Field, Tinctures and divisions

DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

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# Problem statement

The goal of the documentation is to clarify the grammar related to blazon to be able to read it, and to turn it into a model that can represent most, if not all, possible coat of arms.

The blazon can be considered as the human language-based version of a coat of arms. A more technical format, that is easier to manipulate is still worth conversion effort, but, there is no reason to not be able to move from one to the other in all circumstances.

This only focus on the field, and its objects, namely the tinctures and the divisions, the tincture are also used on charges and thus will be used in the following grammar documentation.

# Layers

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A\_Complete\_Guide\_to\_Heraldry

The coat of arms, that interests us in the scope of the blazon project, is only (for now) limited to the shield.

The shield grammar and composition have rules, that are mostly respected. Those rules prevent specific design and enable others, by understanding the basic rules of blazon we can infer a list of “elements” that can be placed upon the shield. More advanced rules will need more advanced analysis and examples. For now, the list of simple objects and their definition is provided.

# Field

The field is the first and only required element of the shield.

The commencement of any blazon is of necessity a description of the field, the one word signifying its colour being employed if it be a simple field; or, if it be composite, such terms as are necessary.

The field family is composed of the following objects

## Tincture

The tinctures can belong to a field or to any objects that can be filled (so pretty much every object) it is presented as a descendent of the field though since it is where it appears first, but a tincture is not a field by definition, it can be, but not necessarily. Here we are talking about the field tincture.

The colour of the shield is termed the field when it consists of only one colour, and when it consists of more than one colour the two together compose the field. The field is usually of one or more of the recognised metals, colours, or furs.

The light blue section represents properties types of the parent object / type. The simple charge, although part of the semy is not part of the field or division scope and won’t be covered in this document.

### Simple Filling

The simple filling is a logical group of grammatical tinctures that can be used as child of vairé, which itself is a fur. It contains all simple tincture that are defined by some words without customization (the keyword implies all properties).

### Simple Fur

A simple Fur is a fur which tinctures, and charges are implied within the name of the fur. The list of furs and their names is stated as below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English modern name | English Blazon name | French Blazon name | Others |
| Ermine | Ermine | Hermine | White field with black ermine spot |
| Ermines | Ermines | Contre-hermine | a black field with white ermine spots |
| Erminois | Erminois | \* | A gold background with black ermine spots |
| Pean | Pean | \* | A black background with gold ermine spot |

### Simple Tincture

A simple tincture is a one colour-based filling that is either a colour or a metal.

#### Colours

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English modern name | English Blazon name | French Blazon name | Others |
| Red | Gules | Gueules |  |
| Blue | Azure | Azure |  |
| Green | Vert | Sinople |  |
| Purple | Purpure | Purpure |  |
| Black | Sable | Sable |  |
| White | White |  | the existence of the heraldic colour of white in addition to the heraldic argent is disputed |
| Between red and purple | Murrey |  |  |
| Orange-tawny | Tenné | Tenné |  |
| Scarlet red | Sanguine |  | Like Murrey in its colour, the use depend, the difference is unsure |
| Brown | Blood-red | Brunâtre | From German, different of Sanguine |
| Earth Colour |  |  | From German |
| Iron Grey |  |  | From German |
| Water Colour |  |  | From German |
| Flesh Colour |  | Carnation | From German |
| Ashen Grey | Ash-Colour | Cendrée | From German |
| Orange |  |  | Different from tenné although close in coloration |
| Sky blue | Bleu-céleste / bleu du ciel | Bleu-céleste / bleu du ciel | is a much lighter colour than, azure |
| Intense red | Amaranth / columbine |  |  |

#### Metals

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English modern name | English Blazon name | French Blazon name | Others |
| Gold | Or | Or |  |
| Silver | Argent | Argent |  |

Finally, is the term “proper” that represent a “default” colour for whatever it is applied to.

mention should here be made of the English term "proper." Anything, alive or otherwise, which is depicted in its natural colours is termed "proper," and it should be depicted in its really correct tones or tints, without any attempt to assimilate these with any heraldic tincture.

### Relative Tincture

The relative tincture is just a way to name a tincture by keyword, this can only be applied to simple filling. The relative terms are limited they are as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| English term | Description |
| Of the N | N being the number (first, second …) at which the tincture to refer to first appeared, in order of the words of the blazon |
| Of the field | Refer to the tincture used to the field |
| Of the last | Refer to the last tincture used in order of the words |
| Of the same | Refer to the last tincture used (the same than the last) |

### Advanced Fur

The advanced furs are furs that contains more than simple implied values, based on enumeration terms. The separation is made because they are not all usable in the same circumstances.

### Vair

The furs known to heraldry are now many, but originally, they were only two, "ermine" and "vair."

The furs can be split between already known (keywords) semy, and plain semy. The first list covers the known semy versions and their description. A semy is of a charge, and thus the 2 named charges are Ermine spot, and vair sport, which are also used as key words in semy.

When it is vairy, it is usually of a colour and metal, though a fur is sometimes found to take the place of one or other, as in the arms of Gresley, which are: "Vairé gules and ermine."

#### Vair Name

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English modern name | English Blazon name | French Blazon name | Others |
| Vair | vair | vair | White field with azure vair spot (inversed in English) |
| Potent | potent |  | Always of argent and azure |

#### Vair Size

Vair also support different sizes and variations. The middle or ordinary size is known as Vair; a smaller size as Menu-vair (whence our word "miniver"); the largest as Beffroi or Gros vair, a term which is used in armory when there are less than four rows.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| English term | Description |
| Menu-vair | a smaller size |
| Beffroi | Or Gros vair, a term which is used in armory when there are less than four rows |

The vair can be countered (like most line of variation) ou “en pointe” an arrangement by which the azure shield pointing downwards has beneath it an argent shield pointing downwards.

Those are only for the vair though, even if “potent” have the same grammar as the vair, it does not support the same properties.

### Vaire

Vairé means that the tinctures used in the semy are not the default ones and thus are stated in the blazon using the “vairy” keyword. A vairy needs to define 2 tinctures, one of which can be ermine. One of which must be a simple tincture.

Potent can also be used as “potenty” which is the same as “semy of potent” although they touch each other list the vair and unlike the ermine spots. The same keywords with the same extension and size options is available in the case of vairé. With the addition of terms that can only be used in the case of vairé

#### Vairé Name

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English modern name | English Blazon name | French Blazon name | Others |
| Vairé | vairé | vairé |  |
| Plumeté |  | Plumeté | the field is apparently covered with feathers |
| Papelonné |  | Papelonné | the field is covered with what appear to be scales |
| Potenté | Potenty |  |  |

#### Semé

It simply means "powdered with" or "strewed with" any objects, the number of the latter being unlimited, the purpose being to evenly distribute them over the shield. In depicting anything semé, care is usually taken that some of the charges (with which the field is semé) shall be partly defaced by the edges of the shield, or the ordinary upon which they are charged, or by the superior charge itself, to indicate that the field is not charged with a specific number of objects.

#### Pre-existing charge names

Some keywords are used that are different of furs and applied to semy: semé-de-lys is used for semy of fleur de lys.

Bezanté for semy of bezant, platé for semy of plates, billetté for semy of billets, crusilly for semy of cross crosslets, goutté when semy of drops.

The goutte have specific names for every of the colours it can take, the list is as follow

For drops of gold, "gutté-d'or” ; silver, "gutté-d'eau"; for gules, "gutté-de-sang"; azure, "gutté-de-larmes"; vert, "gutté-d'huile"; and sable, "gutté-de-poix."

Example: Gules Semé of Bezants Or

## Division

The division are another way of filling the shield, it does not necessarily end up creating multiple “sub shield” and can still be considered as one field, or it can be creating multiple “sub shield” with every part of the division having its own blazon. It is mostly prevalent in quarterly cases. Division can also be used in dividing charges, even animals.

A division can be divided again, so that a division by 2, in turn divided by 3 become a division by 6. But, the objects necessary for the division are just 2 and 3.

### Division by 2

Parted is the main type of division where the field is divided in 2 (usually equal) parts. It is composed of a key word (the name). And the 2 tinctures that are applied to the 2 parts.

The term is meant to be starting with “parted” or “party” (for Scotland) even though this part can be ignored by just using “per” and then the division key word

#### Name

Only the name of the division and not the optional keywords are presented

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Description |
| Fess | Horizontal separation, the top being the main part |
| Bend | Diagonal separation from the top left to the bottom right |
| Bend Sinister | Diagonal separation from the top right to the bottom left |
| Pale | Vertical separation, the left being the main part |
| Chevron | A horizontal line which middle is upper than the start and the end |

### Division by 4

Division by 4 happens when using ordinaries that can split the field in 4

#### Name

Only the name of the division and not the optional keywords are presented

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Description |
| Cross / Quarterly | Both horizontal and vertical |
| Saltire | Both diagonal |

## Partitions

# Line

All the lines that are created on the field, or most ordinaries, can be varied. This line variation defines the shape the line is drawn.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Description |
| Engrailed | formed by a continuous and concurrent series of small semicircles conjoined each to each, the sharp points formed by the conjunction of the two arcs being placed outwards.  bend, pale, pile, cross, chief, and fess all can support it.  when used as a partition line of the field the outside is from the most important part of the field |
| Embattled or crenellé | When dividing the field there can be no difficulty about it, inasmuch as the crenellations are equally inwards and outwards from any point. When, however, the term describes an ordinary, The fess or the bar embattled is drawn with the crenellations on the upper side only, the under edge being plain unless the ordinary is described both as "embattled and counter-embattled." Similarly a chevron is only crenellated on the upper edge unless it is described as both embattled and counter-embattled, but a pale embattled is crenellated on both edges as is the cross or saltire. |
| indented | The terms indented and dancetté need to be considered together, because they differ very little, and only in the fact that whilst indented may be drawn with any number of teeth, dancetté is drawn with a limited number, which is usually three complete teeth in the width of the field. An ordinary which is indented would follow much the same rules as an ordinary which was engrailed, except that the teeth are made by small straight lines for the indentations instead of by small semicircles |
| invecked or invected | is the precise opposite of engrailed. It is similarly composed of small semicircles, but the points are turned inwards instead of outwards. All support and rules are the same as its opposite |
| wavy or undy | is supposed to have been taken from water. Equally applicable to any ordinary and to any partition of the field |
| nebuly | is supposed to be derived from clouds. Equally applicable to any ordinary and to any partition of the field |
| dancetté | The terms indented and dancetté need to be considered together, because they differ very little, and only in the fact that whilst indented may be drawn with any number of teeth, dancetté is drawn with a limited number, which is usually three complete teeth in the width of the field. does not lend itself so readily to general application, and is usually to be found applied to either a fess or chief, or occasionally a bend. In the case of a fess dancetté the indentations on the top and bottom lines are made to fit into each other, so that instead of having a straight band with the edge merely toothed, one gets an up and down zig-zag band with three complete teeth at the top and three complete teeth at the bottom. Whilst a fess, a bar, a bend, and a chief can be found dancetté, I do not see how it would be possible to draw a saltire or a cross dancetté. At any rate the resulting figure would be most ugly, and would appear ill-balanced. A pile and a chevron seem equally impossible |
| raguly | Raguly is the same as embattled, with the crenellations put upon the slant. Some writers say they should slant one way, others give them slanting the reverse. In a pale or a bend the teeth must point upwards; but in a fess I should hesitate to say whether it were more correct for them to point to the dexter or to the sinister, and I am inclined to consider that either is perfectly correct |
| potenté | is used to indicate a line which follows the form of the division lines in the fur potent. As one of the partition lines potenté is very rare. |
| dovetailed |  |
| urdy | A cross or a billet urdy one knows, but urdy as a partition line I have yet to find. |