

SECTION VIII -- NAMES AND ARMORY -- PROCEDURAL

7) Resources Available to Heralds (and their clients)
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RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HERALDS AND THEIR CLIENTS

Eilis O'Boirne (August, XXI)

Remember that resources of use to heralds can be found almost anywhere. Keep an open mind and do not refuse any information just because it wasn't found in a "standard" source.

RESOURCES WITHIN THE SCA

OTHER HERALDS are useful people to share books and information with. They are also invaluable as a place to get a second opinion -- on the validity of a made-up name, on the design of a device, on a possible conflict. Use the heralds in your area when you need immediate help; and feel free to call on the Principality and Kingdom Staff heralds for help with problems you can't solve, questions you can't answer, and help finding particular books or other sources of information.

PEOPLE OTHER THAN HERALDS can also help you. Fighters and armorers can identify strange weapons and armor parts which your clients may want to use as charges. Members of Guilds or other special-interest groups can help with the identification of medieval items in their fields. Companions of the Order of the Laurel can also provide information and documentation on medieval articles which are used in their fields of expertise. Artistic Laurels will often be willing to provide drawings of devices which are beyond your skills.

SCA PUBLICATIONS quite often have articles of interest to heralds. First and foremost on this list, of course, is the West Kingdom Herald's Handbook, but do not overlook other publications, such as The Known World Handbook and other various pamphlets in the Complete Anachronist series. Look over the list of materials available from the Stock Clerk periodically -- this is published in some issues of Tournaments Illuminated and sent with your membership renewal form. There are also useful articles in T.I., and in the Proceedings of the heraldic symposia, and in assorted other handbooks and newsletters which are available through SCA sources.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE OUTSIDE OF THE SCA

COLLEGE PROFESSORS AND OTHER TEACHERS will almost always answer polite inquiries about facts in their fields. If you explain something about the (educational, historically based) SCA, they may become very interested in checking your Rumanian scroll text translation or helping you find the correct form for a Finnish name. Please do get things in writing if you intend

to use their input as documentation. "Professor X says ..." doesn't help us convince Laurel that something is really correct.

BOOKS are among our most useful resources. The best sources for these books are listed below; first I want to concentrate on what sorts of books are useful, and why.

Heraldry Books are useful for learning the language of blazon and the rudiments of heraldic practice.

Art books are useful because they will show you some of the many ways heraldry was used in period. They will also contain useful motifs, and some have pictures of medieval rolls of arms.

Name books are useful in helping people choose names, and are indispensable in documenting them. *** BEWARE THE BABY NAME BOOK! ***

Dictionaries are also useful. Use foreign language dictionaries to help people to translate their chosen names into another language.

Grammar books can help show that the name is correctly put together.

Use the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) to determine whether a word someone wishes to use in a name came into use before 1600.

Atlases are an invaluable source of place names, and atlases of antique maps will provide documentation of place names as being period.

Literature written before 1600 is another good source for names. Names taken from poems, plays, sagas and other works written in period are usually acceptable SCA names.

History books are filled with names which are all connected to dates. Any given name or surname found in a history book attached to someone born before 1600 is documented and acceptable, provided that it conforms to the other Rules for names.

Religious books, such as lives of saints, provide another pool of names attached to dates.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES are a good source of books. They will generally have one or two of the most common books on heraldry -- usually in the genealogy section. This is also where you will find name books. Libraries sometimes have an extensive section on heraldry.

COLLEGE LIBRARIES are a better source for more obscure references. Try the General Library first, if there is more than one. Departmental libraries which might be of interest would be History, Language, and Art History. Ask the librarian in the General Library for help. Access to College Libraries can sometimes be a problem. However, most of them will allow you to purchase a membership, or you may be able to interest a professor or a student in your project. If the library restricts access to the stacks, and most of them do, inquire about a one-day stack pass if you are trying to track down a particular bit of information.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN is the way to get access to a particular book that you can't find anywhere. Ask your librarian how this works -- you will need the name and author of the book you want, and as much other information (publisher, edition, date) as possible.

BOOKSTORE, especially used-bookstores with a large hardcover stock, can yield surprises. The sections most worth searching are reference, history, art, linguistics, and genealogy. If your bookstore has remainder tables, check them frequently. We have discovered some really useful resources there.

BOOKS WHICH ARE IN PRINT can be ordered from the publisher by your bookstore. There is a reference work called Books in Print which lists books available by their subject matter, and which then gives the necessary information for ordering. If your bookstore will not order a book for you (which they may not if they are part of a chain or do not deal with that publisher), try writing to the publisher directly. Explain why you are not ordering through a bookstore, and ask whether they would be willing to sell to you direct.

BOOKS WHICH ARE OUT OF PRINT can sometimes be obtained by a Book Search. These are usually only done by the larger used-bookstores. You give the bookseller as much information as you can on the book you are interested in. He, in turn, puts your request on a list which is circulated to other used-bookstores. If a copy of the book you want is located, you will be notified and ask if you want to pay the price requested. If you do, the book is shipped to your store. This method is not guaranteed, but will sometimes produce results.

BOOK CLEARANCE HOUSES sometimes carry heraldry and name books. The two largest are Publisher's Central Bureau (Dept. 429, 1 Champion Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001-9987) and Barnes and Nobel. Write and ask for copies of their current catalogs.

MAP STORES have lots of maps, both modern and antique reproduction. Maps are just loaded with place names. If lots of people in your area are interested in French names, you might want to buy a reproduction of a period map of France.

"NATIONAL" STORES, generally called things like The Irish Cottage or Scotch House, are a good source of armorial posters. They sometimes have extensive book sections, and quite often these include books on native names.

"COAT-OF-ARMS MILLS", the places which will sell you your family crest on a plastic wall plaque, are not really useful. However, their wares may inspire an interesting way to display devices, and sometimes have access to suppliers who will make up seal rings and suchlike. They also carry items with generalized heraldic motifs.

SOURCES FOR SUPPLIES USED BY HERALDS

ART SUPPLY STORES are the place to buy your colored markers. Ask about brush markers, which allow you to make both thick and thin lines. If you live near a college, the student union store often has a good selection of this sort of thing.

FABRIC STORES sell green and gold fabric for the making of tabards, etc. Get a cotton/polyester blend, so that it won't wrinkle too hideously, but make sure that what you buy is at least 60% cotton (60/40 blend).

COPY STORES or access to another source of inexpensive copying is almost a necessity, since each submission requires multiple forms. If you live in a small town with no commercial copying facility, ask your local lawyer/doctor/real estate man if he has a copy machine you could use occasionally if you reimburse him for the costs. Explain about the SCA -- you may find a new member. Also, check your library. Many of them have copy machines, or know where you can find one.