

Heralds and armorists as editors of armorials

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When King Christian II fled Copenhagen and his realm in 1523, one of his heralds, John Jutland (Hans Jylland, d.1530), followed him into exile. Among the possessions he left behind was "a book with arms, such as heralds used to have".¹ Does this imply that all heralds carried registers of arms? - and may we extend the observation so that all or most of the heralds noted arms encountered on their travels and kept them more or less organized? Hardly, if we look to the surviving armorials for supporting evidence. Most of the late medieval armorials appear to be desk-works based on notes, fragments and other armorials. But that need not preclude that heralds took notes, which were later organized into armorials.

But what about heralds? There were many of them. From the conference in Arras in 1435 we know at least 88 names. From the years 1419-1467, the reign of Philippe 'le bon', duke of Burgundy, we have some 100 names of heralds in his service, but he not only used his own, but also those employed by his towns and nobles, as well as foreign heralds visiting his court. Were they all capable of performing all aspects of the office of arms? - and were they equally employed in all aspects? At least for diplomatic missions, they were not.²

Some armorials have been attributed to named heralds, e.g. Vermandois, Navarre, Sicile, Charolais and Toison d'or - not to mention those with internal evidence of authorship or possession, e.g. Gelre, Ingeram and Rugen. Though it is obvious that there are armorials, which were made or at least commissioned by non-heralds, e.g. the 13th century works of Matthew Paris and the 15th century works of Ulrich Richental and Conrad Grünenberg, most writers almost by reflex have armorials as compiled and executed by heralds.

As an example, take the *Grand armorial équestre de la Toison d'or et de l'Europe* attributed as late as 2001 by no lesser experts than Michel Pastoureau and Michel Popoff to the well-known chief herald of Burgundy, Jean le Fevre de Saint-Rémy, the Toison d'or king-of-arms.³ There is no reference to him in the volume, but he is known as a ceremonialist, diplomat, historian, biographer, theorist of arms - but not as an armorial artist. His sole claim to 'authorship' is that the volume contains the early members of the Order of the Golden Fleece (Toison d'or) arranged as a cavalcade, and that he was the herald of the Order! Actually, not more than very circumstantial

¹ Verwohlt DH 216.

² Spitzbarth HB 560-562.

³ Pastoureau ETO 2:37. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 4790, *Grand armorial de la Toison d'or & de l'Europe*.

evidence. But frankly, the two modern editors did define his role as that of directing the execution of the armorial by a team of heralds and artisans. With 79 miniatures and 42 pages with tables of arms it must have been fairly expensive to make, and could well have required a managing editor.⁴

Armorial, or rolls of arms, simply indicate a collection of achievements and/or coats of arms, and may include arms painted or carved on walls, roof beams or moveables. For this paper the discussion will be confined to large composite collections painted during the 15th century. For the period there are six major groups based on their common contents.⁵ They include volumes made in France, the Low Countries, Germany and England, and in the form of different types of manuscripts. Some have miniatures as well as tables of arms - of varying artistic quality and mad on material of varying costs (paper as well as parchment or vellum). The grouping of armorials were based on analysis of the fragmented or whole series of arms they had in common.⁶

Heralds were heavily involved in making the core of the Toison d'or group.⁷ The English segment in the *Bergshammar* could only have been copied from the *Toison d'or*.⁸ Other parts of the *Bergshammar* were made by mixing fragments from the *Gelre* and the *Lyncenich*.⁹ The conclusion is that around 1450 these three armorials must have been available to the artisan working on the fourth. It is more likely that the *Bergshammar* compiler and/or artisan was a herald in the service of Philippe 'le bon' than an amateur armorist or an artisan employed by a book collector.¹⁰ A herald would be able to borrow books or quires from colleagues working in the same building or town.¹¹ One of these must have inherited or bought the *Gelre* as Claes Heinenzoon died in 1414. The very thick format (22 x 14 x 7 cm, approx. modern A5) and the rather rough technique

⁴ Pastoureau & Popoff suggested that parts may have been lost. The presence of bohemians in the Heessel compendium supports this contention, see below.

⁵ The groups mentioned do include armorials which are only known as later copies, some in blazon only. Not all groups will be discussed here.

⁶ The six groups are named for a typical armorial, e.g. *Ashmolean* (Oxford, Bodley, Ashmole 15 A), *Urfé* (Paris, BnF, ms.fr. 32753), *Toison d'or* (note 3), *Gelre* (Brussels, KBR, ms.15652-15656), *Rineck* (Wien, ÖNB, Ms.3336), or the region of origin: *Bodensee Group*, incl. *Grünenberg* (München, BSB, cgm.145). Most were noted in Clemmensen GR, and will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming Clemmensen EA.

⁷ The *Toison d'or* (c.1435, note 3), *Paix d'Arras* (c.1435, London, BL, Add.11542; Clemmensen APA), *Lyncenich* (c.1450, Brussels, KBR, ms.II.6567), *Bergshammar* (c.1455, Stockholm, RA, Codex Bergshammar), and *Complainte des hérauts* al. the *Heessel* compendium (1434-57, Antwerp, Stadsbibliothek, ms. B 89420 A; Anrooij HH; facsimile on www). Dates as guides only.

⁸ Clemmensen RH 12.

⁹ Raneke BHM 47, 63; Clemmensen GR 165.

¹⁰ Not even duke Philippe 'le bon' was known to have armorials in his large library.

¹¹ The inference is obviously taken from the ways of the 16th and 17th century English heralds, armorial painters and antiquarians. The armorials named were probably kept as loose quires at the time and only cut and bound later.

used suggests that the *Bergshammar* was intended for personal use and made by the compiler himself.¹²

There is a curious element in the relation between these armorials. Among the danes (and germans in danish service) on *Gelre* fo.55v-56r are three achievements for Albrecht Murach (fl.1430-86), Christoph Parsberg (d.1462), and Otto Rosenkrantz (1395-1477), which are in a unique style quite unlike the rest of the armorial (*figure 1*).¹³ The trellis on the pageant helmets have been flattened, as if they were painted on to a tilting helmet of the type used in the *Bergshammar*. The legends are of similar style, but in different ink from that used for the *Gelre*. The segment, present in *Bellenville* fo.4v, *Gelre* fo.55v-56r, and *Bergshammar* fo.215v, has the royal arms of Denmark, the arms of a danish noble Hennike Limbek and of the grand sénéchal (drost) Hennike Putbus (d.1388). These and possibly those of Rud and Uf were probably present in the source of *Gelre* and *Bellenville*. *Bergshammar* also has the arms and crest of Rosenkrantz, which would be unproblematic for a copy of a 1380'es collation, if not for its presence with Murach and Parsberg in *Gelre*.¹⁴ These arrived with Christoffer III in 1441, when the then duke of Bavaria was elected king. After the king's death in 1448 both returned to Germany, while Otto Rosenkrantz in 1444 succeeded Murach as Hofmeister. It is not unlikely that the three items were entered into the *Gelre* by the *Bergshammar*-compiler.

Jean le Fevre *dit* Toison d'or was proposed as a 'managing editor' in a previous paragraph. The relation between the English in the *Toison d'or* and the copy of it in the *Paix d'Arras* manuscript indirectly supports this.¹⁵ The layouts used for the tables of arms were different, but the artisan responsible was the same (*figure 2*).¹⁶ Whether he also painted the miniatures remain to be explored. Though some armorial figures are of the same style, the vigorous mounted figures appear at first sight to be much more expressive. In any case, an artisan, not a herald-painter, was probably employed for the work.

The most recent addition to the Toison d'or group is a herald's compendium containing some tables of arms together with texts on ceremonial, history, statues of chivalric orders, and remedies against illnesses.¹⁷ The texts are in the autograph of Hendrik van Heessel (d.1470), who over time served both the emperor Friedrich III as Austria king-of-arms (Österreich) and both the

¹² The well-drawn helmets may have been pre-stamped. The swan-miniature for Johan of Kleve (1419-81, duke 1449) on fo.47v, copied from *Lyncenich* fo.109v, could be by the same artisan.

¹³ The pages were reproduced in Bergens-Pantens GEL, Pastoureau BEL and Bartholdy (BHM:215v).

¹⁴ Murach and Parsberg could have been entered on a now lost *Bergshammar* 215r-bis, fo.216-217 are blank.

¹⁵ The *Toison d'or* was more likely copied from the *Paix d'Arras* (Bl, Add.11542) or a common source.

¹⁶ Clemmensen RH 211.

¹⁷ The *Complainte des hérauts*, see note 7, survey of elements in Anrooij HH 724-726.

emperor and Philippe 'le bon' as Ruyers king-of-arms. Heessel reportedly spent most of 1434-1437 at the burgundian court. The style used for most of the tables of arms (of nobles from Austria and Bohemia) is so close to that used for *Toison d'or* and *Paix d'Arras*, that they were likely painted by the same man (*figure 3*). The arms are essentially concordant with segments from *Toison d'or* and *Bergshammar*, though the fragments come in variable order. The other arms are in a very different styles, with several by a german artist with a very vigorous style (*figure 4*). Hendrik van Heessel apparently bought or bartered the austro-bohemian arms from an artisan in the Low Countries, which indicate some form of commercial trade in tables of arms even when heralds were involved.

The next set of examples takes imaginary arms as their subject. These are fine objects for study. An imaginary coat of arms need a story behind the visual presentation of the name, and unless it is canting, similar arms imply a common source. But would imaginary arms be of interest to heralds? Such professionals were, according to the common belief, mainly occupied with exalted diplomacy and ceremonials for feasts, tournaments, weddings and burials. The answer is probably yes, if we see them also as providers of imagery for the chivalric culture. At least we know that some heralds, e.g. Jörg Rugen in Germany, needed to peddle their services to both princes and burghers in order to survive - and he had the working title Jerusalem for a senior imperial herald.¹⁸

We find imaginary arms, for fabulous kings, saints, and heroes, in many armorials and from both England, France and Germany, and from the 13th to the 17th century.¹⁹ For now, the discussion will be limited to the german armorials of the Bodensee Group. Most of the imagery can be traced back to the armorial appended to the chronicle written by Ulrich Richental of the Concilium held in Constance on the Bodensee in 1414-1418.²⁰ This was a very popular account, of which a dozen non-illustrated and five illustrated manuscripts have survived. It is assumed to have been written before 1430, though the surviving illustrated manuscripts can be dated to 1460-75, and it came in print as early as 1483.

The imagery was used by the merchant Conrad Grünenberg for a tribute to chivalry presenting the qualities of nobility, the foundations of the empire, a grand tour through the world pagan or christian ending with a listing by rank of the titled nobility and the societies which

¹⁸ Clemmensen RUG 9-12, mainly on the basis of information provided by Klaus Graf on Jörg Rugen *al.* Georg Ruxner (c.1460-c.1526).

¹⁹ Clemmensen IA .

²⁰ Clemmensen KCR, examples in *figure 5*.

organized the German gentry and knighthood (Ritterstand).²¹ The artistic quality of the three contemporary manuscripts is very high. They were executed by professional painters, who also worked for religious institutions, nobles and burghers. Grünenberg may have supplied some of the information and probably acted as 'managing editor' as well as commissioner, but the actual work was done commercially. The artists in these cases did both miniatures and tables of arms.

The herald Jörg Rügen, or Georg Ruxner, as he is also known, organized much of the same information differently in a surviving armorial with 3619 entries. The artwork is quite good, so it must have taken some time to make. This armorial has some unusual elements. It may be understandable that Rügen included ancestors and relatives of his benefactors, but why did he invent arms of 'Greek' nobles some 50 years after the Turks swallowed Byzantium? And why include a genealogical chronicle of the dukes of Bavaria illustrated with imaginary arms? Though there are no significant overlaps within the armorial, some parts of it may have been intended for a different use. In any case this herald tried to cater for the cultural tastes of his contemporaries. We know that he prepared and sold chronicles and works with arms specially made to both princes, nobles and burghers.

Vigil Raber (c.1490-1552), a non-herald multi-artist, used the same material for several armorials.²² He was by profession a canvas painter like Rudolf Stahel, but also wrote and directed religious plays - and made armorials with artwork of very high quality for a commercial purpose. By the turn of the century most designs were probably culled from the printed *Richental* chronicle, which was printed in 1483 by Anton Sorg in Nürnberg, and reprinted in 1536. In the case of *Grünenberg*, the artists probably had access to the base version of the now Berlin manuscript.

But what was the situation in the 1460's? For that period we have five versions of *Richental* and at least six armorials with many markers in common, but with entries in varying order. One was probably made to order from an abbot and another is attributed to a herald associated with the tournament trail.²³ Technically, we know that several of the armorials utilized carved woodblocks for prestamping the outlines of shields, helmets and mantling. Some of these woodblocks were reused for both an armorial attributed to a herald and for some with no such attribution (*figure 6*). Regarding content, we should explore, if the varying selections of names in

²¹ Clemmensen GRU. The three manuscripts are Berlin, GStA-PK, VIII.HA.II.ms.21 (artwork by Friedrich Walther); München, BSB, cgm.145 (artwork by Rudolf Stahel), and Zürich, ZB, ms. A 42 (artwork by Andreas Haider), as identified by Bernd Konrad.

²² Arch VRN.

²³ The *St.Gallen-Haggenberg* has the arms of Abbot Ulrich Rösch on the inside cover. *Ingeram* has a full figure representation with arms of the herald Hans Ingeram. Clemmensen SGH, Bercker ING, Waldstein ING.

the tournaments societies did reflect their composition at the time of collation, and that such name lists were used in combination with archival coats of arms held by commercial workshops.

A single major French herald did attempt to make an armorial for a commercial purpose, if we may extend the definition to cover gifts made for personal advancement or in gratitude. It is impossible to differentiate between the possibilities from the object in question. During his last years, the French royal herald Gilles le Bouvier dit Berry (c.1385-1456), decided to have a presentation armorial made. The first page shows him presenting the work to the king of France. Like his colleague Jean le Fevre dit Toison d'or, Gilles was also a diplomat-historian, but hardly a trained painter. He must have commissioned the 29 miniatures of mounted figures painted on expensive parchment. There was probably several artisan illustrators available both in Paris and at the court in Bourges, as the booktrade was only now recuperating from the slump caused by the Anglo-French wars. For the tables of arms, of which some were painted on parchment and others on paper, he may have done at least some tables of arms himself, as the artwork appears to be of varying quality.²⁴

This limited survey shows that for the late Middle Ages both heralds and armorists made, or had made, armorials for both personal and commercial use.²⁵ For the time being there are no obvious criteria to distinguish between works made or ordered by or for heralds or amateur armorists. Differentiation is at present only possible if there is intrinsic evidence in the form of autograph, dedication or particular name-arms combinations, though knowledge of the relations between armorials may be of great help. When more light is shed on how and why heralds may be differentiated, it may also be possible to explain how and why products like armorials were conceived and executed.

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²⁴ The *Berry*, BnF, ms.fr.4985, is unfinished, has 29 miniatures and 1813 arms on 93 sheets of parchment and 112 of paper. Boos BER, www.gallica.bnf.fr.

²⁵ Late medieval armorials would generally have contents collated during 1350-1500, though the examples used here were painted within the last half of the period, i.e. 1435-1540.

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Figure 1: The danish arms in *Gelre*, *Bellenville* and *Bergshammar*. The arms with flattened pageant helmets for Murach, Parsberg and Rosenkrantz in *Gelre* are a later addition. Henning Putbus (d.1388) was steward of the realm (rigets drost). Murach and Parsberg came to Denmark in 1440. Otto Rosenkrantz relieved Albrecht Murach as Hofmeister in 1444.



Figure 2: Parts of *Toison d'or*, ETO:7r2-4+r7-9, and *Paix d'Arras*, APA:95v2-4+6-8, with arms of english nobles. de Bohun E.Northampton, ETO:7r7 and APA:95v3; Maorves, ETO:7r8 and APA:95v4.



Figure 3: Coats of arms of austrian nobles in *Toison d'or* and in the *Heessel* compendium.



Figure 4: Coats of arms from the *Heessel* compendium in typical Southern German style

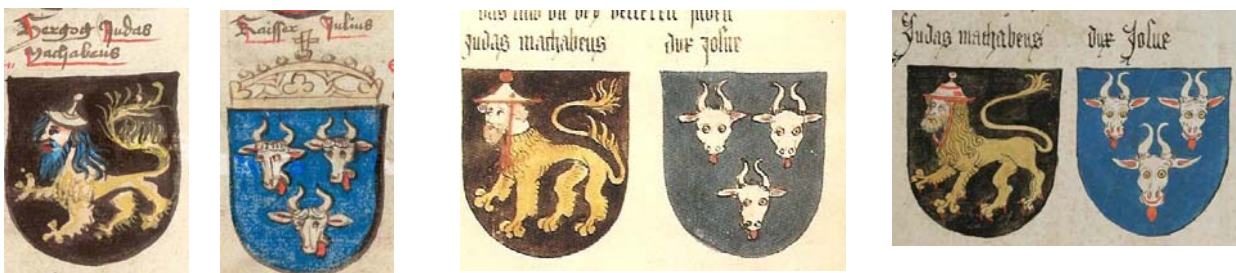


Figure 5: Descent of the arms of two 'Worthies'. From *Richental*, KCR-P:244r, to *Ingeram*, ING:28n, and *St.Gallen*, SGH:17n.