage of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* of Thomas of Kent, composed in the last quarter of the twelfth century: *Un escu a or burny od un vert lioncel*' ('A shield of burnished gold, with a green lioncel'). Brault, however, discovered a number of examples of the use of *escu* to mean '*the field of an armal design*' in works composed after 1250, beginning among armorials with the Bigot Roll of 1254, and among literary works with the *Roman du Hem* of 1278. He also found isolated examples of its use as a synonym of *armes*, in the locutions *deviser la façon de l'escu* ('describe the design of the shield', *Lancelot*, 1215/20) *muer son escu* ('change his shield', *Perlesvaus*, 1200/40*)*, and *porter sifait l'escu* ('bear the same shield', *Durmart*, c. 1250).[65]

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[64] *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 1184-85; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, III, cols. 1018-19
[65] *AND-o*, 'conoissance'; BRAULT, *Early Blazon*, pp. 189, 170, 246, 261

More closely associated with arms, however, were the two vernacular diminutives of *escu* created in the course of the thirteenth century, whose use parallelled (and may well have preceded) that of their Latin equivalents. The first of the two attested in our sources was *escucel*, (corresponding with the Latin *scutellum*) which appeared in OLD FRENCH in Jehan Renart's *Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole* of 1200/28, in the following passage: '*Cil qui portoit un* **escucel** *Des armes Keu le seneschal En son escu bouclé d'archal*' (He who bore an escutcheon of the arms of Kay the seneschal in his shield, bossed with brass'). *Escucel* (whose plural was *escuciaus*) seems to have remained much the more common diminutive in Old French, as the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* gives numerous examples of its use, in such phrases as '*escuciaus de ses armes*', '*Bordee entor a escuchiaus*'.[66] No comparable word existed in either Anglo-Norman or Middle English.

The other diminutive of *escu* created in the thirteenth century was *escusson*/ *escocheon*, whose form corresponds to that of *scucheo*. It is itself first recorded in ANGLO-NORMAN in the three versions of Glover's Roll of 1253 (in the forms **escocheon**, **escuchun**, **escocheun**, and **eschuchun**) and in standard OLD FRENCH in the Bigot Roll of 1254 (in the form **escuchon**). In both of these early armorials it was used as the name of the armal charge, and that is its only attested sense before 1285, when it appears in a passage of Adenés le Roi's romance *Cleomadés* that includes both diminutives in the same sense: '*Et les dames … Estoient la endroit venues En cloches vers et en sambües A* **escuciaus** *de riches ouvraigne Semez,* **fais des armes d'Espaigne**. *Li* **escuchon** *bien fait estoient; sor le vert tres bien avenoient*'.[67] In ANGLO-NORMAN, *escuch(e)on* was first used outside an armorial in *Langtoft's Chronicle* of c. 1305, but would not give rise to the MIDDLE ENGLISH *escochon* until 1480.[68]

It is clear from these and the other examples of its use in the *AW* that both *escucel* and *escusson* were, from the time of their introduction, closely associated with arms, and came by 1285 to be applied to the numerous representations of shields in embroidery, glass, metal, stone, and paint that served for the display of arms in a decorative way.

Like its Latin etymon, *escu* also gave rise to several related words, including *escüage*, equivalent to *scutagium*; *escucier* or *escutier*, equivalent to *scutarius* and *scutator* in the sense of 'shield-maker'; and *escucerie*, derived from *escucier*, and denoting the craft of shield-making. The Latin *scutarius* itself gave rise by 1095/1115 to the Old French *esquier* or *escuier*, which like it meant both 'shield-maker' and 'shield-bearer, squire'. In Anglo-Norman, however, it gave rise to two distinct words bearing those senses: *escu(e)or* in the former, and *escuier* (attested from 1139) in the latter.[69]

In the latter sense (already attested in the *Roland*, though only once) *escuier* became the formal title first of noble youths training for knighthood

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[66] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, III, col. 1018-19, and BRAULT, *Early Blazon*, p. 189

[67] Ibid., pp. 189-191 (esp. for use in armorials), and TOB.-LOM., *AW*, III, col. 1019

[68] *AND-o*, 'escuchon'; *OED 2-o*, 'escutcheon'

[69] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, III, col. 1022; *AND-o*, 'escueor', 'escuier'

and assisting a knight as part of their apprenticeship, and after about 1250 for noble men who had completed their training, but could not afford to undertake the full burdens of knighthood, and functioned in effect as second-class heavy-cavalrymen of the type generically called from that period *gens d'arms* or 'men at arms'. By 1285 it had given rise in continental Old French to an abstract noun, ***escuierie***, recorded in a collective sense in Jacques Bretel's poetic record the *Tournoi de Chauvency*, in the passage '*Fu grans et bele la chempaigne De(s) tresgentil bachele(te)rie, De(s) vallés et d'escuierie*' ('Great and fair was the field of the most noble group of bachelors, of valets and of squires').[70] An Anglo-Norman form of the word, *escuierye*, appeared by c. 1305 in *Langtoft's Chronicle*,[71] but gave rise to no equivalent in English.

In the last third of the twelfth century, two additional words, quite unrelated to *scutum* and *escu*, came to bear their basic sense of 'knightly shield': first, by c. 1170 in continental Old French and 1185 in its English dialect, the noun ***blason***, and then, by 1268 in the former alone, the substantivized adjective ***bucler***, later ***bouclier***. There is reason to think that both words were initially used to designate in a particular way a shield with a boss a the centre of its outer face: an object called an *umbo* in Latin and a *bucle* in Old French, which served to protect the hand of the warrior holding the shield by a strap set behind the boss. Virtually all types of shield were provided with such a boss before about 1190, however, so it is difficult to see why such a distinction should have been made. Nonetheless, it was made while the use of a boss persisted, and when that use ceased, both words continued to be applied, like the older word *escu*, to knightly shields of the new, boss-free, design that became the norm soon after 1200. In their basic sense, therefore, both *bucler* and *blason* became synonyms of *escu*. The later semantic history of the three words nevertheless followed different paths in their secondary senses, so I shall examine that of each of the two newer words separately.

2.b.iii. The Old French bucler > bouclier.[72] I shall begin with the word *bucler* which became *bouclier*, both because as a word it is actually the older of the two, but mainly because it is of much less interest here, since it was never particularly associated with the arms set on the face of the shield. *Bucler* was originally an adjective meaning 'bearing a boss, bossed', and was

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[70] Quoted in *ibid.*, III, pp. 1023-24. The poem is one of our more important sources for the lexicon of our field in this Period. The best edition is still *Les Tournois de Chauvency*, par Jacques Bretex, ed. H. DELMOTTE, (Valenciennes, 1835); *and Jacques Bretex ou Bretiaus, Le Tournoi de Chauvency*, ed. Gaëtan HECQ (Mons, 1898). Jacques (whose surname is now written 'Bretel', was a minstrel possibly attached to the court of Count Henri IV of Salm, in Lorraine, and his poem is a detailed description of a series of historical feasts and tournaments at Chauvency-le-Château between 1 and 6 October 1285.
[71] AND-o, 'esquierie'.
[72] *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 458-59; *AND-o*, 'boucler'

initially used in the expression *escu bucler* 'bossed shield': a use first attested in the *Roland*, and persisting to c. 1300. The use of *bouclier* alone as a substantive in the sense of 'shield' is only attested from 1268, as I noted, but it completely superseded the adjectival use after 1300. For reasons that are not at all clear, *bouclier* would eventually become the standard French word for a shield of any form, so that an *escu* came to be thought of as a type of *bouclier*.

2.b.iv. The Old French word* blason *and its derivatives before 1335.[73] Of the various contemporary words for the shield, indeed, the only ones destined to come into either common or technical use as a name for emblematic arms before about 1450 were *blason* and its English derivative *blasoun*, and given both their later importance as armorial terms, and their extreme ambiguity, it will be useful to trace their early history quickly here. The OLD FRENCH ***blason/ blazon*** first appeared the written record (along with its OCCITAN equivalent ***blezo/ blizo***) between 1160 and 1165. It is recorded in ANGLO-NORMAN shortly thereafter, in Thomas of Kent's Alexander romance *Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie* written between 1175 and 1200, and in Hue de Rotelande's romance *Protheslaus* written c. 1185.[74]

      The etymology of the Old French word is both obscure and controverted, but the most likely explanation is that of P. Guiraud, who has argued that it is a derivative of the Germanic verb *blasen/ blazen*, 'to blow or inflate', and that it was introduced to describe the type of shield whose surface was 'inflated' with a metallic *bucle* or boss.

***b.iv.A.* BLASON *IN THE SENSE OF 'SHIELD'*.** In any case, its earliest attested sense in all dialects was certainly 'shield', as can be see from its use in Crestïen's *Erec et Enide* of 1170 ('*Tant blason et tant hauberc blanc*': 'So many shields and so many white hauberks'); in the anonymous *chanson de geste Raoul de Cambrai* of 1175/99 ('*Desous la boucle li perce le blazon*': 'Below the boss he pierced the shield'), and in Adenés le Roi's *Beuves de Commarchis* of c. 1270 ('*Ains en seront percié maint escu a lion, Et mainte pesans targe et percié maint blazon*': 'Thus were pierced many a shield with a lion, and many a heavy round shield, and pierced many a bossed shield').[75]

      Blason continued to be used to designate shields (with or without a boss after 1200) down to the fourteenth century, and in this sense gave rise (probably by the end of our Second Period in 1335, but if not, soon afterward) to one adjective (*blasonois*), two related nouns (*blasonier* and *blasonerie*), and one verb (*blasoner*), all of which I shall examine below after *blason* itself.

***b.iv.B.* BLASON *IN THE SENSE OF 'SHIELD-FACE BEARING ARMS'*.** In the fourteenth century (perhaps owing to the success of its synonym and rival *bouclier* as a name for shields generally in ordinary language) the primitive

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[73] *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 415-16; GOD., *DALF*, I, p. 659 ; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I, cols. 993-94; and *AND-o*, 'blason'.
[74] *AND-o*, 'blason'.
[75] Quoted in GOD., *DALF*, loc. cit., and TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I. P. 994

sense of *blason* would be entirely superseded by several derivative senses,[76] and it is these that are of particular interest here.

The earliest of these senses, attested from the later twelfth century, is that of '*shield-face*': the only part of the shield certainly produced by the leather-workers called *blasoniers* or 'shield-makers', and of course the part on which the arms were increasingly painted. *Blason* seems in fact to have been used primarily if not exclusively of armiferous shield-faces: a sense that can be seen clearly in this passage of the early thirteenth-century epic *Gaydon* already cited (l. 89): '*fiert le duc sor l'escu au lyon Que il li perce le taint et le blazon,…*' ('the duke struck on the shield with the lion, of which he pierced the paint and the face').[77] An ANGLO-NORMAN example can be seen in the *Protheslaus* cited above, in the similarly worded passage '*Si l'ad feru parmi l'escu … Falsent li teint et li blazun*' (And he struck him in the middle of his shield … the paint and shield-face broke').[78]

b.iv.c. BLASON IN THE SENSE OF 'ARMS ON A SHIELD'(?). The second extended sense — which no doubt arose from the same metonymic process that affected most of the other words designating the underliers of arms — was that of '*arms painted on a shield-face*'. According to the lexicographers of the *Robert Dictionnaire historique*, this is also attested from the late twelfth century, but I have not yet found a clear example of its use in this sense before the end of our present Period, or indeed before 1400, as those quoted in the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* as possibly bearing this meaning could just as easily be read in the previous one. In this semantic path *blason* would eventually come to be used as a mere synonym not only for *armes*, but for the related word *armoiries* in the sense 'armorial signs', but it had not certainly acquired even the first of these senses before 1335.

The lexicographers of the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* mention a figurative use of *blason* in this part of its semantic range, found in the thirteenth-century moral tale *Barlaam et Josaphat* (l. 948). The passage in which it appears reads: '*Certes, amie, j'ai vöé a Diu garder ma castée, Ne je ne voel mon veu enfraindre; Ne tu ne dois **ton blason taindre**,…*' (Certainly, my love, I have vowed to God to keep my chastity, Nor do I wish to break my vow; Nor shouldest thou **taint thy shield**,…').[79] The expression 'taint one's shield' — which treats the shield of arms as the embodiment of one's personal honour — has survived even in English in the form 'blot one's escutcheon', and it is not without significance that it dates from the period when arms were still displayed on functional shields.

b.iv.d. THE DERIVATIVE ADJECTIVE BLASONOIS. *Blason* generated a single adjective during the course of its history: the word *blasonois*, which seems to be attested only in the *Roman d'Alixandre* composed around 1110 — a

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[76] The following senses and their semantic evolution are set out only in the *Robert DHLF*; examples of each use are given by TOB.-LOM., *AW,* loc. cit.
[77] Quoted in TOB.-LOM., *AW,* loc. cit.
[78] Quoted in *AND-o,* 'blason'.
[79] Quoted in TOB.-LOM., *AW,* I, col. 994

romance based on a Late-Classical biography of Alexander 'the Great'. In that work it appears in the phrase *l'escu blasonois*, which given its pre-armal date must have meant 'bossed shield'. The adjective would thus appear to have been a synonym of *bucler* in its primitive sense of 'bossed'.[80]

b.iv.E. THE DERIVATIVE NOUNS* BLASON(N)IER *AND* BLASON(N)ERIE**. The two nouns based on *blason* probably introduced before 1335 were both related to the manufacture of shields: (1) the agential noun ***blason(n)ier, used of leather-workers who specialized in the production of shields and saddles; and (2) the abstract noun ***blason(n)erie***, used of the *mestier* or craft of the *blasoniers*. Both are first attested in the *Livre des Mestiers de Bruges*, a list of crafts compiled in that Flemish city around 1350,[81] but there is no reason to think that they were newly-invented at that time. Whether this craft came to include the painting of arms on the surface of the shield once made is unclear, but a statement in a fifteenth-century treatise on tournaments suggests that it had done so by that date, at least: '*Ad ce temps que je diz que la cognoissance des armes et le blasonnier estoit prisez*' ('At this time that I said that the knowledge of arms and the *blasonnier* was [*sic*] prized').[82]

***b.iv.F. THE DERIVATIVE VERB* BLASON(N)ER**. The verb *blasoner* or *blasonner* — destined to play a central rôle in the terminology of armory in the sense '*to describe arms*' — seems to have been rare in Old French, and is attested only in the very different sense '*to cover with a shield or shields, to shield*'. The sole citation I have found for this word before 1335 is in the late *chanson de geste Li Bastard de Buillon*, composed 1301/50, in the clause '*Et blasonner no gent des escus vienois*': 'And shield our people with the shields of Vienne'.[83]

It should nevertheless be noted here that a quite unrelated verb was employed in Old French through most or all of the Periods before 1335 to express the idea now associated with the verbs derived from *blason*: the verb ***deviser***. I shall examine in Part II.B the history of the words of its family, but I must note here that Brault found it to be the verb most commonly used 'to denote the action of describing arms' before at least 1200 (when his study ended), and that it is attested in that sense as early as 1177/81, when it was used in the fourth of Crestïen's Arthurian romances, the *Chevalier de la Charette*. Therein, the author wrote: '*Et si lor armes lor devisent/ Des chevaliers que il plus prisent/*' (ll. 5771-2:' And thus their arms they described for them, of the knights whom they most prized'.[84]

2.b.v. The words for 'shield' in Middle English, especially* shield.** Neither *escu* nor *scutum* ever gave rise to an English word, and *escusson* did not produce ***escocheon much before 1480. *Bouclier* did inspire Middle English ***boceler*** (ancestral to 'buckler') c. 1300, and *blason* would give rise to ***blaso(u)n*** (ancestral to 'blazon') by 1278. As *boceler* was restricted to a

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[80] *Ibid*.
[81] GOD., *DALF*, I, p. 659 ; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I, cols. 993-94
[82] *Traité des Tournois*, quoted in GOD., *DALF*, loc. cit.
[83] Loc. cit. The work was edited by R. F. COOK (Geneva, 1972)
[84] BRAULT, *Early Blazon*, pp. 169-70

small, round type of shield that did not normally bear arms,[85] I shall ignore its history in English, and concentrate on the two words that were regularly used to designate the kind of shield on which arms *were* normally set, down to the years around 1400: *sheld* and *blaso(u)n*.

The normal word for 'shield' in Middle English throughout our two Periods was the indigenous ***sheld***, derived from the Old English *scild*, and cognate with its equivalents in the purely Germanic languages (including the Middle High German *schilt* / *schild*, and the Middle Low German *schild*), all derived from Old Teutonic *skelduz.[86] Its use corresponded to those of *scutum* in Latin, of *escu* in Old and Early Middle French, and of *bouclier* in Late Middle French.

Its modern derivative has of course remained the ordinary generic word for the item of military equipment, and has become the usual name for its iconic representation in armorial contexts, either in the phrase 'shield of arms' or as an equivalent of 'arms'. Nevertheless, no form of the English word 'shield' is attested in that sense before 1562, and down to 1335 it is not even attested in a phrase comparable to 'shield of arms'.[87]

2.b.vi. The Middle English word* blaso(u)n *to 1335. A derivative of *blason* in the form *blasoun* had been introduced into Middle English by 1278 in its original sense of 'shield', seen in the phrase from the records of a tournament of that year '*Item ij Crest and j Blazoun*'.[88] It seems to have been a rare word for a century or so after that, however, as the *MED* includes no further citations before 1375, and the only earlier citation in the *OED* is in the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,[89] which I have myself argued was probably written in the 1350s, and may well have been written later than that.[90] The extended sense of '*shield or shield-face bearing arms*' is cited in the *OED* in a single work of our current Period, written just before the end: the *Coer de Lion* of c. 1325. In l. 5727 of that poem it appears in the passage '*In his blasoun, verrayment, was i-paynted a serpent*': a clear example of this usage, but one apparently uncharacteristic of any earlier part of the Period.

I shall examine the later (and far more complex) history of *blason* and its word-family in both French and English in detail in § 3.4.2.b. As I

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[85] BLAIR, *European Armour*, p. 182.

[86] *MED-o*, 'sheld'; *OED 2-o*, 'shield'.

[87] The articles on 'sheld' or 'shield' in the *MED* and *OED* 2 both cite as the only case of the word being associated with the arms on its surface before 1390 a passage of the *Treatise of Walter de Bibbesworth* of c. 1325 (British Library, Arundel ms. 220; published in Thomas WRIGHT, *A Volume of Vocabularies*, 1857), in which *eskou* is glossed *cheeld*: '*L'eskou de gules ad porte.*' This does not really constitute a use of 'shield' to mean 'arms', but simply a description of the shield as having a red surface — which might or might not have constituted arms.

[88] *MED*, I, p. 156

[89] *MED-o* 'blason' and *OED 2-o*, 'blazon'.

[90] D'A. J. D. BOULTON and W. G. COOKE, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: A Poem for Henry of Grosmont?', *Medium Ævum* 68 (1999), pp. 32-44

shall explain there, in our Third Period *blason* would come to be treated not only as a synonym of *armes* in both languages, but as a collective and cumular name for armories generally, and as the designation of the descriptive language of armory and of armory itself. But there was no hint of such developments before the end of our Second Period around 1335.

2.b.vii. Alexia in the semantic field related to arms before 1335. It is worth noting at the end of this discussion that none of the words used to designate arms before 1335 in any of our three languages is known to have given rise to an adjective like 'armal' or 'armorial', suggesting a relationship to arms; nor to an abstract noun comparable to 'armory', designating the body of knowledge related to them; nor to either a noun comparable to 'blazon' designating the descriptive language of armory, or a verb bearing the related sense of 'to blazon' in the sense of 'describe'; nor to an agent-noun comparable to 'armiger',[91] at least in its relevant sense of '*bearer of emblematic arms*' — let alone to any of the derivative notions represented by our terms 'armigerous', 'armigery', and the like. Clearly the level of discourse on armorial matters in this Period was too low to require any words of this type, and this would continue to be the case well into the following Period.

2.2.3. WORDS FOR THE FLAGS AND COATS USED TO UNDERLIE ARMS

I shall conclude my survey of concepts and terms related to the arms proper with a very brief account of the names of two additional types of underlier of the arms in my first two Periods: the flags borne by and before lords, knights, and noble squires on their lances, and the coats or surcoats worn both by such men, and by heralds. The history of both of these types of underlier in this period is complex, so I shall defer a fuller account of them to articles on the history of heraldic flags in general and of the 'literal' coat of arms. [92]

3.a. Knightly Flags: Gonfanons, Banners, Pennons, and Pennoncels
I must begin my account of armiferous flags by noting that no distinctive generic word comparable to the modern 'flag' and *drapeau* existed in any

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[91] *Armiger* did of course exist in this period in Latin, both in its literal sense of 'bearer of military equipment', and in its derivative senses of 'military assistant of a knight', 'young nobleman serving as an assistant and apprentice to a knight', and 'nobleman of any age who, though perhaps fully trained as a knight, had not yet been admitted into knighthood'. The vernacular equivalents of *armiger* were *escuier* in Old French, and *squier* in Middle English, both derived from the Latin *scutarius* 'shield-man', an old synonym of *armiger*.
[92]   I delivered a lecture on the surcoats of both knights and heralds at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto on 2 April 2011: 'The (Literal) Coat of Arms: The Form, Design, and Use of the Surcoats and Comparable Garments used to Display Heraldic Arms, c. 1150 – 1600'. I plan to revise this for publication in the near future. The more important secondary works on which I based my reconstruction were C. Willett CUNNINGTON and Phyllis CUNNINGTON, *Handbook of English Mediaeval Costume*, pp. 20, 28-31, and 42-44; BLAIR, *European Armour*, pp. 28-29.

language before 1530, when the former (of uncertain origin, attested in any form only from 1481) appears in that sense. Furthermore, although *drapel* is recorded in Old French from 1119, both it and its later form *drapeau* seems to have meant nothing more than 'a strip of cloth (*drap*)' before 1578.[93] In the meantime, as we have seen, the generic word applied to flags in both continental Old French and Anglo-Norman was *enseigne*, and those used in Middle English were *marke* and *signe* — all of which bore a variety of more general senses as well.

The types of flag on which arms came to be displayed were all derived from the lance-flags borne from an early date by the *caballerii* ancestral to the classic *chevalers* or knights of the twelfth century. The earliest type of lance-flag on which arms were actually set in the 1130s were of the side-mounted form depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry of the 1180s, with a squarish field extended by three or four narrow tails inherited from its top-mounted predecessor. By the time the *Roland* was set down soon after 1100 (and probably long before that) this type (which may be called a **proto-banner**) was known in Old French as a *gunfanun* or *gonfanon*: a word derived from the Old Frankish **gundfano*, 'war-sign', probably introduced in the fifth century. In the decades around 1200, this type of flag was gradually replaced in France and England by two derivative types — one small and triangular and the other large and rectangular — but the name itself was retained for the first of these, and continued to be used, along with two newer names, until at least 1200. The name is attested in ANGLO-NORMAN from 1139 to c. 1200, and must have persisted for some time after that, as it gave rise to a MIDDLE ENGLISH derivative of the form *gunphanun*, *gonfanoun*, or the like, recorded from c. 1300 to 1489.[94]

In the meantime, its rectangular and triangular successors had been given distinctive names of their own. The former type — which came to be restricted in the thirteenth century to princes, barons, and knights 'banneret' — was given the name *baniere* in OLD FRENCH. This word, already attested as a name for the proto-banner from c. 1110, was derived via the Late Latin *bandum* 'war-flag' from the Gothic *bandwa*, 'sign'. In ANGLO-NORMAN and MIDDLE ENGLISH sources, the equivalent names *baner*, *banier*, *banere* and their variants may well have been adopted by 1200, but appear only after 1225.[95] These names have of course persisted (in their modern forms *bannière* and 'banner') to the present day, both in their original and in closely related senses.

In the later twelfth century the triangular successors to the gonfanon were given two new names in OLD FRENCH, both derived from *penne* 'feather': the augmentative *panon* or *penon* is attested from 1160, and

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[93] *OED 2*, V, p. 989; *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 136-37
[94] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV, cols. 435-37; *AND-o*, 'gunfanun'; *OED 2-o*, 'gonfanon'
[95] *Robert DHLF*, I, pp. 319-20; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, I, cols. 824-25; *AND-o*, 'baner'; *OED 2-o*, 'banner'

its diminutive *penuncel* from 1165.[96] Both words persisted well beyond 1335 in Middle French, having been attached at some point to larger and smaller versions of the type of flag set on the lances of men-at-arms to indicate their rank. Nevertheless, forms of these words are not attested in either of the vernacular languages of England until c. 1380 and 1393.[97]

3.b. The military coat of the knight or squire:
cote a armer, cote armee, cote d'armes, cote armoire
The practice of wearing a textile garment over the mail hauberk developed only gradually between c. 1140 and c. 1220, and although the very first representation of such a garment to come down to us — on the seal of Waleran de Beaumont, Count of Meulan and Worcester — depicts him wearing a coat covered with his arms, the practice of displaying arms in this manner seems to have remained unusual in France and England until the end of our Second Period in 1335. Thus, the four names given to the garment in France (which lacked any recorded equivalents in the languages of England) can only rarely have designated one bearing heraldic *armes*, and the related words used as part of those names must have been understood in their military rather than their emblematic sense.

In all three of our vernacular languages the generic name for the civil forms of the garment in question before 1335 was *cot or cote*: a name applied to a coat worn directly over a shirt or hauberk; the augmented name *sorcot* or *surcot* seems to have been applied primarily to a type worn over a *cote*. The former name is recorded in OLD FRENCH from 1159[98] and in MIDDLE ENGLISH from c. 1300,[99] while the latter (not apparently applied to the military coat) is recorded in the same tongues from c. 1250[100] and c. 1295[101] respectively. The military form of the garment was called in OLD FRENCH by the distinctive name of *cote a armer* ('coat for arming') from about 1200 to some time after 1300, and this seems to have been the normal word for it throughout that period.[102] Only in one quotation (from *Li Romans de Durmart le Gallois* of 1240/50) is it associated with the arms that were sometimes displayed covering its anterior and posterior surfaces.

The related designations *cote d'armes* ('coat of arms') and *cote armoire* ('coat bearing arms'?) appear only in the works of Baudoin de Condé, especially *Li Contes des Herauts*, probably composed, as we have seen, in the 1270s. The latter expression alone suggests the presence of emblematic arms. Yet another name for the military or knightly coat, *cote armee* ('armed coat') appeared somewhat earlier, in Robert de Blois' didactic poem *L'Ensoignement des Princes*, composed at some time between 1235 and 1265; it seems to be nothing more than another variation on the

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[96] *Robert DHLF*, II, pp. 2645-46-20; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, VII, cols. 654-59; *AND-o*, 'penun', 'penuncel'; *OED 2-o*, 'penon', 'pennoncel'
[97] *AND-o*, 'penun', 'penuncel'; MED-o 'pennon', *OED 2-o*, 'pennon', 'pennoncel'
[98] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, II, *cols*. 947-49
[99] *MED-o*, 'cote'; *OED 2-o*, 'coat'
[100] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IX, cols. 876-78; *AND-o*, 'surcote'
[101] *MED-o*, 'surcote' ; *OED 2-o*, 'surcoat'
[102] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, II, cols. 948-49

established theme of *cote a armer*.[103]

3.c. The herald's coat: *tabard, garnache, and housse*

We know almost nothing about the costumes worn by heralds before the 1270s, but from that time onward we have some evidence that it consisted essentially of a distinctive type of *surcote* first attested by name in the late twelfth century, and in representations from the early thirteenth. This type — whose original and normal form was composed of two roughly rectangular panels of cloth sewn together only at the shoulders — was called a **tabard** in OLD FRENCH from the time of its introduction, and by the derivative name **tabardus** in ENGLISH LATIN from 1253, and *tabard* in both ANGLO-NORMAN and MIDDLE ENGLISH from c. 1300.[104] A common variant of the tabard attested from 1260 to after 1400 was called in OLD FRENCH a **garnache**, **garnaiche**, or **cote hardie**; it was distinguished by a shoulder-line cut wide enough for the fabric to fall to the elbows on either side, producing cape-like sleeves ancestral to those of the classic heraldic tabard. A late subtype of the *garnache* distinguished by the presence of round lapels was called the **housse** or **houce** in Old French by 1292, and it seems to have remained the principal high-style form down to c. 1400.[105]

Tabards were worn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a form of civil *surcote* or *cote* by men of all ranks of society, but the great majority were apparently badly cut from cheaper fabrics, and in consequence held in rather low esteem by contemporaries. This seems to have been the case with those worn by heralds as their distinctive costume, as the use of the effectively synonymous term *hiraudie* to mean a shabby sort of garment surely indicates.[106] What distinguished the heralds' tabards from those worn as ordinary civil dress was apparently the arms of their masters painted on their outer surfaces, though this is actually stated only in a single contemporary document, and no representations of heralds that might confirm this statement have survived from the period before 1370.

Not surprisingly, the earliest references we have to the distinctive coat of the heralds are in the Baudoin de Condé's *Li Contes des Hiraus*, which was the first work to deal with the heralds and their *mestier* in more than a passing manner.[107] He refers to the garment both as a **cote armoire** — possibly implying that it was *armoirié* or covered with arms — and as a **cote hardie**, indicating that it had loose sleeves. In the *Tournoi de Chauvency* composed in 1285, Jacques Bretel indicated this unequivocally when he declared that at that tournament the herald called Bruiant wore a '**garnaiche que d'armes estoient painturee**': a 'sleeved tabard on which arms were painted'. It would appear that a garment of precisely this type

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[103] All of the French names for the knightly surcoat and quotations are at *loc. cit.*
[104] TOB.-LOM., *AW*, X, 'tabart'; LATHAM, *RMLW*, p. 473; *AND*-o, 'tabard'; *MED-o*, 'tabart'; OED 2-o, 'tabard'
[105] CUNNINGTONs, *Handbook*, pp. 42-44; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV, cols. 175-77
[106] See below, § 5.b.
[107] See above, n. 128.

was adopted in England in the same period, as Edward I's Statute of Arms, issued in 1292, states that the two English kings of arms were to wear as their uniforms *houces des armes* — a phrase that could only have meant 'tabards with sleeves and lapels bearing emblematic arms'.[108]

I have found no other references to the official costume of the heralds before 1335, but there is good reason to believe that the types of tabard attested by 1292 were all still in use a century later, as the earliest representations of heralds dating from that time represent them wearing the most primitive form of tabard, without sleeves of any kind, but bearing over their whole surfaces, front and back, the arms of their master.

2.2.4. WORDS ADOPTED TO DESIGNATE THE CREST AND HELMET

4.a. Words for the crest: *creste*, *crest*, and *cimier*
The arms remained the only emblem of the armorial family outside Germany down to c. 1290, when the use of a more or less distinctively emblematic crest on the helm was finally introduced into both France and England. Unfortunately for the historian of such phenomena, however, the use of a comparable crest that was either purely *decorative* in character, or supportive on occasion of a *secondary* representation of the arms or some part thereof, had begun in both countries in the 1270s, and the transition from this non- or semi-emblematic type to the classic independently emblematic type was not generally complete before the 1340s. In that decade its use also spread to a substantial part of the armigerates of both kingdoms, converting the crest into a standard species of the armorial family.

Given this history, it cannot be surprising that there are very few references to this new species of emblem before 1335 — or indeed for some time after that date — in any of the three languages used in our two kingdoms, or that the armorials composed before that time neither mention nor represent it. What is clear from the few surviving references, however, is that the names given to the pre-classic types of crest, including those devoid of any semantic function, were retained without modification for the classic emblematic type.

4.a.i. The word* creste *and its variants in Old French. Two unrelated but essentially synonymous words came to be used to designate the crest in OLD FRENCH, one of which was adopted in Middle English, and the other (with modifications) in Middle High German.

The former word was ***creste*** or ***crete*** (modern *crête*), a derivative of the Latin *crista* 'the crest of a chicken' which had been introduced in that sense by 1180.[109] It appears in one work of the later twelfth century and one of the later thirteenth in the extended sense here in question: the epic poem *Aliscans* of c. 1180,[110] and the *Tournoi de Chauvency* of 1285.[111] Given the date

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[108] See Adrian AILES, FHS, AIH, '"You know me by my habit": Heralds' Tabards in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *The Ricardian* 13 (2003), pp. 1-11, esp. p. 2.
[109] GOD., *DALF*, II, col. 368c; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, II col. 1036-37; *Robert DHLF*, I, p. 947.
[110] *Aliscans, chanson de geste*, ed. Guessard and A. de MONTAIGLON (Paris, 1870)

of the former work the crests mentioned in it must have been purely decorative, but it is possible that those in the second work — composed in Lorraine, a Francophone region of Germany — were emblematic.

In ANGLO-NORMAN the word *creste* is attested in a relevant sense only in the translation of the Latin work *De re militari* by Fl. Vegetius Renatus made in 1270/1,[112] in which it designates the decorative or insignial crests of the Roman army, not the emblematic crests of the type then still confined to Germany.

4.a.ii. The word* crest *and its variants in Middle English. The *OED* includes no citation for the derivative word **crest** in any sense in Middle English antedating the year 1380, but the *MED* includes one for 1278 and another of c. 1312. The former we have already seen in the segment on *blasoun*: specifically, a passage in the records of a tournament of that year that reads: '*Item ij **Crest** and j Blazoun*'.[113] The second is in a passage of a will of c. 1312, in which it is listed after a sword and a vestment (presumably a surcoat) valued at 10 s. and 5 s. respectively, and is itself valued at 12 d.[114] It is of course unclear whether either of these crests was emblematic rather than purely decorative, and if emblematic, whether it was autonomous in the classic manner or merely armiferous — like that of Sir Geoffrey de Luttrell in the famous portrait in his psalter of c. 1340. Still, there is no reason to doubt that the name *creste* was immediately applied to the autonomous emblematic crests that superseded their purely decorative predecessors around 1340, as it is the only word known to have been used of such objects in English before that date, and either the sole or the principal word used to designate them from 1350 to the present.

4.a.iii. The word* cimier *in Old French and its reflexes in other languages. This cannot be said about crests in France, however, because the word *creste* seems to have fallen completely out of use there for these objects at some time after 1285, and in Old French the only word certainly applied to the emblem in question after that date was the unrelated *cimier*. This word — derived from the Graeco-Latin *cyma* 'tender shoot of a legume', whence 'apex of any object', through the Old French *cyme* (1175) and *cime* (c. 1200) — is itself attested from c. 1200 in the sense of 'apex, highest point'. *Cimier* came to be used at least occasionally of the crest set on knightly helms by 1190, when it appeared in the history *La Conqueste de Jerusalem*, completed not long after 1187, but seems otherwise to be unattested in this sense before 1389.[115]

It is therefore possible that in France *creste* and *cimier* were used

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[111] On the poem, see above, n. 62.
[112] *AND-o*, 'crest'; Lionel K. CARLEY, *The Anglo-Norman Vegetius. A Thirteenth-Century Translation of the 'De Re Militari' of Flavius Vegetius Renatus*, unpubl. Ph.D. thesis (Nottingham Univ., 1962)
[113] *MED*, I, p. 156
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] GOD., *DALF*, IX, col. 94b; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, II, col. 433-4 ; *Robert DHLF*, p. 756

interchangeably to designate crests from 1190 to some time between 1285 and 1389. Eventually, *cimier* would become the normal word for the crest in French (though only after a competition with the new rival *timbre*, as we shall see), and would serve as the model for the equivalent words in all of the Romance languages, and (more surprisingly) for words for arms and armories generally in other languages. Among these derivative words that retained the relevant sense was the MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN *(helm)zimir*, attested from the thirteenth century, but replaced in the second half of the fourteenth by the unrelated *(helm)cleinôd(e)* 'helm-decoration'.[116] Later derivatives included the ITALIAN *cimiero* and the CASTILIAN *cimera*, both treated as the technical designation of the emblem set at the apex of the helm.

Cimier would never inspire a Middle English word, however, and in English it was the rival word *crest(e)* or *creaste* that would ultimately prevail as the technical term for that species of emblem — though as in the case of *cimier* in France, only after a period of rivalry with *timbre*, as we shall see.[117] Once again, therefore, the terms applied to this species of armorial emblem in the two principal centres of heraldic erudition arose in ordinary language and diverged as a result of developments in ordinary language, undirected by experts.

4.b. Words for the helmet: *hiau(l)me* and *helm*
By a happy chance, no such divergence occurred (at least in armorial contexts) in the lexicon used to designate the item of knightly *armure* to whose apex the crest was always affixed, generically known in Modern English as a 'helmet'.[118] Although the CLASSICAL LATIN word for helmet was ***galea***, this word had been replaced in VULGAR LATIN — and therefore in the Romance languages derived from it — with words derived from its Germanic equivalent **helmoz*.[119] These included the MIDDLE LATIN *helmus/elmus* and the Early OLD FRENCH ***helme***, which gave rise to the Later OLD FRENCH ***hiau(l)me***, the MIDDLE FRENCH ***heaulme***, and the MODERN FRENCH ***heaume***. In ANGLO-NORMAN it first appeared in the legal collection called the *Leis Willelme* of c. 1140/60, in the form ***haume***, but was later written in such varied ways as *helme*, *healme*, *heume*, *hyaume*, and *eame*.[120]

In all of the Germanic dialects south of Scandinavia, including OLD and MIDDLE ENGLISH, the word took the form ***helm***, but in the latter

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[116] Gert OSWALD, *Lexikon der Heraldik* (Mannheim, Vienna, Zurich, 1984), p. 190
[117] See below, Part II.B, § 3.4.3.a.i.
[118] On the history of the helmet between 1170 and 1335, see BLAIR, *European Armour*, in see the sections devoted to it in chs. 1 and 2, pp. 19-53. The principal developments occurred between c. 1185 and c. 1230, when the traditional Germanic conical helm was progressively transformed into the all-enclosing type now distinguished as a 'great helm', which was retained with only relatively minor modifications down to around 1400. It was with the latter type of helm that the crest was exclusively associated before the latter date.
[119] *OED* 2, VII, pp. 123-24
[120] *AND-o*, 'helm¹'

language (whose orthography, like that of Anglo-Norman, was exceptionally unstable) it was also written *hælm*, *healm*, *heaulme*, and *helme*.[121]

These words were the only ones used of the object in question in both French and English before 1335, and indeed for some time after that, regardless of the form it took. The Modern English diminutive 'helmet' itself would not appear until 1470/85, and would remain peculiar to our language, as we shall see.

Like the words for 'crest', however, those for 'helmet' were only rarely used in contexts of interest to armorists in either France or England before 1442,[122] and appear in descriptions of armorial achievements before that date only in Germany. In any case, like the words for 'shield', they were ordinary words applied to everyday objects familiar to everyone, and were far from constituting technical terms of armory.

2.2.5. WORDS FOR 'HERALD' AND THEIR DERIVATIVES BEFORE 1335

I shall conclude this subsection on the taxonomic terms employed before 1335 with a brief review of the history of the words associated with the heralds and their craft in the first two of my Periods: a history already sketched in the notes of first section of Part I of this essay.

5.a. Words for 'herald': *hyraus, heraut, haraud, herhaud*
The origins and early history of the occupation of the men eventually called by names ancestral to the Modern English 'herald' is completely obscure before about 1170, and so is the origin and underlying meaning of their title. The earliest known form of their classic title in any language is the OLD FRENCH *hyraus/ hiraus/ heraus*: *hyrau(l)t/ hirau(l)t/ hera(u)(l)t*,[123] which appeared from nowhere around 1170.

It is thought by some philologists (following Diez) that this word was derived from the Old Germanic word **hariwald* or **heriwald*, which literally meant 'army-wielder', and was certainly ancestral to the proper name that in Latinized Old Frankish took the form 'Chariovaldus', and in English takes the form 'Harold'. Others — finding it difficult to explain how such a word could have come to be applied to men whose functions did not include anything resembling the command of armies — have proposed a derivation from the Old High German verb *harên* or *herên*,

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[121] *OED 2*, loc. cit.

[122] It appears in English letters patent of that year, on which see below, Pt. II.B, § 3.3.

[123] See TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV, cols. 1103-06. On its (obscure) etymology, see above, Part I, p. 2, n.3. Old French (OF) nouns had two cases, nominative and oblique, whose forms often differed significantly from one another. This was the case with the word for baron (nominative *bers*, oblique *baron*) as well as that for herald. When presenting OF nouns I shall give both forms in that order, separated by a colon. I shall follow the same convention with words in other inflected languages, including Latin, when the stem is not predicable from the nominative form.

which meant 'to cry or call', and from a semantic perspective, at least (though not apparently from a morphological one) that derivation seems much more likely.

It is not impossible, however, that a word derived from *herên* was simply conflated with a similar word derived from **heriwald* as a result of the sort of confusion that in Middle English would later conflate the sense of words derived from the noun *blason* 'shield' with those related to the verb *blasen* 'to proclaim'. In the case of the derivative of **hariwald* and *herên* he resultant word might well have been thought of as meaning simply 'crier': precisely what the word *hyraus* seems to have meant.

So far as we can deduce from the passages in which they are mentioned, indeed, the functions of those who bore the title *hyraus* and its derivatives in the twelfth century included primarily or exclusively the bearing of messages in battles and the crying of the names and deeds of knights at tournaments. These are themselves rather different and only tangentially related functions, the former being one that must have been necessary in all military organizations from the beginning of warfare, and the latter one that must have grown up with the tournament itself in the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries. It is therefore possible that the novel name *hyraus* — whatever its origins and precise meaning — was initially attached only to one of these functions, and was later extended for some reason to the other. There might therefore have been for a time two quite different types of *hyrauts*, which only gradually merged in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

According to the Oxford historian Maurice Keen, author of the standard work on knightly culture, the Old French word is first attested in the history of Normandy called the *Roman de Rou*, composed for Henry II of England and Normandy between about 1160 and 1174 by the Norman poet Wace, as a sequel to his *Roman de Brut* (itself a retelling of Geoffrey of Monmouth's foundational proto-Arthurian work the *Historia Regum Britanniae*).[124] In this work, the herald is represented as bearing messages in the context of a battle: clearly the older of the two functions, as I said, but not one traditionally associated with anything resembling the title *hyraus* in either a Germanic or a Romance language.

The Classical Latin word for messenger had in fact been *nuntius*, and that for a crier or proclaimer *praeco*. The former does not seem to have been revived in Middle Latin in any comparable sense before 1275, and I have not found it applied to a herald at any time. *Praeco*, by contrast, was occasionally used around 1100 to designate a military crier, and Wagner

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[124] KEEN, *Chivalry*, p. 135. Unfortunately, he gave no indication of where in that 11,440-line work the word appears, and as the glossary provided in the edition by A. J. HOLDEN (*Le Roman de Rou de Wace* [3 vols., SATF; Paris, 1970-73]) fails to mention the word in any form, I decided to take his word for its presence until I had time to read it all myself. It is striking, however, that the form used by Wace of the name of the last English king of an indigenous house, Harold Godwinson, is 'Heraut', which is of course the classic form of the word for 'herald' in French.

mentioned a particularly suggestive example of its use in his account of the origins of the heralds.[125] The English historian Ordericus Vitalis, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* written in the 1120s, described an incident that took place on 2 June 1098, during the siege of Antioch that was one of the principal engagements of the First Crusade. On that day Bohemond de Hauteville, Prince of Táranto and soon to be the first Prince of Antioch, ordered his *praeco* or crier, called Mala Corona ('Evil Crown'), to make a proclamation throughout the camp. The very heraldic-sounding designation of this officer suggests that he was a professional crier in the permanent service of the prince, and thus resembled the royal and princely heralds of the later thirteenth century, but it is not clear that he also functioned as a messenger, and there is no suggestion whatever of any association with tournaments — then in their formative stages, if they existed at all. Thus, there is no real basis for seeing his office as directly ancestral to that of the *hyrauts*, who appear more than seven decades later.

The next appearance in the written record both of a herald and of his title occurs in Crestïen de Troyes' two simultaneously-written Arthurian romances, *Li Chevalier de la Charette* (or *Lancelot*) and *Li Chevalier au Lion* (or *Yvain*), composed between 1176 and 1182 for the court of the Count of Champagne.[126] In the former work (which introduced to the world the greatest of the Arthurian heroes) the title appears twice in the form *hyrauz* and once in the form *hyra*. Here is the first passage, in which a herald fails to identify the unfamiliar arms that Lancelot, resting in a dismal bed, has adopted as a disguise, but recognizes Lancelot himself:

> La ou il [Lanceloz] jut si povremant, / a tant ez vos un garnement, / un **hyraut d'armes** an chemise, / qui an la taverne avoit mise / sa cote avuec sa chaucëure, / et vint nuz piez grant alëure / desafublez contre le vant; / l'escu trova a l'uis devant, / S'i l'esgarda, mes ne pot estre / Qu'il coneust lui ne son mestre, / ne set qui porter le devoit. / L'uis de la meison overt voit, / s'antre anz, et vit gesir el lit / Lancelot, et puis qu'il le vit / le conut, et si s'an seigna. Et Lanceloz le regarda, et desfendi qu'il ne partlast / de lui, an leu ou il alast: / que, s'il disoit qu'il le sëust, / mialz li vandroit que il s'ëust / les ialz treiz ou le col brisié. / "Sire, je vos ai molt prisié, / fet **li hyrauz**, et toz jorz pris; / ne ja tant con je soie vis / ne ferai rien por nul avoir / don mal gré me doiez savoir." / Tantost de la meison s'an saut, / si s'an vet, criant molt an haut: / "Or est venuz qui l'aunera! / Or est venuz qui l'aunera!" [Roques ll. 5535-5564]
> [*There where he [Lancelot] lay so poorly, then behold a rogue A **herald of arms** in his shirt, / Who in the tavern had left in pawn, / his coat with his*

[125] Sir Anthony WAGNER, [Garter King of Arms] *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), pp. 21-22

[126] CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES, *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, ed. W. FOERSTER (Halle, 1899); ed. M. ROQUES (Paris, 1958 (CFMA 86); ed. and trans. C. MÉLA (Paris, 1992); *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ed. W. FOERSTER (Halle, 1887); ed. M. ROQUES (Paris, 1960).

*hose,/ And come barefoot in all haste/ unprotected from the wind/ found his shield before him/ and looked at it, but was unable/ to recognize either it or its master,/ nor knew who ought to bear it./ He saw the door to the house was open,/ entered, and saw Lancelot lying in the bed,/ and as soon as he had seen him/ he knew him, and indicated this to him./ And Lancelot looked at him, and forbade him to speak/ of him, in the places that he went,/ saying that if he spoke of what he had seen,/ it would be better for him to/ scratch out his eyes or to break his neck./ 'Sir, said the **herald**, I have much admired you,/ and shall admire you for as long as I live;/ I shall do nothing at any price to earn your wrath.'/ Then he leapt from the house,/ and went off crying very loudly:/ 'Now is come he who shall take its measure!/ 'Now is come he who shall take its measure!*]

In this passage a herald is represented for the first time performing (albeit under certain constraints) two of the other principal rôles that would be associated with his *mestier* in this Period: those of recognizing, if possible from their arms, the identity of knights who took part in tournaments, and having done so, of crying their names and praising them for the feats of arms they have previously performed. Both rôles are depicted in more detail in such works of the thirteenth century as the anonymous *Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole* of c. 1210/20, Jacques Bretel's *Li Tournoi de Chauvency* of c. 1285, and Jakemes' *Romain du Castelain de Couci et de la Dame de Fayel* of c. 1300 — all quoted at length by Wagner in his book *Heralds and Heraldry*[127] — and in various others quoted in the *Altfranzösiches Wörterbuch*.

They are in fact virtually only the only rôles represented in the literary sources in Old French before 1335. This, along with the confinement of any form of their title before about 1250 to Old French, suggests that the distinctive *mestier* of the heralds *eo nomine* arose, in tandem with the tournament and the knightly culture it came to embody, in north-eastern France and the Francophone regions of Lotharingia, during the first half of the twelfth century. The transfer of the title to military messengers at some time before 1170 can then be explained as the result either of the adoption of that title by messengers who wished to associate themselves with the newly-fashionable occupation of the tournament-criers, or alternatively of the transfer to the ranks of military messengers of heralds whose skills had come to the attention of princes in the context of tournaments — or of a combination of both types of development.

In Old French, the designation *hiraus* was often used alone before 1335, without any qualifying expression, but as the passage quoted above demonstrates, it was also used from at least 1182 in the augmented designation *hyraut d'armes* or *hirauz de armes*: 'herald of arms', whose

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[127] Anthony Richard WAGNER, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Functions of Heralds* (Oxford, 1939, 2nd edn. 1956), pp. 127-132.

Middle French form *heraut d'armes* was to become their normal designation soon after 1335. The augmented title appears in continental Old French in many of the passages quoted by Wagner and Tobler. What the phrase *d'armes* attached to *hiraus* meant to contemporaries is unclear, but it was probably understood in its usual sense '*related to armed combat*', rather than its modern sense '*related to emblematic arms*'. Thus, the phrase as a whole could probably be rendered 'crier in armed combats', including both true battles and the forms of knightly games generically called 'hastiludes'.

The exactly equivalent noun that was applied to the same men in chronicles and legal documents composed in LATIN rather than the vernacular, **heraldus** or **heroldus**, first appears in our sources in France around 1250.[128] It was clearly a back-formation rather than the source of the French word, and was relatively rare before 1335, when its use would begin to take off. It does not seem to have given rise to any derivatives before the latter date — or indeed for some time after it — but it would eventually serve as the basis for the morphology of most of the later vernacular derivatives of the originally vernacular word *hiraus*, including concrete and abstract nouns (like 'heraldry') and adjectives (like 'heraldic').

Unlike arms and armigery, heralds and heraldry of the original northern French type seem to have been confined to that region until the last decades of the thirteenth century, when they finally began to spread to other kingdoms — especially the England of Edward I. This is reflected in the relatively late dates at which words of the 'herald' family appeared in vernacular languages other than Old French. Indeed, only in England and the Domain of the Crown of Castile was a derivative word adopted before 1300.[129] In the former the word (apparently attested in the later thirteenth century) took the form **heraute** or **faraute**: the latter form arising from a confusion between initial 'h's and 'f's that was common in contemporary Castilian. The Castilian *heraute* almost certain gave rise (probably not long after 1300) to the Portuguese **arauto**, which in the phrase *arauto de armas* clearly represented the French *hyraus d'armes*.[130] In the surviving Portuguese texts the term was applied to officers who (like those in neighbouring Castile) served as the messengers of princes and made princely proclamations, but rarely if ever served as criers in tournaments — which were relatively unusual events in the Iberian kingdoms.

In most other countries words of the 'herald' family came into general use only after 1350, or nearly two centuries after their first use in France. In the meantime, other, unrelated names were given to the

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[128] The earliest Medieval Latin form in England was *haraldus*, attested from 1290 to 1557; it was followed by *heraldus*, (p. 1330 to 1606); *haroldus* (1433), and *herauldus* (1474). (LATHAM, *RMLW*, p. 223) Slightly different forms are attested in France at slightly earlier dates, including *hiraldus* and *heraudus*. (NIERMEYER, *MLLM*, p. 484)

[129] J. COROMINAS, J. A. PASCUAL, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (Madrid, 1980), III, p. 343, under 'heraldo'.

[130] *Grande Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*, ed. António de MORAIS SILVA, 10th edn., ed. Augusto MORENO CARDOSO & José Pedro Masado (1945), under 'arauto'.

analogous functionaries, who may be classified as **para-heralds**. In Germany, for example, the heralds so-called seem to have been preceded in their functions in hastiludes first by *garzûne* or 'boys', and men called *crogiere, krigierer*, or *krîierer*, whose title meant literally 'criers'.[131] After about 1275 they were either renamed or replaced by another set of para-heralds called *wappenknaben* or *knappen von der wappen* 'servants of arms'.[132] Only under the Francophile Emperor Karl IV von Luxemburg (reg. 1347-1378) and his successors were the latter names gradually superseded in their turn, first by the French-derived words *erhalt* or *ernhalt*, and then (in the fifteenth century) by the words *(h)eralt* or *heralde*,[133] which bore a much closer resemblance to their French source-word. *Heralde* seems to have been the normal term for heralds in German by 1500, but even it was supplanted during the following century by yet another word of the same family, *Herold*, less closely related to the French word.

In Lombardy or northern Italy — which was united with Germany as one of the constituent realms of the Holy Roman Empire — the history of the names given to heralds seems to have followed a broadly parallel course. The original terms for the roughly analogous tournament-criers of Italy were *garzoni* 'boys, servants' and *crogierarî* 'criers'; these words were replaced around 1300 by *scudieri*, 'shield-men'; and after 1350 the latter word was in its turn gradually replaced by the classic *araldi* (singular *araldo*), first attested in the chronicle of Giovanni Villani just before 1348.[134]

Even in England — whose nobility was entirely Francophone before about 1200 — the ANGLO-NORMAN word ***heraud/ harraunt/ herald*** is only attested once before 1300, and that was in the biographical poem on the life of the heroic knight (and later Marshal and Regent of England), William the Marshal, which was completed around 1220.[135] William had made his name and fortune on the French tournament circuit, however, so the reference to a herald in his life says nothing about the presence of heralds in England in his lifetime. All of the later appearances of the word are in documents from various dates after 1300.[136]

The continuous use of a word for 'herald' in the French of England is actually later than that of either its Latin or its Middle English

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[131] The last two forms are given as head-words in Matthias LEXER, *Mittelhochdeutsches Taschewörterbuch* (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 116.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 308.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 86.

[134] On the history of the terms for heralds in Italian, see under 'Araldica', *Enciclopedia Italiana*, pp. 924-947, esp. p. 924. For the history of the words of the *araldo* family, see *Degli – Dizionario Etimologico della Lingua Italiana*, ed. Manlio CORTELAZZO and Paoli ZOLLI (1st edn., 1979) or Michele CORTELAZZO (2nd edn., Rome (?), 1999), p. 120. See also Fernando PALOZZI, *Novissimo Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, ed. Gianfranco FOLENA (Milan, 1976)

[135] A. J. HOLDEN, Stewart GREGORY, David CROUCH, *The History of William the Marshal*, A.N.T.S., (3 vols., London, 200_). The passages in which the phrase appears are also printed in WAGNER, *Heralds and Heraldry*, App. B, pp. 130-32.

[136] 'Heraut', *AND*, fasc. 3, p. 353

equivalents. The first of these appears in the implicit form **hyraudus** in a document of 1276, issued by the first known king of arms in England — and in fact the first known herald of any rank. I shall quote the passage in which it appears in § 4.d below, but in the present context it must be seen as evidence for the permanent establishment of heralds in England by Edward I soon after his accession in 1272, presumably to perform their traditional duties in the tournaments that he was the first English king not only to *permit* but to *promote* within his kingdom.

It was obviously no accident that this development coincided with the initiation by the same kings and princes and a certain number of lesser barons, of the closely-related practice of attaching heralds to their households on a permanent, or at least ongoing, basis. Down to about 1270, the great majority of the heralds of the Primary Region had resembled the contemporary *jogleors* (or *jongleurs*, as they are called in Modern French) in being both self-employed and itinerant, travelling constantly from court to court and tournament to tournament and asking for *largesse* or gifts from the knights whose identities they proclaimed and whose accomplishments they praised. Entering into the permanent employ of a great lord (like the jogleors who had earlier become *menestrels* or household servants) gave them for the first time in their history a secure and decent income, while permitting them to travel much as they had done before, but more often at least partially on their employer's business.

Both of the developments just described also coincided with, and were no doubt closely related to, the beginning of the regular practice of preparing armorials or rolls of arms, which took off in England immediately following the accession of Edward I. In contrast to the single independent English armorial (*Glover's Roll*) preserved from the years before 1272, three (*Walford's Roll*, the *Herald's Roll*, and the *Dering Roll*) have been preserved from the next ten years alone, and seventeen from the thirty-five years of Edward's reign.[137]

In these circumstances it was to be expected that references to heralds and their activities would increase significantly in the documents of his reign, and it is no coincidence that both the ENGLISH LATIN **haraldus** and the MIDDLE ENGLISH **herhaud** were first recorded, independently of one another, in or soon after 1290.[138] The latter first appears in the romance *Guy of Warwick*, composed by c. 1300, in the passage '*At an herhaud than asked he, 'This armed folk, what may this be*?'. This is an isolated attestation, however, for neither the *OED* nor the *MED* include any further citations before 1385/6. Thus, we know nothing certain of the history of the English word in this period, but as *herhaud* continued to be represented by such orthographical variants as *herode*, *herrod*, *herowd*, and *herauld(e)*, down to at least 1562, it seems likely that the French pronunciation was preserved throughout this period.

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[137] TREMLETT and LONDON, *Aspilogia* II, p. 261
[138] *OED* 2, VII, p. 152

The augmented version of the title, analogous to *heraut d'armes*, seems also to have been less common in England in any of its three languages before the later fourteenth century. The earliest citation of its Latin equivalent *heraldus armorum* in an English source is dated 1356,[139] and the earliest citation of the equivalent title in English in is Langland's *Piers Ploughman* of 1377: '*As doth an Heraude of armes …*'[140]

By contrast, the attachment to the generic version of the heraldic title of the name of a particular heraldic office began in England in or by 1327 — the year of the accession of the Edward III, who like his grandfather was a great patron of tournaments and of knightly virtues.[141] In his famous chronicle of the time of Edward's long reign, Jehan Froissart recounted the conferral of the first known title of a particular office — that of 'Carlisle' — on a herald who had accompanied him on his campaign of that year against the Scots. The campaign had involved a sojourn in that border city, capital of Cumberland and of the Scottish March.   Later in the chronicle Froissart gave an account of the arrival of the same herald at Westminster on 13 April 1338, bringing news from Gascony that what would later be called the 'Hundred Years War' had broken out there.

In the meantime, Froissart had also mentioned the first known Scottish heralds with particular titles of office: first, in 1327, the herald who brought to Edward the defiance of the Scottish king Robert Bruce in 1327, referred to as '*uns hiraus d'Escoce lequel on nommait Glas*' (i.e., Douglas Herald); and later, in 1333, a herald sent by some Scottish lords and prelates to Edward in Alnwick to ask for a parley, referred to as '*uns hiraus d'Escoce, qui s'apelloit Dondee*' (i.e., Dundee Herald).

It seems likely that the practice of creating named heraldic offices was also adopted in France in this period, as it certainly would be soon thereafter, but the first named French heralds are mentioned only in 1346, in Froissart's account of the Battle of Crécy. It thus falls into the third of our Periods, and will be dealt with below in the division on heralds.

5.b. A word for 'heraldage', 'heraldic knowledge', and 'heraldic costume': *The abstract noun* hiraudie/ heraudie *in Old French & Anglo-Norman*

By 1335 both the Old French and Anglo-Norman *hiraut* (unlike their Latin reflex *heraldus*) had given rise to several derivative words. One of these that appeared in a similar form in both languages was an abstract noun in *–ie*, comparable to *chevalerïe* and *baronïe*.

The continental OLD FRENCH *hiraudïe/ heraudïe/ haraudïe* appeared in several literary works of the late thirteenth century, beginning with *Li tornois de Chavency* of 1285.[142] In these works it bore three distinct senses. The first was the **collective sense** common to words of its general form (including *chevalerïe*), in which it designated the heralds as a

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[139] LATHAM, *RMLW*, p. 223
[140] *OED* 2, VII, p. 152
[141] On the emergence of particular offices in England and Scotland, see WAGNER, *Heralds of England*, p. 20
[142] See above, n. 42. All of these are cited in TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV², pp. 1102-03.

occupational category: what we shall call in this journal the 'heraldage'. This appears in the following passage of the *Tournoi de Chauvency*: '*Et nonportant ne di je mie Que li rïos de* **hiraudie** *Ne pasast bien, s'i n'en fust tant*' ('And nevertheless I do not say that the quarrels of the heraldage would not work out well, if there were not so many of them').[143]

The second sense was what may be called (for lack of a better word in Modern English) a **functional sense**, in which it designated the craft of the heralds, conceived of as a body of specialized knowledge and skills: what we call in this journal 'heraldry'. This, too, was a normal meaning for words of this form (again including *chevalerïe*), and can be seen clearly in the following passage from the same poem: '*Et je crïoie "Bazentin" Que je cuida que ce fust cil "Diable vos fait si soutil" dist uns hiraus "en hiraudie"*' ('And I cry "Bazentin" [of a knight in the tournament] Because I know that it was he. "The Devil made you so subtle" said a herald "in heraldry"').[144]

The third known sense of *hiraudie* in Old French may be called **vestimentary**, since it was applied primarily to the surcoat or tabard worn by heralds as their professional costume. It is first attested in a poem by the minstrel Baudoin de Condé, *Li Contes des Heraus*, probably composed between 1270 and 1280.[145] The passage where it appears (contrasting the habits of contemporary heralds with those of their predecessors) reads as follows: '**Il ont mis jus les hiraudies, Et viestent les cotes hardies Et les robes as chevaliers**.' (They have put aside their heralds' habits, and dressed themselves in *cote hardies* [a type of fashionable surcoat], and in the robes of knights'). Apparently by extension, *hiraudie* in its vestimentary sense soon came to applied to any shabby, poor, or worn item of dress — implying that at this date the heraldic tabard had not yet taken on anything of its later, splendid character, and that the heralds' were not well-regarded by minstrels, at least. The word *heraudie* seems nevertheless to have remained quite rare in this Period, and is unattested in Old French after 1285 in any sense but the last.

In England, the word **heraudie** was probably introduced into Anglo-Norman by 1300, but it is actually known exclusively from the title and first line of the treatise *De heraudie*, probably composed between 1341 and 1345[146] — that is, in the first decade of my Third Period in the history of heraldic discourse. Its use before that would thus appear to have been even rarer in England than in France, and we can only guess at its

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[143] Quoted in TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV, col. 1102

[144] Quoted at loc. cit.

[145] Quoted at loc. cit. For the text, see BAUDOIN DE CONDÉ, *Conte des Heraus*, ed. A. SCHELER, *Dits et contes de Baudoin de Condé et de son fils Jean de Condé* (3 vols., Brussels, 1866-6), pp. 153-74. Baudoin, as a minstrel, expressed negative views of the heralds, whom he viewed as emerging rivals to the members of his more established *mestier* in the society of the princely court. Similar ideas were expressed in the later poem by the fourteenth-century minstrel HENRI DE LAON, the *Dit des Heraus*, ed. A. LÅNGFORS, *Romania* 43 (1914), pp. 216-225.

[146] On this treatise, see below, Pt. II.B, § 3.2.1.

semantic range. More surprisingly, *heraudie* would not give rise to an equivalent in MIDDLE ENGLISH itself until c. 1390, when *heraldie* (based on a later form of the Anglo-Norman word) is recorded,[147] and no other word with a comparable semantic range is known to have existed before 1335.

It is not clear how the function of the heralds specifically called *hiraudie* would have been categorized in more general language by contemporaries, but the number of possibilities was relatively limited. In OLD FRENCH the word most likely to have been used for this purpose is **mestier**,[148] as that word was actually employed in ANGLO-NORMAN in the introductory declaration of the treatise just cited, that '*De heraudie le mestier si est les armes deviser*'. *Mestier* was the French reduction of the Latin word *ministerium* (whose literal sense was '*service to a master*') through the intermediate form *misterium*, in which it was partially assimilated (in ecclesiastical contexts) to the *mysterium* of 'mystery' of the altar 'served' by priests. In the twelfth century the Old French *mestier* had taken on the sense of 'special function', and was thenceforth applied to an ever wider set of functions and the occupations associated with them. From c. 1165 it was used in the phrase *mestier d'armes*, meaning the military art and profession, especially that of knights; by 1180 it had been extended in the phrase *gens des mestiers* to designate all arts and occupations requiring literacy, including those of lawyer, physician, and administrator; and by 1335 it had been further extended to include all of the artisanal occupations, especially those whose practitioners were organized into corporations or gilds. Thus by 1335 the occupation of the heralds certainly fit within the contemporary definition of a *mestier* in its artisanal sense, if not yet in its older sense of a learned profession.

In England the semantic history of the Latin word *misterium* had followed essentially the same course, taking on the sense of '*occupation or trade*' in the thirteenth century. Precisely when it generated an English derivative is unclear, but no such word is apparently recorded before 1390, when **mysterye** finally appears in Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*.[149] In the meantime, it is likely that the generic term used of the heralds' special knowledge and occupation was the indigenous word **craft**, which continued to be treated after 1390 as a synonym of *mysterye*. The word *cræft* or *craft* had been employed in this general sense since c. 900, and would be used in the collective sense '*a body of practitioners*' by 1362. The phrase '*the craft of armis*' would indeed be used to designate the profession of the knights in the Scottish treatise *The Dedis of Armis* of 1496 (on p. 1).[150] It would certainly have been applicable to the occupation of the heralds.

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[147] See below, Part II B, § 3.4.7.b.
[148] *Robert DHLF*, II, pp. 2220-21
[149] OED 2, X, pp. 174-74
[150] See above The word 'art' would be used in the same sense from 1393.

**5.c. Words in Old French for 'herald's costume' and 'herald's wife':
the nouns *hiraudois* and *heraude***

Two additional derivatives of *hiraus* in Old French are also known from literary works composed before 1335. (1) One is an adjective in the form ***hiraudois***, which is attested only as a substantive in the *Dis du Singe* of Jehan de Condé, son of Baudoin, in the sense '*herald's costume or appearance*' — making it a partial synonym of *heraudie* and in effect of *tabard*.[151] The work is undatable, but was probably written at some time between 1313 (when his first datable poem was composed) and his death c. 1345. (2) The other word is a nominal derivative in the form ***heraude***, with the basic sense '*a herald's wife*', and the extended sense '*a woman of dubious sexual morality, a bawd*'.[152] Both words probably date from the last decades of our Second Period, but only the latter was to survive into the following Period — primarily if not exclusively in its secondary sense, which had nothing to do with the *mestier* of the heralds.

No reflexes or even equivalents to either word are known in Middle English, which had a much more limited vocabulary in this area.

**5.d. Titles for a superior herald in Latin and Old French:
*rex hyraudorum and roy des herauts***

Down to about 1270, the various regnal and regional corps of heralds in the Primary Heraldic Region do not seem to have had either distinctions of rank or any form of organization in which ranks might have been meaningful. Soon after his accession in 1272, however, King Edward I seems to have organized the heralds of England into provincial jurisdictions to which the name *marche* or 'march' came eventually to be given, and within each of these a single senior herald was given some sort of superiority — whether of authority or merely of honour and precedence is unclear — over the other heralds. A similar form of organization seems to have been imposed, at least in principle, upon the heralds of Germany by 1277 (presumably by Rudolf I von Habsburg, King of the Romans from 1273), and upon the heralds of France by 1288 (probably by King Philippe IV 'the Fair' soon after his accession in 1285). English, French, and German princes also appointed superior heralds with the same distinctive title in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.[153]

The generic title given to the new superior heralds in Latin was ***rex hyraudorum*** or ***heraudum***, and in Old French *roy des herauts (d'armes)*. It is first attested in any language in a receipt of 18 March 1276 issued by *Petrus, Rex hyraudorum citra aquam de Trente ex parte borialia*: 'Peter, King of heralds on this side of the water of the Trent on the northern side'.[154] This reveals both the form of the generic title and the existence of the northern march of

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[151] GOD., *DALF*, IV, p. 477; TOB.-LOM., *AW*, IV, col. 1103.
[152] *Ibid.*, col. 1102
[153] On the early history of this status and title, see WAGNER, *Heralds of England*, pp. 5-8, 17-18.
[154] Ibid., p. 6

England that would come to be associated with the specific title *Norreys* or 'Norroy'. Only two such kings of arms were listed in the royal household roll of 1285, so it is reasonable to conclude that both of the historic English marches and their kingships had been established by that date, and in all likelihood by 1276. In France a ***rex heraudum*** is mentioned among the *ministerialli* of the royal household in a Latin record of 1285, and the earliest OLD FRENCH version of the title ***rois des hirauts*** appears in Jacques Bretel's *Tournoi de Chauvency* of the same year. Back in England, ANGLO-NORMAN versions of the title appear in two documents of c. 1300: ***Roy des Haraunz*** and ***rey des harraunz***.[155] Presumably those who felt more comfortable speaking English would have rendered these titles by an expression of the general form *king of herowdes*, but I have not found an example of that title in any surviving work.

Nor have I found in any language a long form of the title corresponding to the English 'king of heralds of arms', though a shortened version of this in Latin — ***rex heraldus armorum*** or 'king herald of arms' — is preserved in an isolated case in a payment of 1334. As we shall see, however, the modern form of the Latin title, *rex armorum* 'king of arms' is attested in England only from 1415, and its Middle English equivalent *king of armes* only from 1427.[156]

Wagner argued quite persuasively that use of words meaning 'king' to mark officers of relatively humble status was probably inspired by the title of the mock kings long associated with annual feasts. He also noted the slightly later extension of the same title to officers of the royal households of both France and England who held roughly analogous positions with respect to the other members of their crafts. The list of French royal *ministerialli* of 1285 cited above includes a *rex ribaldorum* or 'king of ribalds' as well as a *rex heraudum*, and a *roy des menestreuls du royaume de France* — a 'king of minstrels of the kingdom of France' — was regularly mentioned in the equivalent lists from 1338 onwards. In England, kings of minstrels received gifts from Edward I in 1290, and were frequently mentioned thereafter in the household accounts.[157] Thus, by 1290 'kings of heralds' shared their generic title and status with at least one additional household officer in both kingdoms, and would eventually share it with two.

It must finally be noted here that the practice of giving heralds offices bearing distinctive titles that began, as we have seen, in or by 1327, had been extended to the kings of heralds by 1334.[158] A record has been preserved of a payment made in that year for 'making minstrelsy' to '*Magistro Andreae Claroncell~ Regi heraldo armorum*', whose title seems to be

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[155] *AND-o 'heraud'*, referring in both cases to *Statutes of the Realm*: *Chartes et documents officials des rois d'Angleterre des 12e au 18e s., t. 1 et 2, à partir de 1275.* Vol. II, London, 1810-25, p. 231.

[156] WAGNER, *Heralds of England*, p. 5, implies a citation in French or English before 1400.

[157] Ibid, p. 7.

[158] Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 20

the equivalent to that of the later Clarenceux King of Arms (of the southern
march): an office not otherwise attested before 1420. Four years later, in
1338, an early form of the classic title of the northern king of arms (Norroy)
seems to appear in a similar record of payments to 'Andrew *Norreys* or
Norrois King of Heralds'. Four additional named kingships of arms would
appear in England and its domain during the reign of Edward III, but most
of that reign fell into our next Period, so I shall defer discussion of them to
the appropriate division below.

5.e. A title for a junior or apprentice herald: *poursuivant d'armes*
A grade within the heraldic *mestier* below that of herald did not begin to
emerge until around the end of the second decade of the fourteenth
century — or just over a decade before the end of our current Period. Once
again its early history is quite obscure, especially in England, where there
is no sign of its existence before 1364.

The earliest known example in any language of the classic title for
the members of this junior grade — ***poursuivant*** or ***poursievant d'armes*** —
appears in Old French in a document of 1318/20.[159] The title itself
represented a new substantivization of the present participle of the verb
poursuivre, used in the sense 'to follow' rather than 'to pursue', so it must
have been understood to mean '*a follower or attendant of a herald of arms*'. It
is not clear whether the first men so titled were junior heralds, equivalent
in their *mestier* to the *compagnons* or 'journeymen' of comparable *mestiers* —
who had completed their training but had not yet done whatever was
required to be admitted to the status of *maistre* or 'master' — or
alternatively were mere apprentices, still learning their craft. Given the
absence of any still lower title, however, it is most likely that the title
poursuivant was applicable from the beginning to both apprentice and
journeyman heralds, just as the title *esquier* was applicable to both
apprentice and journeyman knights or men-at-arms.

Not surprisingly, given their low status and presumably limited
rôle in the public duties of their *mestier*, the *poursuivants* of France are
scarcely mentioned in the records of the Second Period, and it is not certain
that their status was introduced into England until some time after it had
ended. No form of their title is recorded in either Anglo-Norman or Anglo-
Latin before 1492, and the Middle English *pursevante* first appears in a
literary work in Chaucer's *House of Fame* of c. 1384.[160]

5.f. Words related to heralds: Summary
In concluding this survey of terms related to the status of herald it may
usefully be observed: (1) that yet again the French and English lexicons and
the semantic ranges of their cognate words evolved at different rates and
along somewhat different lines, more words being generated in the former
than in the latter; (2) that none of the words derived from *hiraus* in either

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[159] *Robert DHLF*, III, p. 3886
[160] LATHAM, *RMLW*, p. 384 (*pursevandus*, 1492); *AND-o*, (no entry), *MED-o*,
'pursevant', *OED 2*, XII, p. 889 (*persewand*, 1427)

language before 1335 seems to have been in common use before that date; (3) that only one of these words had a semantic range that even *included* the idea of *expertise* in armorial matters, let alone armorial emblems as such, and it had no known reflex in English; and (5) that no adjective comparable to the modern words *héraldique* and 'heraldic' was created in either language before the end of the Period. (6) It is also significant that none of the words in any of the three languages (including Latin), other than those designating the heralds of different ranks, was destined to survive to the present — or even to the end of my Third Period, as we shall see.

2.2.6. WORDS FOR HERALDICA BEFORE 1335: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I thought that it would be useful to conclude this whole subsection by presenting, in the form of a table, the history both of the heraldic *concepts* represented by particular words before 1335, and of the *words* used to represent them. In Table 2.1 I have set out this information in four columns, the first including the principal concepts, and the next three the words used to represent them in continental Old French, in Anglo-Norman, and in Middle English respectively, in most cases followed by the earliest date of their use in writing that has yet been discovered. I have indicated the concepts and words that are most important to my inquiry by bold-face on a white field. I have also included a number of related concepts and terms that are of more peripheral interest, marked by a standard face on a light-grey field, along with a number of even more peripheral concepts represented by identical or related words, further marked by indentation.

What is most immediately striking about the lists presented here are: (1) the very limited number of concepts directly related to heraldry and heraldic emblematics that were represented by words in any of the three languages; (2) the *decrescendo* in the *number* of concepts represented, from continental Old French through Anglo-Norman to Middle English; and (3) a parallel *decrescendo* in the *dates* at which words for each concept are attested. Of course, it is likely that all of the words came into oral use at least a short time (and in some cases a fairly long time) before they were written down, and that some of the earliest written uses of some of the words were in works that have been lost, or have yet to be identified or edited. Thus, the dates are all essentially *termini ad quem* for the introduction of the words in each language. Nevertheless, the almost perfect consistency of the pattern of dates does suggest that almost all of the words of Romance origin were adopted in continental French some decades before they were in Anglo-Norman, and that they were often adopted in the latter some decades before they were in Middle English.

Looked at in terms of the absolute dates of attestation, all but the derivatives of *hyraus* and the last name for the knightly coat had appeared in Old French between 1100 and 1285, while in Anglo-Norman many words are not attested until after 1270 or even 1335, if they are attested at all, and in Middle English almost all of the non-indigenous words are first attested in the reign of Edward I, between about 1275 and 1300.

CONCEPT	OLD FRENCH WORD	ANGLO-NORMAN	MIDDLE ENGLISH
visual sign of any functional type	*signe* a. 1000 *enseigne* 1095/1115 *conoissance* 1095/1115	*signe* 1139 *enseigne* 1139 *conoissance* 1175/1200	*signe* 1225 *conysaunce* 1292 *marke* a. 900 *token* c. 890
emblematic sign	*enseigne* 1095/1115 *cognoissance* 1095/1115	*enseigne* 1139 *conoissance* 1175/99	*signe* c. 1290 *marke* a. 900-1200
emblematic arms	*armes* c. 1170 *escu* 1215/20 (rare)	(*armes* 1341/5)	*armes* c. 1295 (*shild* c. 1550)
armament, offen-sive & defensive	*armes* 1095/1115 *armëure > armure* 1130	*arm(e)ure* c. 1295	*armes* c. 1275 *armure* c. 1295
weapons	*armes* p. 1130	*armes* 1214/16	*wepen* a. 1100 *armes* c. 1295
armour	*armëure > armure* 1130	(*arm(e)ure* 1353/80)	*armure* c. 1295
military/knightly calling, activities, deeds	*armes* a. 1170 *chevalerïe* 1095/1115	*armes* (deed 1170) *chivalerïe* 1290s	*armes* c. 1300 *knyghtshipe* 1175 *chyvalrie* c. 1300
knightly shield	*escut, escu* 1095/1115 *blason* c. 1170 *bucler* 1268	*escud, escu* c. 1200 *blason* c. 1185	*scild > sheld* a.900 *blaso(u)n* 1278: 1350
shield **with arms**	*blason* p. 1218	*blason* p. 1300	*blaso(u)n* 1325
small shield **(with arms)**	*escucel* 1200/28 *escusson* 1285	*escuch(e)on* c. 1300	(*escochon* 1480)
shield-maker	*esquier* 1285 *escucier* *blason(n)ier* a. 1350	*escue(o)r*	
proto-banner	*gunfanun* 1095/1115-80	*gunfanun* 1139-80	
banner	*baniere* 1170/90?	*ban(i)er(e)* p. 1230	*banere* c. 1230
pennon	*gunfanun* 1095/1115-80 *panon/ penon* 1160	*gunfanun* c. 1180 (*penun* 1333/75)	*gonfanoun* c. 1300 (*penon* 1375)
pennoncel	*penoncel* 1165	(*penuncel* 1333/75)	(*pennonceal* 1390)
military surcoat	*cote a armer* c. 1200 *cote armoire* 1270/80: *cote d'armes* 1270/80:		(*cote armure* c. 1355) (*cote of armes* 1390)
crest	*creste* 1180: 1285. *cimier* c. 1190: (*1380*)	*creste* 1270/1	*crest* 1278: 1312
helmet	*hiaulme* 1095/1115	*healme* c. 1150	*helm* a. 900
herald (of arms)	*hyraus: hyraut* c. 1170	*haraud* 1220: p. 1300	*herhaud* 1290
body of heralds	*hiraudie* 1285	(*heraudie* 1341)	(*heraldie* 1393)
craft of heralds	*hiraudie* 1285		
heralds' costume	*hiraudie* 1270/80 *hiraudois* 1313/45		
herald's wife	*hiraude* 1270/1325?		
senior herald	*roy des hirauts* 1285	*r. de harauntz* 1300	(*k. of armes* 1427)
junior herald	*poursuivant* 1318/20		(*persevante* 1384)

Table 2.1. The Concepts and Words related to Heraldic Emblematics to 1335
Aqua backgrounds indicate that the word is attested from a date after 1335

Only six of the concepts were of particular relevance to heraldic emblematics: (a) **emblematic sign** (for which all three languages possessed two general words for sign that were sometimes applied to emblems: the same words in the two dialects of Old French and different ones in English); (b) **emblematic arms** (for which all three languages almost certainly used the word *armes*, though it is not actually attested in Anglo-Norman until just after 1335, and Old French occasionally used *escu*); (c) **crest** (for which the word *crest(e)* was probably employed in all three languages to the end of the period, but in rivalry with *cimier* in Old French from c. 1190, and with a clearly emblematic sense only towards the end of the period); (d) **herald of arms** (for which *hyraus: hyraut d'armes* and its derivatives were uniquely employed in all three languages); (e) **senior herald** (for which the expression *roy des hirauts* and its derivatives were employed in the two forms of French by 1300, and probably by 1275, but no Middle English equivalent is attested until much later); (f) **junior herald** (for which the designation *poursuivant* is attested before 1335 only in continental Old French); and (g) **the occupational category of the heralds** and (h) **the craft of the heralds** (both of which were represented in Old French, and possibly in Anglo-Norman as well, by the word *hiraudie* or *heraudie*, which again had no known equivalent in English).

Seven additional concepts represented phenomena with a close, but secondary, relevance to armorial emblematics: the principal contexts for the display of the two species of emblem. These were: (j) the **knightly shield** (represented in both dialects of French initially and principally by *escu*, derived from *scutum*, and later by *blason*, originally indicative of the presence of a boss; and in English initially and principally by *sheld* — the local form of the common Germanic word for that object — but by the end of the Period by a form of the Anglo-Norman *blason* as well); (k) the **shield-face** (represented in all three tongues exclusively by *blason*); (l) the **banner** (whose primitive form was represented by *gunfanun* and whose classic form was eventually represented in all three tongues exclusively by a form of *baner*); (m) the **penon** and (n) **pennoncel** (represented in Old French by *gonfanon, penon,* and *penoncel,* and in the tongues of England by *gunfanun*); (o) the **knightly coat** (represented by four phrases based on *cote* in Old French alone); and (p) the **knightly helmet** (represented in all three languages exclusively by words derived from the Germanic word *helm*).

It is striking that all three languages not only had at least one word for *eight* of these fifteen phenomena, but that in all but the cases of the notion of an *emblematic sign* (where Middle English employed a different pair of words) and that of a *shield* (where again Middle English employed a different word), the principal words in question were identical or nearly identical cognates. It is equally striking that except in the cases of the same pair of concepts (each ultimately represented by a pair of words in all three tongues), and that of *crest* (for which Old French alone acquired a redundant synonym of its original word *creste*), only a single word was used to represent each concept in all three languages. Thus, the lexicon in this area — despite its origin in ordinary rather than expert usage —

exemplified to a remarkable extent two of the characteristics of a sound scientific terminology: a one-to-one correspondence between concepts and terms, and a set of terms whose form is sufficiently similar in all languages to indicate their common meaning.

Nevertheless, the lexicon just described did suffer from a number of the shortcomings of all lexicons in ordinary language. The most important of these was *alexia*: for as I have already observed, most of the key terms just identified had as yet given rise to no adjective, no agent-noun, and at most a single abstract noun, which bore all of the different abstract ideas that tended to be attached to such nouns in the period. Furthermore, several of the key terms — especially *armes*, *escu*, and *blason* — had come to be part of families of words and expressions representing two quite different sets of ideas, making them highly ambiguous in many contexts.

In the end, it must be said that the taxonomic lexicon related to armorial emblematics and the professional activities of the heralds that had evolved in our three vernacular tongues by 1335 was still a very basic one, suitable — and indeed relatively well-adapted — for the simple *designation* of the principal phenomena in their distinct and specific characters, but wholly inadequate for any sort of *discussion* of or *generalization* about those phenomena, or their relationships either to one another, or to those who used and identified them. In other words, it was in no sense a lexicon of heraldic *erudition*, which remained confined before 1335 to the purely descriptive rôle embodied in the lexicon of blazon.

As we shall see, the heraldic taxonomic lexicon would expand considerably in the Third Period, as existing words took on new meanings, and new words were introduced to fill in some of the gaps just suggested. Nevertheless, it is arguable that most of the lexical changes of the years between 1335 and 1560 would make negative rather than positive contributions — complicating the terminology considerably, but reducing rather than enhancing its precision and clarity.

Sommaire français.

Dans cette première Division de la deuxième Partie de son introduction aux hautes études héraldiques, le professeur Boulton discute la nature et les origines des défauts du lexicon technique utilisé par les héraldistes pour classifier les phénomènes héraldiques de toutes sortes: un lexicon taxinomique qu'il contraste au lexicon descriptif ou blasonique. Après une très breve explication préliminaire des problèmes inextricables de l'emploi des termes empruntés sans modification du langage ordinaire (archaïque ou moderne), il initie une étude générale de l'histoire du lexicon taxinomique en France et en Angleterre depuis 1170, divisée en cinq périodes distinctes: (1) celle des sources strictement litéraires (v. 1170 -v. 1250); (2) celle des armoriaux blasonnés (v. 1250 – v. 1335); (3) celle des traités héraldiques en manuscrit et des lettres de donation d'armoiries (v. 1335 – v. 1560); (4) celle des traités imprimés de la tradition antiquaire (v. 1560 – v. 1870); et (5) celle de l'érudition scientifique (v. 1870 – présent). Dans la Première Division (II.A) il s'agit des deux premières Périodes, examinées ensemble.