

The Field

The field is the background of the device, and is blazoned first, followed by the charges. A **divided** or **parti-colored** field is one divided into several pieces. It is partitioned into an even number of pieces when only two (which is by far the most common) **tinctures** (colors) are used. Otherwise, the field is said to be charged with the pieces. For instance, if a field consists of eight horizontal pieces alternately green and yellow, it is "**Barry** of eight vert and Or ..." If, on the other hand, it consists of several green and yellow pieces, with a green on the top, it is "Vert, three bars Or ..." Exceptions are **chequey** and **lozengy**, where it doesn't matter. Chequey and lozengy do not have to be of a specified number of pieces and can have either odd or even numbers along their longest division. Sometimes a blazon does specify "*chequey of nine ...*" or the like. St. John Hope notes that the longest bar of chequey is generally divided into six or eight pieces, but seven has "*some artistic advantage as well.*"

The first named color is the one closest to the chief of the shield. If more than one part of a divided field shares the chief, then the color on the dexter side is mentioned first. Parti-colored fields normally have six pieces, otherwise the number is blazoned. **Figure 2** shows the common divisions of the field, and the order that colors are given in the blazon. For arms without a chief, determine the tincture that belongs in the dexter chief corner, then color the rest of the arms from that starting point. When a charge such as a bend or saltire covers that corner, sketch in the field as if the charge were not present to determine tinctures. For arms with a chief, treat the dexter corner just below the chief as the top of the shield and proceed as above.

Figure 2: Field Divisions

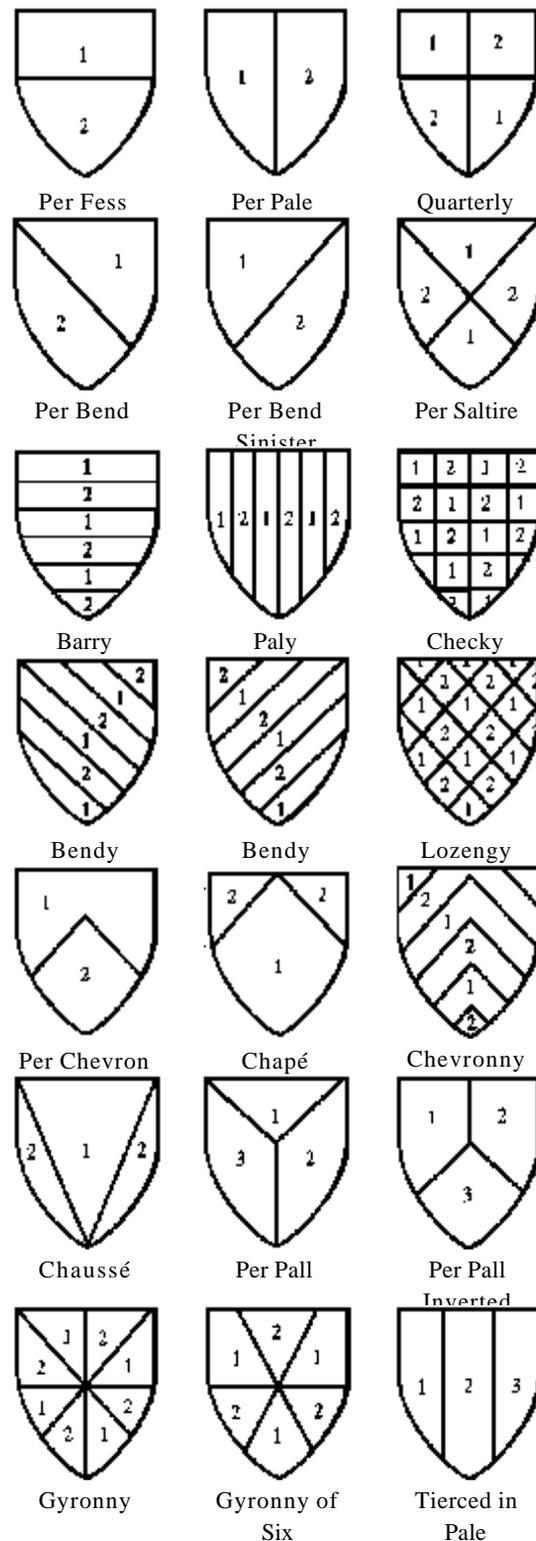
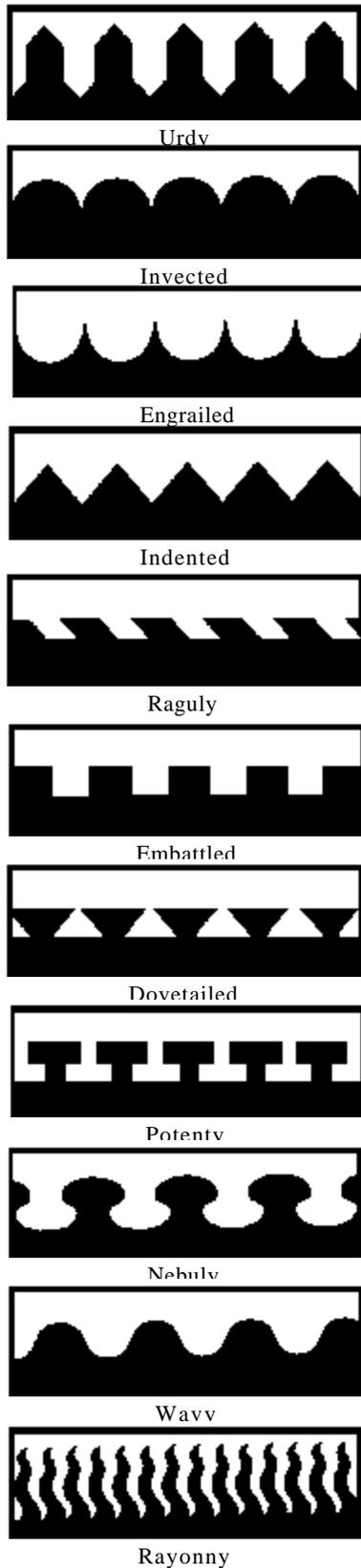


Figure 3: Lines of Partition



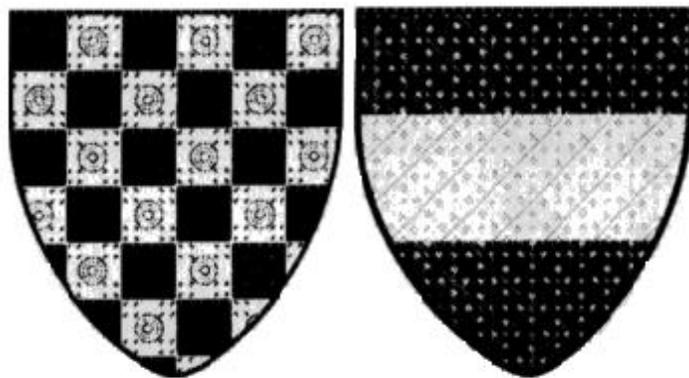
Lines of Partition

The lines of partition need not be just straight lines: if they are not, they should be bold enough to be identifiable from a distance. Thus, three to five copies of the basic unit of the design placed across the width of the shield is about right. **Figure 3** gives their names and pictures. Lines of partition not only apply to divisions of the field, but they can be applied to the **ordinaries** and **subordinaries**.

Since a line of partition cannot face “outward” the rule is that it faces in the more “honorable” position: chief over base, dexter over sinister. Thus, a field per pale inverted would have points to dexter, the arches to sinister. This appears to be the mundane practice, though precedent is somewhat muddled. Society practice is exactly the same. “Per pale” is the same in both but “per fess engrailed” mundanely would probably have the points to base (because the chief position “owns” the partition line), and Society practice places the points to chief so they look like the cups the partition line is named for.

Diapering

Diapering means to fill the blank spaces on a shield with a pattern of lines in a *slightly* darker or lighter hue of the same tincture. It is not mentioned in the blazon and is purely at the artists’ discretion. Uncharged otherwise empty fields or ordinaries were commonly diapered in period scrolls.



Diapering of the Arms of De Warrenne

An example of diapering both field and charge. In this case a fess.

Tinctures are divided into **color**, **metal**, **fur**, and **proper**, and are used according to the **Rule of Tincture**:

Thou shalt
not place
metal upon
metal nor
color upon
color.

Tables 2 and 3 list colors and metals with recommended paints. Furs and proper are nominally neutral with respect to this rule, as long as contrast is maintained.

Note: On period scrolls, silver metal as pigment is not often used, due to tarnishing and chemical reaction, its use is not in general recommended. -- Ed.

Table 2: Colors

Name: Sable
Color: Black
Shade: Greyish Black
Paint: Ivory black & dab white or india ink

Name: Azure
Color: Blue
Shade: Bright aquamarine
Paint: Ultramarine & Cerulean

Name: Gules
Color: Red
Shade: Vermilion
Paint: Vermilion or cadmium red light

Name: Vert
Color: Green
Shade: Emerald green
Paint: Emerald; or azure & cadmium yellow light.

Name: Purpure
Color: Purple
Shade: Mauve
Paint: Purple lake, or azure & cadmium red light.

Table 3: Metals

Name: Or
Color: Gold
Paint: Grumbacher designer color cake; gold ink; decoupage "gold" foil; genuine gold leaf; genuine shell gold
OR
Color: Yellow
Paint: Pale yellow ochre; cadmium yellow light.

Name: Argent
Color: White
Paint: Chinese white
OR
Color: Silver
Paint: Silver ink; decoupage 'silver' foil.
