



Base
1/4 - 1/3 height



Bend
1/10-1/3 width



Bend Cotised
1/10 - 1/3 width



Fess
1/12-1/5 height



Fess Cotised
1/6-1/4 height

Ordinaries

Ordinaries and subordinaries are standard heraldic geometric shapes placed in standard positions on the shield. Following are ordinaries and other charges that occupy a substantial portion of the field, with some notes on drawing them. The central ordinaries (fess, pale, bend, bend sinister, cross, saltire, pile and pall) are considered primary charges, and are named first in a blazon. The ordinaries around the rim (chief, base, bordure, and flaunches) are named after all of the central charges have been described. The other geometrical charges shown (dexter tierce, sinister tierce, gore, and gore sinister) are sometimes called ordinaries and sometimes blazoned first, but precedents, both mundane and Society are mixed.

The most common error in drawing ordinaries is to make them too small. They should be bold. The sizes listed under the shields provide a feel for what is reasonable - they are not hard and fast rules. An ordinary is drawn larger when it is itself charged with objects, to give them more room. It is drawn smaller if the field is charged and the ordinary is not, to give room to the charges on the field. An ancient convention for drawing bends showed them as an arc: a straight line drawn on an outward curving shield would actually look something like that, so it can be interpreted as an early form of perspective drawing.

A charge may surmount another, or be blazoned as overall. Overlying charges should be drawn boldly. An overall charge drawn to just barely overlap onto the field is poorly designed and should be redrawing. In general, underlying charges are drawn smaller to promote ready identification of the overall charge. Exceptions are overall central ordinaries: they are generally the ones drawn skinny, so the charge beneath can be identified.

The edges of an ordinary can also be specified with any of the partition lines. About a third of the ordinary's width on each side is used for drawing the partition line. Thus, there will generally be more copies of the basic unit of the design on the edge of an ordinary than there are when it is used as a field partition. A fess or chevron embattled displays embattlements solely upon the upper edge. Further, there are two additional terms:



Bend Sinister
1/10 - 1/3 height



Chevron
1/5 - 1/3 height



Chevron Cotised
1/3 - 1/2 height



Chevron Inverted
1/10 - 1/3 width



Chevron (Medieval)
1/10 - 1/3 width



Bordure
1/6 - 1/4 height



Chief
1/5 - 1/3 height



Chief Triangular
1/5 - 1/3 height



Cross
1/10 - 1/4 width



Cross Cotised
1/10-1/3 width

Counter-embattled (or embattled-counter-embattled) indicates offset embattlements on both sides of the ordinary; while *bretessé* indicates aligned embattlements on both sides of the ordinary.

The term *fimbriated* means that the charge mentioned in the blazon has a band of color or metal around its outside edge to separate it from the field where it would otherwise be indistinguishable. It is used presently to allow simple charges to be placed on the field color on color, or metal on metal, which is otherwise against the rules. There are some older devices which have very complex fimbriation (birds, animal heads) but this is no longer allowed. An ordinary that is cotised has an extra line, sometimes two around it. The *cotise* is typically one-fourth the width of the ordinary, see the examples on both this and the previous page.

When more than one copy of an ordinary is used, the blazon will specify how many, and will call that ordinary by a diminutive of its name. In the SCA "no diminutive of an ordinary can be borne singly." this means that if the blazon says something like "Azure, a saltorel argent ..." or "Sable, on a bar Or ...", the ordinary in question is drawn as a regular saltire or fess, larger or smaller as the rest of the design dictates. The scribe should remember that a field charged with several copies of an ordinary will have an odd number of pieces, and the first color mentioned is that of the two outside pieces.



Gore
1/5-1/3 height



Gore Sinister
1/5-1/3 width



Flanches
1/5-1/3 height



Pale
1/3-1/2 width



Pall
1/3-1/2 height



Saltire
1/5-1/4 width



Pile
1/3-1/2 height



Pile Inverted
1/3-1/2 height