

# Heraldic Achievements or Coat-of-Arms: Designs for SCA Artists.

By Master Raven Mayne.OL and Mistress Tvoislava.OL

*ravenmayne@msn.com*

My wife, Mistress Turrel, and I, Master Raven Mayne, are Laurels in the Kingdom of Atenveldt and about 15 years ago we decided we wanted to do some heraldic art. So with the help of a friend we designed our own SCA Heraldic Achievements. We then purchased a clip-art Program from the UK with thousands of images and soon after we started designing for friends.

This class is designed to give you an understanding of our design process and help someone create a unique item to represent them. To create a Heraldic Achievement we use PowerPoint because we feel it is the best way to 'group' images, and mostly because it allows for all the 'drawing' tools to be used and manipulate the images.

Please keep in mind, We are NOT Heralds, and while we review and work with SCA Sumptuary for the Kingdom of Atenveldt, ultimately our goal is to create a beautiful piece of artwork that someone wants to hang on their wall and show off to all their friends and family.

Every SCA Kingdom has different laws, sumptuary traditions, and/or guidelines that you will need to check into. Some have none, others have several pages of items that denote what can be displayed for different ranks. Color, tincture, animals, head-ware, and other items that we will be reviewing may or may not be allowed by your Kingdom for Display.

As Artists, we start with local guidelines and abide by the Society of Creative Anachronism restrictions, at the same time we strive for something aesthetically pleasing and depending on the person's goals, that will also allow them to add to and grow with their display over time.

## **Concerning Peerages**

Chivalry, Laurel, Pelican, and Defense. All SCA Peerages have specific items for display. The most common is to put the white belt or wreath around the device, have a pelican supporting and the MOD badge on a banner. However, if someone had multiple items, the pelican head can become a crest or just the red Chapeau placed on the helm, the wreath goes on a banner, or a supporter holds a Rapier.

Coronets have different designation in different Kingdoms, however Strawberry leaves are reserved for Duchy, In Atenveldt a County is 'embattled' and a Baronial coronet is showing 4

pearls. Keep in mind, items we only place on achievements for people that have been recognized with them, so talking over options for future growth.

- **Device** – SCA allows everyone to have ‘arms’ to distinguish you.
- **SCA Achievement** - is a full depiction of the heraldic items a person is entitled to. You don’t Have to represent everything, keeping the overall design in balance will help you achieve a nice final product.
- **Historically, Achievements Or Coat of Arms** - used to denote personal and family affiliations, the current Queen of England and her family all have distinct items they use; feel free to read up at your own leisure.

One quick note: the program we use was created in the UK, so not all items that a person may want are in the software or look the way we want, so we have also used provided images or found something thru Google for the end result and use the provided images as a ‘stand in’.

As you can see in example 1, the monkey in the program is very ‘weasel’ like, and the cat more feral; so we found some additional images online to use for HL Jerusha.

Also, the items are pre-colored, but for our purposes the finished design is traced, and the colors altered to match the Device and any requests. So, a cat that is brown on the screen can be painted white and black to match the person’s own pet for the final product.



**Example 1.**

To get started we will go to the items that can be included, and how to arrange them. Some SCA options that can be used, keeping in mind the overall design and balance of the Achievement.

- Shields
- Helms
- Crest
- Mantling

- Supporters
- Compartment or Base
- Motto

## **Shields**

For a lot of fighters or people that are very persona-oriented the shape of the shield will be very important. For them we go through some template options to start building. Others are good with the basic heater-template and we simply import their device from their Kingdom website. For Women a “Lozenge” or diamond shape can be used instead of a ‘shield’, shown in the example on the left. Some of the templates have decorative flourishes or beveled edges, and some of the templates in this program already have a shield shape for the specific design. Here are some different examples. *See example 2*



***Example 2.***

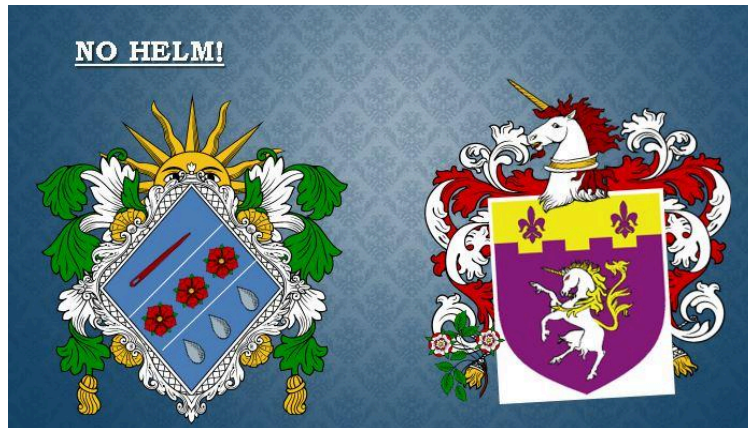
## **Helms**

Since Achievements of Coat-of-Arms are a later period, the helms in this program are also later periods, so occasionally we have had to get images of the person’s own helm to use and simply use one as a template. In Atenveldt the Helm is granted with an AoA, however the way the helm is facing and the color can denote a specific Rank. In other Kingdom’s it is at a different level, and/or does not have any directionality attached to it. For our purposes we only paint them fully ‘gold’ for a Duke, if requested. Since this program does not have the ability to ‘reface’ a helm, we prefer to discuss the options with the recipient and see what their preference is.

## **Crest**

A Crest is the object placed on the top of the helm; it can denote a personal item or an affiliation. In Atenveldt this is for Peers and Royals, and it can be a living item, or part of an item, or a small version of an item. This is a great opportunity to show a barony, shire, or household affiliation; or for a multi-peer an opportunity for a pelican head or a laurel wreath.

Not all non-fighters want a 'helm' and in that case we can discuss other options for a Crest or simply something decorative. On the left you can see a design for "The Elizabethan Sweatshop" group, with a sun behind to denote Atenveldt.



**Example 3**

On the right Countess Drahimera, from the Outlands, wanted a Unicorn with a Coronet. We have also put 'hats' to show a preferred persona for a person. (note: on the right you can see the white 'space' around Drahimera's device, this is because it was an imported JPEG image instead of something in the system; so when tracing we have re-build any details behind it, such as part of the right tassel).

**See example 3**

Your Device should be passed by the SCA College of Heraldry before you commission an achievement. This is good for your Artist and You to avoid needing alterations or other fixes that may or may not be possible. (This is a template device we are using for an example in the coming slides)

### **Mantling**

The Mantling is the 'drapery' that decorates the device, normally using 2 of the colors. The Torse is the braided band that normally sits on top of the helm to join the mantling. In Atenveldt this is reserved for Grant of Arms and above; however in other Kingdom's it denotes an AoA; so we let the recipient decide if it is something they want. There are many options, some are symmetrical, others not, some go all the way down the shield while others are just on top. In the program some designs come with shield, torse, mantling, and helm together, however there are 'single' images to build one if needed. We normally go through the pre-done options first to make it easier to assemble.

### **Supporters**

Supporters are living items that mean something to You. In Atenveldt, they are Not registered and can be changed later for a new Achievement; in addition Atenveldt sumptuary does not restrict supporters usage to any particular level or order.

Normally there are 2 on an achievement, they are 'holding' or 'supporting the device, you can have the same item on both sides, or pick different options. Some things to consider is the size ratio, A large Pegasus with full wings, opposite a rabbit will balance oddly. So, if you're trying to represent your spouse and 4-kids, try to select something that encompasses your family like a large tree. Supporters can take a variety of positions; the most common stance for a supporter is "Rampant", this is when the supporter is holding the device, looking at the viewer, with one foot raised. Here you can see some of the other stances that they can be in, depending on what you like. Also for birds the default is wings down, but they can have wings "extended" while in some of these poses. The owls shown here are both Rampant.

Once you have decided on your supporters, you will want to balance them on either side of the device. Depending on their stance they may both be 'standing' on something', however they can be different proportions if you are creative. For example, A Pegasus may be on grass, while an owl perches in a tree.

### **Compartment or Base**

Adding a Compartment or base for my supporters to stand on will help start to bring the idea together. This can be the ground or grass. Or It can be something decorative, such as a platform or filigree.

The proportion of the supporters, having different sizes or stances for them can make the achievement out of proportion. For some people this will be ok, since having the particular items is more important, while others will consider changing around to be more symmetrical.

### **Motto**

What's a Motto? Well, according to Dictionary.com it is "a short sentence or phrase chosen as encapsulating the beliefs or ideals guiding an individual, family, or institution."

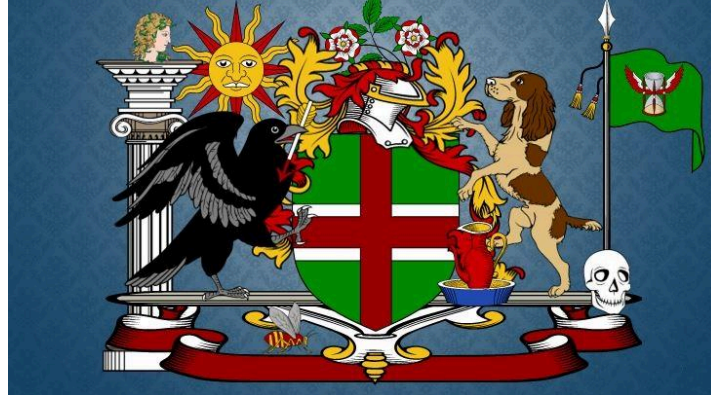
For the SCA, this could be a funny phrase, a strongly held belief, something that shows affiliation, it's really up to you. What language you want and how long it is really determines how long your 'banner' for it is. Placement is normally at the bottom, under the compartment; however, there are examples of them on the top and of the supporters standing on the banner so you can review the shape and decide what fits best with your overall design.

### **Extras**

Now that we have decided on all the elements, what about that household item you wanted to include? Or that nod to your Peer or Mentor? Perhaps your supporters will have trees or a roman column behind them for your persona? Your supporter can be holding an arrow to show your Archery interest? Or perhaps a flag/staff with a household or other affiliation? Maybe a small nod to a personal non-SCA interest to keep it yours?

### **Too Much?!**

When thinking about adding on some personal things: keep in mind their placement and balance with the overall design and try to keep things from getting too busy or crowded. Your Device is the Primary charge and if you have too much it will look cluttered and lose meaning. As you can see in **example 4**, it's hard to understand much about this person as they have put in everything (including the kitchen sink)!



*Example 4*

**Armorial Gold**

<https://www.heraldryclipart.com/>