The Creation of the Armorial Achievement of the United States (1776-1782), and its Representation and Misrepresentation (1782 - c. 1920)

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1. Introduction

In lectures given at three International Congresses on Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, I have examined the history of the armorial, quasi-armorial, and sigilloid display-emblems adopted by the 'states' of the emergent and established republic carved from the southern half of British North America, in the period from the beginning of the Civil and Revolutionary War of 1775-83 down to the present.[1] In my second lecture in this series, given at the XXXth Congress in Maastricht in 2012 (and again at the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada held in Quebec City in 2013), and published in the proceedings of the former,[2] I demonstrated that — while more than a superficial knowledge of

[1] The first presentation in this series was 'The Origins of a *Damnosa Haereditas*: The Degeneration of Heraldic Emblematics in the future and current United States and the Origins of the Sigilloid Display-emblem, 1608-179', published in *Genealogica & Heraldica: Proceedings of the XXVIth International Congress for Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences* (Bruges, 2004), ed. André Vandewalle, Lieve Viaene Awouters, and Luc Duerloo. (Vlaamse Overheid, Brussels, 2006), pp. 121-147. I must take the opportunity here to thank again the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts of the University of Notre Dame for supporting my travel to this and all of the subsequent Congresses at which I have presented these lectures.

[2] 'The Heraldic Emblematics of the Provinces of British North America and their Successors before and after the Partition of 1776/83: A Study in Contrasts', in *Genealogica & Heraldica: Grenzen in Genealogie en Heraldik – Frontiers in Genealogy and Heraldry – Frontières dans la généalogie de l'héraldique – Proceedings of the XXXth*

any armorial code seems to have been extremely rare in British North America generally even on the eve of those events — there remained a sufficient respect for armorial emblems among the leading revolutionaries (many of whom made use of personal arms on their signet seals, at least[3]) that eight of the governments of the thirteen new 'states' chose to adopt what they thought of, at least, as armorial achievements, to represent their newly sovereign authority. These included two achievements retained (with minor modifications) from the Old Régime (those of Virginia and Maryland), and five wholly new ones of a technically correct form, designed for the purpose by specially appointed committees.[4]

No doubt because of their general repudiation of European traditions with monarchical and aristocratic associations, however, and of their increasing isolation from the lands in which those traditions were maintained, the men of the generation who came of age in the decades after the ratification of the federal constitution in 1788 seem to have had no serious interest in matters heraldic, and their number certainly included no one of influence with any knowledge of its traditions. In fact, no state or government institution even attempted to create an armorial achievement for itself in the nearly three decades between 1788 and 1817, by which time most of those who could remember the more European elements of the pre-Revolutionary culture (including the only expert heraldist in the country) were dead. And as I showed in my previous article, the innumerable flaws in the notional arms and achievements created for the new states of the interior in and after 1817 reveal all too clearly how much the understanding of the armorial code had declined in the interim among the political élites of those states.

International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, held at Maastricht 24 – 28 September 2012, ed. Jan T. Anema, Rob J. F. van Drie, Roelof K. Vennik, and Bob (P. M.) Kernkamp (The Hague, 2014), pp. 39-68

[3] Their number included Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams. For a survey of armigery in British North America before and during the Revolution, see Duane GALLES, 'Heralds for the Republic: A Proposal for the Establishment of Heraldic Authorities in the United States of America', *Alta Studia Heraldica* 3 (2010), pp. 79-135, esp. pp. 82-88, 93-99.

[4] Ibid., pp. 51-52

In my most recent lecture, given on 14 August 2014 at the XXXIst Congress in Oslo, Norway, I discussed (and in the present article based upon it, shall discuss),[5] the rather different history of the use and abuse of

First Committee (1776)

a. Du Simitière 1 **b. Du Simitière 2**

Second Committee (1780)

c. Hopkinson 1 **d. Hopkinson 2**

Fig. 1. The Four Designs Proposed for the Achievement of the United States by the First Two Committees

the armorial achievement adopted by the Continental Congress on 21 June 1782 for display on the new seal of the (then Confederal) Republic as a whole, during the course of the first century or so of its existence and use.[6]

[5] A much shorter version of this article will appear in the proceedings of that Congress. The version published here is an extended version of the lecture, incorporating material responding to some of the questions raised during the discussion of the lecture.

The achievement in question was the last of a series of *eight* distinct designs (represented in **Figures 1** and **2**[7]) proposed to a succession of *four ad hoc* committees appointed by the Congress for the purpose, each of which submitted a single proposal to the Congress as a whole. Only the last was found acceptable, but all of them contributed to the final design. The **First Committee**, appointed on 4 July 1776, was composed of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, and advised by Pierre Eugène Du Simitière — who actually designed the achievement submitted in a modified form to the Congress on 20 August 1776, and promptly tabled.[8] The **Second Committee**, appointed on 20 March 1779, was composed of James Lovell, William Houstoun, and John Scott, and advised by Francis Hopkinson — who despite the general erudition of its members, did all of the work of the Committee, and was wholly responsible for the design both of the preliminary and of the final version of the achievement it submitted to the Congress on 10 May 1780 (which rejected it one week later).[9] The **Third Committee**, appointed on 4 May 1782, was composed of Arthur Middleton, John Rutledge, and Elias Boudinot, and advised by William Barton, whose two distinct proposals for an achievement — the second of which was submitted to Congress on 9 May 1782 and rejected on 13 May — were once again entirely his creations.[10] The **Fourth Committee**, appointed on that day, included only the Secretary of the Congress,

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[6] The principal secondary sources for the history of the creation of the federal-national achievement are (1) Gaillard HUNT, *The History of the Seal of the United States*, published by the State Department of the United States in 1892 and 1909 (68 p.), and partially reprinted in Eugene ZIEBER, *Heraldry in America* (New York, 1895; repr. 1984), pp. 95-106; (2) Edward W. RICHARDSON, *Standards and Colors of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1982), pp. 10-12; and (3) Richard S. PATTERSON and Richardson DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield: A History of the Great Seal of the United States* (Washington, 1976), pp. 6-110. The last is by far the longest and the most authoritative, having been written, on the basis of a careful examination of all of the relevant contemporary documents known to survive, by two officers of the United States Department of State as part of the celebration of the bicentenary of the declaration of independence.

[7] Figure 1: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 21, Figs. 3, 4; p. 36, Fig. 5; p. 37, Fig. 6; p. 58, Figs. 7, 8; Fig. 76, Fig. 14; RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 188

[8] PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 6-31.

[9] Ibid., pp. 32-43

[10] Ibid., pp. 44-82

Charles Thomson, again advised by William Barton. Barton revised and provided a blazon for the design Thomson himself had proposed, and the revised design (with a blazon revised by Thomson and an explanatory text composed by Barton) was finally adopted by the Congress on the day it was submitted: 20 June 1782.[11]

Third Committee (1782)

a. Barton 1 **b. Barton 2**

Fourth Committee (of One, 1782)

c. Thomson **d. Barton 3**

Fig. 2. The Four Designs Proposed for the Achievement of the United States by the Third and Fourth Committees in 1782

The history of these committees and the proposals submitted to them was ably examined at the Oslo Congress by David Appleton, in a lecture soon to be published in its proceedings.[12] While I shall inevitably

[11] This is not usually listed as a separate committee, but it had the same status and function as the earlier ones, and must be so regarded. On its activities and their results, see ibid., pp. 71-110.

[12] David B. APPLETON, 'The United States of America: The Search for a National Coat of Arms, presented on the morning of 14 August.

go over some of the same ground in this article, I shall concentrate here on the *theoretical form* and *effective representation* of the achievement actually adopted. As I shall show, the design of the **Arms** and **Supporter** of this achievement were at least in principle both armorially and emblematically sound, and were often represented in an acceptable manner. Furthermore — while it was far from ideal in either its conception or its usual representations — even the **Crest** was at least *capable* of being represented in an armorially acceptable way, and was actually emblazoned in such a way on two very early seals (though never thereafter). Nevertheless, various defects in the blazon (including the omission of any mention of a helmet or crest-base), combined with the ignorance the artisans charged with its emblazonment, meant that it would never be correctly represented.

As this observation suggests, I shall take a rather strict position on the acceptable interpretation of the traditional armorial code, especially in its English form — which (unlike English Common Law) was never explicitly either rejected or modified in the new Republic, and in general continued to be observed to the extent that its citizens understood it.[13] While it is theoretically possible that some of the deviations from the code that I shall take note of were *intentional* innovations, made in the spirit of republican liberty (as certain members of my audience in Oslo suggested during the discussion), I have found nothing to suggest such intentions at any time. I shall therefore assume that the other deviations were made as a result of the same sort of ignorance or misunderstanding of the requirements of the code that led to the creations of the quasi-armorial emblems I examined in my previous lectures.[14]

One form of evidence supportive of this assumption is that the men who designed most of the armorial achievements both proposed and adopted during the Revolutionary years 1776 to 1783 — including not only those of the five states noted, but that of the Confederal Republic itself — clearly had some familiarity with the armorial code, and clearly did their best to conform to it. As we shall see, the only important deviations from it

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[13] On the reception of English heraldic law in the colonies of British North America, see C. T. S. MACKIE, 'The Canadian Law of Arms. Part I. English Origins', *Alta Studia Heraldica* 2 (2009), pp. 71-86; 'Part II. The provinces', ibid. 3 (2010), pp. 55-78.

[14] I have added the following discussion to the text of my lecture to deal with the questions posed during the discussion that followed its delivery by Hans Cappelen, the chairman of my session, and others.

in the final design of the Confederal Achievement involved the conception of the Crest and in the adoption of a *single* Supporter rather than the usual pair. The latter innovation, however, was explicitly derived from a long-established practice of the Holy Roman Empire — familiar to Angloamericans from widely-available reference works and widely-circulating coins — and was presented as a symbol of the *imperial* rather than the *republican* character of the new confederation.

It is also significant that all four of the committees established during the Revolutionary period to create emblems for both levels of government appointed as a consultant someone who was known to possess a relatively expert knowledge of the traditional armorial code; and furthermore that in most cases the emblem finally adopted was in fact a conventional armorial achievement, described (more or less accurately) in the conventional language of blazon. These facts are strongly indicative of a general desire among the leaders of the Revolution to adopt new emblems of that traditional form, and of a general realization that the design of such emblems required a level of expertise well beyond that possessed by the average colonial gentleman.

Unfortunately, the number of such experts available to the revolutionary governments was already quite small in 1776. In fact, although some of the men appointed to the four Congressional Committees were at least active armigers, and must have had at least a basic knowledge of armory, only the three men noted above as having served as *advisors* to those Committees, and the man who alone constituted the last of the committees, seem to have been capable of designing a *new* achievement. As those four men seem to have been the effective designers of *all* of the sound armorial emblems adopted in the United States in that period (and indeed for many years afterward), and as each of them contributed in a significant way to the design of at least one of the elements of the achievement of the Republic with which I shall be particularly concerned, it will be instructive to present brief accounts of their careers, credentials, and general contributions.

2. The Pro-Heralds[15] of the Revolution:

[15] I have adopted the term 'pro-herald' to designate a person other than one holding a formal appointment conveying the title 'herald' or one of its grades or equivalents, who has nevertheless been officially called upon to perform any of the

Du Simitière, Hopkinson, Barton, and Thomson

The four men in question played very different rôles in the process of creating armorial emblems for the revolutionary governments of the southern colonies of British North America, and were active at different stages. Only two of them could claim more than an elementary knowledge of armory, but one of the remaining two possessed a considerable knowledge of the signs of the allegorical family, and the fourth seems to have taught himself just enough about armorial composition when the need arose to produce a design that could be converted into a minimally-acceptable achievement. Unfortunately, all of the designs these men suggested were seriously flawed in one way or another, and none of them can be regarded as a really competent designer, even by the low standards of the day.

The first of the four men to play a rôle in the design of armories for revolutionary governments on either the state or the Confederal level was **Pierre Eugène du Cimetière** (or **Simitière**),[16] an artist and scholar who had been born in Geneva in 1737 as the son of a broker in the East India trade, and at the age of twenty had undertaken a voyage of discovery in the West Indies. After spending six years collecting material on the geography, natural history, and culture of that region, and acquiring at least a basic knowledge of English, he had moved northwards to continental British North America, where he moved about between Boston and Charleston collecting an ever wider variety of materials, including books and papers related to the history of the colonies. Throughout this period he had supported himself through his skills as a painter and draughtsman, and was often called upon to draw designs for provincial, local, and institutional seals — including those of the Provinces of Jamaica and Barbados, and the American Philosophical Society itself. To these he was able to apply a more than ordinary understanding of the conventions of armory — always expressed in terms that make it clear that he had learned

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distinctive functions of an heraldic office, especially that of designing and blazoning armorial emblems. See D'A. J. D. BOULTON, 'Advanced Heraldic Studies: An Introduction. Part I. A New Conception of an Interdisciplinary Field of Scholarship', in *Alta Studia Heraldica* 2 (2009), pp. 1-40, esp. pp. 25-26.

[16] On Du Cimetière (as his name was originally written) or Du Simitière (as it was normally spelled after his immigration to British North America), see esp. PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 10-13.

it in French while growing up in Geneva, and was unfamiliar with the rather different conventions of English blazon.

Du Simitière became a naturalized British subject in New York in 1769, and after returning briefly to the West Indies in 1772, he settled permanently in Philadelphia in 1774. During an earlier sojourn in that city — which soon became the *de facto* capital of the Confederation as well as of the emergent state of Pennsylvania in 1777 — he had been elected in 1768 to membership in the American Philosophical Society (the principal learned society in British North America), and through it had become acquainted with its founder, Benjamin Franklin. Between 1768 and 4 July 1776 Du Simitière must have acquired a considerable reputation among these men for his heraldic erudition, as he was immediately appointed as an expert consultant by the Committee established on that day to design the seal of the new Confederation, and in practice an armorial achievement to set upon it. Although his proposal for an achievement was rejected by the Continental Congress (no doubt on the basis of its excessive complexity), three of its elements — the general form of its **Crest** (the Eye of Providence surrounded by a glory), the **eagle displayed** incorporated in its Arms to represent the German element of the population, and its **motto** (*E pluribus unum*), borrowed directly from the *Gentleman's Magazine*[17] — would be included in the version finally submitted to Congress by the Fourth Committee in 1782, and formally adopted on the same day.

In the meantime, Du Simitière had served as a consultant to the *state* committees charged with creating at least two, and probably all three, of the state achievements adopted in the first year of Revolution: — those of the adjacent states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.[18] All of these achievements were at least *technically* sound, and superior to all of those adopted in later years. The precise nature of his contributions to their design is unclear, but he did at least convert them all into an acceptable armorial form through his emblazonments, which are still used

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[17] And perhaps indirectly from Virgil or Horace. See PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 24-25.

[18] See BOULTON, 'Heraldic Emblematics', pp. 52-53. The origins of the Pennsylvania armories remain uncertain, but given both their general and their particular form, and the fact that Du Simitière was actually resident in Philadelphia — the capital of the state as well as of the emergent Republic — there can be little doubt that he was responsible for their design, and that the design was adopted at some time before April 1777, when they are first attested.

in official contexts to this day. For reasons that I have not yet discovered, Du Simitière seems not to have been consulted by any of the later, or more distant committees charged with designing seals, and as he died in October 1784 — just over one year after the United States was granted its independence — he had no influence on the representation of the new Confederal achievement either in official or unofficial contexts.

The second of the four men who were to contribute to the design of the achievement of the Confederation, **Francis Hopkinson**,[19] was an exact contemporary of Du Simitière, but his life had followed a very different course. Born in Philadelphia in 1737, Hopkinson had been educated as a member of the first class of Benjamin Franklin's secondary *Academy* (opened in 1751) and tertiary *College* of Philadelphia (chartered in 1755, and eventually re-chartered as the *University* of Pennsylvania in 1791). After graduating he travelled to England in 1766, and spent the next year with his cousin the Bishop of Worcester, cultivating prominent English Whigs (including Lord North, the future Prime Minister) in the hopes of being made Commissioner of Customs for British North America. In this he was unsuccessful, but he was a man of great energy and many talents, and seems to have made a positive impression on his contemporaries. Immediately after his admission to the New Jersey Bar in 1775 he had been elected a member for that province of the Second Continental Congress, in which he served from 22 June to 30 November 1776 — latterly as a member of its Marine Committee, on which he made himself an expert in naval affairs. At that time he left the Congress to join its newly-established Navy Board (predecessor of the federal Department of the Navy), of which he soon became the chairman — in effect the equivalent of the British First Lord of the Admiralty. Hopkinson later served as a judge, first of the new Admiralty Court of Pennsylvania from 1779 to '89, and then (by appointment of Washington in his new capacity as the first President of the United States) of a new federal district court in the same state, where he served from 1789 to his death in 1791.

Given the technical correctness of his original design for an Achievement made while serving as an advisor to the Second Committee on the creation of a seal in 1780, Hopkinson must have had at least a basic understanding of the conventions of English armory. Nevertheless, he clearly had a more considerable knowledge of what I have called the

[19] On Hopkinson, see PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 33-35

'allegorical family of emblems' (which I shall discuss below),[20] and this knowledge informed his contributions to the monetary, vexillary, and armorial emblematics of the Confederation and its federal successor. His principal contributions of interest to us were to the design of the naval flag of 1777 that eventually became the **flag of the United States**, and would serve as the model for its Arms; and to the design of all three parts of the achievement of the United States finally adopted: (1) the *tinctures* and *dominant pattern* of the **Arms** (red and white 'stripes' comparable to those of the flag); (2) the *bundle of arrows* and the *olive-branch* held by the supporters in his first proposal and later set in the talons of the eagle **Supporter**; and most importantly (though least happily) (3) the *precise form* of the **Crest**, with its constellation of stars, clouds, and glory.

The heraldic advisor first to the Third Committee, and later to the Fourth, was **William Barton:** the youngest of the men to contribute to the design of the achievement, and the only one who seems to have been thoroughly versed in the conventions of English armory.[21] His status and rôle in the last stage of the process of creating an achievement for the United States were similar to those of Du Simitière in its first stage, but his background was closer to that of his more distinguished predecessor Francis Hopkinson. Barton was born in Philadelphia in 1754 to an immigrant Irish schoolmaster of armigerous ancestry, and the sister of the astronomer David Rittenhouse — a member of a prominent Philadelphia family, and a well-respected scholar who would succeed Franklin as President of the American Philosophical Society in 1791. Like Hopkinson, Barton had travelled to England on completing his secondary education — probably to study law, which he would make his profession on his return. In any case he remained there from 1775 to 1778 — the first four years of the Revolution — and in the last of those years was introduced to an English herald whose marriage to a British-American had given him a particular interest in colonial pedigrees: Sir Isaac Heard, then Norroy King of Arms, and from 1784 to 1822 Garter Principal King of Arms. Heard persuaded Barton to record with the College of Arms what he knew of his ancestry, and probably gave him some instruction in the art of armory (or at least provided him with a copy of one or both of the handbooks on the

[20] See below, pp. 131-32.

[21] On Barton, see esp. ibid., pp. 48-55.

subject he is known to have been familiar with[22]), as he clearly enjoyed a reputation for expertise in that field not long after his return to Philadelphia, and in a letter written to Washington in 1788 claimed to have made himself 'acquainted with this science' 'When very young'.[23] On his return home in 1779, Barton was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar, and thereafter practised as a lawyer in Philadelphia until his death in 1817. His first publication — a pamphlet on the value of paper credit — appeared in 1781, and probably led to the decision of the College of Philadelphia to award him an M.A. later in the same year.

On 4 May 1782, when he was still only twenty-eight, his expertise as a heraldist was called upon by the members of the Third Committee appointed to create emblems for the Great Seal, and he duly proposed two successive designs for an achievement. Both of these, however, were promptly rejected, as we have seen: probably because, though technically sound, they were too fussy to be effective. Nevertheless, original elements of both designs would find their way into the final version of the

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[22] These were John GUILLIM, *A Display of Heraldry*, and Marc Antoine PYRON DU MARTRE, alias Mark Anthony PORNY, *The Elements of Heraldry*. The former work, composed by a leading antiquary and pursuivant extraordinary of the reign of James I, had first been published in London in two volumes in 1610-11, and had been reprinted with greater or lesser numbers of corrections and additions in 1632, 1636, 1660, 1679, and 1724. It was the sixth edition, of 1724, that Barton knew, as he quoted from it in his explanation of his first design of an achievement for the United States. The author of *The Elements of Heraldry* was the French master at Eton College, who assumed an English persona and ended his life as one of the Poor Knights of (neighbouring) Windsor. Barton appears to have possessed the first edition of the work, published in 1765, and is known to have lent it to Thomson, as the latter acknowledged this in a letter of 24 June 1782. It was reissued in 1771, 1777, 1787, and 1795. On Barton's knowledge of both works, see PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 61-62, n. 38. Aside from those two works, only six others dealing even partly with armory had been published in English between 1701 and 1782: Alexander NISBET, *A System of Heraldry* (1722); J. OSBORNE, *The Art of Heraldry* (1730); G. BICKHAM, *The First Principles of Heraldry* (12 p., London, c. 1741); S. KENT, *The British Banner Displayed* (an abridgement of last edition of GUILLIM, London, 1755); H[ugh] CLARK & T. WORMULL, *A Short and Easy Introduction to Heraldry*, etc. (London, 1775, 1776, c. 1779, 1781); and J. EDMONDSON, *A Complete Body of Heraldry* (London, 1780). How many colonial gentlemen had read any of these books is not known, but the number was probably tiny.

[23] Ibid., p. 52

achievement. These included a *white eagle displayed*, which appeared in the first design only as a minor *charge* in the Arms, but in the second featured more prominently as the **Crest**, balanced on its tail. This eagle, like Hopkinson's human supporters, held a pair of symbolic objects in its claws: a sword holding a laurel-wreath in the dexter, and a version of the flag of the Republic (which in his first design had been held by the dexter supporter) in the sinister. The field-design of the Arms in both of his designs for the Third Committee mirrored that of the flag in being charged with six *barrulets*, but like that of the Arms finally adopted (and that of the flag included in both designs) the field itself was represented as white and the barrulets as red, rather than the reverse. Barton's methods of incorporating a blue field into the Arms (in the form of a canton and bordure respectively) were also an improvement over Hopkinson's, and anticipated his final solution to the problem — though both imitated the model of the flag too closely in including the thirteen 'stars' set on its canton. Unlike his predecessors and his one successor among the designers, Barton appended to his two blazons 'Remarks' explaining the symbolism he attributed to each of their elements and motifs, giving us a clear idea of his intentions in both choosing and disposing them as he did.

Despite their flaws, his designs seem to have been regarded as good enough to justify his retention by Charles Thomson as the heraldic advisor to his final committee of one, and in the end a modified version of Barton's eagle — in 'proper' tinctures and holding yet a *third* pair of symbolic objects in its claws, but otherwise identical — was adopted for its final rôle as a **Supporter**. In addition, Barton not only proposed what proved to be the final design of the **Arms** (a simplification and realignment of his own earlier designs, with red *pallets* and a blue *chief*), but composed the **blazon** for the whole achievement, and once again explained the intended symbolism in appended 'Remarks'.[24]

The Revolution concluded with the Treaty of Paris a little over a year later, and for the next few years Barton lived an essentially private life as a lawyer and scholar, publishing a number of learned works that led to the award of a second M.A. from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1785, and his election to the American Philosophical Society in 1787. At that time he decided to make something of his expertise as a

[24] These 'Remarks' — of particular interest here, because they explain the design actually adopted — appear in ibid., p. 80.

heraldist — apparently unique in the new Republic — first by composing a short treatise on the subject, and then by sending a copy of it to George Washington, along with the cover letter dated 28 August noted above. In the latter he asked for Washington's support both for its publication, and for an implicit scheme to establish something like the College of Arms for the new Republic, under his direction. Since the previous 25 May Washington had been presiding over the Convention summoned to create a new constitution for the United States (under which he would become the first holder of the new executive office of president), and was therefore in a position to influence its decisions. His response to Barton's petition, however, while sympathetic, indicated his belief that such an obviously aristocratic institution would be more or less obnoxious to most of those who would have to vote on the constitution, and discouraged Barton from publishing his treatise.

Sadly no copy of the treatise has survived, but Barton did not give up on his basic idea, for he later composed a prospectus for a private body, called 'The American Heraldic Institution', initially to have been owned and directed by himself. Its proposed objects were essentially similar to those of the College of Arms, including 'examining, adjusting, registering, and also for duly certifying, the Armorial Ensigns to which such families may be severally entitled'. Alas for the future of armorial knowledge and practice in the United States, nothing came of this project either, and nothing resembling it would be established anywhere in the country before 1864, when the New England Historic Genealogical Society (founded in 1845) would create its Committee on Heraldry, and assign it a similar mandate.[25] Its first chairman, William Whitmore, would not only edit its quarterly publication *The Heraldic Journal* from 1865 to '69, but would finally produce the first treatise on heraldry 'prepared for the American public' that actually appeared in print.[26] In the meantime there was no

[25] On this committee and its first chairman, see GALLES, 'Heralds for the Republic', p. 95. Galles also discussed the activities of this committee in his lecture, 'The American Century and the Renaissance of Heraldry in the USA', published in the present volume.

[26] *The Elements of Heraldry: An Explanation of the Principles of the Science and a Glossary of the Technical Terms Employed with an essay upon the Use of Coat-Armour in the United States* (Boston, 1866). The fact that its title was identical to that of Mark Anthony Porny's handbook of 1765 suggests that it was based more or less closely upon the latter work.

established institution in the United States, public or private, to which its citizens could turn for advice on heraldic questions. Furthermore, between Barton's death in 1817 (when the second set of states began to assume achievements) and 1865 (when the Second Civil War that broke out in 1861 came to an end) there seems to have been no private individual in the country who might have performed such a function either, even for those who knew of his existence and address.

The last of the four men who contributed to the design of the achievement of the United States, **Charles Thomson**, was at once the oldest and the most politically influential of the set, and had a career very different from that of his heraldic advisor.[27] Born in a village in Londonderry County, Ireland, in 1729, he had emigrated to the Penn dominions in British North America at the age of ten, first to what would become the State of Delaware, and later to New London in the neighbouring province of Pennsylvania. There Thomson received a sound enough classical education in to join Benjamin Franklin's intellectual 'Junto' that in 1743 became the American Philosophical Society, and in 1750 to be appointed the first Latin tutor of Franklin's Academy and College of Philadelphia. Breaking with Franklin in 1765 over the Stamp Act, Thomson had become in 1773 one of the leaders of the radical anti-tax movement that led to the Revolution, and following his marriage in 1774 to the daughter of the wealthy Quaker Richard Harrison, he had achieved a social standing sufficient to be appointed to the important office of Secretary of the Continental Congress. This made him not only the eventual keeper of the Great Seal on which the Achievement was to be set, but the effective prime minister of the Confederation. Thomson was to hold the Secretaryship until the office itself was effectively abolished by the new constitution of 1789 — under which, as we have seen, Washington became the first President of the United States. Thomson then retired from public life to his wife's estate, where he occupied himself down to his death in 1824 with translating the Greek Bible into English.

In contrast to his predecessors, Thomson seems to have known nothing about emblems, heraldic or otherwise, before he was appointed by the Congress as a committee-of-one for the design of the Great Seal on 13 June 1782. At that time, however, he seems to have borrowed from Barton

[27] On Thomson, see 'Charles Thomson (1729-1824)', *Penn Biographies*, online, and PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *& Shield*, pp. 71-74

a copy of the *Elements of Heraldry* — a basic textbook by the French tutor at Eton College in England, writing under his Anglicized name Mark Anthony Porny — and to have read enough of it to give him at least an elementary knowledge of armory (though its weakness is evident in the terms and structure of the blazon he proposed, and in his impossible design for the Arms).[28]

His contributions to the design of the achievement of the United States were nevertheless on a level comparable to those he had made in the other areas of his activities. Apparently without Barton's advice, Thomson soon proposed what would be the final form of the outer Achievement, including the new single **Supporter** — the eagle displayed that had served as Barton's second Crest, though in natural tinctures and with wings inverted, and holding in its claws the olive branch and arrows borne by the very different supporters in Hopkinson's first design. This Thomson combined with the **Crest** proposed by Hopkinson on the basis of that proposed by Du Simitière, unmodified in any way. Finally he proposed a coat of **Arms** whose field of chevronnels was a less successful variation on the bendlets proposed by Hopkinson and the barrulets proposed by Barton, and would be replaced in the final design by Barton's pallets. Thus, the final form of the Achievement adopted on 20 June 1782 differed from the one Thomson proposed without Barton's advice only in the attitude of the wings of the eagle (which Barton restored to 'displayed') and the design of the Arms at its centre.

3. The Expertise and Intentions of the Four Pro-heralds

It is important to observe at this point that, in approaching the problem of how to design the elements of an Achievement suitable for representing the identity and authority of the emergent Republic, all four of our learned men clearly chose the elements of their designs primarily on the basis of their possible *symbolic* significance, rather than on that of their *emblematic* or *aesthetic* effectiveness. Even when they proposed standard armorial figures like eagles, cocks, bendlets, barrulets, pallets, and chiefs, or standard armorial tinctures like gules and azure, they could (and Barton explicitly did) justify their choice on the basis of the symbolic value arbitrarily assigned to them in the treatises of the Bartolan tradition (in the

[28] On this work, see above, n. 17.

case of beasts based on the still older traditions of the bestiary),[29] supplemented when possible with a more original interpretation of the significance of their form, arrangement, and relationship to one another,[30] or the allusion they made to some existing emblem (like the flag of the nascent Republic): the only form of symbolism traditionally characteristic of armorial designs.[31] When choosing other sorts of figure they were primarily influenced by the *symbolic* traditions derived either directly or indirectly from those of Classical Rome: directly in the case of the *personifying* figures proposed as supporters,[32] and for use on the wholly non-heraldic reverse designs (none of which concern us here), and indirectly through the symbolic signs of what I have called the 'allegorical family'.[33] Both species of that family — the simple *impresa* and its scenic variant the *emblema* — were inspired by the propagandistic designs of Roman coins and medals', and like the latter represented some general or particular idea through the combination of a figure or set of figures, and an explanatory *text*, comparable in form to a para-armorial or armorial *motto*, and in the case of the emblema, commonly set in a circular frame comparable to the inscription-circle of a seal.

The importance in the mental world of the revolutionaries of such allegorical signs — widely known to contemporaries from the 'emblem-books' that were published in great numbers from the early sixteenth to the

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[29] Barton was particularly given to this sort of symbolism, defending his choice of the chief and the pale for the figures of the arms on the grounds that they were 'the two most honorable ordinaries', and of their tinctures by explaining that 'White signifies Purity and Innocence; Red, Hardiness & Valour,… Blue signifies Vigilance, Perseverance, & Justice'. (PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 80)

[30] Barton (loc. cit.) explained that the 'pales' of the arms 'represent the several States; all joined in one solid, compact Entire, supporting a Chief, which unites the whole and represents Congress'.

[31] Barton (loc. cit.) declared that 'The Colours or Tinctures of the Pales are those used in the Flag of the United States', though he failed to mention that of the chief, whose tincture was equally found in the flag, or the form of the pallets, which clearly mirrored those of the barrulets of the flag.

[32] The First Committee, for example, proposed as supporters the Classical personifications of Liberty in armour and of Justice bearing a sword and a balance, while Hopkinson initially proposed a personification of War holding a sword and one of Peace holding an olive branch.

[33] On the signs of this family, see my article 'The Origins of a *Damnosa Haereditas*', pp. 131-133, and the works cited therein.

early nineteenth century — can be seen in the universal use of the signs of this family, in the place previously occupied by the British royal achievement, on the paper currency issued by the Congress from 1775 to 1783.[34] Most of these signs were taken from one or another of three emblem-books that circulated in the colonies (two of which at least were in the personal library of Benjamin Franklin),[35] but the signs used on the notes for 35, 40, 45, 50 , 60, 70, and 80 dollars — including an Eye of Providence casting rays of light on a circle of thirteen stars (reproduced in **Figure 30a** below) — were created for the purpose by Francis Hopkinson, probably on the basis of a related symbolic tradition associated with the pseudo-science of alchemy, and familiar to him and his more learned contemporaries through books on that subject.[36] The centrality of symbolism of the former sort to the design of the Confederal Achievement can also be seen in Thomson's lengthy explanation of the symbolism of its various parts set immediately after Barton's blazon in the proposal.

Like that of the flag designed by Hopkinson in 1777 (represented in **Figure 13**), all of the designs for the Arms (including the first with its bordure of thirteen escutcheons and the final one with its six pallets forming a *visual* if *unarmorial* pattern of thirteen 'stripes') were intended to represent before all else the awkward notion of thirteenness-in-unity: awkward because thirteen was too large a number to be clearly or instantly recognizable in an armorial design, and because figures in that number were not only too *numerous* to count but too *small* (in the case of mullets) to distinguish at any distance unless set directly on the field of a shield or flag. Despite this, the same notion was also central to the design of the *field* of most of the later forms of the **Crest** (including the final one), with their thirteen mullets called 'stars' arranged in some sort of 'constellation'. It was further represented by the first and final **motto** (E PLURIBUS UNUM), and by the number of **arrows** held in the sinister claw of the final single Supporter — eventually mirrored in practice in the number of **leaves** on

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[34] On paper currency, I have consulted Eric P. NEWMAN, *The Early Paper Money of America: An illustrated, historical, and descriptive compilation of data relating to American paper currency from its concept in 1686 to 1800* (5th edn., Iola, Wisconsin, 2008)

[35] Joachim CAMERARIUS, *Symbolorum ac Emblematum Ethico-Politicorum* (Mainz, 1702); Diego SAAVEDRA, *Idea Principis Christiano-Politici Symbolis* (1660) (Ibid., p. 79)

[36] On this tradition, see the discussion below in the introduction to the section on the Crest.

the branch held in its dexter claw. As we shall see, other types of symbolism lay behind the choice of the remaining elements of the design, including the tinctures of the Arms and Crest, and some of these had a similarly negative effect on its emblematic and armorial qualities.

Whatever the shortcomings of their designs from an armorial perspective, however, and of the blazons used to describe them (all defective in various ways), the armorial Achievements proposed by all four of the men who contributed to the final design did conform in their essentials to the conventions of armory. All of them included at their centre a shield of *Arms* (clearly *designated* as such by Barton and Thomson), surmounted by an emblem that was both *designated* a 'crest' and in all cases but the first and the final one, *marked* as such, at least by the presence of a crest-base in the form of a torse or cap, and in Hopkinson's first and Barton's two independent proposals, by its attachment to a helmet as well. Similarly, Du Simitière's two proposals, Hopkinson's two proposals, and Barton's two independent proposals, all included a pair of *Supporters*, correctly designated, and not only set in the usual flanking positions, but apparently standing on a *compartment* of some sort, and accompanied in the usual way by a *motto* set beneath them, either on a *scroll* or (in Barton's designs) on the arms of a rococo bracket.

Most of these designs thus indicate a basic knowledge of the *common* conventions of armorial composition, and all but the first and the last two, of the *distinctive* conventions of English armory. Finally, all four men expressed at least the final form of all of their proposals in the technical language of *blazon*, however imperfectly employed. It may thus be asserted with confidence that all four men had at least a basic understanding of the *general* conventions of armory common to the countries of western Europe, and intended to create an emblem for the United States that took the form of an armorial achievement conforming strictly with those *general* conventions, if not always with those of England.

Alas, as David Appleton has shown, even Barton's blazon of the Arms he *designed* was seriously defective, and that of the Crest he merely *retained* from Thomson's proposal (no doubt against his better judgement) was even more so. It was therefore inevitable that *those* elements of the Achievement, at least, would be misinterpreted even by the tiny and dwindling handful of contemporaries who were relatively familiar with heraldic conventions, and equally inevitable that the other elements would soon be subjected to similar misrepresentations by men who knew little or

nothing of those conventions, but were nonetheless charged with representing it in official contexts of various kinds.

Indeed, unlike those of the *state* achievements adopted in the previous decade — which were all treated as *seal*-designs with a fixed official emblazonment — the principal elements of the Achievement of the United States were soon subjected to a great variety of *de facto* modifications in their depiction that violated not only the terms of the blazon (clearly established by law in 1782, and never altered), but most of the conventions of armorial design as well. Thus, within a few years of the legal independence of the United States in 1783, a growing number of what are best termed 'False Achievements', 'False Arms', 'False Supporters', and False Crests' were introduced in a growing variety of contexts, including official flags, coins, and seals, and semi-official and unofficial flags, hangings, carvings, and other patriotic paraphernalia.

4. A Critique of the Emblazonments of the Achievement Adopted, Official and Unofficial, 1782 – c. 1920

In the remainder of my article I propose to examine the range of both correct and incorrect representations of the emblems of each type produced in the first century or so after the adoption of the Achievement in 1782, concentrating on emblazonments prepared for official use on the seals,[37] coins,[38] and flags[39] used to represent the authority either of the government

[37] For the history of the seals in question, I have relied principally on PATTERSON and DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield*, which deals with the history of all of the seals on which the achievement of 1782 was used.

[38] For the use of the achievement and its elements on coins, I have analyzed the images in R. S. Yeoman, *The Official Red Book of United States Coins*, ed. Kenneth BRESSETT and Q. David BOWERS (64th edn., Atlanta, Ga. 2010), which presents clear images of all of the coins issued in what would become the United States from 1616 to 2010.

[39] For the flags displayed during the revolutionary period and its immediate aftermath, I have relied principally on RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*. For those of the same and later periods, I have also consulted Whitney SMITH, *The Flag Book of the United States: The Story of the Stars and Stripes and the Flags of the Fifty States*, (New York, 1970), and *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World* (Maidenhead, U.K., 1975); and Margaret SEDEEN, *Star Spangled Banner: Our Nation and its Flag* (Washington, 1993). The last includes images of early variants of the design on pp. 47, 50, and 61.

of the United States as a whole or of one of its principal divisions or agencies, but mentioning a few of unofficial origin that illustrate particular forms of deviation.[40] In the process I shall comment on the aspects of armorial convention violated by the various incorrect or *false* versions of each type, and attempt to explain them to the extent that is possible without an extensive examination of the surviving evidence for their creation. Because most of the variants of all four types or 'species' of emblem (Achievement, Arms, Supporter, and Crest[41]) employed by the successive forms of the government of the United States emerged more or less simultaneously in the first decade or so after their adoption, and most of the remainder emerged in a similarly random order over the next couple of decades, I shall organize my examination of them primarily on the basis of the *species of emblem* and the *type of deviation* rather than in strict chronological order. I shall begin my discussion of the emblems of each of the four species with an analysis of its origin and official blazon, and the ways in which it might be interpreted that would accord *both* with the blazon *and* with the relevant conventions of armory.

Table 1 below sets out the terms the four designers used to designate those species and the (usually omitted) helmet in their successive blazons, to give a sense of the state of their general understanding of the nature of an achievement. Erroneous terms and technically illicit omissions are indicated in red letters, and the omissions in italics.

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[40] Most of these popular, unofficial examples I have taken from Keith E. MELDER and Roger N. PARKS, *The Village and the Nation* (Old Sturbridge Village, Mass., 1976). Popular representations of the achievement or its detached elements are found on pp. 1, 36, 58, 61, 62, 69, and 77.

[41] I have defined the term 'species' applied to armorial and analogous signs to mean '*A type of sign at least initially peculiar to a particular historical culture, within which it has a distinctive and generally-recognized range of forms, semeiotic functions, and uses (all governed by a more or less extensive set of generally-recognized conventions), and one or more distinctive designations in each of the languages spoken by members of that culture*.' Thus, a *crest* may be defined as '*A species of armorial emblem designed to be displayed primarily at the apex of a helmet, and taking the form of a notionally three-dimensional object whose nature, size, and shape make it possible to be attached in that position, and borne by its wearer in a joust or parade*'.

4.1. THE EMBLAZONMENTS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT AS A WHOLE

It is significant that all four designers employed the term '**atchievement**' in all of their blazons, and that it was retained in the revised versions of all of them submitted to the Congress. Since it was first introduced and defined as a meta-blazonic term by Gerard Legh in his *Accidens of Armory* in 1562, this word (now spelled 'achievement') has remained the only correct term for the compound armorial emblem in which a *coat of arms* (normally but not necessarily displayed on a shield) is augmented with one or more additional armorial *emblems* of different species (including *crests*, *supporters*, *badges*, and *mottoes*), and (or) with armorial *insignia* (including helmets, crowns, collars, staves, mantles, and the like), arranged in a manner governed by conventions that are partly common to all armorial codes and partly peculiar to a national or regnal code.[42] Nevertheless, 'achievement' has always been a learned term, virtually unknown among non-heraldists, and it is not surprising that only Barton (who would have learned it from Guillim's *Display of Heraldry*) and Thomson (who presumably learned it from Barton) employed it either *consistently*, or in its full form '*armorial* atchievement'. Du Simitière and Hopkinson had earlier used it only at the end of their blazons proper,[43] whose headings had designated the emblem

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[42] On general sense of this term, which has no real equivalent in the meta-blazonic terminologies of the other European languages, see Arthur Charles FOX-DAVIES, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (Edinburgh and Toronto, 1909, rev. Charles FRANKLYN 1949), p. 69. The definition I give here is my own, which differs from those usually given in textbooks on armory in permitting the important distinction that must be drawn between 'full' or 'great achievements', which include all or most of the different types of armorial sign to which the armiger is entitled, and what I call 'middle' and 'lesser achievements' of various types, which include only a selection of the signs in question. In reality (as my discussion on pp. 00-00 below suggests), such 'abridged' forms have always been used at least as commonly as the 'unabridged' varieties, but the standard terminology has rarely distinguished clearly among them. In the absence of such terms, heraldists have usually employed the terms 'arms' and 'coat of arms', similarly modified, to the abridged achievements, but that entails the confusion of the distinct species of emblem set on the shield with the compound emblem itself, and makes meaningful discussions of both impossible.

[43] The passage of Du Simitière's reads: 'Legend round the whole atchievement. Seal of the ~~thirteen~~ united ~~and independent~~ states of America. MDCCLXXVI' (PATTERSON and DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield*, p. 20)

to be described respectively as the 'Coat of Arms' and the 'Arms' of the United States. Those terms properly designated only the emblem set on the shield, but they would continue thereafter to be the normal terms used of the achievement as a whole in both official and unofficial contexts. 'Achievement' itself (with or without the qualifier 'armorial') seems to have remained extremely rare.

Term > Blazoner V	**ARMORIAL ACHIEVEMENT**	**ARMS**	**CREST**	**HELMET**	**SUPPORTER(S)**
Du Simitière 1	a. The Coat of Arms b. *the whole atchievement*	The Shield	Crest	*none*	Supporters
Du Simitière 2	same	same	same	*none*	same
Hopkinson 1	a. The Arms *b. Atchievement*	The Shield	The Crest	***not named***	Supporters
Hopkinson 2	a. The Arms *b. Atchievement*	The Shield	same	*none*	same
Barton 1	Armorial atchievement	Arms	Crest	Helmet	Supporters
Barton 2	same	same	same	same	same
Thomson	Armorial atchievement	Arms	***not named***	*none*	***not named***
Barton 3	Armorial atchievement	Arms	Crest	*none*	***not named***

Table 1. The Metablazonic Terms used by the Four Pro-Heralds

Of the four designers, all but Thomson and (under his influence) Barton in his final blazon set out the description of the Achievement in a manner that broadly followed the organization of the blazon of a comparable achievement in a formal grant of arms issued by one of the English kings of arms, naming and describing each of the four species of element in the normal order: Arms, Crest, Supporters, and Motto. Barton began the final blazon in the same way by describing what he (and following him, Thomson) correctly called the '**Arms**', and introduced the blazon with that word alone. That term, too, would rarely be used correctly by contemporary and subsequent writers on the subject, who tended (like Du Simitière and Hopkinson) to call the arms a '**shield**': a term properly restricted to the object over whose surface the arms were most commonly — but by no means exclusively — displayed. Barton (correcting Thomson) also distinguished the **Crest** by that name, but like Thomson set his blazon of it *after* that of the single **Supporter**, and (though he had used that term in

the blazons of both of his own designs), not only failed (like Thomson) to identify his modified version of Thomson's eagle as such, but left it under the heading of 'Arms'. Thus the structure of Barton's blazon itself was seriously defective, and although his description of the supporter was reorganized in the version actually submitted to the Congress, his failure to distinguish the Supporter from the Arms was not corrected. As I shall demonstrate below, the wording of Barton's blazon of each of its three elements was also less than ideal, and while (aside from its lack of a proper designation) that of the Supporter was itself correct, those of the Arms and the Crest were both defective in several ways. Much of the later misrepresentation of his design may therefore be attributed to the weakness of Barton's description.

As I observed above, Barton followed this description with a set of 'Remarks' explaining the symbolic significance of every aspect of its design, in which he assigned (whether explicitly or implicitly) at least one form of symbolism to every one of its elements. In this context he revealed a serious weaknesses in his grasp of the nature of the Supporter, and of its relationship to the Crest in the Achievement, when he declared that — because the head of the eagle rose above the shield set on its breast — its use 'supplies[44] the place of *supporters* and *crest'*. This statement makes little sense, both because Barton had in fact supplied a figure explicitly identified as the 'Crest' in his blazon, and even more importantly because the fact that the head was part of the *Supporter* (whose character as such Barton, like Thomson before him, seems to have failed to recognize) meant that it could not also serve as the *Crest*: an entirely distinct and physically separate species of emblem. Such categorical confusion in the mind of the most expert armorist available bode ill for the future use and representation of the Achievement thus constituted and blazoned.

It is also significant that, following Thomson's bad example — and those of both Du Simitière and Hopkinson before him — Barton had omitted not only the **helmet** included in his own two earlier designs below the figure he had designated the Crest (which would have marked both its nature as such, and the sovereign status of the armiger), but also any of the several forms of **crest-base** previously proposed, which would have served to mark the nature of a *detached* crest as such. Thus, not only his *description*

[44] See below, n. 80

of the Achievement, but his *representation* of its elements, deviated significantly from the universal conventions of armory.

Furthermore, like the other members of the successive committees — and indeed like most other North Americans at the time — Barton seems to have erred in considering the Achievement he designed for use on the Great Seal as a primarily sigillary sign, to be used on the Great Seal of the United States. He therefore gave no directions for the use either of the Achievement as a whole, or of any of its elements individually, in contexts other than that seal. He similarly failed to anticipate the inevitable need to abridge of the Achievement he had designed through the omission of progressive sets of its elements in contexts whose size made such abridged forms — to which I have given the names 'Middle' and 'Lesser Achievement' — more convenient than the use of the full or 'Great Achievement' he described for use on the seal.

a. Great Achievement **b. Middle Achievement** **c. Lesser Achievement**

Fig. 3. The Full and Abridged Achievements of the British Monarch in North America represented on Local Money and the Reverse of a Provincial Seal

As **Figure 3**[45] indicates, abridged achievements of the middle level had long been employed by colonial governments to represent the kings and queens whose supreme authority all British Americans had recognized until 4 July 1776. Even more than the Great Royal Achievement (represented on a banknote in **3a**), the Middle Achievement would have been familiar throughout the colonies from the reverse-designs of the Great Seals Deputed of all royal provinces (**3b.i**), and from coins, paper money

[45] Fig.2a, b.ii, c.: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, pp. 48, 49, 188; 2b.i: Conrad SWAN, *Canada: Symbols of Sovereignty* (Toronto 1977), p 106. The last is the standard reverse of the Great Seal Depute sent by the British Government to the governors of British American provinces (here, Quebec), 1714-1800.

(**3b.ii**), and the large carved representations set on the exterior walls of many government buildings, and on the interior walls of all courthouses and Anglican churches. The establishment of the **middle** form of the achievement involved the replacement of the helmet-complex either with the *crown* alone or (more rarely) with the *crest* whose base was the crown. The establishment of their **lesser** form involved the omission of the supporter-complex as well, including the *compartment* with its *plant-badges* and *motto-scroll*, leaving only the crowned escutcheon of the arms, surrounded by the garter of the principal royal order. As can be seen in **Figure 3c**, from at least 1702 to 1740 the currency notes of Massachusetts had borne a version of the lesser royal achievement of Great Britain that was even further abridged, through the omission from the royal arms of all but the quartering for England: a technically illicit reduction after the Union of England and Scotland in 1707, represented in the royal arms from that year to 1800 by the *impalement* of the arms of the two kingdoms in the first quarter.

Figure 4.
A Correct Emblazonment of the Great Armorial Achievement of the United States
(by the author).

This emblazonment, in a late gothic style, shows the helmet and mantling (normally omitted from comparable renderings), in the form appropriate to a sovereign republic.

It also shows a correct rendering of the crest, conforming both to the blazon and the requirements of the armorial code.

In any case, given this tradition it was all but inevitable that similar abridgements, licit and illicit, would be made to the new Achievement of the Republic — as in fact they were in official contexts, in technically *incorrect* ways within months of its adoption in 1782, and in technically *correct* ways by 1791. It is not at all clear, however, that contemporaries

understood the distinction between the *permissible* omission of technically discrete elements — which in this case meant either the whole *Crest* or the whole *Supporter* (including its blazoned attributes), or both Crest *and* Supporter — and on the other hand the *impermissible* omission in a formal representation of any version of the Achievement either of a *helmet* under the Crest, or of some or all of the *attributes* of the Supporter — which included the motto-scroll held in its beak and the motto set thereon, and the branch and bunch of arrows held in its claws.

i. First Indian Peace Medal (1789)

ii. Supreme Court Seal (1790)

iii. Current Official Emblazonment (1885)

a. Great Achievement

b. Middle Achievement (1791)

c. Lesser Achievement (1867)

Fig. 5. Some of the Better *Incorrect* Official Emblazonments of the Three Levels of the Achievement of the United States

Thanks to Barton's own failure to include one either in his blazon or in his depiction of it, the **helmet** — along with its **mantling** and **crest-base** (whose correct forms are represented in **Figures 4** and **34**, and discussed below in the section on the Crest) — was invariably omitted from emblazonments of the Achievement, official no less than unofficial, so that

all of them were armorially defective. Making allowances for that (and also for the general failure to represent the crest in a manner that conformed both with the blazon and the conventions of armory), only *two* distinct forms of an otherwise correct or *true* Achievement — in which all of the relevant elements were not only *present* but both *represented* and *arranged* in a technically acceptable way — came into use in official contexts before 1860, both within a few years of its introduction: a **Great Achievement** in which everything was present, and a **Middle Achievement** in which the Crest was omitted. As we shall see, most of the representations of each of these suffered from one or more additional omissions or deviations from the blazon, and I have yet to find a *wholly* correct emblazonment of the middle Achievement, but relatively correct forms of both are given in **Figure 5a** and **b**.[46]

No **crown** existed to replace the Crest in the middle Achievement — itself an unfortunate omission, no doubt arising from a combination of anti-monarchism and ignorance of the usage of established republican states (especially the United Netherlands[47]) — but the head of the eagle did take its *visual* place in the overall design. In the absence of both crown and garter (or the equivalent collar of a national order, lacking even at the present day[48]), no **Lesser Achievement** was technically possible until a second motto — IN GOD WE TRUST — was adopted during the Civil War of

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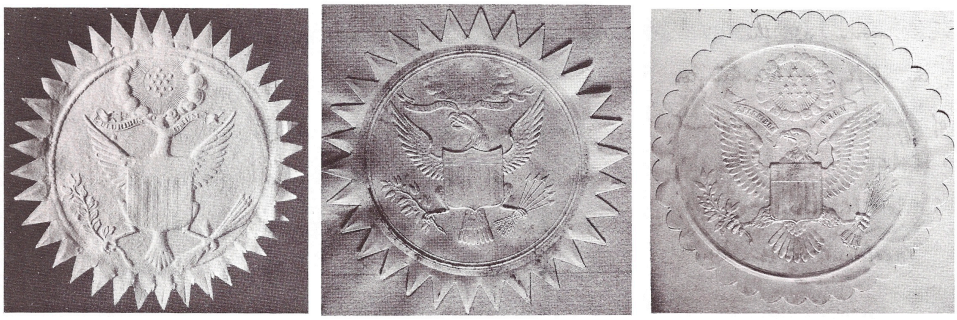
[46] The Great Achievement at 5a.ii is a recent sharper rendering of the polychromatic version of the design on the Great Seal of 1885, made by Andrew Graham around 1890. Graham thought of it as a seal-design, and converted it into a sort of sigilloid emblem by setting it on a circular background defined by a rim like that of the Great Seal. That design, with and without the rim, soon became the standard rendering of the U. S. Achievement, used on seals, flags, coins, passports, and the like, and since 1935 on the reverse of the dollar bill. See PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 400-407.

[47] The United Netherlands had adopted the use of an arched crown lacking the orb that surmounted the crowns of monarchical states.

[48] The United States has long been the only major country in world without a national order of knighthood or merit resembling either the single-class Order of the Garter or the multi-class Order of the British Empire, or the model of the latter, the French *Légion d'honneur*. The nearest things to such an order currently existing are the **Legion of Merit** founded by Franklin Roosevelt in 1942, and the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** created by John Kennedy in 1963 — neither of which includes among its insignia a collar or riband that could be displayed around the shield of arms in the National Achievement.

the 1860s. Thereafter that motto was occasionally displayed on a scroll above the simple shield of Arms, sometimes augmented (as in **Figure 5.c**) with branches and arrows extracted from the claws of the Supporter. The new motto itself — though now almost invariably set (along with the original motto E PLURIBUS UNUM) on the field of coins — was never associated with the Great or Middle Achievements, and remained semi-armorial.

Before 1861, the principal *loci* for the **Great Achievement** were the Great Seal of the Republic for which it was designed, the **seals** of two of the principal divisions of its government (the Supreme Court and the Department of State) from 1790, and the seal of the office of the President from 1850. It was also set on certain **flags** used by the (initially small) Confederal and Federal Armies, and later by the more important offices of the federal government; on several types of **coin** minted from 1786 to 1807 (including gold coins called 'eagles' from 1795 to 1807); and on a series of large **medals** issued between 1789 and 1795. In fact, so far as I have discovered, it was rarely if ever used (at least as an independent emblem) in any other type of context, and was therefore an almost exclusively *official* form of the Achievement.

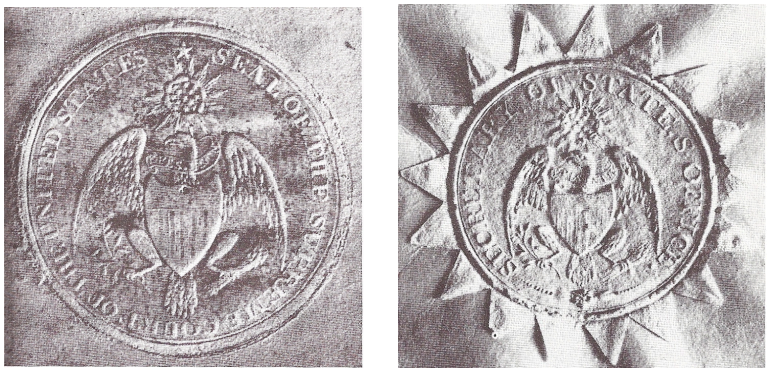


a. Great Seal of 1782 b. Great Seal of 1841 (1877) c. Great Seal of 1885 (1904)

Fig. 6. Imprints of the Great Seals of the 3 Designs used to Date (on 5 Dies)

The first matrix of the **Great Seal** was cut soon after the Achievement was formally adopted in 1782, and was replaced due to wear in 1841, 1877, 1885, and 1904. The *representation* of the Achievement on the seal, however, was changed only in 1841 and 1885, so there have been only

three truly distinct versions, all represented in **Figure 6**.[49] Artistically, the second and third were both significant improvements on their predecessors, but technically the second was the weakest, as it actually set the wrong number of arrows in the eagle's claw.



Fig, 7. Seals of the Supreme Court (1790) and the State Department (1790-1834)

Fig. 8. a. Washington's Pew Panel of 1785, b. Trenchard's Engraving of 1786, c. the Diplomatic Medal of 1792

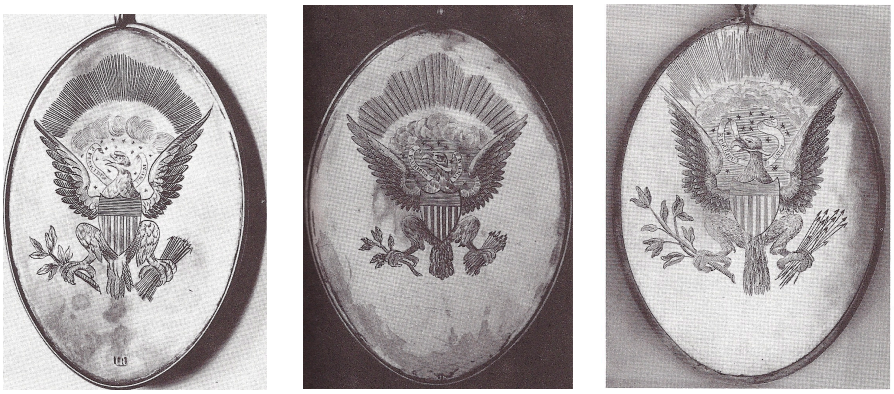
As **Figure 7** shows,[50] the seals of the Supreme Court and State Department were cut to the same, distinctive design in 1790, and although

[49] Fig. 4, PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, 4a: p. 125 (Fig. 21); 4b: pp. 203 (Fig. 34) and 227 (Fig. 38); 4c: pp. 247 (Fig. 45) and 307 (Fig. 49). The die for each seal, with its design laterally reversed, is reproduced on the facing pages, and a discussion of their creation precedes and follows each.

[50] Fig. 5a, b: ibid., p. 469, Figs. 87, 88. A discussion of the history of the latter and its successors is found on pp. 470-86. It was replaced by a seal of a much inferior

that also violated the blazon in inverting the eagle's wings, it in all other respects was the best produced to the present day, for reasons I shall explain below. The design of those seals may have been partly inspired by that made in 1785 for display in St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel in New York, and placed in 1789 in Washington's pew shortly before his inauguration as President (**Figure 8a**),[51] as their Crests are of an essentially similar form, albeit more restrained in size.

The same is true of the Achievement on the **Indian peace medal** of 1789 (**Figure 5ai**).[52] The renderings on the **Indian peace medals** issued between 1792 and 1795 (**Figure 9a-c**) seem in their turn to have been based on the representation of both theoretical faces of the Great Seal made in 1786 by **James Trenchard** of Philadelphia (probably under the instruction of William Barton, **Figure 8b**),[53] as they all included its novel treatment of the Crest, later characteristic of presidential seals and flags.



a. Medal of 1792 **b. Medal of 1793** **c. Medal of 1795**

Fig. 9. The Achievement on the Later Indian Peace Medals

All of these included plausible representations of all of the blazoned elements of the Great Achievement in their conventional arrangement, but

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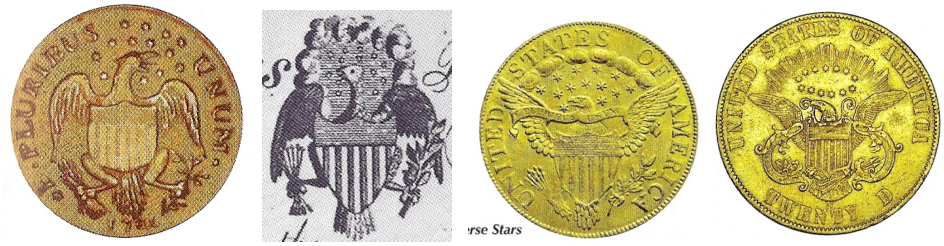
design in 1834, used to 1865, (p. 479, Fig. 89[a]) and another of even worse design in 1880, used to 1911 (p. 485, Fig. 90[a]). I represent it in Fig. 28e.

[51] Fig. 6a, c: ibid., 6a: p. 390 (Fig. 63), 6b: p. 393 (Fig. 65); 6c: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 188. On the painting in Washington's pew, see also PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, pp. 386-388.

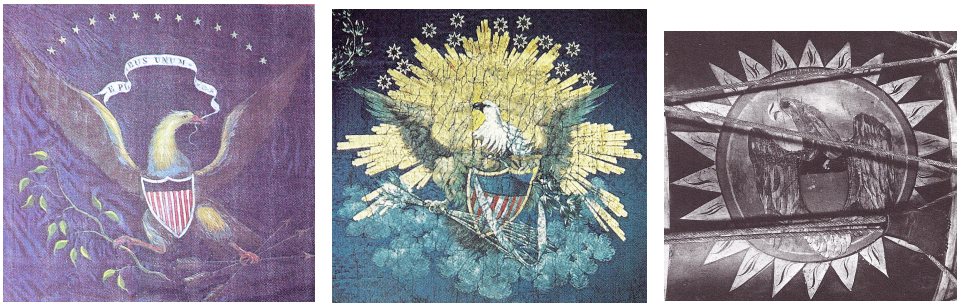
[52] Fig. 7: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 395: 7a, b: Fig. 68; 7c, d: Fig. 69

[53] On Trenchard's engraving, see ibid., pp. 388-89. No die of the Reverse design (of which I reproduce Trenchard's engraving in Fig. 31g below), was never actually made, and it remained theoretical.

as **Figure 10** illustrates, seriously deviant versions appeared within a decade of its adoption in other types of official context, involving renderings of two or more of its elements that violated either the blazon or the conventions of armory, or both. [54]



a. Coin of 1786 b. US Banknote 1791 c. Gold Eagle 1797 d. Double Eagle 1849



e. Army Flag 1782-9 f. Flag of 1st R., U.S. Army 1790s g. Side of drum c. 1814

Fig. 10. False Emblazonments of the Great Achievement in which *More than One* of its Elements violates the Blazon

On coins and banknotes, for example, the Crest of the great Achievement was commonly abridged from 1791 onward by the illicit omission of one or more of its elements (**10a-g**), and from 1792 was commonly reduced to its 'stars' in various arrangements (**10a**, **e**), while the Arms were similarly abridged through the removal of the chief (**Figure 10a**) or the reduction of the number of pallets on the field (**10b**), or alternatively their multiplication (**10e**). In the same period and environments the Supporter was often misrepresented even in what may be called 'formal' emblazonments (in contrast to the 'informal' ones defined below) through such errors as the inversion of its wings (**10a**, **b**, **g**),

[54] Fig. 8a, c, d: YEOMAN and BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, pp. 35, 359, 266; 8b: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 367; 8e, f: RICHARDSON, *Standards and Colors*, pp. 189, 241; 8g: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, p. 69

the reversal of the objects held in its claws (**8a-c**, **f**), and the omission of the motto scroll from its beak (**10a, b**, **d**, **f**, **g**).

The renderings on the military flags of 1782-89 and after 1789 (the latter of the First Regiment of the new United States Army) represented in roughly contemporary paintings of the 1790s, and the military drum of about 1814 (represented in **Figure 10e-g**) deviate even more significantly both from the blazon and from the conventions of armory in a number of other ways, and give a good sense of the freedom with which the blazon soon came to be treated, even in official contexts, by those who were unfamiliar with the conventions of armory.

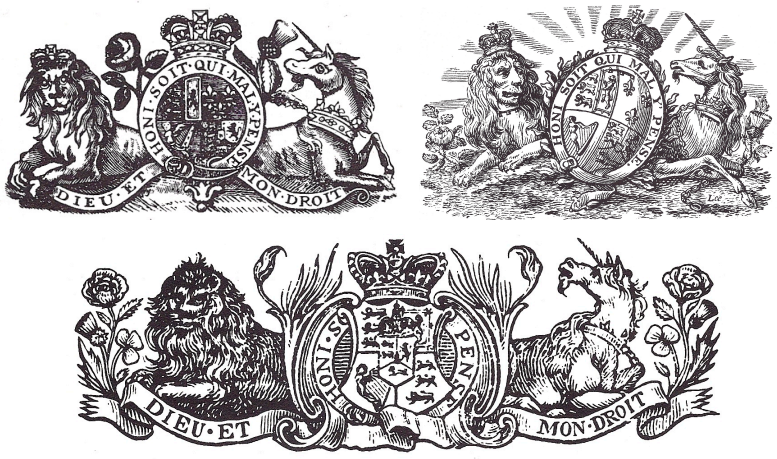


Fig. 11. Informal Royal Achievements 1783, 1794, 1801

It is nevertheless significant that what may be termed '**informal Achievements**' of a type comparable to those on the Army flags had begun to appear in Great Britain and what remained of its Empire in the preceding decade, and may therefore have served as models for those created for the United States. As **Figure 11** shows, from 1786 the royal emblem represented on the masthead of the most important British newspaper, *The Daily Universal Register* of London (called *The Times* from 1788) took the form of an *informal middle achievement* in which the supporters were represented in a **couchant** rather than the normal rampant (or 'rampant- statant'[55]) attitude, and in what might be termed an

[55] The imposition of the 'rampant' attitude on beasts used as supporters was both late and inappropriate, as they were required to stand on some sort of platform, and naturally did so on both of their hind feet. In the absence of a blazonic term for

'**emergent**' position: emerging from behind the shield of Arms, rather than holding it in their paws and hooves.[56] While the lion in such representations normally remained *guardant*, or looking outward at the viewer, the unicorn was almost represented *reguardant*, so as to face towards the Arms rather than away from it. Down to 1800 the supporters (originally the *beast-badges* England and Scotland) were commonly set between relatively large representations of corresponding pair of royal *plant-badges* — the *rose* of England and the *thistle* of Scotland — and themselves flanked a pair of *palm-fronds*, symbolic of victory, that since at least 1784 had been set to either side of the garter, in defiance of the blazon (as can be seen in **Figure 11c**).[57] In a version of 1794 (**11b**) the palms were replaced by a wreath of laurels, of identical significance:[58] curiously mirroring the alternative forms of frond set in the dexter claw of the U. S. eagle in the blazon of 1782. Beginning with the same representation of 1794, the shield and its surrounding garter and surmounting crown were often represented tilting precariously to the sinister: an image strongly suggestive of political instability.[59]

The representation of the Achievement of the United States after 1790 would suffer from many similar irregularities, most of them affecting the position and attitude of the eagle Supporter (as can be seen in **Figures 10e-g** and **10c-f**). There is reason to think, however, that the treatment of the eagle as such was modelled more directly on the very similar treatment of the eagles of Prussia and Russia employed in what I have called the 'extractive mode' (removed from the context of the arms of which they were the principal charge) in the context of military flags (represented in Figure 21b,c).

As **Figure 12**[60] suggests, the earliest representations I have found of what I have called the **Middle Achievement** of the United States appeared

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the attitude combining an upright stance with the planting of both hind feet on the compartment, I have adopted the term 'rampant-statant'.

[56] Charles HASLER, *The Royal Arms* (London, 1980), Figs. 373-76, p. 231

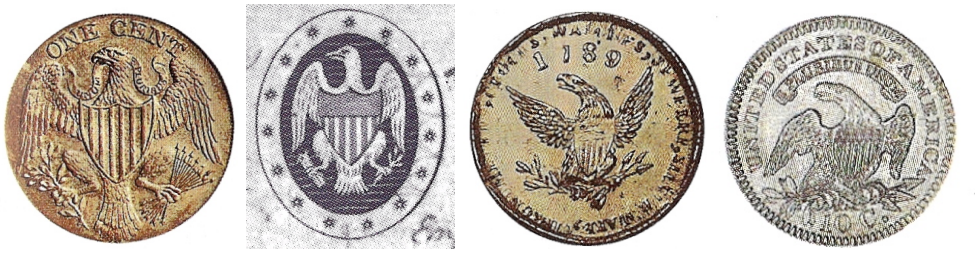
[57] Ibid., Fig. 639, p. 230

[58] Ibid., Fig. 387, p. 233

[59] Ibid., plus Figs. 414-416, p. 238

[60] Fig. 10a,c, d: YEOMAN and BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, pp. 57, 70, 161; 10b, e: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, pp. 367, 368; 10f: William G. ALLMAN and Melissa C. NAULIN, *Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House*, (Washington, D.C., 2011);10g: WOODWARD, *Treatise on Heraldry*, Pl. LIV, f. p. 666.

on coins minted from 1791 onwards, and since 1807 the middle Achievement has been the only type used on coins other than gold 'eagles', which always bore the Great Achievement. Perhaps because they already deviated from the model of the Achievement on the Great Seal in omitting every element of the Crest, all of the Middle Achievements I have found also deviated from the blazon in other ways, and often from the requirements of the armorial code as well. A particular version of the Middle Achievement introduced in 1807 (**Figure 12d**), was used on most denominations of coin to 1908. As can be seen in the Figure, this violated the terms of the blazon in more than one way, as did the versions printed in the banknotes of the Bank of the United States in the 1790s, seen in Figures 10b and 10e.



a. Coin 1791 **b. US Banknote 1795** **c. Coin of 1807** **d. Coin of 1808**

e. US Banknote 1792 **f. White House Compote 1853** **g. Woodward 1891**

Fig. 12. False Middle Achievements, 1791-1890

The same would be true of most of the representations that were increasingly displayed by private persons and organizations as tokens of patriotic feelings as the nineteenth century progressed. Given the constraints of space, I shall include only a handful of these in my article, but two particularly egregious renderings of very different types can be seen in **Figure 12f** and **12g**. In the former, etched on a compote created for use in the White House in 1853, the 'Supporter' — deprived of all of its attributes — stands in an informal attitude *on top of* the shield rather than

behind it: a position later employed, with variations, in many official contexts, including the emblem of the State of Illinois in 1817 (**Figure 18b**) and that of the Department of Justice in 1868 (**Figure 16a**).

In the unofficial Middle Achievement represented in **Figure 12g** — recorded by the Scottish antiquary John Woodward and George Burnett, Lyon King of Arms, soon before the publication of their important *Treatise on Heraldry* of 1892 — both of its elements include almost every possible error, including (1) converting the field of the **Arms** from *Argent three pallets gules* to *Paly of ten gules and argent*; (2) not only setting *mullets* on its chief where none belonged, but (3) doing so in a *number* (forty-four[61]) far higher than anything permitted for such figures by the armorial code;[62] (4) converting the **Supporter** from a *bald* eagle simply *displayed* to a *black* eagle displayed *with wings inverted*; and (5) reducing the number of *arrows* in its sinister claw from thirteen to three. Most of these types of error were quite common, as we shall see.

I shall conclude my examination of the forms of the Achievement as a whole by observing that from soon after its introduction, two of its independent elements — the **Shield of Arms** and the **Supporter** — were

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[61] This was the number of mullets or 'stars' set on the canton of the United States Flag from 4 July 1891 to 3 July 1896, representing the number of states in the federation between the admission of Wyoming and that of Utah. The number rose to forty-eight following the admission of Arizona and New Mexico on 4 July 1912, and remained at that level until the admission of Alaska in 1959. (SMITH, *Flag Book*, p. 283)

[62] The Number of *countable* figures set on a chief was normally limited to *three*, which was both the *maximum* and the *most common* number in the armorials of the reign of Edward I edited by Brault. John PAPWORTH — whose *Ordinary of British Armorials* (London, 1874, pp. 581-584) remains the standard dictionary of its kind for arms created after about 1500 — lists 142 distinct coats bearing chiefs charged with mullets, of which 77 bore **two** mullets, 63 bore **three**, two (for men named Russell and Chaucombe) bore **five**, and one (for a man named Everard) bore **six**: the additional *three* constituting a difference to the chiefly coat, and probably not authorized. Thus, even *thirteen* mullets was well beyond the acceptable number, and 44 would not have been permissible even on a *field* without any other charges, let alone a chief occupying less than a third of its area. Even a field *semé* of mullets — a pattern without a fixed number running off the edges of the field — would not have included more than **twenty** nearly whole charges even if they were closely spaced, and might well have included as few as **five** *whole* mullets and *parts* of **seven** more.

frequently displayed alone, both in official contexts like coins, and in many unofficial contexts, and even the third element — the **Crest** — was occasionally displayed in isolation. The use of the elements in this way, and the full ranges of their relationships to one another, and of the forms and attitudes they were given both in isolation, and in the context of both Great and Middle Achievements, may most usefully be reviewed in the context of more general discussions each those elements individually — if only because the variations in these characteristics of each element were quite independent of one another. It is to such discussions that I shall now turn.

4.2. THE EMBLAZONMENTS OF THE ARMS

I shall begin with the Arms, designed by Barton at the very end of the process by which the Achievement as a whole was created. It was certainly the soundest of the three elements of the Achievement, both from a technical armorial perspective, and from that of general emblematic effectiveness. Its numerous variations arose in part from the weakness of its blazon, and in part from its obvious but misleading resemblance to the flag of the Republic — whose 'stripes' began to be multiplied in 1795 to represent the addition of new states to the Union, and came to have a pattern of tinctures opposite to those established for the arms.

In fact, as **Figure 11**[63] shows, Barton (following but improving upon the examples of the two earlier proposals by Hopkinson, his own earlier proposals, and the immediately preceding proposal by Thomson) had clearly designed the Arms as a version of the familiar flag-design of 1777 (the more important of whose many variants are represented in the bottom row of the Figure), modified for use on a shield. It was for that reason that he reoriented the thirteen red and white 'stripes' (representing the 'states') from a horizontal to a vertical arrangement, and replaced the blue *free-quarter* or *canton* of the flag (and of his own first design) with a blue *chief* . The chief served as a simple unity-symbol, initially representing the Continental Congress, and after 1789 the tripartite Federal Government of the United States.

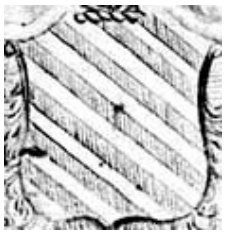
[63] Fig. 11: The various versions of the arms are taken from PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, as cited in n. 6; the flags are taken from RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 187

Although he had included the 'stars' set on the canton of the flag both on the similar *canton* of his first design and on the *bordure* of his second, Barton wisely judged that even the chief of a shield (which would mainly be represented on a small scale on seals and coins) was too small for the display of the vexillary 'constellation' of the flag, and restricted it to the Crest — where as we have seen it had already been set by Hopkinson and Thomson in their earlier proposals. The result was a coat of Arms that was at once simple and fully in keeping with armorial traditions, as well as obviously related to the more widely-used and generally-recognized national flag.

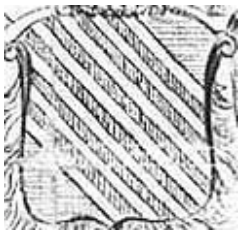
First Committee 1776

(1)Du Simitière

Second Committee 1779-80

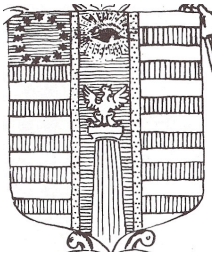


(2) **Hopkinson 1 >**



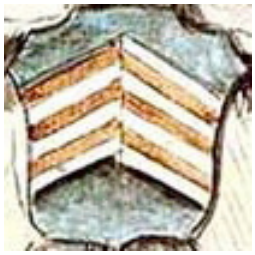
(3) **Hopkinson 2 >**

Third Committee 1782



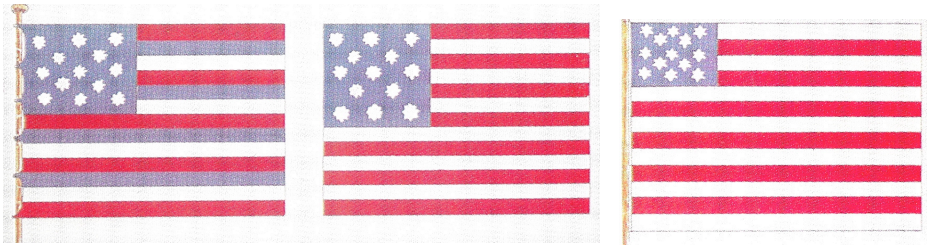
(4) **Barton 1 >** (5) **Barton 2 >**

Fourth Committee 1782



(6) **Thomson**

(7) **Barton 3**



Variants of the Flag of 1777. The arrangement of the 'stripes' in Barton's Arms were based on the third pattern, red on a white field. (The normal arrangement of the 'stars' in the Crest was based on their common pattern: 3, 2, 3, 2, 3.)

Fig. 13. The Evolution of the Arms of the United States 1776 - 1782

Barton's blazon, however, was seriously defective, for it described the field of the Arms as '***Paleways* of thirteen pieces, Argent and Gules**', using both an obsolescent term for 'paly', and (more importantly) ignoring the long-established convention that 'paly' described only fields that were divided into an *even* number of vertical stripes (in practice *four*, *six*, *eight*, or *ten*), so that no distinction could be made between field and charges. Under this convention, when an uneven number of vertical stripes was employed, the first tincture named had to be treated as that of the *field*, and the second tincture had to describe a specified (even) number of charges called 'pallets' laid upon it. Thus, though the field *appears* to be divided into thirteen vertical 'stripes' of equal width, the red stripes are technically charges called 'pallets', and the white stripes merely parts of the field showing to either side of them. Thus the correct blazon for Barton's field design was '**Argent, *six pallets* gules**'. It is worth noting that a number of arms with closely analogous designs had been adopted by different English lineages centuries earlier, including several similarly composed of *pallets and a chief*. Only two of these had a field similarly bearing *six* pallets — the largest number apparently regarded as distinguishable, and one that involved *three* more vertical divisions than the largest number in any coat with a *paly* field.[64]

Again unfortunately for the *use* of Barton's design, the tincture of the first of the thirteen 'stripes' on the **Flag** — properly blazoned as a field with six *barrulets* — while initially quite variable, as the Figure indicates, came eventually to be officially fixed as *red,* so that in armorial terms its *field* was effectively fixed as *gules* rather than *argent*. The blazon of its field-design was in consequence ***Gules six barrulets argent***, as opposed to the

[64] According to PAPWORTH (*Ordinary of British Armorials*, pp. 1016-19) *four* distinct lineages bore arms charged with **four pallets and a chief**, and *two* bore arms charged with **six pallets alone**. Numerous lineages bore arms with a field **paly of six**, *ten* bore arms with fields **paly of eight**, and *four* with fields **paly of ten**, which seems to have been the highest number ever used. This was still three vertical 'stripes' less than the *thirteen* divisions or 'pieces' created by the use of six *pallets*, which indicates how extreme the latter number was considered to be.

Argent six pallets gules of the field of the Arms — which had been derived from its rejected variant with the pattern *Argent six barrulets gules*. The choice of the opposite pattern of tinctures for the Flag was bound to cause confusion among those who had to represent the Arms, and indeed the most common deviation from the blazon of the Arms would involve the reversal of its tinctures to conform to those of the flag.

a. Great Seal 1782 **b. Coin 1786** **c. Coin 1867** **d. Presid. Flag 1888**

Fig. 14. Various Correct Representations of the Arms

In official contexts like the seals, coins, and medals employed by the federal government, the Arms were normally represented correctly, as **Figure 14**[65] suggests, and when not in full colour (as in the presidential flag shown at **14d**),[66] the tinctures of both the chief and the pallets were often indicated by the standard horizontal and vertical hatchings established by Petra Sancta, and both chief and pallets were even represented as charges raised above the field. This was true, for example, both of the Arms engraved on the dies of all of the Great Seals (the first being represented in **14a**), of the shield of Arms first used alone on the coins minted in New Jersey in 1786 (**14b**), and of the Arms included in the Lesser Achievement on the coin of 1867 (**14c**).

Nevertheless, even in official contexts versions of the Arms with one or more errors made their appearance soon after their adoption, beginning with the presidential seal engraved in 1798 and on coins minted in 1791, 1792, and 1795. Given that these early examples involved different sets of errors, it will be most useful to consider the various forms of deviant

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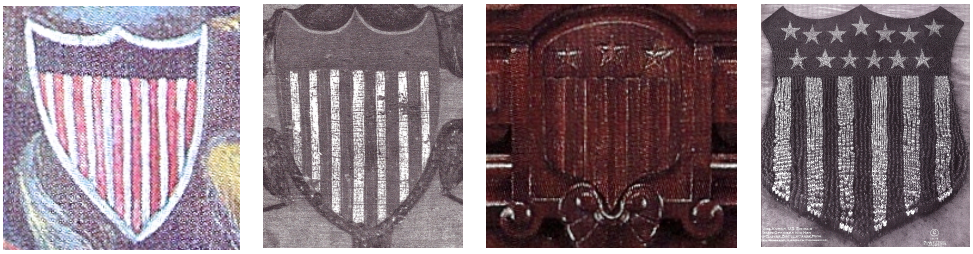
[65] Fig. 12a: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 124 (Fig. 20); 12b, c: YEOMAN and BRESSETT, *United States Coins*, pp. 55, 123; 12d: ZNAMIEROWSKI, *World Encyclopedia of Flags*, p. 60

[66] On the flags of the presidency, see SMITH, *Flag Book*, pp. 231-232

Arms under the headings of the distinct *types of deviation* from the blazon they involved, rather than those either of the types of their *context* or of the *times* of their introduction. And because individual *designs* usually involved two or more types of deviation, the same examples will often be cited in two or more places in my discussion — not only in this Section dealing with the Arms, but on those dealing with the Supporter and the Crest below. For the same reason, the ***simple deviant types*** I shall distinguish on the basis of a single characteristic cannot be equated with the more numerous types of **False Arms**, which (like the equivalent types of *False Supporter*, *False Crest*, and *False Achievement*) would have to be classified on the basis of the *combination* of the deviations they included, and named and numbered in a distinct series. Such a complicated type of classification is beyond the scope of this article.

I shall begin my discussion of simple deviant types of Arms with a consideration of the deviations from the (effectively) specified **field design**: a white field with six red pallets, correctly represented on the seal, coins, and flag in Figure 14. These deviations may be considered to have constituted a set, which for ease of reference I shall designate with the letter A (for Arms) and I (for the set), and number the particular deviations within that set with small arabic numerals. **(A-I.1)**



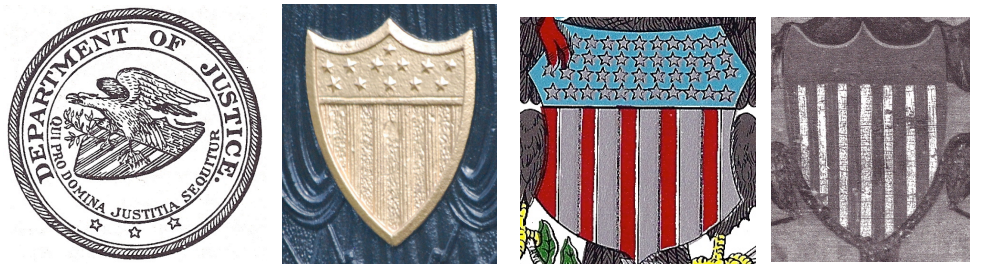
a. Army Flag 1782 **b. Overmantel 1830s** **c. White House 1869** **d. Shield of soldiers 1917**

Fig. 15. Arms with Field Tinctures Reversed (and one with a Bordure)

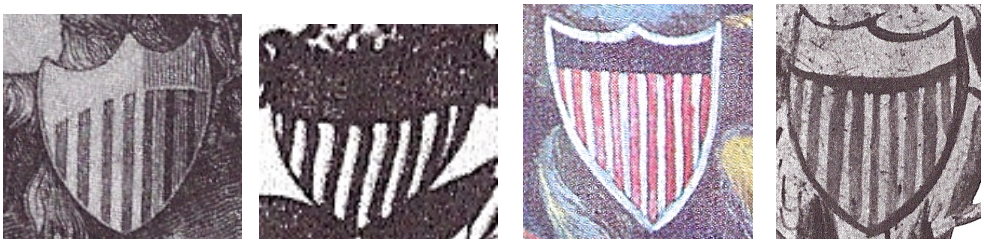
As can be seen in **Figure 15**,[67] the **first type** of deviation in this area was the **reversal of the tinctures** I alluded to earlier, which (not surprisingly, given its vexillary basis) first appears in the representation of

[67] Fig. 13a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 189; 13b: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, front cover; 13c: ALLMAN & NAULIN, *Something of Splendor*; 13d: SEDEEN, *Star Spangled Banner*, p. 7

the canton of the Confederal Army flag of 1782, painted at some time in the 1790s. This Arms on this flag also incorporated two other deviations, one of which — **(A-I.2)** the ***inclusion of a white bordure*** surrounding the whole design of the Arms as if it were a major brisure — I found only in its representation. Nevertheless, I shall number it as the **second type**. By contrast, the reversal of the tinctures was quite common thereafter, as the remaining examples suggest, and as the next Figure suggests, was commonly associated with deviations of the next two types.



a. Just Dept. Seal 1868 *Paly of 6 gules & arg.* **= 6 'stripes'**
b. Vicksburg fence *Paly of 10 arg. & gules* **= 10 'stripes'**
c. Woodward 1891 *Paly of 10 gules & arg.* **= 10 'stripes'**
d. Overmantel *Gules 7 pallets arg.* **= 15 'stripes'**



e. Hotel flier 1820s *Arg. 7 pallets gules* **= 15 'stripes'**
f. Propaganda 1824 *Paly of 16 arg. & gules* **= 16 'stripes'**
g. Army Flag 1782 *Gules 8 pallets arg.* **= 17 'stripes'**
h. Militia cap 1820 *Gules 9 pallets arg.* **= 19 'stripes'**

Fig. 16. Arms with Fewer or More than Thirteen 'Stripes' (either Pallets or Divisions of an Incorrect Paly Field)

The **third** and **fourth types of deviation** were closely related: **(A-I.3)** the ***inclusion* of *either fewer or more than the specified thirteen divisions***; and, when the number of divisions was *even* rather than odd, **(A-I.4)** the ***conversion of the divisions from pallets on a field to a paly pattern***. As **Figure 14**[68] shows, representations of the Arms I have found

[68] Fig. 14a: ZIEBER, *Heraldry in America*, p. 110; 14b: David APPLETON, personal photo; 14c: WOODWARD & BURNETT, *Treatise on Heraldry*, Pl. LIV, f. p. 666; 14d, e, f,

include **six**, **ten**, **fifteen**, **sixteen**, **seventeen**, and **nineteen** divisions, those of fifteen and seventeen involving tincture reversals, and those of six and ten the transformation of *pallets* into *paly* divisions. There may well have been versions with other numbers of divisions or 'pieces' — eight, nine, eleven, twelve, and fourteen being the most likely — but I have not yet discovered examples of any of these. In principle the range of variants of each subtype could be identified as **infratypes I.3.i**, **ii**, **iii**, or **I.4.i**, **ii**, **iii**, and so on.

The use of the numbers of divisions ***over* the specified thirteen** may have originated in a desire to make the field of the Arms conform to that of the contemporary flag, whose 'stripes' increased in a similar fashion from 1795 to 1818, when the process of multiplication was finally halted by an act that declared that thenceforth the number of *stripes* would revert to the original thirteen, while the number of *stars* on the canton would be officially increased from time to time to represent the current number of states. (This last occurred in 1960, after Hawaii was admitted as the fiftieth state.) [69]

The use in the Arms of numbers of divisions ***under* the specified thirteen** seems by contrast to have resulted from nothing more than ignorance of the blazon or of its legally binding character, or simple ignorance of its specifications. This is particularly shocking in the case of the seal of what was originally the office of the Attorney General, and became in 1870 the Department of Justice (**14a**). This represented Arms that not only bore ***five** white* pallets on a *red* field), but were charged on the chief with a set of 'stars' — of uncertain number, because most were hidden by the 'Supporter' standing illicitly on the shield.[70] A similar seal-design was adopted by the State of Alabama in 1868, in which the Arms (similarly provided with 'stars' on its chief) was given a field blazonable as *Paly of **six** gules and argent*.[71]

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h: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, 14d: front cover; 14e p. 61; 14f: p. 62; 14h: title page; 14g: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 189

[69] SMITH, *Flag Book*, Appendix I, pp. 281-283.

[70] ZIEBER, *Heraldry in America*, p. 110, Fig. 294. He noted the deviations, but erroneously blazoned the field 'paly of eleven', rather than the 'Gules five pallets argent' he depicts. It is uncertain when this design was adopted, as it had served for some time as that of the Office of the Attorney General.

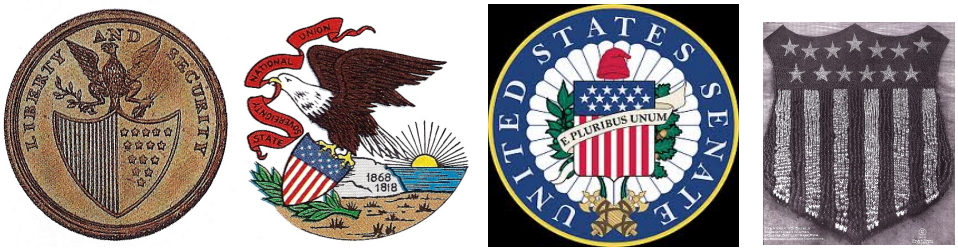
[71] Ibid., p. 112, Fig. 298.

As this suggests, and **Figure 15**[72] shows, the **second set** of deviations from the blazon of the Arms (A-II) involved the ***representation of the chief*** — or its ***non-representation***. **(A-II.1)** The earliest error in this set, and the **fifth** in the whole set related to the Arms, was the ***diminution of the depth of the chief*** from the normal one third or so of the height of the shield to something close to one fifth. The result was what in French blazonic language would be called a *chef retrait*, but English armory does not recognize such a charge, and therefore has no name for it. Such an illicit diminution of the chief in the Arms first appeared in the Confederal Army flag of 1782 (**15a**) and was repeated in the die cut for the Treaty Seal of 1825 (15d).

a. Army Flag 1782 **b. Coin of 1791** **c. Coin of 1795** **d. Seal die of 1825**

Fig. 17. Arms whose Chief has been Reduced, Omitted, or Replaced

(A-II.2) The second error in this set, and the **sixth type** of the whole series related to the Arms, was the ***complete omission of the chief***, leaving only the field with its (correct) six pallets. I have found this inexplicable deviation only on a pair of otherwise quite different coins minted in 1791 and 1792 (**17b**, **28d**). **(A-II.3)**



[72] Fig. 15a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 189; 15b-d: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *United States Coins*, 15b: p. 77; 15c: p. 79; 15d: p. 80; 15e: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 178 (Fig. 25)

a. Coin 1795 b. Illinois emblem 1817 c. Sigilloid emb. of U. S. Senate 1886 d. Shield of soldiers 1917

Fig. 18. Arms with Thirteen Mullets Added to the Chief (or its Replacement)

A related but even more egregious error (the **seventh** of the whole set), limited to a **coin** minted in 1795 (**17c**), involved the ***replacement* of the chief** by a vertical division occupying the whole sinister half of the design, next to a dexter division charged with no fewer than fourteen very narrow pallets, creating a field with twenty-nine divisions: the largest I have discovered. The sinister division was also charged with thirteen mullets, arranged in a pile of five, four, three, two, and one, making these Arms one the earliest (if not indeed the earliest) to bear any number of such additional charges.

(A-III) The remaining deviant versions of the Arms created before 1890 (represented in **Figures 18** and **19**) all involved the ***addition of mullets*** in various numbers on the chief, on the analogy of those set on the canton of the flag: what may be considered the **eighth** general type of deviation. Although the mullets set on the flag were quite varied in form — with four, five, six, and eight points — for reasons that are not clear (but probably have to do with the relatively late date of most of them), the mullets I have found set on the chief of the Arms all had the classic five points, and did not therefore establish distinct types of design.

(A-III.1) As **Figure 18**[73] suggests, the most common ***number of mullets*** was ***thirteen***, reflecting the number set on all flags before 1795 and after 1818, and this may be seen as a **subtype 1** of the type including mullets in any number. Thirteen mullets were set on the analogous division of the Arms on the **coin** of 1795 (**18a**), on the chief of the Arms included in the seal- and flag-design adopted by Illinois in 1819 (**18b**), probably in that in the great seal of Alabama of 1868 (n. 67), and certainly on that placed at the centre of the new seal of the Senate of the United States in 1886 (**16c**). In all of these cases except the coin of 1795, the mullets or 'stars' were arranged in ***three rows of four, five, and four***: the most common of the many arrangements on the pre-1795 canton of the flag (though their arrangement was not officially fixed until 1912, when their number had reached forty-eight[74]). Because of the relative narrowness of

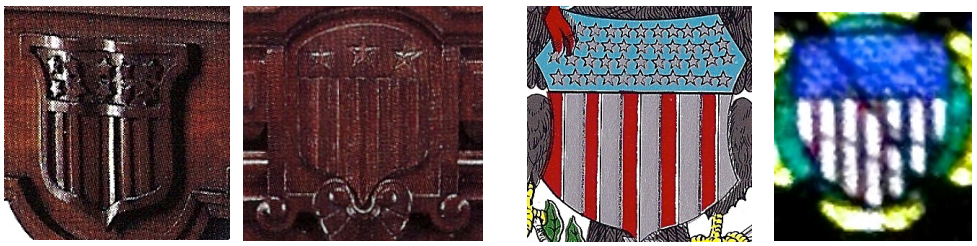
[73] Fig. 16a: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *United States Coins*, p. 80; 16b: SMITH, *Flag Book*, p. 104; 16c: Online site of U.S. Senate; 16d: SEDEEN, *Star Spangled Banner*, p. 7

[74] SMITH, *Flag Book*, p. 283

the *chief* compared to the canton or free-quarter of the Flag, other arrangements were also used on the former, the most common being the ***two rows of seven and six*** represented by massed soldiers in 1917 (**16d**). In armorial terms, of course, such arrangements would all constitute distinct arms — for the *arrangement* no less than the *number* of such charges must be specified in the blazon — but as *no* such charges, in *any* number or arrangement, were actually specified, they merely constituted distinct *deviant infratypes* of the U. S. Arms.

(A-III.2) What may be regarded as a **second subtype** of chiefs with mullets is composed of those with ***fewer than thirteen mullets***. Examples of these (which seem to have been relatively rare) are given in **Figure 19**.[75] The oldest I have found are on items of furniture made for the White House

in 1853 and 1869 (**19a**, **b**), which have respectively ten mullets in two rows of five and three mullets in a single row. Later examples include the shield set on a fence in Vicksburg, Virginia (which as **Figure 17c** shows, has twelve in rows of one, six, and five), and that represented on the seal of the President *pro tempore* of the Senate (which has eleven in rows of six and five). No doubt there are many others with different numbers and arrangements, but these alone constitute four additional subtypes.



a. White House 1853 b. White House 1869 c. Woodward 1891 d. St. Albans 1920
10 mullets, 5, 5 3 mullets 44 mullets, 11-11-11-11 48 mullets

Fig. 19. Arms with Fewer or More than Thirteen Mullets on the Chief

(A-III.3) A third subset of mullet-bearing chiefs was composed of types with ***more than thirteen mullets***. Their numbers, like those of the additional pallets on the field, presumably reflected those on the current version of the national Flag, but they seem have been relatively rare. The only examples I have found of such a design was the one bearing forty-

[75] Fig. 17a, b: ALLMAN & NAULIN, *Something of Splendor*; 17c: David APPLETON, personal photo; 17d: WOODWARD & BURNETT, *Treatise on Heraldry,* Pl. LIV, f. p. 666

four mullets (in four rows or eleven) published by Woodward, and cited above (**Figure 17c**), and one bearing forty-eight mullets, set in the west window of St. Alban's Cathedral c. 1920 (**Figure 17d**).

Thus, despite their relatively simple nature and the relative clarity of the blazon describing them, the Arms suffered no fewer than ***ten*** distinct subtypes of deviation, the last two of which, at least, included several infratypes. And because many of the ten subtypes were combined in different ways in particular examples of the Arms, the total number of **distinct types of False Arms** created by 1880 must have been in the dozens.

4.3. THE EMBLAZONMENTS OF THE EAGLE SUPPORTER

Third Committee 1782

(1) Barton 1

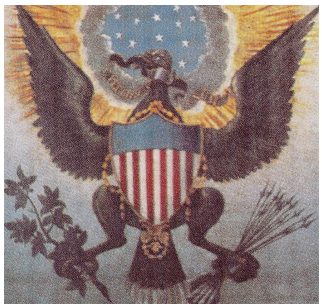
(2) Barton 2

1. A white eagle displayed as a charge in the Arms

2. A white eagle displayed, holding a sword and a flag, as a Crest

Fourth Committee 1782

(3) Thomson



(4) Barton 3

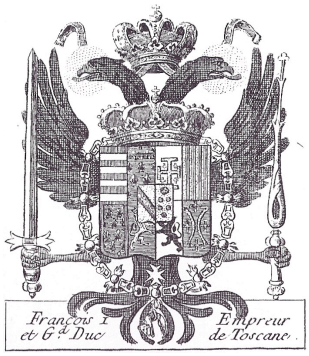
3. **A bald eagle displayed wings inverted proper, holding an olive branch and 13 arrows, as the Supporter**

4. Same, with wings not inverted

Fig. 20. The Evolution of the Form and Use of the Eagle Emblem of the United States 1776-1782

As we have seen (and is represented visually in Figure 18), the eagle displayed that ultimately came to serve as the Supporter of the

Achievement of the United States first appeared (in black) in a quartering for Germany in the Arms proposed by Du Simitière; was reintroduced by Barton (in white) as a charge in the Arms of his first proposal, and became the Crest in his second; was finally put to use as a single Supporter (in a native species and natural colours and with wings inverted) in the sole proposal of Charles Thomson; and was left in that rôle and form (save for the inversion of its wings) by Barton in his final proposal, adopted by the Congress. The first two eagles were devoid of attributes, but Barton placed symbolic objects in the claws of the eagle in his second proposal, and Thomson did likewise in his, but chose different objects with a different pair of symbolic meanings.



i. Encyclopédie 1751 **ii. Thaler of Empress Maria Theresa**

a. Armorial Model: Extractive Middle Achievement of the Holy Roman Empire

i. Coin 1551 **ii. Camerarius 1597** **iii. Emblem Book 1618**

b. Allegorical Models: The Eagle holding symbols of war and peace

Fig. 21. The Armorial and Allegorical Models for the Eagle Supporter

The symbolic significance of the eagle itself had changed with the evolution of its armorial function. Du Simitière's eagle was a simple affiliation symbol of the German heritage of the colonists, alluding to the arms of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation' (as that state was

officially called). Barton's eagle, though alluding to the same arms, was a more general symbol of imperial authority, whose attributes (a sword supporting a laurel-wreath and a United States flag) symbolized respectively military victory and the new Republic as such. Thomson chose to represent the American character of the Republic by making his eagle itself an obvious exemplar of a distinctive indigenous species — the bald eagle, so called because of the white feathers that covered its head and neck — and gave it attributes symbolic of peace and war.

Thomson's conversion of the eagle into the sole Supporter bearing those symbolic figures in its claws seems to have represented a combination of two distinct models, one emblematic and armorial, the other symbolic and allegorical. Both can be seen in **Figure 21**.[76] Because the use of single supporters (though never actually prohibited) had long fallen into disuse in England,[77] the effective armorial model must have been the quasi-supporter (technically an *extracted charge* of the arms) of the middle achievement of the Holy Roman Emperors, who since the accession of Karl V in 1516 had marshalled the arms of their numerous hereditary dominions on a large inescutcheon at the centre of the shield of arms of the Empire proper: *Or a double-headed eagle displayed sable, beaked and membered gules, nimbed of the first*. The shield bearing these arms had always been displayed in great achievements, including those on great seals.[78]

When removed from its shield in the middle achievements displayed on the coins and flags from which it was principally known, however, the black, double-headed Imperial eagle appeared to be a single supporter of the inescutcheon, and was represented as such in the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert — probably familiar to some of the leaders of the Revolution in British North America (**19ai**). The Imperial

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[76] Fig. 19a: *L'Encyclopédie Diderot et d'Alembert: Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts libéraux, et les arts méchaniques avec leur explication. Blason Art Héraldique* (Paris, 1994, after edn. of 1751-76), Pl. XV, no. 1; 19b-d: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, 19b: p. 100 (Fig. 17); 19c: p. 101 (Fig. 19); 19d: p. 100 (Fig. 18)

[77] On the use of single supporters, see John WOODWARD and George BURNETT, *A Treatise on Heraldry, British and Foreign* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1892; repr. in 1 vol., Newton Abbott, Devon., 1969), pp. 628-634; and FOX-DAVIES, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, pp. 408-14.

[78] On this, see Luc DUERLOO and Steven THIRY, 'The Eagle Resurrected — The Abdication of Emperor Charles V, the Spanish Monarchy and the reinvention of the imperial eagle', published in this volume.

eagle thus extracted would also have been familiar to some British North Americans of the period from the widely-circulated *Thaler* coin of the Empress Maria Theresa, originally struck in Austria from 1740 to 1780, and continuously struck with the latter date to the present day (**19aii**).[79] On the *Thaler* the eagle of the Empire was represented in its traditional form, without any insignia in its claws, but the engraving in the *Encyclopédie* represented one of the several contemporary versions in which those claws held the Imperial sword, sceptre, and orb, in various combinations and arrangements.[80] A single eagle of this form had also served as the *true* supporter of the arms of certain princes of the Holy Roman Empire (among them the British Dukes of Marlborough) from at least the seventeenth century.[81]

Barton himself acknowledged in his various 'Remarks' the importance as a model not only of the Imperial eagle itself, but of the placement of objects in its claws that he introduced in his second proposal.[82] The objects he proposed were replaced in that of Thomson by

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[79] See Ludwig HERINEK, *Österreichische Müntzprägungen von 1740-1969* (Vienna, 1970)

[80] On the great seal of the Emperors Joseph II and Franz II (of which I possess a cast) it holds a sword and sceptre in its dexter claw and an orb in its sinister claw.

[81] The custom of displaying the eagle of the Empire as a single supporter of the dynastic arms of the Emperor seems to have begun under Karl V, Emperor from 1519 to 1558, and continued to the dissolution of that Empire in 1806. It had in the meantime been emulated by the Tsars and Emperors of Russia, who employed it to the fall of that empire in 1917, and would be continued by the Emperors of Austria and the later German Emperors to the fall of those empires in 1918. In every one of these cases, the eagle that appeared to be a *supporter* was in fact the principal *charge* of the arms of the Empire itself, extracted from its shield. The only *true* supporters of this type were those conceded by Emperors before 1806 to certain princes of their Empire as a mark of princely status, whose number included John Churchill, created Duke of Marlborough in Great Britain in 1702, and Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, first at Mindelheim in Swabia in 1704, and then (by transfer) at Mellenburg in Austria in 1713. His princely dignity lapsed on his death, but its insignia have been borne by his heirs and successors to the present.

[82] In the explanatory note following his first proposal, he wrote 'The Eagle displayed is the Symbol of supreme Power & Authority, and signifies the Congress'; in his final 'Remarks' he wrote: 'The Escutcheon being placed on the Breast of and Eagle is a very antient Mode of bearing, & is truly imperial. The

the branch of olive or palm in the dexter claw (eventually reduced to the former in the proposal set before the Congress), and the bundle of thirteen arrows in the sinister. Like Barton's objects, Thomson's were generic *symbols* of peace and war rather than specific *insignia* of authority, but unlike Barton's they were also *conventional* symbols, probably borrowed from the relevant symbolic corpus included in contemporary emblem-books. In fact, (as can be seen in **Figure 19b**) no fewer than three independent images of an eagle displayed either *holding* or *set between* symbols of peace and war had been published in emblem-books available to Thomson — and it is more than likely that he took inspiration from one or more of them.[83]

Significantly, the symbols of peace in all three models either *consisted of* or *included* an olive branch, and in the third included an additional branch of palm. By contrast, the symbols of war took the form of a thunderbolt in the first two cases, and a sword in the third. Barton had already proposed a sword for the same rôle, but Thomson clearly wanted a symbol of war that also alluded to the confederation of the colonies, so he substituted the bundle of arrows held by the warrior figure of Hopkinson's first design for the physically similar thunderbolt, and specified that their number should be thirteen. In fact, a tied bundle of a certain number of arrows had long served as a symbol of the unity of similar confederations, most notably in the arms of the United Provinces of the Netherlands[84] — a very obvious model with which Thomson would almost certainly have been familiar.

The union of the rebellious British American provinces was of course further symbolized in Thomson's design not only by the chevrons of its Arms (replaced by Barton's pallets) but by the motto E PLURIBUS

Eagle displayed is an Heraldical Figure: and, being borne in the Manner here described, supplies the Place of Supporters and Crest [!]' PATTERSON and DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield*, pp. 60 and 80.

[83] Fig. 19b-d: ibid., pp. 95-102. The first example (**19bi**) was an engraving of the design of a coin of the Emperor Karl V of 1551, accompanied by the motto SUUM CUIQUE (Fig. 17, p. 100); the second (**bii**) a derivative emblema under the motto CUIQUE SUUM published by Camerarius in 1597; and the third (biii) an emblema with the motto PHEBUS POST NUBILA published in an emblem-book of 1618.

[84] The seven provinces of the United Netherlands were represented in its arms by a bundle of seven arrows held in the sinister paw of the lion that was its principal charge (a sword being set in its dexter paw).

UNUM, itself already adopted in other contexts. The *motto-scroll* bearing that text that Thomson rather rashly pressed into the beak of the eagle was probably modelled on the *infulae* or bands of silk suspended from the mitre of the Imperial Crown that floated above the heads of the Imperial eagle when used as a supporter, since the scroll extended to either side just below the Crest, which in Thomson's design visually replaced the Crown of the Imperial Middle Achievement.

Barton's blazon of the Supporter thus established included eight specifications — every one of which would be violated in one or more official emblazonments: '… [i] *an American (bald-headed) eagle,* [ii] *displayed,* [iii] *proper,* [iv] *holding in his Beak a Scroll,* [v] *inscribed with this motto, viz. 'E pluribus unum'* — [vi] *And in his dexter talon* [vi.a] *a Palm or* [vi.b] *Olive Branch* — [vii] *in the other a bundle of 13 arrows;* [viii] *All proper'*. Except in in failing to identify it as a *supporter*, and in allowing it to hold a branch of *either* of two different species of tree in its dexter claw (both symbolic of peace), Barton's blazon of the Supporter was reasonably sound. Unfortunately the creature it described fell short of the ideals of armory in several ways: (1) in being of a *particular species* of eagle represented as *proper* (especially as 'proper' meant white, grey-brown, and yellow); (2) in holding objects also blazoned 'proper' (introducing green and grey as well as brown into a colour-scheme vertically dominated by the more heraldic tinctures red, white, blue, and gold); and finally (3) in suspending the motto-scroll — normally an independent element of an achievement, set above or below the other elements, but not attached to any of them — from its beak. The eagle has also suffered from being represented in the quasi-realistic fashion of the period of armorial decadence, though the more recent versions have at least been more vigorous that the earliest, as we shall see.

As **Figures 4** and **5** above show, technically correct representations of the Supporter — with the eagle in the proper displayed attitude, holding the *scroll* in its beak, and both the *branch* and the *arrows* in the correct *numbers* and the correct *claws* — have been characteristic of the Great Seals of the Republic, and on the earliest seals of the more important divisions of its government. Nevertheless, errors were made in the depiction of the Supporter even on two of the great seals, and both those errors and many *additional* types were committed in the realization of the blazon in every other type of context, beginning once again with coins and flags. These errors fell once again into several distinct sets: (I) errors involving the

attitude* of the eagle's *body, wings,* and *head; (II) errors involving the ***presence of both its upper* and *lower attributes*** and of the ***order and number of the latter***; and (III) errors involving the ***position* of *the eagle in relationship to the shield*** it was meant to support on its breast. I shall review those types of error in the order indicated, designating each distinct type with a number prefixed by the letter 'S' for 'Supporter', followed by upper-case roman, arabic, and lower-case roman numerals for the *types*, *subtypes*, and (when necessary) *infratypes*. I shall also distinguish between (A) ***informal*** and (B) ***formal*** representations involving the same types of deviation.

(S-I.A) Errors related to the attitude of the informal eagle. In principle, an eagle displayed should be represented in a formal context like a seal, coin, or flag in an upright, full-frontal posture, with its head facing to the dexter, its tail spread directly below it, and its wings and legs splayed symmetrically to either side, with the tips of the former pointing upward. This is in fact how the eagle Supporter was represented in the Achievements set on all of the seals and medals cut before 1877, and on most of the coins minted before 1808.

a. Army Flag 1782-9 **b. Prussian Flag 1740s-1802** **c. Prussian Flag 1802**

Fig. 22. The Eagle Displayed Rising and Regardant: Origin and Models

(S-I.A.1) Nevertheless, as **Figure 22a**[85] shows, the first version of two distinct **informal representations** of the posture and orientation of the eagle was introduced, almost immediately after the adoption of the Achievement in 1782, on the canton of the Army Flag used to the adoption of the new constitution in 1789. This (the **first type** of deviation affecting the Supporter) probably preceded the first deviant version affecting the formal Achievement. As can be seen in the Figure, the eagle in that context was represented in an informal version of the **rising attitude**, its body

[85] RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 241

turned to the dexter, its dexter leg bent upwards, its sinister leg extended, and its tail extended to the sinister, and partly hidden by that leg. In addition, its **head** was turned to face the sinister in the **reguardant attitude**. I have found no exact model for that combined attitude, which would be blazoned **rising reguardant with wings elevated and displayed**, but (as can be seen in Figure 19b) except in the retention of the displayed attitude of the wings and the informal disposition of the legs, it was in effect the mirror image of the attitude of the eagle on the coin of 1551 that was one of the probable models for eagle holding symbols of peace and war. This was itself based on Classical Roman models, likely to have been familiar to the leaders of the Revoultion. Except in the reguardant orientation of the head, the attitude of the eagle on the army flag also closely resembled that of the eagle set from the 1740s to 1802 in the central medallion of the military flags of the Kingdom of Prussia (**20b**),[86] and except in the attitude of its wings, was the mirror image of the eagles set in that context after 1802 (**20c**).[87]

(S-I.A.2) Not surprisingly in these circumstances, the distinctive attitude of the eagle on the U. S. army flag of 1782 seems to have remained rare in the context even of informal Achievements — though as we shall see, a variant of it was introduced slightly later on coins bearing the eagle without its shield. In the meantime, in the context of informal Achievements that attitude was soon superseded by a version closer to that of the models just cited (**Figure 23**[88]): a version that was its precise mirror

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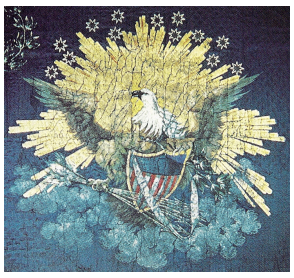
[86] On these flags, see Terence WISE and Guido ROSSIGNOLI, *Flags of the Napoleonic Wars (2): Colours, Standards and Guidons of Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia* (Osprey Military: Men-at-Arms Series 78, Oxford, 1978; repr. 2000), pp. 17-24 and Plate D. The double-headed Imperial eagle on the equivalent flags of the Russian Empire was represented in the same period in a similar informal manner, as can be seen on pp. 31 and 32, and Plates F and G.

[87] This was a very informal and heavily modified representation of the black eagle that was technically the principal charge in the arms of the Kingdom of Prussia, and in that capacity was not only crowned, but bore the Prussian sceptre in its dexter claw and an orb in the sinister. On military flags, by contrast, it was represented rising contourné, holding in its claws a sword and a thunderbolt respectively.

[88] Fig. 21a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 241; 21b: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 368; 21c: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, p. 70; 21d, e. PATTERSON &

image, and may be described technically as **rising reguardant and *contourné* with wings elevated and displayed**.[89] It constituted the **second** general type of False Supporter. This first appeared on the new Army flag adopted at some time after 1789 (**23a**), or possibly on the fifty-dollar note of the Bank of the United States, whose first branch was established in 1792 (**23b**). After its representation in 1807 on a one-cent coin in a series that would continue to 1907 (**23c**), it became increasingly common in official contexts. It entered the highest level of usage in 1825 when it appeared both on the single face of the new Treaty Seal cut by Seraphim Masi to serve for the pendant seals attached to diplomatic documents (**23d**), and the closely-related designs on the covers of its metal container or 'skippet' designed both by Masi himself and by Samuel Lewis in 1854 (**23e**), later used as the matrix for the Seal itself in 1871. These official models inevitably led to the widespread of this type of informal Achievement in such unofficial contexts as the hotel flier of c. 1820 in **23f**.

(S-I.A.3) In 1809 a coin was minted on which was represented a variant of this attitude in which the elevated wings were both **displayed and *inverted*** — that is, folded in such a way that their feathers all pointed



a. 1st Reg., U. S. Army 1790s

b. Fifty-dollar note 1792

c. Coin c. 1807

DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 217 (Fig. 26), p. 18, (Fig. 28); 21f: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, cover.

[89] The term 'contourné' means 'oriented to the sinister', and was originally applied to lions rampant.

d. Treaty Seal 1825 e. Skip cover for Seal 1825 f. Hotel flier 1820s

Fig. 23. Eagle Supporters Displayed Rising Reguardant and Contourné

more or less directly downwards rather than angled upwards (**Figure 26f**). This (the mirror-image of the attitude of the eagles represented without the shield on their breast noted above, and the **third** general type of variant in the form of the informal Supporter, and of the Supporter generally) persisted on coins of the same series to 1908.[90] Given the fact that this manner of holding the wings had been introduced in formal versions of the Achievement as early as 1786, and in association with informal versions of the eagle outside any Achievement in 1795, it will be useful to comment at this point on its origin and armorial significance.

What came to be called the 'inverted' attitude was in fact the original manner of representing the wings of eagles (as in my neo-gothic rendering in **Figure 4**), and had remained such until the late fifteenth century, when artists began to represent them with their feathers splayed in a radiant manner, so that the upper ones pointed upward at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The introduction of ever more naturalistic representations of eagles between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries had led to the representation of wings with feathers tightly grouped, gradually creating (through intermediate forms like those in **Figure 21**) a clear visual distinction between wings that were fully extended and pointed upwards (like those in **21c** and **d**), and those that were half folded at the wrist and pointed downwards (like those in **21b**).

As the eagles of the Holy Roman and Russian Empires and the Kingdom of Prussia continued to be represented in both manners well into the nineteenth century, it would appear that this distinction was not regarded as significant in those countries. Nonetheless, it was certainly visibly distinctive, and the English heralds had systematized that

[90] YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *United States Coins*, p. 161

distinction when they introduced the term 'inverted' to describe the half-folded posture. As this term is first attested in 1611, in Guillim's *Display of Heraldry*, it can be asserted with certainty both that the distinction was long-established in the English armorial code in 1782, and also that it was well-known to Barton — who not only represented both of the eagles he blazoned as 'displayed' in the correct manner (**Figure 20-2,4**), but rejected the inverted attitude of the wings of the eagle drawn by Thomson (**20-3**). Furthermore, it must have been understood at the highest levels of state thereafter, as the upwardly-oriented attitude was maintained on all of the Great Seals and Treaty Seals, all of the early medals, and all of the flags representing the President and lesser officers of the executive branch.

Why then, were the wings of the eagles in so many other contexts incorrectly represented as *inverted*? In all likelihood the practice of inverting the wings arose (1) in part because there were a number of important models for it that would have been familiar to the artisans designing the coins, banknotes, and other items on which it was represented, and (2) in part because these artisans had no idea that it violated the terms of the blazon, and regarded it as nothing more than an artistic variation on the usual (but in their minds inherently flexible) version. Among the models for the inversion were the eagle on the coin of 1551 (**19b**) and the one on the new design of the Prussian flag introduced in 1802 (**20c**).

a. Gold coin 1795 **b. Quarter-dollar 1796** **c. Trade dollar 1873**

Figure 24. Eagles Rising and Reguardant, Displayed with Wings Inverted

The first *informal* type of eagle to which this deviant attitude applied was one used as a sort of beast-badge without any of its attributes on various coins of the 1790s (**Figure 24a,b**[91]), and with its *lower* attributes

[91] Fig. 22a-d: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *United States Coins*, 22a: p. 185; 22b: p. 246; 22c: p. 160; 22d: p. 218

on a coin-design introduced in 1873 (**24c**). As the bearer of the shield of the Arms of the Republic, it appeared as I noted earlier on a coin of 1809 (**26f**), whose design with minor variations would continue to be employed down to 1891. It constituted the **fourth** distinct variant of the Supporter as such.

a. Coin 1786 **b. Coin 1787** **c. Coin 1785** **d. Coin 1786**

Figure 25. Formal Eagles Reguardant Displayed with Wings Inverted, used (A) as Supporters and (B) Without the Shield of Arms

(S-I.B) Errors related to the attitude of the formal eagle. The remaining three forms of deviation of the series related to the *attitude* of the Supporter (the **fifth**, **sixth**, and **seventh** general types) were associated with *formal* representations of the eagle displayed, in which the body itself remained rigidly vertical, and its members were extended symmetrically around it. All three had been anticipated in the informal representations: (1) the ***inversion of the wings***, (2) the ***reversal of the orientation of the head***, and (3) the ***combination*** of the two. These deviations — all introduced between 1785 and 1790 — nevertheless established three additional general types of False Supporter.

(S-I.B.3) Surprisingly, as **Figure 25**[92] indicates, eagles exhibiting the ***combination*** of these errors appeared a few years earlier than those exhibiting one or the other: specifically on coins minted in 1786 and 1787. The attitude had in fact been anticipated in the use of eagles lacking a shield and a motto-scroll set on coins of 1785 and 1786, but seems to have fallen into disuse in official contexts thereafter, being superseded by versions in which only one or the other of the two deviations was present.

[92] Fig. 23a-d: Ibid.: 23a: p. 55; 23b: p. 62; 23c: p. 53; 23d: p. 54

a, b. One cent coins 1791, 1792 **c. Miss. 'Arms' 1817** **d. Pres. Seal 1845-8**

Fig. 26. Formal Eagles Displayed with Wings Inverted

(S-I.B.1) Both of these versions appeared in 1790, but the one involving the ***inversion of the wings*** was the first to be employed in a fully official context, and remained far more common down to 1877. This version of the eagle Supporter (represented in **Figure 26**)[93] is first attested on the seals of the Supreme Court and State Department engraved in 1790 (**7a,b**), but appeared almost immediately thereafter in a Middle Achievement set on a coin of 1791 (**26a**) and a Great Achievement set on one of 1792 (**26b**). It does not seem to have been very common thereafter, though it did appear in the 'Arms' adopted by Mississippi in 1817 (**26c**) and on the seals of the office of President of the United States from at least 1845 to 1858 (**26d**).

a. Ach. of President 1877 **b. Seal of Pres. 1877/88** **c. Flag of Pres. 1888-1945**

Fig. 27. Formal Eagles Displayed and Reguardant

[93] Fig. 24a, e: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, 24a: p. 469 (Fig. 88), 24e: p. 421 (Fig. 75); 24b, c: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 77; 24d: SMITH, *Flag Book*, p. 136 (Fig. c)

(S-I.B.2) Curiously (as **Figure 27**[94] indicates), the remaining deviant version of the eagle Supporter, characterized exclusively by the ***reversal of the orientation of its head***, was exclusively associated in official contexts, at least, with the office of the President. This may have been intended as a sort of armorial difference, and it seems to have been regarded as such by all of the Presidents from at least 1877 to 1945, because they all employed it in the Achievements displayed on their stationery (from 1877) (**27a**), their official seal (from 1877/88) (**27b**) and their official flag (from 1888) (**27c**). In 1945, however, this form of the Supporter would be abandoned in all of these contexts in favour of the officially blazoned version, and the presidential Achievement would be distinguished only by the peculiar representation of the Crest that had appeared on the stationery in 1877, discussed below.

(S-II) The second general set of deviations associated with the Supporter were those involving the ***omission* or *transposition* of both its *upper* and *lower attributes*** and of the ***alteration* of both the *order* and *number* of the lower attributes.** **(S-II.1)** Of these, the earliest and most common was the removal of the scroll bearing the motto from the eagle's beak, and either its complete omission from the Achievement or (more rarely) its transposition to another place (represented in **Figure 28**[95]).

[94] Fig. 25a-c: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*: 25a: p. 427 (Fig. 76), 25b: p. 431 (Fig. 79); 25c: Alfred ZNAMIEROWSKI, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags* (London, 1999, 2003), p. 60

[95] Fig. 26, YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, 26a: p. 35; 26b: p. 53; 26c: p. 77; 26d: p. 79; 26e: p. 359; 26f: p. 161; 26g: p. 91; 26h: p. 266

Fig. 28. Eagles lacking their Scroll (in 28f, detached and set above the head)

(II.1.i) The ***complete omission*** of the motto is first attested on coins of the 1780s and '90s, and as the Figure suggests, was associated with most of the different forms of eagle, with and without shields, that I have just distinguished. **(II.1.ii)** The ***displacement*** of the motto to above the head was largely if not entirely restricted to the later coins of the series bearing eagles rising in reverse that began in 1809, and those of the series of trade dollars in which they were rising and reguardant.

Fig. 29. Eagles with their Lower Attributes Reversed

(S-II.2) The next type of deviation (represented in **Figure 29**)[96] involved the ***reversal of the blazoned position of the branch and the arrows***, setting the former in the sinister claw and the latter in the dexter. This first appeared in 1786 on the same coin in which the eagle was first depicted with its wings inverted and its head reguardant (**29a**). It next appeared on a banknote of 1791 (**29b**) and a gold coin of 1795 (**29c**), and was revived on the trade dollar introduced in 1873 (27d), on which the

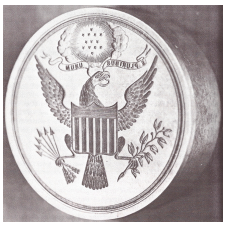
[96] Fig. 27a, c, d: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, pp. 35, 359, 144; 27b: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 367

eagle also lacked a shield. In all of these cases the reversal probably arose either from ignorance of or indifference to the blazon.

a. 6 on coin of 1791

b. 3 on handkerchief c. c. 1810

c. 3 on coin of 1815



d. 6 on Great Seal of 1841

e. 3 on coin of 1849

f. 3 on State Dep. Seal of 1880

g. One arrow on a political flier of 1799

Fig. 30. Eagles with the Number of their Arrows Reduced

(S-II.3) That is also at least part of the likely explanation for the next type of deviation (represented in **Figure 30**):[97] the ***reduction in the number of arrows*** held either *correctly* in the eagle's sinister claw or *incorrectly* in its dexter claw. The other part of the likely explanation is that it was difficult to represent precisely thirteen arrows in the small compass of seals and coins, and using a smaller number made them easier both to engrave and to recognize. In any case, the practice of reducing their number was more common than not on coins from 1791, and may also have been applied to military flags from around the same time. As can be seen here, the number was reduced to six on the coins of 1791 (**30a**) and '92 cited above, and to three on the series that began in 1807 (**23c**) and 1815 (**30c**), the patriotic handkerchief of c. 1810 (**30b**) and the State Department seal of 1880 (**30e**). It was even introduced onto the matrices of the Great Seal of the Republic of 1841 (**30d**) and 1877, both of which had only ***six arrows***. In popular

[97] Fig. 28a, c, e: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, 28a: p. 77, 28c: p. 161, 28e: p. 266; 28d, f: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*: 28d: p. 202 (Fig. 33), 28f: p. 484 (Fig. 90); 28b, g: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, 28b: p. 58, 28f: p. 37

representations of the eagle like that on the political flier of 1799 (**30f**) the number of arrows could even fall to one.

(S-III) The third and last general type of deviation affecting the Supporter was its displacement within the Achievement from its normal position, in which it was set at the centre, with the shield of Arms on its breast. In practice this position was maintained in the great majority of official representations throughout the period under review, but from the very beginning the eagle was occasionally set in other positions even in official contexts. I have identified five such positions: (**III.1**) standing behind and slightly to one side of the shield (as on the banknote of 1792 shown in **10a**); (**III.2**) floating directly above the shield (as on the coin of 1795 shown in **16a**); (**III.3**) standing on a rock and holding the shield by the upper rim with one claw (as on the seal of Illinois of 1819 shown in **16b**); (**III.4**) standing on the upper rim of the shield (as in the White House compote of 1853 shown in **10f**); and (**III.5**) standing on the face of the shield (as in the seal of the Justice Department of 1868 shown in **14a**, as well as the seals of the Department of Indian Affairs of 1892, and the State of Alabama of 1868[98]).

These positions — all egregious violations of armorial convention — brought the total number of simple subtypes of deviant Supporter I have identified to sixteen. Once again, however, the total number of types of False Supporter was significantly higher than that, because once again in many cases two or more of the different forms of deviation were combined in the same Supporter.

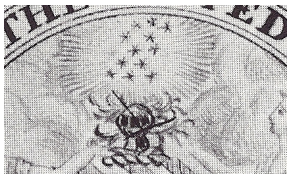
4.5. THE EMBLAZONMENTS OF THE CREST

I shall conclude my examination of the elements of the Achievement with what was from the beginning the most problematic of the three: the Crest, which Barton blazoned as '*Over the head of the eagle, which appears above the escutcheon, a Glory, Or, breaking through a cloud, proper, and surrounding thirteen stars forming a constellation, Argent, on an Azure field*.'

[98] For the last two seals, see ZIEBER, *Heraldry in America*, p. 112, Figs. 297 and 298.

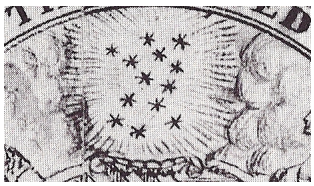
(1776) a. Du Simitière:

'The Eye of Providence in a radiant triangle whose Glory extends over the Shield and beyond the Supporters'

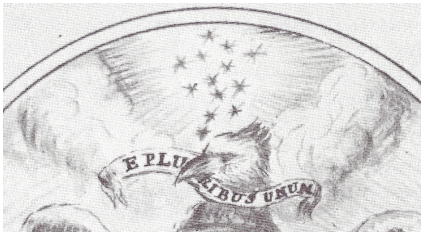


(1780) b. Hopkinson 1

'The Crest a radiant Constellation of 13 stars'



c. Hopkinson 2



(1782) d. Thomson: '*… a Constellation of Stars surrounded with bright rays and at a little distance clouds.'*

e. Barton 3: '*a Glory, Or, breaking through a cloud, proper, and surrounding thirteen stars forming a constellation, Argent, on an Azure field.'*

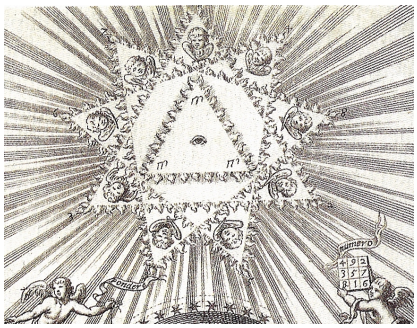
Fig. 31. The Evolution of the Crest of the United States 1776 - 1782

As I noted above, this Crest (whose evolution I trace pictorially in **Figure 31**[99]) was itself derived in part from the irradiated Eye of Providence proposed for the same purpose by Du Simitière in 1776, and later reused by Barton both in his first design for the Arms, and also in his design of the emblema he proposed for the reverse of the Great Seal (where it surmounted the symbolic pyramid earlier introduced by Hopkinson on the fifty-dollar bill of 1778[100]). Barton's Crest, however, was directly based on

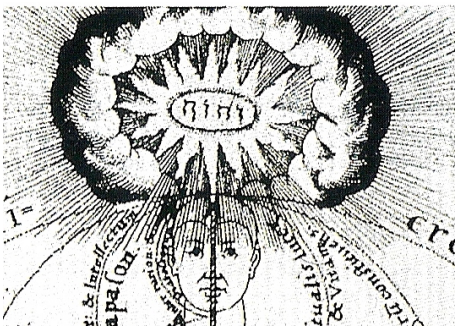
[99] Fig. 29: see n. 6 for sources.

[100] These are reproduced in PATTERSON and DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield*, Figs. 12 and 11, pp. 67 and 66. The pyramid on the fifty-dollar bill of 1778 had a flat top and was set in a circular frame bearing the motto PERENNIS. Barton's design for the reverse of the Great Seal included a similar pyramid, but suppressed the frame, and set an irradiated Eye above it, the motto PERENNIS below it, and the second motto DEO FAVENTE to either side of it. In the design finally adopted — long reproduced on the reverse of the one-dollar bill to the dexter of the obverse

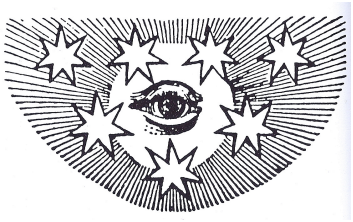
that first proposed by Hopkinson in 1780, which itself was derived in part from a pair of allegorical union-symbols that Hopkinson had created in the interim, involving both the *radiant Eye* and an *annulus*[101] of stars (shown in **Figure 33a-d**).



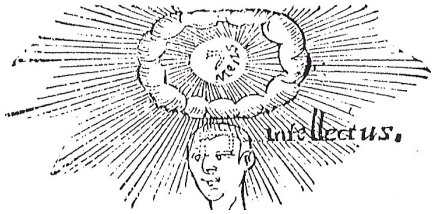
a. The Eye in a radiant enneagram (Llull)



b. Radiation through clouds of the divine to the human mind



c. The Eye in a radiant circle with stars



d. Radiation through clouds of the divine to the human mind

Fig. 32. Alchemical Models for the Crest: Stars, Clouds, Glories

It is clear that Hopkinson had borrowed the components of these union-symbols from a large and complex corpus of symbols associated with the hermetic tradition of alchemy. This (as can be seen in **Figure 32**) included the figure of the *Eye*, often set in a *radiant triangle*, sometimes set within *three interlocking triangles* forming a nine-pointed *star*, and often

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design bearing only the Achievement — the Eye was restored to its original triangle, and both of the mottoes were replaced: the first with NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM set on a scroll below the pyramid, and ANNUIT COEPTIS set to either side.

[101] As the blazonic term 'annulet' seems to be restricted to a figure in the shape of a simple metallic ring, I shall use the related word 'annulus' to designate a figure of the same annular shape, but composed of cloud or some comparable substance, normally treated in heraldic contexts in a formalized manner.

illuminating other *stars*: all seen in **32a**[102]. The Eye might also be set in a *circular* or *ovoid* field, similarly emiting rays, and sometimes surmounted by a *constellation of stars* (as in **32c**[103]). Other signs of comparable significance — especially the Tetragrammaton YHWH representing the Hebrew name of God (seen in **32b**) — might also be set at the centre of such fields, which were usually *irradiated* (to use the heraldic term) or surrounded by 'glories' (to use the then current vernacular term),[104] and often represented breaking through *annuli of cloud* (as in **32b** and **d**[105]).

Thus, every one of the elements of the Crest adopted in 1782, including its general form (in the last of these images), had not only been part of the corpus of alchemical symbols, but had already been associated in that corpus with the other elements of the Crest. Furthermore, much of that corpus had been appropriated first by the Rosicrucians and later by the Freemasons — an international secret society to which many of the leading Revolutionaries belonged — and would therefore have been familiar to them from that source, if not from the various works on alchemy that would have been available to them.

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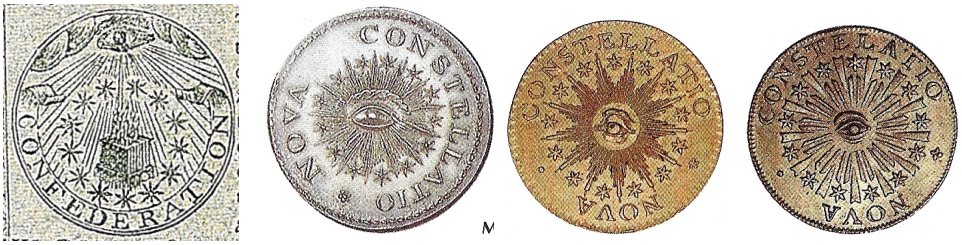
[102] Fig. 30a first appeared in Ramon Llull's *Ars brevis* (a summary of alchemical knowledge composed in the late thirteenth century), and in the form reproduced here in A. KIRCHNER, *Arithomologia* (Rome, 1665, reprinted in Alexander ROOB, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Cologne, London, 1997), p. 659.

[103] Fig. 30c first appeared in an eighteenth-century edition of J. BÖHME, *Theosophical Works* (Amsterdam, 1682), and was reprinted in ROOB, *Hermetic Museum*, pp. 564 and 242.

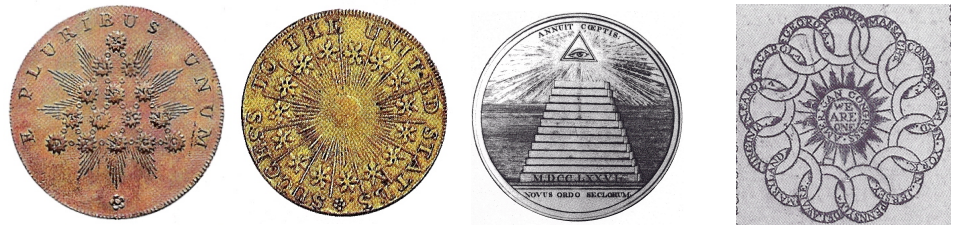
[104] The word 'glory' is first attested in English in the relevant sense of 'radiant halo' in 1646, and by 1693 it had come to be applied to any representation of a circle or ring of radiant light — including the 'stars' of knightly orders like the Garter, in which the order's badge was surrounded by such a circle of rays. (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1989), VII, p. 590) It was not a normal term of heraldic blazon, however, as simple 'glories' were rarely if ever used either as charges or as external armories, and objects surrounded by rays were blazoned as '**irradiated**' if the rays issued from their outer margins, or '**rayonnant**' if they issued from a central point behind them. (See Julian FRANKLYN and John TANNER, *An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Heraldry* [Oxford, 1970], p. 274.)

[105] Fig. 30b first appeared in R. FLUDD, *Utriusque Cosmi* (Frankfurt, 1619); Fig. 30d in the 1621 edition of the same work. They were reprinted in ROOB, *Hermetic Museum*, pp. 564 and 557 respectively.

Both the *Eye of Providence* and the *Tetragammaton* irradiated had also come into common use in all Christian denominations as symbols of divine oversight over human affairs. The latter symbol — in a setting almost identical to that of **32d** and the later Crest of the United States — was represented in a prominent place in the Anglican Church of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields in London: the direct model for most of the churches of British North America. The most common variant of the Eye of Providence was one in which the Eye proper was set in a triangular frame, representing the Trinity: a form particularly favoured by the Freemasons, and the one proposed by Du Simitière for the Crest and ultimately set by Barton above the symbolic pyramid on the Reverse of the Great Seal (**33g**).



a. The Emblema with an Eye radiating on a Circle of Stars **b - d. The Impresa with the irradiated Eye at the centre of the Circle of Stars, on tokens of 1783-85**



e. The stars in an irradiated triangle (Token 1792) **f. The Impresa minus the Eye (Medal c. 1850)** **g. The Eye in the irradiated triangle on the Seal Reverse (1782)** **h. Franklin's links and radiant annulus (1776)**

Fig. 33. Hopkinson's Emblema of 1778 and its Principal Derivatives and Analogues

As can be seen in **Figure 33a**,[106] the earlier of Hopkinson's two union-symbols based on the hermetic corpus — an original emblema with a circular frame — had consisted of a Roman altar surmounted with the flames of a sacrifice, surrounded by a *circlet of thirteen eight-pointed stars*,

[106] Fig. 31a, h: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money,* pp. 70, 64; Fig. 31b-f: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, 31b: p. 82; 31c,d: p. 52, 31e: p. 71, 31g: p. 80; Fig. 31g: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 391, Fig. 64

above which was set the all-seeing *Eye of Providence issuant of clouds, and emitting a fine radiance* that filled most of the circular field. The latter element of the design differed from Du Simitière's Crest only in including the clouds of Hopkinson's own later Crest, and the emblema as a whole included all of the elements of the Crest — in which Hopkinson's stars would replace Du Simitière's Eye. This emblema as a whole (the lower two-thirds of whose field were surrounded by a scroll bearing the word CONFEDERATION) had been adopted for use on the Continental forty-dollar bill issued on 1 April 1778 (33a), and was soon widely known.

Nevertheless, the most durable of Hopkinson's unity-symbols consisted exclusively of the *Eye-of-Providence irradiated*, or surrounded by a *glory*, itself often surrounded by *clouds*. Numerous variants of this symbol were created in some numbers in the 1780s and '90s, including Hopkinson's impresa (**33b-d**). As can be seen in **Figure 33b**, a token was minted in 1783 bearing a version of the irradiated Eye set within a circlet of 'stars' (in the form of mullets of six points) and the motto NOVA CONSTELLATIO (the 'New Constellation' represented by the 'stars' since the adoption of Hopkinson's canton design in 1777), thus recombining in a more unified form the elements of Hopkinson's earlier emblema. Variants of this design (shown in **33c** and **d**) with forms of 'glory' that anticipated some of those that would be associated with the Crest, appeared on coins of 1784 and '85. Thereafter, however, the Eye at the centre was often omitted from the impresa (as it would be on a series of 'success medals' (**33f**) minted from about 1840 to 1860), and from 1792 was sometimes replaced by the 'stars', on the model of the Crest established a decade earlier. A Kentucky token minted from 1792 to 1794 (**33e**) bore a circular glory with twelve triangular points, overlaid with thirteen mullets of about a dozen points arranged in a triangle with rows of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

It is worth noting here that a very similar glory had also formed part of an otherwise quite different symbol of thirteenness-in-unity invented at about the same time by Benjamin Franklin (**31h**[107]). The latter consisted of a set of fourteen annuli, one (representing Congress) set in the center, and the other thirteen (representing the states) arranged around it in a circle, linked together like a continuous chain. The central annulus surrounded the text WE ARE ONE; itself bore the identifying text AMERICAN CONGRESS; and was surrounded by a glory of thirteen major points, also

[107] NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 37

representing the states. This figure appeared on the Continental two-thirds-of-a-dollar bill as early as 17 February 1776 — more than four months before the unilateral declaration of independence — and from the same year on the first coins of what was called 'Continental Currency'. On those coins it was associated with a new emblema including a sun casting its rays downward (in this case on a sundial).[108]

It must appear, therefore, that Du Simitière's design for the *Arms* of the United States (with its chain representing the states) was inspired by Franklin's emblem, while his design for the Crest (a radiant Eye casting its rays towards the Arms) was inspired by Hopkinson's emblem. As we have seen, the Crest finally adopted was essentially that proposed by Hopkinson himself in 1780, in which he replaced the Eye on the field of his emblema with the 'Constellation of Stars' he had created as a union-symbol for his flag of 1777, and had set below the Eye on his emblema of 1778.

All of this serves to explain how the Crest of the United States came to take the very odd form (for an armorial emblem) of a patch of sky sprinkled with thirteen stars and surrounded by rays and clouds. I must now turn to the problems such a crest — and especially one described in the blazonic language established by Barton — poses for the emblazoner.

The fundamental difficulties presented by the Crest thus described and its actual representation are fourfold. First, its **general form** — that of a glory or radiance — was relatively ill-suited to its function as an armorial crest, which *by definition* is an armorial emblem in the form of a three-dimensional object attached to the apex of a helmet. This definition means that anything designated in a blazon as a 'crest' must at least be *attachable* (if not always *attached*) to the top of a helmet, and must therefore be both of a *nature* and of a *size* that permit such an attachment. In practice, this means (1) that a crest must take the form of a *solid object*, all of whose parts are capable of being either *carved* from wood or *moulded* in boiled leather or some similar material, or composed of a bunch of feathers; and (2) that it must be *small* enough to be borne on a helmet. Finally, the conventions of emblazonment everywhere demanded that a crest be represented in the context of an achievement (3) on a scale not significantly larger (and normally rather smaller) than that of the shield of arms;[109] (4) *entirely above*

[108] YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, pp. 81, 83-84.

[109] Measuring the relative height of the crest (including its crown) and the shield in a randomly-chosen set of the great achievements of the British monarchs from the

the upper margin of that shield; and (5) entirely *within* the boundaries of any frame used to surround the achievement. The crest described in Barton's blazon *can* certainly be represented in a way that conforms to all of these conventional requirements, but as we shall see, the great majority of the earlier emblazonments of it violated most or all of them.

The most consistent violation in these emblazonments was the omission of the **helmet**, noted above. This omission not only undermined the claim of the object so identified to *be* a crest, but deprived the Achievement as a whole of two important signs of the *nature* of the armiger it represented: that of a sovereign and independent government. Because helmets had come to serve in the English armorial code as insignia of generic status, the helmet to which a crest was attached had to be one of the appropriate type: in the case in question, the gold, barred parade-helmet insignial of royalty and sovereignty, normally set affronty to distinguish it in monochromatic representations from the otherwise similar helmet assigned to peers.

Both Hopkinson and Barton were clearly aware of these facts, for as **Figure 31b** shows, the former had included a representation of a helmet of that form and orientation below the Crest in his first drawing of the Achievement, and Barton had not only included an identical helmet in the blazons of both of his own proposals and in the drawing for the second (**1f**), but stated its insignial significance in his explanatory note to his first proposal, in a passage citing Guillim's classic handbook *A Display of Heraldry*.[110] Nevertheless — perhaps in recognition of the fact that, at least in the form in which he conceived it, the Crest he was proposing could not

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reign to James I to that of George III represented in HASLER, *Royal Arms*, (pp. 176-227), I found a range of ratios from 3 : 2 to 2 : 5, but in all but one case the crest was either the *same* height as the shield (1 : 1), or distinctly *smaller* (3 : 4, 2 : 3, 1 : 2). Even in the middle achievements where the *crest* replaced the simple crown (ee.g. nos. 389 and 390), the proportions fell in the same range. A review of representations of achievements in various armorials of the last several centuries, representing those of noblemen of a wide range of countries, revealed a very similar range of proportions, suggesting that they have long been in effect *canonical*.

[110] 'The Helmet is such as appertains to Sovereignty; and the Cap is use as the Token of Freedom & Excellency: It was formerly worn by Dukes, because, says Guillim, 'they had a more worthy Government than other subjects'. PATTERSON and DOUGALL, *The Eagle and the Shield*, pp. 61-62.

easily be attached to a helmet — Hopkinson had abandoned its representation in his second drawing, and Thomson, having complicated matters by setting it over the head of his eagle Supporter holding the motto-scroll in its beak, maintained this omission, and transmitted it to Barton. It is true that this left less room for a helmet than would normally have been the case, but my own rendering of the Achievement in **Figures 3a** and **34** show that it was still possible to include the helmet required by armorial convention in a visually effective manner, and thus to include the principal sign of sovereignty permitted by the blazon of the Achievement.

A secondary sign of sovereignty lacking because of the omission of the helmet was the **mantling** or **lambrequin**, which in the British armorial codes had also been assigned an insignial function, at least among personal armigers, and jurisdictions of regnal and provincial rank. Since shortly after the accession of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558, the mantling suspended below the crest on the helmet of the English or British monarch has been represented as ***gold doubled*** (or lined in) ***ermine***, and under the Stuarts those came to be treated as the colours insignial of *sovereignty* as well as of royalty. A mantling of this sort ought, therefore, to have bedecked the gold parade-helmet set below the Crest of the United States. I include one in **Figure 34** (albeit with a silver lining).

Even if those colours had not been employed, however, a mantling in some colours ought to have been represented, as the conventions of English armory had long required the use of such a helmet-cover, and the omission of a mantling from emblazonments had always been extremely rare. Nevertheless, for reasons that are quite unclear, the only representation I have found of a helmet decked with a mantling of any form in association with the Crest of the United States is in the drawing made by Hopkinson in 1780, in support of his first proposal for an Achievement (**1bi**). Although Barton included a sovereign helmet in both of his own proposals, he made no mention of a mantling, and failed even to represent one in the painting he prepared for the second proposal (as can be seen in **Figure 1d**). This suggests that neither Hopkinson nor Barton was aware of the long-established conventions governing the insignial character of the royal mantling.

The second major deficiency in the design of the Crest — the omission of a **crest-base** — is closely related to the first. In English armory a crest was *always* attached to the helmet through a crest-base either in the form of an *arched crown* or *cap* (on which it sits or stands according to its

nature); or in the form of an open *coronet* or *torse*, which in three-dimensional representations conceals the join between the real base of the crest and the apex of the helmet, and in two-dimensional representations often serves as a visual base on which the crest sits or stands. These bases also serve to identify a crest *as such* when it is represented *detached* from its helmet — as it is legitimately only when used as a kind of *badge*, and in representations of the containing Achievement abridged for the purpose of registration. Once again, both Hopkinson and Barton were aware of this convention, as the former included a torse in both of his representations of the Crest, and the latter included some sort of crest-base in both of his original proposals. Unfortunately, no form of crest-base was mentioned in Barton's final blazon, based on Thomson's drawing, with the result that the 'Crest' of the United States must be attached to the helmet *directly* in a very un-English (and indeed, un-British) fashion (shown in **Figure 34**), and cannot be recognized as a *crest* when displayed independently.

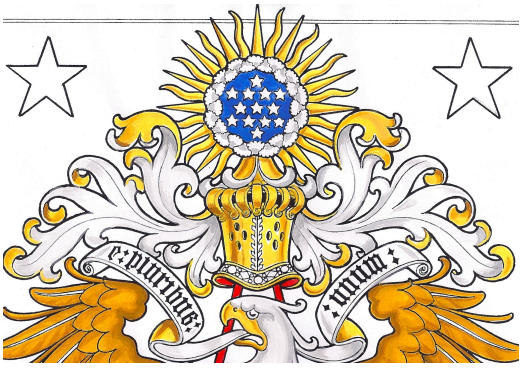


Fig. 34. The Crest on a appropriate helmet with an appropriate mantling

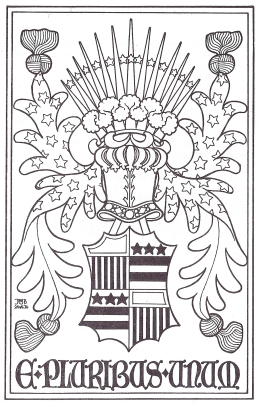


Fig. 35. A basic emblematic Achievement of the Presidency

The third problem related to the Crest arises from the wording of the blazon that places it 'over the head of the eagle'. Aside from suggesting quite improperly that it was not to be attached to the technically requisite helmet, this direction theoretically **limited the use of the Crest to *great* Achievements**, in which the Supporter was displayed. This was a very odd limitation to place on the display of a Crest, which could normally be represented in what I have called a '**basic emblematic achievement**', composed only of the shield of arms and crested helmet. This is in fact the *normal* form of achievement for all but the most eminent

armigers. In practice, so far as I have been able to discover, the blazon has been followed to date, and the display of the basic emblematic form of the Achievement has been entirely avoided. Nevertheless, as the blazon here violates a fundamental rule of the general armorial code, it is legally null, and should be ignored. I have given in **Figure 35** a representation of such an achievement with the helmet bearing what came to be the *presidential* version of the Crest (described below).

The fourth and most important shortcoming of Barton's blazon of the Crest, however, is that it was full of obscure and inappropriate terms, and inadequate specifications. The key words 'breaking through', 'surrounding', 'star', 'constellation', and 'field' were not standard terms of blazon in such a context, and are therefore open to a wide range of interpretations beyond the purely stylistic types normally permitted by blazonic language. In consequence they oblige the artist to rely too heavily on earlier representations, which might themselves be (and in practice usually were) incompatible not only with the conventions of armory, but even with a reasonable interpretation of the blazon. For all of those reasons, all but a tiny handful of the depictions of the Crest produced for both official and unofficial contexts to date deviate significantly *both* from the conventions of armory *and* from the only interpretation of the blazon that permits conformity with those conventions.

Barton was not wholly to blame for the shortcomings of his blazon, as he had been obliged to include in his final design for an Achievement the very unheraldic form of Crest first set out by Francis Hopkinson in his first proposal for an Achievement during the proceedings of the relevant committee in 1780, retained in the second proposal he laid before that committee, and revived by Thomson in his proposal for an Achievement set before the committee of 1782. In all of these renderings (shown in **31b**, **c**, and **d**), the 'Crest' is represented as a disordered collection of thirteen **stars**, set in a formless **field** emitting from its perimeter a similarly formless band of **rays** running off the field of the seal at the top. The rays are themselves surrounded on their visible sides by an equally formless mass of **clouds**, which fills the whole field of the seal above the shield and the heads of the Supporters. This baroque confection was not only represented on far too large a scale to function as a proper crest, but was far too nebulous in its construction either to be represented as an object attached to a helmet, or to be described adequately in blazonic terms.

Hopkinson's Crest, as we have seen, had been conceived in *symbolic* rather than heraldic terms, and its elements all derived — like the scenic designs set on the reverses of contemporary seals — from the world of the emblem-book rather than the armorial. His *description* of the Crest — 'a radiant constellation of 13 stars' — was hopelessly inadequate in armorial terms, however, and for all of the reasons stated above, it was a very unfortunate figure from an armorial perspective. The description of Hopkinson's Crest included by Thomson in his own proposal of 1782 had improved only slightly on its wording, by mentioning the clouds included in Hopkinson's drawing. His *representation* of it (**Figure 31d**) had improved upon it equally slightly by lifting the lower margin of the mass of clouds above the shield and the wings of his eagle Supporter. Nevertheless, his rendering left the lower part of the Crest behind the head of the eagle in a most unheraldic fashion, and allowed both its upper two-thirds, and the upper *half* of his glory, to disappear behind the inscription-circlet of the seal on which the Achievement was set. This established yet another unfortunate model.

Barton's definitive blazon of the Crest — as vague as it remained — was actually a significant improvement on its predecessors. This was true especially because it did not actually describe the Crest drawn by Hopkinson, but rather an armorially superior version that should have given rise to a much more acceptable rendering. Barton described the glory as 'breaking through' a cloud rather than being *surrounded* by one, and that would most logically be interpreted to mean that the rays of the glory were to extend *beyond* the cloud: a much more natural and visually desirable position from an heraldic point of view. Thus, the only truly *correct* form of the Crest — conforming both to the blazon and to the general conventions of armory — is one in which the rays of the 'glory' are largely or entirely outside the *cloud*, which itself defines the shape of the 'field'.

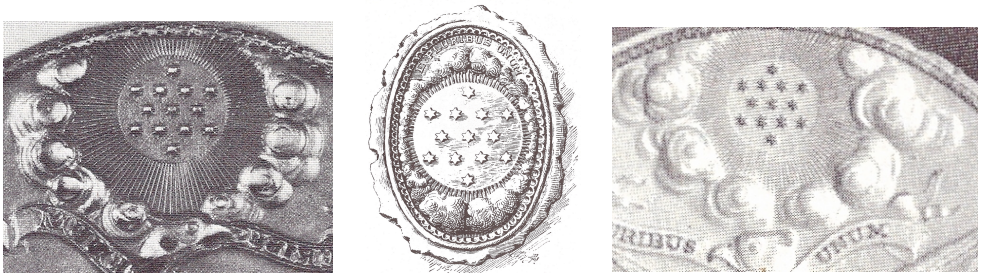
Unfortunately, Barton did not have an opportunity to represent his description of any part of the Achievement in a visual form before his proposal was submitted to Congress. Nevertheless, he seems to have told Trenchard how to emblazon it when he prepared an engraved representation of both sides of the Great Seal four years later, and as can be seen in **Figure 38a**, the Crest in the Achievement on the obverse (the only side ever cut) conforms to Barton's blazon as I have just interpreted it. That Crest did, of course, retain all of the other defects of the earlier

emblazonments, and was thus far from ideal in terms of the armorial code, but it was a step in the right direction.

(C.I) In any case, setting aside the inherent failings noted above (which meant that all representations of the Crest were at least partially defective), what may be called the **most correct general type of the Crest** resembled Trenchard's in having a *glory entirely exterior to the band of cloud*, which itself *immediately surrounded the 'field' on which the 'constellation' was set*, and thus *defined its outer boundary*. The only **wholly correct subtype** of this type of Crest (C.II.1) is one in which the *form and proportions of its elements conformed not only to the blazon but to the conventions or armory*. The **false subtypes** (C.I.2, 3, etc.,) are those in which one or another of those characteristics violated those conventions.

On the basis of that definition, the most correct of the numerous **deviant** or **false general types** of Crest may next be collectively defined on the basis of their *inclusion all of the elements mentioned in the blazon in some erroneous form or arrangement*, and may be classified into types on the basis of their structure into a **second type** (C.II) that (in violation of the blazon and of the conventions of armory) *set the glory entirely within the band of clouds, and thus radiating directly from the field*; and a **third type** (C.III) that (in conformity with the *blazon* but in violation of the *conventions* of armory) set it in the same position with respect to the field, but with the *band of clouds arranged across its visible diameter at some point between the field and the outer parts of the glory*, so that the latter could be said to 'break through' the clouds. The subtypes of each of these general types (C-II.1, 2, etc.) may then be defined on the basis of their violations of the other conventions governing the nature of crests.

The remaining **general deviant types** (C-IV, V, etc.) may be defined in their turn on the basis of their ***displacement*** or ***omission*** of one or more of the elements of the Crest (field, 'stars', clouds, and glory), and their **subtypes** (C-III.1, C-IV.2, etc.) defined on the basis of such things as the ***arrangement***, ***reduction,*** or ***augmentation*** of the elements retained. I shall examine these types and their subtypes in a broadly historical order, beginning with what I have called the second deviant type, which appeared before the first subtype of the canonical first type.



a. On the Great Seal of 1782 b. On seal of 1782 c. On presidential seal of 1790

Fig. 36. (C-II.1-2) The Earliest Official Emblazonments: The Crest on the Seals of 1782 to 1790

(C-II.1) Alas, as **Figure 36**[111] shows, the earliest official emblazonments — on the matrix of the first Great Seal (**36a**) and the signet seal of the President of the Congress made in 1782 (**36b**), and on the privy seal prepared for the newly-created Office of the President of the United States in 1790 (**36c**) — all represented the cloud as entirely *surrounding* the glory, in imitation of Thomson's drawing, rather than in obedience to Barton's blazon. The early emblazonments did improve upon the earlier drawings from an heraldic perspective in a number of other ways, however — not only by reducing the *size* of the Crest to something closer to that required by armorial convention (and in the process significantly reducing the width of the band of cloud to the point where it could be blazoned as an '**annulus**'), but also by setting the 'constellation' of stars on a clearly-defined *circular* field that could be blazoned as a '**roundel**', and arranging the 'stars' themselves in a regular pattern, which could be blazoned as '**one, four, three, four, one**'. This pattern — which was to be retained on all later Great Seals — initially reflected the shape of the 'stars' of which it was composed, which were represented on all three as **mullets of six points**. Unfortunately, although the reduced proportions of the crest, and the reduction of the clouds to a *relatively* narrow annulus (or at least a segment of an annulus) would persist in all later emblazonments, this would not be true of the form of the 'stars', the 'constellation', or the 'field', and only the first would be given a different *fixed* form (with the **five points** introduced in Trenchard's engraving of 1786 (**38a**) before 1885.

[111] Fig. 34: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle &c*, 34a: p. 124 (Fig. 20); 34b: p. 564 (Fig. 90); 34c: p. 431 (Fig. 80)

(C-II.2) One other improvement was introduced in the smallest of the three seals in Figure 36. In both of the larger seals, the *rays* of the 'glory' surrounding the roundel were still represented as too long for either the *glory* itself or the *cloud* to fit on the field of the seal. On the signet seal, by contrast, they were reduced to a very narrow annulus between the roundel and the wider annulus of cloud, so that both elements would fit easily on the sigillary field — as armorial convention required. I shall classify these two designs as **types II.1 and II.2**., and count them as the **first two types** of deviant Crest.

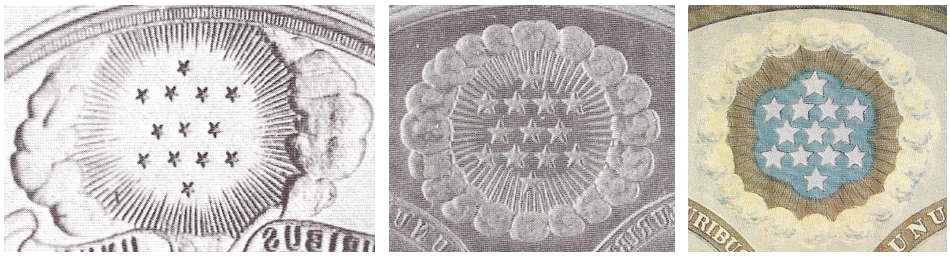


Fig. 37. (C-II.3-5) The Crest on the Seals of 1841, 1885, and the lithograph of 1890

A related but significantly different interpretation of the blazon of the Crest would be employed on the matrices of the Great Seal made in 1841 and 1877 **(type II.3)**, and an even more different version on the seals of 1885 and 1904 **(type II.4)**, all represented in **Figure 37**.[112] Unfortunately, the 'field' of the former design was deprived of the circular form it had been given in the three earlier seals, and restored to the inchoate and unblazonable shape of Hopkinson's and Thomson's sketches — at the same time reducing the width of the (equally formless) surrounding glory by swallowing up its innermost third. The 1885 design, by contrast, benefitted from two *positive* changes: (1) further reducing the overall size of the Crest so that it would fit completely on the field of the seal, and (2) making both the circlet of clouds and the circlet of rays narrower and more regular, on the model of the signet seal of 1782.

Alas, the 1885 design also suffered from a *negative* change: (3) removing what remained of the definition of the central field by shrinking its and allowing the stars to overlap the rays set around it. The negative changes were mitigated to a significant extent in the coloured representation made by the lithographer Andrew Graham c. 1890 (**35c**), in

[112] Fig. 35: ibid., 35a: p. 202 (Fig. 33); 35b: p. 276 (Fig. 44); 35c: p. 400 (Fig. 72)

which he imposed a *quinquelobate* shape upon the blue field, and confined the stars within its boundaries. This (which may be called **II.5**, and numbered as the **fifth type** of deviant crest) is the form of the Crest familiar today both from representations of the Graham's rendering of the seal design used on almost all government buildings, and from the monochromatic version set on passports and the reverse of the one-dollar bill. Unfortunately, the shape of its field is unknown to armory and cannot therefore be blazoned, and it is still irradiated in a manner that is not only *unarmorial* but in violation of the blazon.

In any case, even Crests of this *general* type were by no means the only ones to be represented on seals, coins, medals, and other comparable official contexts, even in the first decade of the official existence of the Achievement of which it was part. Among these were several versions of the more correct general type I have called **C.I.**, in which the glory was entirely outside an arc or annulet of clouds, and the clouds defined the shape of the field bearing the 'stars'.

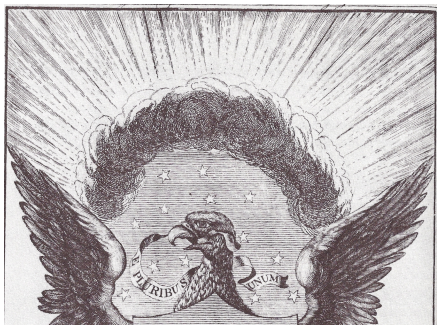
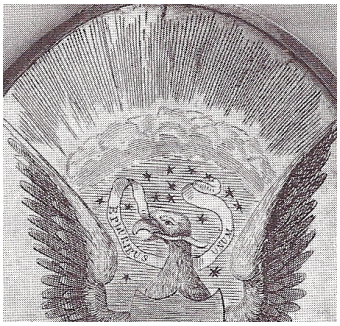
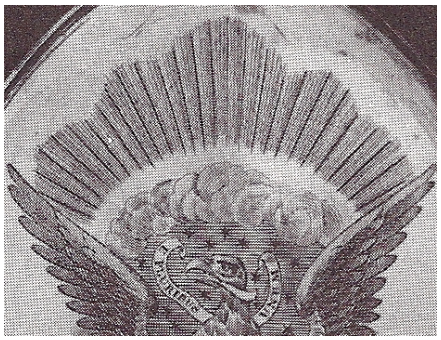
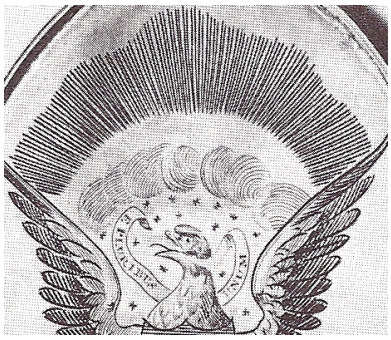
(C-I.1) As I observed above, the first step in the direction of establishing this arrangement of the elements of the Crest appeared in Trenchard's painting of the new Achievement made (apparently under Barton's instruction) in 1786 (**Figure 38a**).[113] While this representation not only solved the problems inherent in type II, along with that of depicting the clouds cut off by the lower margin of the inscription circlet of the seal, it violated the requirement of the blazon that the glory, at least (which was by definition annular) — and by implication the clouds — 'surround' the constellation of stars.

In effect, Trenchard had attempted to solve the problem of the placement of the overlarge Crest by forcing it down farther behind the head and wings of the eagle-Supporter, and in effect reducing it to a segment of the whole in which the cloud and radiance took the form of arcs set over the partly-obscured field between the wings. This arrangement (which constituted the **sixth type** of deviant Crest) clearly violated both the blazon and the conventions of armory, and was thus inferior to that of Type C-II.1 set on the contemporary Great Seal. Nevertheless, it was soon reproduced in a monochromatic mode on the Indian Peace Medals of 1792, '93, and '95 (**38b-d**[114]), and would later be adopted for use on the seal and

[113] Fig. 36a: ibid., p. 390 (Fig. 63)

[114] Fig. 36b: ibid., p. 395 (Figs. 68, 69)

stationery of the presidency in 1850 and '77 (**27a**, **b**). A variant I shall identify below would be set on the presidential flag of 1888 (**27d**), where it would remain in use until 1945.


a.

b.

c.

d.

a. Trenchard rendering 1786 b-d. On second, third, and fourth Indian Peace Medals 1792, 1793, 1795

Fig. 38. (C-I.2) The Crest in Trenchard's Emblazonment (1786) and the Later Peace Medals (1792-95)

(C-I.2) The first subtype of the *superior* derivative of this general type of Crest had in the meantime appeared in a polychromatic form on a painted panel set in St. Paul's Chapel, New York, in or soon after 1785, and in a monochromatic form on the First Indian Peace medal of 1789. Both of these renderings (seen in **Figure 39**[115]) retained the arrangement of clouds and glory in which the former was set within the latter, but differed from their models in representing the field of the Crest as a large roundel, most of whose circumference was actually visible, and was visibly surrounded and defined by a narrow circlet of cloud formed of a series of identical puffs. In both renderings the field of the Crest was also much larger than in its predecessors, requiring once again that it be set *behind* rather than *above* the head of the eagle (as both the blazon and armorial convention

[115] Fig. 37b: ibid., p. 395 (Fig. 68); 37a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 188

required), but while the glory of the panel filled the whole space that had been occupied in the earliest renderings by the clouds, that of the medal (whose field was much larger) was reduced to a series of short triangular sets of rays of diminishing size, comparable to those on the tokens of 1784 and 1792 (**33c**, **e**).

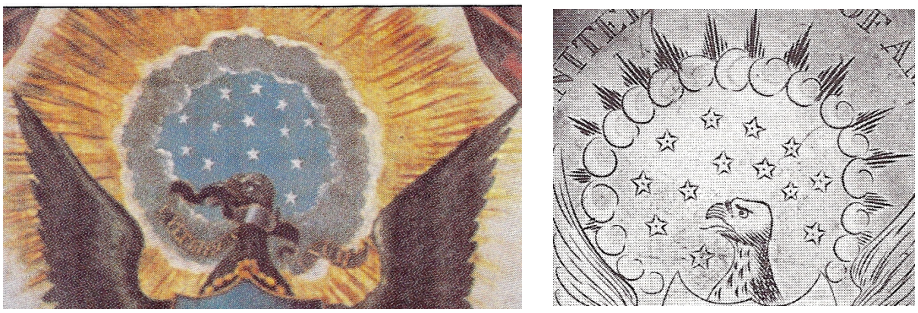


Fig. 39. (C-II.2) a. Crest in Washington's Stall and b. on Peace Medal of 1789

Because of the inappropriate size of the *field* of both of these versions, and also of the *glory* of the former, neither of them was a satisfactory rendering of the blazon, but they both represented another step towards the only possible solution to the problem of interpreting the blazon in a way that would satisfy the requirement for a crest in which the field was defined by something other than the rays issuing from it, and permit the glory to be something more than a narrow circlet of rays between the field and the cloud.

(C-I.3) An acceptable rendering of this idea in the contemporary baroque style was finally introduced in the following year, in the almost identical representations seen here in **Figure 38**[116] of the Crest on the matrices of the seals adopted by the **Supreme Court** and the **Department of State**. In both of them the circular field — tightly packed with stars — was reduced to about the same size as that on the Great Seal, and was immediately surrounded by a very narrow circlet of clouds, composed of eight identical ovoid puffs, which in turn was surrounded by a radiance composed of triangular groups of rays like those on the peace medal but of a relatively larger and even size so that they formed a more visually prominent part of the whole design, like those in the impresa on the coin of 1783 (31c). This form of the Crest even fit neatly above the head of the eagle

[116] Fig. 38, ibid., p. 469 (Figs. 87, 88)

and below the margin of the field of the seal, and unlike the earlier renderings, could easily have been attached by one of its points to the apex of a helmet (represented in Figure 32). It must therefore be regarded as the **only correct type of the Crest** actually employed, and it is a great pity that it not only failed to become the *normal* type, but was never employed again in any Achievement I have yet discovered.

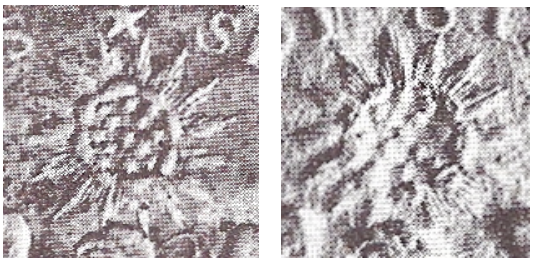
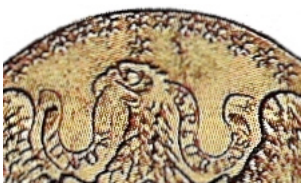


Fig. 40. (C-II.3) The Crest on the Seals of the Supreme Court and Dept. of State 1790

Fig. 41. (C-III) The Crest on the Diplomatic Medal of 1792

(C.III) What I have called the **third general type** of Crest was introduced on the Diplomatic Medal of 1792, whose relevant part is represented in **Figure 41**.[117] It was effectively a hybrid of the first and second types which had appeared just before it. While it conformed more precisely to the blazon that the first, in having the band of cloud *set across* rather than wholly *inside* or *outside* the rays of the glory, so that they actually 'broke through' it, in all other respects it suffered from the defects of Type II.1, extending behind the Supporter and beyond the edge of the field, and occupying far too much of the space of the Achievement. Perhaps fortunately, it was rarely if ever employed in later settings.

a. Army Flag of 1782-89

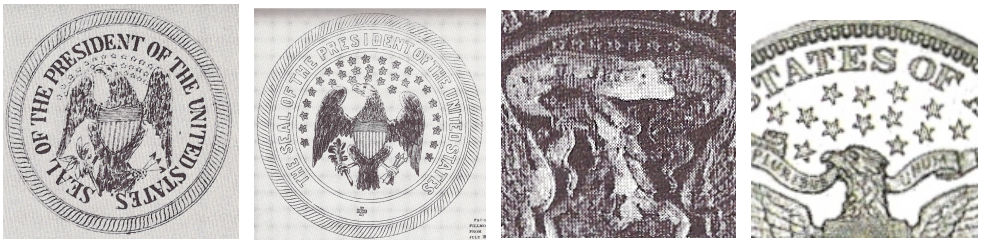


b. Coin of 1792

c. Overmantel panel c. 1830

[117] Fig. 39, ibid., p. 393 (Fig. 65)

d. Coin 1786 (13 st.) e. Coin 1787 (12+1) f. Coin 1791 (15) g. Coin 1792 (6 stars)



h. Seal 1845-6 (42 st.) j. Seal 1851-8 (44 st.) k. Seal 1880 (7+1+1+3+1 stars) l. Coin 1892-6 (13 stars)

Fig. 40. (C-IV) The Crest omitting the Field, Glory, & Clouds, reduced to 'Stars'

Despite the shortcomings of most of them, all of the types of Crest noted to this point actually included all of the elements specified in the blazon, and differed only representing and arranging them differently. All six of the remaining general types of Crest differed from the first three in lacking one or more of their essential elements. Two of them (general types IV and V) were also distinctively characterized by the particularly unorthodox manner of their relationship to the other elements of the Achievement.

(C-IV) Rather surprisingly, given its radical character, the first general type of Crest of this second series to appear (represented in **Figure 40**[118]) was characterized by the ***omission of the field, the clouds, and the glory***, so that only the ***'stars'*** were retained of the Crest established by the blazon. Though radically reduced in its content, it resembled the Crests of subtype C-I.1, in which the arcs were formed by the bands of clouds and rays rather than the 'stars'. **(C-IV.1)** Its earliest known setting was the Army flag (**40d**) used in at least part of the period between the adoption of

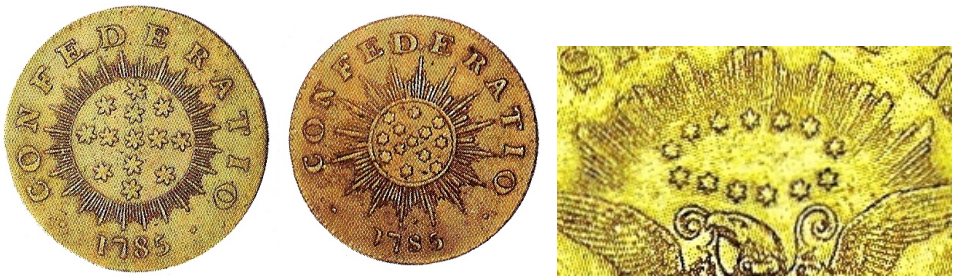
[118] Fig. 40a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 189; 40b, d-g, l: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, 40b: p. 77, 40d: p. 55, 40e: p. 62, 40f: p. 78, 40g: p. 79; 40c: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, cover; 40h-k: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, 40h, j: p. 421 (Fig. 75), 40k: p. 484 (Fig. 90)

the Achievement in 1782 and the establishment of the federal constitution in 1789, and it appeared in that context in the form of a ***simple arc of 'stars'*** set well above the head of the eagle between the tips of its upturned wings. Precisely that arrangement appeared again on a panel of an overmantel of c. 1830 (**40c**), and a very similar one in which the thirteenth 'star' was displaced to below the arc over the eagle's head had appeared in the interim on a coin of 1792 (**40b**). A third variant of the arc would appear in Crest of the ninth general type (established in 1888), in which nine of the 'stars' would be set in this manner over the rays and below an arc of clouds (**Figure 44**).

The Crest reduced to 'stars' arranged in an arc constituted the **first subtype** of the fourth type; the **second subtype (C-IV.2)** was characterized by a ***random arrangement of the 'stars' either entirely or mainly around the eagle's head***. Five distinct types of arrangement were eventually established, determined in part by the attitude of the eagle's wings, in part by how many 'stars' were included, in part by whether or not the eagle held the motto-scroll in its beak, and in part on how much space was left in the design above the head or the scroll. Down to 1880, the random arrangement of the stars alone was associated exclusively with eagles lacking the motto-scroll (**40d-j**), and mainly with those with inverted wings (**40d**, **c**, **h**, **j**), though in two early cases (**40f**, **g**) with eagles whose wings pointed upward. On the coins of 1786 to 1792 on which these crests were initially set, all or most of the 'stars' (whose number varied between a low of three and a high of fifteen) floated either above or between the wings, in extremely varied but essentially disordered patterns, giving no suggestion of the 'constellation' of the blazon. On the coin of 1787, indeed, the thirteenth 'star' was displaced (for no obvious reason) to a position diagonally below the arrows held in the eagle's sinister claw. This subtype probably represented a radical simplification of the Crests of types C-I.1 and I.2, created through the removal of all of the elements except the 'stars', which retained the place they occupied in both earlier types.

Though apparently rare after the 1790s, the subtype was revived for use on the seals of the office of the President of the United States between 1845 and at least 1858 (**40h**, **j**), but on those seals of which an image has survived the number of 'stars' was raised from the blazonic thirteen to the armorially absurd levels of forty-two and forty-four: no doubt chosen to reflect the number of states then forming part of the Union, and more particularly the number of 'stars' then displayed on the canton of the Flag.

The increase in their numbers obliged the designers of those seals to arrange the 'stars' in three long rows, curving around the eagle's head and wings, and in the latter case the outer row ran almost to the lower tips of the wings, in a manner wholly inappropriate for the elements of a crest. From at least 1880, however — when a new seal was cut for the State Department (**40k**) — the number of 'stars' on seals, coins, and flags was reduced back to thirteen, and the motto-scroll was normally restored to its blazonic place in the eagle's beak.



On *Confoederatio* coins of 1785 **On the double eagle coin of 1849**

a. C-V.1. Circular, Defined Field **b. C-V.2. Segmental, Undefined Field**

Fig. 41. (C-V) The Crest omitting only the Clouds

On the seal in question, however, the scroll occupied so much of the space above the eagle's head that the 'stars' had to be arranged rather awkwardly around it: seven in a row above it, and the rest either singly or in a set of three below it in the blanks between its folds. A happier arrangement appeared on quarter dollar coin of 1892 (**40l**), which left room above the scroll for the sort of random grouping of 'stars' introduced in 1786.

(C-V) The **fifth** of the later types of Crest (represented in **Figure 41**[119]) was characterized the ***omission of the circlet of clouds***, and the retention of all of the other elements. The first of its two distinct subtypes (**V.1**) was introduced on a pair of *Confoederatio* coins minted in 1785 (**41a**). In it, the ideal form of the Crest established in type C-I.3 — with a circular field surrounded first by a narrow circlet of clouds and then by a circlet of rays in triangular sets — was modified by the omission in question, though on the second coin it was replaced by a simple annulet. This made it the least egregious of the deviant types of Crest, as it preserved the general

[119] Fig. 41: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, p. 54

form of the Crest to an extent that none of the others was capable of doing. (**V.2**) Its later subtype, by contrast — introduced on the 'Double Eagle' or twenty-dollar gold coin of 1849 (**41b**) — had all of the flaws of its segmental prototype C-I.1, with the additional flaw arising from its omission of the line of clouds that had served to define the starry field.

a. Banknote 1791 **b. Coin 1791** **c. Coin 1795**

Fig. 42. (C-VI) Crest omitting the Glory (Field framed by Clouds and Wings)

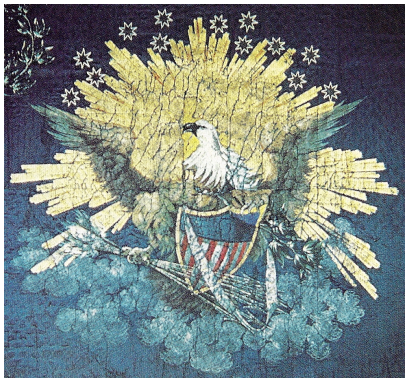
(C-VI) As can be seen in **Figure 42**,[120] the **sixth** deviant type of Crest to be introduced resembled the fifth in omitting only *one* of the four elements of which it was properly composed: in this case the glory. Like the Crests of type IV which it resembled, it was probably crested through a simplification of the design of subtype I.1, because the remaining field was centred on or below the eagle's head, and the band of cloud that surrounded it was largely concealed by its head and wings, and reduced in the later representations to a visible arc of less than half its notional circumference. It first appeared on a banknote in 1791, whose hatching indicated clearly that the blue field had been retained. This is not clear in the two later examples I have found in official contexts — a copper coin of the same year (**42b**) and a gold coin of 1795 (42c) — but one may reasonably give them the benefit of the doubt.

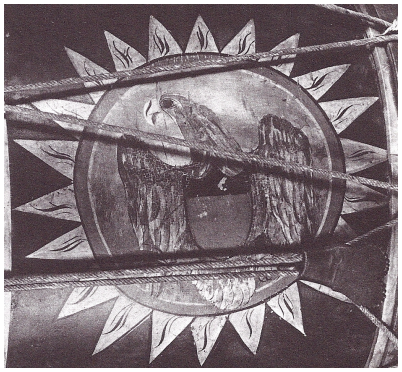
(C-VII) The **seventh** deviant type of Crest appeared at about the same time as the third, in this case in the context of the flag adopted by the First Regiment of the new Army of the United States, formed soon after the adoption of the federal constitution in 1789. The Achievement represented on that flag was peculiar in a number of respects, but its greatest peculiarities were the form and placement of its Crest. As can be seen here

120 Fig. 42a: NEWMAN, *Early Paper Money*, p. 367; 42b, c: YEOMAN & BRESSETT, *U. S. Coins*, pp. 77, 359

in Figure **43a**,[121] it differed from all of its predecessors not only in being represented as large enough to serve as a field for the rest of the Achievement, but in having its blue field conflated with that of the flag itself, and in having its remaining elements arranged with the stars in a ragged row above the glory, and the enormous glory apparently resting on an almost equally enormous cloud, set below the eagle as if it were a compartment. Needless to say all of these peculiarities violated to an extreme degree both the terms of the blazon and the conventions of armory, and it cannot be surprising that the design as a whole is otherwise (to my knowledge) unattested, although its general form and placement were emulated in a simplified manner in the next general type.

(C-VIII) The **eighth general type** of Crest was closely related to the seventh in its treatment as a ground for the rest of the Achievement, but differed in omitting the 'stars' and the clouds rather than the field, so that it was reduced to the glory alone set behind the eagle Supporter. In the only example of this type I have discovered — painted on a military drum of c. 1814, presumably used in the War of 1812 (**Figure 43b**)[122] — the glory appears in a form resembling a sun-in-splendour whose rays take the form of numerous small triangles, and its large central field — whose colour is unclear from the photography — is delimited by a narrow annular frame. Presumably many comparable versions of the Crest were displayed on similar drums and flags carried by militia units of this period: all probably inspired by the more complex version painted on the flag of the Army as a whole.





[121] Fig. 43a: RICHARDSON, *Standards & Colors*, p. 241

[122] Fig. 43b: MELDER & PARKS, *Village & Nation*, p. 69

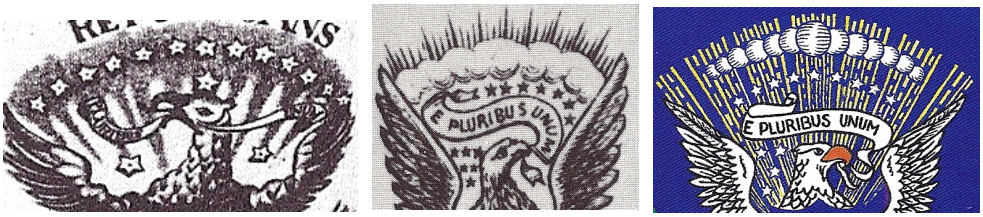
a. 1st Reg. U. S. Army: 1790s **b. A Military Drum of c. 1814**

C-VII. Omitting the field **C-VIII. Omitting the clouds and stars**

Fig. 43. The Crest *Containing* the Lower Achievement

(C-IX) The **Ninth Type** of Crest — which first appeared on the presidential flag adopted in 1888 and used to 1945 (represented in **Figure 44**[123]) — was an immediate variant of the seventh type, and therefore an indirect variant of the third. Its distinctive characteristic was the retention of the arc of clouds above the stars, and the replacement of the field by a *segment* of a glory apparently radiating from the middle of the eagle's back, and extending upwards just beyond the clouds. At least three distinct subtypes were introduced in very different environments, differing primarily in the relationship among the rays, clouds, and stars. **(C-IX.1)** The first of these I have found, set on a pitcher of 1824 commemorating a visit by the Marquis of Lafayette (**44a**), represented the rays of the glory radiating in the form of somewhat fuzzy triangles across a background of cloud extended in the usual way between the wings of the eagle, and the 'stars' arranged in an arc across the upper part of the fan-shaped segment of cloud.

The two later subtypes of this type of Crest have been associated with the office of the President since 1877. **(C-IX.2)** The earlier of them, first recorded on the stationery of the office in that year (**44b**), and used again on the presidential seal of 1877/88 (**25b**), must be regarded as transitional between type C-I.1 (**36a**) and C-IX.3, because the area on which the 'stars' were set — above and below the motto-scroll — might have been regarded as either a segment of the field or a segment of the glory (whose rays appeared only above the arc of clouds), and the 'stars' themselves were arranged rather like those on the State Department seal of 1880 (**40k**) rather than in an arc. **(C-IX.3)**



[123] Fig. 44a: Ibid., p. 62; 44b: PATTERSON & DOUGALL, *Eagle & Shield*, p. 427 (Fig. 76); 44c: ZNAMIEROWSKI, *World Encyclopedia of Flags*, p. 60

a. Commemorative pitcher of 1824 **b. Presidential stationery of 1877** **c. Presidential Flag of 1888-1945**

Fig. 44. (C-IX) Crest omitting the Field, reducing the Glory to a Segment with an Arc of Clouds and an Arc of 'Stars'

Nevertheless the third subtype (**44c**) — created for and displayed on the flags of the office of the President since 1888 (with a reguardant white eagle down to 1945) — was clearly derived from it. In it the rays of the glory radiated in a fan-like manner from the middle of the eagle's back, and were represented as thin continuous lines alternating with similar broken lines, divided into a wide central segment between the eagle's wings and two narrow segments arising from behind the wings. The clouds were then arranged — in an arc formed of series of circular overlapping puffs of outwardly diminishing size — across most of the upper part of the central segment of rays, but visibly within it on all three sides. Nine of the thirteen 'stars' were then arranged in a narrower arc between the clouds and the motto-scroll, and the remaining four were inserted — rather like those on the contemporary seal of the State Department — in rows of two, one, and one below the scroll, and behind the head of the eagle. Unfortunately, this very peculiar form of Crest — which would be quite difficult to describe in a blazon — has long served to distinguish the office of the President from the Government as a whole.

Additional variants of many of the types and subtypes of Crest just identified were created throughout the period through the variation in the number of mullets or 'stars' set above the eagle's head (already noted in passing), and the variation in the number of their points: from eight on the Army flag of the 1790s (**43a**) to four on the overmantel panel of c. 1830 (**40c**). Space does not permit a consideration here of such minor distinctions, or of those based on the precise *arrangement* of the 'stars' or of the *form* of the clouds. Nevertheless, it should be noted once again that most of the particular examples of the nine general types of Crest that I have identified in this section shared the deviant characteristics of two or more of those types, so that the *total number* of deviant designs or 'False Crests' based on such combinations of characteristics was several times as great.

Obviously, the same can be said of the many particular examples of the Achievement of the United States in which such varied types of False

Crest were combined with similarly varied types of False Arms and False Supporter, so that the total number of types of False Achievement with different combinations of these hybrid deviant types of all three of its elements must number well over a hundred: too many for me even to attempt to distinguish.

4.6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

I shall conclude this article by reiterating my contention that the innumerable deviations both from the *blazon* of all three of the major elements of the Achievement of the United States established by the Continental Congress in 1782, and never altered, and equally from the long-established and generally recognized *conventions* of armorial composition and representation, arose primarily if not exclusively from the profound ignorance of such matters among those charged with representing them. They are a clear sign of the all but complete collapse of heraldic knowledge among the literate members of the society of the new Republic in the decades following its legal independence from Great Britain in 1783: a collapse that would not even begin to be repaired even in the oldest urban centres of the north-eastern coast until 1864 (when the New England Historic Genealogical Society created its Committee on Heraldry), and still general in most regions today.

English summary: *In this sequel to his earlier articles on the emblematics of the provinces of British North America and Canada, and of the states of the emergent and established republic of the United States after 1776, Professor Boulton surveys the origins of the achievement of the Republic itself, and of the many ways in which it and its constituent emblems (arms, supporter, crest) were misunderstood and misrepresented, in official and unofficial contexts, between its adoption in 1782 and c. 1920.*

Sommaire en français: *Dans cet article, successeur aux deux précédants sur l'emblématique des provinces de l'Amérique du nord britannique et du Canada, et des états de la république naissante et établie des États-Unis dès 1776, le professeur Boulton présente une étude sur l'origine du cumul armorial (ou des armoiries) de la république en tant que telle, et des diverses manières de la méprise et de la déformation des emblèmes dont elle est composée (les armes, le support, le cimier), dans des contextes officiels et non-officiels, entre son adoption en 1782 et environ 1920.*

The Armorial Achievement of the United States of America
emblazoned correctly in keeping with the blazon and the conventions of armory