

Design Ideas for a Coat-of-Arms

Designs that have been submitted for a coat-of-arms for the Knighthood of Purity range from traditional to quite-nontraditional. The emphasis has been on creativity. And often some Sufi symbol is incorporated. Some have elaborated on an inherited familial coat-of-arms. Others have started from scratch. You are encouraged to follow your intuition and inspiration, and also to learn something about traditional coat-of-arms design. Your draft design will be reviewed, and suggestions will be made but the final design is up to you.

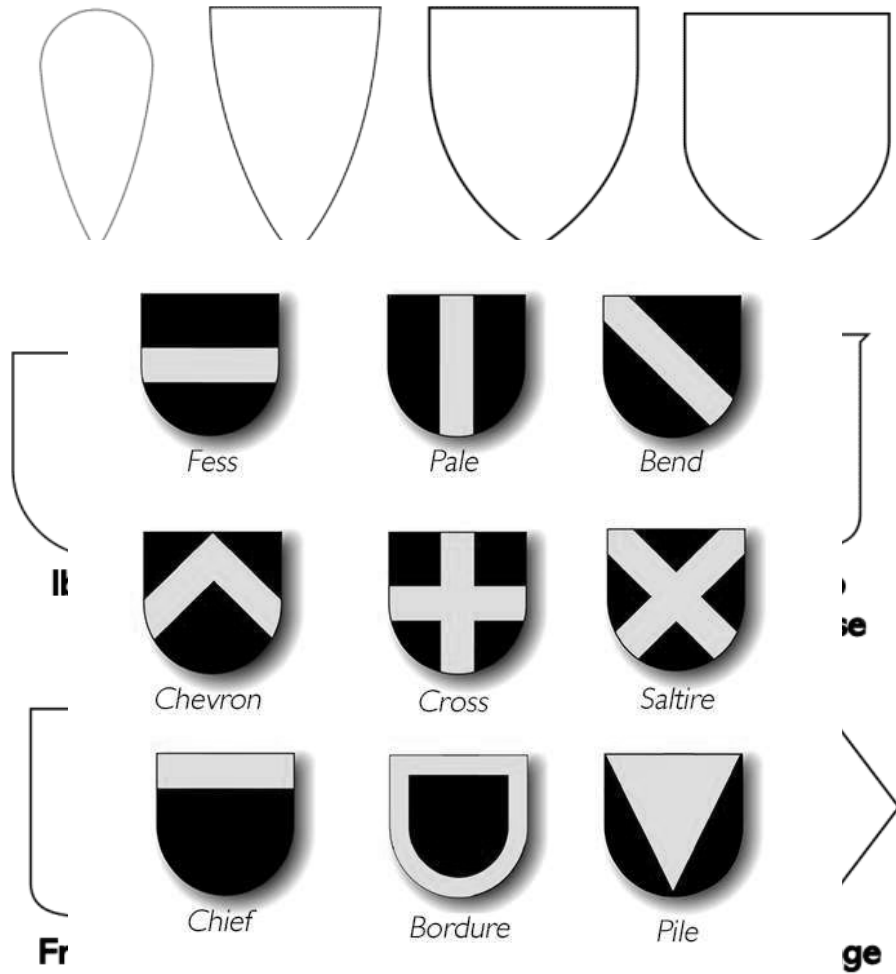
You can take a look at what others have done by examining the Registry of Symbols which is sent with this introduction to heraldic design.

Traditionally heraldic designs included four main things:

- A shield divided into sections. An image representing the family was placed in each section.
- On either side of the shield, objects or animals holding the shield. These are called supporters.
- Above the shield a helmet and a crest. A crest is an identifying object on top of a helmet.
- Below the shield a phrase or motto, often in Latin, reflecting one's beliefs.

Shield shapes

Traditional shapes by country are the Heater (England), the Iberian (Germany), and French Style (France). Note the Lozenge which was often chosen by women. The Oval is also a novel shape not often used.



Shield Divisions or Ordinaries

The shield shape was divided into sections in these traditional ways.

Traditional Colors

Traditional colors were bright so that they would show up on a battlefield. The color names were

Red = Gules represents strength

Blue = Azure represents truth and loyalty

Green = Vert represents hope and joy

Black = Sable represents grief or constancy

Purple = Purpure represents royalty or justice

Two metals

Yellow = Gold represents generosity

White = Silver represents peace and security

And two furs

Ermine = stoat coloring, white with black tips

Vair = squirrel traditionally colored blue and white

A basic rule for using colors in heraldry is do not use color on color or metal on metal, for example, red on blue or yellow on white.

Charges or Symbols Placed in the Shield Sections

Traditional charges include these objects:

crosses of many types

stars

rings

balls

crescents

diamonds

flowers

and animal charges include:

lions representing bravery

dogs representing reliability, faithfulness

stags representing wisdom and long life
eagles representing power and nobility
hares representing speed
badgers representing endurance and persistence

Mythical beasts were also used as charges:

dragon - brave and cunning
griffin - watchful and courageous
cockatrice - protection
manticore or "man-tiger" - fearsome and overpowering

The animals or beasts can also be used as supporters on either side of a shield.

Helmet

Traditionally the type of helmet on top of the shield represented one's rank in the hierarchy.

royalty - a gold helmet with red and blue silk showing through bars
nobleman or noblewoman - a silver helmet
knight - a steel helmet with open visor
squire - a steel helmet with closed visor

Crest

Above the helmet is a symbolic object related to your accomplishment or interest or an interest of your family. There are no traditional crests as each one can be unique.

Motto

Usually written across a ribbon at the bottom, a phrase in Latin or another language representing a principle or ideal.

Please look at the Registry of Symbols for the Knighthood of Purity and at some examples of coats-of-arms on the internet for examples.