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Message from the President

Regrettably the Easter issue of *the Escutcheon* is somewhat later this time as the backlog of articles has dried up. The Journal Editor and I would therefore like to remind you that if you have any knowledge of Heraldry, Genealogy, Academic Dress, or cognate subjects that you would like to share, the *Escutcheon* is the place for it. We publish both long and short articles and look forward to receiving submissions from our Membership. *The Escutcheon* is moving to a digital format so there will be more scope for larger illustrations and maps too.

One benefit of having a later Easter issue is that it puts me in position to reflect not only on the Easter Term but also to talk about next year with a better understanding of what is to come. The end of Easter 2017 was one of those occasions in CUHAGS history when a whole cohort of committee members left Cambridge – Messrs. Gazeley, Lipp and Shah, having served a combined nine years on the Committee, finished or are soon to finish their courses and have therefore retired from the committee. I wish them well for the future but I am convinced that we will see them at a talk or a feast soon enough. For most of last year it was my intention to join them as I had set my eyes on – yet another – Master Degree at, dare I say it, “the other place”. Rather unexpectedly I found myself in Cambridge for another year and with no other candidate for the Presidency, was able to stay on for another year.

Looking forward to 2017-2018, we can expect a few familiar faces to return, Two of our honorary Vice-Presidents, Somerset and York Heralds of Arms, have agreed to return to CUHAGS for a talk and the Freshers' Squash for this year will be an exposé of *The Last Rites of an Empire* by our former President, Dr. Patrick Cook. In terms of Feasts, the Committee hopes to open the doors to three colleges where the Society has not dined in recent years, but for more on that please consult our Michaelmas issue.

Yours in pean,

Richard van der Beek

Our English Hapsburgs Revisited.

In the 1895 edition of the Fox-Davis *The Art of Heraldry*, there appeared a fine engraving (figure 1) purporting to be the ancient arms of the family Feilding. The claim was that these were the arms of Sir Basil-Percy Feilding of Denbigh, Warwickshire, Barons and Earls (creation 1662). It was discreetly removed from the later edition of 1900 for very good reason.



Figure 1 'Ancient' arms of the family Feilding

The Earldom of Denbigh (1622), so Feilding claimed, was held alongside the dignity of Count of Hapsburg, and carried in the male line for centuries. It is not simply a question of genealogy involved in the claimed illustrious descent, as the Earls, according to Burke's Peerage, were styled Counts of Hapsburg, Lauffenburg and Rhienfelden. An eagle of Austria bears their arms which are surmounted by the cap of a Count of the Empire.

Burke's Peerage recognised this claimed descent as an undoubted fact, as did Sir William Dugdale (1605-1686), in his *Warwickshire and Baronage* (1656). It has also allegedly

been recognised by the English Crown in the patent of creation for the Barony of St. Liz (1664) (Sir William Feilding had married Agnes de Liz in 1471, and it would appear that the title had been a second creation). It was further claimed that the titles had *always* been recognised by the reigning Emperors of Austria. There was, it appears, no lack of documentary evidence to support the claim of the family to being Counts of the Empire. Dugdale supplied some convincing documentation but the majority may be found in the '*elaborate history*' composed in 1670 by the Reverend Nathaniel Wanley (1634-1680)¹ for the head of the family, Sir Basil-Percy Feilding the 2nd Earl, and printed in John Nichol's *County History of Leicestershire*. (1805). The edition was dedicated to Feilding with the usual unctuous observations, and included a history of the Gulhlaxton Hundred, ancient seat of the *illustrious* Feildings. The study, entitled *The History of the Illustrious Family of the Feildings compiled by the command of the Rt. Hon. Basil, Earl of Denbigh, 1670*, and according to Round, a fine example of a spurious pedigree. Unfortunately, space would not permit inclusion within this article. A similar history to that produced by Wanley was being transported to London by command of George II, (1727-1760), but had mysteriously, and unfortunately, '*perished by fire*'.

The story, of the early Feilding pedigree, as it is told, is rather romantic, Geoffrey, Count of Hapsburg, Laufenburg and Rhienfelden (obit 1271), head of the younger line of Hapsburg, is said to have been reduced to comparative poverty by his cousin Rudolph (later the first Hapsburg Emperor), and sent his son and namesake Geoffrey to England in 1228, during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), this younger Geoffrey married *Maud de Colville*, took the name of Feilding (Felden), and had by Maude, a son and heir, also Geoffrey, who by his wife, *Agnes de Napton (married 1309)*, was allegedly the direct ancestor of the Earls of Denbigh. Geoffrey, the father, returning to Germany, was refused his inheritance for marrying Maud without his family's permission. His son, Geoffrey, was also disinherited but later obtained from Count Rudolph, the uncle who had supplanted him, 7000 marks in compensation for his claim on Rhienfelden. This story is supported by Evelyn P. Shirley (1812-1882), in his *Noble and Gentlemen of England (1859)*; he states, '*The princely extraction of this noble family is well known; its ancestor Galfridus or Geoffrey, came to England around 1228 and received large possessions from Henry III. The name Feilding is derived from Rinfelden in Germany, where, and at Lauffenburg, were the patrimonial possessions of the house of Hapsburg*'.

A long period elapsed before the Feildings re-affirmed the German dignities publically, as these appear only during the reign of Charles II (1675-1685), although a reference to the German descent did appear some years earlier in

¹ Rev. Nathaniel Wanley. *Peterhouse 1649, Trinity 1651/2, BA 1653/4 and MA 1657*.

1656, in the aforementioned Dugdale's *Warwickshire*; in a reference to the third Earl, William, when he was styled, *Comes de Hapsburg, Dom's Loffenburg, & Rinfelden in Germania, Baron of Newnham Padox & St Liz, Viscount Feilding & Earl of Denbigh*. Burke refers to this when he states that 'William, third Earl of Denbigh, resumed the ancient denomination of Hapsburg, which his descendants still use'.

A member of the Feilding family, styled Sir William Feilding de Hapsburg, knighted April 23rd 1603, married, in 1606, Susan Villers (1583-1652), daughter of Sir George Villers and a sister to George, Duke of Buckingham(c1623)



Figure 2 1705 Satirical print of the arms of the Feilding family superimposed on the Hapsburg double-headed eagle lacking one head, dedicated to the Garter King of Arms and mocking the family's pretensions at ancestral connections to the Habsburg dynasty.

(1592-1628). The Feildings may then have chosen to reveal the pedigree that they had nurtured for over three centuries, namely that they were not of English origin, but descended in the male line, from the 'mighty house of Hapsburg'. The marriage was referred to by a contemporary observer as 'a lucky rise'. Interestingly, the Hapsburg suffix does not appear to have been used after the death of Sir Basil Feilding in 1675, but there is no doubt that the connection with the Villers family had significantly advanced the upward mobility of the Fieldings. The contemporary opinion of the Feilding pretensions was characterised in a cartoon of 1705 addressed to the officers of the College of Arms.

In 1895, possibly prompted by the appearance of the Fox Davis illustration, John Horace Round (1854-1928), the well-known historian,

genealogist and debunker of bogus pedigrees, made the comment 'I have for some time, been interested in this unique story, because, unless it is wholly false, it must be wholly true, in which case it is difficult to exaggerate the splendour of the claim it involves'. Round had first put forward a very plausible case against the claims of the Feildings in the *Quarterly Review* of 1883. His suspicions had been aroused during the course of his research into the claim, and he made the very significant comment that, 'I found that although the family had come to England during the reign of Henry III, their earliest assumption of German

dignities seems to have been under Charles II (1675-1685)'. Round further researched family monuments, an armorial window at the family seat (Newnham Paddox), the family pedigrees and the family patents, coming to the obvious conclusion that there was no reference to any Hapsburg descent, or use of the Hapsburg arms. He noted that the Feilding window was installed at the end of the sixteenth century, and that the parents of the first Lord Denbigh are the last members of the family depicted. Had there been any Hapsburg connection it would seem likely that it would have been shown on the armorial window. He further records that the window begins with Geoffrey Feilding who married Agnes de Napton in 1309 and also that the Visitation Pedigree of 1563 begins with Geoffrey and Agnes. In his review of the Visitation of 1619, he states that this 'raises a difficult question'. The document (a copy in the Harleian MSS), is in the handwriting of Sampson Leonard, Bluemantle (1554-1633), and bears his arms upon the cover. The Feilding pedigree, found in Bluemantle's own copy, goes back for two generations to a 'John Feldinge' but there is an 'alternative descent' also entered as 'out of Mr Fielding's pedigree'. Round notes that 'this carries back the descent from Geoffrey and Agnes for nine generations, and is one of those familiar concoctions that nobody nowadays accepts'. It would seem that the Feildings were, according to Round, 'trying to get beyond Geoffrey to the glorious vision of Hapsburg'. Round's research into the comparisons of the family patents came up with a quite



Figure 3 Arms used by the Feildings indicating claimed Hapsburg connection

astonishing fact; the original patent for the Barony (30th December 1620), established that the new peer's ancestor was actually one William Willington, 'a wealthy merchant who had bought property at Barcheston, Warwickshire, around 1508, and had 'depopulated the town'. He died in 1555. According to Dugdale (referred to by Round as the panegyrist of the family), Willington was; 'son to John Willington of Todnam, Gloucestershire, and he of William Willington of the same place, son of another John; descended probably from Ralph de Wylinton who was extant in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), of which line I conceive that John de Wylinton and Ralph de Wylinton were in the reigns of Edward III (1327-1377) and Richard

II (1377-1399), and had been summoned to parliament amongst the Barons of this Realm'. Needless to say, in this patent there was no trace of the Hapsburg descent, nor did any appear two years later when the Earldom was created. Round's comment on this revelation was 'So much for the long succession of Barons and Knights from whom, according to this veracious patent, Lord Feilding derived his descent.

Round then turned his attention to the German side of the claimed pedigree, and whilst this is a complex issue best left to the professional genealogists, and too lengthy to be included within this article, Round's researches provided a very plausible case against the Hapsburgian claims of the Feildings, and confirmed the concoction of the spurious pedigree. The claim did not stand scrutiny, and the matter was finally laid to rest. Round was quite magnanimous in his success, and stated *'The strange thing is that this pretended descent should be covered by such a family as that of Feilding. For whether the antiquity of their Earldom be considered, or that their position as country gentry, they must rank high among what in England is considered ancienne noblesse. It is, however, only right to add that the family inherited this claim from their ancestors, and, though it has been, no doubt, accentuated by the introduction of the name Rudolph, they are wholly guiltless of its original concoction, and could scarcely, indeed be expected to abandon it, till it was, as now, disproved. To quote Round, 'Magna veritas et praevalebit'.*



Figure 4 Contemporary arms as used by the Feilding family

In 1895 Jean E.M. Feilding published a book, *Some Hapsburgs, Feildings, Denbighs and Desmonds*, in part a response to the criticism of the alleged Hapsburg pretensions of the Feildings expressed by John Horace Round in the *Quarterly Review* (1893). There is little new in the book, merely echoing previous references to the Hapsburg pretensions; and of course, containing quite genuine parts of the Feilding pedigree. Amusingly, she refers to Round as 'Mr Sneerwell'. (No doubt a reference to Lady Sneerwell from *Sheridan's School for Scandal* - 1777).

Terence Trelawny Gower

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The Armorial Bearings of the Province of Limburg - A conflict of Lions

The name *Limburg* could refer to various localities: a castle, a town, a city, an abbey, a diocese, provinces, duchies, or even a combination of some of these. This article will describe the arms of the modern-day province of Limburg in The Netherlands, but as will quickly become apparent those arms are closely linked to the past of several of those other Limburgs. Those who attended the author's talk given in the Thirkill Room at Clare College in Lent term of 2015, entitled *The Lion of Nassau and the Count with no Head: Heraldic Tales of the Low Countries*, might remember an expose of various arms all depicting lions of different shapes, sizes, and colours. If those members found that *Smörgåsbord* of lions appetising they will be more than relieved to learn that the arms of the Dutch province of Limburg manage to combine at least four of those lions in one coat. Though one sees five, the arms – in both blazon and depiction – appear to have the same lion in quarter I and the inescutcheon. Besides setting out the history behind the provincial arms, this article will argue that there *is* a fifth, and that both the lion attributed to Valkenburg and the lion representing the old Duchy of Limburg are wrongly blazoned.



Figure 1 The arms of the Province of Limburg

The current arms were granted by Royal Decree of King William III on the 27th of December, 1886. The

decree describes the reasoning behind its design, the work of provincial archivist Jos Habets, as having incorporated the arms of the four largest principalities of which parts belonged to the territory currently known as the Province of Limburg – then still styled Duchy of Limburg – until the arrival of the French in 1794. It is blazoned as follows:

Quarterly; I *argent, a lion double-queued gules, armed and crowned or*; II *or a lion rampant sable, armed and langued gules*; III *or, three bugle horns gules, vrioled of argent*; IV *azure, a lion rampant double-queued or, crowned of the same, langued gules*; and an inescutcheon *argent, a lion double-queued gules, crowned and armed or*. The shield is crested by the Limburgish ducal crown, *three diadems or, lined gules, turned up with ermine*.

Quarter I is meant to represent the Lordship of Valkenburg. This is problematic as the Lion of Valkenburg should be *armed and crowned of the same*, that is, *fully gules*. In the blazon above there is no difference between Valkenburg and Limburg. Quarter II represents the arms of the Duchy of Jülich, Quarter III the arms of the County of Horn and Quarter IV the ancient arms (before 1371) of the Duchy of Guelders. The inescutcheon should refer to the arms of the old Duchy of Limburg (1082-1795), but that lion was *langued or*. An identical lion, wrongly blazoned twice.

The arms of Limburg closely reflect its *Gründungsgeschichte* and to understand the nature of the armorial bearings of the province of Limburg, it is important to have a grasp of the geographical and political history of the province of Limburg. The bulk of the territory of the modern-day Dutch province of Limburg was historically not located in the Duchy of Limburg. Though Limburgish-speaking these areas, 26 in total, belonged to other entities. The map below (figure 2) is a good indicator of this. It is the south-western part of Blaeu's map of *Iuliacensis et Montensis Ducatus*, or The Duchy of Jülich-Berg, showing the river Meuse flowing south to north on the left-hand side, thus placing it in today's Dutch-Belgian-German borderlands. On a modern map this would be the Belgian province of Limburg on the very left (the western bank of the Meuse), the southern part of the Dutch province of Limburg, and the western part of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

This 1645 map, however, sketches a different lay of the land. In the area of what is today the Dutch province of Limburg, it shows no less than five different entities. For the purpose of this article we will ignore the city of Maastricht – today the capital of the Dutch province of Limburg but historically a condominium of the Prince-Bishop of Liège and the Duke of Brabant (later succeeded in that office by the States-General of the United Provinces). The

history of Maastricht is worth an article of its own! Ignoring Maastricht then, one can traverse the territory of the modern-day province and walk through the various counties and duchies that contributed to the arms of Limburg.



Figure 2 Part of the Duchies of Jülich and Berg. A New Atlas of Maps and Representations of All Regions, edited by Willem and Joan Blaeu, 1645

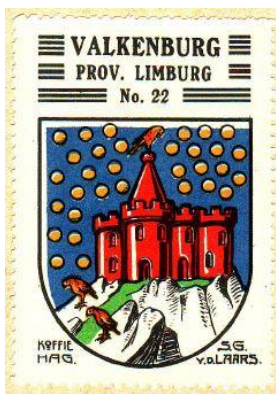


Figure 3 Valkenburg Ancient

Going from south to north, one can start in Valkenburg, the ancient capital of the Lordship of Valkenburg, which makes up the first quarter of the Limburgish arms. It has been granted the first quarter because its entire territory is now part of the province of Limburg. The ruins of its hill castle – one of a few in the country – are well worth a visit. The castle featured in the ancient canting arms of the House of Valkenburg, consisting of falcons (“valk”) on a hill castle (“burg”), which have been used by the town of Valkenburg until the 20th century.

By the late 13th century the family adopted as its arms a shield of *argent a lion gules*. As already mentioned above, Valkenburg is a complicating

factor in the arms of Limburg for two reasons. Firstly, the Lion of Valkenburg is *not* the same as the Lion of Limburg. A booklet on the arms published by the province of Limburg in 2011 describes the arms of Valkenburg as *nearly identical* to the arms of Limburg¹, but does not go into further details. Secondly, like the arms of Limburg, the arms for Valkenburg are also wrongly blazoned. The Lords of Valkenburg were descendants of the Dukes of Limburg and as such used the Limburgish lion, though differentiated by being *armed, crowned, and langued gules*. The Lion of Valkenburg features on many of the arms of towns and municipalities formerly belonging to the Lordship of Valkenburg and is nearly always *armed, crowned, and langued gules*.

The arms of the Municipality of Valkenburg nicely combine a variation of the ancient arms with the Lion of Valkenburg as supporters. Here too the lion is fully *gules*. One can only wonder where the confusion in the 1886 Royal Decree comes from! Was it Habets' mistake, did the High Council for the Nobility miss the double misblazoning, or was the clerk who drew up the decree still under the influence following his Christmas celebrations?

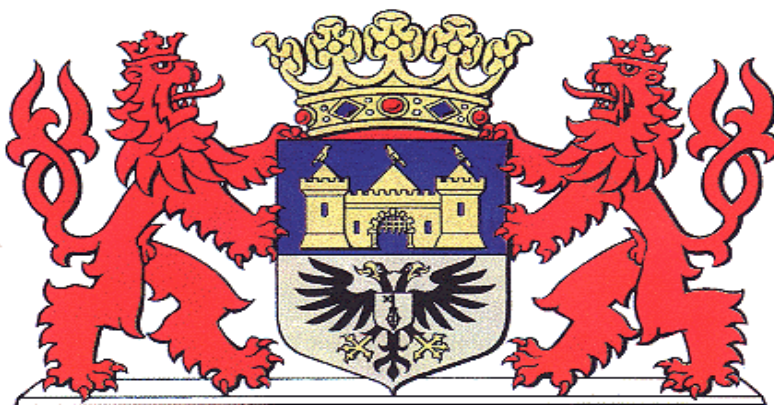


Figure 4 The arms of the Municipality of Valkenburg

The House of Valkenburg became extinct in 1352 and the Lordship passed to the Dukes of Jülich. Strapped for cash, William II of Jülich sold the Lordship to the Duchy of Limburg, which since 1288 has been ruled by the Dukes of Brabant. The connection with Jülich may have been lost there, and the arms of Limburg may have looked completely different, were it not that in 1400 the Duke of Brabant sold Sittard, Born, and Susteren to the Duchy of Jülich, of which they remained a part until the arrival of the French in 1794. This *ambt* of

¹ Jos Poels, *Wapenfeiten 125 jaar provinciewapen Limburg 1886 – 2011* (Maastricht, 2011)

the Duchy of Jülich today covers the narrowest part of The Netherlands: less than 5 kilometres separates Belgium from Germany. On the map in figure 2 the aforementioned territories are found in the green stretch of land coming up to the river Meuse. If one leaves Valkenburg behind and heads north, out of the pink territory and into the green, Sittard is the next port of call. Though not of any military importance, Sittard was a religious and educational centre and until 1867 – when the German Confederation collapsed and Sittard fully and solely became part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the westernmost German city. Most importantly, however, is its status as the author's hometown! The vast majority of the Duchy is currently in Germany, but its western territories have become part of the province of Limburg. In addition, its cultural heritage, most readily found in the dialects of Sittard and Tegelen, is important for the province of Limburg. For this reason *Jülich* is represented in the second quarter of the Limburgish arms as *or a lion rampant sable, armed and langued gules*.

If one continues one's journey north, past the castles of Born, Millen, and *Leemburg* – today Limbricht, but a contender to the origin of the name Limburg – one arrives at the next stop, *Roermond* in the Duchy of Guelders – on the map shown in pink. The city of Roermond has been the cathedral city of the Diocese of Roermond since 1559, but for the sake of this article is more important as the capital of the Upper Quarter of the Duchy of *Guelders*. The Upper Quarter contained most of the northern and central lands of the modern-day Dutch



Figure 5 The Herald Guelders
(Folio 122r, *Armorial de Gelre*)

province of Limburg. Though most of Guelders seceded from the Habsburg Monarchy and joined the Dutch Republic, the Upper Quarter did not, ensuring that Dutch and Limburgish histories were kept separate for a few more centuries. Between 1393 and 1423 Guelders was in personal union with Jülich, of which the arms of William I (figure 6) are a good reminder. In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht finally split up the Upper Quarter, with the northern parts becoming part of The United Provinces and Prussia respectively, the southern part remaining under Habsburg rule, and the town of Erkelenz (visible in figure 2 as an exclave within Jülich) joining the Duchy of Jülich. As so much of the territory of the current province of Limburg has a past linked to Guelders, the ancient arms of Guelders – *azure, a lion rampant double-queued or, crowned of the same, langued gules* – are rightly incorporated in the arms of Limburg as its fourth quarter.



Figure 6 *The arms of William I of Guelders and Jülich, KG*

Our last stop on this tour of the province of Limburg is the County of Horn. From Roermond, *Horn* is just to the west, across the river Meuse. Horn started out as a lordship and was raised to the status of county in 1450. Most of the province of Limburg's territory on the western bank of the river Meuse belonged to Horn, which is why the

arms of Horn are included as the third quarter of the Limburgish arms. The arms of the House of Horn (figure 7) – *three bugle horns gules, vrioled of argent* – are another example of canting arms and like the arms of Valkenburg are used in town and municipal arms of various places in the former country of Horn. The last Count of Horn, though as a stepson of his predecessor not a member of the House of Horn, was Philip de Montmorency, who featured in the author's talk on *Heraldic Tales of the Low Countries* as one of *the Counts with no Head*. After his execution in Brussels on the 5th of June, 1568, the County of Horn was ruled directly by the Prince-Bishops of Liège.

Also shown as part of the County of Horn on the map in figure 2, but *de jure* and *de facto* separate, is the Imperial Abbey of Thorn. It was founded in the 10th century by St. Ansfrid of Utrecht, confirmed as free by Emperor Otto III and affirmed as *reichsunmittelbar* by Adolf of Nassau. As a *stift* for noble canonesses, its worldly possessions were no more than the city of Thorn, a few villages, and some manors. Due to its small size and little impact on Limburg, the arms of Thorn (figure 8) – depicting the Archangel Michael, trampling on and killing a dragon and holding a shield charged with the Imperial Eagle in his sinister hand – sadly did not make it unto the Limburgish arms. Had they been included they would have greatly offset the collection of lions on the current arms and added some action and display to the provincial arms.



Figure 7 *The arms of Horn*



Figure 5 *The arms of the Imperial Abbey of Thorn*

The last constituent parts of the provincial arms of Limburg refer to the old Duchy of Limburg (1065-1795) itself. It is from this Limburg that the provincial arms have taken the inescutcheon *argent, a lion rampant double-queued gules, crowned and armed or*. With the exception of a few villages and hamlets, there is no overlap between the old Duchy of Limburg and the Dutch or Belgian provinces of Limburg – most of the territory is currently located in the Belgian province of Liège. Why then are both the Dutch and Belgium provinces called Limburg and why do both use the Lion of Limburg in their arms? For this one has to look at the province of Limburg (1815–39) of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Before the arrival of the French in 1794, the various lordships, counties, and duchies that today make up Limburg were held as Prussian, Austrian, or Bavarian fiefs, or as generality lands of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, ruled directly by the States-General. After the Napoleonic War they were all granted to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and combined in one province. Initially to be called either the province of Maastricht or the province of Upper-Guelders, King William I insisted on Limburg in order to keep the name and, arguably, the title too. The arms of this province as granted in 1816 were *argent, a lion rampant double-queued gules, crowned, armed, and langued or*, crested by a ducal coronet. Following the Belgian Revolution, the province was split into a Belgian and a Dutch part, of which the Dutch part also became a member of the German Confederation under the name Duchy of Limburg (1839–1867). The arms were kept in both provinces, though only the Belgian province actively used it. The Dutch province received new arms as per the Royal Decree of 1886 mentioned above. Oddly enough the lion in the inescutcheon for the old Duchy of Limburg was now not blazoned *langued or* and thus considered to be *gules*.



Figure 9 The arms of the Belgian province of Limburg

That leaves us with the issue of the lions in the first quarter and the inescutcheon. The Lion of Limburg is definitely *crowned, armed, and langued or*. It has historically been blazoned and represented as such and featured in several arms which include a Limburgish quartering. Further evidence that *a lion rampant double-queued gules, crowned, armed, and langued or* is the Lion of Limburg – and Limburg only – can be found across the border

in the Belgian province of Limburg. For the Belgian province of Limburg, both arms *and* flag feature the Lion of Limburg *crowned, armed, and langued or*, to which in 1996 was added an inescutcheon featuring the arms of the County of Loon, the territory of which is today located in the Belgian province of Limburg. In contrast, the flag of the Dutch province of Limburg (figure 10) features a Lion referred to by the High Council of the Nobility as the *Lion of Valkenburg*, which, rather confusingly, is correctly *crowned, armed, and langued gules*.

Why is the Lion of Valkenburg correctly blazoned for the flag, but not for the arms? How is it that the Lion of Limburg is also incorrectly blazoned? The Province seems to be aware of these issues². With regards to the inescutcheon, it considers the problem to be the cause of miscommunication – though it was Habets' intention to have the lion *crowned, armed, and langued or* somewhere in his correspondence between the provincial government, the High Council for the Nobility, the Ministry of Justice, and the King the word *langued* appears to have gone missing. The province states that the mistake was noted in 1981 when the provincial government requested a new grant of arms. Instead of addressing the issue in the new grant, Otto Schutte, secretary of the High Council for the Nobility, advised to keep the wrongly-blazoned tongue as it is. Rather than matching the Belgian and ancient arms, he recommended to keep the tongue *gules* to differentiate it from the Belgian *or* and the *azure* of the House of Limburg-Styrum. The Province has heeded this recommendation.

² Jos Poels, *Wapenfeiten*



Figure 10 The flag of the Dutch province of Limburg

The wrongly-blazoned Lion of Valkenburg was also noted by Schutte. Here he suggested changing the arms to correctly represent the lion as being *crowned and armed gules*, to ensure Valkenburg is correctly quartered and to resolve the issue of the duplication between quarter I and the inescutcheon. Unfortunately the Province decided to ignore this advice and to keep the arms as they are.

So there we are. Four lions, two of them wrong. To the author it is still a mystery how the mistake can only have been noticed in 1981, when the flag, which was introduced in 1953, does feature a correct Lion of Valkenburg. Though there is something to say for not changing the arms after 125 years, there is also something to say for not wrongly blazoning arms after 700 years. What was first but a mistake, has now become a policy decision. It is therefore unlikely that this conflict of Lions will be resolved any time soon.

Richard van der Beek

The Arms “Jelita”

Most (if not all) coats of arms have interesting symbolism to them, symbolism which allows us to learn something about the history and values of the family or organisation that they represent. The fact that all this information can be derived from what is, in essence, a small drawing, is one of the reasons heraldry is as fascinating as it is. In my opinion another layer of allurements is added to the arms if their symbols have a history behind them. Thus, in this short piece I will explore an example of a Polish coat of arms, which has behind it a particularly interesting story.

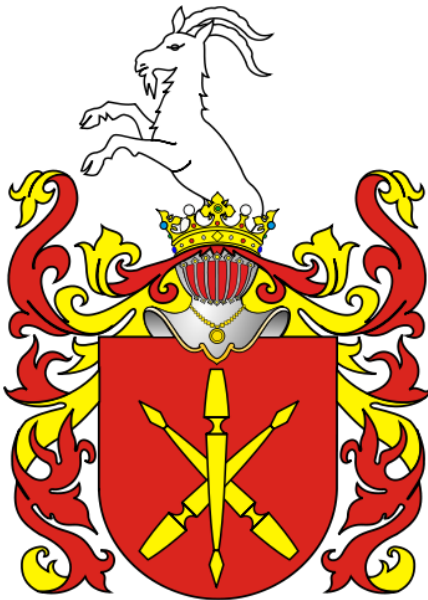


Figure 1 The Arms "Jelita"

The coat of arms I wish to discuss is called “Jelita” which translates to “intestines”. The shield is a field *gules* with three lances (or two in saltire pointing to chief and one in pale, pointing to base) in *or*. The crest is as follows: out of a ducal coronet a demi-goat rampant proper.

The first mention of the arms in a heraldic work is found in Jan Długosz’s “*Insignia seu clenodia Regis et Regni Poloniae*” written between 1464 and 1480. In it Długosz describes the 71 oldest Polish coats of arms, and gives the following description of Jelita:

“Koschlya Rogy alias Gyelyta, tres lanceas transversales in campo rubeo defert. Ex Polonia

genus ortum. Huius quidem miles strenuus Florianus Sary dum in prelio, propter Wladislaum Loketek ad Plowcze cum Cruciferis habito, animose pugnans in ventre transfossus, viscera, altera die in palestra iacens, rege inspectante tractaret, iussu regis sublatus et reintegratus, familie sue alterum nomen Gelyta indidit. In qua viri modesti, canum et in venacione studiosi..”.

This passage contains not only the blazoning of the arms, but also a brief account of their story; a fuller version of which is found in Długosz's "Chronicles of the history of Poland":

"The beginning of the history of the arms, according to one of our greatest legends, is accepted to be the year 1331, when, on the 27 of September at Płowice, Ladislaus the I of Poland, forty thousand Teutons did defeat so mightily that of his men (only forty was their number), only a handful fell on the field of battle. When on the next day he (the King) walked through the field, between the Polish corpses, he happened upon his knight, Florian Szaryusz, who bravely toiled in battle, was brought down by wounds innumerable, and was his intestines with his own hand attempting to his abdomen to return. Seeing this, the king said to his men, his voice full of pity: 'Oh, the torment that this valiant soldier is suffering!'. To this the knight, gathering his last ounce of strength, replied: 'What you see, Your Majesty, does not afflict and torment me so much as the evil neighbour who lives in the same village as I do'. The king, smiling, replied 'Do not worry, if you recover from this blow, I will free you from this neighbour's captivity'. And thus the king did free him and bestowed upon him a lordly estate. It is widely, by men, understood that the King, did the goat, which was the arms of the knight's fathers, to the crest elevate; and upon the shield placed the three lances with which he saw the soldier pierced."

While the story of how Florian Szaryusz was elevated to lordly status is widely accepted; it is unlikely to be true that the knight's arms with the charge of a goat were altered as described in the chronicles. In his 'Polish Armorial' (Full title: "The Polish Crown in golden freedom of Polish Knighthood and The Great Duchy of Lithuania with the ancient and most high jewels of Honour, Heroism, Manliness, Bravery, Refined Learning, and above all: Virtue, Learnedness, Godliness, and Saintliness decorates its descendants, while to the ages for the glory and undying fame of the memorable sons of the Fatherland presents this tome by Kasper Niesiecki *Societas Jesu*, written. Lviv, 1738") Kasper Niesieniecki points out that since in Poland arms do not tend to be granted to individuals, but rather to families/clans, many men other than Szaryusz would have borne the arms of the goat. "And to this day descendants of the men which also bore these arms would be found". He goes on to argue that had the three spears been granted specifically to Szaryusz, they could only be used by his direct descendants. It was clear to Niesieniecki that this was not the case as even at his time around 50 separate families were entitled to use the arms, which to him constituted obvious evidence that the arms existed prior to Szaryusz's elevation. With this in mind it is most reasonable to conclude that Szaryusz already bore the arms of the three spears before the battle. The king most likely granted him the right to decorate the arms with the ducal coronet when he elevated him to lordly status. It is also quite clear that the battle is where the

arms got their name (Jelita). Finally it is not unlikely that the goat in the crest was added by Szaryusz himself to distinguish himself from the other families with the right to use the arms of the three spears. Further to this historians tend to agree that families entitled to use the arms of the three spears, who bore no relation to Szaryusz and thus with no claim to the altered “Jelita”, nonetheless begun to use the altered version of the arms due to their great fame.

If we accept all this to be true, one question remains: where did the arms of the three spears come from? Niesieniecki attempts to provide an answer to this question: “This is an ancient shield, even in the time of the pagan monarchs well respected. Its origins are most difficult to discern owing to its immemorial age” he continues: “What I know is that the spear was a symbol of lordly honour. I also know that once in power grew Sarus, King of the Goths, who Radagas defeated thoroughly and took from him his slaves in the year 406”. Niesieniecki goes on to explain that he found, in the books of Parisius in Slavia (Petrus Franciscus Parisius - a Jesuit historian), accounts of the name Szary (Szaryusz) being brought to Poland by the descendants of Sarus. He also quotes Parisius in saying that “The shield was acquired from a Sarmatian who in war with the Romans with three spears was pierced”. Niesieniecki is inclined to agree with this explanation adding that the spears in the arms closely resemble roman ‘sariissae’, which are weapons very distinct from spears which would have been used in Poland, by Teutons, or for that matter by the Goths.

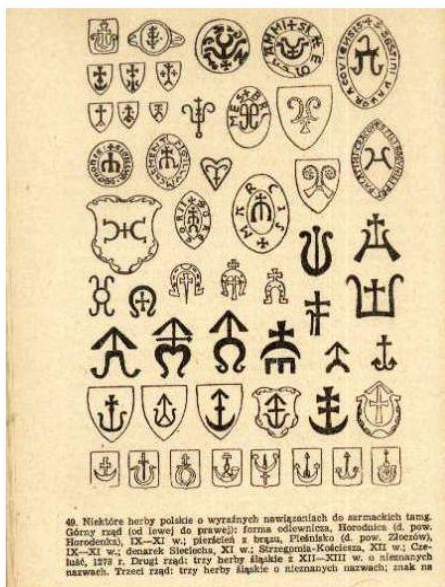


Figure 2 A page from a heraldic manual outlines the similarities between Tamga and Polish heraldic symbols

This explanation of the origin of the arms could also account for why they were so widely used (before Florian Szaryusz). One of the more influential legends in medieval Poland was that of the Sarmatic origins of the nobility. It was widely believed that the knightly Sarmatians departed from the steppes of the Black Sea, and through conquest took over the lands where Poland is currently found. This isn't too far from the truth as the Sarmatians did move westward around the 2nd century BC; and in their conquest of the Scythians reached as far as the Vistula river.

Anthropological research suggests that the Sarmatians became assimilated and absorbed by the Proto-Slavic population of Eastern

Europe. The nobility, however, chose to believe that after they arrived the Sarmatians enslaved the indigenous peoples, of the Polish region. They explained that the slaves thus became peasants, and the Sarmatians became the nobility, known as “Szlachta”, the similarity of this name to that of the Sarmatians being no coincidence. It was widely held that the nobility’s intelligence, bravery, love of freedom, etc. were traits that peasants lacked, for they had to be inherited from the Sarmatians¹. This belief formed the cultural basis of the legitimacy of the power held by the noble classes in the early medieval period; a legitimacy which was, of course, later strengthened by the influence of western, Christian ideology. However despite the advent of Christianity in Poland, which coincided with the appearance of ‘regular’ feudalism; the Sarmatian tradition continued as a prominent element of Polish culture. The Sarmatian legend was later consolidated in literature, firstly in Jan Długosz’s historical works, and later in Alessandro Guagnini’s “*Sarmatiae Europaeae descriptio*” published in Krakow in 1578. An even more firm connection between the Polish nobility and the Sarmatians was established by Petrus Parisius, who in his works drew extensive parallels between the Tamga (abstract seals or stamps used by Eurasian nomadic peoples) of the Sarmatians and Polish heraldic symbolism.

If one considers the sentiment of the Polish nobility for the Sarmatians, it becomes clear how a coat of arms, the origins of which were associated with the Sarmatians, would become very desirable, and thus widely spread. On the other

¹ While Historical data confirms the Sarmatian legend insofar that Sarmatians would likely have reached what is now the territory of Poland, there is no evidence to suggest that they took control of the peoples indigenous to that area of Eastern Europe. It is more likely that the Sarmatians simply became integrated with the Slavs. Recent archeological research does however provide a possible explanation for the source of the legend. Historian Zdzisław Skrok writes about the lost Swedish dynasty of Askold and Dira, arguing that after their conflict with the Rurik dynasty, the Askold and Dira did not, as many suggest, become extinct. He posits that finding themselves ousted from their indigenous territories the leaders of the dynasty travelled west (towards what is now Poland), where large territories could easily be claimed due to the lack of established dynasties, borders, etc. This would have taken place at the beginning of the 10th century AC. Skrok also proposes that the Swedes were joined in their conquest by vikings from Wolin-Jomsborg. This claim is supported by archeological findings which suggest that around this time mass destruction of indigenous settlements and the construction of new, more advanced, settlements took place. Evidence also suggests the development of a large-scale slave trade, and the construction of pagan religious structures, distinct from those found in areas inhabited by porto-slavic peoples. Destruction and enslavement of indigenous cultures and populations, is characteristic of viking colonisation, and archeological records of similar conquest can be found everywhere the vikings are known to have operated, from Ireland to Kiev. It is possible that these events formed the basis for the evolution of the Sarmatian legend.

hand this information can put into question the validity of the alleged origin of the arms. Considering the same heraldic writer who strived to uncover the Sarmatic roots of Polish heraldry, attributed Sarmatic roots to the arms in question, one would do well to retain a dose of scepticism with regard to his claims.

In conclusion, where the origin of the arms “Jelita” is concerned, the line between legend and history is blurred, and the precise facts relevant to the inception of the arms are most likely lost to the ages. One could consider this to be unfortunate, however, in my opinion it adds to the value of the arms. I argue this because arms are themselves devices which blur the line between a factual identifier of name, class and position, and a more abstract conveyer of values, codes and tradition.

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Editor’s Postscript

This is the final part of Volume 22

I would like to thank all the contributors who have submitted articles, comments, and illustrations. I recognise that participation in a project of this nature requires time, effort and inspiration. Indeed there are many calls on the time of members whilst they are in residence.

CUHAGS thrives on the enthusiasm of its membership; *The Escutcheon* provides a valuable record of the wide range of subject matter encompassed by the study and practice of Heraldry. Whilst members continue to share their enthusiasm for Heraldry and its many facets our Society will prosper.