

# AN EXPLANATION OF HERALDIC TITLES AS USED IN AN TIR

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## Introduction

In the Society for Creative Anachronism, we use a variety of titles and styles to refer to people in varying degrees of formality. Perhaps the most prominent of these titles are those that result from receiving honors, such as *king*, *queen*, *baron*, *baroness*, *lord*, and *lady*. Others include descriptive titles, describing a relationship between the person and someone else, such as *squire to Sir [William]* or *sergeant to Baroness [Matilda]*. Some titles describe a job or role that the person has, such as *Bardic Champion of [Wales]*, *Minister of the Lists*, *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, and *Master of Stables*.

In general, while kingdoms vary somewhat in the way they use titles, some basic guidelines are established in the SCA's *Governing Documents*, (primarily *Corpora*), with more detail from the SCA's College of Arms. As a result, heralds are the administrators of the SCA's titles, according to the rules from the Board of Directors and the various kingdoms.

Unusual among the titles used for people in the SCA, are heraldic titles. This article will address the structure, meaning, and use of heraldic titles, with emphasis on and examples from the Kingdom of An Tir.

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## What Is a Heraldic Title?

A heraldic title consists of two elements:

1. The unique name (technically called a "substantive element")
2. A designator
  - a. Rank within the heraldic community
  - b. Whether the rank is "in ordinary" or "extraordinary"

The substantive element of a heraldic title is unique to a particular office. Since there are heraldic offices for a variety of responsibilities and jurisdictions, this part of the title serves as a quick identifier to tell one herald from another. The following table illustrates this point, emphasizing the name portion.

		jurisdiction		
		The SCA	An Tir	West
role	Principal (in charge)	<b>Laurel</b> Principal King-of-Arms	<b>Black Lion</b> Principal Herald	<b>Vesper</b> Principal Herald
	Heraldic Education	<b>Clarion</b> Herald	<b>Argent Scroll</b> Herald	<b>Baldric</b> Pursuivant

The designator identifies the heraldic rank and (when included) whether the title applies to an office or belongs personally to the individual. The Kingdom of An Tir counts three grades or ranks of heralds, and only assigns them in connection with a title. The three ranks are (from highest to lowest): Sovereign-of-Arms, Herald (with a capital "H"), and Pursuivant. In An Tir,

the rank pertains to the office, rather than to the person (except when it is part of a personal heraldic title).

The rank of Sovereign-of-Arms is used only at the Society level. The chief (or “principal” heraldic officer of the entire Society is given the title “Laurel Principal [King/Queen]-of-Arms”. Laurel’s deputy over names is the “Pelican [King/Queen]-of-Arms”. Laurel’s deputy over armory (devices, badges, seals, and flags) is the “Wreath [King/Queen]-of-Arms”. When referring to the office in general, and irrespective of the incumbent occupant, you may encounter the designator “Sovereign-of-Arms”. This is acceptable under generic circumstances, but should never be used to refer to a particular person. Whether the appropriate title is “King-of-Arms” or “Queen-of-Arms” depends on the sex of the particular herald’s persona.

The rank of Herald (with a capital “H”) is used for certain members of the staff of the Laurel Principal Sovereign-of-Arms, for certain deputies to the Black Lion Principal Herald, and for the chief herald of each of An Tir’s principalities.

The rank of Pursuivant is used for certain members of the staff of the Laurel Principal Sovereign-of-Arms, certain members of the staff of the Black Lion Principal Herald, deputies to heralds having the rank of *Herald*, members of the staff of each of the principality heralds, and to the branch heralds of baronies, shires, cantons, and so forth. The established practice of the An Tir College of Heraldry is that titles are only registered for kingdom-level and principality-level heralds, and for the branch herald of baronies. In the case of branches smaller than a barony, the unique name portion (the “substantive element”) of the title is simply the name of the branch. For example, Midhaven, being a shire, doesn’t have a registered heraldic title, and so the branch herald of the Shire of Midhaven is titled, “Midhaven Pursuivant”.

Sometimes the designator also includes the word “Principal”. This indicates that that herald is the head of the College of Arms of the Society or the head of a College of Heraldry for a particular kingdom.

Heraldic titles that pertain to an office (one that could be passed down from the incumbent to the successor) are said to be “in ordinary”. Usually, this distinction is implied. Heraldic titles that belong to a specific person, regardless of current office, are said to be “extraordinary”, and this distinction is usually explicit in the title. So, Doña Juliana de Luna, OL, is also the Siren Herald Extraordinary, because the title is her personal title, regardless of any office she may hold.

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### **What If the Herald Has No Title or Multiple Titles?**

It also happens, in our volunteer-administered organization, that a person may hold more than one heraldic title concurrently. In this case, the choice of which title to use in a given situation depends on the role in which the herald is acting at the moment. For example, I currently hold the offices (and titles) of Argent Scroll Herald and Midhaven Pursuivant. At a Midhaven event, it would make more sense to refer to me as the *Midhaven Pursuivant*, but at a kingdom event, especially one where I was actively engaged in heraldic education, *Argent Scroll Herald* would be more appropriate. In cases where the role is irrelevant, generally the senior title is preferred.

Furthermore, a person who is fulfilling the duties of a herald doesn't necessarily have a particular title. In this case, the person is called a "herald at large". Also, in many cases, a titled herald may have untitled deputies. In this case, they may be referred to as "deputy to" and the title of the herald under whose direction they serve.

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## How Can I Use Heralds' Titles in Addressing Them?

Depending on the degree of formality in a given situation, the manner of referring to a titled herald can vary considerably.

In the least formal settings where heraldic titles are used, such as when working among other heralds at a consult table or in online settings such as email lists, the Online System for Commentary And Response (OSCAR), or at heralds' meetings/symposia, it is common to refer to other heralds by nothing more than the substantive element of their titles (regardless of their rank in the SCA). For example, if I make a comment on someone's submission, and another herald wants to respond to that comment, they would likely refer to me simply as *Argent Scroll*.

When I am participating in a conversation on the An Tir Heralds email list, I often sign my email as "Michael Argent Scroll". This is an example of how the substantive element of the title acts as an informal substitute for my surname — a very common practice.

When it comes to heraldic titles, it is improper (with the sole exception of the Lord Lyon King-of-Arms in Scotland) to combine other titles with the heraldic title. Titles like **Lord** and **Lady** may be used with the *name* of a herald, but not with the heraldic title. For example, an even more formal manner of addressing a herald is *Lady Anne Rose Smythe, GdS, Lions Blood Herald*.

If you want to get ridiculously formal, you can call her *Lady Anne Rose Smythe, Companion of the Goutte de Sang, Lions Blood Herald of Arms in Ordinary*.

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## Some Heraldic Titles Worth Knowing

Title	Jurisdiction	Function	Incumbent (11Oct14)
Laurel Principal King-of-Arms	SCA	head of the College of Arms / chief herald of the Society	Andrewe Bawldwyn
Pelican Queen-of-Arms	SCA	deputy to Laurel over names	Lillia de Vaux
Wreath Queen-of-Arms	SCA	deputy to Laurel over armory	Emma de Fetherstan
Black Lion Principal Herald	An Tir	head of the An Tir College of Heralds / branch herald for the kingdom	Richenda du Jardin
Æstel Herald	An Tir	running consult table at Crown events / consultation in general	Marya Kargashina
Lions Blood Herald	An Tir	decides whether to forward submissions beyond kingdom	Juliana de Luna
Argent Scroll Herald	An Tir	heraldic education / the annual Kingdom Heraldic Symposium	Michael FitzGeoffrey
Löwenmähne Herald	An Tir	field heraldry at Crown tournaments / voice heraldry generally	Finngall McKetterick
Town Crier Pursuivant	An Tir	town cry at Crown events	Kattera Giese
Sable Sable Herald	An Tir	kingdom officer in charge of scribal duties	Sarra the Brave
Dexter Gauntlet Herald	An Tir	maintains the An Tir <i>Order of Precedence</i>	Phelan Tolusmiör
Couronne Rouge Herald	An Tir	maintains the An Tir <i>Roll of Arms</i>	Frederic Badger
Midhaven Pursuivant	Midhaven	branch herald for the Shire of Midhaven	Michael FitzGeoffrey
Gorges Pursuivant	Aquaterra	branch herald for the Barony of Aquaterra	Nigel Compton
Motley Herald	An Tir	general member of Black Lion's staff	Oddr þjálfason