



The Use of Heraldry in French Genealogical Research

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Heraldry and Genealogy in France

- Heraldry is the system of arms involving the use of particular devices centered on a shield that has become hereditary symbols passed down through a family, normally through the eldest son.
- In some countries it is tied to social stratification and is a mark of nobility and the use of arms restricted to nobles.
- In France, heraldry was used by nobles but was not forbidden to non-nobles. It is not uncommon to find bourgeois arms in France. Also, towns, institutions, and guilds used arms.
- Heraldry is a tool that can be used to solve genealogical problems and to provide background for our research.

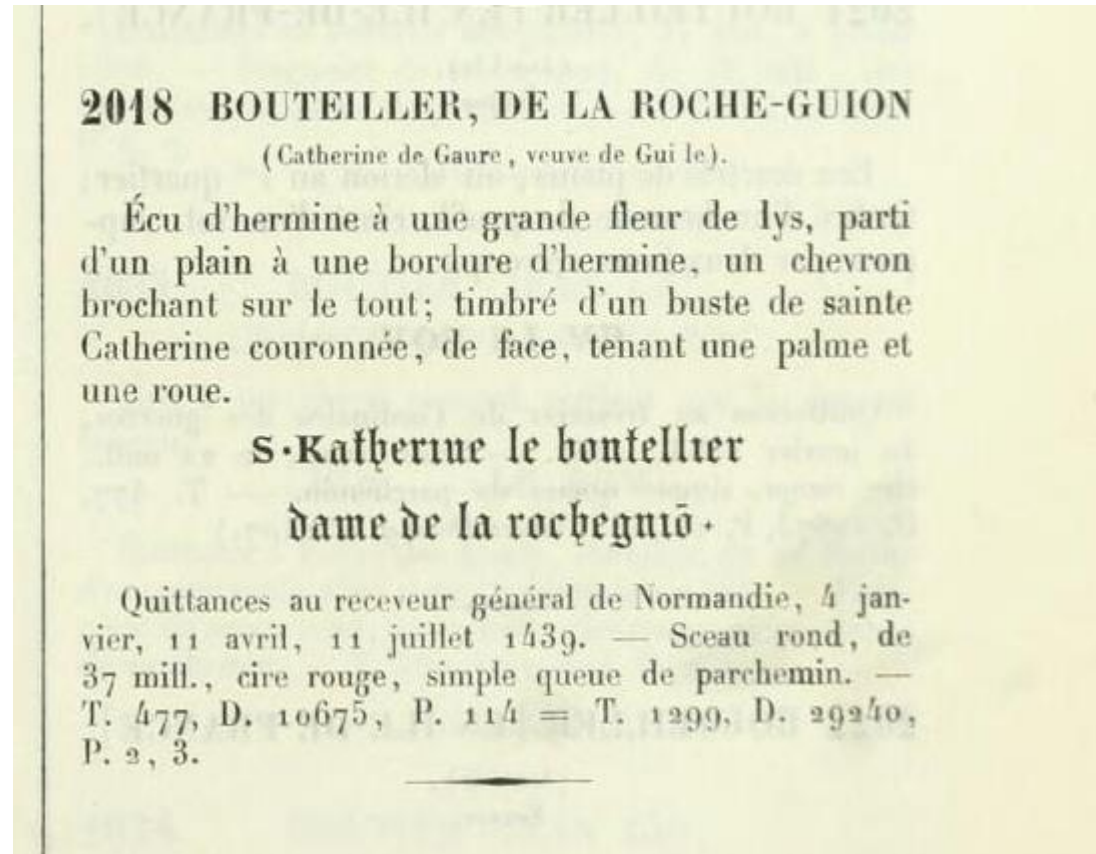
The Use of Heraldry in Tracing the Ancestors of Catherine de Baillon

- Catherine de Baillon was a young noble woman who immigrated to New France in 1669 as one of the *filles du roi* (daughters of the king).
- Her ancestry leads back to Philippe II, *Auguste*, King of France, and Theodore II Doukas Laskaris, Emperor of Nicaea.
- Her ancestry has been well documented by the research team of René Jetté, John P. DuLong, Roland-Yves Gagné, Gail F. Moreau, and Joseph A. Dubé.
- We used heraldry evidence to prove that Catherine de Baillon descended from Catherine de Gavre d'Escornaix who in turn descended from the Isabelle de Ghistelles.
- Isabelle de Ghistelles descended from Marguerite de Luxembourg who was easily proven to be a descendant of Philippe II, *Auguste*, King of France.
- Heraldry evidence from France and Belgium was used to prove the links between these families.

Importance of Sigillography in the Baillon Case

- Sigillography is a branch of heraldry, it is the study of seals attached to documents.
- Two thirds of seals use arms or other heraldic devices.
- My colleagues and I used seal evidence to prove a link between generations in the Baillon pedigree.
- Specifically, we needed to prove that Catherine, the wife of Guy Le Bouteillier, was a member of the Gavre d'Escornaix family.
- From our research we knew that a seal existed that would verify this link between families.

Example of a Seal Index Entry



While visiting the Archives nationales de France I entered *La salle de sigillographie et d'héraldique* and used an index there to locate a copy of my ancestress's seal. For a small fee, they made a plaster cast of it for me.

Joseph Roman, *Inventaire des sceaux de la collection des pièces originales du Cabinet des titres à la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1909).

The Parentage of Catherine Gavre d'Escornaix

The seal is evidence of the parentage of Catherine Gavre d'Escornaix, the wife of Guillaume Le Bouteillier, seigneur of la Roche-Guyon.

The seal was used on several 1439 documents and bears the legend "S. Katherine le boutellier dame de la rochegniõ."



Plaster cast of the seal.



Le Bouteillier arms **impaled** with Gavre d'Escornaix arms, normally the husband's arms are on the dexter (left) side and the wife's on the sinister (right) side.

Heraldry Used to Extend the Gavre d'Escornaix Ancestry

- We had established, using the seal and other documents, that Catherine was the daughter of Arnould VI, de Gavre, baron d'Escornaix, and Isabelle de Ghistelles.
- Now we needed to learn more about the parents of Catherine de Gavre d'Escornaix and their ancestors.
- We came to rely on an interesting artifact that contained heraldry clues to Catherine's pedigree.

The Marguerite Gavre d'Escornaix Plaque



This commemorative plaque was created for Marguerite de Gavre d'Escornaix, the Abbess of Ste-Gertrude, Nivelles, in modern-day Belgium. It displays Marguerite's ancestral arms and the images of the Madonna and child, Ste-Marguerite, a crouching dragon, and a kneeling abbess Marguerite in the middle, 1461.

Most importantly, it shows the arms of Marguerite's parents and grandparents.

Marguerite is the sister of Catherine de Gavre d'Escornaix.

Arms on the Nivelles Plaque

Gavre d'Éscornaix,
Paternal
Grandfather

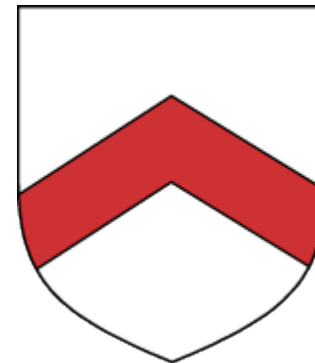


Gavre d'Escornaix
impaled with
Ghistelles,
Parents



Roye,
Paternal
Grandmother

Ghistelles,
Maternal
Grandfather



Dudzeele,
Maternal
Grandmother

Luxembourg Royal Gateway to the Kings of France



Ghistelles Ancient
Arms



Ghistelles Arms
modified with an
escutcheon
showing a relationship
to the dukes of Luxembourg



Duke of Luxembourg
Arms

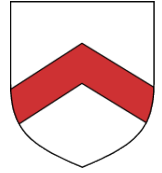
This escutcheon is used to establish that the Ghistelles have a maternal connection to the illustrious dukes of Luxembourg. Among the ancestors of these dukes are some kings of France.

The Paternal Grandmother's Arms



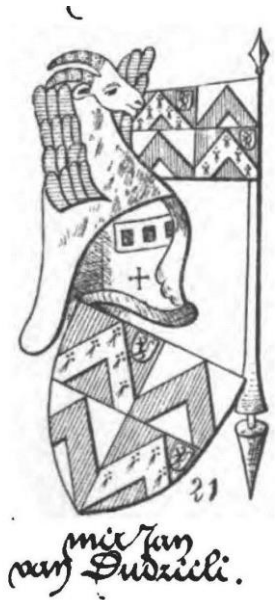
- We knew from the plaque what the arms of the paternal grandmother looked like, but we did not know the surname.
- I consulted an ordinary of arms: Renesse's *Dictionnaire des figures héraldiques* (1894-1903) for *Bande d'argent sur gueules*.
- This ordinary is organized by **blazon** and points to all the arms in Rietstap's, *Armorial général* (1884-1887).
- I found 57 families using this pattern, eventually narrowed it down to de Roye.
- It is surprising how many families used the same general arms in different regions.
- Using an ordinary of arms is difficult and you must understand blazoning.
- The more complex the blazon, the more challenging it is to use an ordinary of arms.
- Further genealogical research confirmed that the arms are indeed the de Roye arms and led to another royal connection to Louis VII, king of France.

The Maternal Grandmother's Arms

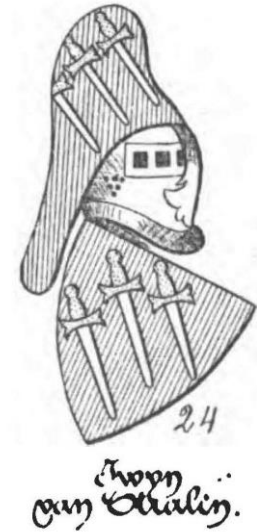
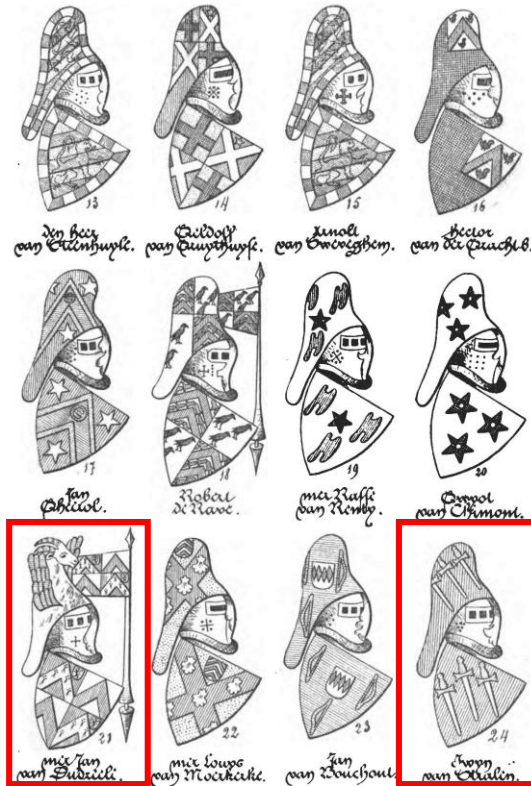
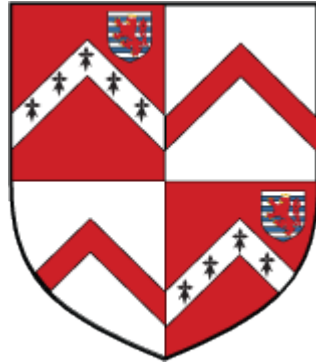


- The last shield we learned was for the Dudzeele family of Flanders.
- Several of Catherine de Baillon's Flemish ancestors participated in a famous tournament held Bruges, 11 March 1392/3.
- The challenger with a team of 49 knights was Jan van der Aa, Lord of Gruuthuse, and the defending team with 48 knights was led by Jan van Ghistelles (another distant relative).
- Note in the following example that Jan van Dudzeele was really a Ghistelle, but as his mother was a heraldic heiress, he has quartered her arms with his fathers and he is using her surname. Also, observe that he too uses an **escutcheon** containing the arms of the dukes of Luxembourg. This is more support for the royal gateway for Catherine de Baillon.
- The Dudzeeles are also related to the Stratens.

Participants in a Famous 1393 Tournament



Jan van Dudzeele



Iwin van Straten

Bourgeois Arms

- OK, heraldry is obviously helpful in tracing noble and royal ancestors, but what about non-nobles?
- In France heraldry was for everyone, at least everyone who had some money.
- We found that Catherine de Baillon had many non-noble armigers in her ancestry.
- Many of them were Parisian magistrates attached to the *Parlement de Paris* or the royal mint.

Examples of Bourgeois Arms

These are just some of the bourgeois arms we have found among Catherine de Baillon's Parisian ancestors.



Boucher



Braque



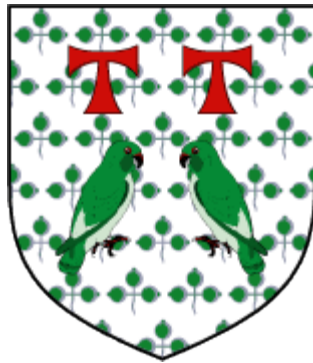
Culdoë



Marigny



Des Landes



Gaillard



Gentien



Le Sueur



Lhuillier



Villebresme

Differentiating between de Marle Families using Arms



de Marle,
Picardie



de Marle,
Paris



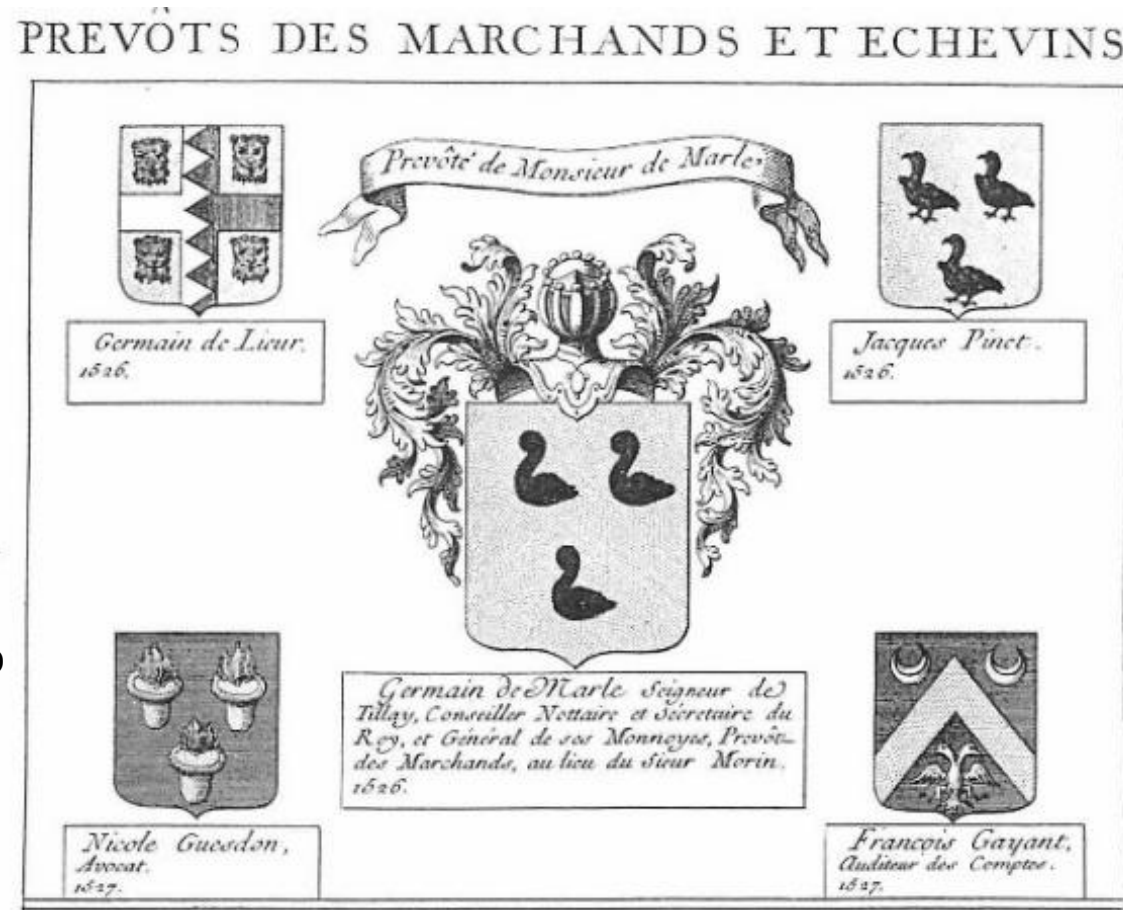
de Marle de Versigny,
Paris

Heraldry can be used to differentiate between families with the same surname, but with different arms. Catherine de Baillon descends from the de Marles of Picardie and Paris, but not the de Marle de Versigny family.

Engravings of the Arms of Parisian Officials



Arms mistakenly assigned to de Marles of Paris.

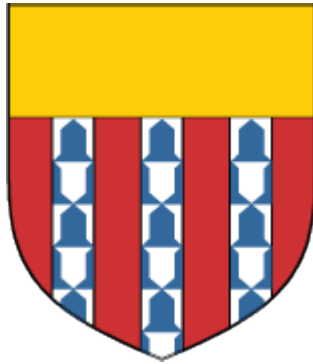


Arms actually used by de Marles of Paris.

Differencing Arms (*Brisure*)

- By law, in France, only the eldest son inherited arms, younger sons were supposed to difference their arms.
- This law was not always followed scrupulously. Some branches of the same family used the same arms without differencing.
- However, when arms are differenced, this can help distinguish different branches of the same family.
- Arms can be differenced by adding charges to paternal arms, reversing **tinctures**, or quartering paternal arms with maternal arms.

Differencing Arms: Some Branches of the Chastillon Family



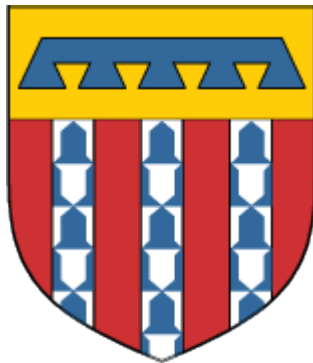
Ancient Chastillon
arms



Chastillon de Fere



Chastillon de Fere quartered
with Lorraine arms



Chastillon St-Pol



Chastillon de Leuse

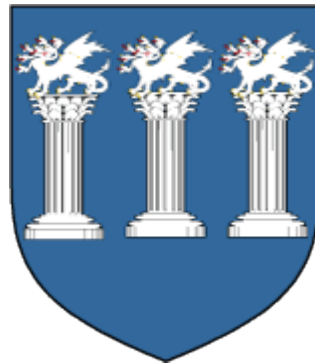


Chastillon de Porcean

Changing Arms Because of a Family Dispute



Joyeuse, count
of Grandpré



Joyeuse, seigneur of
Champigneulle

Father disapproved of son's marriage
to a less than socially acceptable woman.



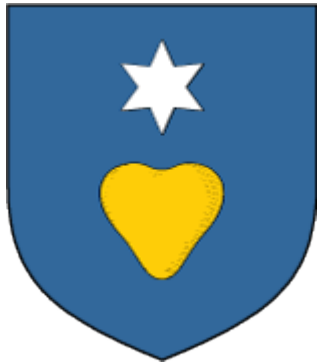
Chabaud, seigneur of
Tourrettes, etc.



Chabot, sieur
of La Fond

Son abandoned the Order of St. John
of Malta and became a Protestant.

Abrupt Arms Change for Unknown Reason



Old Le Maistre
Arms



New Le Maistre
Arms

On the left are the arms of Jean Le Maistre, advocate general of the *Parlement de Paris*. On the right, the arms used by his descendants who were also in the *Parlement de Paris* and other administrative positions in Parisian government.

Why the change? We do not know, but might be related to a proverb.

Blazon: *D'azur, à trois souds d'or*. Proverb: "*Si les valets ont les peines, les maîtres ont les souds*." "If the valets have sorrows, then the masters have worries." Souci meaning both marigold and care, anxiety, or worries. This is an example of **canting** arms: a jest or pun on the armiger's surname.

Adopting a Mother's Arms

Although rare, a son might adopt a mother's arms if her family was more prestigious. For instance, among the Le Neuf ancestors is Raoul Paynel who took the surname and arms of his mother, Tesson



Paynel



Tesson

Marshalling Arms

- The ordering of several arms on a shield to indicate marriage, inheritance, office, or claimed connections.
- It usually involves quartering of arms.
- In France the marshalling of arms was more flexible than in the British Isles.
- Quartered arms in France do not necessarily mean that the maternal arms are those of a heraldic heiress, that is, the daughter of an armiger who lacks sons.
- Often just used to indicate a connection to a more illustrious family.
- One way to difference arms is by marshalling arms.

Marshalling with Quartered Arms

- Catherine de Baillon descends from the Grimaldis.
- Grimaldi de Beuil, the cadet branch of the Grimaldi family, is differenced by marshalling the Grimaldi arms with the Beuil arms.
- About 1314, Andaron Grimaldi married Astrugue Rostang, heiress of the seigneurie of Beuil.



Grimaldi, Later
Princes of Monaco



Grimaldi de Beuil

Marshalling Arms Revealing a Royal Gateway



Lascaris



Vintimille or
Ventimiglia



Vintimille
de Lascaris

The Byzantines did not really use heraldry, they did use insignia and flags. The double headed eagle is often seen as a Byzantine symbol. However, the Lascaris arms are attributed arms. The Franco-Italian Vintimille / Ventimiglia family, ancestors of Catherine de Baillon, quartered the attributed Lascaris arms because their ancestor Guillaume Pierre I de Vintimille, married Eudoxie Lascaris, a daughter of Theodore II Doukas Laskaris, Emperor of Nicaea from 1254 to 1258.

Tools for Identifying French Arms

- Rolls of Arms: Medieval heralds compiled lists of arms, usually drawings, based on an event or region.
- Armorial: Usually blazons for arms arranged by surname and limited to a nation or region. *Grand armorial de France*.
- Ordinaries: A special tool that lets you look up the owner of an arm based on the blazon.
- Sigillography: This is the study of seals. Publications dealing with seals often provide the name of the owner, the type of document the seal was attached to, the date, and a description of the seal including any text. However, they usually lack information on tinctures.
- Proofs of noble status: These are formal collections of genealogical and heraldic information used to establish to verify noble status or the right to arms. The *Cabinet des titres* holds the records of the *Juges d'armes de la noblesse de France* (Judges of Arms) and *Généalogiste et historiographe des Ordres du Roi* (Genealogists of the King's Orders).
- Artifacts including church windows, tombs, plates, jewelry, and other architectural features.
- Illuminated manuscripts and engravings.

Using a Published Armorial

- An armorial list armigers for a country, region, or event.
- If you are lucky, then the armiger is named, particulars are given about the grant or confirmation of arms, the blazon of the arms and crest are provided, the family motto is stated, and in some cases historical facts for the family are recorded.
- If you are unlucky, then the armorial will just shows a surname and a blazon.
- The best, but not complete, armorial for France is Henri Jouglas de Morenas and Raoul de Warren, *Grand armorial de France*

Grand Armorial de France

de Barante, père de Ferdinand (1836-1883) sans postérité de Mlle Pathoux ; et de Robert Ernest-Frédéric-Marie (1842-1909), Baron de Nervo, Conseiller Général, Administrateur de la Compagnie des Chemins de fer du P.L.M. allié : A) en 1867 à Mlle Talbot dont deux fils : Prosper et Léon qui continuent. B) en 1879 à Mlle Samson de Samal dont il eut Jean qui continue.
(Révérend Rétention 5. — Bul. Héral. 1890, 1892, 1894, 1897).

NERY.

24.888. — (BERRY ?). — D'argent au lion couronné de sab. — (Pièces Originales 2097).

DE NESCHESRE. — Voir : ARTAULT.

DE NESCHEZ. — Voir : LE BEUF.

DE NESLE. — OLIM : DE NEELLE. — Voir : DE CLERMONT. — DE MAILLY.

24.889. — (BENVAHIS). — De gue. à la paillasse d'argent mouchoir de sab. — (Pièces Originales 2097).

24.890. — (PICARDIE). — sgr d'Officement et de Melle éteinte à la fin du XV^e siècle. a donné plusieurs Maréchaux de France et un Connétable en 1285). — De gue. à 2 hers adossés d'or, l'écu surmonté de rochers du même. — (Pièces Originales 2097. — Bul. Héral. 1892. — Salle des Croisades).

24.891. — (PICARDIE). — sgr de Falvy et de la Hérille. — Éteinte au XIV^e siècle). — Barbelé d'argent et d'az. de 10 pièces à la bande (ou cotice) de gue. brochant sur le tout. — (Pièces Originales 2097. — Récitap).

NESME ou NESMES.

24.892. — (Bis de Paris en 1754). — De gue. à une bande d'or occup. de 6 billettes d'argent posées en orle. — (Nouveaux d'Hozier 252).

DE NESMOND.

24.893. — (ANGOUMOIS). — « De sab. à la croix ancrée d'argent » olim « D'or à 3 cors de chaise de sable litz d'az. (ou de gue). »

Cette famille avait pour auteur : Guillaume de Nesmond, Avocat à Angoulême (1546) qui de Marguerite du Pont, laissa deux fils : le cadet, François, sgr du Pignier, Conseiller au Parl. de Bordeaux en 1568 fut l'auteur du rameau des sgrs de Rie et de la Juvinière, maintenu nobles en 1668 : l'aîné : François, sgr de Maillon, Président au Parl. de Bordeaux en 1572 laissa entr'autres : 1^o André, sgr de Chetac, mort en 1615, Président au Parl. de Bordeaux, père de : A) Théodore, Président au Parl. de Paris, allié à Anne de Lamoignon d'où : Guillaume, sgr de St-Diann mort en 1697, Président au Parl. de Paris, marié à Mlle de Boucharnais et père entr'autres du Marquis de Nesmond, du Président de Nesmond, et d'Henry de Nesmond, Archevêque de Toulouse en 1719, Membre de l'Académie Française. — B) Henry, Président au Parl. de Bordeaux dont le fils André fut Lieutenant Général des Armées Navales. — 2^o Jean de Nesmond, sgr des Courades, auteur des rameaux des sgrs de La Grange, des Barons des Estrées. — (Pièces Originales 2097. — Dossiers Bleus 485. — Nouveaux d'Hozier 252).

DE NESMY. — Voir : TINGUY.

DE NESSELRODE.

24.894. — (THURINGE). — Maréchal héréditaire du Duché de Bergh en 1481. — Baron de Stein 1655. — Comte du St-Empire 1705. — Comte de Reichenstein. — Grand Bailli de Malte. — Ambassadeur de S.M.I. en France 1719). — Écartelé : aux 1 et 4 d'argent à 1 fère d'écliquier de sable en bande de dextre à senestre ; aux 2 et 3 d'or à une fère d'écliquier de gue. en barre de senestre à dextre ; ce qui forme un anneau ; sur le tout d'argent à la fère bretonne de gue. — (Dossiers Bleus 485).

DE NETTANCOURT. — Voir : Page suivante.

DES NÉTUMIÈRES. — Voir : HAY DES NÉTUMIÈRES.

DE NETZ.

24.896. — (PARIS). — Auditeur de la Chambre des Comptes en 1591 et 1615). — D'az. au chevron d'argent, chargé de 3 mouchoirs d'her. de sab. et occup. de 3 roses d'or. — (Pièces Originales 2098. — Nouveaux d'Hozier 252).

DE NEUCHAISE. — Voir : THIBAUD.

DE NEUCHEZE. — OLIM : NEUTCHEZES. — NEUCHAIZE ou NUCHESE.

24.897. — (PORTUG). — De gue. à 9 molettes d'argent posées 3, 3 et 3.

Guillaume, sgr de Neuchaise, vivant en 1520, avait l'auteur de cette Maison ; il aurait eu pour fils : Guillaume de Neuchaise, sgr de St-Aubin tr en 1544, qui de Jeanne Pourcelle aurait eu deux fils : Guillaume, auteur des sgrs de la Rocheviveuse, éteints au XV^e siècle — et Jean, Chr, sgr de la Ménardière, tr en 1569, aîné de Guillaume, sgr de la Ménardière, tr en 1486, qui de Catherine des Francs laissa 3 fils : 1^o Pierre, sgr de Baudouin, tr en 1515, allié à Charlotte de Brézy, père de : 1^o Geoffroy, Chr de l'Ordre du Roi, sgr de Baudouin, auteur d'un rameau éteint au XVII^e siècle ; 2^o Léon de Neuchaise, Chr, sgr des Francs, qui épousa en 1538 Benigne de Saus, dont les fils : Jean-Jacques et Pierre, formèrent les rameaux éteints des Barons des Francs. — 1^o René, qui de Françoise Greulle eut : Jean, allié en 1555 à Jeanne de Parthenay, de la Pierre, auteur du rameau des sgrs de la Boulonnais ; et, Michel, auteur des sgrs de Badrevillain, comparant en Poitou en 1789. — 1^o Jacques, Eyr, sgr de Chantelonde, marié à Françoise d'Autery, dont le fils Jean, sgr du Plessis épousa en 1559 Catherine de Virey, il fut l'aîné de Charles de Neuchaise, Eyr, sgr du Plessis, maintenu noble en 1667 sur titres remontés à 1541, allié en 1656 à Françoise des Ulmes, leur petit-fils Claude, Chr, sgr du Plessis, né en 1679, épousa en 1729 Marguerite de la Trubère dont il eut : 1^o Michel-Claude, sgr du Plessis, né en 1730, Page de la Grande Écurie, allié en 1750 à Louise de Férjeol, d'où Jean-Louis de Neuchaise, né en 1752, admis aux Écoles militaires en 1767, comparant à Nevers en 1789. — 2^o Jean-Baptiste, sgr des Lizeux, marié en 1762 à Mlle des Champs et père de : Joseph, né en 1767 et de Edme Bernard, né en 1778. Cette famille qui subsiste porte actuellement le nom de Neuchaise. — (Dossiers Bleus 486. — Nouveaux d'Hozier 252. — Chéris 146. — Armorial Général Poitiers. — G. de Soultz. — La Roque et Barthélemy).

DE NEUSTEIN.

24.898. — (ALSACE). — Reconnaissance du titre de Baron en 1773. — Stettmeister de Strasbourg. — Comparant à Bellfort, Haguenau, etc. etc. etc. — De gue. à une croix de sautoir d'argent, surmontée d'un croissant, et encadrée de deux lions en sautoir.

LE NEUF DE SOURDEVAL DE MONTENAY.

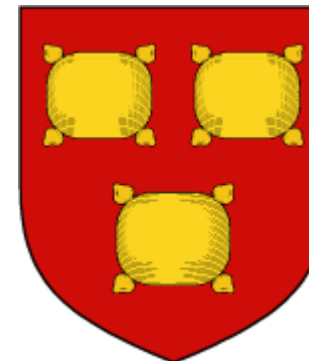
24.899. — (NORMANDIE). — Maintenu noble en 1667 sur preuves de 1451. — Preuves pour les Ecoles militaires en 1757. — Comte de Sourdeval L.P. 1764. — sgr de Tourneville, Sourdeval, Montenay). — De gue. à 3 cousins d'or 2 et 1. — (Pièces Originales 2098. Dossiers Bleus 486. — Nouveaux d'Hozier 252. — Armorial Général Normandie 2).

DE NEUBOURG. — Voir : COURTIN DE NEUBOURG. — CRESPIN.

LE NEUF DE SOURDEVAL DE MONTENAY.

24.899. — (NORMANDIE. — Maintenu noble en 1667 sur preuves de 1451. — Preuves pour les Ecoles militaires en 1757. — Comte de Sourdeval L.P. 1764. — sgr de Tourneville, Sourdeval, Montenay). — De gue. à 3 cousins d'or 2 et 1. — (Pièces Originales 2098. Dossiers Bleus 486. — Nouveaux d'Hozier 252. — Armorial Général Normandie 2).

Henri Jouglà de Morenas and Raoul de Warren, *Grand armorial de France*, 7 vols., Paris: Les Editions Héraldiques, 1934-1952; reprint ed., Paris: Frankelve, 1975.



Manuscript Armorial

- Many armorials only exist as manuscripts found in archives and libraries.
- Some of these armorials are now being scanned and placed on the Internet.
- For French research the most important armorial is the *Armorial général de France*.
- The manuscripts of images and blazons can now be downloaded and searched for free from Gallica, a service of the Bibliothèque nationale de France .
- See <http://habitant.org/tools/agf.htm> for a guide in English.

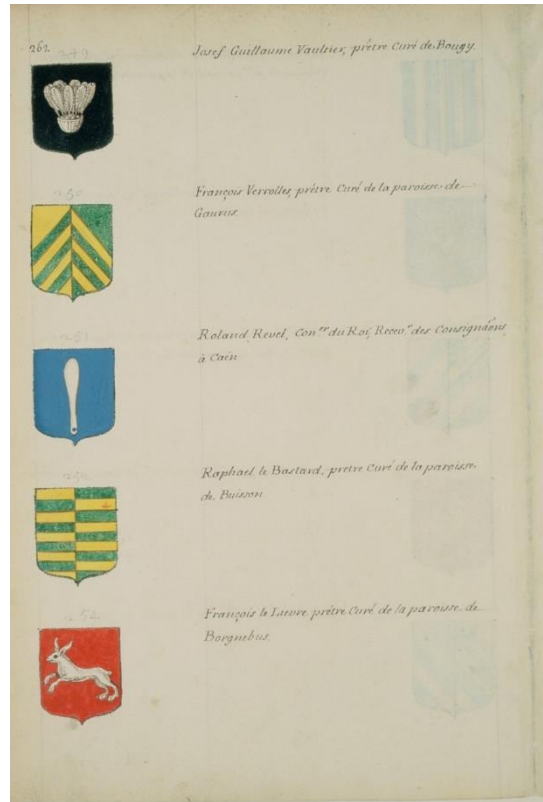
Armorial général de France, Images



- In 1696, King Louis XIV needed to raise funds for his wars so he decided to tax people for the use of arms.
- The tax was 20 *livres* to register arms and a penalty of 300 *livres* for failing to do so.
- Arms were registered until 1709.
- The result of this law is the *Armorial général de France*. This is the largest collection of French arms used in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century France.
- Many commoners (*roturiers*) can be found in this work; only about 20,000 (one sixth) of the 120,000 arms displayed are those of nobles.
- Your French-Canadian ancestor might have a relative back in France with registered arms.
- WARNING: Many of the arms are legitimate, but clerks would assign arms to wealthy bourgeois and peasants in order to raise funds. These assigned arms are easy to spot since they are often repetitive, sometimes hideous, and sometimes cruel. Canting arms were frequently assigned.

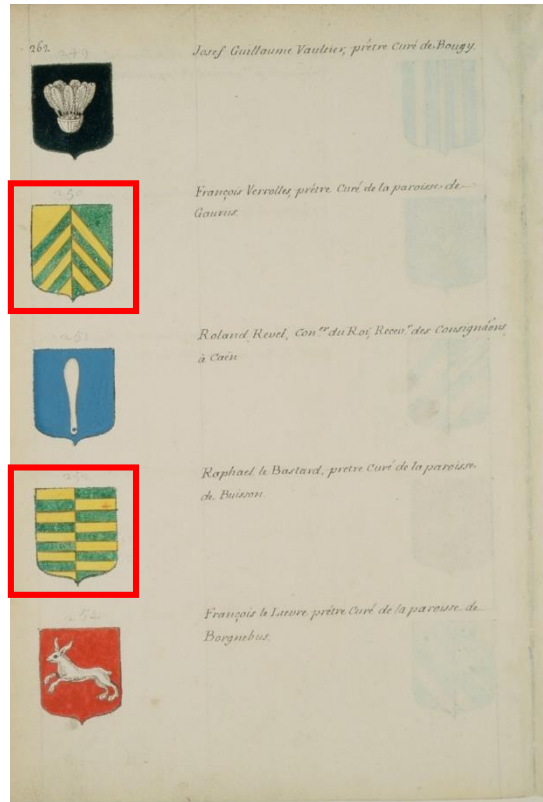
More Examples of Generated Arms from the *Armorial général de France*

Can you spot the generated arms?

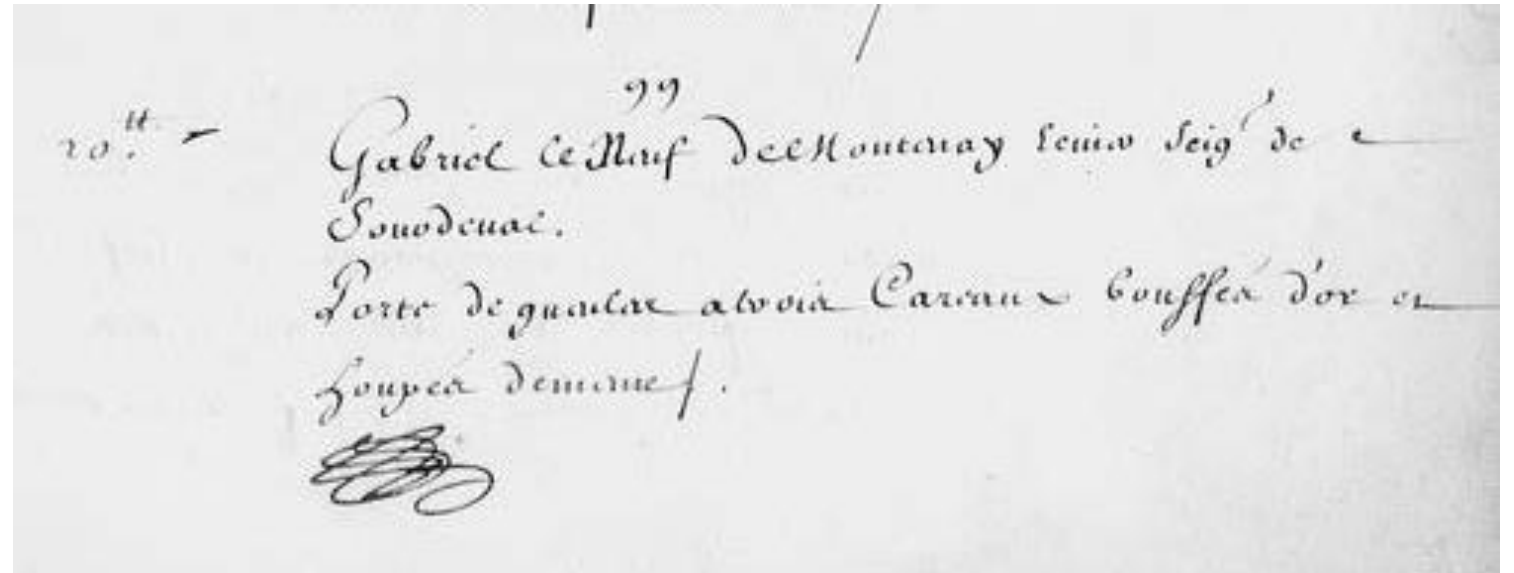
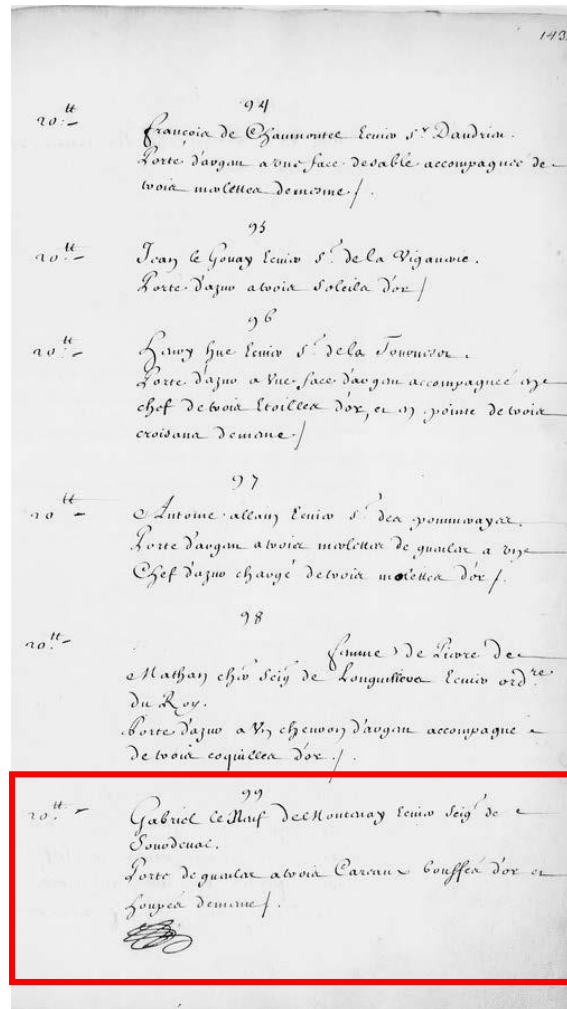


More Examples of Generated Arms from the *Armorial général de France*

Can you spot the generated arms?

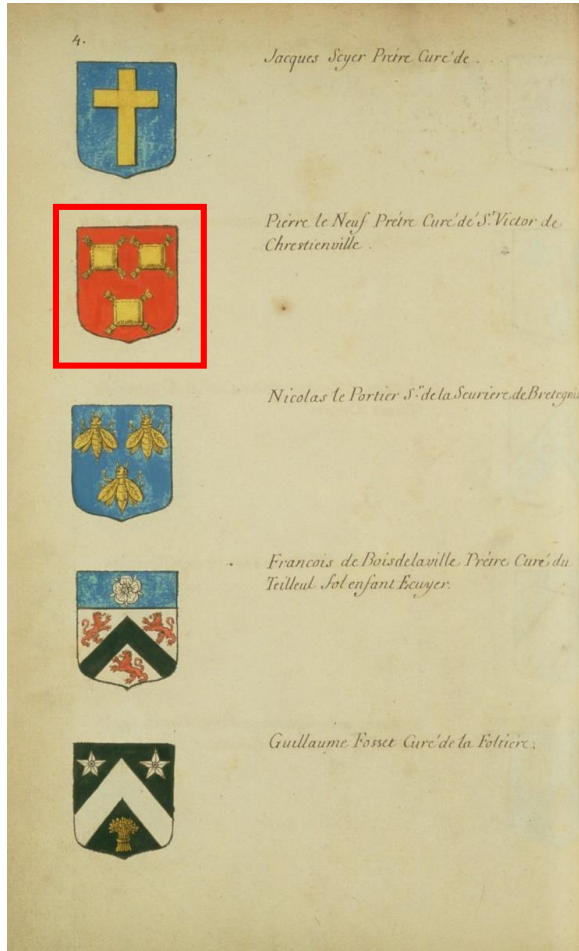


Armorial général de France, Blazons



Blazon for the arms of Gabriel Le Neuf de Montenay, seigneur
of Sourdeval, a cousin of the Le Neuf brothers of New France

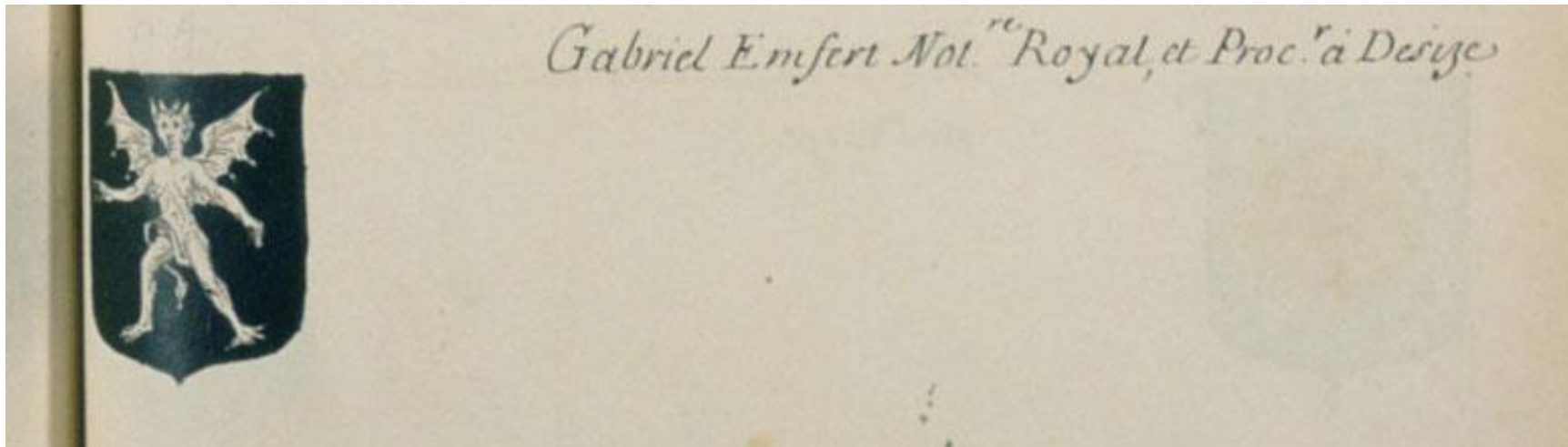
Example of Authentic Arms from the *Armorial général de France*



- Despite the generated arms found assigned to some people, many of the arms recorded in the *Armorial général de France* are authentic.
- For example, here are the Le Neuf arms properly recorded.
- However, you should not assume any arms displayed were authentic without doing more research in original documents to verify them.

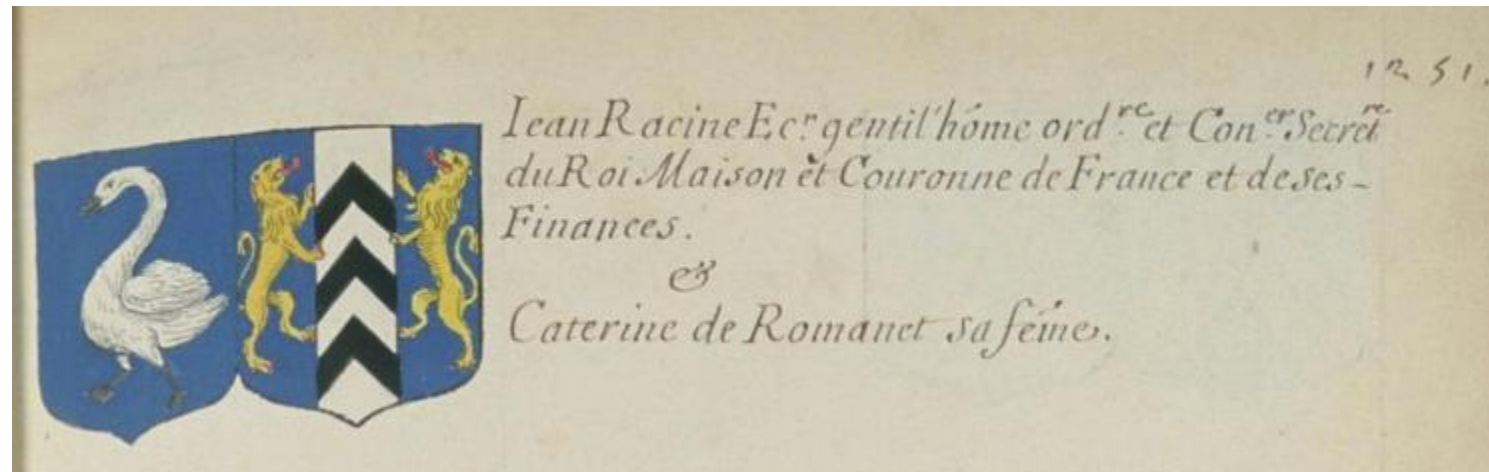
Example of Cruel Generated Arms from the *Armorial général de France*

Most generated arms were rather mundane, but some could be cruel. For example, the royal notary Gabriel Emfert was given "*de sable, a un Diable d'argent*" (a silver devil on a black field) for his arms as a pun on his surname, emfert = enfer = hell = devil (see Bourbonnais, Ms. Fr. 32197, f. 477, no. 24 and Ms. Fr. 32231, f. 275).

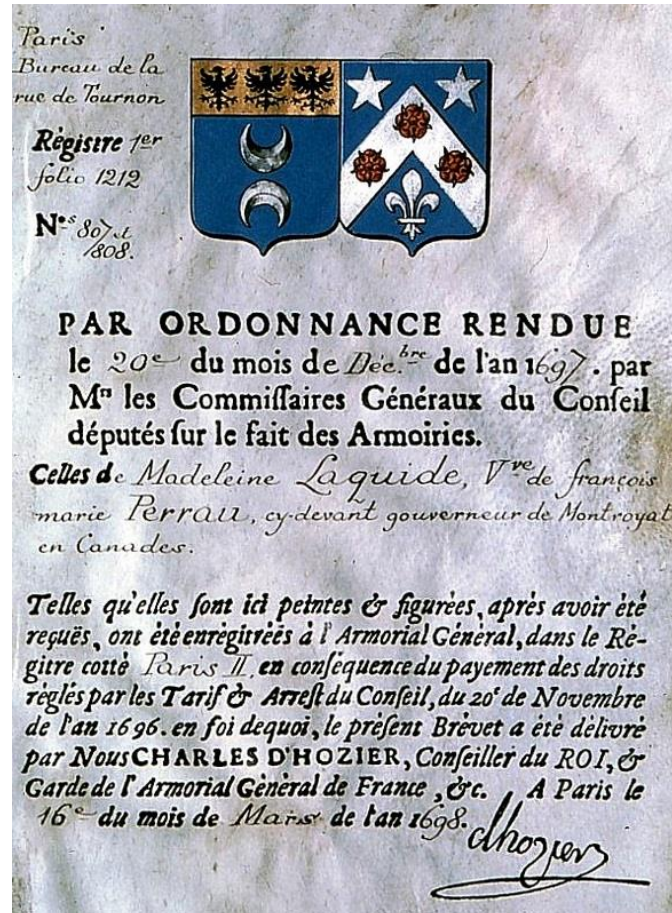


Example of Improved Arms from the *Armorial général de France*

- In 1697, the French playwright Jean Racine (1639 – 1699), took the opportunity of registering arms to improve his family's arms.
- The family had been using canting arms: *D'azur au rat et au cygne d'argent*; the 'rat' and 'cygnet' (swan) alluding to the two syllables of his name.
- He registered his arms as: *D'azur au cygne d'argent becqué et membré de sable*.



Example of an *Armorial général de France* Certificate



This is an example of a certificate (*brevet*) issued for arms registered under the law of 1696. The Judge of Arms would issue these certificates for a small fee (1 *livre* 10 *sous*). Some are found in archives, but most were kept by families and may not have been preserved.

This particular certificate registers the arms of Madeleine Meynier Laguide, the widow of François-Marie Perrau (Perrot), the former governor of Montréal and Acadia. Found in the Archives nationales du Québec.

Medieval Rolls of Arms: Bellenville Roll



Many medieval rolls of arms are now being digitized and made available online. One of the best rolls of arms for my research purposes is the Gelre roll of arms which has not yet been digitized, but the Bellenville roll of arms is based on the Gelre roll of arms.

For Medieval arms, verifying them on a contemporary or near contemporary roll is particularly helpful.

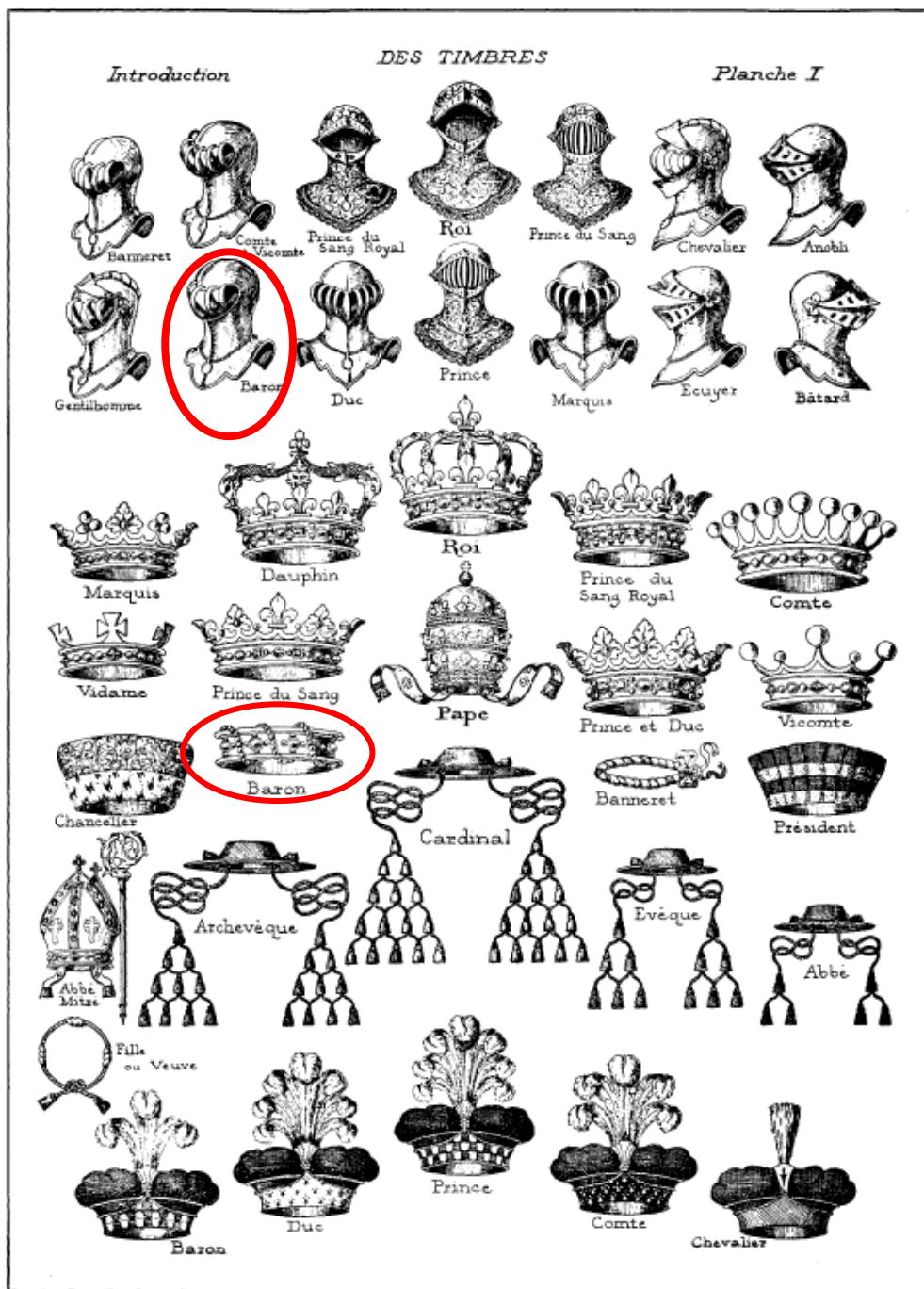
Here we have the Count of Flander's arms, supported by a griffin wearing a helmet with the count's crest. Below are the arms of Ghistelles and Gavre d'Escornaix.

Social Rank and Heraldry

- The style of helmets and crowns used in a full achievement of arms can indicate the noble status of an ancestor.
- The type of hat used can indicate a persons clerical position or if they are a magistrate.
- Unlike British heraldry, where supporters were reserved for nobles, in France anyone can use them, but few did.
- Augmentations could be added by the king as a mark of honor.
- Orders of chivalry can also be displayed with arms.

Nobles vs. Commoners

- Titled nobles included: baron, *vidame*, *vicomte*, *marquis*, *duc*, *pair* (peer) *de France*, *prince du sang* (prince of the royal blood), *fils et petit-fils de France* (children and grandchildren of the king), *dauphin* (prince and successor), and king). Entitled to a crown and helmet.
- Untitled nobles included: *Écuyer* (squire) and *chevalier* (knight). Entitled to a helmet.
- Nobles of the sword vs. nobles of the robe.
- *Anobli* is ennobling commoners, most of whom held administrative positions.
- Commoners (*roturiers*): peasants and merchants. Not entitled to a crown or helmet, but in violation of the law they are often found with helmets and sometimes crowns.



Robineau Example



René de Robineau, baron de Portneuf, was entitled to the helmet and crown of a baron.



Original Robineau Arms



Robineau Arms with Augmentation of Honor granted in 1681 when he became a baron.

Roll of Arms: Toison d'or

Jean de la Clite, seigneur de Comines, chevalier de la Toison d'or, died 1475:



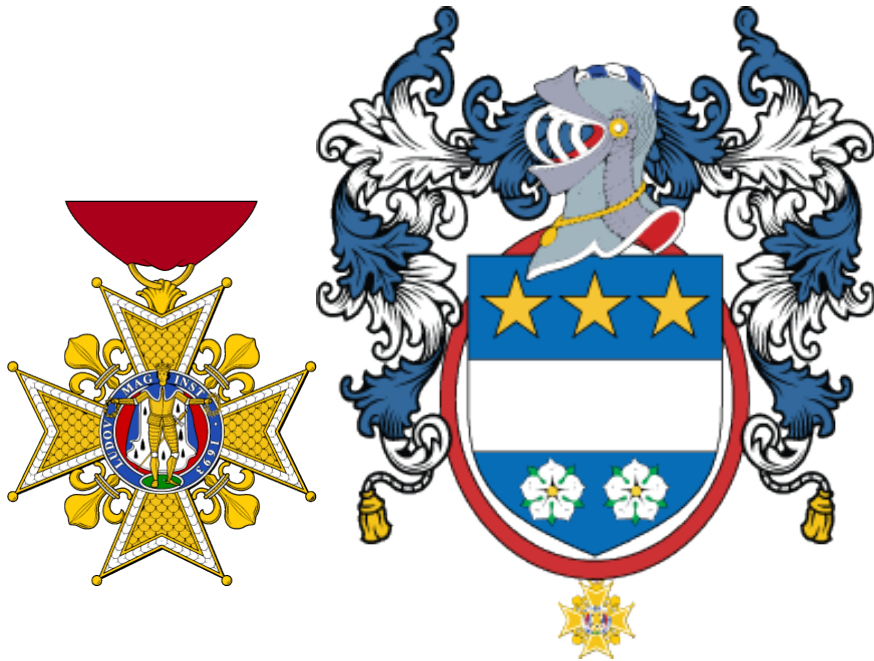
One of the nicest illustrated roll of arms has mounted figures for the members of the Toison d'or.

The Toison d'or (the Order of the Golden Fleece) was one of the most prestigious knightly orders in Europe. It was the order created by the Duke of Burgundy.

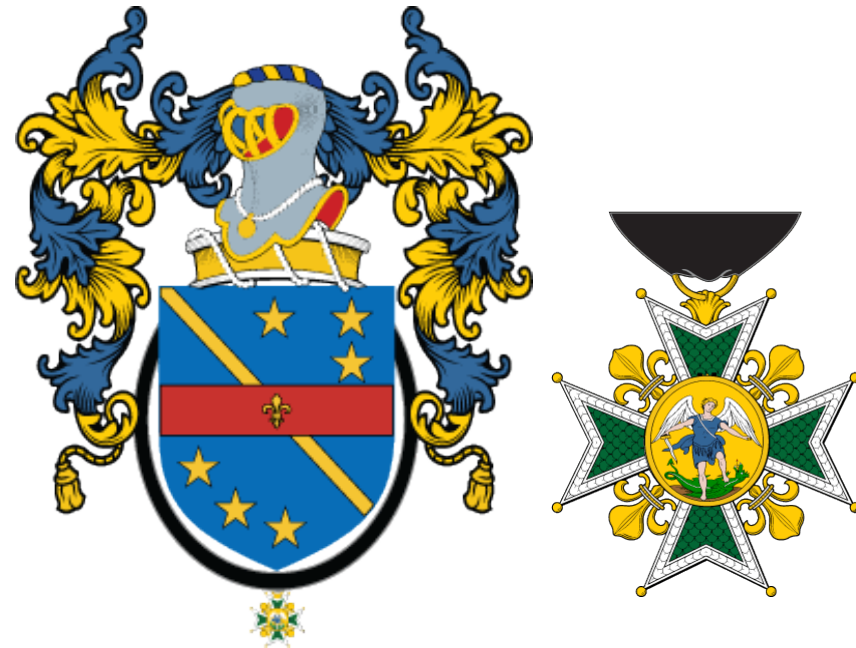
Here I have included the chain and medal of the order surrounding the shield of Jean de la Clite, an ancestor of Anne Couvent.

Orders of Chivalry

If your ancestor was in an order of chivalry, then his arms might indicate his membership in that order.



Captain François de Jordy,
Knight in the Royal and Military
Order of St. Louis



René Robineau,
Baron de Portneuf
Knight in the Order of St. Michel

WARNING: False Claims of Status

- The law in France was that helmets were reserved for nobles and crowns for titled nobles.
- By the seventeenth century people started to ignore these laws.
- Bourgeois arms can be found with the *chevalier* (knight) or *écuyer* (squire) helmets.
- If you find your ancestor's arms with the helmet of a noble or the crown of a titled noble, then you cannot assume it is a just claim to the rank.
- Always verify any claims of status portrayed in armorial achievements with documentation.

Mirabeau's Complaint

- Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Count of Mirabeau (1749 – 1791), the revolutionary.
- In 1779, before the French Revolution, he asked his friend Sophie de Monnier for a signet ring with a shield bearing his arms surmounted by a ducal coronet, even though he was a count.
- He complained that: “persons of quality are all adopting the duke’s coronet, since every solicitor now has a count’s or a marquis’s.”

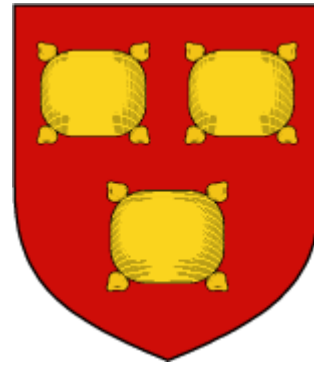
Arms Associated with Families in New France



de Jordy



Robineau



Le Neuf



Hertel



de Baillon



Marchant



Le Gardeur



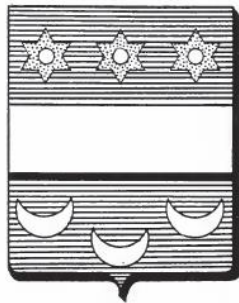
de Corday

Armorials for New France

- Arms were also used in New France.
- Édouard-Zotique Massicotte and Régis Roy, *Armorial du Canada français*, 2 vols. (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1915-1918).
- Aegidius Fauteux, “Armorial du Canada français,” 2 vols., typed manuscript at the Salle Gagnon, Bibliothèque centrale de Montréal, n.d.
- Fauteux added to and corrected Massicotte and Roy, but his work unfortunately has not been published.

De Jordy Example

DEJORDY DE CABANAC



D'azur, à une fasces d'argent, accompagnée en chef de trois molettes d'or et, en pointe, de trois croissants d'argent, posés deux et un.
(Couillard, Hist. des Seig. de la riv. du sud, p. 300).

DEJORDY DE CABANAC (Joseph), Seigneur de Tolomers et de Garne, il épousa, en 1691, Madeleine, fille d'Etienne Pezard de la Touche, seigneur de Champlain. Il fut major et commandant aux Trois-Rivières.

Son cousin, François Dejordy de St-Georges, capitaine et chevalier, portait des armes différentes ainsi qu'on le constate par un sceau au palais de justice de Montréal.



Joseph de Jordy
de Cabanac



François de Jordy,
nephew of Joseph de
Jordy de Cabanac

Massicotte mistakes the nephew as a cousin.
Fauteux has two pages of information about these
arms.

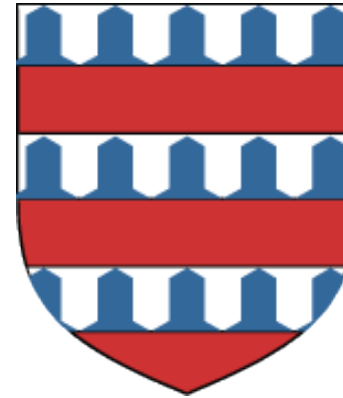
Other Sources for Arms

- Arms are not just recorded in books dedicated to heraldry.
- They can be found on tombs, in manuscripts, in artworks, and in buildings.
- The following are just some examples I have found of arms in unusual places.

Tombs and Effigies: Roucy and Coucy



Hugues II, count of
Roucy and of Braine

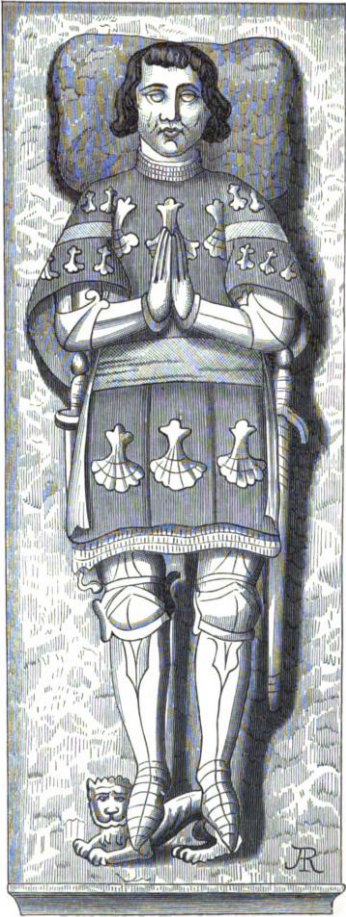


Blanch of Coucy,
Dame of Montmirel

At the Abbaye
royale St-Yved de
Braine. Collection
Gaignières.

These are ancestors of Anne Couvent, the wife of Philippe Amiot.

Another Tomb: Morhier



Morhier

Etching of a tomb effigy for Guillaume Morhier, seigneur de St-Piat. He was probably the uncle of Simon Morhier, the Provost of Paris. They used the same arms. Simon is an ancestor of Catherine de Baillon.

Found in the chapel of St-Gilles in the abbey of Coulombs.

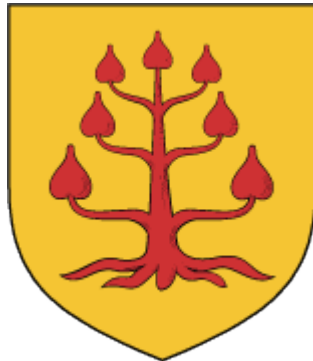
When touring in Europe you will often find arms in churches and public buildings and not just on tombs.

Armorial Plates: Créquy

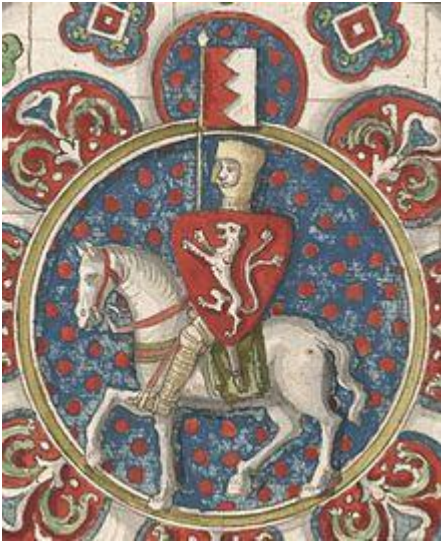


On a recent visit to Belgium I was pleasantly surprised to find hundreds of armorial plates for members of the order of the Golden Fleece on display in the Saint-Bavo's cathedral Ghent. The artist was Lukas de Heere. They would have been done before his death in 1584.

Catherine de Baillon is related to the Créquy family.



Stained Glass: Montfort



Chartres Cathedral,
France



St. John the Baptist
Church, Fladbury,
Worcestershire,
England



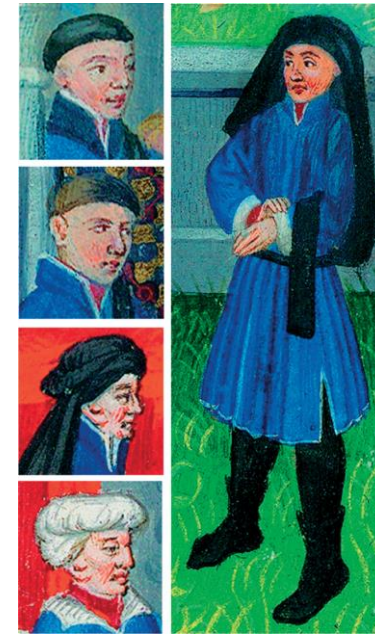
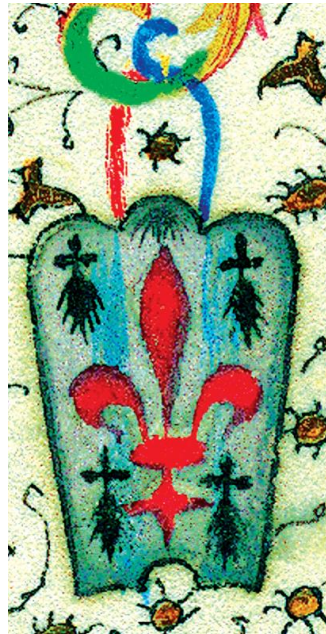
Montfort

The Le Neuf brothers descend from Simon V, seigneur de Montfort, duke of Narbonne, viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, and 5th earl of Leicester, a participant in the 4th Crusade, and leader of the Albigensian Crusade.

Illuminated Manuscripts: Le Bouteillier and La Roche-Guyon Castle



Le Bouteillier

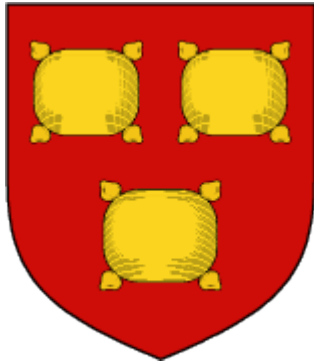


The book that was commissioned around 1425 by Guy Le Bouteillier and is entitled *Livre du Chastel de Labour* (the Book of the Castle of Labor). It illustrates a poem by Jacques (or possibly Jean) Bruyant.

WARNING: The Abuse of Arms

- Some arms are assumed inappropriately, the most famous example in New France is the arms of Cadillac.
- Some arms are bogus, that is, assigned to someone incorrectly.
- Some arms were assigned to people unwillingly, for example, to force them to pay a heraldry tax in 1696.
- Some people misuse arms by adopting the arms of others with similar surnames.
- Lastly, some arms are attributed to people who existed before the age of heraldry.

Shared Arms, Bogus Arms, and Assigned Arms: The Case of the Le Neuf Arms



Le Neuf arms shared
between cousins in France
and New France without
differencing.



Arms of Hérison from Brittany,
assigned to Michel Le Neuf,
sieur du Hérison, of Normandy
without justification.
A pun on Hérison, meaning Hedgehog.



Arms assigned to Jean Le Neuf,
merchant, bourgeois of Caen, for
taxation, ca. 1696.

Modern Example of Misused Arms: Amiot

The Canadian Amiot's were not armigers. However, the Honorable Georges-Elie Amyot (1856-1930), industrialist and member of the Legislative Assembly of Québec, used the following arms: "*D'azur, à la bande d'argent chargée de cinq mouchetures d'hermine.*" These are the arms of the unrelated Amyot de Moyencourt family said to be of Normandy and Picardy. He apparently assumed these arms as his own around 1912. There is no indication that these arms were used by his Amiot ancestors either in France or Canada. In fact, in France, the surname was not Amiot, but Hameau! Nevertheless, many modern-day Amiot's mistakenly use these arms.



Attributed Arms

Attributed arms are arms assigned to historical persons before the age of heraldry. Attributed arms have been assigned to biblical figures, mythical heroes, Charlemagne, Arthur and his knights of the round table, etc.



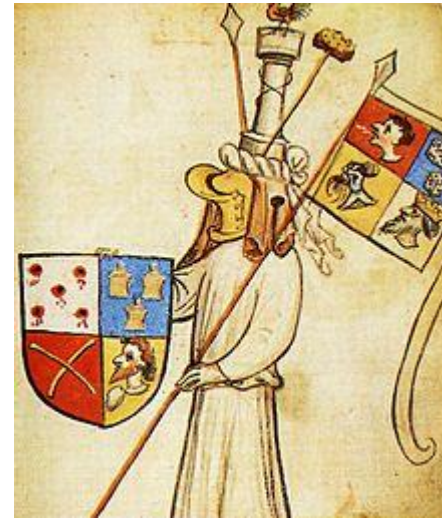
Attributed arms of William the
Conqueror



Attributed arms of Matilda,
the daughter of the Count
of Flanders, wife of William
the Conqueror

Arms of Christ

Even Jesus Christ was attributed arms, though there apparently was no agreement of what his arms really looked like:



Use of Heraldry in French Genealogy

- Heraldry is not just something of esthetic interest, but of practical value when doing genealogy on bourgeois, gentry, and noble ancestors in France and Canada.
- It is a tool that can be used to establish the identity of an ancestor and to verify links between generations.
- Arms are also visual guideposts that can assist the researcher in spotting relevant information.
- There are several published and online tools you need to use to find and understand heraldry information regarding your ancestors.

Arms as Guideposts in Research

It helps to know the arms of your ancestors because the information:

- Can indicate their social status.
- Can reveal honors and orders of chivalry.
- Can indicate the arms of a couple.
- Can be used to help sort out branches of families when similar arms are differenced between branches.
- Can be used to understand the relationship between different families over generations when arms are marshalled.
- Can help differentiate unrelated families with the same surname in a particular region.
- Can be used to hint at a distant common ancestry when arms are similar between different families with different surnames.
- Most importantly, arms are a visual clue, especially helpful when trying to find a family in a difficult to read manuscript.

Rules of Heraldry

- The rules and terminology of heraldry are very complex.
- There are many fine books regarding heraldry, but they concentrate on heraldry in the British Isles, French heraldry is different.
- For French sources see my bibliography at <http://habitant.org/tools/index.htm>
- There is one universal rule that I would like to be very clear: *It is bad form, and in some countries illegal, to use the arms of others without a right to them though inheritance.*
- English and Scottish heraldry have relatively rigid rules, French heraldry has flexible guidelines which allow for exceptions.
- When doing research it is important to understand that there is a difference between the rules of heraldry and how heraldry was actually used by your ancestors.
- Folk heraldry is what I call the actual use of heraldry and it often violates the rules, especially in France.

Working with Heraldry

- Must not abandon your analytical skills you learned doing genealogy.
- Some arms are simply wrong, completely or in part. Our ancestors violated the rules of heraldry sometimes with wild abandon!
- It is always best to track down examples of the arms used in original documents. Often they differ from what is presented in published armorials.
- Do not be surprised to find changes in crests and mottos over time. These were not as standardized as the design of arms on shields. And they were seldom used in French heraldry.
- Keep track of quarterings as these are clues to other related families the armiger descends through a heraldic heiress or from a prestigious maternal ancestress.
- Heraldry practices (like differencing and marshalling) can help you learn more about your ancestors.
- Heraldry sources will occasionally record genealogical data, for example, submitted proofs of nobility.
- Keep in mind that heraldry customs do vary from country to country and even within countries.

Recording Your Heraldry Findings

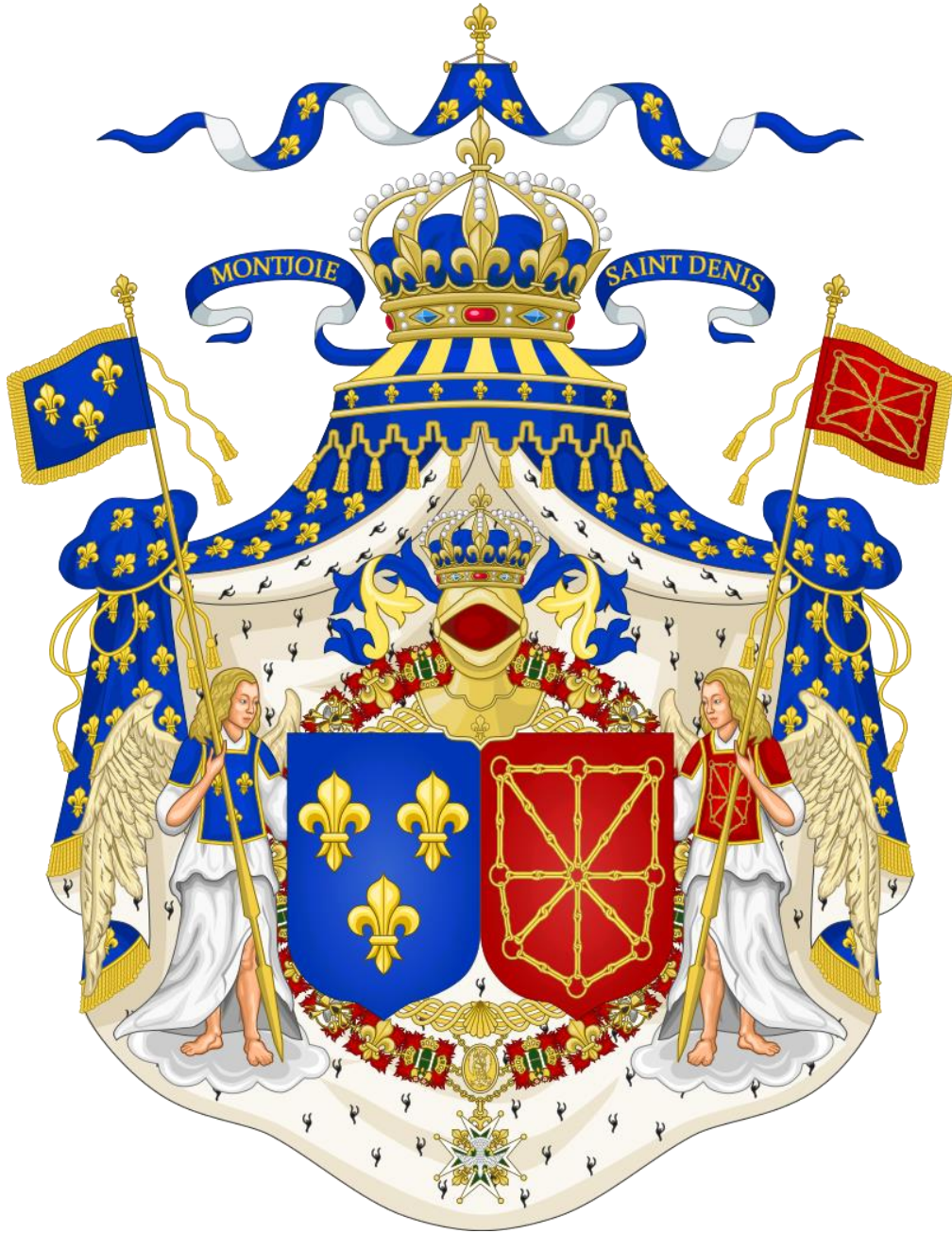
- Important to record the following information:
 - The source of the arms.
 - Whether it is granted, confirmed, matriculated, or assumed.
 - The blazon (I prefer to leave it in the language I find it except I expand any abbreviations).
 - And preferable a drawing of the arms.
- You can use this heraldry information to:
 - Include in your genealogy software; instead of a photograph of an ancestor you provide the arms next to your ancestor's name.
 - Compile what I call an ancestral armorial, that is, all the arms of your ancestors. For example, see the Baillon Armorial at <http://habitant.org/baillon/armorial.htm>.
 - Prepare a lineage between an ancestor and an illustrious ancestor providing arms for each generation. For example, see the Couvent ascending lineages to famous royals at my website, <http://habitant.org/couvent/index.htm>.
- *You may not use the arms of your ancestors as if they are your personal arms unless you can prove a direct male descent based on primogeniture.*

Conclusion

- If you find any ancestors with arms, then it is worthwhile learning more about heraldry in general and their arms in particular.
- Heraldry was used both in France and New France.
- Remember to document your heraldry findings like you do your genealogical findings.

Heraldry Artwork

- The drawings of arms in this presentation was done using Armorial Gold Heraldry clipart and Adobe Illustrator by John P. DuLong. Please do not use any of these drawings without the permission of John P. DuLong.
- Screenshots of several arms examples from multiple sources including the Archives nationales de France and the Bibliothèque national de France.



This is what a real graphic artist can do with heraldry and computer software.

This is the full achievement of arms of Louis XIV, King of France and Navarre.

Done by Sodacan and available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Sodacan>