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Heraldic Imagery in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry

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Abstract

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Heraldic Imagery in Seventeenth-Century Poetry

The significance of heraldic references in literature has been the subject of both antiquarian interest and recent scholarship. In the field of seventeenth-century poetry, there exists a small body of published work concerned with the use of heraldry by William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and John Cleveland. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the existence and significance of heraldic references in a wider range of seventeenth-century verse and poetry. It eschews assumptions regarding the use of heraldry by, or with reference to, a narrow social élite, and examines heraldic references published in broadsheets and used in songs, as well as in the privately-circulated manuscripts of the nobility. Chapter One offers a critical examination of a range of current scholarship concerned with heraldic readings of literature. Chapter Two demonstrates that formal heraldic references, affirming or celebrating their subject's identity, were used in diverse genres, including dedicatory verses, encomia, epitaphs, elegies, epithalamia and anagrams. Chapter Three determines the social implications of the use of heraldry, with particular reference to epic and satirical verse, arguing that heraldic references in this period develop beyond their traditional, chivalric associations. Chapter Four discusses those works that include heraldic references as expressions of authority or political power, and considers their use in different contexts to affirm or undermine the position of individuals and groups within society. Chapter Five establishes the use of heraldry within religious or spiritual poetry and addresses whether its vocabulary was regarded as an expression of particular Christian values. Chapter Six explores the engagement of women writers with heraldry and considers how far their use of the language offered a challenge to the prevailing patriarchal culture. The Conclusion draws attention to the significance of the evolution of heraldry from the seventeenth century to the present day.

Introduction: The Significance of Heraldry in Seventeenth-Century Verse

In 1610, Edmund Bolton wrote of 'Armories ... occurring euery-where, ... from whence doth breath so sweet an aër of humanity'.[1] The hyperbole demands the studious attention of his readers and invites consideration of the ubiquity of heraldry in the seventeenth century. The intention of this study is to demonstrate that heraldry, or armory, was a common trope in the verse of the period and that its importance, for seventeenth-century readers as well as to modern criticism, extends far beyond the recognition of a 'sweet ... humanity'.

This study will examine references from both manuscript and printed sources, in a variety of contexts and from a number of different genres, in order to reach an appreciation of the nature and significance of heraldry as a trope in seventeenth-century verse. Where important insight may be gained, some eighteenth-century material is included. The first chapter will examine a number of the important studies of heraldry and literature which have been undertaken in the twentieth century. It will also consider modern critical approaches to the subject, especially semiotic theory, which will influence this study. The second chapter considers the use of direct references to coats of arms by poets in formal, heraldic contexts; heraldry records rites of passage and a reading of poems celebrating birth, marriage or commemorating death offers the most straightforward insight into the use of heraldic references in the period. Formal boundaries, however, provoke challenge and invite the possibility that they may be breached. Chapters three to five examine, in turn, heraldic references in a variety of social, political and religious contexts in order to confront a more equivocal, and often less formal, use of heraldry. Chapter six looks at the use of heraldry with regard to women, and at the particular use of armorial references by women poets.

A Display of Heraldry, by John Guillim, was first published in 1611. Its introduction includes the declaration that: 'Arms ... being a Word of Equivocation or Ambiguity, needeth some Explication'.[2] This is an instruction which has an enduring relevance.

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1. Edmund Bolton, *The Elements of Armories* (London, 1610; reprinted, Amsterdam and New York, 1971), sig. A4^r. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

2. John Guillim, *A Display of Heraldry*, sixth edition (London, 1724), p. 2. The 1611 heraldry manual appeared in new editions in 1632, 1638, 1660, 1679 and 1724. The 1724 edition was edited by James
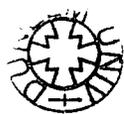
For the purposes of this work, it is necessary to clarify both seventeenth-century explanations of heraldic terms, as well as the particular definitions which will be used in the following chapters.

Much ambiguity arises from the fact that many terms which surround heraldry are used synonymously. *Heraldry, armory, coats of arms, coat armour, armorial bearings* and *arms*, are often used interchangeably. The distinction recognised by the present work is that while *heraldry* and *armory* can be synonymous, *heraldry* is the broader term, referring to all the responsibilities of a herald, as well as to armorial bearings and their significance. *Armory* is applied in a more limited sense to armorial bearings alone. *Coat of arms, coat armour, armorial bearings* and *achievement of arms* are all used today to indicate the full heraldic entitlement conferred, or assumed, by an individual or institution, although this use blurs the earlier distinction of the first two terms, which indicated the coat, vest or tabard which had been embroidered with arms.

The complete achievement of arms is composed of various elements, which must also be clarified. They are all centred around a shield, which may also be known as an *escutcheon*. That which appears on the shield is known as a *charge*; *arms* refer to the charges and the shield together. The *crest* is placed on top of the *helmet* (or *helm*) and these are always depicted above the shield. The helm is normally shown resting on either a *wreath* of cloth or a *coronet*, and a *mantle* is usually drawn flowing from the helm. Both *arms* and *crest* are sometimes used in synecdochic expressions to refer to the full achievement of arms, but this is inaccurate. In addition to the shield, helm and crest, the full achievement may include *supporters*, which are figures placed on each side of the shield, a *motto*, which in the seventeenth century usually appears on a *scroll* beneath the shield, and certain *insignia*, which are the badges of office, decorations or orders of knighthood to which the bearer may be entitled and which often hang on a ribbon beneath the shield.

A particularly ambiguous term is *device*, which in some contexts is used to refer to an

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Coats, whose own work, *A New Dictionary of Heraldry,* was published in 1725. Coats expanded Guillim's introduction, the original text being identified by quotation marks in the 1724 edition. References here will also distinguish between authorial and editorial comment. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

heraldic design on a shield. *The Art of making Devises*, translated into English by Thomas Blount, recognised, for example, that 'The Armes of Families may very well be converted into Devises'.[3] Although devices are considered here insofar as they are heraldic, since the term is also used to refer to emblems, impreses or even mottoes, it is generally avoided in this analysis.[4] The *badge* (or *cognizance*) too, may or may not be heraldic. Where it is the case that a crest is used as a badge, it will be included in this study. This study will not consider either the imprese (or impresa) or the emblem. The former is defined by William Camden as 'a device in picture with his Motto, or Word, borne by noble and learned personages, to notifie some particular conceit of their owne.'[5] Such an image is not heraldic because it is not hereditary. Camden himself notes that arms should not to be referred to in discussions of impreses because 'Armes ... were devised to distinguish families' (p. 342) rather than individuals. Emblems are excluded on similar grounds. James Coats, in his edition of Guillim's *Display of Heraldry*, provides a useful explanation of these: 'The Emblem represents some moral Lesson, but Arms are the Testimony of some noble Action; Arms are Hereditary, but these assum'd, and altered at Pleasure' (p. 3).[6]

For the purposes of the following discussion, it is also necessary to provide a clear definition of *blazon*, which refers to both the method according to which coats of arms are described, so that they can accurately be drawn, and to the complete description itself. According to the 'Dictionary', which is provided at the end of the 1724 edition of *A Display of Heraldry*, blazon is used 'to signify Description; for to blazon is to describe the things born in Arms, as they ought with their proper Significations or

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3. Henry Estienne, *The Art of making Devises: Treating of Hieroglyphicks, Symboles, Emblemes, Ænigma's, Sentences, Parables, Reverses of Medalls, Armes, Blazons, Cimiers, Cyphres and Rebus*, translated by Thomas Blount (London, 1646), p. 48. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

4. For a consideration of the significance of the device, see: Frank Whigham, 'Elizabethan Aristocratic Insignia', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 4 (1985), pp. 325-53.

5. William Camden, *Remaines concerning Britaine: Their Languages, Names, Surnames, Allusions, Anagrammes, Armories, Monies, Empreses, Apparell, Artillarie, Wise Speeches, Proverbs, Poesies, Epitaphes*, fifth edition (London, 1637), p. 341. The first edition of *Remaines* was published in 1605, but did not include the section on 'Armories'. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

6. The relationship between heraldic and emblem literature is examined by Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden in the following article: 'From Shield to Emblem: Changing Fashions in Heraldry', *Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, 73 (1979), pp. 334-43.

Intendments' (p. 4). The anonymous writer of the manuscript volume, 'The Catholike Armorist: the First Book: What Armories are, and of Their Origine', refers to Blazonry as an 'Heroike science'[7]. Henry Peacham describes it as a 'discourse ... with ... lawes and termes',[8] but there was no single, definitive law to which all blazonry conformed. Attempts were made to provide some regulation. In 1682, John Gibbon, Bluemantle Pursuivant, published his *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam: An Essay to a more Correct Blason in Latine than formerly hath been used*, in which he demanded that the system of blazon should be reformed. He states:

> My business ... hath been to endeavor (out of approved modern Authors)
> a more correct Latine Blason than our ancient English masters (whom
> we wholly follow) have exhibited in their published Instructions.
> Learned Camden ... was so out of conceit with their Terms ... in his
> Britiannia, ... he follows a Stile and Method of his own.[9]

In spite of idiosyncrasies, blazon was, and is, governed by conventions, both of linguistic form and vocabulary. While these are not definitive, the general characteristics of blazon must be appreciated in order that its use by writers and poets can be recognised.

To blazon arms, first the colour of the surface of the shield, known as the *field*, is stated. Next, the charges which appear on it are described, with adjectives of quantity preceding the noun, and other description following. Then details of the crest and supporters are given in turn. Heraldry relies on the use of *tinctures*, which are

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7. The Queen's College Library, Oxford (hereafter QC) MS 141, f. 22. Further references to this manuscript are given after quotations in the text. I am grateful to Dr Alison Shell for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

8. *Peacham's Heraldry for The Complete Gentleman*, edited by Cecil R. Humphery-Smith (Great Bookham, 1991), p. 15. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text. Peacham's book was reprinted in 1626, 1627, 1634, 1642 and 1661; see Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman, Fashioning him absolute in the most necessary and commendable Qualities concerning Minde or Bodie that may be required in a Person of Honor: To which is added the Gentlemans [sic] Exercise; or, An exquisite practice, as well for drawing all manner of Beasts, as for making Colours, to be used in Painting, Limming etc., much Inlarged, especially in the Art of Blazonry, by a very good Hand*, third edition (London, 1661). His influence continued into the eighteenth century; Samuel Johnson derived from Peacham's work the definitions of the terms of blazonry for his *A Dictionary of the English Language, in which the words are deduced from their originals and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers* (London, 1755).

9. John Gibbon, *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam: An Essay to a more Correct Blason In Latine than formerly hath been used* (London, 1682), sig. A3ʳ. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

dominated by five colours, two metals and furs. According to the terms of blazonry, these are described as *azure* (blue), *gules* (red), *purpure* (purple), *sable* (black), *vert* (green), *or* (gold), *argent* (silver) and *ermine*, which is the most common fur and comprises black spots on a white background. As an example, the arms of the Earls of Westmorland, borne by Mildmay Fane (c. 1600-1666), may be considered. They are blazoned *azure, three dexter gauntlets, backs affrontée or*. This means that the Earls bore a blue shield, on which were shown three right-hand gloves, drawn in gold, with their backs facing the observer.

The blazon is also informed by hidden conventions, both textual and pictorial. Regarding colours, it is not generally acceptable to have a colour touching another colour, or a metal next to another metal. In the blazon text, no repetition of the same tincture is allowed, which therefore requires the use of phrases such as *of the second*, meaning that the noun is described by the second colour mentioned in the blazon. In the Fane example, the heraldically literate reader would also understand the position of the gloves implied by the blazon, since convention dictates that when three objects are placed on a shield, two are drawn *in chief*, which is the upper part of the shield, and one *in base*, which is the lower portion. Another seventeenth-century convention was that when mantling was drawn, it was always coloured red on the outer folds and silver on the inside; this being the case, it is not mentioned in the blazon. Conventions changed with time. For example, in earlier periods the metals gold and silver were so described, while in the seventeenth century they were more typically described as *or* and *argent* respectively.[10]

The identification of heraldic references in verse is reliant on an appreciation of the terms of blazon. In creative writing, although full blazons do occur, it is more usual for partial blazons to be given, or for an accumulation of heraldic references and technical terms to be identified, which then gives an heraldic significance to the text. Clearly, terms such as *azure* or *difference* (*differences* are marks placed on a shield to distinguish between sons) may not be heraldic, and only gain significance in this study when they appear in close proximity to other heraldic terms.

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10. J. P. Brooke-Little, *An Heraldic Alphabet* (London, 1988), pp. 22-5.

William Camden's definition that 'Armes are ensignes of honour borne in banners, shields, coates, for notice and distinction of families one from the other, and descendable, as hereditary to posterity' (pp. 206-7) is fundamental to both a seventeenth-century and a modern understanding of the qualities that are intrinsic to heraldry, the nature of which will now be addressed. The hereditary aspect of armorial bearings is regarded by scholars as having developed between the mid-twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and is the quality which distinguishes heraldic bearings from other marks on shields.[11] Guillim confirms this understanding, and introduces a second important characteristic of heraldry, that heraldic bearings are conferred upon, rather than assumed by, an individual:

> Arms are, generally and according to their present Use, hereditable Marks or Signs of Honour, taken or granted by Sovereign Princes, to reward and distinguish Persons, Families and Communities in War and Peace.
> (p. 3)

That arms are acknowledged as being simply those marks which have been granted by the sovereign power reflects the formal, legal position that developed in England between 1417 and 1687, and which still pertains today. The legal historian G. D. Squibb has established that the wording of a legal statement in 1687 by the Kings Advocate in the Court of Chivalry repeated that contained in a writ of 1417. This declared that, in law, the only right to bear arms was by birth or by grant from the lawful authority, that is, the sovereign or the heralds, upon whom the authority to grant arms had been conferred by the Crown.[12] In 1621, James I, in a defence of the Court, described it as being 'so imediatelie derived from us, who are the fountaine of all honor.'[13] Thus heraldry was, officially, a formal system, regulated by authorities based

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11. On the origins of heraldry, see: Adrian Ailes, 'The Knight, Heraldry and Armour: The Role of Recognition and the Origins of Heraldry', in *Medieval Knighthood IV: Papers from the fifth Strawberry Hill Conference, 1990*, edited by Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 1-21; *Boutell's Heraldry*, revised by J.P. Brooke-Little (London, 1983), pp. 1-10; A. C. Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, revised by J. P. Brooke-Little (London, 1985), pp. 1-13; Stephen Friar and John Ferguson, *Basic Heraldry* (New York and London, 1993), pp. 9-28; Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 125-8; Beryl Platts, *Origins of Heraldry* (London, 1980); Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford, New York, Melbourne and Toronto, 1988), pp. 1-13.

12. G. D. Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry: A Study in the Civil Law in England* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 181-185.

13. Squibb, *High Court of Chivalry*, p. 245. The quotation is recorded in *Acts of the Privy Council 1621-1623*, p. 99.

in London, whose power derived from the monarch.

The definition of heraldry as an 'institutional language', of the type defined by J. G. A. Pocock, is important. Pocock recognised such a language as the '"idiom" or "rhetorics" ... of intellectual specialists', which may be detected by a scholar in historical texts if three factors are present: 'the existence and activities of the institution within which it is spoken', a 'relatively self-conscious' use of language and 'a secondary literature about how it should be spoken'.[14] Heraldry answers these criteria. The institution responsible for heraldry is the College of Arms. The heralds were incorporated by royal charter in 1484 and the site of the present College of Arms was granted them in 1555.[15] Appointed by the sovereign, the heralds received a salary from the crown: in 1617, Garter King of Arms was granted fifty pounds; Clarenceaux and Norroy Kings of Arms, forty pounds; heralds, twenty-six pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence and pursuivants, twenty pounds.[16] Evidence for the 'self-conscious' use of heraldic language in the seventeenth century lies in its regulation. It was illegal to adopt a coat of arms which had not been registered at the College of Arms, and the Kings of Arms, or chief heralds, conducted a series of Visitations to the homes and communities of the armigerous in order to correct any irregular use of heraldry and its blazon. The Visitations were authorised by royal licence and permitted the heralds to destroy any illegal arms, their instructions being:

> to visite among other your Armes and Conysaunces and to reforme the same yf yt be necessarye and requisite, and to reforme all false armorye & Armes devysed without auctoritie ... and them to deface & take away wheresoever they be sett ... and all suche as sett upon churches or other places[.][17]

By 1635, a series of such Visitations had reviewed the use of arms throughout the country, but with the outbreak of civil war, their regulation ceased, only to be resumed

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14. J. G. A. Pocock, 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought,' in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-century England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1987), p. 27.

15. Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Ancestors* (London, 1978), pp. 52-3.

16. Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), p. 99.

17. Letters Patent issued by Henry VIII to Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux King of Arms, 19th April, 1530, quoted in Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages*, second edition (London, 1956), p. 9.

in 1663 before ending, finally, in 1687. In answer to the third of Pocock's points, there is a considerable body of secondary literature which benefits readers of heraldic language in seventeenth-century texts. Between 1602 and 1697, heraldry manuals by at least thirteen heralds and pursuivants were published, in addition to those of other authors, all of which were concerned with the regulation and understanding of the idea of honour and its expression through heraldry.[18] These texts, too, were subject to regulation. As G. D. Squibb observes, the Court of Chivalry:

> enforced the control of the publishing of books and prints relating to matters of heraldic interest. ... on 11 July 1637 ... a decree of the Court of Star Chamber ... provided that all books concerning heraldry, titles of honour and arms or otherwise concerning the office of Earl Marshal should be licensed by the Earl Marshal or by his authority, and that the licence should be printed at the beginning of each book.[19]

This power was restated in the Licensing Act of 1662;[20] the press continued to be licensed until 1695, although the effectiveness of the censorship is the subject of debate among historians.[21]

Heraldry, then, refers to a system, that was officially accepted in the seventeenth century as being characterised by institutional concerns, upheld by the force of law and

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18. The following list details, in chronological order, the heralds or pursuivants, their office and the short-title of the earliest relevant edition of their respective works: William Segar, Norroy King of Arms, *Honor Military, and Ciuil* (London, 1602); Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, *The Catalogue of Honor,* translated by Thomas Milles (London, 1610); John Guillim, Portsmouth-Pursuivant of Armes, *A Display of Heraldrie* (London, 1611); Raphe Brooke, York Herald, *A Catalogue and Succession of the Kings...of this Realme of England,...Together with their Armes* (London, 1619); Augustine Vincent, Rouge-croix Pursuivant, *A Discoverie of Errours in the first Edition of The Catalogue of Nobility,* (London, 1622); William Camden, Clarenceux King of Arms, *Remaines concerning Brittaine,* second impression (London, 1623); John Philipot, Somerset Herald, *The Cities great concern, in this Case or Question of Honour and Arms* (London, 1629); Henry St. George, Richmond Herald and Garter King of Arms, *A Catalogue of the Nobility of England,* edited by Thomas Walkley (London, 1630); Elias Ashmole, Windsor Herald, *The Institution, Laws, and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (London, 1672); Francis Sandford, Lancaster Herald, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England* (London, 1677); William Dugdale, Garter King of Arms, *The Antient Usage in Bearing of such Ensigns of Honour as are commonly call'd Arms* (Oxford and London, 1682); John Gibbon, Bluemantle Pursuivant, *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam* (London, 1682); Randle Holme, Deputy for the Kings of Arms, *The Academy of Armory* (Chester, 1688); Robert Dale, Blanch-Lion Pursuivant, *An Exact Catalogue of the Nobility of England* (London, 1697).

19. Squibb, *High Court of Chivalry,* p. 143. The quotation is from College of Arms MS SML 3, f. 173.

20. Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London, 1967), p. 265. The reference is to *Statutes of the Realm,* vol. V, p. 429.

21. See Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 644-658.

governed by hereditary and authoritarian principles. Its systematic nature is reflected in the fact that, like blazonry, heraldry itself was referred to as a science (in the seventeenth-century sense). For example, Guillim observes that he has one aim: 'to adorn and beautify this Science' (sig. A2ʳ), and Silvanus Morgan, in a broadsheet of 1679, refers to 'this Heroic Science'.[22]

Although all heraldry is governed by hereditary principles, a distinction is made between private and public arms. Guillim identifies those arms which are 'either Publick or Private' (p. 14). There are, on the one hand, the arms of the rulers of a state and, on the other, those of 'private Houses and Persons' (p. 14). The former included episcopal arms, and those of institutions and corporations. They signified 'Publicke Authority' and the 'Notes and Testimonies of ... their several Jurisdictions' (p. 14). The main difference between private and public arms is that public arms would be transferred to those succeeding to an office, regardless of their family history, whereas private arms would simply be inherited within families.

In order to appreciate the qualities intrinsic to heraldry, it is essential to understand the debate which centred around the nature of private arms. The contention was that arms could be equated with names, and, therefore, that a person had as much right to bear arms as they had to a name. This position clearly undermined the notions of social and institutional regulation upon which heraldic authorities insisted. William Camden, for example, wrote in 1623 of the heraldic signs 'which as silent names doe distinguish families' (p. 205). Guillim's editor, James Coats, discusses six ways in which names can inspire the design of a coat of arms. He then cites Guillim's attribution of the same value to arms as to a man's name, and states that neither should be changed, 'except a weighty and honourable Reason shall induce him to it' (p. 11). The authority for this equation of arms and names was the lawyer Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314-57). His work, *On Insignia and Coats of Arms* was first published by his son-in-law in 1358. Bartolo regarded coats of arms as names:

> Just as names are created to identify persons, so insignia and coats of arms are devised for this purpose. Anyone is permitted to use such

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22. Silvanus Morgan, *Heraldry Epitomiz'd: And its Reason Essay'd* (London, 1679).

names for himself, and thus anyone can bear these insignia[.][23]

This work was acknowledged as an influence by the writers of later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century heraldry manuals. Edmund Bolton referred to the 'renowned Bartolvs' (p. 139), Bartolo's work is quoted by Guillim in *A Display of Heraldry*, where the translation reads: 'For as Names, so Arms and Ensigns were invented to distinguish Men one from another' (p. 6) and John Gibbon lists 'Bartholus his Tractatus de Insignibus' among the 'Heraldical Authors quoted by me' (sig. A5ʳ) in the preliminaries to his work. Again, John Bossewell, whose *Workes of Armorie* was published in 1572 and 1597, recognises 'Bartholus de insigniis' as one of the 'names of the aucthors ... out of whiche these workes are chiefelye collected and amplified'.[24]

Accordingly, when private arms are understood to be synonymous with names, the discourse of heraldry becomes a language of self-definition. The link between heraldry and names is demonstrated in the verse of one writer, identified only as 'C. G.', whose work was published in 1600. In *The Minte of deformities*, heraldry, in the form of an ensign, or flag, is presented as the map of a name:

> What doe these cutting sutes portend but shame,
>   ensignes to bawdie tauerne boulsteres,
> The stayned mapp of a loose gouerned name (ll. 151-3)[25]

The speaker rails against degenerate tailors for demanding social recognition equal to that of their clients. The inappropriate attribution of an ensign to those whom he imagines as bawdy drunks emphasises the speaker's contempt; the implications of such use of heraldic language to negotiate social position, will be discussed in chapter three. Here, the interest lies in the construction of an ensign as the tangible form of an individual's name, as a map or guide to their identity.

The conscious use of heraldic language to articulate identity is also evident in the work

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23. *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's 'Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms'*, edited by Osvaldo Cavallar, Susanne Degenring and Julius Kirshner (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 145-6.

24. John Bossewell, *Workes of Armorie: deuyded into three bookes, entitled, the Concordes of Armorie, the Armorie of Honor, and of Coates and Creastes* (London, 1572; reprinted, Amsterdam and New York, 1969), sig. Oivʳ. A second impression of this work was published in 1597. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

25. C. G., *The Minte of deformities* (London, 1600), sig. B2ʳ.

of George Daniel (1616-1657). Although two editions of Daniel's works exist, the poem 'Coat of Arms and Portrait' appears only in manuscript, (see figure 1), where it is placed beneath an oil painting of Daniel himself, which is surmounted by his coat of arms. The verse is signed and dated the twenty-third of March 1646; the opening line indicates that Daniel regarded the portrait as a 'Shadow' of himself, which is itself 'overshadowed' (l. 1) by the coat of arms:

> This Shadow, overshadowed, is a Tipe
> Of my full Selfe; if you (who see't) are ripe
> to Judge of Art, behold: a twofold grace
> In one small Draught; my Fortune and my Face (ll. 1-4)[26]

Daniel offers the coat of arms as a metonymic link to himself and finds in it a way of speaking about his inherited identity, his 'Fortune' (l. 4). In contrast, the portrait reflects his own, physical, reality, his 'Face' (l. 4). The verse shifts between a sense of confidence in the ability of his art to reveal himself: 'for only Men/ Can draw their inward selves, with theire owne Pen' (ll. 5-6), and a sense of the inevitable self-deception which will intrude into the process because: 'Soe neare, is man himselfe; that to his owne/ Self, he dissembles, and will not be knowne' (ll. 11-12). Yet the last line concludes that, 'If wee know not, ourselves; none other may' (l. 14). The tension which is evident in the verse is echoed in the relationship between the coat of arms and the portrait, the former being an objective identification of Daniel, the latter being his own, subjective, self-portrait. Together, they inspire his verse meditation on the possibility of self-knowledge.

That a coat of arms was understood to reflect the identity of its bearer is also made clear in the following encomiastic verse addressed 'To The Lord Chancellor' by 'H. G.' (attributed to Sir Henry Goodere). The Chancellor's shield displayed, on a *chief* (the top third of the shield) two mullets, or five-pointed stars, set each side of a crescent. The stanza below makes clear that the Chancellor's virtues are evident in both his shield and in himself:

> The North and Southerne Poles the two fix'd Starres
> Of worth and dignitie, which all iust warres,

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26. British Library (hereafter BL) Additional MS 19,255, f. 6. The two editions of Daniel's works are: *The Poems of George Daniel*, edited by Alexander B. Grosart, 4 vols (Boston, 1878) and *The Selected Poems of George Daniel of Beswick 1616-1657*, edited by Thomas B. Stroup (Lexington, 1959).

Figure 1
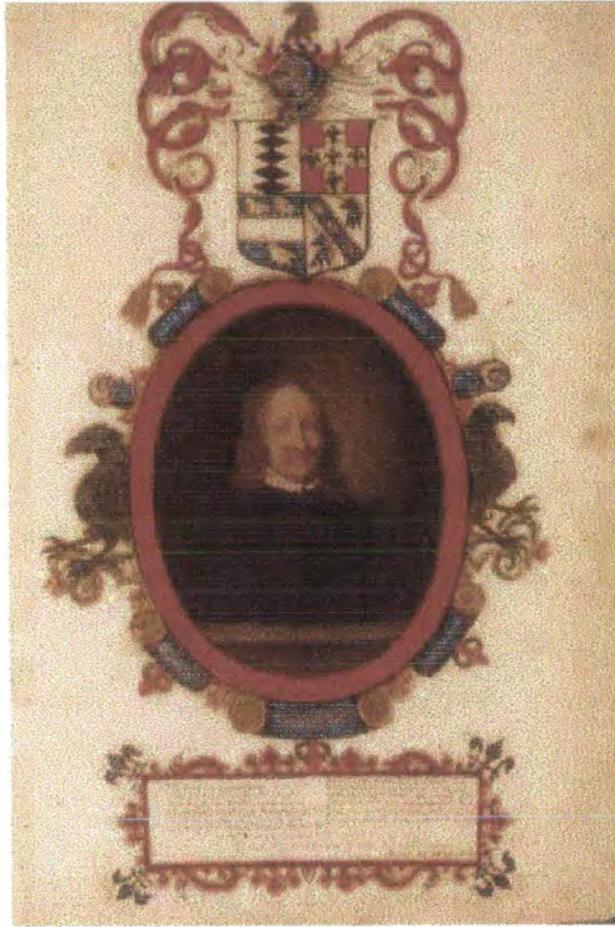
BL Additional MS 19,255, f.6

> Should still maintaine, together: be here met
> And in your selfe as in your Scutchion set (ll. 1-4)[27]

Perhaps the most well-known literary evidence for the intensity of the relationship between the heraldic sign and its bearer is that dramatised by Shakespeare in *Richard II*. Henry Bolingbroke condemns to death Bushy and Green; his indictment against them concludes with the charge that they had destroyed his coat of arms. The significance of the attack on the coat of arms is so great because of its combination of public and private significance. Bushy and Green have:

> From my own windows torn my household coat,
> Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign,
> Save men's opinions and my living blood,
> To show the world I am a gentleman.[28]

To deface a coat of arms was a uniquely personal insult since arms are, by the addition of small marks of difference to distinguish between male family members, unique to the man who bears them. A coat of arms is also a public declaration and affirmation of identity. Bolingbroke's sense of gentility and honour, and his faith in the worthiness of his lineage, is validated by its expression in terms of an objective code. In an hierarchical society governed by principles of patrilineal inheritance, the destruction of the visible and outward sign of gentility attacks both his social as well as his personal identity.

Heraldry therefore has the capacity to objectify, as well as to legitimise, the self. An insight into the reason for its effectiveness as a trope in the seventeenth century may be gleaned from two particular observations made by John Guillim in *A Display of Heraldry*. Guillim states that: 'Arms, then, ... may be thus defined: Arms are Tokens or Resemblances, signifying some Act or Quality of the Bearer' (p. 3). Later, he suggests that the original assumption of particular images on shields was determined by the fact that the armigerous person would select an image which in some way reflected himself, something:

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27. H. G., *The Mirrovr of Maiestie: or, the Badges of Honovr conceitedly emblazoned: with emblemes annexed, poetically vnfolded* (London, 1619), sig. C1ᵛ.

28. *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, III. 1. 24-27, in *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 3 vols (London, 1987), I, 213. All further references to the work of Shakespeare should be understood to imply this edition; subsequent references to individual works will be incorporated after quotations within the text.

whose Nature and in Quality did in some Measure quadrate with his own, or whereunto himself was in some respect in Quality like, or wished to be resembled unto. ... The Reason is, for that no Man is delighted but with Things that are like himself (p. 9)

The perception of such a close identification of a family with their arms gave writers a tool with the capacity to contain the personal, social and political tensions involved in the relationship between the individual and society, between private identities and public expectations and between inheritance and the possibility of an independent self. Heraldic references could function as expressions of interiority, as in the Daniel poem, above, or as weapons either to challenge or defend existing social structures. This study will explore these issues: chapter three will be concerned with the important social implications of heraldic references and chapter four will examine their political impact.

Although distinctions between 'popular' and 'élite' cultures are often superficial and unhelpful, heraldry is characterised by the fact that it establishes differences between people. It defines a principal, armigerous group against a marginalised 'other'. Writers of heraldry manuals, in general, expected a privileged readership. Edmund Bolton, for example, assumed a 'generous, and learned Reader (for to such onely doth this part of humane letters appertaine' (sig. A3ʳ), for his *Elements of Armories*. John Ferne intended *The Blazon of Gentrie* to be 'for the instruction of all Gentlemen bearers of Armes, whome and none other this worke concerneth'.[29] Historians have established that a 'hierarchy of illiteracy' existed in the seventeenth century, with the evidence of ecclesiastical court depositions between 1580 and 1700, in East Anglia, establishing

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29. John Ferne, *The Blazon of Gentrie: Deuided into two parts: The first named The Glorie of Generositie, The second, Lacyes Nobilitie: Comprehending discourses of Armes and of Gentry, Wherein is treated of the beginning, parts, and degrees of Gentlenesse, with her lawes: Of the Bearing, and Blazon of Cote-armors: Of the Lawes of Armes, and of Combats, Compiled by Iohn Ferne Gentleman, for the instruction of all Gentlemen bearers of Armes, whome and none other this worke concerneth* (London, 1586), title-page. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text. Ferne was regarded as an authority on heraldry throughout the seventeenth century. Henry Peacham was so concerned that his readers would not be able to find a copy of *The Blazon of Gentrie*, it being 'very rare, and daily sought after as a Iewell', (p. 6) that he included some of its principles in a chapter 'Of sundry Blazons, both Ancient and Moderne' (p. 4). In 1682, John Gibbon listed Ferne among the 'Heraldical Authors' quoted in his *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam* (sig. A5ʳ). The respect which Ferne's work was accorded was not, however, uncritical. The twenty-eight page manuscript 'Diatribe De Heraldorum origine, officio, collegio, etc', whose author remains anonymous but which is dated 1655, places Ferne at the top of its list of heraldic authors. Its writer observes, however, that: 'John Ferne tells us a wild story (where he had it I know not) that Julius Caesar instituted & appointed Heralds ... further that they were as antient almost as the flood but you must pardon this impertinent extravagance in John Ferne who was a better Herald then antiquary' (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre (hereafter HRHRC), pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 88, f. 1).

that women were eighty-nine per cent illiterate, labourers and servants eight-five per cent, husbandmen seventy-nine percent, tradesmen and craftsmen forty-four percent, yeomen thirty-five per cent, while 'gentlemen deponents were two per cent illiterate' and 'professional men entirely literate'.[30] If the situation in East Anglia pertained to the nation as a whole, then Bolton's 'learned Reader' could not have included the majority of women, or a significant percentage of those men beneath the professional or gentle classes. This study will examine, in chapters three and six, the implications of this observation; chapter three with regard to the likelihood that a more diverse group of people did in fact appreciate heraldry, while chapter six will discuss the implications of heraldry for women and their response to, and use of, the language.

Any examination of heraldry must acknowledge another inherent quality, its formation by, and encapsulation of, a chivalric past. Early evidence of the importance of chivalry in understanding the significance of coats of arms is provided by the late thirteenth-century *Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, by Ramon Lull, which was translated and printed in England by William Caxton between 1483 and 1485. The *Book* describes the importance of a coat of arms:

> A Cote is gyuen to a knycht / in sygnefyauce of the grete trauaylles that a knyght must suffre for to honoure chyualrye / ... A token or esseygnal of armes is gyuen to a knyghte in his shelde and in his cote / by cause that he be knowen in the bataylle / And that he be allowed yf he be hardy / & yf he do grete & fayr feates of armes / and yf he be coward faulty / or recreaunt / the enseygnal is gyuen to hym be cause that he be blamed / vytupered and repreuyd.[31]

With reference to this last point, there is no sense in seventeenth-century heraldry manuals that a coat of arms might provide a reproof for cowardly behaviour. On the other hand, the martial origins of coats of arms are acknowledged. Guillim, for example, makes reference to their exclusive use by soldiers. However, he goes on to explain that, in the seventeenth century, the significance of the coat of arms had developed beyond that limited association:

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30. Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), pp. 190-1.

31. *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, translated and printed by William Caxton, from a French version of Ramón Lull's 'Le Libre del orde de Cauayleria', together with Adam Loutfut's Scottish transcript (Harleian MS. 6149)*, edited by Alfred T.P. Byles, Early English Text Society (London, 1926), pp. 87-8.

> Arms are so called, because they were formally given to none but Soldiers, who bear Arms. For they being the Instruments whereby Glory is obtain'd they came in process of time to signify that glory which is the reward of them [.]   (p. 2)

Coats of arms, as the signifiers of 'glory' or 'honour', have been examined by Maurice Keen with reference to European literature between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. For that period, Keen demonstrates that a coat of arms was a 'mark of recognition' which conveyed chivalrous ideals. It was used to send 'messages of pride in loyal service, martial achievement and family connection, and to exemplify special virtues'. On this last point, Keen emphasises the importance of colour theories, which attributed a specific chivalric virtue to each heraldic colour: '*or* denotes *noblesse*; *gules*, *prouesse*; *azur*, *loyaulté*; and *purpur*, *largesse*'. He concludes that 'the language of heraldry was the language of honour not just in its genealogical, but in its ethical sense too'.[32] By contrast, John Gage warns that in looking at colour in medieval contexts, one should not 'suppose that colours were symbolic in any standard way ... Colour provided imaginative embellishment, rather than expressing any notion of objective truth.'[33]

In reading heraldic references in seventeenth-century poetry, Gage's observation is particularly helpful. While it is tempting to seek to extract specific meanings from the use of heraldic colours as Keen describes, the writers of seventeenth-century heraldry manuals continued to debate colour theories, and thus 'reinforced', according to Gage, '[t]he idea that heraldic blazon embodied an authentic language of colours'.[34] Their readings of the significance of colours clearly draw upon earlier, chivalric interpretations, however, difficulties arise when their interpretation of particular colours differs entirely from earlier explanations, and therefore appears almost random. In the following seventeenth-century example, where the details are drawn from tables of heraldic information compiled by Henry Peacham, Christian virtues are signified alongside chivalric ones: *azure* again signifies loyalty, but the meanings for *or* and *gules*, respectively, are rather different from those given by Keen above:

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32. Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 131-2.

33. John Gage, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (London, 1993), p 87.

34. Gage, *Colour and Culture*, p. 90.

> *Or*, Faith and Constancie; argent, Hope and Innocencie; gules, Charity and Magnanimity; azure, Iustice and Loyalty; sable, Prudence and Constancie; Vert, Loyalty in love, Curtesie & Affability; purpure, Temperencce and Prudence (pp. 7-10)

The fluidity of the interpretation of colours is also apparent later in the century. Sylvanus Morgan, in his 1679 broadsheet *Heraldry Epitomiz'd: And its Reason Essay'd*, attributed values to combinations of colours. He explained: '*Or*, and *Sable*, representing by those Colours, Wisdom, Riches, and Elevation of Mind ... *Argent* and *Azure*, Courteous and Discreet'. Gage suggests that 'It may indeed be doubted whether the colours of heraldic blazon were ever as important as the forms they embellished ... in historic coats of arms ... meaning has always tended to reside in the heraldic devices.'[35] In the light of this debate, any meaning derived from colour theories in reading seventeenth-century poetry must be provisional, and reliant upon the immediate context of the reference and other internal evidence within the poem concerned.

That heraldry was still recognised as 'the language of honour' in the seventeenth century is nevertheless clear from the quotations above. For Camden, they are 'ensignes of honour' and for Guillim they 'signify ... glory'. The growth of heraldry from a crusading past was recorded in heraldry manuals. Guillim's editor, James Coats, summarises the view that those arms perceived to have descended from Crusaders should be more highly regarded than any other:

> those that were in Command in the Holy Wars, and did use Insignia or Arms ... did upon their Return from that Service, either assume and take those Devices as their Due ... or else, had Indulgence from their Sovereign ... to bear them. Thus as Religion at Stake is the greatest Spur to true Courage, so those Arms which had been display'd in its Defence, became of most Esteem ... their Issues ... glorying in ... those open and plain Demonstrations of their Parents Piety and Virtue. (p. 6)

The significance of heraldry with reference to religion will be the subject of chapter five. The importance of chivalry to understanding heraldic references in seventeenth century poetry will be evident throughout this study, but will gain particular significance in chapter three, which, in part, considers heraldic references in epic poetry.

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35. Gage, *Colour and Culture*, p. 90.

It is important to appreciate seventeenth-century approaches to understanding and analysing heraldry before embarking on a study that is subject to modern strategies of literary interpretation. So far, this introduction has offered a definition of heraldry as an hereditary, institutional language of honour, that embodied the ideals of a chivalric past but which could also be appropriated as a private language of self-definition. Seventeenth-century writers approached heraldry from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including those of the natural sciences, natural philosophy, geometry, hieroglyphics, neoplatonism, Christian spirituality and mnemonics. No writer devoted themselves to a single strategy but rather incorporated elements of a number of these disciplines in their heraldry manuals. A consideration of each provides an important context for understanding how and why seventeenth-century poets may have drawn on heraldry in their work.

Guillim's 'Preface to the Reader' exemplifies what may be called the systematic approach. He seeks a systematic classification of heraldry by subdividing different kinds of material into 'Genus', 'Species' and 'Individua's', and attributing 'Rules' to each. Guillim hopes to establish 'orderly Connexions' and derive a 'Form of Method' from the 'confused Lump' of heraldry that is his material. Consequently, Guillim's manual is organised into *'Sections'*, each introduced by *'an Analogical Table'* and *'Chapters'*. Ultimately, he aims to bring different elements of the subject 'together in an universal Coherence' (sig. A2^v).

The influence of natural philosophy is evident in a number of manuals. For Peacham, heraldry was 'in substance the most refined part of Naturall Philosophie' (p. 12) and Richard Wallis, whose work on coats of arms was published in 1677, repeats this phrase in the Preface to his own work.[36] The writer of one manuscript, 'The Catholike Armorist', is explicit, in the first volume, as to the importance of nature for interpretation:

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36. Richard Wallis, *London's Armory: Accuratly delineated in a Graphical display of all the Arms, Crests, Supporters, Mantles & Mottos of every distinct Company and Corporate Societie in the Honourable City of London as they truly bear them: faithfully Collected from their severall Patents which have been approved and Confirmed by divers Kings at Arms in their Visitations: A Work never till now exactly perfected or truly Published by any and will rectify many essentiall Mistakes and manifest Absurdities Committed in Painting & Carving* (London, 1677), sig. A2^v. Further references (to this edition, etc.), will be given after quotations in the text.

> The Field of a Shield of Armes is noe other thing but the Body of
> Armory without a soule to enspiritt it and its Blason is its true soule and
> Life. ... The true Blazon is neuer well described but by a Person very
> intelligent in things of Nature   (pp. 59-60)

Natural philosophy contributed especially to debates concerned with the origins of heraldry. Edmund Bolton and John Gibbon, in their heraldry manuals, each refer to marks that had been labelled heraldic on the bodies of native peoples in North America. Their observations will be discussed at greater length in chapter five; their conclusions confirm that each sought to establish heraldry as a phenomenon connected with natural bodies. In Bolton's work, the knowledgeable knight Sir Amias suggests that: 'The new worlds ... present to vs the prime simplicity of our creation' (p. 20) and observes that, in the New World, cannibals had been found 'with distinctions among them, and (in their kind) cognisances vpon them' (p. 20). Bolton opines that, 'nature (like a raw scholar) began in these to practise her *notion*' (p. 22). In turn, Gibbon writes of his own observations of 'Natives' in Virginia, and concludes: 'That Heraldry was ingrafted naturally into the sense of humane Race' (p. 156).[37] Similarly, in his *Autobiography*, Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) presents heraldry as a natural language. Writing in the third person, Vico notes that:

> he discovers new origins of heroic insignia, which were the dumb
> language of all the first nations at a time when they were incapable of
> articulate speech. Thence he discovers new principles of the science of
> heraldry [.][38]

The principle that heraldry was a natural and universal phenomenon, in Bolton's words, 'that *the notion of ensignement is vniuersal, and natural*' (p. 7) which 'began with the creation of things, and ... is imprinted in nature' (p. 8), was the subject of debate later in the period. The tension between heraldry as a natural language and heraldry as an artificially determined one is evident, for example, in the response of Guillim's editor James Coats to Bolton's argument. In his edition of *A Display of Heraldry*, Coats objects to the idea of heraldry as a natural language. His introduction concludes that 'Arms cannot be said to be founded upon Nature' (p. 5) because their essential

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37. Thomas Moule, *Bibliotheca Heraldica, Magnœ Britanniœ: An Analytical Catalogue of Books*, (London, 1822; reprinted, London, 1966), pp. 217-219.

38. *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, translated by Max Harrold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca and London, 1944), p. 168.

hereditary aspect was an historical, conventional phenomenon that developed 'in late Ages' and was subject rather to the demands of 'Princes and Great Commanders' (p. 5) than to Nature.

The importance of geometry to understanding heraldry is vital in the light of this debate. In a prefatory verse to Bolton's manual entitled 'H.C. To the Gentleman reader', the speaker announces that geometry should be understood to be an organising principle of heraldry: 'By structure of a choyce Phylosophie./ GEOMETRIE giues Lines in ordred Place' (sig. A1ᵛ). Later, in the same text, 'a Shield' is defined as 'a solid, and Geometricall body' (p. 79). Peacham, too, remarks of heraldry that 'it taketh the principles from Geometry, making use almost of every severall square and angle' (p. 12). Richard Wallis, again echoing Peacham's observation, writes that 'it assumeth also the principles of Geometry, by putting into use almost every Square Angle and Circle' (sig. A2ᵛ). That geometric principles could be applied to heraldry was significant, as Vaughan Hart has established, because this demonstrated that 'heraldry was seen to harmonise with nature' and thus confirmed the notion of heraldry as a natural language.[39]

Hart also discusses geometry as a 'component of the supposed Egyptian mysteries' (p. 73), of which hieroglyphics was the dominant form. Thomas Blount, translator of the work of Henry Estienne, defined the seventeenth-century understanding of the term: 'Hieroglyphicks, held the first rank among their [the Egyptians] secret Disciplines, whereof Moses had without doubt a perfect Idea, as the holy Scriptures testifie' (sig. B1ᵛ). The application of theories of hieroglyphics to heraldry is problematic. The prefatory verse to Bolton's *Elements of Armories* assumes that the manual will equate heraldry with hieroglyphicks: 'This Book will say that they by nature were/ The HIEROGLYPHICKS of Nobility' (sig. A1ᵛ). Guillim's editor, however, dismisses the form: 'Arms ... are distinguished from those Hieroglyphicks ... of old' (p. 3). Bolton provides clarification of the connection between heraldry and hieroglyphics later in the manual:

some learned ... have held that wee deduce our armories from their [the

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39. Vaughan Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London and New York, 1994), p. 73. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

'ancient ÆGYPTIANS'] Hieraticall figures ... though it be farre otherwise: Yet is it not to be denied that some Armories haue beene euen copyed by Hierogrammes, or coyned out of them, & armories indeed ... ought to taste of them (p. 38)

The 'secret Disciplines' of the Egyptians, of which Moses had a perfect understanding, refers to the hidden meanings of the hieroglyphs, which, as Hart explains, were believed to contain divine truths. These included 'the secrets of nature, secrets which had been expressed in the original language of God's Book of Nature but were lost at the time of the building of the tower of Babel' (p. 60). Moses, however, was thought to have been 'initiated into this arcane language' (p. 60). If heraldry was read as a form of hieroglyphic, 'the Hieroglyphicks of armes' (p. 3) that Bolton mentions, then it, too, could provide a link to the 'secrets of nature', even if the connection to hieroglyphics was as slight as by a 'taste'.

The fifth approach to heraldry, through Neoplatonic theory, was important to writers both at the beginning and end of this period in explaining the composition and significance of the subject. For James Coats, the coat of arms becomes the shadow of a greater idea that is, nonetheless, centred in, rather than beyond, the individual self: 'the Arms or Device on the shield is but an Idea of the Bearer, a Representation of something more excellent, which is conceal'd' (p. 3). Bolton uses Neoplatonic concepts to explain the relationship between the physical, visible form of a coat of arms and its existence in the mind of an intelligent observer:

> For let an Armes painted on a Surcoat, Tabard, or Shield be blotted out, the priuation of the Armories, makes no priuation of the *Continent*, though not as the *Continent* of Armories, but as a substance of it selfe, and if the blazon of the coat be knowne, though by reason of that preserues the notice both of the mater, and forme in the mind, though so priuation it appeare not to the eye, yet to the intelligent it abideth, and I doe no more take it to bee an actual Armes, then the dreame, or *Idea* of a building is an house. (p. 80)

Christian spirituality is another vital element in seventeenth-century interpretations of heraldry. Michael Bath has examined interpretations of emblems and their importance in understanding the 'topos of nature as God's book in the seventeenth century'.[40]

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40. Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (London and New York, 1994), p.161.

Although as explained above, this study is not concerned, for the most part, with emblem theory, the reading of emblems in the seventeenth century provides a context for the reception of heraldry at that time. The many writers who regarded heraldry as a natural phenomenon, like the emblematists, invited the possibility that heraldry offered an affirmation of divinity. At a fundamental level, the origins of heraldry were regarded as divine. In his consideration of this question, Edmund Bolton will not 'acknowledge any primary author, but in almighty God, the Prototypon, Arch-type, or original paterne' (p. 7). In turn, Joseph Hall argues that heraldry first became in apparent in the Patriarchal period of Old Testament history and presents God as 'the first herald'. One may:

> first see the ancient use of Heraldry in the Scriptures; ... all the Patriarks had their Armes assign'd them by IACOB ... The use therefore of ... armes must needs be very laudable, as ancient; since God himselfe was the first Herald, and shall be the last[41]

While it is important that the Christian significance of heraldry to writers in seventeenth-century England is acknowledged in all the verse that will be examined here, its importance will be evaluated in chapter five in particular, which examines the nature of heraldic references in overtly spiritual or religious contexts.

Heraldry, as a form, was believed to encapsulate the honourable deeds of the past, and was also regarded, explicitly, as a mnemonic tool. John Gibbon, in the *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam*, expressed his understanding of a coat of arms and its blazon as a vehicle for 'transferring ... Memory' to subsequent generations:

> My desire being, That henceforth such as record and publish to the World ... the Heroick Acts of men, will be pleased to describe ... the Symbolical Rewards deservedly given to their Virtues; such Descriptions being to the impressed Shield, as the faculty of Speech allowed to a Picture, and taken both together, are at this day the usual means of transferring the memory of Merit to Posterity   (sig. A3ʳ⁻ᵛ)

Memory and heraldry were together regarded as arbiters of social status. The following stanzas from the prefatory verses to Gulielmus Gratarolus' sixteenth-century *The Castel of Memorie* evince the social and political powers which were believed to accrue to

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41. Joseph Hall, 'The Imprese of God: In Two Sermons preacht at the Court In the Yeeres 1611, 1612', in *A Recollection of such Treatises as have been heretofore severally published and are nowe revised, corrected, augmented* (London, n.d.), pp. 521-541.

memory. The last stanza quoted here demonstrates that memory itself could be perceived as a shield:

> So Memorie doth still preserue
>   eche thing in his degree:
> And rendreth unto euery one,
>   his doughty dignitie. (ll. 69-72)
>
> ....
>
> How needfull then is Memorye
>   to rule a publicke weale:
> In things deuyne & eke prophane:
>   God graunt it neuer fayle.
>
> Or how can it in any tyme,
>   be spared in the fielde:
> That is so requysite at home,
>   and strong defending shielde. (ll. 105-112)[42]

The interpretation of heraldic references in seventeenth-century verse cannot ignore any of the contemporary definitions or theoretical approaches that have been introduced above. Important differences between them are apparent. Readings which find in heraldry no reference beyond the identity of the bearer inevitably conflict with those which find in the elements of coats of arms a transcendent link to the moment of creation. Such tensions as these highlight the responsibility of readers to appreciate the context and nuances of the heraldic references encountered in seventeenth-century poetry.

Heraldry, then, offered seventeenth-century writers a language that was governed by the technical rules of the blazon. Secondary literature directed readers towards a belief that heraldry was an ordered reflection of a divine, hierarchical creation, which must be regarded as a formal, institutional language. In social and political terms, heraldry manuals discussed the subject in terms of honour, identity, genealogy and patriarchal authority. In the seventeenth century, there are numerous examples of customary, disciplined uses of the language in verse. However, this study will give particular attention to the many disorderly references which exist alongside them. Some of these take advantage of the self-referential aspect of a coat of arms, in order to reflect the

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42. Gulielmus Gratarolus, *The Castel of Memorie: wherein is conteyned the restoring, augmenting, and conseruing of the Memorye and Remembraunce, with the latest remedies, and best preceptes thereunto apperteyning*, translated by Willyam Fulwood (London, 1562), sig. A3ᵛ.

personal concerns of the writer or the individual identity of a subject. Through the deliberate flouting of heraldic conventions, other writers articulated their challenge to prevailing authorities and social conventions. The aim of this study is to equip the reader with an understanding of the potential significance of the many such references in seventeenth-century verse.

> I am not sure that even this art of heraldry, which has for its main object
> the telling and proclamation of our chief minds and characters to each
> other, and keeping record of descent by race, as far as it is possible, (or,
> under the present aspect of Darwinism, pleasant), to trace it; - I am not
> sure that even heraldry has always understood clearly what it had to tell.
> But I am very sure it has not been understood in the telling.
>   (John Ruskin, 'Lecture X: The Heraldic Ordinaries')[43]

In 1872, John Ruskin opined that heraldry was beset with misunderstanding. In contrast, attempts to understand what heraldry 'had to tell' readers of literature have been made by an increasing number of writers and critics during the twentieth century. This chapter will review the significance of their work, and consider the importance of recent criticism, the best of which gives direct support to the principal contentions upon which the present study is based. It will also suggest some ways in which the critics' arguments might be extended.

The contention that heraldry had an important influence on literature in seventeenth-century Europe is defended by the work of numerous scholars. In England, readings of Shakespeare, Jonson and Cleveland rely on heraldic interpretations. In France, La Fontaine has been read through the lens of heraldry and publications considering Russian heraldic 'virši', and the heraldry in Slavic poetry before 1800, have also appeared. Such a breadth of scholarship offers a witness to the premise that an understanding of heraldic references will often lead to new critical interpretations, in full or in part, of particular poems.

This analysis will introduce a range of current scholarship concerned with heraldic readings of literature, although detailed criticism regarding some studies of seventeenth-century literature will be reserved for later, relevant chapters. The significance of heraldic language to the understanding of literature has been acknowledged, in particular, by semioticians and linguists; their work will also be discussed for the vital theoretical background it provides to the understanding of seventeenth-century references that is offered here.

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43. *The Works of John Ruskin,* edited by E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London, 1906), pp. 265-6.

Critical interest in heraldic references within seventeenth-century literature has, predictably, focused on the works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Ben Jonson (1572/3-1637). In 1930, Guy Cadogan Rothery's *The Heraldry of Shakespeare* was published, and, twenty years later, *Shakespeare's Heraldry*, by C. W. Scott-Giles, appeared. Similar in kind to these is *Heralds and Heraldry in Ben Jonson's Plays, Masques and Entertainments*, by Arthur Huntington Nason, which was first published in 1907. Each testifies to the enthusiasm for heraldry of their authors, but they are not works of rigorous literary criticism. Rothery's book contains little close analysis of any Shakespeare text, even though he explains that:

> The entire arcanum of the heralds' science, its glowing pageant, its minutely prescribed forms, so full of symbolism, its romantic legends, its quaint terminology is closely woven into the text of his tragedies and comedies alike ... and we find the same thing in his poems [.][44]

Rothery does, however, provide some historical context for the references, with quotations from manuals of heraldry and some references to bestiary and herbal literature. Rothery admits in the foreward that his work is 'the result of scattered notes jotted down from time to time' (n. p.) and scholars must approach *The Heraldry of Shakespeare* accordingly. Viewed as a catalogue of heraldic references, care must also be taken, since the work is incomplete. For example, in spite of including a chapter entitled 'Of Liveries and Livery', Rothery failed to record two relevant lines from 'A Lover's Complaint'. In this work, the 'fickle maid' (l. 5) recalls the lover whose 'rudeness so with his authorized youth/ Did livery falseness in a pride of truth' (ll. 104-5). Later, she repeats her lover's boast that he 'Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free' (l. 195). The heraldic significance of these lines warrants explanation. Line 105 echoes the pattern of heraldic blazon; to *livery* implies the display, by a person's retainer or servant, of their distinctive badge. In heraldry, the blazon *in his pride* applies to the depiction of a peacock shown with his tailfeathers open on display.[45] The implied portrait, of the lover as peacock, whose falsehoods are obscured through being arrayed against a display of truths as beautiful as a peacock's tail, is inescapable. Understanding this, the reader may appreciate the significance of line 195. The lover is

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44. Guy Cadogan Rothery, *The Heraldry of Shakespeare: A Commentary with Annotations* (London, 1930), p. 10. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

45. Brooke-Little, *Heraldic Alphabet*, p. 160.

not, in spite of his own arrogant perception to the contrary, free of his own livery; he may like to think of himself as the possessor of women's hearts, but in fact he is identified by the disparaging livery of a peacock.[46] Rothery's work is also prone to error. There is an instance of false attribution, where a quotation is cited from '*I Henry VII*, V, 5' (p. 67), instead of, *I Henry VI*, V, 6. There is also some misunderstanding, when Duke Humphery of Gloucester, the uncle of Henry VI, is confused with Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III (p. 59), and misspelling, when Cardinal Pandolf, a Papal legate in *King John*, is cited as 'Cardinal Randulph' (p. 112). These must stand as warnings to the reader.

Rather more valuable to the scholar is *Shakespeare's Heraldry* by C. W. Scott-Giles, who aimed to provide 'a Shakespearean introduction to heraldry' as well as 'an heraldic companion' to Shakespeare.[47] Scott-Giles devotes a chapter to the identification of heraldic references in each of the history plays, analysing patterns of motifs and heraldic themes. Consideration is given, for example, to the rôle of the heralds across the plays. Scott-Giles also deals at length with the heraldic issue which is perhaps most commonly encountered by non-specialists in seventeenth-century literature, the question of Shakespeare's personal arms. In 1596, William Dethick, Garter King of Arms, drafted a grant to John Shakespeare in which he recorded the *canting* arms (which pun on the name of the bearer) that would be borne by his son William:

> Gould on a Bend sables a Speare of the first steeled argent, And for his creast or cognizance a falcon his winges displayed argent, standing on a wrethe of his coullors, supporting a speare gould steeled as aforesaid, sett uppon a helmett with mantelles and tasselles   (p. 37)

In 1599, a second grant gave the Shakespeares the right to impale the arms of Arden with their own (pp. 36-7). It is generally accepted that William Shakespeare paid for the grant of arms to his father, in order to affirm his own position in society; an impaled coat of arms implied a more significant and illustrious lineage. Michael O'Shea, whose

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46. According to John Guillim, whose manual of heraldry was first published in 1611, two years after 'A Lover's Complaint' first appeared, 'The Peacock is so proud, that when he erecteth his Fan of Plumes, he admireth himself. And some write, that he swalloweth up his Excrements, because he envieth Man the Use thereof. Indeed, those which are most proud, are generally of such sluttish and dirty Qualities.' (Guillim, *Display of Heraldry*, p. 233).

47. C.W. Scott-Giles, *Shakepeare's Heraldry* (London, 1950), p. ix. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

work on heraldry in literature will be considered below, also addresses the question of the significance of Shakespeare's arms. O'Shea draws attention to the 'defiant' nature of the Shakespeare motto, *Non sans droit*, not without right, and the challenge which Shakespeare would have offered, by such a display of arms, to the assumption of the writer as 'a low life'.[48]

The third foundational work which examines heraldry in seventeenth-century literature is A. H. Nason's book concerned with *Heralds and Heraldry in Ben Jonson's Plays, Masques and Entertainments*. As his first chapter makes clear, Nason intends to recover, from a 'mass of technical terminology', the 'heraldic jests' and 'excellent satire' in Jonson's dramatic works.[49] Nason supplies annotations to seventeen plays and eight masques and entertainments. He succeeds in creating a full catalogue of heraldic allusions for these works. Most usefully, Nason establishes Jonson's technical competence in heraldic matters. For example, the complicated exchange in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, between Carlo Buffone, Puntarvolo and the clownish Sogliardo, which involves a discussion of Sogliardo's purchased coat of arms, is fully explained. This passage includes an accurate use of blazon. Sogliardo's arms are given as 'Gyrony of eight pieces, azure and gules; between three plates, a chevron engrailed checquy, or, vert, and ermins; on a chief argent, between two ann'lets sable, a boar's head, proper'. Carlo interprets these arms as 'a hog's cheek and puddings in a pewter field'.[50] Nason explains the general impression of 'an elaborate motley', which is like a 'fool's coat' (p. 98).[51] It is with Jonson's poetry however, that the present work is concerned. In his *Epigrams*, published in 1616, Jonson addresses the ninth epigram 'To All, to Whom I Write' and claims: 'I a poet here, no herald am.' (l. 4).[52] This study will demonstrate,

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48. Michael J. O'Shea, *James Joyce and Heraldry* (Albany, NY, 1986), pp. 33-34. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

49. Arthur Huntington Nason, *Heralds and Heraldry In Ben Jonson's Plays, Masques and Entertainments* 1907 (reprint edition, New York, 1968), p. 3. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

50. Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, III. 1. 75-84, in *Ben Jonson*, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 11 vols (Oxford, 1927), III, 421-604 (pp. 504-5).

51. It has been commented that Sogliardo's motto, 'Not without Mustard' is a satirical comment on Shakespeare's purchased arms, although, as Scott-Giles notes, in no other way do Sogliardo's arms resemble those of Shakespeare (Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry*, p. 32). Michael O'Shea also considers this example, offering an illustration of Sogliardo's arms (O'Shea, *Joyce and Heraldry*, p. 35).

52. *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, edited by George Parfitt (London, 1988), p. 37.

however, that there is a considerable heraldic element in Jonson's poetry. Nason offers no consideration at all of this aspect of Jonson's work.

Although the works of Rothery, Scott-Giles and Nason fail to combine heraldic expertise with full textual and literary criticism, their work has been followed by that of two critics, Nancy J. Vickers and Alexander Calder. In studying heraldry in Shakespeare, they have selected a narrower focus for their research, moving towards a more successful synthesis of the two disciplines and offering valuable readings and insights into their chosen subjects. Vickers has re-examined Shakepeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*. Although written at the end of the sixteenth century, this work is considered here because it seems to have remained popular in the seventeenth century, passing through nine editions by 1655.[53] Rothery gives passing credit to *The Rape of Lucrece* as a 'fine instance' of blazonry, that is 'apt and helpful to poetic conception' (p. 15). In contrast, Vickers' detailed analysis draws upon the traditions of structuralist and feminist criticism. Her interest is directed towards 'those occasions in which men praise beautiful women among men' and she identifies heraldry as one of 'the rhetorical strategies' that 'such occasions generate.'[54] Her arguments will be considered in detail in chapter six.

Alexander Calder has marshalled examples of heraldry in the *Henry VI* plays in order to demonstrate Shakespeare's use of 'dramatic language', which Calder defines as language that is formed of a 'combination of verbal and non-verbal ingredients'. His concern is to 'reconcile academic assessment and theatrical experience' and he argues that heraldry, as both a verbal and a visual language, is a vital element in Shakespeare's dramatic writing.[55] A key moment, Calder argues, occurs in *3 Henry VI*, II. 1., where Edward, Earl of March, later Edward IV, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III, see three suns in the sky, which become one before their eyes. Edward vows to bear, from that moment, three suns as the heraldic charge upon his shield. The

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53. *Complete Shakespeare*, edited by Wells and Taylor, I, 175.

54. Nancy J. Vickers, 'This Heraldry in Lucrece' Face', *Poetics Today*, 6:1-2 (1985), pp. 171-184 (p. 171).

55. A. C. Calder, 'The Dramatic Language of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*: A Stylistic and Theatrical Study' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1989), p. 402 and abstract. Further references to this dissertation are given after quotations in the text.

image, Calder explains, provides a moment of spectacle where key themes of inheritance, identity and power can be visually displayed by the punning allusion to suns/sons (pp. 395-6). The value of Calder's work is to remind the reader that heraldic references have an important visual function, which must not be forgotten in analyses of heraldry in verse.

While the work of the cavalier poet, John Cleveland (1613-58) has not been so comprehensively surveyed for heraldic references as has that of Shakespeare and Jonson, Ruth Berman has established the importance of heraldry to Cleveland. She has concentrated on a particular technical detail of heraldry in order to draw critical attention to four of his poems: 'Upon Sir Thomas Martin, Who subscribed a Warrant thus: We the Knights and Gentlemen of the Committee, &c. when there was no Knight but himself', 'Fuscara; or The Bee Errant', 'The Hetacomb to His Mistresse', and 'The Mixt Assembly.'[56] Berman's brief article is structured around explanations of the two most basic rules of heraldry, which dictate that it is poor practice to place a colour on a colour, or a metal on a metal, on an achievement of arms. She presents the technical and historical development of these principles, with reference to manuals of heraldry, such as Gerard Legh's *The Accedence of Armory* of 1562. Berman considers each poem, explaining in turn the joke against Sir Thomas Martin, the depth of the poet's praise to the ladies in 'Fuscara' and 'Hecatomb' and the simultaneous ridicule and rich evocation of characters in 'The Mixt Assembly.' Its expansion of the possible interpretations of the significance of heraldry in verse is the most interesting aspect of Berman's work. However, she neither offers nor suggests the possibility of a comprehensive analysis of heraldic references in Cleveland's work. That he draws upon heraldry in other poems is evident. In 'To the State of Love, or, The Senses Festival', for example, Cleveland declares of his love: 'I now empale her in mine arms' (1. 28).[57] This is a punning heraldic allusion to his physical embrace and to a husband's marital coat of arms, which impales his wife's arms on the *sinister* (or left, from the bearer's point of view) side. Cleveland's work will be considered again in chapter six.

In European literature, the influence of heraldry has been studied with reference to

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56. Ruth Berman, 'Cleveland's False Heraldry', *Notes and Queries* (December 1978), pp. 510-512.

57. *The Poems of John Cleveland*, edited by Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (Oxford, 1967), p. 48.

France, Russia and Eastern Europe. Hélène Naïs considers 'La Symbolique Héraldique' in the course of her examination of animals in French Renaissance poetry.[58] She observes:

> Les animaux héraldiques les plus importants sont, pour l'étranger, le Lion, le Léopard et l'Aigle, pour la France, le Coq et le Dauphin ... le léopard réservé en principe à l'Angleterre et l'Aigle généralement à l'empire d'Allemagne. Mais le lion figurant dans les armes de beaucoup de pays ... le coq, qui personnifie les Français, demeure relativement rare.
>
> (p. 358)

Whereas Naïs emphasises the function of heraldic animals as symbols of national identity, Yvan Loskoutoff explains the significance of heraldry in representing monarchy. Through an analysis of the heraldic references in the *Fables* of Jean de La Fontaine (1621-95), Loskoutoff argues that, in adopting the genre of the animal fable, La Fontaine could not avoid drawing upon heraldic references, which were commonplace in political and encomiastic poetry in France from the sixteenth-century onwards. They offered the possibility of avoiding the political dangers associated with more precise allusions.[59] In 'Le Lion', for example, Loskoutoff notes that, although the heraldic references are transparent ('l'allusion est transparente'), with the lion designating Louis XIV and the leopard, Charles II of England, the allusions are not specific, and so the fable becomes an allegory of monarchy itself (p. 522). In heraldic blazon, the terms *leopard* and *lion* designate the same creature and Loskoutoff argues, therefore, that La Fontaine is designating the monarchs as 'ennemis mais parents' (p. 524), with similar concerns.[60] At the same time, the vagaries of heraldic logic allow the poet to maintain the supremacy of the French monarchy, since, according to that code, the leopard is considered to be the bastard of the lion and the panther (p. 524).

While Loskoutoff's essay analyses one manifestation of the great importance of heraldic reference as a political and artistic tool for writers in seventeenth-century France,

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58. Hélène Naïs, *Les Animaux dans la poésie française de la Renaissance: Science, Symbolique, Poésie* (Paris, 1961), pp. 355-66. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

59. Yvan Loskoutoff, 'L'écureuil, le serpent et le léopard: présence de l'héraldique dans les *Fables* de La Fontaine' *XVIIe Siècle* 184 (1994), pp. 503-28 (p. 503). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text.

60. The term *leopard* merely indicates that the beast is walking, with its face turned outwards i.e. *passant guardant*. The English lions may thus be referred to as 'the leopards of England' (Brooke-Little, *Heraldic Alphabet*, pp. 131-2).

Alison Saunders has examined the importance of heraldic sources for the sixteenth-century French genre, the *blason poétique*. Her analysis offers important observations on the transition between a *blason* which was a 'purely heraldic sense of description' and that which had moved towards a more creative use of heraldry in poetry, involving imagined or mythical shields and poetic interpretation.[61] In particular, Saunders traces the development of colour symbolism in sixteenth-century poetry from earlier, fifteenth-century heraldic treatises. She also discusses the significance to the later poems of their origins in heraldic treatises, which combined an illustration of a coat of arms with a text that praised the bearer of the arms in question. Her observation that 'illustration and poem are both mutually explanatory, and essential the one to the other' (p. 34) is informative for this study, in which a number of seventeenth-century examples of poems illustrated by an accompanying shield or coat of arms will be discussed.

Nils Åke Nilsson has explored the nature of 'heraldic virši' in Russia in the seventeenth century. His account is also interested in heraldic verse from Bohemia and Poland. Nilsson examines dedicatory verses, that were placed beneath woodcuts of coats of arms at the beginning of printed books, and defines them as a type of panegyric poetry. His research dates the first appearance of the 'virši' to the end of the sixteenth century, and establishes that the form continued into the early eighteenth century, with a notable transition in the second half of the seventeenth century, when dedications first appeared to the Russian Tsar rather than to private individuals.[62] Nilsson discusses the nature of the heraldic verses in general terms. He considers, for example, the propaganda value of those verses written to flatter the Tsar, in the hope that his approval would ensure the printing of more copies of the book in question. More importantly, in Nilsson's view, the Russian coat of arms was 'a kind of symbol for the orthodox faith and for national culture' and the verses which accompanied it, in print, expressed patriotic sentiments, designed to prove that Russia 'was now a cultured country' (p. 12). He also identifies that in the seventeenth century a moralising element entered the heraldic verse produced

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61. Alison Saunders, *The Sixteenth-Century Blason Poétique* (Bern, Frankfurt am Main, Las Vegas, 1981), p. 27. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text. See also: R. L. Donald, '"Rhetoricall Courtings": The Blazon in Elizabethan and Stuart Poetry, its Conventional Patterns and Contexts' (University of Texas at Austin, PhD thesis, 1974).

62. Nils Åke Nilsson, *Russian Heraldic Virši from the 17th Century: A Manuscript in the Diocesan and County Library at Västerås, Sweden* (Stockholm, Göteborg and Uppsala, n.d.), pp. 8-10. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

in Poland. The arms, he writes, 'could serve as models for the young generation' and represented 'the merits of the family' (pp. 22-4). Although Nilsson aims primarily to describe the significance of the heraldic verse contained within one particular manuscript, his work provides a valuable discussion of heraldic poetry in Europe, and includes examples of verse which, with the French poetry discussed above, provide an important context for reading heraldic verse in seventeenth-century England. It is evident that a consideration of heraldry in English verse must take account of heraldry as a mode through which questions of monarchical power, national identity, culture, faith and morality could be articulated.

Moving beyond the seventeenth century as a subject for twentieth-century critics, a number of scholars have sought to identify all those writers for whom heraldry has been important. Michael O'Shea identifies a 'first string' of such writers, including James Joyce, whose work is O'Shea's first concern. These are: 'Dante, Chaucer, Malory, Spenser, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Jonson, Defoe, Sterne, Thackeray, Keats, Coleridge, Disraeli, Scott, Dickens, Ruskin, Tennyson' (p. 26). Michel Pastoureau likewise selects Malory, Shakespeare and Scott, but also includes Thomas Nashe in his selection of examples of heraldry in British literature.[63] A brief article, by Hermann Real and Heinz Vienken, considers the importance of Guillim's *A Display of Heraldry* as a source for heraldic references in the work of Jonathan Swift.[64] In the mid-nineteenth century, Ellen Millington peppered her rather antiquarian *Heraldry in History, Poetry, and Romance* with references drawn from Dante, Chaucer, Spenser and Scott.[65] She also identified heraldic references in the poetry of John Lydgate.[66] There is, however, no single work which seeks to provide a comprehensive account of the use of heraldic references in English literature as a whole. Even those which try briefly to survey the

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63. Michel Pastoureau, *Heraldry: Its Origins and Meaning* (London, 1997), pp. 106-8.

64. Hermann J. Real and Heinz J. Vienken, 'Swift and "The Herald"', *American Notes and Queries*, New Series 1:1 (1988), pp. 14-16.

65. Again in the antiquarian style, is a chapter entitled 'The Influence of Heraldry Upon Poetry and Literature - Scott', by Gale Pedrick, in *A Manual of Heraldry* (London, n. d.), pp. 265-83. This consists largely of quotations from those of Scott's works that include heraldic references, but there is little critical analysis.

66. Ellen Millington, *Heraldry in History, Poetry, and Romance* (London, 1858). The index to this work does not include references to the writers discussed in the text: for Dante see p. 7; Lydgate, pp. 37-8; Chaucer, pp. 42, 46 and 231; Spenser, pp. 76 and 297; Scott, pp. 8 and 51.

use of such reference, miss such obvious examples as the 'poetic drama' by Robert Browning entitled 'A Blot in the 'Scutcheon'.[67]

While the present work discusses seventeenth-century literature, it is important to acknowledge the significant criticism which has been published with reference to the heraldry in literature of other periods. There is considerable scholarship concerned with heraldry in Arthurian literature, for example.[68] Detailed criticism has also appeared of heraldic references in the works of Spenser, Tennyson, Sterne and Joyce. The conclusions of those critics concerned with these four writers identify some of the issues which the present work will also address, and also begin to define some general principles for reading heraldic references in literature. They will therefore be considered here. It should be noted that while the work of Alexander Pope is not mentioned in any general list of poets whose work includes heraldic references, Pat Rogers has published an important consideration of the language of heraldry in Pope's *Windsor Forest*. He argues that the poem should be read as a Jacobite poem, that encourages, through heraldic references, readers to associate Windsor with the Stuart cause. Rogers' analysis will be discussed at greater length in chapter four of this study.

Michael Leslie offers the most comprehensive reading of heraldic references in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, within the context of a thorough examination of martial and chivalric symbolism in the work. Leslie examines, for example, the significance of the many heraldic references to Elizabeth I and her court, such as Sir Arthegall's bearing a greyhound, a Tudor supporter, as his crest.[69] He argues that an appreciation of Elizabethan politics, and especially the rôle of the monarch in dispensing justice, is gained through Spenser's association of Tudor heraldry with heraldic descriptions of the court of Mercilla (pp. 63-8). Leslie notes that 'the heraldic shields ... mainly employ

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67. Robert Browning, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, and other poetic dramas (1843-1850)* introduced by Frank Rinder (London, n.d.), pp. 62-109.

68. See, in particular, Gerard J. Brault, *Early Blazon: heraldic terminology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with special reference to Arthurian literature* (Oxford, 1972); Michel Pastoureau, *Armorial des Chevaliers de la Table Ronde* (Paris, 1983) and E. H. Ruck, *An Index of Themes and Motifs in 12th-Century French Arthurian Poetry* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 136-8.

69. Michael Leslie, *Spenser's 'Fierce Warres and Faithfull Loves': Martial and Chivalric Symbolism in 'The Faerie Queene'* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 63. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

medieval chivalric symbolism' and that, through them, Spenser 'develops and expounds his moral and political themes' (p. 63). For example, the importance of chastity is conveyed symbolically by the use of ermine on Arthegall's shield (p. 28). According to Richard McCoy, Leslie's understanding of chivalric symbolism is misguided, and he misinterprets the more 'ambiguous' nature of the allegory.[70] Nevertheless, in Leslie's examination of heraldic references in *The Faerie Queene*, six critical approaches to the heraldic material in the text are established which are of value to this study.

Leslie's work demonstrates that reading heraldic references depends upon an understanding of the historical and literary development of heraldry, as well as appreciating the significance of myth, legend, Christian iconography and contemporary politics. The first of these points may be illustrated with reference to Leslie's conclusions regarding the plain shield carried by Prince Arthur. This is of a simple type that, in contrast to the complex quarterings of later shields, should be understood to imply 'honour and antiquity ... unblemished chivalry and national success' (p.15). Leslie then emphasises the importance of literary sources in understanding the significance of Arthur's shield, in particular drawing attention to Atlante's shield, in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, as a source reference (p. 15). He also notes Spenser's reliance on the mythological significance of Minerva's shield (pp. 19-20) and of Perseus' shield, with which Perseus overwhelmed the Gorgon (p. 21-2). Leslie then draws on the legends of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, considering the importance of the shields reputedly borne by King Arthur and Sir Galahad (p. 24). The significance of Christian iconography, in particular the importance of the 'red cross as the heraldic device of Christ' (p. 129), is critical to his interpretation of the text as an exploration of the Red Cross Knight's actions and his 'struggle to remain faithful' (pp.127-31 (p. 130)).

The importance of heraldry to Spenser as 'a method of characterization' has also been considered by Ruth Berman.[71] She does not develop conclusions regarding character,

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70. Richard C. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1989), p. 143.

71. Ruth Berman, 'Blazonings in *The Faerie Queene*', *Cahiers Elisabéthains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1983), pp. 1-14 (p. 4). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text. See also Paul C. Franke, 'The Heraldry of *The Faerie Queene*', *The Coat of Arms*, N.S. 4 (1980), p. 322.

however, but rather attempts to use heraldry to establish a true chronology for the composition of the six published books of *The Faerie Queene*. Berman demonstrates that Books Three and Four are the earliest because they employ conventional heraldic references, using the most technical terms of blazon, whereas Books One and Two contain unconventional, emblematic descriptions of shields. According to Berman, this proves that Spenser had moved on from the 'limiting' conventions of the earliest books and was experimenting with, and developing, the heraldic trope in Books One and Two (p. 1). In her view, the lack of heraldry in Books Five and Six indicate that, by that final stage of composition, Spenser had 'lost interest' in the form (p. 3). While an argument that relies on the intuitive deduction of Spenser's motivation cannot be considered rigorous, Berman's work draws a helpful distinction between conventional and more experimental heraldic references.

Heraldic references with 'symbolic values' that 'related to character, theme and plot' concern Michael O'Shea in his consideration of heraldry in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.[72] O'Shea approaches heraldry as a unifying element within the work, and draws a useful distinction between those heraldic references with metaphorical significance and those which are simply functional. O'Shea highlights Tennyson's use of colour in descriptions of female beauty, and the importance of descriptions of shields; he emphasises their dual purpose, as a means of defending their bearer and identifying their chivalric status. That heraldic references establish identity is an issue which O'Shea addresses at length. They can also signify a 'loss of self' (p. 400), if an armigerous person cannot be identified by their coat of arms. This approach to heraldry, as an arbiter of identity, will inform much of the criticism in later chapters of this study.

In another article, O'Shea considers the importance of heraldry to Laurence Sterne. Again, he emphasises two aspects of heraldic reference which will be useful to this analysis of seventeenth-century imagery. First, O'Shea describes the allusions in *A Sentimental Journey* that are made to elements of Sterne's own coat of arms, which direct the reader towards considering the significance of the 'author's identity' in the

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72. Michael J. O'Shea, 'Armorial Bearings in *Idylls of the King' Victorian Poetry*, 21 (1983), pp. 393-402 (p. 395). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text.

work.[73] The ability of the heraldic trope to carry self-reflexive authorial references will be the subject of particular discussion in chapter two. Turning to *Tristram Shandy*, O'Shea emphasises the hereditary nature of heraldry, and the fact that since 'Sterne left no male heir, allusions to thwarted primogeniture in his works seem pertinent' (p. 64). This second quality of heraldry, of implying principles of patrilineal inheritance, will inform much of the argument of chapter six, which addresses the use of heraldry by, and with reference to, women.

Michael O'Shea's most comprehensive contribution to the study of heraldry in literature concerns the work of James Joyce. Ruth von Phul has also offered a limited reading of heraldry in *Ulysses*, suggesting that Joyce 'indicted' Stephen Dedalus as a 'pedantic romantic' by casting some of his thoughts in heraldic language.[74] O'Shea however, moves beyond specific textual criticism to derive more general critical approaches to reading heraldry in literature. He discusses heraldry's visual, aesthetic and thematic importance (p. 81), its political significance, given its ability to raise questions of 'paternal, tribal, and national affiliations' (p. 85) and its rôle at the point of death, when its display serves 'to legitimize the stature of the deceased' (p. 89). O'Shea establishes, too, the importance of intertextuality as a method of reading heraldic references, since 'a single reference to an heraldic charge, tincture, or motto, invokes other heraldic achievements (historical and literary) which feature the same devices' (p. 65). O'Shea comments, of *Finnegans Wake*, that 'Human history ... like the Wake as a whole, is a tapestry woven of the emblems and colors of invaders and conquered, heirs and disinherited. Heraldry is an essential code for reading the pattern' (p. 121). While it has become a commonplace among writers on heraldry to refer to heraldry as 'the shorthand of history', O'Shea's observation of heraldry's ability to encapsulate the relationships between people, and the exchanges of power and allegiance among them, provides a foundation for the present work.

Northrop Frye has written that: 'It is not often realized that all commentary is

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73. Michael J. O'Shea, 'Laurence Sterne's Display of Heraldry', *The Shandean*, 3 (1991), pp. 61-9 (p. 62). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text.

74. Ruth von Phul, 'The Boast of Heraldry in the "Proteus" Episode of *Ulysses*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3 (March 1971), pp. 399-405 (p. 404).

allegorical interpretation, an attaching of ideas to the structure of poetic imagery'.[75] Through its analysis of significant works of criticism concerned with heraldry in literature, this chapter has isolated a number of 'ideas' which may be 'attach[ed]' to heraldry, such as ideas of chivalry, character, identity, self-legitimation, morality, loyalty, patriotism, Christianity, faith, power, female subjection, social and political commentary or subversion. The nature of the particular heraldic 'structure of poetic imagery', and the way in which such 'ideas' are attached to it, will now be examined.

The way in which heraldry communicates meaning has been studied by semioticians. As the introduction to this study has explained, heraldry assumes two forms, visual and written. Each visual element in a coat of arms has a corresponding linguistic element in the blazon. A herald, in drafting a coat of arms, will draw upon existing heraldic elements and perhaps design new ones, so adding new terms to the blazon. They will order all the elements, visually in the coat of arms, and syntactically in the blazon, according to prescribed rules. Brian Ragen has analysed this process in linguistic terms and has concluded that 'The visual versions of a coat become syntagmatic expressions that must follow the paradigms of blazon'.[76] Ragen's view that the visual form of heraldry is subject to the written form, and that the image must be 'judged and defined' (p. 6) by the text, seems, however, to be a distortion of the creative process, outlined above, and which still exists today. The subject of this study is the interpretation of written heraldic signs, but there is no intention to imply that the written form is superior; the visual importance of heraldry is not forgotten in this analysis and, in some instances, the written signs are translated into pictorial form.

Georges Mounin, in 1970, warned against too easy an assumption that the linguistic theories of Saussure would illuminate heraldry:

> on est d'abord tenté d'identifier dans le blason des unités qui seraient des symboles au sens saussurien du terme: tout ce que l'heraldique appelle les «figures»: humaines, animales, végétales, les astres, les tours, les

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75. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 89. Frye himself theorises heraldry (p. 92). His comments, however, refer to all emblematic symbols and not to armory alone, and do not, therefore, form a detailed part of this discussion.

76. Brain Abel Ragen, 'Semiotics and heraldry' in *Semiotica*, 100:1 (1994), pp. 5-34 (p. 6). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text.

clefs, les vêtements, les armes, etc. ... ces figures ne fonctionnent pourtant pas sémiologiquement comme des symboles. [Ils ont] des valeurs psychologiques ou morales, symboliques au sens littéraire du terme (gloire? courage?, etc.), et surtout ne formant pas un système stable et lisible de manière univoque.[77]

To use one of Mounin's examples, the temptation to regard the depiction of a lion on a shield, or the word 'lion' in a blazon, as signifiers of the lion, an animal with a biological existence alone, must be avoided, because it distorts the heraldic meaning of the shield or blazon, which in facts communicates equivocal, abstract ideas through the image of the lion, such as courage. In the seventeenth century, Edmund Bolton made a similar point. He sought to demonstrate that 'Blazon [was] the least, and meanest part of Armorie' (p. 84) because '*Blazon* ... comprehends but the description of the mechanicall parts' (p. 92).

For this reason, the semiotic theories of C. S. Pierce are more suited to the study of heraldry. O'Shea notes that shields can be interpreted as carrying 'what C. S. Pierce would call a "symbolic" sign', while others bear '"iconic" charges that literally depict ... the ... action' (p. 4). Pierce's distinction between the symbolic and the iconic sign is important for understanding the way in which heraldic signs communicate meaning. The symbolic sign has a conventional, rather than a natural, connection with its referent. Therefore, all the words of the blazon function as symbolic signs, accruing meaning from conventions that began to be established in the twelfth century and were regulated by the heralds. However, it is the visual aspect of heraldry to which O'Shea refers, and here the function of different heraldic elements must, as O'Shea infers, be divided between the iconic and the symbolic. At a fundamental level, the referent of the heraldic sign must be regarded as being the bearer of the coat of arms. There are many heraldic elements, however, which are simply symbolic signs, that in no way resemble their referent. These include, for example, most of the marks of *difference*, which are small signs, placed on the shield in order to distinguish between the sons of the same family, so that none bear exactly the same coat of arms as their father or each other. A *crescent*, for instance, refers to the second son, a *mullet*, or star, identifies the third son, the fourth son bears a *martlet*, the fifth, an *annulet*, or ring, and the sixth, a *fleur-de-lis*.

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77. Georges Mounin, 'Sémiologie et Linguistique: L'Exemple du Blason', *La Linguistique*, 6 (1970), pp. 5-16 (p. 12).

These associations were simply conventional, and were recorded in heraldry manuals such as Guillim's *A Display of Heraldry* (p. 454).

The mark of difference for the eldest son, on the other hand, may be considered an iconic sign. It is a *label*, which is a horizontal band, with three short vertical pieces, (also referred to as labels), that stretches across the shield. According to Guillim, 'one of the Labels betokeneth his Father, the other his Mother, and the middlemost signifieth himself' (p. 451). The fact that Guillim relies on the correspondence between each label and a family member to define the mark, must identify the label as an iconic symbol. Other heraldic elements may likewise be read as iconic signs. The colours, for instance, where gold is used to stand for the sun, or black for darkness, as Bartolo da Sassoferrato intended, are obvious examples of signs which stand for their object by resembling one of its features.[78] Some charges and crests are iconic, because they bear a natural connection with their referent. For example, the coat of arms of the Armstrong family includes, as its principle charge, three right arms, encased in silver armour. According to Guillim, the *pale* (a broad band, formed of two parallel lines, that run vertically down the central third of the shield) must also be read as an iconic sign since, in O'Shea's terms, it 'literally depicts' an action with which the bearer is identified. *A Display of Heraldry* records their use and significance when granted to a soldier as an armorial bearing: 'Soldiers of old carried Pales of Wood to encamp them, which they fix'd in the Earth ... they are bestowed on him who empaled a City for its Defence' (p. 32).

The referent of a sign may also be a more abstract idea, such as power. In most cases of heraldry this would be communicated symbolically, but the following example demonstrates that a coat of arms can also function as an iconic sign of power. The shield of the Duke of Dordrecht is recorded by Henry Peacham:

> The Duke of *Dort* or *Dordrecht* in *Holland*, for a civill broile that long
> since occasioned much slaughter, stayning the streets (being onely two
> above a mile in length, the River running in betweene) with blood, bare
> in a field *gules* a pale *argent*.   (p. 20)

Thus the record of the Duke's suppression of civil unrest is fixed in the heraldic record, with the river and the bloody roads depicted iconically by dividing the shield into two

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78. *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's 'Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms'*, p. 153.

red bands separated by a central, silver one.

The structure of heraldry is determined by the inter-relationship between the various heraldic elements or signs. They are combined together according to rules and conventions that are both explicit and implicit. Those which are explicit are regulated by the heraldry manuals, which explain both a formal method of combining the signs and the message which is thereby to be communicated. Evidence that the seventeenth-century reader valued the heraldry manual for its ability to imbue all the elements of heraldry with meaning is provided in a manuscript verse praising Guillim's work. The writer, Anthony Gybson, welcomes the manual for providing a method for the study of heraldry that will illuminate and give life to 'every parte' of heraldry:

> ... ARMES.
> Of which the severall Blazonnes, Rankes, & Rites
> Now first explan'd by theire dewe shades & lights
> In perfect METHODE wrought, with praecepts, Lawes
> Examples & distinctions, for eache cause,
> GWILLIM'S elaborate hande, hath with such spright,
> Inform'd as every parte hath life & Light. (ll. 4-10)[79]

The formal conventions, or codes which comprised this 'perfect METHODE' are evident, for example, in the composition of heraldic signs which indicate marriage, honour, rank and genealogy. Marriage is signified by the combination of two coats of arms. A particular honour is communicated by an *augmentation*, which is a charge that is added to those already present on the shield, or else is shown by the suspension of a badge of office, on a ribbon, below the shield. Particular heraldic elements are granted to the armigerous depending on their rank; supporters are only granted to peers and to certain knights, for example, and different forms of helmet differentiate between others. Genealogical descent is indicated by the combination of arms by *quartering*, whereby the arms of previous generations are organised together on the shield; most usually the shield is divided into four quarters, but many more *quarterings* are possible.

It is also vital to understand the implicit conventions, or codes, which govern the communication of meaning through heraldry. In 'Semiotics and heraldry', Brian Ragen offers, without extensive textual analysis, two ways of reading heraldic signs. He

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79. BL Additional MS 26,680 f. 6b. The verse is untitled in the manuscript.

suggests first that, 'Aside from claims to sovereignty or position, and personal rank or honors, all that can be encoded within the heraldic system itself are propositions about relationship and descent' (p. 17). This corresponds to the explicit meanings of heraldry discussed above. Later in the article, Ragen argues that heraldry 'even more clearly than most sign-systems ... encodes an ideology of gender ... an ideology of class' and he comments that, 'As might be expected from a sign-system based on patrilineal inheritance, all the assumptions of patriarchy are encoded in heraldry' (pp. 26-7). It is the nature of this implicit code that the present study will confront. Heraldry, for example, encodes patriarchy through conventions which suggest that certain points of the shield are more or less honourable, and then ruling that female arms are accorded the lesser position. On a marital coat of arms, for example, the wife's arms occupy the left-hand side, from the bearer's point of view.[80] Heraldry encodes ideologies of class most obviously by excluding the majority from possession of a coat of arms, thereby denying them the possibility of honourable reference. Such implicit heraldic codes will be explained in greater detail in the following chapters. Ragan suggests that, 'like all sign-systems, the heraldic system itself is liable to disruption' (p. 25). This study will examine how far this disruption occurred in seventeenth-century writing, asking whether these codes were explicitly challenged and exploring how heraldic signs were reappropriated by writers to convey new meanings, that could be both socially and politically subversive.

Once the nature of the heraldic sign system is understood, the reader must address the question of how best to read heraldic signs in literature, so that their meaning is communicated most effectively. J.G.A. Pocock asserts that the recognition of the use of a particular language 'obliges the scholar to ask what languages people in the past really spoke, and what forms of thought they considered important'.[81] In order to fulfil this obligation, the present work aims to consider as broad a spectrum of seventeenth-century voices as possible. Therefore, much of the verse discussed in this and subsequent chapters is drawn from the work of less well-known poets. The importance

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80. The pre-eminence of the right-hand side is noted by Bartolo in his *Tract*: 'the right side. For that side is nobler and is the source of motion' (*A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's 'Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms'*, p. 154).

81. Pocock, 'Texts as Events', p. 27.

of such an emphasis is defended by Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, who maintain that:

> Only when we appreciate the commonplace idioms and contemporary associations of language, the ethical and political values and taboos enshrined in words can we understand just how the great texts address, question, and then reshape all future considerations, even all future discourse on an issue.[82]

In this light, the minor works gain a particular significance. They teach the reader the many ways in which the language of heraldry could be used in poetry, and offer a context for assessment of the rather 'greater texts'.

In France, the scholarship of Michel Pastoureau has highlighted the general importance of heraldic studies. In 1976, he argued for the recognition of heraldry as 'une science auxiliaire de l'histoire, ... une discipline nouvelle', which offered cultural historians and medieval archaeologists unique social and political insights into their particular fields of research. Heraldry reflected 'les aspirations, la morale, l'humour et la culture de ceux qui en ont fait usage.'[83] This study maintains that the study of heraldry is as helpful to literary studies as to history and archaeology. The fact that heraldry reflects the culture which nurtured its development points to the possible insight that is offered into both the literary works and the society within which it was articulated.

This study has, therefore, a two-fold purpose: to understand more clearly the function of heraldry in the seventeenth century, and to recover underlying meanings in verse and poetry containing heraldic references that have previously been overlooked or misunderstood. Clearly, a contextual reading of heraldic references is vital, although this is not to deny the timeless, creative value of the most effective heraldic references. In reading seventeenth-century literature, Pastoureau also notes the 'complications and unnecessary details' which were added by scholars of the period.[84] He suggests that they created a literature characterised by escapism ('une littérature d'évasion') rather

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82. Sharpe and Zwicker, *Politics of Discourse,* p. 20.

83. Michel Pastoureau, *Les Armoiries* (Turnhout, Belgium, 1976), pp. 66-81 (p. 81).

84. Pastoureau, *Heraldry: Its Origins and Meaning,* p. 89.

than by didactic or theoretical concerns.[85] The following chapters will suggest that, in England, writers did not always use heraldry as an escape, but as a way of engaging with pressing social and political issues.

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85. Pastoureau, *Traité d'héraldique* (Paris, 1979), p. 74.

Chapter Two: Individual Identity, Inheritance and Family Histories

> How great the Estimation and Dignity of Arms ever hath been, and yet
> is, we may easily conceive by this, ... they do occasion their Spectators to
> make serious Inquisition, whose they are, who is the Owner of the House
> wherein they are set up, of what Family their Bearer is descended, and
> who were his next, and who his remote Parents and Ancestors.
>
> (John Guillim, *A Display of Heraldry*, p. 17)

A coat of arms, according to Guillim in 1611, raised questions of identity, property and personal history. They commanded the 'serious' attention of their viewers. References to heraldry in literature should be regarded no less seriously. It will be argued in this chapter that heraldic references in seventeenth-century verse were used deliberately to mark formal occasions in family histories: the births, marriages and deaths of individuals. Consideration will also be given to verse which seeks to establish, through heraldry, a particular personal or social identity for their subject.

The range of genres from which examples of verse will be drawn for the purposes of this discussion reflects the numerous verse forms that record or celebrate public identities. Heraldic references are to be expected in dedicatory verses and encomia, which are often addressed to armigerous patrons. Those forms which depend on the naming of their subject also provide an obvious context for heraldic references, therefore epitaphs and elegies, that present a last, formal reflection of an armiger's life, will be examined. Similarly, epithalamia, which celebrate marital bonds and the union of families, will be included in this discussion, as will anagrams, which derive their inspiration and significance from their subject's name.

The nature of heraldry, as established by the heraldry manuals, determines that references should be read according to formal, social conventions. These dictated that heraldic references should confirm the honourable nature of an individual, the significance of their lineage, their inheritance and ownership of land and property. They might commemorate, for example, a particularly courageous deed, that had come to represent the valiant nature of the family. Above all, reading an heraldic reference should establish the privileged position of the individual, within an hierarchical society, in a universe ordained by God. However, it will be argued in this study that heraldic references in verse may also carry unexpected inferences. This chapter will examine

the conventional use of heraldic references and indicate the subversion of traditional readings which is possible through heraldic reference; that marriage might imply rape is, for example, suggested in a poem by Thomas Carew. Within encomiastic verse, the adoption of self-reflexive heraldic references by poets anxious to identify their own social and creative claims, while purporting to address or celebrate someone else, is given particular attention.

This analysis is concerned initially with verse occasioned by birth, marriage or death. These are the three social rites of passage that traditionally incorporate a significant heraldic element, establishing or redefining the coat of arms of the individual or family concerned. Armorial bearings are inherited at birth, with marriage, these alter to incorporate the arms of the spouse, and at death, the arms are finally displayed, with whatever augmentations, alterations or distinctions the individual might have attained during their lifetime. Poetry conceived within this social framework offers the most straightforward insight into the use of heraldic references in the period.

When they are born, the sons and daughters of the armigerous inherit the right to bear the coat of arms of their family. The late sixteenth-century heraldry manual, *The Blazon of Gentrie*, by John Ferne, records the principles of armorial inheritance:

> sonnes shall euery one of them (the eldest only except) beare his coate differenced ... to the intent that the degrees of the fathers [sic] line or kinred [sic] might be preserued safe, and without confusion.   (p. 172)

The marks of *difference* which appeared on the shield to distinguish between sons have been listed in the previous chapter. In contrast, Ferne records the position for daughters, who are:

> permitted to beare the Armes of their Father, that is to say, whilest they be vnmarried, to place them on their lozenge scutcheon ... and they may beare their coate plaine, euen as their elder brother, after his fathers [sic] death doth beare it, without any difference [.]
>
> (p. 172)

Thus, sons inherited a sign which was unique to themselves, whilst a daughter was in no way distinguished, in symbolic terms, from her sisters. She therefore had no separate heraldic identity. The ramifications of this will be discussed in chapter six.

The use of heraldry to identify a newborn child is most obvious when the child involved was the heir to the throne. The rose and the lily, of England and France respectively, were used as badges by the House of Stuart (see figure 2). Ben Jonson, in 'An Epigram on the Prince's Birth: 1630', duly recognised the birth of Charles, on the twenty-ninth of May, to Henrietta Maria and Charles I, with references to both roses and lilies. The reference to the lily pays a particular compliment to the French queen:

> And art thou born, brave babe? Blessed be thy birth!
> That so hath crowned our hopes, our spring, and earth,
> The bed of the chaste lily, and the rose! (ll. 1-3)[86]

The royal arms continued to provide a vocabulary for congratulation throughout the century. The following example demonstrates that heraldry could be appropriated to articulate support for Roman Catholic, as well as Anglican, monarchs. Edmund Arwaker (c. 1655-1730) addressed *A Poem Humbly Dedicated to the Queen, On the Occasion of Her Majesty's Happy Conception* to Mary of Modena, the second wife of James II, which praises 'The Glory of the Ancient House of Este./ Bright Mariana' (ll. 135-6). James had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1671 and Arwaker portrays the English lion defending the throne:

> ... Lion roar'd aloud,
> And frighten'd and dispers'd the impious Crowd.
> But now with Joy he seems transported more,
> More Rampant grows,
> To see their vain Designs or'e-thrown,
> Who did your Right, and Heav'ns Decree oppose,
> By this addition to the Royal store,
> This third Supporter of the Crown,
> That gives a triple Prop to the Succession. (ll. 83-91)[87]

The heraldic lion invoked here is specifically the dexter supporter of the Royal arms, the *lion rampant guardant crowned or*. Queen Mary's child, James Francis Edward Stuart, born on the tenth of June 1688, provided a 'third Supporter of the Crown' (l. 90), since he was believed to have secured the prospect for Catholic rule in England after James's death. The heraldic distinction is vital here in its appropriation of the English

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86. *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, edited by George Parfitt (London, 1988), p. 207. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

87. Edmund Arwaker, *A Poem Humbly Dedicated to the Queen, On the Occasion of Her Majesty's Happy Conception* (London, 1688), pp. 4-7.
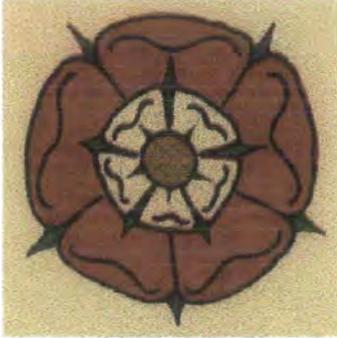
Figure 2

Tudor Rose
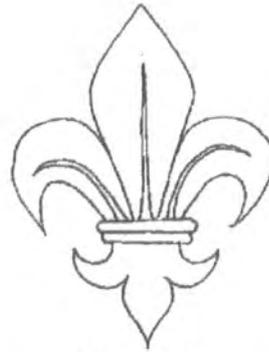
Fleur-de-lis

Figure 3

[Husband | Wife]
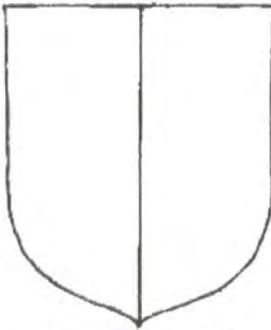
Impaled Shield
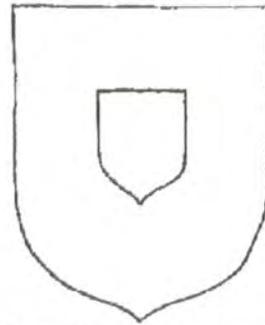
Escutcheon of Pretence

Figure 4

Figure 5

FSL MS X. d. 484, f. 14

Canton

lion as a metaphor for Catholic concerns. The lion, as a supporter of the Catholic crown, is made to represent a true, Catholic nation, which stands against an 'impious Crowd' (l. 84), in defence of both James's right to rule and the will of God (l. 88). The fact that the armorial bearings of James II were exactly the same as those of his brother, father and grandfather, demonstrates an important characteristic of heraldic representation. An heraldic sign, although expressed in the fixed vocabulary of blazon, could acquire a symbolic significance, with the ability to designate otherwise opposing parties. While the nature of any heraldic sign is to recognise honour and to validate patrilineal inheritance, the character of the bearer or the concerns of the readers of the sign may give it additional significance. In consequence, the sign might even, as here, change its religious or political associations entirely.

These examples have illustrated the most straightforward use of heraldry in verse, where direct references were made to the badge, or to the principal charge, or to the supporters, of a family's arms. Metaphors were also derived from other heraldic elements, such as mottoes. These were readily associated with a particular family, in spite of the fact that 'no mottoes are necessarily hereditary'.[88] C. N. Elvin has identified four classes of mottoes: those which do not refer to the family's name or armorial bearing, but which have 'a religious, ... loyal, ... patriotic ... [or] enigmatical' nature; those 'which have a direct reference to the bearings'; those 'which make a punning reference to the name' and those which refer 'both to the name and bearing' (pp. viii-ix).

The motto of Fane, the Earls of Westmorland, is *Ne vile fano*, which is translated by Elvin as 'bring nothing base to the temple' (p. 125).[89] It will be argued here that this motto provided the inspiration for 'A Dedication of My First Son', by Mildmay Fane (1600-1666). In the verse, Fane celebrates the birth of his son Charles to his first wife, and expresses his wish to dedicate the child to God. He believes that, if he fails to make the offering, 'The Temple would accuse me, where the son/ Of Elk'na first had dedication.' (ll. 31-2).[90] The Biblical reference is to the story of Hannah, wife of

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88. *Elvin's Handbook of Mottoes*, revised by R. Pinches (London, 1987), p. ix. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

89. This motto originally celebrated marriage between the Neville and Fane families. I am grateful to Mr. Graham Beck, formerly Bursar of the College of Arms, for this observation.

90. Mildmay Fane, Second Earl of Westmorland, *Otia Sacra, Optima Fides 1648: a facsimile*

Elkanah, who brought her son Samuel to be dedicated to God at the temple in Shiloh after he was born (I Samuel 1. 24-28). That Fane's reference to the temple is also an heraldic reference to his motto is confirmed by the final stanza, where, in addition to asking God's blessing on his son, Fane wishes: 'That in the progress of his years,/ He may express Whose badge he wears.' (ll. 39-40). With this conclusion, the reader's attention is drawn back to the family's heraldic identity, which was introduced with the Temple reference. This in turn reflects the idea of 'Dedication', which gives the poem its title, and is its guiding principle. The implication for the reader who has recognised these heraldic signs is an acknowledgment of the family's honourable history and genealogy, which the birth of a son would hope to secure for the future.

The next significant rite of passage to have an effect on a family's coat of arms was marriage, when the coats of each of the families concerned would usually be *impaled*, that is, placed side by side on a new shield divided vertically down the centre. However, if the bride was an heraldic heiress, then her arms would be placed on a small shield, known as an *escutcheon of pretence*, in the centre of her husband's arms (see figure 3). The following work, by Francis Lenton (fl. 1630-1640), demonstrates the use of blazon in epithalamia. Lenton incorporates the blazon into his complementary work of 1649, 'The Muses Oblation presented In a Memoriall of Love & Hono[r]: expressed In Epithalamigue Odes, Sonnetts Fancys and Devices on the Name, Coate-Armour and happy Nuptialls of the most Honourable &: Heroick William Lewys Esq[r]: And the most Vertuous, Beauteous and Bounteous chaste Virgin M[ris] Margarite Banister: The formall Heire of that antient Family of the Banisters &c'. Lenton's work is recorded in manuscript, with an illustration of the new marital coat of arms, which is reproduced here (see figure 4).[91] Lenton gives poetic form to a standard blazon, in four stanzas of 'The Muses Oblation', entitled, 'Herauldry explaned by Poetry with Fancyes on the same':

> The auntient Name of Banister doth beare,
> Argent on a Crosse flurrey sable, there

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reproduction with an introduction by Donald M. Friedman (Delmar, N. Y., 1975), pp. 32-3. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

91. The armorial bearings of both families are recorded as, for Banester [sic]: *Argent a cross flory sable*; crest, *a peacock proper* and, for Lewis [sic]: *Sable a lion rampant argent*; crest, *a lion sejant argent*. The only discrepancy between these arms and Lenton's verse is in the Lewis crest, which Lenton gives as a lion *rampant*, rather than *sejant*.

proper and plaine which is accounted best,
And Juno's Bird (the Peacock) is theire Crest

Braue Lewys sable beareth, to be seene
The Lyon Rampant Argent sett betweene
Three silver flower de luces of the same,
which shewes that Family of auntient Fame.

The Coat with which He quarters ownes the Name
of William and soe vnited were,
In Loue in Hono^r, Armes Lewys the Best
The Lyon rampant Argent being his Crest.

The Lyon thus with all his Maiesty
Joynes with the Peacock in Rich Brauery,
Of Mynd and Body, And soe both vnite,
In youthfull Flames & Loues most chast Delight. (ll. 1-16)[92]

Lenton records the armorial bearings of both families in order to affirm their nobility and to emphasise that the 'Vertues and highe Meritts' (l. 19) of the bride and groom are 'Innately seated' (l. 20). The virtues which are celebrated are those of an idealised, medieval chivalry. The lives of the bride and groom are to be regarded as having their foundation in an honourable lineage, with past unions formed 'In Loue' (l. 11) between those of similarly honourable estate. Of equal importance is their ancestral heritage, the renowned nature of which is emphasised by Lenton's references to the 'auntient Name' (l. 1) of the Banisters and the 'auntient Fame' (l. 8) of the Lewys family. The chivalric virtue of courage is also praised: the 'Braue' (l. 5) character of Lewys is to be augmented by the 'Rich Brauery' (l. 14) that is demonstrated by the marriage. Even the emphasis on the heraldic crests, and in particular the peacock (l. 14), allows the possibility of further chivalric allusion. Maurice Keen records, for example, the chivalric significance of the medieval peacock oath, which was an 'ancient custom' according to which heralds presented a peacock to members of the nobility 'at a great feast ... to the end that they might swear expedient and binding oaths'.[93] This allusion would have had obvious relevance within an epithalamion occasioned by the exchange of marriage vows. In this poem, the formalities and conventions of the heraldic blazon contribute to the idealised celebration of the marriage. Dated 1649, the poem makes no concession to social and political realities but is subject to the literary inspiration of

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92. The Folger Shakespeare Library (hereafter FSL) MS X. d. 484, f. 14.

93. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 214.

Lenton's 'Royall Muse' (l. 24), Queen Henrietta Maria.[94]

The following anonymous doggerel verse, entitled 'On Miss Holt, and Knox Ward Esq.', is recorded in an eighteenth-century manuscript, entitled *A Collection of verses upon several occasions by several hands, begun March 26th 1732*. It provides a later example of the use of blazon to narrate the nature and progress of a relationship between a herald, who 'deeply was skilled in old Pedigree' (l. 6), and a lady:

> at last having trac'd other Families down,
> He began to have thoughts of encreasing his own.
> A Damsel he chose, not too slow of Belief,
> and fain would be deemed her ~~Party in Ch~~ admirer in Chief;
> He blazon'd his Suit, & the Summ of the Tale,
> Was his Field and her Field join'd party per Pale.
> In different style to tye faster the Noose,
> He next did attack her in soft billetdoux.
> His Argent and Sable now lay'd away quite,
> Plain english he wrote in as plain Black and White
> Against such Atchievements ~~what~~ what Beauty defence
> or who w:d have thought, 'twas but a Pretence!
> His Pain to relieve, and fulfill his Desire,
> The Lady agreed to join Hands with the Squire; (ll. 11-24)
>
> ....
>
> In Law then Confiding she took it upon her
> By justice to mend those foul Breaches of Honour;
> and handled him so, that few would, I warrant
> have been in his Coat on so Sleeveless an Errand.
> Ye Heralds, produce from the time of the Normans
> In all your Records such a base Non Performance;
> or if without Instance the Case is we touch on,
> Let this be set down as a Blot on his Scutcheon (ll. 31-8)[95]

The heraldic metaphors here are straightforward. A girl is seduced by the power of a senior herald's language (an *achievement* (l. 21) is a complete armorial bearing) and fails to recognise the deception involved (*arms of pretension* (l. 22) illustrated a claim to territories that were not actually possessed by the bearer). The herald seeks to become

94. Alison Shell notes that Lenton 'was given the title of Queen's Poet by Henrietta Maria'; see Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 160, and also Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 146-7. Shell considers that 'Much of Lenton's ... work ... suggests a coterie poet attentive to the exemplars chosen by the Queen, whose works would have found a keen audience in the Queen's court even without his official title' (p. 162). I am grateful to Alison Shell for these references.

95. Brotherton Library, Leeds, MS Lt. q. 20, f. 31[r-v].

her primary admirer (a *chief* (1. 14) distinguishes the top third of the shield) and his success is implied with reference to their *fields* (the surface of a shield), having been joined *per pale* (1. 16), as would be the case in an impaled coat of arms associated with marriage. However, in this case, 'Breaches of Honour' (1. 32) are evident, which, in heraldic literature were marked according to convention by an heraldic *abatement*, which was a mark of dishonour or 'blot' (1. 38), that was added to the shield or 'Scutcheon' (1. 38). The reference to 'base Non Performance' (1. 36), for which the lady took the herald to court, would indicate that, in the end, in spite of his 'Desire' (1. 23), the herald proved to be impotent, and she had the marriage annulled on grounds of non-consummation.

Other writers turned rather more seriously to heraldic references in celebration of marriage. 'A Pastoral Epithalamium upon the Happy Marriage of George Lord Ramsay and Lady Jean Maule', by Allan Ramsay (1686-1758), finds heraldry used to record the new property boundaries that were sealed by the marriage. Ramsay evokes the black eagle, which, with outstretched wings, was the principal charge of the armorial bearings of the Earls of Dalhousie:[96]

> Soon may their Royal Bird extend
> His sable Plumes, and Lordships claim,
> Which to His valiant Sires pertain'd (ll. 41-43)[97]

The verse reflects that, as a husband's arms would identify his wife after their marriage, so her lands, or manorial 'Lordships' (1. 42), would also be newly marked. Heraldry, as a claim to ownership and an identifier of property boundaries, was encountered throughout an estate, and most especially at its gates, where the supporters from the family's arms, or a principal charge, might be carved in stone on a gatepost.[98] This

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96. The arms of Ramsay, Earls of Dalhousie, are blazoned: *argent an eagle displayed sable beaked and membered gules*; for the crest, a *unicorn's head couped argent armed and maned or*; for supporters, *two griffins proper*; for the motto, *ora et labora*.

97. *The Poems of Allan Ramsay*, 2 vols (Paisley, 1877), I, 27.

98. Regarding heraldry and property, see Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *Heraldry in National Trust Houses* (London, 2000) and Stephen Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (London, 1997), p. 77. Friar offers the example of the stone fire-baskets at the gates of Montacute House, Somerset, from the Philips' family crest: *a square beacon or filled with fire proper*. He also writes that, 'in the seventeenth century heraldry rarely featured in the buildings of Inigo Jones, Wren or even Vanburgh, who was himself a herald'. Heraldic expression did, however, continue in seventeenth-century estate and country house poetry, which is discussed in my 'Assessment of the Significance of Heraldic Imagery in Country House Poetry of the Seventeenth century', *The Coat of*

public demarcation was commented upon by the speaker of 'A country Notar's morning Hymn to the Gibbet, erected before his Door' by Alexander Pennecuik (d. 1730), who records: 'Seldom we landed Gentlemen forget,/ To place our Coat of Arms at our Gate.' (ll. 13-14).[99]

That a man's relationship with a woman and with his lands could each be perceived within an heraldic framework, is evident in the opening section of Thomas Carew's erotic poem, 'A Rapture', in which seduction is preceded by an attack on 'Honour':

> I Will enjoy thee now my Celia, come
> And flye with me to Loves Elizium:
> The giant, Honour, that keeps cowards out,
> Is but a masquer, ... (ll. 1-4)
> ....
> ... not as we once thought,
> The seed of gods, but a weak model wrought
> By greedy men, that seek to enclose the common,
> And within private arms impale free woman. (ll. 17-20)[100]

With these lines, Carew deconstructs the myths of honourable society. Honour is reduced to 'a weak model' (l. 18), created by 'greedy men' (l. 19) as a means to control land and women. The use of the heraldic term *impale* in line twenty implies the marriage of a woman (since new impaled coats of arms are created upon marriage) and, as 'impale' may also mean 'to fence in', makes reference back to the enclosure of common lands mentioned in the previous line. These two lines invite a number of different readings. They may also represent an attack on those men who use notions of honour to provide a barrier between themselves and those of a lower, 'common' (l. 19) social class, whom their ideas have 'fenced in'. The basic heraldic image also offers a more violent reading. 'To impale' may also be defined as 'to thrust a pointed stake through the body of' (OED). Since the suggestion here, unlike the Cleveland poem discussed in chapter one, is of action taken by 'greedy men' towards 'free woman' (l. 20), Carew also offers the possibility that the marital rights enjoyed by a husband should

Arms, New Series 11 (1996), pp. 222-236.

99. *A Compleat Collection of all the Poems wrote by That Famous and Learned Poet, Alexander Pennecuik* (Edinburgh, n.d.), pp. 30-1. I am grateful to Professor Peter Davidson for his observation that, in Scotland, 'quite modest laird's houses will have their builder's arms over the door.'

100. *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum,* edited by Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford, 1949), pp. 49-53.

be interpreted as rape.

The epithalamion written by Ben Jonson in 1632 contains less equivocal, complimentary, heraldic references. 'Epithalamion: or, a Song Celebrating the Nuptials of that Noble Gentleman, Mr. Hierome Weston, Son, and Heir, of the Lord Weston, Lord High Treasurer of England, with the Lady Frances Stuart, Daughter of Esmé D[uke] of Lennox Deceased, and Sister of the Surviving Duke of the Same Name' (pp. 218-24) celebrated the marriage of the son of Jonson's former patron, Richard Lord Weston. In this poem, Jonson extended heraldic compliments to the queen and to Charles I, who gave the bride away. Again, Jonson compliments the royal couple through references to lilies and roses:

> The choicest virgin-troop of all the land,
> Porting the ensigns of united two (ll. 50-1)
> ....
> See, how with roses and with lilies shine
> (Lilies and roses, flowers of either sex)
> The bright bride's paths, embellished more than thine
> With light of love, this pair doth intertexe!
> Stay, see the virgins sow,
> Where she shall go,
> The emblems of their way. (ll. 57-63)

It is surprising, since the bride's father, Esme, Duke of Lennox, also bore fleurs-de-lis on his shield, and his daughter in turn would have borne this coat until her wedding, that Jonson does not extend a more obvious compliment to her.[101] The only indication that the reference to the lilies might extend to the bride appears as the speaker observes the ground 'where she doth tread,/ As if her airy steps did spring the flowers'(ll. 70-1). However, as the reference must also include roses, which do not appear in the Stuart arms, it would seem that Jonson has only granted an heraldic recognition to the sovereign and his consort in this case. It is also important to note that Edmund Spenser's 'Epithalamion' provided the model for the genre in English, and that Spenser includes a non-heraldic reference to lilies and roses in his work, in which the speaker calls for: 'Another gay girland/ For my fayre love of lillyes and of roses' (ll. 42-3).[102]

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101. Elias Ashmole, *The Institution, Laws and Ceremonies Of the most Noble Order of the Garter* (London, 1672; reprinted, London, 1971), pp. 716-7.

102. *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, edited by Hugh Maclean (New York and London, 1982), pp. 492-503 (p. 493).

Even so, the royal context of Jonson's work would make an heraldic reading of the flower reference inevitable.

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658) ignored altogether the arms of the two families that were joined with the marriage of the poet Charles Cotton to his cousin Isabella Hutchinson in 1656. Lovelace did, however, use an heraldic metaphor in the poem which he wrote on the occasion of their marriage: 'The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret: To the Noblest of our Youth and Best of Friends, Charles Cotton Esquire: Being at Berisford, at his house in Staffordshire: From London: A Poem'. Through heraldry, Lovelace evokes most powerfully his own release from prison, for which he is assumed by his editor to be grateful to Cotton. The speaker reflects on his situation:

> What Fate was mine, when in mine obscure Cave
> (Shut up almost close Prisoner in a Grave)
> Your Beams could reach me through this Vault of Night,
> And Canton the dark Dungeon with Light! (ll. 7-10)[103]

A *canton* (l.10) in heraldry describes a square portion of the shield, smaller than a quarter, which is shown in the upper right or upper left corner of the shield (see figure 5). An *augmentation of arms* (commemorating a particular achievement), is often placed on a canton. With this reference therefore, Lovelace creates an impression of the small square of light that broke into his prison cell upon his release and, since the source of that light is his friend, the reference becomes a compliment. If the light were to be displayed as an augmentation on a canton, it would also represent, as the poem does, a public recognition of Cotton's action.

The rites of passage with which heraldry was most closely involved were those surrounding death. The coffin and its final resting-place drew together heraldic symbols in visual and written forms. For example, the armorial bearings of the dead were depicted on diamond-shaped boards, known as *hatchments*, which were carried in the funeral procession and then hung beside the tomb, while memorial verses were displayed on the coffin. Coats of arms, heraldic inscriptions and epitaphs were commissioned and appeared together on monuments to the dead. Heralds themselves

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103. *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, edited by C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1930), pp. 169-74 and note p. 317.

organised funerals. It is not surprising, therefore, that heraldic references were a significant resource for writers of commemorative verse.

References to family arms in memorial verses can be identified throughout the period. Anthony Wagner's *Heralds of England* contains, for example, a plate illustrating the monumental brass of Robert Longe at Broughton Gifford, Wiltshire. Longe died in 1620. Wagner includes the plate because it depicts a herald resembling the then Garter King of Arms, Sir William Seager. The herald holds a number of shields, as though they were a pack of cards, from which a skeletal figure of Death draws one shield, which depicts the arms of Longe. Here, interest lies in the verse that appears beneath this scene, which uses heraldic imagery, alongside the lottery metaphor, to convey a sense of the arbitrary in the face of death:

> The Life of Mann is a trewe Lottarie,
> Where venterouse Death draws forth lotts short & Longe,
> Yet free from fraude, and partiall flatterie,
> Hee shufl'd Sheilds [sic] of seuerall size among,
> Drewe Longe; and soe drewe longer his short daies,
> Th'auncient of daies beyonde all tune to praise.[104]

Although this work is concerned primarily with verse in English, examples of heraldic memorial verse have also been recorded in Welsh, by the poet William Middleton (c. 1558-1660). Middleton wrote an ode on the death of Catherine, Countess of Pembroke, the daughter of his patron, the Earl of Shrewsbury, which included four stanzas describing the coats of arms painted on her funeral hearse. They incorporated the blazon of eleven different families from which she was descended.[105] In English, Thomas Pestell (1584?-1659?), a royal chaplain, commemorated one Gabriel Armstrong

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104. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, pp. 232-3.

105. Evan John Jones, *Medieval Heraldry, Some Fourteenth Century Heraldic Works* (Cardiff, 1943), pp. lxi-lxiii. Jones cites the four stanzas and provides a partial translation; the fourth verse is the most complete and is therefore given here as an example of Middleton's work:
Siwel trwy irwaed salteir ariant,
a bend o geuls band da i galwant,
rhwng chwe martled unlliw, a ledant,
ffret geuls, ar faes or, da cydgordiant,
rhodder llew hanner, henwant o sabl,
a geul yn y dabl glan a dybiant (p. lxii)
Translation: 'A jewel in the blood-red field and a saltire argent, and a bend of gules between six martlets of this same colour, a fret of gules in a field of gold, - they harmonise well. Let there be added a lion half sable and gules ...' (p. lxiii). Jones identifies these as references to the Neville, Furnivall, Verdon and Lovetot arms respectively.

in '1638: A Tryumphall (in stead of Elegie) on the victorious & safe passage of the noble gent'man Mr Gabr: Armstrong from Earth to heaven.' According to Pestell's editor, Gabriel Armstrong was in fact 'a fairly inconspicuous person ... parson of Hathern in Leicestershire'. The verse included a call to:

> ... trick the blood
> That Spowts out great, but dropps no good;
> Pure ARGent: Sables fine
> That make the brauest Coats to vs belonge (ll. 36-9)
> ....
> Who wou'd not sell his Armes for such a Song? (l. 42)[106]

These images are derived from the arms of the Armstrong family, which are blazoned *gules three dexter arms vambraced argent hands proper*. To 'trick' (l. 36) a coat of arms is to describe its tinctures, or colours, by using abbreviations such as 'gu.' (*gules*) 'ar.' (*argent*) or 'sa.' (*sable*). The references to 'blood' (l. 36) and 'Argent' (l. 38) are to the colours of the Armstrong shield: *gules*, or red, and *argent*, or silver. The punning question, 'Who wou'd not sell his Armes ...?' (l. 42), also plays on the idea of the right arms encased in armour, the principal charge on the Armstrong shield.

With the death of members of families with celebrated arms, such as the Sidney family, who bore *argent, a pheon azure*, it is unsurprising that in the attempt to preserve the name and identity of the dead, heraldic reference is made to their well-known charge; a *pheon* is a dart or arrow head (see figure 6, below).
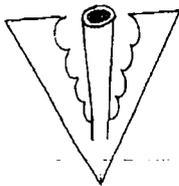
Figure 6.

This image lent itself very well to memorial verses which conjured a figure of Death, or Time, striking out against the individual concerned. William Browne of Tavistock (1591?-1643?) wrote 'On the Death of Marie, Countess of Pembroke' after the death of his patron, Mary, wife of the second Earl of Pembroke and sister of Philip Sidney, who died in 1621. In this instance, the reference to the dart cannot be claimed to be an exclusively heraldic one:

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106. *The Poems of Thomas Pestell: with an account of his life and work,* edited by Hannah Buchan (Oxford, 1940), pp. 54-5 and note p. 120.

> Underneath this sable hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse: (ll. 1-2)
> ....
> Time shall throw a dart at thee. (l. 6)[107]

Similarly, Thomas Jordon (c. 1620-1685?), in 'On the Death of the most worthily honour'd Mr. John Sidney, who dyed full of the Small Pox' is able to imply the Sidney arms in a reference to the figure of Death, who must empty his quiver of arrows in order to kill John Sidney. With this conceit, at once heraldic and traditionally associated with Death, Jordan rewrites the relationship between Death and the deceased. The power which Death had held becomes instead an expression of Sidney's 'Glory' (l. 26) and the final impression is that of the name of Sidney, triumphant over Death itself. '*Sidney* is dead' (l.1), the speaker announces, and the heraldic context is introduced almost immediately: 'In whose good Acts, you might such vollumes see,/ As did exceed th' extent of *Heraldry*' (ll. 5-6). The speaker then challenges Death regarding his treatment of Sidney:

> Sure when thou mad'st his *Fabrick* to shiver,
> Thou could'st not chuse but empty all thy Quiver. (ll. 19-20)
> ....
> Without that Number, *Sidney* could not die:
> And therefore we will Pen it in his Story,
> What thou intend'st his *Ruine*, is his *Glory* (ll. 24-6)[108]

One vital characteristic of memorial verses, elegies and epitaphs was their ability to confer an element of immortality upon the deceased. William Camden valued epitaphs for a number of reasons, including their memorial aspect:

> in them loue was shewed to the deceased, memory was continued to
> posterity, friends were comforted, and the reader put in minde of humane
> frailty. The invention of them proceeded from the presage or foreboding
> of immortality implanted in all men naturally [.]   (p. 361)

For Camden, heraldry was an important element in the invention of epitaphs, since the descent of armorial bearings marked the continuation of a family through surviving generations. His *Remaines concerning Britaine* includes two examples of heraldic

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107. *The Literature of Renaissance England*, edited by John Hollander and Frank Kermode (New York, London and Toronto, 1973), p. 597.

108. Thomas Jordan, *Piety, and Poesy: Contracted* (London, 1643), sig. D2^{r-v}.

epitaphs. The title of the first explains that it is composed 'Vpon the golden Lyon rampant in Gueles of the house of Albenye, which the late Earle H. Fitz-Alan bare in his Armes as receiving the Earledome of Arundell from the house of Albenye' (p. 391).[109] The second, 'On rich *Hewet*' (p. 410), commemorates Richard Hewet, whose family bore *gules a chevron ermine between three owls argent*, that is, in part, three silver owls on a red shield:

> *Here lyes rich* Hewet, *a Gentleman of note,*
> *For why he gave three Owles in his coate,*
> *Ye see his is buried in the Church of Saint* Paul,
> *He was wise, because rich, and now you know all.* (ll. 1-4)

The flippant tone adopted here, with the punning references to Hewet's Christian name and the play on the wisdom of the owl which appeared on his shield, appears to be far removed from Camden's assertion that epitaphs should display characteristics of love, respect and comfort. The function of the heraldic imagery in memorial verse is, however, perhaps most evident in this context. The final affirmation, 'And now you know all' (l. 4), seems at first to offer little more than a convenient rhyme with the preceding line; the sentiment it carries is in fact more important. With its confident expression of knowledge, and a sense of control in the face of death, it reflects the operation of the heraldic references themselves. The rational nature of the armorial system, its validation of certain aspects of human existence, particularly the immortality achieved through generation, and its expression of a stable society, was an important defence against the disruption wrought on individuals and society by death.

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109. The arms of Fitz-Alan are blazoned, *Gules a lion rampant or, enraged azure*. The epitaph is here reproduced in full:

> Aureus ille leo (relique trepidate leones)
> Non in sanguineo nunc stat ut ante solo.
> Nam leo de luda vicit, victoque pepercit,
> Et secum patris duxit ad usque domos.
> Sic cadit ut surgat, sic victus vincit, and illum,
> Quem modo terra tulit, nunc Paradisus habet.

This may be translated as follows:

> That golden lion (tremble, O ye lionesses left behind)
> Does not now stand, as he did before, on bloodstained soil.
> For the lion has emerged victorious from the contest, and spared the one he conquered
> And has led him with him even to his father's house.
> He falls in such a way that he will rise; conquered thus, he conquers
> Now Paradise holds that one, whom lately the earth did bear.

I am grateful to Edmund Brumfitt for allowing me to consult him about this translation.

The extent of institutional control over funerals, in the form of the involvement of the heralds, has been the subject of historical debate. Lawrence Stone, in 1965, concluded that 'opulent funerals' were in decline by the early seventeenth century.[110] This has since been challenged, in particular by David Cressy, who believes that heraldic funerals continued to flourish:

> Although heraldic funerals may have lost ground in the Stuart period, and faced local competition from unofficial suppliers of escutcheons, the heralds continued to offer their services to an élite that was sensitive to status and reputation.[111]

This conclusion is in line with that of heraldic scholarship, which is best represented by the work of Anthony Wagner, who records that 'Heraldic funerals remained in fashion for the gentry till about the 1670's and for some of the nobility down to about 1690. Thereafter they grew very rare.'[112] Heraldry manuals offer a contemporary comment on this process, as they record the reduction in the opportunities for heralds to be present at burials and funerals. Gerard Legh's *The Accedence of Armory* was first published in 1562 and contains the observation that 'Neyther are they [*Herehaughts*] called to the buriall of diuers Gentlemen of auncient Houses, and especially of such as dwell farre off in the Countrey'.[113] By 1682, the herald John Gibbon offers an account which suggests that the situation had deteriorated further:

> It was my hard hap to become a Member of the Heralds Office, when the
> Ceremony of Funerals (as accompanied with Officers of Arms) began to
> be in the Wane. ... In eleven years time I have had but five Turns   (p. 161)

The research which has been published concerning the incorporation of heraldry into funeral monuments would seem to challenge this impression of a decline in interest in heraldry. Nigel Llewellyn has studied the monuments of the St Johns of Lydiard, Wiltshire, and notes the addition of heraldry from 1592 until 1718.[114] Examples of

110. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), p. 577.

111. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), p. 450.

112. Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Ancestors* (London, 1978), p. 84.

113. Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armory*, sixth edition (London, 1612), p. 143. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

114. Nigel Llewellyn, 'Claims to Status through Visual Codes: Heraldry on post-Reformation Funeral

heraldic references in the written record support this local evidence of a continued interest in heraldry. The writing of Henry King (1592-1669), Bishop of Chichester, demonstrates, however, a shift away from the incorporation of formal heraldic language in verse towards a more personal articulation of heraldry. In 'A Letter', to a friend of 'Giant Titles' (l. 53), the speaker acknowledges the friendship in heraldic terms: 'You are my friend, and in that word to me/ Stand blazon'd in your noblest Heraldry' (ll. 5-6).[115] The authority for both conferring and interpreting heraldry here is personal, not institutional, an impression that is supported by further references, as the subject is praised for avoiding sycophantic behaviour when 'the passant Lord/ Let fall a forc't salute, or but afford/ The Nod Regardant' (ll. 21-3). In other words, the heraldic distinction of the 'Lord', evident in King's description of him in formal heraldic terms as 'passant' (l. 21) and 'regardant' (l. 23), is ignored, to his credit, by his friend, whose own value is, nevertheless, 'blazon'd' (l. 6) in a personal way in King's verse.

Again, in 'An Elegy Upon the L. Bishop of London John King' (pp. 99-100), traditional heraldry is dismissed as the articulation of 'formal bragges' (l. 11). The late Bishop, Henry King's father, whose office would have entitled him to bear arms, is therefore commemorated in terms of a private heraldry, that is regarded as the more honourable for being comprised of his own merits and 'deserts' (l. 15):

> When those that in the same earth neighbour thee,
> Have each his Chronicle and Pedigree:
> They have their waving pennons and their flagges,
> (Of Matches and Alliance formal bragges.)
> When thou (although from *Ancestors* thou came
> Old as the *Heptarchy*, great as thy *Name*)
> Sleep'st there inshrin'd in thy admired parts,
> And hast no Heraldry but thy deserts.
> Yet let not *Them* their prouder Marbles boast,
> For *They* rest with less honour, though more cost. (ll. 8-17)

When his subject is John Donne, who died in 1631, King is even more subversive of traditional heraldry. 'Upon the death of my ever desired friend Doctor Donne Dean of

Monuments', in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, edited by Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 146-7. Further references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

115. Henry King, *Poems, Elegies, Paradoxes and Sonnets etc* (London, 1657; reprinted, Menston and London, 1973), pp. 61-4. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

Pauls' (pp. 101-3) suggests that silence, rather than heraldry, confers the more honourable recognition:

> At common graves we have Poetick eyes
> Can melt themselves in easie Elegies;
> Each quill can drop his tributary verse,
> And pin it with the Hatchments, to the Herse.
> But at thine, Poem or inscription
> (Rich Soul of wit and language:) we have none;
> Indeed a silence does that Tomb befit
> Where is no Herald left to blazon it. (ll. 5-12)

In his work on epitaphs to Donne, Joshua Scodel has considered the use of 'the inexpressibility topos ... that only Donne could adequately praise Donne', which was common to many of the funerary tributes that were written to the poet.[116] However, Scodel does not discuss the significance of King's particular presentation of Donne's death as the death of the last herald. This reference emphasises the magnitude of the loss felt by the bereaved, since without Donne, without heralds, there is no longer the means to express a true record of a life for posterity. The opening lines of the elegy express the belief that Donne 'liv'd .../ Beyond our lofty'st flights' (l. 2), thus affirming the creative distance between the poet and his fellow writers and friends. In death, the gap between them becomes unbridgeable, a fact which is emphasised by the heraldic silence. By denying Donne the possibility of heraldic articulation, King places him beyond the reach of the living, and of the constraints which their descriptions of him might impose, while ensuring, by casting Donne himself as 'Herald', that he is not diminished by the heraldic silence.

In King's work, individuals are commemorated in opposition to, rather than in terms of, traditional heraldry. The examples given demonstrate that the significance of the deceased lies in their personal merits: of friendship, of virtue, and of literary genius respectively, rather than in the bearing of a particular coat of arms, accurately blazoned in a commemorative verse. The significance of this approach is also explored by Mildmay Fane in 'Virtus vera Nobilitas'[117]:

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116. Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca and London, 1991), p. 130.

117. '*Virtus vera Nobilitas*' is also the motto of the Henville family; see *Elvin's Handbook of Mottoes*, p. 220. *Virtus vera Nobilitas* does not appear in contemporary emblem books as a specific emblem-motto; their emphasis is, rather, on the importance of virtue as the true path to salvation. George Wither's

What doth He get who ere prefers
The Scutchions of His Ancesters?
This Chimney-piece of Gold or Brass,
That Coat of Armes Blazon'd in glass;
When those with time and age have end,
Thy Prowess must thy self commend. (ll. 1-6)

....

True Nobleness doth those alone engage,
Who can add Vertues to their Parentage. (p. 146, ll. 15-16)

That heraldry could be regarded as a record of the virtues of the deceased is important. Scodel has considered the implications for funeral monuments of Protestant denials of the existence of purgatory and the communion of saints: since they had abandoned a prayerful relationship between the living and the dead, Protestants could only accept a memorial which cast the dead as 'examples of virtue and vice for imitation, admiration, avoidance, or execration'.[118] This approach also avoided charges of idolising the dead. Mervyn James has also analysed what he has termed 'The changing emphasis of honour' in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He discusses the 'uncertainty about the status of heredity in relation to other aspects of honour' and the modification of a system which began to give 'parity, or even priority, to virtue over lineage, learning over arms'.[119] James highlights the importance of the work of Sir Thomas Elyot, whose *The Boke named The Governour*, of 1531, popularised the humanist belief that true nobility was founded in, and dependent upon, virtue. Heraldic epitaphs and elegies in the seventeenth century inevitably reflected this tension between inherited nobility and that which was founded in personal virtue. This tension in the literary record is also found in the physical monuments to the dead. Llewellyn concludes that, on post-reformation funeral monuments, 'virtue became the new insignia, blood no longer sufficing' (p.149). Llewellyn's comments may appear incongruous in the light of the chivalric origins of heraldic language, where the virtuous knight was recognised by the

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emblem book, for example, includes the emblem-motto '*Labore Virtus, Virtute Gloria Paratur ... By* Labour, Vertue *may be gain'd*; *By* Vertue, Glorie *is attain'd*'; see George Wither, *A collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne, Quickened with metricall illustrations, both Morall and divine: And Disposed into lotteries, that instruction, and good counsell, may bee furthered by an honest and pleasant recreation* (London, 1635), p.5. Further consideration of emblems and emblem-mottoes cannot, however, form a part of the present work, which is limited by its consideration of heraldic elements.

118. Scodel, *English Poetic Epitaph*, p. 114.

119. Mervyn James, 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642', *Past and Present* Supplement 3 (1978), pp. 58-65.

devices borne on his shield.

Writers were explicit in their acknowledgment that heraldry was a system which recorded the virtues of the deceased. The importance of colour theories to the signification of chivalric virtues has already been discussed in the introduction to this work. In his manual of heraldry, Henry Peacham asked:

> How should we give Nobility her true value, respect and title, without notice of her Merit? and how may we guesse her merit, without these outward ensignes and badges of Vertue ...? (p. 11)

It is unsurprising, therefore, to find elegies which adopt heraldic references redefining their commemoration of the dead in terms of monuments to virtue. Such an attitude is evident in the following elegy on the death of Prince Henry, who died on the sixth of November, 1612. Heraldic roses and lilies identify 'vertues Tombe' (l. 51). The speaker asks:

> If you demaunde whose is this monument
> Tis vertues Tombe, boute which ye graces daunce
> with warlike Brittaines damaske Roses sprent
> and with the goulden lillies, crownde of fraunce (ll. 51-4)[120]

Thomas Philipot (d. 1682) responds to this debate with an assertion that the virtues of his friend William Glover are as well commemorated in written form, as in pictoral heraldry. Philipot's father was John Philipot, Somerset herald, and his own interest in heraldry is confirmed by the publication of *A brief Historical Discourse of the Original and Growth of Heraldry, demonstrating upon what rational Foundations that Noble and Heroick Science is established* (London, 1672). William Glover was one of the genlemen ushers' daily waiters at James I's court. (DNB). 'An Advertisement to the Reader', from Philipot's *Elegies, Offer'd up to the memory of William Glover Esquire, late of Shalston, in Buckinghamshire*, draws the reader's attention, initially, to Glover's coat of arms, which was blazoned *sable a chevron ermine*:

> Thy eye needs not take notice of his Crest,
> Nor scan those Metals that his Armes invest;

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120. "'Cestria Lugens": A Collection of epitaphs and elegies on Prince Henry by one "G.B."', (Bodley MS Rawl. Poet. 116, fos 1-16), reproduced in Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 233-245.

> Nor see if cloth'd in purple they appeare,
> Or the pale furre of speckled Ermins weare, (ll. 11-14)

The reference to 'Ermins' is to the ermine chevron; a purple pall could be used to mark the status of the deceased in the funerals of the social élite. Philipot, however, suggests that it is also important to inscribe heraldry in written form. In the following lines, the black (*sable*) ink offers a notable means of recovering and preserving the name of the deceased:

> Since these sad lines that onely can display
> Their Heraldry in Sables, will array
> His name with as much eminence and note,
> As those rich colours that improve his Coate (ll. 15-18)[121]

The tension between the written and the visual form of heraldic memorial is most acute when the verse itself defends the erection of a monument which might otherwise be seen as ostentatious, unnecessary and even ungodly, for a truly noble person. In 'An Epitaph upon the death of Sir Philip Woodhouse Knight Baronet', one of the 'Funerall Elegies and Epitaphs' by Thomas Heywood (d. 1650?), the social status of the deceased is clearly reinforced, as his armorial bearings and lineage are detailed. The Woodhouse crest and motto are blazoned: *Out of clouds proper an arm couped at the elbow and erect, habited argent charged with four sinister bendlets sable in the hand proper a club of the last; over it this motto, 'Frappe forte.'* Heywood's interest in heraldry is also evident in his contribution of verse to preface James Yorke's *Book of Heraldry*. Many of Heywood's printed works also bore his motto, *Aut prodesse solent aut delectare* (DNB). In 'An Epitaph upon the death of Sir Philip Woodhouse Knight Baronet', the physical memorial is to be understood to have been inspired, not by any virtue of Sir Philip's, but rather by his son's sense of filial duty:

> From valiant *John* this *Philip Woodhouse* springs
> Hee (of the Chamber to the greatest Kings
> *Henry* the fift) who at famous *Agincourt*
> Woon that eternis'd Motto, *Frappe fort*,
> Snatcht from a noble Frenchman, when by force
> In the mid-field, he beat him from his horse,
> And brought him prisoner, for which warlike deed,
> (As Souldiers still deserve their valours meed)

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121. Thomas Philipot, *Elegies, Offer'd up to the memory of William Glover Esquire, late of Shalston, in Buckinghamshire* (London, 1641), sig. A3[r-v].

> All Heraldry hath to his Crest allow'd
> A Hand and Club extended from a cloud. (ll. 1-10)
>
> ....
>
> For whom this monumentall Marble weepes.
> Reader, who e're thou beest, conceive this done
> By the due office of a gratefull sonne. (ll. 22-4)[122]

Reinscription of the arms of the dead in written form provided an opportunity for political comment as well as personal commemoration. John Dryden (1631-1700) wrote the 'Epitaph *on the Monument of the Marquis* of Winchester' for his wife's relative, John Paulet, who died in 1675. Paulet was a Catholic, and for arms bore *sable three swords in pile points in base argent pomels and hilts or*. His motto was *Aymez Loyaulté* and is hinted towards in line nine below. The epitaph praises the Marquis:

> Whose Arms asserted, and whose Sufferings more
> Confirm'd the Cause for which he fought before (ll. 3-4)
>
> ....
>
> Ark of thy Age's Faith and Loyalty
> Which (to preserve them) Heav'n confin'd in thee (ll. 9-10)[123]

The reference to Paulet's arms, with their display of three swords, commemorates his participation in the Civil War, during which he lost his home, Basing House, to Parliament following a siege, but nevertheless remained loyal to Charles I. Joshua Scodel discusses this epitaph, believing that it 'implicitly endorses toleration for Catholics in gratitude for their loyalty, a commitment Charles II had himself earlier espoused but had now out of political prudence abandoned.'[124] Scodel does not comment on Dryden's presentation of Paulet's loyalty in heraldic terms. Dryden's commitment to Catholicism appears rather more explicit than implicit if the reader concentrates on the heraldry. By employing a sign system which was used by Roman Catholic and Anglican alike, Dryden is able to accord the Marquis, and by extension, his church, exactly the same degree of honour and worth as would be due to anyone

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122. Thomas Heywood, *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramma's, selected out of Lucian, Erasmus, Textor, Ovid, &c., With sundry Emblems extracted from the most elegant Iacobus Catsius. As also certaine Elegies, Epitaphs, and Epithalamions, or Nuptiall Songs; Anagrams and Acrosticks: With divers Speeches (upon severall occasions) spoken to their most Excellent Majesties, King Charles, and Queene Mary* (London, 1637), p. 255.

123. *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden*, edited by James Kinsley (London, New York and Toronto, 1962), p. 848.

124. Scodel, *English Poetic Epitaph*, p. 243.

else. Ten years after Paulet's death, with the accession of James II, Dryden himself became a Catholic.

Readers, then, should not be surprised to find heraldic references in verse written to mark birth, marriage or death. Any verse of this period, addressed to an armigerous person, should be considered to be a likely vehicle for heraldic reference. The famous example of Ben Jonson's commendatory verse, for the Shakespeare first folio of 1618, 'To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr William Shakespeare: And What He Hath Left Us' (pp. 263-5), which makes punning reference to Shakespeare's name and arms, is not unusual.[125] Jonson calls classical dramatists to life again so that they might 'hear thy buskin tread,/ And shake a stage' (ll. 36-7), and he praises Shakespeare's lines, 'In each of which, he seems to shake a lance/ As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance' (ll. 69-70).

More interesting, are those occasions when the writer incorporates heraldic references to himself in the course of complimentary verses which are otherwise plainly addressed to someone else. An ingenious example is provided by Henry Bold (1627-1683). In the course of his 'New Years Day, to my Dear Friend, W. M. Esq', the poet's real interests become clear only when the heraldry involved is successfully decoded. That Bold is in financial straits is soon established, as he exclaims: 'Oh could *rime* pay my scores!' (l. 15). He bemoans his condition in heraldic terms:

> Or were I *rich*! but this *age* will not yeild
> More *Argent*, to me, then my *Griffon's Field*,
> Or could *he* with his display'd *Sable Wing*,[126]
> As *Pegasus* did once, *create* a *Spring*, —
> Which like *Pectolus* with it's silver streams,
> Should stil *bring fresh supplies* to *mine extrems*;
> Had I this *wish*, my *Chief* should never view
> A *Moyle* but *Argent,* and *imbordur'd* too.
> But oh! this will not do! no *stock* can *serve*
> To *Pay,* or *Praise* you, as you *Deserve.* (ll. 23-32)[127]

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125. The arms granted to Shakespeare's father are an example of *canting arms*, also known as *allusive arms* or *armes parlantes*, in which the bearings in some way pun on the name of the bearer.

126. Bold makes a technical error in line 25, in his conversion of the heraldic beast into an imaginative, gendered, form; the male griffin has no wings (Brooke-Little, *Heraldic Alphabet*, pp. 109-10).

127. Henry Bold, *Poems Lyrique Macaronique Heroique, &c.* (London, 1664), pp. 200-201. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

Bold's arms are blazoned *argent a griffin segreant sable beaked and legged or*; in other words he bore on a silver (*argent*) shield, a black (*sable*) griffin, which was a monster with the rear of a lion and an eagle's head, breast, claws and wings. In this case, the beak and legs are marked in gold; *segreant* denotes that the beast would be shown with the left hind-leg on the ground, with the others waving in the air. Bold laments that the only silver available to him is that which forms the background colour of his shield, and he wishes that the griffin could conjure up more for him, with a wave of his black wing. The verse which follows 'New Years Day' in *Poems Lyrique Macaronique Heroique* identifies 'W. M.'. It is entitled, 'A Frolick to W. M. Esq: Returnd from France' (pp. 201-3), and the third line expresses the intention of the poem: 'To welcome Moyles return'. In 'New Years Day', Bold compounds the address to Moyle with an implicit demand for money. In heraldry, a *moyle* may be understood to be a variant spelling of moele, or millstone.[128] Bold wishes that his *Chief* (1. 29), or the top third of his shield, could only be associated with a silver moyle (1. 30). Since it is not, the moyle/millstone becomes a metaphorical expression of Bold's financial burden. That his 'Dear Friend' is called Moyle, and that Bold wishes he might display in his shield a moyle converted into silver, conveys Bold's hope that, for him, W. M. will prove to be a source of silver and relief from his financial difficulties.

Addressing one's work to a family member was an obvious way in which one's own identity would not be submerged. George Wither (1588-1667) dedicated his 1613 publication, *Abuses stript and whipt: Or Satiricall Essayes,* to himself: 'To Him-selfe G. W. wisheth all happiness'. Among the epigrams, which succeed the satires, is one addressed 'To his loving friend, and Cousen German, M. William Wither: Epigram 15'. This is concerned entirely with the significance of their family's arms. Wither's verse works on the assumption, expressed in the opening lines, that 'the *Standerds* of the house bewray/ What *Fortunes* to the owners may betide;' (ll. 1-2). He explains:

> ... that faire antique *shield*
> Born by thy Predecessors long agoe,
> Depainted with a cleere pure *Argent* field,
> The innocency of thy line did show.
> The sable *Chevron* twixt three *Crescents* gul'de,

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128. Gerard J. Brault, *Early Blazon Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with special reference to Arthurian Literature* (Oxford, 1972), p. 243.

Tel's that black *fates* obscur'd our houses light; (ll. 5-10)

....

But yet despaire not, keep thy *white* unstain'd,
And then it skills not what thy *Chevron* be.
What though the *Moon* be now encreas't, now wain'd
Learne thence to know thy lifes inconstancie; (ll. 15-18)

....

Ere thou shalt want thy *Hare* will bring thee meat,
And to kill care, her selfe thy make-sport be,
Yea, yet (though *Envies* mists do make them dul;)
I hope to see the wained *Orbes* at full. (ll. 25-8)[129]

Wither includes the following note at the conclusion of the verse: 'For the better understanding of this Epigram, note that his Armes are, in a field argent a Chevron sable, betwixt three crescents gules; ... his Crest is a Hare with 3 wheat eares in her mouth.' Since they would have both born the same basic arms, with appropriate marks of difference, a pure lineage (l. 8), knowledge of life's inconstancy (l. 18) and self-sufficiency (ll. 25-6) are values which accrue to George as well as to William Wither. This last virtue is also reflected in George Wither's motto, *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*, (nor have I, nor want I, nor care I), which he incorporated in the title of another work, dedicated 'To any Body', in which he stated his intention: 'To recreate my selfe, after some more seious Studies, I tooke occasion to exercise my Invention in the illustration of my *Motto*'.[130] The work led to a second period of imprisonment for Wither, in 1621. It is striking that although Wither continued to adopt armorial expressions, his commitment to his own independence was such that he also presented himself, paradoxically, as seeking to stand outside the heraldic system itself, even while expressing himself in heraldic terms. Playing on his own motto, and ignoring the chivalric virtues traditionally held to be encoded in blazon, Wither claims:

I care not for that Gentry, which doth lye
In nothing but a Coat of Heraldry.
One Vertue more I rather wish, I had;
Then all, the Herald to mine *Armes*, could add:
Yea, I had rather, that by my industry
I could acquire some one, good quality. (sig. E1^v, ll. 1700-5)

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129. George Wither, *Abuses Stript and Whipt: Or Satiricall Essayes: Divided into two Bookes* (London, 1613), pp. 293-4.

130. *Wither's Motto: Nec Habeo, nec Careo, nec Curo* (London, 1621), sig. A2^r. Wither's colours and the motto, *Pro rege, lege, grege* (For king, law and flock) were carried by the troop of horse which he raised in 1642 in support of Parliament (DNB).

The epithalamion by Allan Ramsay, discussed above, also functions in a self-reflexive manner. The poet praised the arms of George, Lord Ramsay, but Allan Ramsay was descended from a collateral branch of the Ramsays of Dalhousie, and the poet considered his 'auld descent [as] my chief, my stoup, my ornament' (DNB). In praising Lord Ramsay, Allan also, therefore, affirmed the merits of his own inheritance.

The significance of self-reflexive heraldic references in literature has also been considered by Michael O'Shea, in the course of his detailed consideration of the use of heraldry in the work of James Joyce. O'Shea analyses heraldry as a means of identifying a writer's contribution to the literary inheritance of future generations:

> by using as signature the coat of arms, one of the most compelling
> traditional emblems of paternal legacy, each novelist emphatically
> blazons his paternal claim to artistic posterity   (p. 58)

O'Shea considers the examples of Joyce, Laurence Sterne and Shakespeare, and develops his arguments for the significance of heraldry in literature in generative terms. He believes that writers:

> have not stopped at merely assuming the arms, but have gone on to place
> them into their own works as symbols not only of the artist's gentility,
> but also of his identity, and of the genetic relationship between him and
> his works [.]   (p. 43)

In a culture in which many relationships were defined by conditions of patronage, the use of self-reflexive heraldic references provided a particularly useful tool for armigerous poets keen to assert their independence of a patron. Although, in O'Shea's judgement, Ben Jonson was 'obsessed with' heraldry (p. 25), he does not include Jonson in his consideration of reflexive armorial references. However, I would argue that, on two occasions, Jonson's work may be understood to incorporate self-reflexive elements. Jonson's understanding of his armorial bearings are suggested in the 'Conversations with William Drummond *of Hawthornden*' which record that, in 1619, Jonson informed Drummond that 'His arms were three spindles or rhombi, his own word about them, Percunctator or Perscrutator' (p. 477). It has been suggested by Jeffrey Johnstone that Jonson intended 'rhombi' to refer to the rhombus-shaped cushions that appear in the arms of Johnstone of That Ilk.[131] However, it may also be the case that Drummond's

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131.   Jeffrey Johnstone, 'Ben Jonson's Ancestry and Arms', e-text: http://home.eznet.net/~jeff/

record is accurate, and that the reference to 'rhombi', a lozenge shape, simply qualifies the reference to the spindle. In heraldry, the bearing known as a *fusil*, which takes the form of an elongated lozenge, was originally a representation of a spindle covered with tow (OED). Jonson's emphasis on the rhomboid shape of the spindle would therefore indicate that his arms should depict a spindle covered with the unworked flax or fibre. On two occasions in his verse, reference to a spindle provides commentary on Jonson and his relationship, in the first instance, to his patron, and, secondly, to his work. In each case, an implicit understanding that the spindle is covered with unworked fibre contributes to the success of the reference. In the course of 'On Lucy, Countess of Bedford' (pp. 58-9), Jonson conjures his ideal muse and finds that it is the Countess, his patron, who died in 1627. He presents his relationship to her in metaphorical terms:

> Only a learned, and manly soul
> I purposed her; that should, with even powers,
> The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
> Of destiny, and spin her own free hours. (ll. 13-16)

The implication of the lines is that Jonson's muse will have the power to control destiny, and that, since the spindle is made an attribute of destiny, it becomes an instrument of the muse. The heraldic reference reflects the relationship between patron and poet. Jonson's destiny is in the hands of his patron, which she will manipulate just as the spindle will refine the fibres wound upon it. Since the spindle is Jonson's armorial bearing, it is implicit that, with the spindle in her hands, Lucy has power over all the honour and identity which is Jonson's due and which are represented by his arms.[132]

Jonson uses the same armorial reference in a verse from *The Masque of Queens*, which was performed 'At Whitehall, February 2, 1609' (p. 307). It includes the following lines of chant from the third of nine charms in the masque: 'The owl is abroad, the bat, and the toad,/... The spindle is now a-turning' (ll. 1 & 6). The spindle, turning its fibres, becomes a metaphor for Jonson's own creative rôle in the masque, which would have been all the more important since the masque was a form in which success depended on

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jonson.html.

132. The primary source for the spindle reference is Theocritus, 'Idyll XXVIII'. See *Theocritus*, edited with a translation and commentary by A. S. F. Gow, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1998), I, 227.

the work of many others, including, in particular, Inigo Jones, as well as the poet himself. The self-reflexive reference, if recognised by an heraldically literate audience, would have kept Jonson's identity, and contribution, to the fore.

Of course, most encomiastic or dedicatory verse did not include self-reflexive heraldic references, and the writer's identity is eclipsed by that of their subject. Matthew Stevenson (fl. 1645-1680), for example, dedicates his work in a sonnet 'To my Lord B.'[133] The poet expresses his subordinate position to 'Lord B.' in heraldic terms: 'For Your Extraction, 'tis so High,/ As it transcends my Heraldry' (ll. 7-8).

The formulaic nature of many poems dedicated to actual or potential patrons may be appreciated by considering three examples, the first drawn from the prefatory verse to Edmund Bolton's *Elements of Armories*, a situation in which the reader might expect to encounter more complex heraldic imagery. This heraldry manual was dedicated to Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, the dexter supporter of whose arms was *a lion argent* (or silver) and who also bore a lion on an *escutcheon* in the centre of his arms. Among the dedications is a sonnet entitled 'Another of the same by Apostrophe to Phoebus, finishing in a symbolicall allusion, to the most noble Earle of North-Hampton':

> For as no Eye dare face thy [Phoebus] glorious light
> When as Thou reignest in the golden Lion.
> So dare no Curre against them ope his Iaw,
> Once seis'd into the Silver Lion's Pawe. (sig. A2ᵛ, ll. 11-14)[134]

A second example is taken from *The Mirrovr of Maiestie: or, the Badges of Honovr conceitedly emblazoned*, the authorship of which is attributed to Sir Henry Goodere. This book comprises a series of illustrated pages, with emblems or coats of arms being engraved above explanatory verses. Among those concerned with armorial bearings, rather than with emblems, are verses addressed 'To The Earle of Arvndell' and 'To The Lord Carew', respectively. The Earl of Arundel, as the son of the Duke of Norfolk,

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133. Matthew Stevenson, *Norfolk Drollery: Or, a Compleat Collection of the Newest Songs, Jovial Poems, and Catches, &c* (London, 1673), sig. B2ʳ.

134. The Earl's arms are blazoned, *gules on a bend between six crosses crosslet fitchee argent an escutcheon or, charged with a demi lion rampant pierced through the mouth with an arrow, within a double tressure flory counter flory of the first.*

bore the Howard arms, which comprised *gules on a bend between six crosses crosslet fitchee argent*. The verse indicates the conventional, chivalric virtues associated with these arms:

> On *Gules* you beare the figure of a *Bend*
> Between *crosse crosselets* fixt: which all intend
> Rightly to shadow *Noble birth*, adorn'd
> With valour, and a Christian cause, not scorn'd
> By any but by Infidels ... (ll. 1-5)[135]

The short stanza addressed 'To The Lord Carew', who bore *or three lions passant sable*, also praises traditional virtues:

> The noblest parts of *Wisdome*, as *cleare wit*,
> High *Courage*, and such vertues kinne to it:
> Should ever be proceeding, and goe on
> Forward, as seeme these *Lyons*; urg'd of none.
> So (like to these) You keepe a passant pace,
> Till *Wisedome* seate You in your wished place. (ll. 1-6)[136]

These verses, which are entirely concerned with praise of their subject, demonstrate typical sentiments; nobility, valour, faithfulness, wisdom and courage are variously understood to be implied through the technically straightforward blazon of the dedicatee's armorial bearings.

A final form in which concern with identity and family connection is clear and within which, therefore, heraldic references would be expected, is that of the anagram, defined by Camden in his *Remaines concerning Britaine* as:

> The onely Quint-essence that hither-to the Alchymy of wit could draw
> out of names, is Anagrammatisme, or Metagrammatisms, which is a
> dissolution of a Name truely written into his Letters, as his Elements,
> and a new connexion of it by artificiall transposition ... into different
> words, making some perfect sense applyable to the person named. (p. 168)

Camden's examples include three heraldic stanzas in praise of the Earl of Cumberland, 'in respect of his sea service then, alluding to his fierie Dragon the Creast of his family':

> Georgius Clifordius Cumberlandius.

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135. H. G., *The Mirrovr of Maiestie: or, the Badges of Honovr conceitedly emblazoned: with emblemes annexed, poetically vnfolded* (London, 1619), p.24.

136. H.G., *Mirrovr of Maiestie*, p. 58.

> Doridis regno clarus cum vifulgebis.
> In Doridis regno clarus fulgebis, & undis.
> Cum vi victor erit flammeus ille Draco. (p. 175, ll. 1-4)[137]

Camden also records that 'Out of the name of the late Lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlaine, and his Creast the white Swanne, was this Anagramme, and Distich thereon composed':

> Georgius Carius Hunesdonius.
> Huos in suos candor egregius
> Hunsdonii egregius resplendit pectore candor,
> Huius ut in cygne nil nisi candor inest. (p. 176, ll. 1-4)[138]

His third example is drawn from the arms of Sir Thomas Ridgeway, who was appointed vice-treasurer and treasurer-at-wars, under Sir George Cary, in Ireland in 1603, and was created a baronet on 25th November 1611 after payment to the Crown. The Ridgeway crest is blazoned *a dromedary couchant argent maned sable bridle and trappings or*. Camden interprets this in the following terms: [Ridgeway] 'gave for his crest a Camell kneeling under his burthen, whereupon this Anagramme fortunately fell upon his name Thomas Ridgwaie/ Mihi Gravato, Deus.' (p. 176)

The extent to which heraldry should be accepted as one of the forms of language and thought which people in the seventeenth century considered important, is one question which this study seeks to explore. This chapter has isolated and explained the use of heraldic references in very different contexts, and across various literary genres. It has become evident that heraldic expression was used widely, to record, and to express the concerns associated with extremes of human experience: births, marriages, and deaths.

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137. This may be translated as follows:
     George Clifford of Cumberland
     When you will shine out brightly in the realm of Doris.
     In the realm of Doris, and over the waves, you will shine brightly.
     With his strength that fiery Dragon will conquer.

NB. Doris was the daughter of Oceanis, wife of the sea god Nereus and mother of the Nereides.

138. This may be translated as follows:
     George Cary Hunsdon
     His outstanding brightness towards his people.
     Hunsdon's outstanding brightness shines wondrously in his breast
     And as in the swan, there is nothing in him except his brightness.

NB line two is the attempted anagram of Hunsdon's name.
I am grateful to Edmund Brumfitt for allowing me to consult him about these translations.

In the *Hydriotaphia*, Thomas Browne wrote:

> man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equall lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature[139]

Heraldry provided a means to articulate the nobility which Browne describes. Whether, as a language, it was simply the preserve of 'intellectual specialists', is an issue which further chapters will also address; the evidence so far presented would indicate that it was a language shared among an educated élite, which flourished particularly among groups of enthusiasts, such as Ben Jonson, William Camden and John Selden, and within families, whose members could be relied upon to appreciate the significance of the arms they bore. How far heraldry should be considered to have been a vital element in any or all of the genres considered here is an important question. Blazon and heraldic references were certainly considerable linguistic and cultural resources, but their use was so varied, as has been seen, that it is difficult to regard them as simple conventions, limited to particular genres. Rather, the language of heraldry should be acknowledged to have been used self-consciously by writers in the seventeenth century; without an appreciation of the complexity of heraldry and the values imbued within it, scholars cannot expect fully to understand the implications of many varieties of seventeenth-century verse and poetry. To this end, the following three chapters will, respectively, explore the social, political and religious significance of heraldic references at this time.

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139. Sir Thomas Browne, 'Hydriotaphia' in *The Major Works*, edited by C. A. Patrides (London, 1977), p. 313.

> For the herald the principal concern, beyond style, is with *identity*, ... the
> herald tells society about *itself*.
>
> (Richard Pine, *Dandy and the Herald*, p. 12)

In his preface to *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam*, published in London in 1682, the herald John Gibbon, Bluemantle Pursuivant, testifies to the importance of heraldry in society. Arms are the 'Honorary Symbols' of 'meritorious Deeds', whose 'Rewards are lasting, out-living the Actors ... continually from Age to Age accompanying and dignifying their Descendents' (sig. A3ʳ). The dramatic analogy is useful; arms continue to play to an audience when their original bearer is long dead. Gibbon also stresses heraldry's mnemonic function and its authority. In 'transferring the memory of Merit to Posterity' (sig. A3ᵛ) heraldry becomes a matter of public record. He emphasises the need for heraldic skills in the clergy in particular, but his aim is to regulate the use of heraldry by all those who 'record and publish to the World' (sig. A3ʳ). Gibbon's preface raises many points of interest to this chapter, which aims to examine the social implications of the use of heraldry in seventeenth-century literature. Attention will be given, in particular, to the genre of epic verse in the period, and subsequently to the treatment of heraldry in satirical verse. That heraldry towards the end of the century merited regulation suggests that in previous years Gibbon regarded its use in society as wayward; how far that may be seen in the literary record, in what regard and with what import, is the concern of this discussion.

In his 'Answer to Sir William Davenant's Preface before *Gondibert*', written in 1650, Thomas Hobbes comments that 'the Description of Great Men and Great Actions is the constant designe of a Poet'.[140] It is unsurprising, therefore, that it is in the epic, or heroic, genre that heraldic references function most clearly, according to Gibbon's understanding, as 'Honorary Symbols' of 'meritorious Deeds'. Davenant himself, however, whose preface addresses the nature of epic in the seventeenth century, does not use heraldic references in *Gondibert*. This may be explained by a comment in the preface regarding Spenser's 'obsolete language': 'wee may wonder that our Language ... should ... receive from his hand, new grafts of old wither'd words' (p. 7). Although

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140. *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert*, edited by David F. Gladish (Oxford, 1971), p. 51.

not stated explicitly, the reader may suppose that the vocabulary of heraldry may be included among these 'wither'd words'. Certainly, Spenser made significant use of heraldry, as has been discussed in chapter one with reference to the works of Michael Leslie and Ruth Berman.

In considering Davenant's work, Hobbes condemns those writers whose epic works 'exceed ... the possibility of nature' in their employment of references to 'impenetrable Armors, Inchanted Castles ... and a thousand other such thinges'. It is important here to distinguish heraldry from these 'thinges', since it could too easily be included among these figurative elements, which J. S. A. Adamson has called 'the imaginative paraphernalia of chivalric epic'.[141] Although heraldic language obviously developed in the sphere of courtly, staged tournaments, it was also integral to the battlefield. Adamson describes the rôle of the heralds in the battles and conflicts of the early Civil War and determines that, 'in the early 1640's, ... the reality of war [had not] yet been wholly divorced from the formal rituals of the High Court of Chivalry' (p. 182). He considers that 'chivalric culture' informed the participants' 'sense of what was fitting in the conduct of war' (p. 183). In this light, heraldry in epic verse must be approached as a serious expression. In social terms, it both allowed writers to record or reflect upon experience for posterity, and to influence the behaviour of their readers, since, as Adamson notes, readers would continue to carry with them the linguistic and cultural burden of the texts available to them.

Examples will be considered of heraldic references in the works of three poets: Michael Drayton (1563-1631), Charles Aleyn (d. 1640) and Sir Richard Blackmore (1654-1729), who developed the use of heraldry in epic beyond that of honourable identification. In his epic, *The Baron's Wars In the Reign of Edward the Second*, the revised version of which was published in 1603, Drayton's use of heraldry allowed him to express the depth of his condemnation of the warring parties. Initially, the families ranged against each other, before the Battle of Burton Bridge, are identified by their arms:

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141. J.S.A. Adamson, 'Chivalry and Renaissance Culture in Caroline England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 195. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

23.
    Upon his surcote valiant NEVIL bore
A Silver Saltire upon Martiall Red;
A Ladies Sleeve, high-spirited HASTINGS wore;
FERRER his Taberd, with rich Verry spred,
Well knowne in many a Warlike Match before;
A Raven set on CORBETS armed head;
    And CULPEPPER, in Silver Armes enrayl'd,
    Bare thereupon a bloudie Bend engrayl'd.

24.
    The Noble PERCY in this dreadfulL day,
With a bright Cressant in his Guidehome came,
In his white Cornet, VERDON doth display
A fret of Gueles, priz'd in this mortall Game,
That had been seene in many a doubfull Fray,
His Lances Penons stayned with the same;
    The angry Horse, chaf'd with the stubborne Bit,
    With his hard Hoofe the Earth in furie smit. (Canto 2, ll. 177-192)[142]

Yet these arms, we are told, 'Against their Owners rudely seem to stand,/ As angry for th' Atchievements whence they came,/ That to their Fathers gave that generous Brand' (ll. 170-72). The narrator turns from the present, unworthy, generation to emphasise past glories; Ferrer's arms became known in past battles, 'in many a Warlike Match before;' (l. 181) and Verdon's 'had been seene' (l. 189) in past skirmishes. In their historic context, these arms signify the 'pride of lineage and esteem for martial achievement' which Maurice Keen attributes to heraldry 'in its medieval heyday'.[143] These traditional assumptions provide a touchstone for Drayton's narrator as he observes the battle. His subsequent rejection and manipulation of the heraldic vocabulary enable him to highlight the subversive nature of civil war. It is suggested that heraldic language is inadequate; the recitation of armorial bearings ends with the exclamation: 'But O, deare Muse, too soon thou art control'd!' (l. 198). With this line, heraldry has become a language of constraint, which fails to acknowledge the bloody chaos of the battle. So, while the narrator 'could the summe of STAFFORDS arming show,' (l. 193) he prefers instead to curtail this description and remark that, 'My Pen, for Ink, warme drops of Bloud doth sheed.' (l. 200). The narrator does not abandon heraldry, however, but changes his interpretation of the imagery so that, instead of signalling a glorious past,

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142. *The Works of Michael Drayton*, edited by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford, 1932), II, 32-3.

143. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 132.

the heraldic elements point to the savagery of civil war and indicate to the reader that the conflict is both unreasonable and unnatural. The narrator draws attention to the heraldic lions, or leopards, which appear in both the royal and the Lancastrian arms:

> 26.
> On the Kings part th'Imperiall Standard's pitch'd,
> With all the Hatchments of the *English* Crowne,
> Great LANCASTER (with no lesse Power enrich'd)
> Sets the same Leopards in his Colours downe:
> O, if yee be not frantique, or bewitch'd,
> Yet doe but see, that on your selves you frowne:
> A little note of diff'rence is in all,
> How can the same stand, when the same doth fall? (p. 33, Canto 2, ll. 201-08)

The emphasis is on the mutual dependence of the two sides, symbolised by the similarity in their armorial bearings. A mark of 'difference' (l. 207) is all that separates them, which, in heraldic terms, implies that the men are members of the same family, distinguished one from the other only by a small mark on their shield. The unnatural conduct of the war is also the subject of stanza twenty-seven, as heraldic animal imagery leads the narrator to bewail the greater savagery shown by men than by animals:

> 27.
> Behold the Eagles, Lyons, Talbots, Beares,
> The Badges of your famous Ancestries;
> Shall those brave Marks, by their inglorious Heires,
> Stand thus oppos'd against their Families?
> More ancient Armes no Christian Nation beares,
> Reliques unworthy of their Progenies;
> Those Beasts yee beare, doe in their kinds agree,
> O, that then Beasts, more savage Men should be! (p. 34, Canto 2, ll. 209-16)

Drayton, then, subverts the reader's expectations that heraldry in the epic genre will record the 'Great Actions' of men. Rather, it is through heraldry that the offence which the civil war gives to notions of the familial and Christian foundations of society is expressed.

Charles Aleyn, in *The Historie of That wise and Fortunate Prince, Henrie of that Name the Seventh, King of England*, published in London in 1638, uses heraldry not to identify the individuals involved in battle, but, again, to reflect in figurative terms the serious social dislocation which the battle of Bosworth in 1485 represented:

There (as if *Birth-rights* had beene question'd) stood
The wombe at war with't selfe, and *brethren* fought:
There *Kinsmen* fought, and streaming forth their *blood*
Into one chanell found their Kindred out,
And prov'd without the ayde of *Heraldry*
How neere they were by *consanguinity*
Sword upon a *sword*, *shield* upon a *shield*
A source of blood below, and one appeare
Above: yet was there not in all that field
A *solecisme* in *Armory*, nor there
Did it *abate* but make the *Honour fuller*
Metall upon *metall*, *colour* upon *colour*. (ll. 601-12)[144]

It would be a mistake, in spite of line 605, to conclude that Aleyn finds heraldry irrelevant to the description of battle. Instead, lines 609-12 convey, in heraldic terms, the dramatic action of the scene which the narrator has witnessed. The narrator states that no heraldic mistakes have been made in the course of the battle (l. 610) and no shields have been amended with marks of dishonour (*abatements*), implying that honour has only been increased by the combat. Though it would usually be against the rules of heraldry for metal to appear on metal, or colour on colour, in this instance, as Peter Davidson has pointed out, the reference in line 612 serves to describe the 'melée of the battle', as 'metal from one shield clashed with metal from another'.

Aleyn again uses heraldry to both identify the heroic and expound a more general theme in his epic poem, *The Battailes of Crescey and Poictiers, Vnder the Fortunes and Valour of King Edward the third of that name, and his sonne Edward Prince of Wales, named the Black*, the second edition of which was published in 1633. The 'Great Action' of Prince Edward at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 is emphasised through the narrator's play on his red dragon, the badge of Wales: 'Edward to be even,/ Advanc'd his Dragon Gules, to let them know,/ They must have none that will no mercy show' (ll. 567-69). Yet heraldry is used as more than an acknowledgment of Edward's prowess. In the narrator's eyes, the natural world also assumes heraldic colours:

But if wise nature had informed the earth,
That all her Vert should into Gules be turnd, (ll. 559-60)
....

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144. Charles Aleyn, *The Historie of That wise and Fortunate Prince, Henrie of that Name the Seventh, King of England: With that famed Battaile, fought betweene the sayd King Henry and Richard the third named Crookbacke, upon Redmoore neere Bosworth* (London, 1638), p. 26.

> Then had they fought in a red sea of blood. (l. 564)
>
> ....
> Black was the day: the Chaos was thus black
> Before twas said, let there be light; the clouds
> Opend their watry treasures, which did crack
> They were so full, all is in sable shrouds:
> The symptomes of true griefe were in the sphere,
> As if it meant to be chiefe mourner here. (ll. 567-575)[145]

The overwhelming impact of the battle is made clear by the use of heraldic metaphor: the green (*vert*) earth will be turned red (*gules*) with blood, and the clouds assume black (*sable*) mourning shrouds; nature itself appears to collude with the battle and suffers its consequences.

At the end of the seventeenth century, heraldic references were still being used as a resource for poets describing heroic action. In Sir Richard Blackmore's work, the hero is Arthur, fighting the Saxons, and heraldic metaphor serves to identify Arthur as a British hero. In Book VII of *Prince Arthur: An Heroick Poem*, published in London in 1695, Merlin has a prophetic vision in which he compares Arthur to a lion and a unicorn:

> He, like a fearless Unicorn shall stand,
> Sure of his Strength, and all the Fields command. (ll. 653-4)
>
> ....
> He couches like a Lyon on the Sand,
> Like a vast Lyon in a Desart Land (ll. 659-60)[146]

It was an heraldic commonplace to associate great leaders with the figure of the lion: Edmund Bolton, in *Elements of Armories*, notes that 'Alexander the great was borne with the impression of a Lion' and James I, 'our most renowned King, ... upon him also, the figure of a Lyon was alike naturally set.' (pp. 12-13). In Blackmore's verse, the similies have a political dimension. The unicorn of Scotland became a supporter of the royal arms with the accession of James I, and continued to be used, with the English lion, by his successors. It is implicit that Arthur, in command of 'all the Fields' (l. 654), assumes control of battlefields, of heraldic shields (the *field* is the surface of the shield,

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145. Charles Aleyn, *The Battailes of Crescey and Poictiers, Vnder the Fortunes and Valour of King Edward the third of that name, and his sonne Edward Prince of Wales, named the Black* (London, 1633), p. 37.

146. Sir Richard Blackmore, *Prince Arthur: An Heroick Poem: In Ten Books* (London, 1695), p. 205.

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and control over it implies a power over the apportioning of honour in society) and of the landscape itself. As an attribute of unity, the figure of Arthur thus confirms the strengths of a unified nation and, given the date of publication, the reference must be situated within the context of the debates which resulted in the Act of Union of 1707.

This examination of heraldry in epic verse suggests tensions in the use of heraldry in the genre; the reader is alternately presented with references which function within a chivalric tradition, where heraldry identified heroic action, courage, loyalty or inherited honour and status, and those references which subvert this tradition, as writers use heraldic ideals to point to inhuman, dishonourable or unnatural behaviour. In order to examine further whether these tensions reflect social changes and expectations, it is helpful to consider the likely composition of the heraldically literate audience of the period to whom these texts, and others employing heraldic references, would have been addressed.

Since armorial bearings are granted by the sovereign to an élite, an easy assumption would be that heraldic references in literature would have been composed with only an élite audience in mind. There is certainly textual and other surviving evidence to support this. The previous chapter has established that the success of numerous verse dedications, epithalamia, elegies and epitaphs to élite subjects depended on the understanding of heraldry by their implied readers. That an élite audience would have this ability may be inferred from the expectation that the children of armigerous families would be educated in the principles of heraldry. In the case of the Higfords, responsibility for that education was assumed within the family. The manuscript *Works* (c.1650) of William Higford, entitled 'Institutions or advice to his grandson', include a detailed consideration of his grandson's descent, pedigree, surname and armorial bearings. Their family pedigree, 'drawne, by m^r Campden Clarenceux kinge of Armes' (p. 13) having been lost, William Higford pledges to his grandson, 'yf yt shall please god to vouchsafe me life' to:

> make a recollection thereof wherein alsoe if any mistakes shall appeare
> in this my relation (wch may verie easilye soe happen my whole relyance
> beinge now upon slippery memorie) they shalbe rectified, and soe will I
> present it unto you, for I meane to putt of my Cloathes and goe to bed. ...
> The Persons unto whom you are to resort in the Heralds office are John
> Philpott Esquire by office Somersett a most Ingenious, and Industrious

searcher of Antiquities.[147]

At an institutional level, too, heraldry was considered important in the education of the élite. At the end of the sixteenth-century, proposals for the education of the Queen's wards, entitled *Queene Elizabethes Achademy*, were drawn up by Sir Humphrey Gilbert (c. 1539-1583). These made provision for a member of staff who was to be 'one perfect Harowlde of armes, who shall teach noble men and gentlemen to blaze armes, and also the arte of Harrowldrie'.[148] The idea that heraldry should form part of an élite education persisted into the eighteenth-century. The *New Dictionary of Heraldry*, by James Coats, was first published in 1725 and emphasises to readers that 'Heraldry is a Science of which most Degrees of Men ought to have some Knowledge, either as they are Gentlemen, or aspire to be such'.[149]

The ability of the élite to read heraldry was regarded as a conspicuous sign of their social standing and identity. It was a skill that writers of heraldry manuals believed marked a social boundary. James Coats comments that 'the meaner Sort who never look higher than the present low Station they are in, cannot be suppos'd capable of applying themselves to the Study of what is so much above them' (sig. A2^r). Given this opinion, it is interesting to note that the title of Coats' manual varies between printed copies. The copy used here refers to the fact that the book is intended to make the 'Science' of heraldry 'familiar to every Capacity', while others say simply that it is 'design'd to make that Science familiar.' While this could be an accident of type-setting, it is possible that the addition of 'every Capacity' is a challenge to the author's socially circumscribed position.

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147. HRHRC, pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 89, f. 13. Further references to this manuscript will be included after quotations in the text.

148. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, *Queene Elizabethes Achademy: A Booke of Precedence, the Ordering of a Funerall, etc.: Varying versions of the Good Wife, the Wise Man, etc.: Maxims, Lydgate's Order of fools, A poem on heraldry, Occleve on Lords' Men, etc.*, edited by F.J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, Extra Series no. VIII, (London, 1869), p. 8.

149. James Coats, *A New Dictionary of Heraldry, Explaining all the Terms us'd in that Science, with their Etimology, and how express'd in Latin And Containing all the Rules of Blazoning Coat-Armour, with the Reasons for the same. The Original Signification of all Bearings. An Account of the most noted Orders of Knighthood that are, or have been; and of Honours and Dignities Ecclesiastical, Civil, or Military. Adorn'd with several Copper Plates. The whole design'd to make that Science familiar to every Capacity* (London, 1725), sig. A2^r.

The assumption that books concerned with heraldry and chivalry were not appropriate for all readers was established, in English, by William Caxton. His translation of *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry* includes a statement that such a 'book is not requysyte to euery comyn man to haue/ but to noble gentylmen'.[150] The perception that heraldry could not be understood by the unworthy is evident in the mid-seventeenth century in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), by Sir Thomas Browne. Browne distinguishes between those 'vulgar eyes' who would consider heraldic imagery 'as literall truths, or absurd impossibilities' and those who appreciate that 'indeed they are commendable inventions, and of laudable significations.'[151]

An explicit and important challenge to this tradition was mounted during the seventeenth century by James Yorke, a Lincolnshire blacksmith, whose belief that, 'nature inclin'd me to so Noble a study' (sig. A2ᵛ) resulted in the publication of his own heraldry manual, *The Union of Honour*, in 1640. The iconography of the work's frontispiece marks the radical position which the book represents. While the book's title is framed by four shields depicting elements of the royal arms, this is balanced by a mirror image of a hammer and anvil on each side of a portrait of the author. In the address 'To the Courteous Reader', which introduces the book, Yorke acknowledges that he may incur:

> the learned Anger of some, who must quarrell with my Booke for my sake, and smutch it with a scorne of my Profeßion, their pallats being so curious, as can digest nothing but from delicate hands; ... To see a Booke of this comprisement, subscribed by James Yorke, blacke Smith, it stirres their criticall Constitution out of temper streight, and I shall be prejudicated, ere considered a syllable further: I am not ignorant of mine owne unworthinesse for so grave a task, but readily confesse it [.][152]

Those who expressed their support for Yorke's work were less willing to admit any such 'unworthinesse'. The defiant verses which accompany the text emphasise that the

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150. *Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, p. 121.

151. Browne, *Major Works*, p. 240.

152. James Yorke, *The Union of Honovr: Containing The Armes, Matches And Issves of the Kings, Dukes, Marquesses and Earles of England from the Conquest, untill this present yeere, 1640; With the Armes of the English Viscounts and Barons now being; and of the Gentry of Lincolnshire; Whereunto is Annexed, A briefe of all the Battels which have beene fought and maintained by the English since the Conquest, till the yeere 1602* (London, 1640), sig. A3ʳ.

ability to appropriate heraldic discourse was regarded as a mark of social equality and participation. The dramatist Thomas Heywood, also from Lincolnshire, condemned those who would attack Yorke's right to study and publish on heraldry:

> By what strange Alcumy comes Gold refin'd,
> (Not found till now) from Iron to be Calcin'd, (ll. 1-2)
> ....
> Some queasie Criticks, may this booke abhorre,
> And say, wherefore with *Argent*, or with *Or*,
> Should Black-smiths meddle? and the world perswade,
> These are *Materials* farre above his Trade. (ll. 5-8)[153]

The metaphors contain the added significance of reflecting the titles of Heywood's own works: The Golden Age (1611), The Silver Age (1613) and The Iron Age (1632). Heywood's dedicatory verse therefore implies that he approves of both Yorke's 'meddl[ing]' (l. 7) with heraldic gold and silver, and his participation in literary and creative endeavours in general. Richard Brathwait (1588-1673) also contributed a dedication to the manual, addressed '*To his industrious Friend*'. Brathwait's argument in favour of Yorke's publication is not, however, based on Yorke's absolute right to consider such matters but on the fact that those who are gentlemen are so ignorant of heraldry that they are in no position to criticise Yorke:

> Well may wee then his industry approve,
> Who thus bestow'd his oyle for's Countries love;
> While those who know no *Colour, Coat, Crest, Race*,
> May be asham'd, and beare *Or* in their Face.
> *Who weare* gay Coats, *but can no* Coat *deblaze*,
> *Display'd for* Gulls, *may beare* Gules *in their face*. (ll. 17-22)[154]

One indication that Yorke's trade did not prove a bar to the recognition of his scholarship is the citation of his work by John Gibbon in the preface of *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam* (sig. A5r), over forty years later.

Even the singular existence of Yorke's work, 'not yet matched by any of my trade' (sig. A2v), indicates that any study of the social implications of heraldic references in

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153. Thomas Heywood, 'To my Friend and Countrey-man James Yorke, Concerning his Booke of Heraldry', in Yorke, *Union of Honovr*, sig. A5v.

154. Richard Brathwait, 'To his Industrious Friend, Iames Yorke, upon his Booke of Heraldry', in Yorke, *Union of Honovr*, sig. A4r.

literature should not confine itself to a social élite. Although a universal participation in heraldic culture is impossible to determine, as a visual code, all classes must have been exposed to heraldry, given its general presence in the community. In addition to external armorial inn signs, the varieties of which have been considered by Jacob Larwood and John Camden Hotten, the arms of those who lodged at inns were also displayed inside.[155] Sir Dudley Digges observed in the *Compleat Ambassador* of 1654, for example, that at the inns located between London and Chester, the arms of the lords-lieutenant of Ireland 'are hung up in inns where they passed.'[156]

Heraldry was a presence in daily life, and was particularly evident in parish churches, in the display of personal arms on individual tombs and at focal points in the church building. As John Martin Robinson has observed, 'The Royal Arms often took the place of the rood in the top of the chancel arch after the Reformation.'[157] Such an exalted treatment of royal heraldry, with the arms replacing the crucifix, would have served to underline the social hierarchy and power that the royal arms represented, but the display would not have been worthwhile if the community had not been able to comprehend its meaning.

Further confirmation that the wider population understood heraldic symbolism derives from its use in civic pageantry. As Vaughan Hart writes, this form of Jacobean pageantry was aimed at 'ordinary citizens' and intended 'through heraldry, costume, music and temporary arches' to 'project royal ideals' and convey a sense of the power and significance of monarchy.[158] Again, the existence of such pageants cannot confirm

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155. Jacob Larwood and John Camden Hotten, 'Heraldic and Emblematic Signs' in *English Inn Signs* (London, 1951), pp. 64-87.

156. Quoted in Larwood and Hotten, *English Inn Signs*, p. 79; see also *Sir Dudley Digges, The Compleat Ambassador: or Two treaties of the intended marriage of Qu: Elizabeth ... comprised in letters of negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham ... Together with the answers of The Lord Burleigh, the Earl of Leicester, Sir Tho: Smith, and others ...* (London, 1655).

157. John Martin Robinson, *Treasures of the English Churches* (London, 1995), p. 90.

158. Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts*, p. 158. While this study recognises the heraldic significance of the temporary architecture used in pageants and festivals, it is a subject which cannot be afforded further treatment here, as this study is necessarily limited by its concern with heraldry in verse. For further consideration of the use of heraldry in pageantry and on stage, see in particular: Roy C. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 42-62; Richard Dutton, *Jacobean Civic Pageants* (Keele, 1995); Alexander Charles Calder, 'The Dramatic Language of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*: A Stylistic and Theatrical Study.' (University of Aberdeen, PhD thesis, 1989); Tristan Marshall, '"That's the Misery of Peace": Representations of Martialism in the Jacobean Public

the active comprehension by 'ordinary citizens' of heraldic symbolism. Two examples show, however, that an understanding of heraldry was at least expected of such groups of people, in spite of the generally exclusive comments contained in heraldry manuals. At the end of the sixteenth century, William Wyrley expected a 'plaine vnlearned man' to be able to understand basic heraldic banners on a battlefield, and consequently complained about the use of overly complicated arms:

> An other thing is amiss as I take it, and have great need to be reformed, is the quartering of many marks in one shield, coate or banner, for sithence it is true that such marks serue to no other vse but for a commander to lead by, or to be known by, it is of necessitie that the same be apparent, faire, and easie to be discerned, so that the quartering of many of them together doth hinder the vse for which they are prouided. As how is it possible for a plaine vnlearned man (who may be as good a soldier in some respects as the best) to discerne and knowe a sunder, six or eight ... sometimes thirtie ...?[159]

A second example, which demonstrates that members of lower social orders were generally expected to recognise and show respect for the heraldic signs of their social superiors, is provided by a Court of Chivalry ruling, alluded to by Edward Hyde in his maiden speech to Parliament on 19 April 1640. The case arose from an incident where 'a waterman' demanded a fare from a 'citizen', who responded by telling him to 'be gone with his goose'. This referred to the badge on his coat, which was, in fact, 'a swan, the crest of an earl, whose servant the waterman was'. In consequence, the citizen 'was, for the opprobrious dishonouring the earl's crest, by calling the swan a goose, fined and imprisoned'.[160]

If the wider community was expected to comprehend visual heraldic representations, then the attitude of the writers of heraldry manuals, who maintained the élitism of the language, begins to look increasingly like wishful thinking. The recognition that heraldic references were used in a variety of less formal genres than that of epic, and that even within epic there were tensions in the manner of its use, raises the suggestion

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Theatre, 1608-1614' in *The Seventeenth Century*, 13 (1998), pp.1-21.

159. William Wyrley, *The True Use of Armorie* (London, 1592; reprinted, London, 1853), p. 7.

160. Edward Hyde, *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon ... in which is included a continuation of his History of the Grand Rebellion: Written by himself*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1817), I, 61. Quoted in Squibb, *High Court of Chivalry*, pp. 63-4.

that heraldry may have been a more popular form of expression than these élite writers maintained.

Nigel Smith points out, however, that one must be careful in considering a text as representative of 'popular culture' simply because it 'occupied the public space in which the definition of 'popular' consists.'[161] Nevertheless, the use of heraldry in the following broadsheet publication of 1630 is important; it demonstrates the extent to which heraldry could signal beyond the chivalric and familial, and operate within a controversial area of popular concern. The anonymous author appropriates heraldry in a scatalogical diatribe against smoking, a habit which Charles I personally disliked[162] and against which legislation was confirmed in 1625 and 1626.[163] The argument depends on the interpretation of an imagined coat of arms, which was depicted in a woodcut above the verse (see figure 7). The first stanza is concerned with the speaker's search through a heraldry manual for a coat of arms for tobacconists. When he is disappointed, he finds a group of smokers, one of whom knows the arms he seeks. The main charge on the shield that is described to him is a naked man, bending over:

> A *Man reuerst proper* improperly
> *In a field Sable* mounting vp on high,
> His faire *posteriours* whilsts, his *head* and *hands*
> Are *pendant* to his *legges* whereon he stands;
> Out of his mouth two *pipes* a *Cheueron* makes,
> From whom the precious vapour that he takes:
> He at his backe side, very freely *vents*, (ll. 25-31)

A 'Morroll' is provided, and the anti-smoking propaganda becomes clear as instruction as to 'what in the Armes is ment' (l. 48) is provided:

> The *Sable field* resembles hells blacke pit,
> Whereas the Diuells in smoake and darknes sits
> The *man reuerst* shewes men, or beast indeed,
> That doate to much vpon this heathen weed,
> Who smoake away their precious Time and Chinke,
> And all their profit is contagious stinke:
> The pipes and fume vnto vs doth disclose,

161. Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London, 1994), p. 306.

162. Sharpe, *Personal Rule of Charles I*, p. 245.

163. Count Corti, *A History of Smoking* (London, 1931), p. 94.

Figure 7

The Armes Of The Tobachonists (1630)
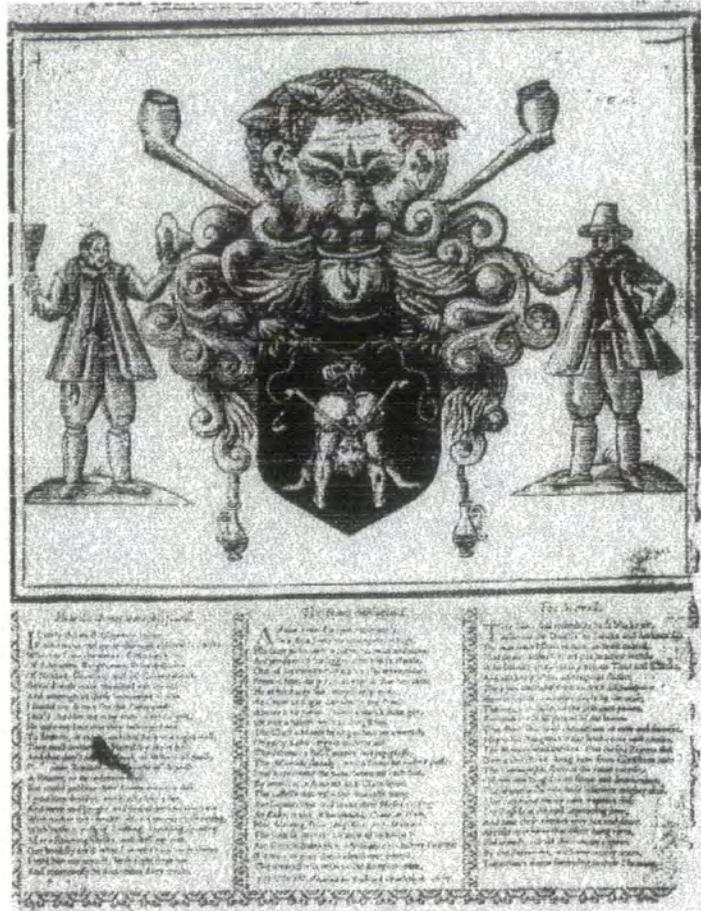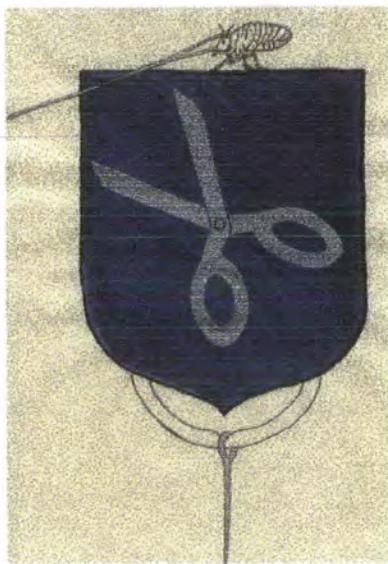
Figure 9

Figure 10

How it leades coxcomes dayly by the nose (ll. 49-56)[164]

Although the subject matter is obviously 'popular', the text cannot be simply labelled a product of 'popular culture' as the author is anonymous, and its message is so much in line with the interests of the court.

The development of heraldic language within this informal, non-chivalric sphere is confirmed, nevertheless, by a number of occasions where heraldry is associated with descriptions of alcohol, and drunkenness. 'Upon a Red Face', by Matthew Stevenson (fl. 1645-1680), for example, offers an image of a drunk, whose 'Nose according to the Heralds rules,/ Powder'd with Ermins is, in a field Gules.' (ll. 3-4).[165] Since ermine denotes purity, reflecting the white fur of the animal, the heraldic reference illustrates the corrupting influence of alcohol, as the man's drink-red (*gules*) nose is now only 'powder'd' with white skin.

Thomas Randolph (1605-1636), in 'Necessary Observations', also sees the drunkard's face in heraldic terms:

> Fly Drunkennesse, whose vile incontinence
> Takes both away the reason and the sence. (ll. 1-2)
> ....
> Puffing the cheeks, blearing the curious eye,
> Studding the face with vitious Heraldry. (ll. 11-12)[166]

Another example considers the drink itself in heraldic terms. John Philips (1676-1709) uses heraldry to describe the visual appeal of cider in 'Cyder: A Poem: In Two Books'. Philips lists the varieties of apples that create 'A pleasurable Medly' (l. 291), as their different 'Colours gay, Or, Azure, Gules/ Delights, and puzzles the Beholders Eye, (ll. 293-4).[167]

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164. Anon., *The Armes of the Tobachonists* (London, 1630).

165. Matthew Stevenson, *Poems: or, A Miscellany of Sonnets, Satyrs, Drollery, Panegyricks, Elegies, &c. At the Instance, and Request of Several Friends, Times, and Occasions, Composed; and now at their command Collected, and Committed to the Press* (London, 1673), p. 96.

166. Thomas Randolph, *Poetical and Dramatic Works*, edited by W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1875), pp. 561-2.

167. *The Poems of John Philips*, edited by M. G. Lloyd Thomas (Oxford, 1927), p. 77.

A necessary response to such light-hearted references is to ask how far they might be haphazard uses of language, or whether they are part of a pattern of language use that reflect more serious social changes. In the light of Yorke's work, it is clear that the appropriation of heraldic language could offer individuals the opportunity to mount a challenge to the traditional social hierarchies that were affirmed by the majority of heraldry manuals. Yeomen, craftsmen and merchants were all variously excluded from the heraldic sphere: John Ferne states unequivocally that 'yeomen ... with other sortes of people, buried in the culture of the earth' are forbidden by 'the lawe of Armes from honor, and the ensignes of nobility' and that 'those which practice mechanicall and handy-crafts, cannot be admitted into the meanest raunge of Nobilitie'.[168] Henry Peacham writes, 'concerning Merchants', that 'the exercise of Merchandize hath beene (I confesse) accounted base, and much derogating from Nobility'.[169] Whilst the heraldry manuals were firm in their categorisation of those to whom the signs of gentility could apply, the judgements of the Court of Chivalry show that, in practice, attributions of gentility to traders were much negotiated during the century. G. D. Squibb has studied the rulings of a number of cases in the 1630s and 1640s and has concluded that, although controversial, 'Trade in itself was not inconsistent with gentility'. Squibb cites, for example, the case of Done v. Babington of 1640, in which Edward Done submitted that he was 'a gentleman by birth and a linen draper by trade'.[170]

Another indication of social change is the appearance of numerous verse satires, which responded to a situation in which arms were regarded as being assumed by a wider range of people than had previously been the case. It is evident that writers used the resources of blazon to articulate their response to the social changes they observed, as armorial bearings were used without effective regulation, often as a result of unauthorised arms-painters having been commissioned, without reference to the heralds.[171] In 1615, William Goddard used armorial references to ridicule those who no

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168. Ferne, *Glory of Generositie*, p. 7.

169. *Peacham's Heraldry*, pp. 68-9.

170. Squibb, *High Court of Chivalry*, pp. 176-7.

171. Susan Foister, 'Foreigners at Court: Holbein, Van Dyck and the Painter-Staines Company' in *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts: Essays in honour of Sir Oliver Millar*, edited by David Howarth

longer derived their gentle status from martial achievement:

> 57.
> Hee's made a gentleman although noe knight
> Hath hee not bought a knights old cloathes? ... (ll. 2-3)
> ....
> For now tis cloathes the gentleman doth make
> Men from gaie cloathes theire pedigrees doe take
> But wott you what's the armes to such mens howse
> Why this, hands chasinge of a rampant Lowse. (ll. 5-8)[172]

The arms of Goddard's upstart gentleman depict itching hands chasing fleas (see figure 8 below).

Figure 8.

Through this image, Goddard makes clear his scorn for those whose honourable status is derived from their own efforts (their ability to pay for particular garments) rather than from their birth. It is an attitude that develops throughout the century; when such concerns or prejudices were expressed in verse, the heraldic vocabulary was an obvious resource for writers but, it will be argued here, its use in this context had considerable implications for the language of heraldry itself.

A number of other examples serve to illustrate this pattern of language use. *The Minte of deformities*, published in London in 1600, uses similar imagery to that later taken up by Goddard. The writer styles himself 'C. G., gentleman', and again attacks the degenerate elements of his society, focusing on those who sell arms as one source of the corruption: 'Vertues-decayed-world is out of vse/ and honest trading mindes are cleane extinct' (ll. 13-14), he declares. Outward signs of gentility are scorned: 'a purchast shift will make them gentlemen' (l. 26). The narrator then turns to the sellers of false pedigrees:

(Cambridge, 1993), pp. 32-50 (p. 41).

172. William Goddard, *A Neaste of Waspes Latelie Found out and discovered in the Low-countreys, yealding as sweete hony as some of our English bees* (Dort, 1615), sig. E3ᵛ.

But who more proud then beggers mounted hie,
Whose three yeeres gentry from a brokers shoppe,
Will proue his stenching-silke stampt pedigree, (ll. 43-5)

a gentleman? why its common unto all, (l. 52)

....

Taylors I hope are no meane gentlemen.

In azure rampant sticks a payre of sheares,
our coate (out of a thousand) one weele sorte,
A spanish needle pendant, and that beares
our crest, which is our ornamentall port:
a bodkin iacent with a lowse doth hould,
makes our impression in honours mould. (ll. 60-66)[173]

These arms of the upstart tailors (see figure 9), who request the 'gentle mayster scribe' (l. 73) to 'Become our harrold' (l. 73) and 'Blase our antiquitie ... for a bribe' (l. 75) are also the subject of heraldic satire more than a century later. Alexander Pennecuik (d.1730) wrote 'Comical Reflections on a Taylor's Sign', which, again, ridicules foolish and grasping tailors (see figure 10):

Lo, here's a Sign all overspread with Charms,
Never had Taylor such a Coat of Arms.
A Hand cut off adorns the azure Field,
Which truly, Sirs, doth this Reflection yield,
A Taylor's Hand, that steals the People's Stuff,
Doth very well deserve to be cut off.
The Scissars pointing at the Sun's bright Rays,
The thievish Temper of the Man displays.
Fain would he steal the very God of Day,
And clip his golden Fringes all away. (ll. 3-12)

....

The Sun ne'er shin'd on such a Fool before
Surely you've broke your Leg in stretching high
'To steal the Sun down from the azure Sky.
Most just that Motto should surround your Crest,
Let Work bear Witness, you're a witless Beast. (ll. 17-21).[174]

Henry Bold, in 'Mock Song LXVIII', likewise seeks to attribute a debased form of arms to those he deems ignorant and unworthy social climbers (an *abatement* is a mark of

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173. C. G., *Minte of deformities*, pp. 4-6.

174. Alexander Pennecuik, *Comical Reflections on a Taylor's Sign thus blazon'd: Azure, a Hand couped, ruffled proper, grasping a Pair of Scissars, expanded, Ore, pointing to the Crest, a meridian Sun of the 2d, incircled with Motto, 'Let Work bear Witness'* (Edinburgh, 1750), pp. 28-9.

dishonour on a shield):

> Abatements Degrading,
> Are for men of Trading,
> Who have since forgon
> By Birth, what's their own (ll. 15-18)
> ....
> He that bears a base mind, or Mechaniquely lives
> Reverts, his own Armes, or a Batoun he gives, (ll. 27-28)[175]

The implication is that tradesmen must bear the marks of bastardy (a *baton* is a diagonal line across the shield, and the typical mark of bastardy) or of a chaotic world (arms *reversed* or *subverted* indicate that they are turned upside down).

When read alongside Yorke's work, these poems by Bold, 'C. G.', Goddard and Pennecuik, respectively, illustrate considerable tensions in the use of heraldic language; on the one hand, heraldry may be seen as a resource upon which the newly empowered can draw to express their sense of participation in society. At the same time, heraldry is used exclusively, to defend traditional views of an hierarchical society. However, in attributing mock arms to those whom they would exclude from their society, writers were contributing to a culture which debased heraldry more fundamentally.

During the seventeenth century, the reputation and function of the heralds were also being threatened by unregulated competition from other arms-painters, the serious effect of whose activity has been explored by Anthony Wagner, who provides a useful explanation of the significance of the heralds' loss of their monopoly:

> the value of his arms to the armiger lay in the fact that he was distinguished from most of the world in bearing arms at all, and from other armigers in that his particular arms were his and his family's alone. But if these two conditions could not be reasonably maintained the whole system broke down and with it fell the credit of those whose duty it was to maintain it [.][176]

This chaotic situation informs much of the use of heraldry in verse of the period. The idea of the herald as simply one seller of arms among many was much advanced by the

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175. Bold, *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique &c.*, pp. 116-17.

176. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 241.

numerous editions of John Earle's *Microcosmography*, which was circulated in manuscript prior to the eleven editions that were published between 1628 and 1665. Earle's satirical character sketch of a herald is uncompromising, attacking both the language and practice of heraldry:

> His trade is honour, and he sells it, and gives arms himself, though he be no gentleman. His bribes are like those of a corrupt judge; for they are the prices of blood. He seems very rich in discourse, for he tells you of whole fields of gold and silver, Or and Argent, worth much in French, but in English nothing. ... His traffic is a kind of pedlary-ware [.][177]

This is the attitude which Bold subsequently reflects in 'Song XXVI':

> Though thy Father thee before
> Neither armes, or Scutcheon bore, (ll. 11-12)
> ....
> Thou shalt have,
> What thy Dad
> Yet never gave,
> For Heraldry's to be sold. (ll. 17-20)[178]

The following two examples were published in 1691 and 1692, respectively, and reflect a further decline in the heralds' reputation. Three factors in particular contributed to the situation: the decline in heraldic funerals, which 'grew very rare' after 1690;[179] the end of the heralds' Visitations, the final series of which were carried out between 1681 and 1687;[180] and the unfavourable outcome of a Court of Chivalry prosecution in 1691. This last instance involved a cheesemonger who was prosecuted for various offences against the heralds, including painting arms without a licence; his successful denial of the Court's jurisdiction, in Wagner's opinion, 'damaged its reputation and authority'.[181]

In 1691, 'The Power of Money' appeared in *Merry Drollery Compleat*, an anonymous *Collection of Jovial Poems*. The herald is characterised as a seller of arms, who has no

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177. John Earle, *Microcosmography; or, A Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters*, edited by Harold Osborne (London, 1933), p. 93.

178. Henry Bold, *Latine Songs, With their English: and Poems*, collected by William Bold (London, 1685), p. 112.

179. Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Ancestors* (London, 1978), p. 84.

180. Wagner, *Heralds and Ancestors*, p. 40.

181. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 314.

regard for his rôle as an arbiter of honour:

> This herald gives arms not for merit but store
> And gives coats to those that did sell coats before,
> If their pockets be but lin'd well with argent & ore. (ll. 26-8) [182]

Almost the same metaphor is used by Edward Ward (1667-1731) in *The Miracles Perform'd by Money; A Poem*:

> Yet Learned Heralds can for Mony show,
> From some rich Family he first did grow:
> Tho, for some time it may have been obscure,
> His Ancestors came in with th'Conqueror.
> If store of Or and Argent he has got,
> He shall not fail to have 'em in his Coat;
>
> Tho' Dormant Couchant long his Name did rest,
> He shall have Lyon Rampant for his Crest; (ll. 175-82)
> ....
> Thus store of Mony and a vast Estate,
> Can of a Clown a Gentleman create. (ll. 185-6) [183]

By 1700, therefore, Thomas Brown can utterly dismiss the activities of the heralds. In 'Amusement X: A Heralds Office', he concluded that:

> The Heralds I see have but little to
> do, Honour and Arms which used to
> employ all Men of Birth and Parts,
> is now almost dwindled into an Airy
> Nothing ... (ll. 92-96) [184]

His observation was prescient. Wagner records that between December 1704 and December 1706, 'not a single grant of arms was registered' by the heralds'. [185]

The erosion of the heralds' reputation in print cannot be divorced from the attitude of

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182. *Merry Drollery Compleat; Or, A Collection of Jovial Poems, Merry Songs, Witty Drolleries, Intermixed with Pleasant Catches: The First Part. Collected by W. N., C. B., R. S., J. G., Lovers of Wit* (London, 1691), p. 116.

183. Edward Ward, *The Miracles Perform'd by Money; A Poem: By the Author of the Humours of a Coffee-house* (London, 1692), pp. 8-9.

184. Thomas Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical* (London, 1700), p. 130.

185. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 318.

writers to heraldic language. In the quotation above, Earle turns from an attack on the heralds to mock the language of heraldry itself. Their 'discourse' may seem 'very rich' but, he declares, it is 'worth ... nothing'. Although it could be argued that the presence of heraldic references in such satirical verses as these confirms its popular usage and vitality, there are a number of poems in which writers explicitly ridicule the heraldic vocabulary, questioning both its authority and creative usefulness.

Brown's 'A Heralds Office', quoted above, opens with the narrator observing the 'Confounded Noise' (l. 1) in the office and declaring that 'Descents, Pedigrees, Genealogies,/ Coat Armour, Bearings/ Additions, Abatements' (ll. 2-4) are just so much 'insignificant Jargon' (l. 5) and 'Gibberish' (l. 6). In turn, 'C. G.', the gentleman author of *The Minte of deformities*, considers the result of the irregular trade in arms to be that 'Babels new built, confusion rules the toung,' (l. 145). The descent into linguistic chaos, in the view of 'C. G.', portends 'wracte vnto our weale and vs' (l. 150).[186] Finally, 'A Heralds Office' reflects the fact that heraldry can no longer be relied upon to identify or name the individual. The narrator opines: 'Honour is grown/ Contemptible' (ll. 66-7) and so 'nothing is now/ called by its right Name' (ll. 90-1). Wagner's comments, above, suggest that once the integrity of armory is lost, a 'whole system' breaks down. In these verses, the reader is forced to confront both the social crisis, in the sense that traditional social hierarchies have been challenged, and the linguistic crisis, where heraldry is so tarnished that it no longer had the authority to name and identify the self.

Attacks on blazon undermined its authority. The following lines, from 'A Satire Touching Nobility', by John Oldham (1653-1683), rewrite the history of heraldry, dismissing the language as something irrelevant and 'apart' (l. 137). The satire is subtitled 'out of Monsieur Boileau', and is an adaptation of Boileau's *Satire V*, published in 1666 and written between 1663 and 1665. The satire ridicules both the texts and one of the leading practitioners of heraldry:

> Soon after, man, fruitful in vanities,
> Did blazoning and armory devise,
> Founded a college for the herald's art,

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186. C. G. *Minte of deformities*, p. 10.

And made a language of their terms apart,
Composed of frightful words, of Chief, and Base,
Of Chevron, Saltier, Canton, Bend, and Fesse,
And whatsoe'er of hideous jargon else
Mad Guillim and his barbarous volume fills. (ll. 134-41)[187]

This was a widespread satirical topic. Mention is made in *Hudibras*, published in 1663,
by Samuel Butler (1612-80) that: '... a Herauld/ Can make a Gentleman, scarce a year
old,/ Of ancient Kings in a small space...' (*Hudibras*, II. iii. 669-72).[188] Other
examples are found in the works of Robert Gould (d. 1709) and George Daniel, who
both use culinary comparisons in their derision of heraldry. Gould dedicates 'The
Corruption of the Times by Money: a satyr' to Fleetwood Shepard, a gentleman-usher
and daily waiter to the King. The narrator declares that the terms which distinguish the
gentry from other members of society have become so debased that they are no more
accurate or worthwhile than those which distinguish soup from stew:

More barbarous Terms we now in Cookery see,
Than in that barb'rous Myst'ry Heraldry;
And as those Terms distinguish Gentry there,
So Fricasies, Ragousts and Soups do here
And both alike, their Wit and Worth declare. (ll. 635-9)[189]

The narrator of Daniel's 'Parted per Pale', expresses shock that poetry should have been
tainted by heraldry, and implies that heraldic references in verse are foul and offensive,
spoiling poetry in the same way that too much lard spoils meat:

But what! is Poetrie
Come to be Larded, with ranke Heraldrie?
Soe some Cookes spoile good Meat; (ll. 47-9)[190]

A shield *parted per pale* is one divided vertically, and the poem presents a divided
opinion on the value of heraldry in poetry; the narrator equivocates, 'yet not amisse,/
ffor divers Palats; some like that, some this' (ll. 49-50). Yet for his own purposes,

187. *Poems of John Oldham*, introduced by Bonamy Dobrée (London, 1960), p. 219.

188. Quoted in *The Poems of John Oldham*, edited by Harold F. Brooks with Raman Selden (Oxford, 1987), p. 466.

189. *The Works of Mr. Robert Gould: consisting of those Poems and Satyrs which were formerly Printed and Corrected since by the Author* (London, 1709), p. 284.

190. *The Poems of George Daniel, Esq. of Beswick, Yorkshire (1616-1657) from the Original MSS in the British Museum: hitherto unprinted*, edited by Alexander B. Grosart, 4 vols (n.p., 1878), I, 44-5.

Daniel implies that the 'Colours ... which I love' (ll. 23 and 26) are not the 'Gules, or, vert, azure' (l. 21) from a herald's roll but the 'poor Common Blacke and White' (l. 26) with which he writes. The significance of these lines is one of authority. Daniel rejects a language (represented by the colours of the blazon) which is externally authorised (originating in the 'herald's roll') in favour of a language which, though 'poor' and 'Common', gives expression to his own writing and is, by implication, unlike heraldry in being self-authorising.

In 1682, John Gibbon's heraldry manual, *Introductio ad Latinam Blasoniam*, emphasised that heraldry was a language of public record, and that its use needed to be objectively corrected and regulated. The futility of this aim is evident. In England, the position that was upheld by the legal system was that:

> none can assume Arms, but that all must owe them to Authority ... For Arms are Badges and Symbols of Dignity; and no Man can arrogate a Dignity to himself, without the Prince's Leave. (p. 15)

The fundamental challenges to authority in the seventeenth century and the execution of the monarch, regarded by many as the source of all heraldic authority on earth, inevitably had a dramatic impact on the esteem in which heraldry was held. If heraldry 'tells society about itself' then the dominant theme for this period is one of disorder. Although this chapter has been concerned with reading the literary record for evidence of this, a Parliamentary ordinance of 1646 confirms that, even before the execution of Charles I, a revolution in the way in which heraldry was regarded in society was taking place. The ordinance charges forty-four men with the regulation of 'the Office and Officers of Armes', as a response to the fact that:

> divers persons have assumed to themselves the use and bearing of the Armes of severall of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdome, whereby many errors are crept in, and divers abuses committed since the sitting of this Parliament [.][191]

Even within the epic genre, in which heraldry retains most closely its traditional chivalric associations, it is clear that the use of heraldic language no longer simply confirmed chivalric ideals; writers used heraldic references, for example, to highlight

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191. *An Ordinance of the Lords & Commons Assembled in Parliament, Authorizing Commissioners to setle and regulate the Heralds Office, and to supply the Offices of Constable and Marshall of England in matters of Armes* (London, 1646), sig. A2^r.

the unnatural and unheroic aspects of civil war. In those instances where heraldry was used in epic simply to recall traditional ideologies, its use towards the end of the period, for example in the work of Sir Richard Blackmore, seems nostalgic.

In a social context, references to armorial bearings in the literature of the period begin to serve as expressions of the citizenry's equal right to participate in society, rather than as a demonstration of the superiority of an élite. Ironically, it was those who used heraldry to attack the new armigers that did the most to move heraldry beyond its traditional boundaries. Since their arguments were presented within satirical contexts, the language of heraldry, in which they couched their ridicule of the upstarts, was itself trivialised. At the hands of Brown, Daniel, Gould and Oldham, it was declared irrelevant. At this point, Gibbon's plea for regulation, in 1682, seems naïve and behind the times.
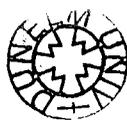
> in Commonwealths ... he or they that have the supreme authority can make whatsoever they please to stand as signs of honour ... of civil honour, ... such as are magistracy, offices, titles, and in some places coats and scutcheons painted: and men honour such as have them, as having so many signs of favour in the Commonwealth, which favour is power. Honourable is whatsoever possession, action, or quality is an argument and sign of power. ... honour consisteth only in the opinion of power. ... Scutcheons and coats of arms hereditary, where they have any eminent privileges, are honourable; otherwise not for their power consisteth either in such privileges, or in riches, or some such thing as is equally honoured in other men.
>
> (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter X)[192]

This passing reference to heraldry, in Hobbes' *Leviathan* of 1651, is made within the context of a chapter entitled 'Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour and Worthiness'. Hobbes regards heraldry as one sign of the transfer of power between individuals in society. Such signs gain their authority from the governed; while governors may create the sign, being able to 'make whatsoever they please to stand as signs of honour', it is only by dint of general 'opinion' that the signs have significance and gain authority. In *Leviathan*, inherited arms have no intrinsic worth and are to be valued only insofar as they are the visible manifestation of their bearer's current social 'privileges' or economic wealth. These issues, of inherited privilege, of the nature of authority and the expression of power, will be reflected in discussions throughout this chapter, which is concerned with heraldry and political power. It will examine how heraldic signs are presented in verse forms with a political context, and how they are manipulated in order to affirm or to undermine the position of individuals and groups within society, or to articulate their loss of power.

At the end of the sixteenth century, legislation protected heraldry's place as the language which defined the hierarchical society. Those who challenged the accepted order, and the institutional regulation of heraldry, received harsh punishments if they were brought before the Court of Star Chamber. On 13 February 1579/80, a glazier called William Dakyns was sentenced 'to stand in the pillory in several places, to lose his ears and to suffer other cruelties' for breaching the heralds' monopoly on selling

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192. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 62-9.

armorial designs and for 'wearing a herald's tabard'.[193] Laws also existed to curtail the distortion of heraldry and protect its integrity. A statute of 1543 declared that it was a felony to issue false prophecies inspired by the devices of the armigerous, a fact which must inform any examination of the creative representation of heraldry in the imaginative sphere.[194]

In the seventeenth century, the assumption that heraldry was of importance in the governance of a state was well established. Gerard Legh remained an important heraldic authority in the seventeenth century; in *The Accedence of Armory* (1562) Legh cited classical and Biblical authorities for the political significance of heraldry in society, referring to:

> the worthie bearers of them [Armes] (which Plato affirmeth to be the
> upholders of the common wealth & Salomon saith likewise, where such
> be not, the people shall fall to ruine)   (sig. A2ᵛ)

Edmund Bolton, in *The Elements of Armories*, likewise affirmed that:

> Armorie is a Maiesty worthy thy service ... Neither doth She want her
> part also in our Comon-weale, and they, who sit chiefe in the *primum
> mobile* of state, bethinke themselves, how to enlighten Britain with the
> beams of restored Honor.   (sig. A4ʳ⁻ᵛ)

This view of the importance of heraldry, or armory, in establishing a governing authority within a Commonwealth, is echoed by Matthew Carter, who writes that 'so necessary is the possession of Arms, that no Common-wealth ... no publick Society can subsist without it'.[195] Silvanus Morgan also notes, in a broadsheet on heraldry, the 'necessity' of coats of arms for the 'distinction ... of Political Bodies'.[196] John Guillim further examined the public aspect of heraldry in *A Display of Heraldry*. In particular, he points to the way in which heraldry could signal political loyalties; those arms that he defines as 'Publick' are the 'official arms of office, inherited by holders of office or

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193. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 237.

194. 33 Henry VIII c. 14. Quoted in Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford, 1979), p. 390 and Whigham, 'Elizabethan Aristocratic Insignia', p. 347.

195. Matthew Carter, *Honor Redivivus: or, the Analysis of Honor and Armory*, third edition (London, 1673), p. 13. The first edition was published in 1655. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

196. Sylvanus Morgan, *Heraldry Epitomized: And its Reason Essay'd* (London, 1679).

position' (p. 14). The use of these by anyone other than the office-holder would be viewed as a 'token of Loyalty' to the office (p. 14). As will be seen below, the misuse of public arms could be construed as a sign of political disloyalty.

As opposing political theories regarding the nature of government and monarchy developed throughout the period, heraldic language offered a convenient form of reference for poets seeking to explore the implications of particular forms of government for their readers. Many of the references discussed here depend on heraldry to articulate a paternalistic view of kingship, in line with the view expounded by James I to Parliament in 1610, that 'Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriæ*, the politique father of his people.'[197] This understanding of heraldry carries further implications: arms descend through generations according to principles of patrilineal inheritance, so the notion that sovereignty is underpinned by patriarchal succession is usually implicit in armorial references to monarchy. More generally, heraldry also offered a vocabulary for exploring the operation of hereditary privilege within a patriarchal society. As in a family, there was no sense in which arms could be changed according to the wishes of the current bearer or their community, who should, rather, expect to be the unquestioning inheritors of signs that had been determined by previous generations.

It is evident from John Bossewell's late sixteenth-century heraldry manual that, when heraldry was associated with monarchy, its function as an instrument of social cohesion and political stability was regarded as being particularly important. Heraldic forms had long been assumed to rouse readers or onlookers to feelings of loyalty and reverence for the crown; Bossewell described in his *Workes of Armorie* the expected response of viewers to the arms of Elizabeth I:

> who readinge, & marking the order of the blazon of the said moste noble Armes, and seinge the same afterwarde in any Churche, Castle, or other place, but by & by he will know the same, and remember the reuerence therunto due: and not onely that, but wil breake out, and say, *God saue the Queene, God saue her Grace*. Whiche woordes so saide, and hearde of others, bringeth all the hearers in remembrance of their obedience, and duetie to her, being our most lawful Prince, and Gouernour.   (sig. 20ᵛ)

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197. James I, *The Workes of the most high and mightie Prince, James ... King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland ...* (London, 1616), p. 529.

Political loyalty to the sovereign thus implied a respect for the integrity of the royal arms and the heraldic system, including the formality of its language. The ability of poets to manipulate heraldic references and symbolism in their work thus offered opportunities to challenge the nature of sovereignty and succession, as well as to tackle fundamental issues of democratic participation.

Although the most celebrated prosecution involving the abuse of royal arms occurred in the sixteenth century, in the early eighteenth century, footnotes to the case still appear in the work of Edward Ward (1667-1731). Ward's use of heraldic references in 'The Merry Travellers: or, A Trip upon Ten-Toes, from Moorfields to Bromley: an Humerous Poem' illustrates the compression which heraldry afforded a political satirist of some of the most profound political questions of the period:

> For Mortals oft by Names are cheated,
> And by bifarious Terms outwitted; (Pt II, ll. 612-13)
> ....
> As *Red* and *Green*, with Men of Art,
> In common Coats, are *Gules* and *Vert*;
> But when the Bearings of a King
> Shall fall beneath our blazoning,
> If we're in Heraldry ingenious,
> Those Colours must be *Mars* and *Venus*
> Besides, sometimes the World may see
> *High-Treason* blazon'd *Loyalty*:
>
> And then again, for some new reason,
> Loyalty shall be call'd High-Treason:
> Therefore Words signify no more
> Than what our Betters take 'em for.
> Which shows, that mighty Men, as proud
> As Heathen Gods, must be allow'd
> To cheat, with Names, the common Crowd. (Pt II, ll. 620-34)[198]

A footnote reference to the Earl of Surrey is printed with regard to line 629. Henry Howard was executed for treason in January 1547, but only finally laid to rest in 1614. Among a number of charges of using inappropriate heraldry that were brought against him, Howard was condemned for quartering the arms of Edward the Confessor with his own.[199] For Ward, the ambiguities of the Surrey prosection are drawn into a verse

198. Edward Ward, *The Wandering Spy: or, the Merry Observator* (London, 1724), pp. 35-6.

199. John Martin Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk: A Quincentennial History* (Oxford and New York, 1982), pp. 49-51.

which presents a society facing a crisis of signification. People are cheated of a clarity of understanding by the equivocal use of language by the 'mighty Men' (l. 632) who rule them. Heraldry is an example of this 'bifarious' (l. 613) language. For example, royal arms can be blazoned according to the planets; as Henry Peacham explains, 'The lofty Blazon by Planets is most proper for the Armes of Emperours, Monarchs, Kings and Princes (p. 11), but their meaning will be equivocal. Again, 'Mars and Venus' (l. 625), according to Peacham, signify the opposing elements of fire and water respectively, as well as being classical deities of war and love.

When there are such tensions in the use of language, Ward suggests that meaning becomes a matter of hierarchical authority; significance is only to be determined by 'our Betters' (l. 631). The fact that the narratorial voice, which controls the verse, is thus distanced from the arbiters of meaning in society allows the verse to dramatise an essential political question: whether authority arises from the popular will, or whether power is located in a hierarchy that regarded itself as divinely ordained. Ward's contempt for this latter notion is evident in his reference to the governing élite as like 'Heathen Gods' (l. 633) in their attitude to the people.

The assumption, in lines 622-3 of Ward's 'Humerous Poem', is that the sovereign can be, and should be, subject to popular authority. This is expressed heraldically. The narrator looks to a time 'when the Bearings of a King/ Shall fall beneath our blazoning', indicating that the sovereign identity of the monarch, which the armorial bearings represent, will be controlled by the people, with whom the narrator identifies, and be subject to their blazoning of the royal arms. Published in 1724, this verse should be read not only within an historic context, as the printed footnote to Surrey directs, but with reference to the contemporary concerns regarding the bureaucracy of Sir Robert Walpole. As J. A. Downie writes, Walpole's administration was subject to many allegations of corruption, and was criticised for 'neglecting the welfare of "the lower sort of people"'.[200] It is this neglect which Ward's verse challenges, as, beneath the irony, lies the possibility for the appropriation of heraldry, by the people.

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200. J.A. Downie, *To Settle the Succession of the State: Literature and Politics 1678-1750* (Basingstoke and London, 1994), p. 112.

That heraldic references in poetry may signal the honourable transfer of powers is particularly evident in Andrew Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House: To My Lord Fairfax', of 1654. The effect of Marvell's use of heraldic iconography is, in part, to challenge the notion that the retirement of the Parliamentary General to his family's country estate of Nun Appleton, in Yorkshire, might be regarded as dishonourable; as Henry Peacham writes:

> For since all vertue consisteth in Action, and no man is borne for him-selfe... hardly they are to be admitted Noble, who (though of never so excellent parts) consume their light, as in a darke Lanthorne, in contemplation, and a Stoicall retirednesse.[201]

'Upon Appleton House' describes how the 'hero' (l. 281) 'retired' (l. 283) to his estate, where he 'laid these gardens out in sport/ In the just figure of a fort;' (ll. 285-6). The poem includes a description of the family walking in the garden. It recalls a military parade, as the morning sun 'Hangs out the colours of the day' (l. 289), the flowers open to display 'Their silken ensigns' (l. 294), and, 'as their Governor goes by' (l. 297), the 'fragrant volleys they let fly' (l. 298). He is accompanied by his wife, while, 'to salute their Governess' (l. 299), the flowers 'Again as great a charge they press' (l. 300). It is evident in the stanzas that follow, which develop the floral tribute, that the arms of both Fairfax and Vere are the inspiration for the metaphor:

> See how the flowers, as at parade,
> Under their colours stand displayed:
> Each regiment in order grows,
> That of the tulip, pink, and rose.
>
> But when the vigilant patrol
> Of stars walks round about the Pole,
> Their leaves, that to the stalks are curled,
> Seem to their staves the ensigns furled. (ll. 309-316)[202]

The armorial bearings of both Fairfax and Vere include the colour red, blazoned *gules*. The former comprises, in part, *three bars gemelles gules* and the latter is blazoned *quarterly, first and ninth, quarterly gules and or, in the first quarter a mullet of five points argent (for Vere)*. Marvell's description of the three 'regiment[s]' (l. 311) of the

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201. *Peacham's Heraldry*, p. 65.

202. *Andrew Marvell, The Complete Poems*, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno (London, 1985), pp. 75-99, (p. 85).

'tulip, pink, and rose' (l. 312) evokes the Fairfax shield, with its red bars (*gemelles* indicates narrow bars, depicted close together on a shield), while the image of the stars walking 'about the Pole' particularly compliments Lady Fairfax, daughter of Sir Horace Vere.[203] Through these metaphors, the couple is placed at the centre of the natural world of Appleton House. The lines imply the defining presence of the family, honourably bound up with their estate. Without them, and without, therefore, the General's retirement, its way of life would lack the dignity that is made manifest by the armorial references.[204] That their presence is the moving force behind the restoration and the recovery of both the family and the estate after the deaths and destruction of the civil war is also expressed in armorial terms. The trees in the estate's woods are compared to their genealogical family trees; 'The double wood of ancient stocks, ... like two pedigrees appears,' (ll. 489 & 491). Both the re-planting of the trees and the restoration of the souls of the dead to heaven are implied in the observation that 'though many fell in war,/ Yet more to heaven shooting are' (ll. 493-494).[205] Again, the shooting star metaphor locates this recovery in the presence of the family itself.

The authority which an armorial description confers upon a subject is also evident in Marvell's poignant use of heraldry in 'The Unfortunate Lover'. The subject of this poem is thought by Nigel Smith to be 'the newly unfathered princes, Charles and James'[206] but Peter Davidson argues, more specifically, that it 'would appear to be an allegorical painting of the exiled Charles II.'[207] The final stanza describes a banneret, a knight dubbed on the field of battle:

> This is the only banneret
> That ever Love created yet:

203. Other references in the poem to the star in the Vere coat of arms also compliment Anne Vere; Fairfax's daughter Mary, to whom Marvell had been appointed Tutor in 1650, is praised as having been nursed 'In a domestic heaven', under 'the starry Vere' (ll. 722 & 724).

204. I have discussed the use of heraldry in this poem, among others, in my article 'An Assessment of the Significance of Heraldic Imagery in Country House Poetry of the Seventeenth Century', *The Coat of Arms,* New Series 11 (1996), pp. 222-236. Perhaps surprisingly, Marvell does not drawn upon the armorial bearings of his subjects in the elegies to Lord Francis Villiers, Lord Hastings and the Lord Protector.

205. See Alastair Fowler, *The Country House Poem* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 300.

206. Smith, *Literature and Revolution,* p. 289.

207. *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660,* edited by Peter Davidson (Oxford, 1998), p. lxx.

> Who though, by the malignant stars,
> Forced to live in storms and wars,
> Yet dying leaves a perfume here,
> And music within every ear:
> And he in story only rules,
> In a field sable a lover gules. (ll. 57-64)[208]

As Peter Davidson points out, 'story' in the seventeenth century meant a 'depiction' or 'legendary picture';[209] here, the bleak experience of the exiled Charles II is captured in the heraldic imagery of the last line. Reflecting the previous stanzas, which describe the lover 'ragg'd with wounds,' (l. 54), battered by waves and clasping a 'stubborn rock' (l. 52) beneath an 'angry heaven' (l. 41), the heraldic description must be that of a red, or bloodstained, lover against a black, or stormy, background. Peter Davidson has also pointed out the extent to which the images in 'The Unfortunate Lover' echo the devices which appear on civil war flags. In particular, he has noted that of the Parliamentary Captain Hawkeridge, which shows, on a field sable, an armed man 'in trouble and anguish' at the base of 'some rugged cliffs', while a storm cloud rains 'fire and blood' above him, in the top left-hand corner of the flag.[210]

The political significance of heraldry at the beginning of the seventeenth century lay in its institutionalised ability to signify a community subject to an hierarchical order. When that order was later overturned, it is perhaps unsurprising that in at least one example, heraldry itself appears to be set aside. Following the execution of Charles I, an illustrated verse elegy, *The Kings Last Farewell to the World, or the Dead Kings Living Meditations, at the approach of Death denounced against Him* was published, anonymously, as an illustrated broadsheet in London in 1648/9. The fourteen stanzas are set beneath a woodcut of a tomb, which is flanked by two heralds carrying banners. The banners, however, display blank shields, a dramatic contrast to the typical function of heralds at funerals, who would display banners bearing the deceased's arms. That they are blank in this broadsheet elegy implies a crisis of representation that is located at Charles's tomb; they may signify that heraldry is no longer an appropriate reference

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208. *Andrew Marvell, The Complete Poems*, p. 43.

209. *Poetry and Revolution*, p. lxxi

210. *The English Emblem Tradition,* Volume III, *Emblematic Flag Devices of the English Civil Wars 1642-1660*, edited by Alan R. Young, with Beert Verstraete (Toronto, Buffalo and London, c.1995), p. 241. I am very grateful to Professor Davidson for drawing my attention to this flag.

to the king, or even that the system itself has become irrelevant with the collapse of monarchy.[211]

Robert Herrick's poetry, too, suggests that heraldry could have no practical consequence in the face of the suffering of so many members of the gentry and nobility at this time. The armigerous subject of Herrick's verse 'Upon Clunn', meditates on his family's coats of arms and is transported beyond his present, impoverished, state to an earlier, heroic and chivalric age, when heraldry signified the stability of ancestral privilege:

> A rowle of Parchment *Clunn* about him beares,
> Charg'd with the Armes of all his Ancestors:
> And seems halfe ravisht, when he looks upon
> That *Bar*, this *Bend*; that *Fess*, this *Cheveron*;
> This *Manch*, that *Moone*; this *Martlet*, and that *Mound*;
> This counterchange of *Perle* and *Diamond*.
> What joy can *Clun* have in that Coat, or this,
> When as his owne still out at elboes is? (ll. 1-8)[212]

As the victim of political and social revolution, Clunn is disorientated; the armorial pedigree he carries around with him has become a redundant piece of paper. Heraldry has come to represent his powerlessness within a new order. Nevertheless, Clunn does not discard his grant of arms. Nigel Smith understands Herrick's 1648 *Hesperides* poems, in which 'Upon Clunn' appears, to be examples of those lyrics which 'kept the gentry and the nobility together during the Civil War and the Interregnum ... the form ensures the continuity of civilisation inside the order of words.'[213] That Clunn continues to 'look[s] upon' (l. 3) his armorial parchment suggests that the heraldic mode is not an expression of defeat, but, rather, one of the defiance of a class whose beleaguered state is only temporary.

In his satire on the Westminster Assembly, 'The Mixt Assembly', John Cleveland uses the colours of heraldry to demonstrate against what he regarded as the inappropriate

211. Anon., *The Kings Last Farewell to the World, or the Dead Kings Living Meditations, at the approach of Death denounced against Him* (London, 1648).

212. *Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, p. 295.

213. Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, p. 250.

composition of the 'Fleabitten Synod' (l. 1). The Assembly comprised lay people and members of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Independent clergy, and, to Cleveland, these are 'discolour'd Mates' (l. 5). Furthermore, they would inspire monstrous births since, 'chequering her 'magination' (l. 12) at the sight of them, a woman would have 'borne a dappl'd son,' (l. 11). The early references to colour and to 'chequering', which recalls the heraldic term *chequy*, (that is, a shield divided into small squares of two alternating colours or metals), establishes the use of heraldic language in the poem. Later, the colours are blazoned more directly:

> Strange Scarlet Doctors these, they'l passe in Story
> For sinners halfe refin'd in Purgatory;
> Or parboyl'd Lobsters, where there joyntly rules
> The fading Sables and the coming Gules. (ll. 37-40)[214]

With the reference, in line 37, to the scarlet robes of academics, the concern is to undermine the Assembly's ability to provide intellectual leadership; their disunity is represented heraldically by their part-black (*sable*) part-red (*gules*) colouration. Line 40, which has been paraphrased by Peter Davidson as: 'The fading days of darkness and the coming days of blood', further expresses the depth of Cleveland's condemnation of the Westminster Assembly and his foreboding for its consequences. The poem's final couplet also depends on the heraldic mode. The narrator states: 'Water and earth make but one Globe, a Roundhead/ Is Clergy-Lay *Party-per-pale* compounded. (ll. 97-98). By 1647, when the 'Mixt Assembly' was first published in *The Character of a London-Diurnall*, the Westminster Assembly's recommendation to abolish the Book of Common Prayer had been approved by Parliament, a national Presbyterian church had been established by Parliamentary ordinance and, in October 1646, another ordinance had abolished bishops. Cleveland was the son of an Anglican clergyman, and his heraldic vision of clergy and laity, figuratively divided in the body of a 'roundhead', reflects the disruption of the relationship between clergy and laity at this time. Sylvanus Morgan, in *Heraldry Epitomized*, recorded the significance of a parted Shield: 'if the Shield is divided, it is called Parted; representing the blows or the Cuts proceeding from the hands of Warriors'. Cleveland's use of heraldry in 'The Mixt Assembly' inscribes the blows dealt to the Church of England by the Westminster Assembly, and by Parliament, in verse. That Cleveland describes this through heraldry, a language whose

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214. *Poems of John Cleveland*, pp. 26-28 and notes pp. 108-116.

essence is to determine hierarchies, signifies his challenge to that which he condemned as 'the rude/ Chaos of Presbyt'ry, where Lay-men guide/ With the tame Woolpack Clergie by their side' (ll. 2-4).[215]

'Mock Song LXVIII', by Henry Bold, likewise expressed political defiance through heraldry. The narrator exclaims:

> For why should we be,
> Of the new Paritye,
> 'Cause there are a few,
> Of the Levelling Crew,
> Who would have us all equal & brothers (ll. 43-7)
> ....
> Pesantry's base, and who's born to't must wear it,
> But Honour is the Merit of the Persons, that bear it. (ll. 56-7)[216]

Ironically, Bold, as explained in the previous chapter, had established earlier in this verse that the honours that are borne may often be purchased (due to '*Argent* and *Or*' (l. 31), rather than the reward of 'Merit'. The verse, nonetheless, adopts the heraldic mode, as representative of established forms of social and political distinction, in the face of the perceived 'Levelling' (l. 46) threat. The sense of heraldry as an expression of the resilience of traditional hierarchies in the face of reform is again evident in another of Bold's works, the defiant drinking song entitled 'On the Act of the Rump against Titles of Honour given by the King':

> Let our Honours
> And our Mannors
> Be Confiscate to their Powers,
> If we Sack
> May not lack,
> The whole World shall be ours,
> ....
> Who'd be a Knt. where Charles is not a King?
>
> Drink away,
> ....
> And be still

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215. As Morris and Withington note, Cleveland was not alone in using this particular heraldic reference to condemn the Presbyterians. In *The Coat of Arms of Sir John Presbyter*, Sir John 'bears party per pale indented, God's glory, and his own interest'; see *The Coat of Arms of Sir John Presbyter* (London, 1658/1678; reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany*, 1810, vi. 524-5).

216. Bold, *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique &c.*, pp. 116-17.

As Gentile
　　　As the Kingdoms Protectors,
　　　And bear, (dispite of State or Heraulds Rules)
　　　I'th Pockets, Argent in their Faces Gules. (ll. 11-16, 36-7, 50-4)[217]

When the political situation changed, heraldry was an important expression in the celebration of the restored monarchy. In *Astræa Redux: A Poem On the Happy Restoration and Return Of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second*, published in 1660, John Dryden describes the Royal Fleet awaiting Charles' return to England, with 'The wavering Streamers, Flags and Standart out' (l. 225).[218] Samuel Pepys also testifies to the heraldic preparations that the fleet made to welcome the King. On 11 May 1660, Pepys wrote: 'This morning we begun to pull down all the State's arms in the fleet - having first sent to Dover for painters and others to come to set up the King's.' Two days later, he records that: 'the taylors and painters were at work cutting out of some pieces of yellow cloth in to the fashion of a crown and C.R. and put it upon a fine sheet, and that into the flag instead of the State's arms'.[219]

Jonathan Sawday has examined these changes in iconography and argues that 'the symbolic forms representative of republicanism were replaced with the symbolic forms representative not just of monarchism but of monarchism as it had existed at the moment of its dissolution in 1649'. He cites other examples of the restoration of royal heraldry: on the seventh of May 1660, the 'State's Arms were ordered to be 'taken down in all the courts of justice, and other publick places ... and all the king's arms set up.' As Sawday writes, 'The following day, the arms of commonwealth over the speaker's chair in parliament were replaced by the king's arms, and on 9 May, all commonwealth arms throughout the kingdom were ordered to be replaced.'[220]

Yet one poem, by Thomas Shipman (1632-1680), demonstrates that it was not always

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217. Bold, *Latine Songs*, pp. 150-2.

218. *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden*, edited by James Kinsley (London, 1969), p. 21. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

219. *The Shorter Pepys*, edited by Robert Latham (Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 43.

220. *Mercurius Publicus*, 19 (May 3-May 10 1660), pp. 303-4 and *The Parliamentary Intelligencer*, 20 (May 7-May 14 1660), pp. 307 and 311, cited in Jonathan Sawday, 'Re-Writing a Revolution: History, Symbol, and Text in the Restoration' in *The Seventeenth Century*, 7 (1992), pp. 171-199 (p. 175).

easy for contemporaries to accept pre-civil war heraldry as part of the iconography of the Restoration. In 'Restauration and Welcome, 1660: An Historical Poem upon the return of King Charles II', the narrator rejects the national flag, claiming: 'Saint Georges bloody Cross we cannot own,/ Since now 'tis lost within a bloody Field' (ll. 49-50).[221] The cross is, in heraldic terms, invisible, since a red cross would not be seen against a red shield (the *field* also being, in heraldry, the surface of the shield). The burden of the 'lost' cross is significant. Vaughan Hart discusses 'heraldry's supposed talismanic virtues, and the rôle in chivalric epics of the shield in particular in providing good fortune and magical protection'.[222] After the civil war, Shipman implies that St George's cross had had no special, protective powers.

In addition to its use as the national flag, St George's cross was conspicuous for its incorporation into the badge of the Order of the Garter. The Order suffered considerable during the war: Charles I, who had identified himself closely with the Order of the Garter,[223] had been executed, its members had been divided by the war, and their chapel at Windsor had been destroyed. As 'A Mock-Song', written in 1649, by Richard Lovelace makes clear, the fate of the Order was understood to encapsulate the experience of the nation:

> Now the Thighs of the Crown
> And the Arms are lopped down,
> And the Body is all but a Belly;
> Let the Commons go on,
> The Town is our own,
>   We'l rule alone;
> For the knights have yielded their Spent-gorge;
> And an order is tane
> With HONY SOIT profane,
>   Should forth amain
> For our Dragon hath vanquish'd the St. George. (ll. 18-28)[224]

221. Thomas Shipman, *Carolina: or, Loyal Poems* (London, 1683), p. 47.

222. Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts*, p. 64.

223. Among some fifty personal books from the King's Cabinet at Whitehall, which were inventoried by Abraham van der Doort in 1639, thirty-six were described as 'concerning the order of the Garter and Harroldry'; see Ronald Lightbown, 'Charles I and the Art of the Goldsmith,' in *The Late King's Goods,* edited by Arthur MacGregor (London and Oxford, 1989), p. 251.

224. Richard Lovelace, *Lucasta: Posthume Poems* (London, 1659/60), p. 34. Annabel Patterson discusses the significance of this reference to St George in *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (London, 1984), p. 170.

In Shipman's verse, it is as though, in spite of the presence of Charles II, the nation cannot revert to using St George's cross; as if, through the bloody deaths of the king and so many others, the nation had lost any right to claim ownership of the cross as a sign of its identity.

The sense of a vacuum, in terms of a national iconography, that is evident in Shipman's poem, was not, however, widespread. An heraldic reference in *Astræa Redux* confirms Sawday's observation that the heraldry which was celebrated in 1660 re-established the sovereign importance of traditional symbols of monarchy. Dryden offers an image of Charles II as the lion of England. The lions in the royal arms are *passant guardant*, their tails being curled, whip-like, above their backs:

> Tremble ye Nations who secure before
> Laught at those Armes that 'gainst our selves we bore;
> Rous'd by the lash of his own stubborn tail
> Our Lyon now will forraign Foes assail. (p. 19, ll. 115-18)

In order to appreciate the significance of the re-appropriation of such symbols at the Restoration, it is important briefly to consider the importance of heraldry to the Commonwealth and to Cromwell himself. The protectorate adopted the iconography of heraldry as a visible symbol of the transition of power; as discussed at the end of the previous chapter, heraldry was regulated by Parliamentary ordinance. In February 1651, the coats of arms of Charles I were removed from display in Whitehall.[225] Edmund Prestwich's account of the 'Investiture & Installation of his highness Oliver Cromwell' on June 26 1657, provides an insight into the public use of heraldry to consolidate Cromwell's position.[226] As 'an eye & ear-witness to all that passed on this glorious occasion', Prestwich observed the significance of the 'ensigns armorial of their power' for 'his Highness and the Parliament' (p. 19). He describes in detail the incorporation of Cromwell's family arms into those of the Commonwealth:

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225. Roy Sherwood, *The Court of Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1977), p. 21.

226. J. Prestwich, *Prestwich's Respublica; Or a Display of the Honors, Ceremonies & Ensigns of the Common-Wealth, Under the Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell together with the Names, Armorial Bearings, Flags & Pennons, of the Different Commanders of the English, Scotch, Irish Americans & French. And An Alphabetical Roll of the Names & Armorial Bearings of Upwards of Three Hundred Families of the Present Nobility & Gentry of England, Scotland, Ireland &c.* (London, 1787), sig. B2ʳ. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

On a prince-like shield, fashioned as a royal breast-plate, four flags borne quarterly, viz in the first and fourth the Cross of St George, the Patron of England ... second the ... Cross of St Andrew Patron of Scotland and North Britain ... third The Harp of Ireland ... the fourth quarter as the first ... and over all, in fess, on a Saxon-fashioned shield of a knight, the paternal arms of his Highness Oliver Cromwell, viz. Argent a lion rampant Sable. The whole timbred with a princely helment of steel, burnished with gold and mantled Sable one side ... lined with ermine. At top of this ... a princely crown of gold. &c. on the top of which, the royal crest of Great Britain, which is a lion passant guardant or, crowned with an imperial crown of gold. Supporters, first, a lion guardant and imperially crowned, the supporter of England, Or. 2d, a dragon in profile, with wings raised and indorsed Vert, pursled with gold, for antient Britain or Wales. (p. 20)

The 'royal' lion was thus retained, reflecting iconographically the Protector's concern, discussed by Nigel Smith, that the constitution should have '"something of the monarchical" in it'.[227] However, it only occupied positions that were considered to be of secondary importance to the shield, as one supporter and as part of the crest. Cromwell's personal arms, *argent a lion rampant sable*, were placed in the centre (the *fess point*) of the shield, an implicit acknowledgment of his personal, dynastic interests and support for the traditions of an hierarchical society.[228]

That the heraldic iconography of kingship was recognised as such, even when it was deployed with reference to Cromwell, is argued by Nigel Smith. He quotes a manuscript verse, collected by Thomason on 19 May 1653, which demonstrates that the heraldic lion had been successfully assimilated as a reference to the Protector. The verse is entitled 'K. Cromwell (O)' and declares that Cromwell must 'Ascend three thrones, great Captaine Divine/ By the Will of god (O Lion)' (ll. 1-2).[229] Cromwell's heraldic identity was also affirmed by the show of heraldry at his funeral, in 1658, where his family's arms were displayed on the hearse and accompanying bannerols.[230]

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227. Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, p. 113.

228. Regarding an hierarchical society, Cromwell referred, in the first Protectorate parliament of September 1654, to 'a nobleman, a gentleman, and a yeoman. (That is a good interest of the nation and a great one.)'; see: *The writings and speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, edited by Wilbur Cortez Abbott, with Catherine D. Crane, 4 vols (Oxford, 1988), III, 438; also quoted in Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England 1603-1714* (London and New York, 1994), p. 263.)

229. Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, p. 113.

230. Sherwood, *Court of Oliver Cromwell*, p. 83.

Against this background, Dryden's reference to Charles II as the 'Lyon' of England must be seen as more than a commonplace allusion to a sovereign, but, rather, as a reappropriation of a symbol of monarchy and a celebration of a national strength and unity.

Other poets also reflected the Restoration in heraldic terms. In 1660, following his accession, Charles II undertook a series of improvements to St James's Park. Edmund Waller (1606-87) imagines the king walking in the park, where 'his brows may be with laurel charged,/ For nations conquered, and our bounds enlarged' (ll. 119-120).[231] The form of the blazon is evident here; *to charge* is to place an armorial bearing on a shield; here, the laurel, signifying national power, is set upon Charles. The reference may also reflect the king's concern at this time to consolidate support for the crown by granting additions, or *augmentations*, to personal coats of arms in reward for individual loyalty to the monarchy. A royal warrant of 3 September 1660, authorised Garter King of Arms, Sir Edward Walker, to grant augmentations 'of any of our Royall Badges' to 'such persons of exemplary meritt', as the king's 'Royall Father' had done 'for the incouragement and reward of such as valiantly and faithfully adhered to him during the unnatural Rebellion'.[232]

Although some poets turned to heraldry in order to create a perception of the Restoration as a return to pre-revolutionary England, references did not always centre upon the person of the king, as the following elegy by Thomas Shipman demonstrates. 'The Old-English Gentleman: 1665: An Elegiac Poem upon the truly honourable Sir Gervas Clifton, of Clifton, Knight and Baronet' uses the arms of Clifton, *sable a lion rampant within an orle of cinquefoils argent*, to express the tenacity of pre-revolutionary culture. The baronet's motto, *Tenez le droit* (Keep the right) is not quoted explicitly, but its sentiment is evident in the poem, particularly in line 214:

> Tho *Vapours* clouded *Britains* Sky (l. 211)
> ....
> For all these *Clouds* he scorn'd to yeild;

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231. *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, edited by Hugh Maclean (New York and London, 1974), p. 249.

232. *Munimenta Heraldica MCCCCLXXXIV to MCMLXXXIV*, edited by G.D. Squibb (London, 1985), pp. 126-7.

> But still remain'd like his *rich Shield*
> A *Lyon argent,* in a *Sable Field.*
>
> After *Great Brittany* had mourn'd
> Twelve years, her Sorrow's were adjourn'd;
> Her Joys again with glorious *Charles* return'd
>
> When *Clifton* did attend his Train,
> How he rejoyc'd, to find again
> The ancient Glories of his *Grandsire's* Reign (ll. 214-22)[233]

Here, the turbulent years of civil war are represented as a temporary aberration, in contrast to the stability of an inalienable, 'ancient' system, that is realised through heraldry.

Following the Restoration, heraldry continued to be used by poets keen to reflect contemporary debates surrounding the monarchy in their work. Heraldry was a particularly useful way of introducing questions of legitimate succession, for example, as John Dryden's work makes clear. In *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden appropriates heraldry as part of Achitophel's (the Earl of Shaftesbury's) attempt to persuade Absalom (the Duke of Monmouth) to subvert the natural order of succession, from Charles II to his brother James. Achitophel/Shaftesbury argues that Absalom should take the crown; Absalom is, Achitophel declares, the people's hero, whose succession would accord with popular opinion:

> If you as Champion of the publique Good,
> Add to their Arms a Chief of Royal Blood;
> What may not Israel hope, and what Applause
> Might such a General gain by such a Cause?
> Not barren Praise alone, that Gaudy Flower,
> Fair only to the sight, but solid Power (ll. 293-8)[234]

As well as indicating Monmouth's assumption of the leadership of a popular army, line 294, with its the reference to 'Arms' and to 'Chief' may be read heraldically. Monmouth's succession is expressed metaphorically as the addition of a regal *chief* (a charge placed at the top of a shield) to society's coat of arms. An heraldic reading of

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233. Thomas Shipman, *Carolina: or, Loyal Poems* (London, 1683), p. 103.

234. *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden*, edited by James Kinsley (London, 1969), p. 197. These lines are discussed in Stephen N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture 1649-1689* (Ithaca and London, 1993), p. 148; Zwicker does not, however, refer to the heraldic metaphor.

the line focuses the reader's attention on issues of heraldry and genealogy, and thereby brings to the fore Monmouth's identity as Charles's son (illegitimate children could bear their father's arms if their paternity was acknowledged).

Later in the poem, Achitophel/Shaftesbury urges Absalom/Monmouth to:

> Try your Title while your Father lives:
> And that your Arms may have a fair Pretence,
> Proclaim, you take them in the King's Defence (p. 201, ll. 462-4)

Again, these lines owe their meaning to heraldry: *arms of pretension* are 'borne to illustrate a claim to territories not actually possessed',[235] providing an ironic commentary on the proposed action.

Dryden also uses heraldry to highlight the Earl of Shaftesbury's self-interested part in the situation and to undermine his position. The coat of arms of Ashley Cooper, Earls of Shaftesbury, is blazoned: *quarterly, first and fourth argent three bulls passant sable, armed and unguled or, for Ashley; second and third gules, a bend engrailed between six lions rampant or, for Cooper*. In Dryden's poem, Achitophel describes, to Absalom, the threat which David's brother (James, Duke of York) is to him. The lion reference implies James, entitled to bear the royal lions of England:

> And like a Lyon, Slumbring in the way,
> Or Sleep-dissembling, while he waits his Prey,
> His fearless Foes within his Distance draws;
> Constrains his Roaring, and Contracts his Paws;
> Till at last, his time for Fury found,
> He shoots with suddain Vengeance from the Ground (p. 201, ll. 447-452)

However, these lines also offer an ironic commentary on Shaftesbury's own manoeuvrings; the lions in Shaftesbury's coat of arms are *rampant*, meaning that they are depicted with only one hind leg on the ground, while the other paws wave in the air. Described imaginatively, a lion rampant appears indeed to have shot up 'from the Ground' (l. 452).

More usually, however, the heraldic lion is used with reference to the monarch. With

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235. Brooke-Little, *Heraldic Alphabet*, p. 38.

the accession of William III, the arms of Nassau, *azure billetty or, a lion rampant gold*, were placed on an escutcheon of pretence in the centre of the royal arms. Subsequent references to William as the 'English lion' therefore both appropriate the lion of Nassau as an English sign, and affirm William's sovereignty through his entitlement to bear the royal arms of England. The manuscript copy of 'A Pindaric Ode on the King written Aug: 2d 1692 by Mr Dennis', styles William, in the sixth stanza, as the rampant English lion, whose 'lifted Paw' subdues his continental enemies. The context is the Battle of Steenkirk, fought in August, 1692:

> In Belgian Plains whilst th'English Lyon ramps,
> Terror's diffus'd thro' Gallis Forts and Camps
> See how his deadly lifted Paw
> Keeps couchant Luxemburgh in awe!
>   At William's mighty Name
> All France with it's [sic] exalted Idol sh'akes
>   William's bright and sounding Fame
> Like Lightning when from Heaven it breaks
>   Troubles the great offender's sight. (ll. 44-52)[236]

The hyperbole has propaganda value and does not reflect the inconclusive outcome of the battle, in which William in fact suffered greater losses than did the French. The reference to 'couchant Luxemburgh' (l. 47) is yet another reference to an heraldic lion: the Grand Ducal Arms of Luxembourg have, as their principal charge, a lion rampant, which, the verse implies, is subdued into the cowering, *couchant* position.[237]

The political importance of heraldry to the Jacobite cause has been argued by Pat Rogers, with reference to *Windsor Forest*, by Alexander Pope (1688-1744). In an article entitled '"The Enamelled Ground": the Language of Heraldry and Natural Description in *Windsor-Forest*', Rogers argues that, in this work, Pope chose to 'fall back on the long-consecrated vocabulary of armorial description', through which a 'metaphoric heraldry opens out to disclose a bold claim for the Stuart cause.'[238] Rogers casts *Windsor Forest* as 'a Jacobite poem' (p. 369) and believes that it is the heraldic

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236. HRHRC, pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 175, f. 1.

237. Carl-Alexander von Volborth, *Heraldry: Customs, Rules and Styles* (Ware, 1983), p. 174.

238. Pat Rogers, '"The Enamelled Ground": the Language of Heraldry and Natural Description in *Windsor-Forest*', *Studia Neophilologica - a journal of Germanic and Romance Language and Literature*, 45 (1973), pp. 356-71 (p. 370-1).

references which reinforce this interpretation. Since Rogers' work is one of those few which provide new readings of texts through the consideration of heraldic references, it is worth considering in further detail.

Rogers intention is to analyse Pope's 'technique of heraldic description' (p. 356). He notes, for example, the use of primary colours throughout the poem, alongside references to 'artificial' colours like silver and gold, together with 'words like dye and stain' (p. 358). The accumulation of such references directs Rogers to consider the 'one particular mode of representation: heraldry', in which they all occur. He then enumerates the use of technical heraldic terms in *Windsor Forest*, including, among many others, *azure, sable, crest, field* and *checky* and opines that Pope's use of 'purple' should be understood to suggest *purpure*. While he points out the non-heraldic metaphors that are used alongside the heraldic references, it should be noted that Rogers is wrong to include 'pearly' as a simple, non-heraldic, metaphoric colour (p. 360). Seventeenth-century heraldry manuals include in their tables of blazon the fact that colours may be blazoned according to precious stones, and, according to Peacham's *Heraldry for the Complete Gentleman*, 'Pearle' denotes *argent*, or silver (p. 7). Rogers' understanding of the significance of heraldic references in the poem is, nevertheless, sound. He reflects that heraldry, with its connections to 'royalty and the genealogy of noble families' and its associations with 'chivalry', commemoration, 'history and tradition', provides Pope with a vital 'symbolic repository' (pp. 358-9). The particular political significance of heraldry in *Windsor Forest* is to inscribe, Rogers argues, 'the landscape of Windsor' with Stuart heraldry, thus 'celebrat[ing] the Stuart line, and its seat at Windsor', and reinforcing the Stuart's 'territorial claim' to the English throne (p. 366). Importantly, Rogers addresses the question of authorial intention, and concludes that the armorial associations in the poem are 'consistently present' in the poem, 'whether or not Pope was aware of the associations' (p. 366).

The association of heraldry with Jacobite sympathisers is certainly not limited to Pope's work. It was sufficiently well-established to provide one anonymous writer with an opportunity for satire. In *The Jacobites Coat of Arms*, the reader is offered an explanation as to the significance of a fanciful coat of arms, which ridicules, through heraldic display, the fundamentals of the Jacobite cause (see figure 11).

Figure 11

The Jacobites Coat of Arms [1710]

The shield is divided *per fess*, that is, horizontally across the centre. Above that line, is an ass, which in the context of the poem becomes symbolic of Jacobite ideology; it is weighed down by the burden of the theories of non-resistance and passive obedience to the sovereign:

> *Per Fess Sable* and *Gules* in chief he Bears;
> An *Ass* Couchant, hard laden in her Gears,
> With the Dead weight of Hampers 2, the one
> With *Obedience Passive*, and *Resistance non*: (ll. 1-4)[239]

The second hamper carries 'Tooles of cruelty;/ To carry on Tyrannick Rule and *Popery* (ll. 5-6). The Jacobites are scorned as the instruments of Rome throughout the verse: the 'Slavish *Ass*' (l. 8) is whipped along by a Roman Catholic priest; the base of the shield shows the Jacobites as 'silly *Crab's*' (l. 27) crawling to Rome; and they are derided as the 'Darling Offspring' (l. 20) of Louis XIV and Pope Clement XI, who are portrayed as the supporters of the shield. The Roman Catholic threat is represented by crossed swords, concealed beneath the mantling that flows from the helmet. These arms are poised, the verse makes clear, to attack the perceived heresies of the Church of England:

> Under a *Sable Mantle* hidden lyes,
> The *Popes* Consecrated *Artelery*
> The Course he takes t, Exterpate Heresy. (ll. 23-5)

The verse also attacks Jacobite hopes, undermining any sense that Queen Anne, the daughter of James II, might support their cause. Instead, Anne is perceived both iconographically and literally, as occupying a non-partisan, virtuous, middle ground. She is positioned, figuratively, on a golden river representing 'Moderation', and line fourteen, in which her name is used, is even, numerically, the middle line of this twenty-seven line poem:

> Thro' *Fess* wav'd, plac'd in Vertues Station,
> Gluides the River *Or* of Moderation.
> Which do's the Lands prosperity Explain,
> Where safe from Stormes doth Sail the Royal Ann. (ll. 11-14)

While the poem works to expose the futility of Jacobite hopes of Anne's support, it also uses heraldry to ridicule Anne herself. The queen is located, metaphorically, within the

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239. Anon, *The Jacobites Coat of Arms* (London, [1710]).

fess, the broad horizontal band across the centre of the shield. Within the heraldic tradition, each heraldic charge or *ordinary*, had its own significance and Sylvanus Morgan specifically refers to 'a Fess, signifying Resolution and readiness to Action'. Queen Anne, in contrast, was a physically weak woman, of 'reputed limited intellectual powers', who 'could not walk far unaided'.[240]

The use of the heraldic mode in anti-Roman Catholic writing is evident throughout the period. It is important to note, however, that while individual writers used the resources of heraldry to attack Roman Catholics, the institutions of heraldry were not established to exclude them. Of greatest significance, in this regard, is the appointment by the Crown of the Earl Marshal, the officer with responsibility for the College of Arms. In 1672, Charles II conferred this hereditary office on a Roman Catholic, Henry Earl of Norwich (later Duke of Norfolk). Although the Test Act meant that between 1673 and 1684 the Duke could not exercise his duties in person, he was allowed to appoint a Deputy. Thus, the College of Arms itself was subject to the influence of a senior Roman Catholic who was, in Anthony Wagner's opinion, 'an incapacitated but still powerful Earl Marshal behind the scenes'.[241]

An early example of heraldry used to attack Roman Catholics is recorded in manuscript. 'A Blazon of Papistes' is dated 1587 and is addressed to Elizabeth I. This is worth considering because its style is echoed in works of the following century. In a prefatory address to the queen, the herald, William Seager, accounts for the use of blazon in this context, explaining that the 'diversitie' of Roman Catholic 'natures' will be 'brought wthin [sic] the methode of Armorye' and 'blazoned accordinglye'. He then explains:

> For as in that Science the Actyons Gestures and Natures of Beasts, Byrdes, and other Thingis by tearmes of Arte are Livelye expressed: So in this sett of Papistrie theire Actions gestures and Natures compared withe like tearmes are in some moste properly Blazoned viz A Papist Cowchant, a papist Passant, A papist Passant gardant, A papist Variant, A papist Volant, A Papist Seminant, A papist Saliant, A papist Rampant and a Papist Pendant.[242]

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240. Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 400.

241. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 279.

242. BL, Egerton MS 2,642, f. 250b.

It is clear that heraldry offered writers of anti-Catholic works the opportunity of marginalising Roman Catholics, and of designating them as 'other' than themselves. According to Seager, above, if heraldry can capture and describe the actions of 'Beasts' and 'Byrdes', then it can, in the same way, define and control Roman Catholicism. The verses proceed to deliver on this promise. A 'Papist Cowchant' (l. 1) is defined as a duplicitous fraudster, 'that kynde of Man/ That Humbly bowes, and bendes at every becke' (ll. 1-2) but who, 'by his cowching' (l. 5), lives with 'greatest frawde ... for in his harte consent to ill hee gives' (ll. 6-7). The second stanza deals with 'A papist passant' (l. 8), who is again characterised by deceit, in that 'hee will keepe the Lawes & Statute right' (l. 10) whilst plotting for a 'channge of thinges' (l. 14). Each stanza draws on the posture of an heraldic beast to describe a negative character trait in the Roman Catholic: the 'papist passant gardant' (l. 15), which in heraldry describes a beast whose face looks outward as he walks, signifies a Roman Catholic who 'lurkes with watchefull lynxes eyen' (l. 16). Inevitably, a 'Papiste Variant' (l. 22) is fickle, described as divided 'partie per pale' (l. 22) and 'counterchangte in Life' (l. 23), who will take 'the strongest parte in every strife' (l. 25). In this stanza, the bestiality which is implicit throughout the poem is made explicit; Catholics 'Resemble Apes in Imitacyon' (l. 28). As a final example, the fifth stanza may be considered, which describes 'a papist Volant' (l. 29). *Volant* in heraldry describes a bird flying. This idea inspires the writer to reflect that Roman Catholics who flee 'the realme for Conscience as they saye' (l. 30) are in fact leaving because ''tis Treason makes them stryve/ for feare of Law to flye some other waye' (ll. 31-2). At the end of the nine stanzas, a summary concludes that, of all the examples given, 'Not one good Subiect [was] founde amonges them all' (l. 68). It is clearly the object of the verses to prove this point, and is an aim for the achievement of which later writers also turned to heraldry.

Almost a century later, a broadsheet publication of 1682, *The Coat of Arms of N.T. J.F & R.L.: An Answer to Thomson's Ballad call'd The Loyal Feast*, uses heraldry to support its anti-Roman Catholic message. The verses are illustrated by a shield, which depicts Tories being hanged, while a bishop, identified by his crozier, looks on.[243] The Tories are attacked for their 'Plots' against the 'True Blue Protestant' (l. 1) in support of James, Duke of York, which are hatched with their Roman Catholic counterparts in

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243. *The Coat of Arms of N.T., J.F. & R.L.*, (Dublin, [n.d.]).

Rome, France and Spain (1. 29). In this example, the terms of the blazon are not used within the verse, but the use of the shield, at the top of the page, invites the reader to interpret the verses within an armorial context. The shield proclaims the end of the Tories, rather than, as their personal arms or arms of office would have done, affirming their social distinction and political power. The broadsheet, in spite of its title, in fact denies the Tories both the iconography and the vocabulary which could otherwise have designated, and articulated, an honourable status in society.

The heraldic mode was particularly effective in its definition of the 'other'. In simple terms, possession or non-possession of a coat of arms signalled an individual's participation, or their exclusion, from 'élite' society. If a subject was described in seeming-heraldic terms, yet in a manner which broke all the rules of blazon, then that subject was likewise placed outside the recognised boundaries of social distinction. Traitors, who were naturally regarded as a threat to the political nation, were thus also condemned according to the heraldic mode.

In 1600, *Englands Hope, Against Irish Hate*, by J. G. E., was published in London. This work was directed against the Earl of Tyrone, who had been proclaimed a traitor in 1595. The principal charge on his shield was *a sinister hand, couped and erect gules*. His arms were supported by *two lions gules*. The narrator claims that:

> ... first, the Traitor Passant I define:
> The next, Regardant: Couchant is the third:
> Rampant the fourth and last (ll. 120-22)[244]

Since lions in heraldry are usually styled *passant, regardant, couchant* or *rampant*, the stanzas which follow appear to provide an ironic commentary on Tyrone, inspired by his heraldic lion supporters, but emphasising his cowardice. The 'Traitor Passant' is 'the Triple wreathed Beast:/ With plodding feete' (ll. 143-4), the 'Traitor Regardant' is 'this wry-neckt fugitive' (l. 148), and the 'Traitor Covchant' does not dare 'once lift up their low-checkt eyes' for 'trembling feare (ll. 194-5). The reference to Tyrone's arms is especially evident in the course of the description under the heading 'Traitor Rampant':

> And so doth eleuate his reaching paw,

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244. J.G.E., *Englands Hope, Against Irish Hate* (London, 1600), p. 9.

> With kingly spoyle, to gorge Ambitions maw. (ll. 202-3)
>
> ....
>
> A Traitors Cognizaunce to know him by:
> Are his leawd deeds...............................(ll. 281-2)
>
> ....
>
> Heauen lowres in Tragicke collours of disdaine, (l. 365)
>
> ....
>
> The Hand giues not direction to the Head, (l. 400)

With these lines, any honour associated with Tyrone's armigerous status is utterly eroded: the rampant lion, instead of waving a leg fiercely in the air, is characterised by a weak 'paw' of ambition, and the red hand on his shield no longer offers inspiration or guidance.

If heraldry can work, as has been argued, towards the social and political exclusion of individuals, then it follows that those who wished to assert their political participation in society might also turn to heraldry to articulate that right. The example of James Yorke, the blacksmith who wrote a heraldry manual, has been discussed in the previous chapter. By extension, those who wished to assert their independence of society could do so by claiming to be independent of the armorial system. This is evident in one example, from 1691, which is a song entitled 'A Herald to Himself'. The narrator rejects the legitimacy of an hierarchical society, claiming: 'No delight can I see/ In the thing called degree' (ll. 15-16) and declaring that: 'He that wears a brave soul and dares honestly do,/ He's a Herald to himself, and a God-father too.'(ll. 22-3). In these last two lines, traditional notions of authority are turned up-side-down; the 'brave soul' can be a herald to himself, effectively breaking the chain of authority from God, through king and his institutions (including heralds), to heads of households. The possibility that the subject of this song can lay claim to his own identity and provide his own authority for life is offered without reference to either armorial or church institutions. This sense of self-authorship arises out of the narrator's conviction that he is a member of a democratic society. He states: 'It's we Commons make the Lords, as the Clarks make the Justice' (l. 35).[245]

This last example finds the appropriation of heraldic authority expressed alongside a newly-acquired sense of democratic participation, and echoes the assertion in Edward

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245. W.N., C.B., R.S., J.G., *Merry Drollery Compleat: Or, A Collection of Jovial Poems, Merry Songs, Witty Drolleries, Intermixed with Pleasant Catches: the first part* (London, 1691), pp. 36-7.

Ward's verse, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, that the 'Bearings of a King' may become subject to popular blazoning. The idea of being a herald to oneself was not a seventeenth-century development; as has been identified previously, Bartolo da Sassoferrato had assumed that self-appointed arms were valid. However, the notion of a democratic heraldry, in which armorial definition would be subject to the will of the people rather than to institutional regulation is a fundamental political development, which is evident for the first time in these late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century works.

This chapter has examined how political authority was negotiated and maintained through texts using heraldic references. Hobbes recognised that a coat of arms would be regarded as honourable only if it were a sign of power. The discussion has charted the changing attitudes towards heraldry that were reflected in the poetry of those who alternately lost, and then reclaimed, power in the period. Herrick's 'Upon Clunn', in his disempowered state, despairs of heraldry; the Restoration works of Waller, Dryden and Shipman celebrate both the return to power of the sovereign and the efficacy of heraldic reference. It has also been seen that heraldry could work to maintain political powerlessness, through the construction of prejudice. In the case of Roman Catholics, heraldry gave concrete expression to the notion that they were beyond inclusion within society. The development of a satirical heraldic mode, as seen in the anti-Jacobite verses, is also significant. As social hierarchies and political positions were challenged in this period, so the terms of the language associated with their maintenance were renegotiated. Heraldry moved beyond the boundaries of institutional regulation and became a flexible tool which writers could use to undermine the subjects of their scorn.

> And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Every man of
> the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of
> their father's house [.]   (Numbers 2.1-2)

The previous chapter has established the political nature of heraldic language, which often depended for its power on the ecclesiastical affiliations and religious interests of the parties involved. This chapter will examine the religious and spiritual aspects of heraldic discourse, addressing the question of whether its vocabulary was regarded as the expression of particular Christian values and examining the circumstances under which it was used in the verse of the period.[246]

Throughout the seventeenth century, writers on heraldry claimed the authority of scripture for the pursuit of their subject. William Camden, Clarenceaux King of Arms from 1597 until his death in 1623, used Biblical reference to introduce a discussion concerned with the use of arms. In the second impression of *Remaines concerning Brittaine* (1623), Camden observed that: 'He that would shew variety of reading in this argument might note out of the sacred Scripture that every Tribe of Israel pitched under their own Standard' (p. 205).

In addition to the quotation from Numbers, which prefaces this chapter, the New Testament also provided a source for demonstrating the acceptability of heraldic study in the sight of God. Sir William Dugdale, appointed Garter King of Arms in 1677, made reference to The Acts of the Apostles in *The Antient Usage and Bearing of ... Arms,* to show that heraldry was not offensive to God:

> the using, bearing and setting forth of Banners, Ensigns and Marks of
> Armory are allowable by the sacred scriptures, it appeareth by the holy
> Evangelist Saint *Luke* recording the peregrination of Saint *Paul*, and
> speaking of Armory without reprehension (which he would not have
> done had the use thereof been offensive)[247]

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246. Consideration will generally be limited to examples in English, as this study does not offer the scope to take full account of the continental and Scottish traditions of sacred heraldry.

247. Sir William Dugdale, *Antient Usage In Bearing of such Ensigns of Honour As are commonly call'd Arms,* pp. 33-4. Dugdale had previously held the offices of Blanch Lyon Pursuivant (1638), Rouge Croix Pursuivant (1639) and Norroy King of Arms (1660). See Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time, English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford and New York, 1995) and Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of*

The reference is to Acts 28. 11: 'And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.' These two passages were commonplace in attempts to establish a scriptural context for the development of heraldry. They are again implied, for example, in Edmund Bolton's *Elements of Armories*, which takes the form of a didactic dialogue between Sir Eustace and the wiser knight, Sir Amias. Although Sir Amias does not 'acknowledge any primary author, but in almighty God' (p. 7) as the originator of armory, his argument is important for its demonstration that seventeenth-century interpretations of heraldry were not necessarily made according to a rigidly defined scriptural code. Sir Amias makes the sardonic observation that:

> there are not wanting, who do say that almost before the flowd, such a Prince, commonweale, or Kingdome bare such, and such a Shield, or painted Symboll. In so much, that I, for my part, haue euer look'd, when on a sodaine these marueilous men would as readily tell vs what armes, or badge NOAHS Arke it selfe did carry in the sterne, as we out of the Acts of the Apostles written by S. LVKE, can informe our selues what name the ship which transported S. PAVL was known by. And albeit I am exceedingly farre from dishonoring, or from not zelously honoring, any venerable moniments of wit, or antiquity, yet am I as far from promiscuous subscription to vncertaine glosses[.]   (pp. 10-11)

While Bolton's Sir Amias suggests that scriptural references may offer heraldry only 'vncertaine glosses', the assumption of other authorities was that heraldry should only be understood as part of a Christian framework. Christian interpretations of heraldic signs dominate their technical manuals. For example, John Bossewell, who wrote the *Workes of Armorie* (1572), assumed that 'the Crosse is ye most triumphant signe and worthiest' (fo. 22). Writing on the significance of gold (*or*), Legh, in *The Accedence of Armory*, draws from Biblical texts to explain that gold was the colour evident in the face of Christ at the moment when his divinity was revealed to the disciples: 'to conclude, Saint Mathew writeth, that Iesus when hee was transfigured, his face shone as the Sunne' (p. 4).[248] As Alison Saunders remarks, it is appropriate that Christ should be evoked in gold, since this is the highest ranked of the heraldic colours (p. 19).[249] For

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England (London, 1967) for biographies of both Dugdale and Camden.

248. The reference is to Matthew 17. 1-8 (2). There are parallel references in Mark 9. 2-8. and Luke 9. 28-36.

249. Saunders, *Sixteenth-Century Blason Poetique*, p. 19.

Legh, moreover, *azure*, the heraldic blue, was 'a colour of heauenly hew' (p. 10).

There does not seem, however, to have been a consensus as to which Christian symbols were appropriate for use in heraldic discourse. To return to Bolton's work, for example, we find that Sir Amias argues against the rainbow, maintaining that:

> The rainebow set in the clowds immediately after the Deluge (from which some deriue an authority wher-with to grace Impreses, and heroical Deuises) was indeed a signe, but of a far different kind from these of ours, & therfore not at al to be screw'd into our discourse for further countenance or confirmation.   (p. 50)

Whereas Bolton readily dismisses this Christian symbol from heraldic discourse, John Gibbon struggles to provide a Christian context for his explanations of heraldic signs. He considers, for example, one form of the cross, the cross potent, (see figure 12 below).

 Figure 12.

In an effort to clarify the correct way to blazon this form, Gibbon suggests at first that it may be called a *crux pedata*, signifying 'a Shepherd's Crook or Staff,' which would thus relate 'King *Davids* Translation from the Sheepfold to the Throne'. He qualifies this Christian interpretation with the secular observation that the symbol could as well be identified with a walking stick: it 'may be used for any kind of walking staff ... not much unlike the Crutches of lame people.' He then suggests that the form resembles a gibbet, and that an appropriate term might therefore be *crux patibulata*. Gibbon notes that: 'We here commonly make our Gibbets but with one arm, but beyond Sea with two like a T.' Gibbon's unease at this interpretation is evident. He anticipates the reader's hostility to a secular explanation of this cross: 'And if any one blame me to put so vile an Epithet to a Badge or Symbol so Sacred' then he, Gibbon, will insist that the gibbet is the particular Roman *patibulus* (a fork-shaped gibbet) which was used for the crucifixion of Christ. He cites passages from Acts and St Luke's gospel to support his conclusion (pp. 66-7).[250]

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250. The references are to Luke 23. 39: 'And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him' and Acts 5. 30: 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.'

The sacred potential of heraldic symbols was argued by the Roman Catholic lawyer, Thomas Blount (1618-79), whose translation of *The Art of Making Devices*, by Henry Estienne, was published in 1646 and 1650.[251] This work explained that coats of arms might be framed into devises (p. 48), and established that these might be called sacred (p. 9) and a means to:

> represent and discover humane passions, hopes, feares, doubts, disdaine,
> anger, pleasure, joy, sadnesse, care, hatred, friendship, love, desires, and
> all other motions of the soule   (pp. 9-10)

Writers of manuals which dealt specifically with heraldry, rather than with the nature of devices in general, emphasised that the system was not simply a means to represent the sacred but was itself divinely ordained. Bossewell declared:

> It is to be knowen, that almightie God is the originall authour of
> honouringe Nobilitie, who, euen in the heauens hathe made a
> discrepance of his heauenly Spirites, giuinge them seuerall names, as
> Ensignes of honour ... the Lawe of Armes was by the auncient Heraultes
> grounded upon these orders of Angelles in heauen, encrowned with the
> pretious stones, of colours, and vertues diuerse ... For as the Angels ...
> are distinct ... So here in earthe men are also distincte, in degrees,
> offices, gouernance, and power, euery one seruing their heade in their
> vocation, and callinge.   (fo. 10r)

That a regard for the aesthetics of heraldry could lead to an appreciation of the divine is a lesson which was demonstrated in creative work. James Howell (?1593-1666) published *Dodona's Grove* in 1640, three years before he was imprisoned in the Fleet as a royalist. In 'OF RHENVSIVM. AND BOMBYCINA', Howell writes:

> An undenyable principle it is, that there is but one Truth, and one Tracke
> which leadeth to the right notion of the Almighty: And certainely Hee
> being a Spirit and the most simple of essences, they approach nearest this
> Track, who serve Him, as I sayd before, in Spirit and simplicity of
> thoughts, with the least mixture of externe Rights and humane
> inventions: for as in Heraldry, tis held a rule, that the plainer the Coat of
> Armes is, the more ancient it is: so in the blazon of true Religion, the
> more simple and plaine the forme is, (yet I alwayes presuppose decencie)
> the nearer it comes to the old Primitive times.[252]

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251. Thomas Blount's correspondence testifies to his interest in heraldry. He corresponded with heralds and antiquarians, including William Dugdale, Anthony Wood and Elias Ashmole. See *The Correspondence of Thomas Blount (1618-1679): A Recusant Antiquary: His letters to Anthony Wood and other Restoration Antiquarians,* edited by Theo Bongaerts (Amsterdam, 1978). I am grateful to Dr Alison Shell for directing me to this work.

252. James Howell, *Dodona's Grove* (London, 1640), pp. 89-90.

The idea that heraldry embodied essential, divine truths, which the intelligent mind would reveal through Christian meditation, is demonstrated in the first volume of 'The Catholick Armorist'. The writer of the manuscript considers the heraldic metal silver, regarded as having been 'religious and sacred aboue all the rest'. Significantly, it had an uplifting affect on the soul: 'Of Syluer and its Colour White ... w:ch doe raise innumerable and admirable affection in the soule of man' (pp. 73-4). The colours blue and red are also read in a revelatory light:

> Of Coelestiall Blew ... The Heauens ... seeme nott to bee able better to represent vnto men and Angells there admirable stability then by this generous liuery ... Of red which is vsed in Armories/ It is a colour w:ch God hath much esteemed ... when hee appeared upon the Mountaine ... hee had the Red Colour of Fire (pp. 77-83)

Descriptions of God in seventeenth-century poems developed the association of God with heraldry. The Old Testament had established the idea of God as the shield of his people in Genesis 15.1., where God tells Abraham: 'Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield'. Images of God in heaven drew on the wider resources of heraldry in order to represent the divine. Nils Åke Nilsson, who has studied seventeenth-century Russian heraldic verse, has observed that the interpretation of heraldic charges 'at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century ... is usually made in a religious spirit'.[253] Nilsson examines the manner in which God is presented by the writers of heraldic verses and concludes that: 'God ... is the life-giving force, as the sun ... But he is also ... the God of Wrath, the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Last Judgment ... a distant God' (p. 47).

In English heraldic verse, this latter vision of God is evident in 'Meditation,' by Thomas Beedome (d. 1641?), which was first published in 1641:

> My God came down in whirlewinds too, and flame,
> But his great Name,
> So blazon'd, did astonish more
> Than heretofore,
> When pointed thunder his loud Herrald came. (ll. 6-10)[254]

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253. Nilsson, *Russian Heraldic Virši*, p. 45.

254. Thomas Beedome, *Select Poems Divine and Humane*, edited by Francis Meynell (London, 1928), pp. 42-3.

One verse, '*The description of heauenly* Ierusalem' published in 1601, assigns arms to God. Although the blazon is not exact, the verse appears to describe a red (*gules*) cross against a green (verdant) background, which is placed on a shield of gold. The emphasis on the triumphal nature of *gules* is significant; from the early middle ages a triune device, placed on a red shield, had been used to represent the Trinity.[255] Here, since the cross is coloured red, the heraldically literate reader is reminded of the triune nature of God as well as of Christ's triumph over death on the cross:

> The King that heauenly Pallace rules,
> Doth beare vpon his golden shield,
> A Crosse, in signe of tryumph gules,
> Erected in a verdant field. (ll. 116-9)[256]

With heraldry providing a means to represent the divine, it is unsurprising that verses affirming the Christian faith should have adopted heraldic references as a means to express the reality of God in an individual's life on earth. Alexander Pennecuik's poem, 'A Morning Walk to ARTHUR'S SEAT, On the First Day of May', is an example.[257] It is likely that Pennecuik was a merchant in Edinburgh, where he was buried in Greyfriars churchyard in 1730 (DNB). 'A Morning Walk' was published ten years before his death and includes a substantial contemplation of the speaker's faith in Christ, expressed in heraldic terms. The verse is of particular interest because it addresses the equivocal nature of heraldry; both the private and the public aspects of the language are involved in the course of the speaker's meditation. The heraldic passage opens by invoking the entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Matthew 21.1-11). The speaker considers: 'The *Ass* he Pastures in the Forrests Wild; /... The Christians Arms is blazon'd on its Back,' (ll. 340 and 343). The possibility of honour being conferred upon the humble ass which carried Jesus, as symbolised by the appearance of Christian arms on its body, leads the speaker to declare:

> I'll mock the Pomp and Pageantry of Courts,
> The World's fallacious, silly, glistering Honours,

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255. Rodney Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London, 1975), p. 94.

256. Anon., *The Song of Mary the Mother of Christ: Containing the story of his life and passion: The teares of Christ in the garden: With The description of heauenly Ierusalem* (London, 1601), p. 34.

257. Alexander Pennecuik, *Streams from Helicon: Or, Poems on Various Subjects. In Three Parts*, second edition (Edinburgh, 1720), pp. 177-8.

> Vain Sepulchers are rear'd, t'adorn the Dust[258]
>
> The Heralds Art's a dull routtine of Words, (ll. 346-9)

This attack on the public language of heraldry, as regulated by the heralds and practised at court, does not prevent the speaker from assuming that heraldic symbols may still, in a private sphere, function as a sacred sign. His own declaration of faith in Christ assumes an heraldic form, as he declares that he will bear a golden shield, with the figure of Jesus on the cross and with other elements of the crucifixion comprising the various charges upon it:

> Than this no other 'scutcheon will I have.
> In a *Field Or*, a bleeding dying Jesus
> Upon the Cross expanded *Proper Sable*;
> The *Dexter* grasps a *Reed*, i'th' *Sinister*,
> A bitter Cup of *Vinegar* and *Gall*,
> For gentile Nations *quarterly o'er all*
> I'th' *First* and *Fourth*; the *gentile Elect Or*;
> *Crown'd, arm'd, langu'd, Gules*; for Jews.
> I'th second and the third a *Breast-Plate*, bearing
> The twelve Tribes *Bend-ways Argent* and *Azure*;
> The polar Part inscribed *Ecce Homo*,
> Mantled with Love befitting his Degree.
> For Crest a *Crown*; not Gold but plaited *Thorns*;
> Which terminateth in a *Mond, Or*;
> Th'Arms supported by two *wretched Thieves*
> Whose drooping Heads lys on their pensive Bosom;
> And *Jesus* is Motto in an *escrol* Writ,
> Jesus Nazareus Rex Judeorum. (l. 349-366)

This section of verse concludes with an unambiguous expression of faith in the redemptive power of Christ: 'In th' Arms of Love he on *Mount Calv'ry* dies;/ His Death was our attoning sacrifice' (ll. 372-3). The reference to the 'Arms of Love' (l. 372) should be regarded as an allusion both to God and to the armorial bearing. An impression of the shield blazoned in this verse is offered in figure thirteen.

The poetry of Henry Vaughan (1622-1695) uses heraldry not only to express the personal faith of the speaker but also to define those who may be counted among the faithful. In

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258. I am grateful to Professor Peter Davidson for pointing out to me that, in Scotland, 'heraldry is much more frequently seen in the churchyard ... than in the church itself.'

Figure 13
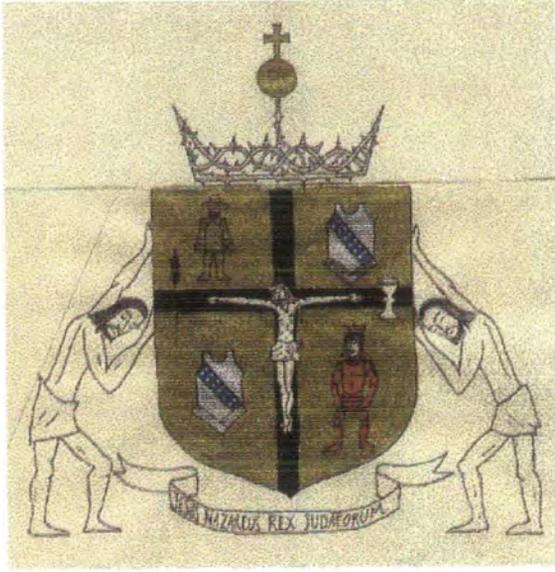
Figure 14
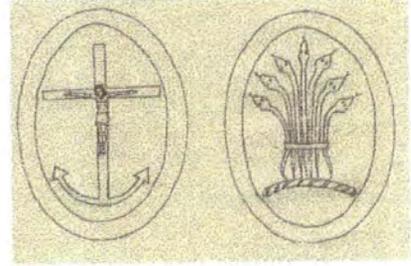
Figure 15

Figure 16
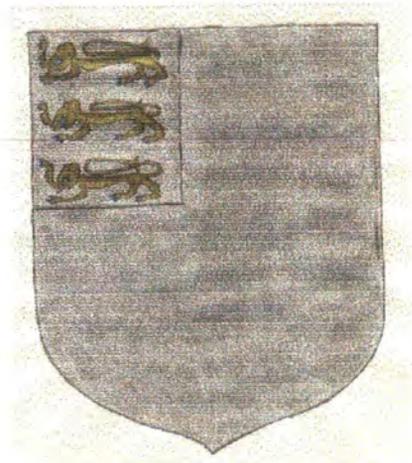
'Retirement', from *Silex Scintillans: or Sacred Poems and Priuate Eiaculations*,[259] first published in 1650 and reprinted in 1655, the ability to read heraldry marks a visionary ability, which in turn identifies the Godly. In the opening line, the speaker remarks: 'Who on yon throne of Azure sits' (l. 1), thus drawing attention to the heavenly figure (*azure* being the heraldic colour associated with heaven) whose divine voice then instructs the speaker that on earth there is:

> A faithful school where thou maist see
> In Heraldrie
> Of stones, and speechless Earth
> Thy true descent; (ll. 45-8)

Heraldry, a system of hereditary signs, which may be blazoned by precious stones,[260] thus allows the deity to identify those who may see clearly in the natural world their true, Godly, nature. This reference allows Vaughan to express the hermetic belief that there is a way in which one may discern real truth; the ability to read heraldic language becomes a metaphor for the possibility of discovering that truth on earth. In another of Vaughan's poems, 'Regeneration', the speaker's heraldic experience occurs during a dream, which is likened to the heavenly vision of Jacob in Genesis 28. 11-15. The speaker narrates his experience of God as a revelation that occurs in the midst of the natural world, into which he has escaped from the control of his guardian one day in spring. As the speaker approaches the divine in nature, his description of his surroundings shifts into an heraldic register. Initially, he climbs a mountain, where:

> ... some cryed, *Away*; straight I
>   Obey'd, and led
> Full East, a faire, fresh field could spy
>   Some call'd it, *Jacobs Bed*; (ll. 25-8)[261]

That the 'fresh field' is a projected reference to an heraldic *field*, (the surface of the shield on which the *charges* are placed), becomes clear by the sixth stanza, where the

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259. Henry Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans* (London, 1650; reprinted, Menston, 1968), pp. 86-7.

260. Henry Peacham tabulated the following associations of colours with precious stones: yellow/*or*; topazion and chrysolith, white/*argent*; margarite or pearl, red/*gules*; carbuncle, ruby and corall, light blue/*azure*; saphire, black/*sable*; diamond, agate or chelydoin, green/*vert*; smaragd or emeraud, purple/*purpure*; amethist, opall and hyacinth. (*Peacham's Heraldry*, pp. 7-10). Peacham's source for this information was John Ferne's heraldry manual, *The Blazon of Gentrie*.

261. Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*, pp. 7-9.

speaker is greeted by 'a new spring' (l. 39) and a dawn that is described in vivid heraldic language:

> The unthrift Sunne shot vitall gold
>   A thousand peeces,
> And heaven its azure did unfold
>   Checqur'd with snowie fleeces (ll. 41-4)

Gold, azure and *chequy* are all heraldic terms (*chequy* describes a field divided into small squares of alternating colours). The stanza continues with another heraldic reference, to a *garland*, which is also known as a *chaplet*. This is significant, because in heraldry, the *garland* is understood to comprise a wreath of leaves with four roses marking the points of a cross, unless a different flower is specifically mentioned in the blazon. A 'rose red chaplet' is also a Christian symbol.[262] Vaughan's speaker observes that:

> ... every bush
> A garland wore; Thus fed my Eyes
>   But all the Eare lay hush. (ll. 46-8)

The 'garland' also anticipates the speaker's sense of sacred quietness, that is expressed in line 48, since the rose is understood also to symbolise a 'duty of silence' and to mark the sanctity of anything spoken beneath it.[263] As in 'Retirement', in this poem heraldry is the language which expresses the speaker's progress towards the divine. In 'Regeneration' it also serves to limit the possibility of such progress to those who are initiated in the language; the speaker sees the divinity in nature because he has the ability to understand heraldry: 'I ... could spy' (ll. 25-7) the field and the heraldic charges thereon. Thus heraldry marks those elect of God; the reader of 'Regeneration' is excluded from the vision by the persistent use of the first person, an exclusion which is reinforced if the implications of the heraldic references are not appreciated.

The notion that heraldry could mark those in receipt of predestined grace was propounded by particular manuals of heraldry. Matthew Carter's *Honor redivivus; Or an Analysis of Honor and Armory*, first published in 1655, opens with a description of the God-given distinctions between people:

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262. Guy Cadogan Rothery, *Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry* (London, 1915; reprinted, London, 1995), p. 231.

263. Rothery, *Encyclopedia*, p. 134.

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The great and wise disposer of all Entities hath contriv'd every thing into such a Method, as in every particle of the Creation is discover'd a most excellent harmony, in which that of the degrees and honorary distinctions is as admirable as any ... Some he hath created to Honour, and some to Dishonour; setting a difference and variety in all things that by a rule of contraries they might the better display themselves. Some men he hath richly adorn'd with Excellency, and elevated them with the sub'imary glories of Honor, Nobility and Greatness; and others again ... hath he obscured with contraries of Meanness, Ignobility, and Indigency. Of the latter I shall onely say, that for them to spurn at the more honorable, because themselves are debased to an inferiority, is to kick dirt in the face of that infinitely just and wise God of our Creation.   (pp. 1-2)

The didactic importance of the book is thus established; by analysing heraldry as a system which distinguished the honourable from the dishonourable, Carter offers his readers a lesson in the recognition of the marks of God's grace. According to this scheme, those who wrote in heraldic terms thereby acknowledged the due hierarchies of Creation, and demonstrated their respect for God, which in turn indicated their own godly nature.

The use of heraldry as a demonstration of piety was documented by James Coats with reference to the arms originally borne by Crusaders. He records, in his edition of Guillim, the Crusaders' descendants, 'glorying in nothing so much as the open and plain demonstrations of their Parents Piety and Virtue' (p. 6). That heraldic references were also regarded as having the capacity to convey the personal piety of their bearers is evident in a number of poems, including John Donne's 'To Mr. George Herbert; sent him with one of my Seals of the Anchor and Christ'. This work is prefaced by the remark that: '*A Sheaf of Snakes used heretofore to be my Seal, which is the Crest of our poor family.*' Donne expresses his acceptance of his faith in heraldic terms:

Adopted in God's family, and so
My old coat lost, into new Arms I go.
The Cross, my Seal in Baptism, spread below,
Does by that form into an Anchor grow.
Crosses grow Anchors, bear as thou shouldst do
Thy Cross, and that Cross grows an Anchor too.
But He that makes our Crosses Anchors thus,
Is Christ, who there is crucified for us.
Yet with this I may by first Serpents hold;
God gives new blessings, and yet leaves the old (ll. 1-10)[264]

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264. Izaak Walton, *The Life of Dr John Donne* (London, 1658; reprinted in *John Donne: Devotions*

Donne's meditation on sin, death and salvation is inspired by the transition between the old crest of snakes or serpents and the new sign of the crucifix and anchor symbol, which appear on his new seal (see figure 14). An intrinsic aspect of heraldic distinction was its function as a mark of Godly favour; writing such as Donne's, which attempted to express an individual's search for personal salvation, conveyed a sense of the inevitability of that salvation by its use of the divinely ordained language of heraldry.[265]

This aspect of the language is evident, too, in verse by Mildmay Fane, second Earl of Westmorland. *Otia Sacra, Optima Fides,* a collection of verse which was privately printed in 1648, includes the poem 'Quid Amabilius'. Fane invokes Christ as a lover, and uses the same metaphor of heraldic exchange as Donne:

> If I must needs Discover
> I am in Love: be Christ again my Lover, (ll. 1-2)
> ....
> Thus I'll no longer... (l. 9)
> ....
> ...on Luxurious vow,
> Becircling Rose-buds seek to Gird my brow;
> But with a melting thought
> Bring home that Ransom whereat I was bought,
> In Contemplation
> Of that same Platted Crown He once had on. (ll. 13-18)
> ....
> Else farther to be drest,
> Borrow the Tincture of His naked brest: (ll. 21-22)
> ....
> With Him, who was both Priest and Sacrifice,
> To make atonement in
> The Difference 'twixt his Fathers wrath, Mans sin; (ll. 28-30)[266]

The metaphor articulates Fane's willingness to exchange his earthly, heraldic crest for

Upon Emergent Occasions Together with Death's Duel (Ann Arbor, 1959), pp. xxxi-xxxii.

265. Evidence of Donne's awareness of heraldry is also found in 'Sermon V', which he preached at St Paul's Cathedral on Christmas Day 1627. In the course of this sermon, Donne observes: 'goe to the Heralds Office, the spheare and element of Honour, and thou shalt finde those men as busie there about the consideration of Funerals, as about the consideration of Creations; thou shalt finde that office to be as well the Grave as the Cradle of Honour; And thou shalt finde in that Office as many Records of attainted families, and impoverished and forgotten, and obliterate families, as of families newly created and presently celebrated.' (*The Works of John Donne with a Memoir of his Life*, edited by Henry Alford, 6 vols (London, 1839), I, p. 90). See also Troy D. Reeves, *An Annotated Index to the Sermons of John Donne*, Volume I, *Index to the Scriptures* (Salzburg, 1979).

266. Fane, *Otia Sacra*, p. 70.

Christ's crown of thorns. This notion develops into a desire also to assume the colours associated with the crucifixion. It is expressed, initially, through the reference to rose-buds 'becircling' (l. 14) the speaker's brow; the Fane crest is blazoned: *Out of a ducal coronet or, a bull's head argent pied sable armed of the first, charged on the neck with a rose gules barbed and seeded proper.* So, a red rose appears on the neck of the bull which rises from a gold coronet, that rests on the wearer's brow. The speaker would exchange this crest, referred to metonymically through the rose, for Christ's crown of thorns. Then he turns to the 'Tincture' (l. 22) of Christ's breast, which would naturally be the red of Jesus' blood. The *tinctures* (while not an exclusively heraldic term, *tinctures* denotes all the colours, metals and furs used in heraldry) of the Fane coat of arms were gold (the charges) and blue (the field), so the implication is that Fane would change these for sacrificial red. The heraldic meditation continues. Christ's atonement is imagined as marking a 'Difference'(l. 30) between God's wrath and Man's sin; a heraldic *difference* is a mark on the shield which identifies one brother from the next, so in this verse, the reference marks the belief that an understanding and acceptance of the significance of Christ's death distinguishes the saved from the damned.

The indirect nature of these references to the crucifixion may be explained by the case of a coat of arms which actually included the figure of Christ as a charge on the shield. In *The Heraldic Imagination*, Rodney Dennys describes the Elizabethan grant of arms of Sir Theobald Butler. In 1583, he was granted 'as a quartering to his arms, *Argent a Crosse graded [i.e. on three steps] gules with the Picture of Christ Crucified or*'. However, in 1606, Dennys notes that Ulster King of Arms removed the quartering when a new Patent of arms was requested of his office.[267] No arms bearing the figure of Christ were granted during the seventeenth century; with such official unease concerning direct representations of Christ in individual grants of arms, reflecting the injunction of Exodus 20. 4 against 'graven image[s]', it is unsurprising that Fane, even in writing for a limited, private circle, should treat this subject with circumspection. A similar attitude is evident in the following lines from 'On Beauty', by Nicholas Billingsley. The narrator recognises and commends the beauty of divine Grace, but finds that it is not within his capacity to describe it further:

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267. Dennys, *Heraldic Imagination*, pp. 101-2.

But O the Jewels which on Christ were hung,
Cannot be blazon'd by a mortal tongue. (ll. 37-8)[268]

The examples by Donne and Fane, above, nevertheless direct our attention to the fact that heraldry in the seventeenth century was used as a witness of Christ, even if it could not extend to a direct portrayal of his image on a coat of arms. The use of a cross, without the figure of Christ, was of course a display of faith; in the *Remaines*, Camden reminds his readers that 'The first Christians used no other blazon in their shields then the name of Christ, and a crosse for their Creast' (p. 228). The fifteenth-century *Boke of Saint Albans* confirmed Christ's association with heraldry. According to that text, Jesus was a gentleman bearer of arms:

> Of the ofspryng of the gentilman Japeth come Habraham Moyses Aron and the profettys. and also the kyng of ye right lyne of mary. of whom that gentilman Jhesus was borne very god and man: after his manhode kyng of the londe of Jude & of Jues gentilman by is modre mary prynce of Cote armure.[269]

Other writers conceived of heraldry as predating Christ and, accordingly, regarded the redemptive quality of Christ's life and death as having created an heraldic system which had been purified by, rather than which had originated in, the divine. This is the position in *Psyche*, an epic poem by Joseph Beaumont (1616-1699) that was published in 1648, two years after Beaumont was made a canon of Ely. In Canto III, John the Baptist baptises Christ, and in so doing triumphs over death: 'And soon confuted that sad Heraldry' (l. 904). In the same poem, Canto X, Stanza 130, is a celebration of the sign of the cross, and its use, in particular, on the flag of Scotland: 'which shall inherit such Renown,/ ... That it the *Scottish Heraldry* shall crown' (ll. 781 and 783). In this light, heraldry becomes a system which will glorify those whom it commemorates, as the narrator of *Psyche* exclaims: 'What Glories then shall *Saints* themselves obtain,/ If in such state their *Suffring's Badges* reign!' (ll. 785-6).[270]

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268. Nicholas Billingsley, *A Treasury of Divine Raptures: Consisting of Serious Observations, Pious Ejaculations, Select Epigrams: Alphabetically rank'd and fil'd by a Private Chaplain to the Illustrious and Renowned Lady Urania The Divine and Heavenly Muse: The First Part* (London, 1667), pp. 50-52 (p. 51).

269. *The Boke of Saint Albans by Dame Juliana Berners: containing Treatises on Hawking, Hunting, and Cote Armour*, edited by William Blades (St Albans, 1486; reprinted, London, 1905), sig. aiir.

270. *The Complete Poems of Dr. Joseph Beaumont*, edited by Alexander B. Grosart, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1880), I, 191-192.

Heraldry was also used in verse to signify the eternal life which was purchased by Christ's death. This particular aspect of heraldry as a sacred language is presented in a dedicatory verse which prefaces Sir John Ferne's *The Blazon of Gentrie*, of 1586. It confers upon heralds a near-priestly status, since their work is regarded as 'sacred' (l. 25) in its definition of the hierarchical relationships in creation. Heraldry is also given sacerdotal significance as the identifier of vice or virtue. Specifically, in the latter case, those whose tombs are marked by heraldry are to be recognised as having gained eternal life. As a prefatory verse from *The Blazon of Gentrie* makes clear:

> By sacred skill of heralds arte: that difference might remaine,
> Twixt King and Lord, twixt Lord and Knight, twixt Knight and simple swain
> From whence it comes that mortall men, when vertue makes the ods,
> So farre exceed mortality, that comming neare the Gods
> With armes they are eternized, in witness of their fame,
> And those whose actions are more vile in blemish of their name
> Haue coats reuerst, for honor longs to none but vertues deedes (l. 25-31)

In this verse, the perception of heraldry is almost blasphemous, although the use of the plural 'Gods' keeps the reference partly classical. Coats of arms are presented as an objective witness of individual virtue, and their possession grants an eternal status (l. 29) which is, 'neare' that of 'the Gods' (l. 28). Historians have dated the appearance of heraldry on tombs from the late thirteenth century. Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson note that, from this time, 'coats of arms became the standard form of embellishment on the tombs of both the laity and the clergy, at first modestly, and then with increasing elaboration and decorative fancy.'[271]

The terms used in the prefatory verse are repeated in Ferne's text, where he explains the exemplary significance of the 'sacred sculptures of the coat-armour':

> if it be so, that dumbe images of the noble: if tables painted, with the heroicall gestes, of such that were straungers in bloud, haue not a little moued the posteritie, to the attempting of the like vertues ... much more shall the worthy merites of the auncester, figured out, in the secret emblemes, or sacred sculptures of the coat-armour, stirre vp the sonne, to imitate the same vertues, whereby his auncestor obteyned to make them both Gentlemen. (p. 26)

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271. Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford, 1988) p. 173.

Arms thus assumed the inspirational function of an icon, worship of which would secure a virtuous lineage by keeping the worthy nature of the deceased in the memory of his descendants. The affective power of heraldry is witnessed in the twentieth century by Jung, who, in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, recalls:

> In the winter of 1955-56 I chiselled the names of my paternal ancestors on three stone tablets and placed them in the courtyard of the Tower. I painted the ceiling with motifs from my own and my wife's arms ... my coat of arms no longer contains the original phoenix. Instead there is a cross azure in chief dexter and in base sinister a blue bunch of grapes in a field d'or; separating these is an etoile d'or in a fess azure. ... When I was working on the stone tablets I became aware of the fateful links between me and my ancestors.[272]

These 'fateful links' encourage Jung, not to particular acts of virtue, but rather to feel that he is 'under the influence of things or questions which were left incomplete and unanswered by my ... ancestors.' Jung's observations are of interest here for their testament to the power of heraldry to indeed, 'stirre vp' the emotions of later generations.

Unsurprisingly, in James Yorke's *The Union of Honour*, published in 1640, concerns with eternity and posterity are expressed from a very different perspective from that of John Ferne. The authority for heraldic recognition of virtue and salvation, in the prefatory verse to Yorke's work, lies not in the divinely ordained mysteries implied by the 'sacred skill of heralds' (1. 25) of the Ferne preface, but rather in an '*Honourd Art*' (1. 29), which may be understood by '*the light/ Of* Reason' (1. 2). The verse is by George Bucke, and includes the observation that:

> *Tis onely merit, brings home just reward.*
> *And what more noble study can there be,*
> *To keepe it upon File, unto Posterity,*
> *Then in this Honourd Art? by which men live*
> *Beyond the fate, that stones or Brasse can give:*
> *To what with greater safety can we trust*
> *The* Credit *of our* Marble *and our* Dust? (ll. 26-32)[273]

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272. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, edited by Aniela Jaffé, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (London, 1995), pp. 259-60.

273. Yorke, *Union of Honovr*, preface.

In Bucke's work, sacred vocabulary is replaced by financial metaphor; heraldry keeps virtue '*upon File*' (l. 28) and records a meritorious life to the 'Credit' (l. 32) of the deceased. The writer still assumes that heraldry has the power to confer everlasting life, but it is a life in the memory of '*Posterity*' (l. 28) rather than a place in eternity which is at stake. Nigel Llewellyn has studied the significance of heraldry on post-reformation funeral monuments and his assumptions regarding the nature of heraldry are important here. Llewellyn observes that:

> Within the newly developed civil society, the concept of Honour resulted in a mundane glorification of both self and public esteem: religious images were neither legal or essential. ... some tomb programmes comprised virtually nothing but heraldry. (p. 148)

For Llewellyn, heraldry is a secular sign, and Bucke's verse, where heraldic metaphor is commercial rather than sacred, would support that understanding. However, the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that heraldic imagery cannot be assumed to be secular. The existence of poems such as the following, 'On Children' by Nicholas Billingsley, testifies to the persistence of a belief in heraldry as a divinely ordained language in the second half of the seventeenth century:

> God's children are the royal Diadem,
> He makes a precious account of them,
> Creates them noble persons; them doth crown
> With honour, they have titles of renown.
> They are call'd Kings, th'excellent of the earth,
> And their rich Scutchions shew their Heav'nly birth
> The Scripture hath set forth their Heraldry, (ll. 27-33)
> ....
> They have a fairer Coat of Arms to shew
> Then Angels, let's their Priviledges view; (ll. 55-6)[274]

The use of heraldic metaphor did not, however, automatically imply divine favour. The works of Nicholas Billingsley, John Beaumont and John Milton will be discussed below; each demonstrate that heraldic imagery was as appropriate to evil as to godly subjects. In 'On a Bastard', Billingsley's initial heraldic reference confirms that heraldry is a language appropriate to the expression of God's benevolence and love of mankind: 'By faith it is, that God takes cognizance/ Of us for sons' (ll. 13-14), the

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274. Billingsley, *Treasury of Divine Raptures*, pp. 103-6.

speaker claims (a *cognizance* is an heraldic badge). Then Billingsley addresses those who lack faith:

> Tis faith that doth legitimate, until
> Thou do believe, thou art a Bastard still.
> Boast not thy Pedigree, the devil can show
> As full as good a Coat of Arms as thou. (ll. 19-22)[275]

The image of the devil as an armigerous figure is also provided by Joseph Beaumont, in *Psyche*, Canto I, stanza twelve. The main charge on the devil's arms is a red dragon, providing a clear reference to the symbolism of the book of Revelation, where 'a great red dragon' (Revelation 12. 3) was cast out of heaven: 'the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan' (Revelation 12. 9). In Beaumont's poem, Satan's coat of arms include a dragon, depicted on a black shield (see figure 15):

> The Hall was roof'd with everlasting *Pride*
> Deep pavèd with *Despair*, checker'd with Spight,
> And hangèd round with *Torments* far and wide:
> The front display'd a goodly-dreadful sight,
> Great *Satan's* Arms stamp'd on an iron shield
> *A Crowned Dragon Gules in sable field.* (ll. 73-8)

In heraldry, *pride* refers to a depiction of a peacock with its tail displayed, *checky* describes a shield or charge divided into alternately coloured squares. That the black shield would have been regarded as communicating the diabolical to seventeenth-century readers is likely given the colour theories established by Bartolo da Sassoferrato, whose work provided a source for many later heraldry manuals. According to Bartolo, 'light is very noble, its opposite, namely darkness, is very base. ... The color black is the basest because it comes closest to darkness'.[276] The devil was regarded as the prince of darkness, presented for example, in the New Testament, as the ruler 'of the darkness of this world' (Ephesians 6. 12).

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton does not distinguish Satan's arms in such exact terms. Reference is made to his standard, that is:

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275. Billingsley, *Treasury of Divine Raptures*, pp. 47-8.

276. *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrrato's 'Tract on Insignia and Coat of Arms'*, p. 153.

The imperial ensign, which full high advanced
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies: (I. 535-8)

Alastair Fowler has noted, in his edition of *Paradise Lost*, that Milton contrasts pagan with holy ensigns in order to differentiate the rebel angels from their heavenly counterparts.[277] Thus, in heaven, appear:

Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards, and gonfalons twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. (V. 588-94)

I would argue, however, that the significance of Milton's use of heraldry extends beyond the distinction acknowledged by Fowler. In Book One, heraldic references are an inescapable part of the reader's introduction to Satan. For example, his eyes 'sparkling blazed' (I. 194); the heraldic connotation of this is clear when compared to the use of 'imblazed' (I. 537) above. As well as Satan's standard, Milton describes his shield:

... his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, (I. 284-7)

Significantly, the only use of direct armorial blazon in Book One is with reference to heaven; in hell, Satan struggles to walk 'not like those steps/ On heaven's azure' (I. 296-7). The impression is that only heaven merits a true heraldic description (*azure* being the heraldic term for blue). Satan, although ejected from heaven, is still subject to heraldic discourse, but now merits only an indirect form of reference. The description of his ensign would indicate a reference to the sun (it is 'imblazed' with 'golden lustre' (I. 537) and in heraldry gold is associated with the sun). His shield hangs 'like the moon' (I. 287). These, however, are simply associations, which stand in contrast to the pure, technical language that is applied to heaven. That Satan's shield is 'ponderous' (I. 284), suggests a grandiloquence that is the opposite of succinct heraldic reference. This

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277. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, edited by Alastair Fowler (London and New York, 1971), p. 75 and p. 294.

impression is confirmed by the following lines, in which it is clear that, in hell, Satan 'beholds/ Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood/ With scattered arms and ensigns' (I. 323); heraldry, both physically and linguistically, has become part of Chaos. The effect is to reinforce the irony of Satan's declaration that, in hell, 'We shall be free' (I. 259) and that 'Here we may reign secure' (I. 261). In fact, Satan is still subject to the linguistic forces which find their most pure form in defining heaven. In the light of Bossewell's explanation from the *Workes of Armorie,* quoted above, that God should be regarded as the 'originall authour' of noble distinctions, the implication that Satan remains subject to God's omnipotence is inevitable from a reading of the heraldic references in the book. If the associations with the sun and the moon are pursued through heraldic literature, the irony deepens. One seventeenth-century French heraldic authority recorded that, 'Le soleil est la symbole de la Diuinité, de la magnificence, et des autres qualitez diuines'.[278] Moreover, Nilsson believes that the sun was used in heraldry as 'an image of God's all-seeing eye looking down on the world He created' (p. 47). Such references and heraldic associations confirm Satan's subjection to the will and determination of God in Book One.

The use of heraldic references in creative depictions of heaven and hell reflected assumptions concerning the origins of heraldry which had been set out in fifteenth-century heraldic treatises. *The Boke of Saint Albans* included a translation of Nicholas Upton's heraldic treatise, *De Studio Militari,* which was completed in 1446/7 and was reprinted in 1654 by Sir Edward Bysshe. The influence of this text upon those governing official heraldic language in the seventeenth century may be inferred from the fact that Bysshe was, at the time, Garter King of Arms; he was appointed by parliament in 1646, and held the office until 1660. According to this late medieval vision, the use of arms on earth was based upon the laws of heaven, where the orders of angels were distinguished according to a similar system of signs:

> In so moche thatt all gentilnes cummys of god of heuvn ... the lawe of armys ... was ... begunne before any lawe in the worlde. bott the lawe of nature and before the x comawndementis of god And thys lawe of armys

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278. Charles Segoing, *Tresor Heraldique ov Mercvre Armorial Où sont demonstrée toutes les choses necessaires pour acquerir vne parfaite connoissance de l'Art de blazonner* (Paris, 1657), p.41. Quoted in Frederick Edward Hulme, *The History, Principles and Practice of Heraldry* (London, 1892; reprinted, New York, 1969), p. 151.

was grounded uppon the ix orderys of angelis in heuen encrowned with
ix dyveris precious stonys of colowris and of vertuys dyueris[279]

It is unsurprising, therefore, that angels in seventeenth-century verse should have been described in heraldic terms. Milton, in 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity', describes the ranks of angels appearing to the shepherds 'with wings displayed' (l. 114).[280] *Displayed* is an heraldic term meaning that the wings were outspread. The 'Ode: To the Right Reverend Father in God John, late Lord Bishop of Chester, upon his Promotion thither' by Samuel Woodford (1636-1700), provides another example. In 1679, when this verse was printed as part of a collection of his compositions, Woodford was a doctor of divinity and canon of Chichester; the occasion celebrated by the verse was the Bishop's promotion to Wadham College, Oxford, where Woodford had taken his Bachelor of Arts in 1657:

> The British Gardian-Angel cloath'd in Light,
> Did on an Azure Cloud descend, (ll. 66-7)
> ....
> The Faith's DEFENDER, Heav'ns best Charge did represent, (l. 75)
> ....
> His Left Hand held a Silver Shield,
> Charg'd with three Leopards, in a Canton of the Field. (ll. 83-4)[281]

Woodford uses heraldry to describe the angel's appearance to the 'Warriors ... In Civil Wars' (ll. 73 and 93) since, 'th'Shape he takes above' (l. 69) is 'a Form too subtile, and too great' (l. 70) for mortal eyes. The angel carries the arms of England on a canton of his heavenly shield; the term *leopard* was used to describe the *lions passant guardant* of the English arms. It is perhaps in order to differentiate between the mortal and the immortal that the angel's shield is cast in a form that is deemed inappropriate for regular heraldry. The placing of a metal on a metal, as in the angel's shield where the golden English lions are set against a silver background, was unacceptable to the heralds, who maintained that such patterns were impractical because the individual elements were difficult to distinguish when set against each other (see figure 16).

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279. Berners, *Boke of Saint Albans*, sig. ai^v-aii-^r.

280. *Milton: Poetical Works*, edited by Douglas Bush (London, 1966), pp. 64-72 (p. 68).

281. Samuel Woodford, *A Paraphrase upon the canticles, and some select hymns of the New and Old Testament, with other occasional compositions in English verse* (London, 1679), pp. 142-3.

Heraldic language was thus an established form for identifying the different elements of heaven and earth and the hierarchical relationships between them. 'Times Mintage', by Mildmay Fane, demonstrates the usefulness of this framework for poets. In the poem, Fane explores the struggle against the 'Muck and Slime' (l. 32) of worldly wealth and ambition and the hope that the Redeemer (l. 39) will intervene to save his 'Soul/ Immortall' (ll. 33-4). In the first stanza, the hierarchy of creation, from the worm to man, are assumed 'To Blazon Providence divine' (l. 4):

> Of all the scattered Brood,
>   Or Brotherhood,
> Drawn from Creations line,
> To Blazon Providence divine;
>   The Worm, the Snail,
>   The Ant, the Fly,
> Best make discovery
> What *Adam* did entail
>   On His posterity. (l. 1)[282]

To 'Blazon Providence divine' (l. 4), using the 'scattered Brood' (l. 1) of creation, implies that a correct rendering of these creatures, including man, will provide an accurate impression of the deity. While the writers of heraldry manuals confirmed God as the ultimate author of heraldry, since his creation assumed in their minds an heraldic form, Fane's verse proffers nature as an element through which the divine itself might assume a recognisable form.

Armorial literature affirmed the notion that heraldry on earth was the original pattern of creation. Edmund Bolton states: '*Ensignes* ... began with the creation of things, and ... the notion is imprinted in nature' (p. 8). The idea that observations of the natural world would confirm the godly nature of the language is emphasised by Bolton, as he instructs the student of heraldry to:

> but cast your eye ... vpon the goodly booke of the world, the noble
> creatures wherein are admirably distinguished, with signes of that
> nobility. The heauens haue their ensignes, and notes, their colours, and
> charges, and of them some apparently more excellent then the other   (p. 12)

That heraldry could embody the secrets of the created universe is implicit in the

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282. Fane, *Otia Sacra*, pp. 64-5.

figurative language of a verse which prefaces John Ferne's *The Blazon of Gentrie*. It compounds the message that heraldry was the system according to which the natural world could be understood. The verse depends on the metaphor of various physical features being identified as charges on ensigns, in order to distinguish the earth, the sky and the sea:

> At first when neither heauen, nor earth, nor sea diuided were,
> But all confused in one heape, deuoide of light or aire,
> Then he which was before the world, which is and still shall bee,
> The chiefe of Gods, (for why not one hath rule in heauen but hee)
> First made the skyes wherein he plac'st the starres the moone, the sun
> As ensignes of the statelie pole:... (ll. 1-6)
>
> ....
>
> As ensignes of the earthe he gaue, the woddes, the groues, the hilles.
> Then last of all he made the seas with fishe and creatures store:
> Whose Ensignes were the rocks and sands, deuided from the shore. (ll. 10-12)

The most striking consequence of this construction of heraldry as a natural and universal form arose when observers adopted heraldic language to voice their experiences of the natural world and its inhabitants. This study has found only one example of an heraldic reference in American verse in this period. In *The Sot-weed Factor: Or, a Voyage to Maryland*, the narrator is a character newly arrived in Maryland from Great Britain (l. 89). Its author, Ebenezer Cook (1667?-1733?) was the son of a Maryland tobacco merchant (a sotweed factor) who was present in the colony from 1694. He draws from the heraldic palette to describe an encounter with 'Indians' (l. 261) at the start of a journey to Battletown:

> Scarce had we enter'd on the way
> Which thro' thick Woods and Marshes lay;
> But *Indians* strange did soon appear,
> In hot pursuit of wounded Deer;
> No mortal Creature can express,
> His wild fantastick Air and Dress;
> His painted Skin in colors dy'd
> His sable Hair in Satchel ty'd
> Shew'd Savages not free from Pride:
> His tawny Thighs, and Bosom bare,
> Disdain'd a useless Coat to wear, (l. 259-69)[283]

283. Ebenezer Cook, *The Sot-weed Factor: Or, a Voyage to Maryland: A Satyr: In which is describ'd, The Laws, Government, Courts and Constitutions of the Country; and also the Buildings, Feasts, Frolicks, Entertainments and Drunken Humours of the Inhabitants of that Part of America* (London, 1708); see also: *The American Tradition in Literature*, edited by George Perkins, Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty and E.Hudson Long, 2 vols (New York, 1985), I, pp. 136-149 (p. 142 and note

In order to appreciate Cook's use of heraldry in this passage, it is helpful to note two seventeenth-century descriptions of Native Americans. In 1610, Edmund Bolton described: 'AMERICA, that rude new found world' (p. 44), where 'The shoulders of the naked FLORIDIANS are badged with the markes of their Lords' and a 'marke consisting of three parallel Arrowes trauersed barre-wayes, is the branded badge of sundry prinicipall men in Secota, and set vpon the backs of their vassals there' (pp. 20-21). Bolton believed that, in examining Indians, one might 'behold not onely the infancy, and cradle-age of armories, but also what they were in their Embrion, nay, what they were in their seed.' (pp. 19-20). As has been mentioned in the introduction to this study, Bolton used his observations to prove the existence of a natural and universal heraldry:

> HOLATA OVTINA (interpreted (I thinke) King of Kings) in FLORIDA
> was painted red, and none but he were so coloured, saue onely some
> such choyse young soldiers ... of this (as a secret fountaine of true
> Armories, and not the least mystery in the wisdome of nature ... Hereby
> it is ... cleared, that the notion is universall, and therefore natural ...
> Manyfest examples whereof it were not hard to depourtray vnto you out
> of the Barbarous worlds; the same being no lesse verifiable in the ciuill.
> And from this *common notion; imprest in nature, Armes, or Armories*
> (the present matter of our conference) claime their parentage.   (pp. 17-18)

John Gibbon drew a similar conclusion in 1682, giving a detailed description of the marks he regarded as heraldic on the bodies of Native Americans in Virginia:

> I say, while I lived in Virginia, I saw once a War-dance acted by the
> Natives. The Dancers were painted, some Party per pale Gul. and Sab.
> from forehead to foot (some Party per Fesse of the same Colours) and
> carried little ill-made Shields of Bark, also painted of those Colours (for
> I saw no other) some party per fesse, some per pale (and some barry) at
> which I exceedingly wondred, and concluded, That Heraldry was
> ingrafted naturally into the sense of humane Race.   (pp. 156-7)

Against this background, Ebenezer Cook's heraldic references cannot be disregarded or dismissed as coincidental. The 'colors' (l. 265) and 'sable Hair' (l. 266) that the narrator mentions, are obvious references. The absent 'Coat' (l. 269) may, following the introduction of the heraldic vocabulary in the previous lines, also be understood to imply the absence of an heraldic identity recognisable to the European speaker, as well as a lack of conventional clothing.

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p. 136).

Although there is no published work on heraldry in early American literature, Peter Mason, in *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other*, considers the use of native figures as supporters in coats of arms to be:

> symbols of the western domination of the New World. The negative portrayal of the New World in the early representations could serve the interests of a colonialist attitude, which was only too ready to domesticate the continent and to tame the wildness of its inhabitants. In this sense, the portrayals with the coat of arms may be seen as a piece of wishful thinking, if not a confirmation of geopolitical practice.[284]

Conrad Swan has identified the first Indian in heraldry to be the sinister supporter in the arms of Nova Scotia, Canada, which, according to his research, were in existence by 1628.[285] Swan notes that this figure, like the supporters in the Seal of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, which was granted in 1663, were conventional Indian figures, distinguished by 'feather kilts and head-dresses' (pp. 99-101). In the Carolina seal, an Indian woman is the dexter supporter. A conventional Indian figure also occurs in the seal of Massachusetts, which was used between 1629 and 1684, when it was replaced under James II by the royal arms.[286]

The Indian in the *The Sot-Weed Factor* is defined as a 'strange' (l. 261) 'wild' and 'fantastick' (l. 264) figure, and heraldry functions to confirm his position as 'other' to the narrator. The Indian's body marks are not identified in his own terms by the speaker, who instead describes him in the terms of European heraldry, which confirms for the reader the narrator's domination of 'the brute' (l. 292).

Such an attitude was not universal. Swan has found evidence from 1637/8 of 'the beginning in British heraldry of a serious effort to portray local and particular types of North American Indians as they actually were'. He cites the Grant of Arms, Crest and Supporters for Newfoundland, in which the supporters, Beothuk Indians, were blazoned: 'two savages of the clyme proper, armed and apparaled according to their

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284. Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other* (London and New York, 1990), p. 47.

285. Conrad M.J.F. Swan, 'American Indians in Heraldry', *The Coat of Arms*, 87 (1971), pp. 96-106 (pp. 97-8). Further references to this article are given after quotations in the text.

286. Eugene Zieber, *Heraldry in America* (Philadelphia,1895; reprinted, New York, 1984), pp. 141-2.

guise when they goe to Warre' (p. 106). Contrary to Peter Mason's argument, it is important in reading Cook's verse to note that in the seventeenth century, the figurative imposition of heraldic markings on a body were not necessarily intended to diminish the subject. According to Edmund Bolton, even James I had an heraldic distinction set upon his body. In *The Elements of Armories*, Sir Amias suggests that Sir Eustace should:

> but behold the countenances of men, how, like to seuerall coates of armes, by complexion, lineament, and a thousand alterations of aspect, they are diuersifi'd, and that with degrees of dignitie, one from the other. *Nature her selfe* ... shall present vnto you figures, wrought by her own hand, and penicill, as marking out by them her cheife Maister-peeces. For, of what other sort are ... the genitiuall notes printed vpon some supereminent princes in their mothers womb? Alexander the great was borne with the impression of a Lion ... our own most renowned King, vpon him also, the figure of a Lyon was alike naturally set.   (pp. 12-13)

In the lines which follow the heraldic description of the Indian, the narrator of *The Sot-weed Factor* indeed pauses to question 'Whether this race was framed by God,' (l. 302). The choice of language, it might be argued, lays the grounds for asking, and answering, that question even before it is articulated. If heraldry can describe the Indian in any way, then, according to the prevailing understanding of seventeenth-century heraldry which has been discussed here, the logical conclusion must be that the Indian is part of God's creation. In the poem, the Indian is identified as a devil worshipper (l. 298), which conveniently places him, not outside God's creation, but among the fallen; the use of heraldry in this regard has already been established in the works of Milton, Billingsley and Beaumont.

This chapter has sought to explore the nature of heraldic language with a consideration of references used in a religious or spiritual context. It has demonstrated that heraldry manuals offered an interpretation of heraldry which would have conditioned readers, with only occasional moments of scepticism, to accept heraldry as a Christian, divinely ordained discourse. Poets responded to this environment by drawing upon heraldic references to express a range of personal encounters with the divine, as well as to articulate the general assumptions of the Christian faith. For Donne, Fane, Vaughan Pennecuik, heraldic references served a meditative or inspirational function, articulating the progress of an individual spiritual quest. Other writers, among whom Milton is the most notable, found in heraldry an appropriate way to distinguish the nature of God,

Christ and the devil. For the most part, the metaphors served to impress upon the reader that a particular work revealed a spiritual or Christian truth. Heraldry, with its strictly ordered code of blazon, provided a tangible echo of a divinely ordered universe, encompassing heaven and earth, which could therefore articulate a purity of faith, the beauty of creation or the glory of God.

that this is thyng not accustomed & out of vsage to wymen/ whiche
comynly do not entremete but to spynne on the distaf & ocupie theim in
thynges of houshold.
(Christine de Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualry*)

Those who turned to the language and images of heraldry in their work were working within, or against, a code which had strict technical guidelines regarding the use of heraldry involving women. Early evidence of the consequences of this code for writers appears in the work of perhaps the most famous female writer on heraldry, Christine de Pisan. She acknowledged in her fifteenth-century work, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualry*, that heraldry and chivalry were not subjects upon which women were 'accustomed' to write. She therefore had to account for her behaviour and seek an authority for her work that would make it more acceptable. The strategy that Christine de Pisan adopted was to associate her voice with that of the goddess Minerva, the 'goddesse of armes & of chyualrye', whom she described as a fellow 'woman ytalien.'[287]

Christine de Pisan transgressed the tenor of heraldic law, grounded as it was in male authority. As John Ferne implies in *The Blazon of Gentrie*, the organisation of the heraldic system effectively silenced women:

> This is, the ordinaunce of the lawes: wherein is secreatlye set foorth, of
> how much more excellencye and worthynes, is noblenes in man, then
> when it falleth in the other sexe, which as shut vp or rather extinguished,
> can not communicate, the brightnes and vertue thereof to an other. (p. 62)

According to Ferne, the laws of heraldry determined that honour could not be 'communicate[d]' through women. Certainly, heraldry was subject to rules of patrilineal inheritance, with a woman's heraldic identity being derived from her father's

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287. *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye: translated and printed by William Caxton from the French original by Christine de Pisan*, edited by A. T. P. Byles, Early English Text Society (London, 1932), p.6. The source for Christine de Pisan's chapters on heraldry is Honoré Bonet's *L'Arbre des Batailles* (Paris, 1493). The other fifteenth-century work to include a discussion of heraldry, and which is traditionally believed to have been written by a woman, is *The Boke of Saint Albans* by Dame Juliana Berners. This was printed at St Albans, by the Schoolmaster-Printer, in 1486. However, the twentieth-century editor of the work argues for the 'erroneous attribution' of authorship to Dame Juliana (*The Boke of Saint Albans*, p. 7).

or husband's coat of arms.[288]   The system reinforced the principle of coverture, according to which a wife was considered to be a *feme covert*, whose husband was legally responsible for her actions. Heraldry provided a visible reminder that women 'should be seene, and not heard'.[289]   No provision was made for recording either a woman's unique identity, or her female lineage. Even the shape upon which an unmarried woman's arms were displayed was regarded an expression of the ideal female virtues of chastity and devotion, rather than as a vehicle for displaying a sign of individual identity. A woman bears her arms on a *lozenge* (a diamond) shape, rather than on a shield. John Guillim explained the history and significance of the lozenge in *A Display of Heraldry*:

> *Anne* of *Britain*, Wife to *Charles* the Eighth of *France*, as an ornamental Honour to several deserving Ladies, instead of the Military Belt and Collar, bestowed on them a Cordon or Lace, and admonishing them to live chastely and devoutly; and to put the greater esteem thereon, she surrounded her Escocheon of Arms with the like Cordon; from which Example it is now become the Custom for unmarrried Women to bear their Arms in form of a Lozenge, which are commonly adorned with such a Cordon. (p. 148)

As well as discussing the use of heraldry with reference to women, this chapter will examine the engagement of women writers with heraldry and their implicit challenge to Ferne's 'secret' law.   Ferne's assumption that his heraldry manual addressed 'Gentlemen bearers of Armes' and that it should concern 'none other' demonstrates that he had no expectation that women should be involved in heraldry, either as bearers of arms, or as its students. In response, it is necessary to consider whether other evidence indicates that women in the seventeenth century were generally denied access to the visual culture of heraldry, to its language and secondary literature. While the primary concern of this chapter is with the relationship between women and heraldic language, some contextual material will, therefore, first be considered.

Perhaps of greatest significance, is the fact that women were, in spite of the indications

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288.   This is the general rule; it should be noted that women can transmit arms under certain circumstances, when they are designated 'coheiresses', 'heiresses' or, in Scotland, the 'heir of line'. For details of these circumstances, see Fox-Davies, *Complete Guide to Heraldry*, pp. 404-5.

289.   William Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman*, (London, 1632), p. 41. Quoted by Elaine Hobby in '"Discourse so unsavoury": Women's published writings of the 1650s' in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740*, edited by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London, 1992), pp. 16-33.

to the contrary provided in many manuals of heraldry, an official part of the system that existed to regulate the use of heraldry in the provinces. While women were never appointed as heralds in the College of Arms in London, in 1681, Thomas St George, Norroy King of Arms, appointed Jane Horsley deputy herald for the city of York. Five years later, in 1686, when Sir John Dugdale held the office of Norroy, Jane Haynes was appointed a herald-painter for the city and county of York.[290] Although the following reference falls just outside our period, it is also noteworthy that John Anstis, Garter King of Arms between 1715 and 1744, mentions a woman working in the heraldic sphere. In *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, Anstis discusses the threat to the heralds of the appointment of 'a Number of low Mechanicks, and among others a Woman.'[291]

Other records, of anecdotal evidence from the seventeenth century, certainly imply a considerable level of commitment to, and involvement with, armorial matters among women. William Higford's manuscript record of his 'Institutions or advice to his grandson', dated around 1650, recalls, for example the fate of his family's genealogical record:

> The Pedigree mentioninge all those *par*ticulars, as yt was drawne, by m^r Campden Clarenceux kinge of Armes, my wife -- (intendinge to preserve yt) carryed yt wth her into the Forrest of Deane (wch belife seeminge a gay thinge unto the souldiers) was plundred, and soe lost [.][292]

In a rather less tense situation, Anne, Lady Halkett, records in her *Memoirs*, that she, with other women, was in the company of heralds:

> upon Thursday the 24 of June, 1652, my Lord Dunfermline, with his nephew the late Lord Lyon and severall other gentlemen, wentt from Fyvie, allowing mee and my woman the honour of there company.[293]

In contrast to this rather weak record, from which it is impossible to discern the level of interest in heraldry of the women involved, are the sixteenth-century examples of

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290. Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 240.

291. John Anstis, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, from its cover in Black Velvet, usually called the Black Book*, 2 vols (London, 1724), I, p. 470. This is also quoted in Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 240.

292. HRHRC, pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 89, f. 13.

293. *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, edited by John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), p. 63.

Elizabeth Hoby, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, 'Bess of Hardwick' (d. 1608) and, from the seventeenth century, Lady Anne Clifford (d. 1676). Elizabeth, the widow of Sir Thomas Hoby, is believed, for example, to have designed the tomb of her husband and his brother. Erected in the Hoby Chapel in the church of All Saints, Bisham, Berkshire, between 1566 and 1570, this contains, in the opinion of Peter Begent, four 'splendid heraldic memorials'.[294] Regarding the Countess of Shrewsbury, according to John Pearson:

> During her final years at Hardwick, Bess ... would pass the time embroidering ... One of the symbols she ... incorporated in her work was the Cavendish stag, but as she stitched she also worked another animal into her designs. This was a coiled serpent, which she originally copied from a book of prints with Mary Queen of Scots, and it became adopted as the second of the Cavendish heraldic beasts.[295]

In the opinion of Santina M. Levey, while the Countess may have embroidered small items 'to while away the time' when she was the warder of the Queen of Scots, 'there is no evidence that Bess herself was a compulsive embroiderer'. However, the many examples of heraldry in the textiles of Hardwick Hall, which would have been worked by professional embroiderers, in Levey's view, 'depended on the taste and knowledge of the intiator of the project', that is, the Countess of Shrewsbury herself.[296]

Lady Anne Clifford's concern with genealogy and heraldry was rather more deliberate. She commissioned heraldic monuments in churches and castles, for public and private record. Her mother's alabaster tomb, for example, was commissioned from Maximilian Colt in 1617, for St Lawrence's Church, Appleby, in Westmorland. Her father's, and her mother's Russell coat of arms were displayed at either end of the tomb.[297] Again, in 1646, Lady Anne commissioned two versions of a triptych, for Appleby and Skipton Castles. The plan for the central panel of the latter was to include thirty-six shields,

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294. Peter J. Begent, *The Heraldry of the Hoby memorials in the parish church of All Saints, Bisham, in the Royal County of Berkshire* [n.p., n.d.], p. 1.

295. John Pearson, *The Serpent and the Stag* (New York, 1983), p. 37-8.

296. Santina M. Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance: The Hardwick Hall Textiles* (London, 1998), p. 41 and p. 50.

297. Richard T. Spence, *Lady Anne Clifford: Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery 1590-1676* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 38-9. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

which allowed her to demonstrate her ties with the great families of the nation and proclaim the legitimacy of her, much disputed, inheritance (pp. 195-198). In 1669, she paid Thomas Strickland for 'drawing over a coppy of an antient pedigree of the Cliffords & other of my Ancestors for mee' (p. 179). As Spence notes, others of her commissions included 1654 the 14 feet high 'Countess' Pillar' (p. 150), which marked 'her last sad parting with her mother' (p. 150); this was a sundial, that displayed the arms of Clifford and Russell. Lady Anne also commissioned further pedigrees and a book of coats of arms, drawn by Thomas Webster (pp. 198-9). She organised the restoration of the heraldry in those of her castles which had been destroyed during the Civil War, and, in 1670, paid for 'forty-two coats in all of my Ancestors the Cliffords' for Appleby and Brougham Castles (p. 199).

Alongside these examples, stands one from the literary record, in which women's involvement in heraldic matters is satirised. In *The English Rogue,* by Richard Head and Francis Kirkman, published in 1671, a 'Brewers-Clerk' who has become wealthy through cheating, 'is married to a Countrey-maid; who understanding her Husbands Riches, puts him to great expences in new furnishing the House'. She visits her neighbours, and, after seeing their 'household-stuff', demands that she, too, must be able to display a coat of arms:

> that she might be *a la mode,* … on every piece there must be the Coat of Arms of her Husband, and hers empaled, engraven on them; and … he being unacquainted with any Arms of his own, or hers either, must be at the charge to search the Heralds Office for them; and they being found out (for money rarely misses to make any man so much a Gentleman as to have a Coat) they must also be fairly painted, to hang up in the Hall; … and upon every piece of Plate their Coats of Arms were engraven [.][298]

These examples serve to demonstrate that, in spite of injunctions against them in heraldry manuals, women were involved in heraldry in the seventeenth century. In order to examine the relationship between women and heraldic language, this chapter will analyse the use of heraldry in thirty-four poems, drawn from the work of various writers.

Initially, the armorial and heraldic references from elegies written to four seventeenth-

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298. Richard Head and Francis Kirkman, *The English Rogue described, in the life of Meriton Latroon: Being a compleat history of the most eminent cheats, etc.* (London, 1671), pp. 269-73.

century women will be considered. Two surviving elegies to Anne Bradstreet demonstrate the difference between those writers who embraced heraldic references in their memorials and those who avoided heraldry, or condemned its inadequacy and superficiality. The writer of 'A Funeral Elogy, Upon that Pattern and Patron of Virtue, the truely pious, peerless & matchless Gentlewoman Mrs. Anne Bradstreet, right Panaretes, Mirror of Her Age, Glory of her Sex, whose Heaven-born-Soul leaving its earthly Shrine, chose its native home, and was taken up to its Rest, upon 16th. Sept. 1672' briefly dismisses the use of heraldic wit in order to blazon her virtues: 'Grave Matron, whoso seeks to blazon thee,/ Needs not make use of witts false Heraldry' (ll. 55-6).[299] In contrast, 'B. W.' (the Rev. Benjamin Woodbridge) writes 'Vpon the Author; by a known Friend.' in precise armorial terms. Anne Bradstreet was by birth Anne Dudley, and the arms of the Dudley family include three crescents on an argent, or silver, ground. The Bradstreet arms include gold crescents and are blazoned: *gyronny of six gules and or, on each a crescent counterchanged* (see figure 17). Woodbridge draws on heraldic metaphor in order to praise Bradstreet's talent as a writer:

> In your own Arts, confess your selves out-done,
> The Moon hath totally eclips'd the Sun,
> Not with her sable Mantle muffling him;
> But her bright silver makes his gold look dim (p. 89, ll. 7-10)[300]

It is likely that the lines quoted above refer to Anne's having eclipsed her husband's achievements as the governor of Massachusetts.

Other verse, however, highlights the limitations of the armorial system in recording a woman's personal identity. In Sir John Beaumont's elegy, 'Of the truly noble and excellent lady, the Lady Marquesse of Winchester' the value of dwelling on lineage for an appreciation of individual character is altogether denied:

> Thus from her ashes must my poem sing, (l. 16)
> ....

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299. *The Works of Anne Bradstreet in prose and verse*, edited by John Harvard Ellis (Gloucester, Mass., 1962), pp. 409-13 (p. 411). Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

300. The arms of the Dudley family are blazoned: *argent on a chief azure three crescents or.*

Figure 17
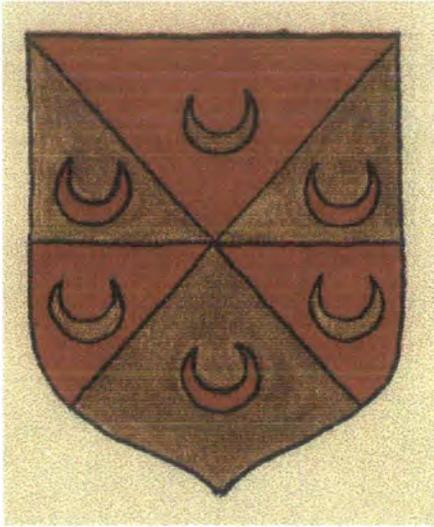
Figure 19
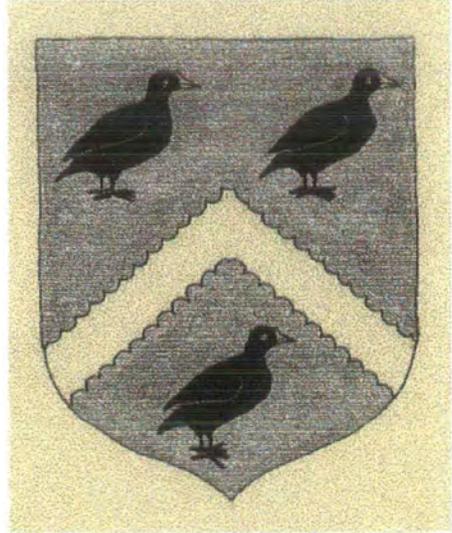
Figure 20

Figure 21

DECUS & TUTAMEN
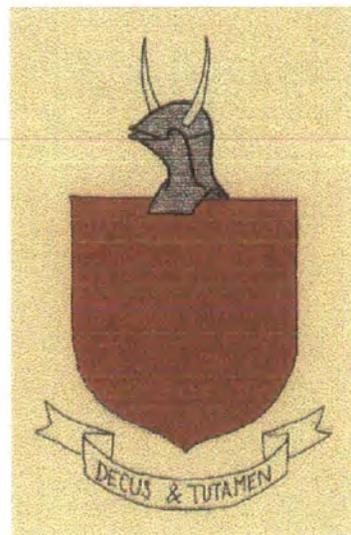
> ... those that loue thee best, will best allow
> That I omit to praise thy match and line,
> And speake of things that were more truely thine. (ll. 30-32)[301]

Beaumont continues with a condemnation of the work of the College of Arms, the implications of which extend beyond women to the heraldic treatment of all armigerous people:

> For thou hadst liuing honours, not decay'd
> With wearing time, and needing not the ayd
> Of heraulds, in the haruest of whose art
> None but the vertuous iustly clayme a part:
> Since they our parents' memories renew,
> For imitation, not for idle view.
> Yet what is all their skill, if we compare
> Their paper works with those which liuely are,
> In such as thou hast been, whose present lookes,
> If many such were, would surpresse all bookes? (ll. 41-50)

Perhaps the most bitter denunciation of heraldry is provided by Richard Brathwait, in an elegy on Lady Elizabeth Herbert. Brathwait hopes that her children will 'represent Her that is gone/ In your surviving vertues' (ll. 222-3) because:

> ...I doe not care
> For guilded honour, 'tis a vading ayre
> That's soone disperst; a painted Trophie torne
> From tainted Heraldry, displai'd in scorne. (ll. 227-30)[302]

Thomas Pestell's 'Elegie on the truly noble Katherine Countesse of Chesterfeild: 1636', offers an example of a poem that is written against the dictates of heraldic convention, in that it provides a record of Katherine's lineage, and also offers a form of blazon which is particular to Katherine herself. She was born Katherine Hastings, and married Philip, Lord Stanhope, later Earl of Chesterfield.

> My Chesterfeild in all another shee
> Whose life devout and gratious strove to advance
> Hir blouds true badge, the Hastings Cognizance

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301. Sir John Beaumont, *Bosworth - field: with a Taste of the Variety of other Poems, left by Sir John Beaumont, deceased; set forth by his Sonne, Sir Iohn Beavmont, Baronet; and dedicated to the King's most Excellent Maiestie* (London, 1629), pp. 159-63.

302. Richard Brathwait, *Raglands Niobe; or, Elizas Elegie: Addressed to the unexpiring memory of the most noble Lady, Elizabeth Herbert, wife to the truly honourable, Edward Somerset Lord Herbert, &c.* (London, 1635), p. 17.

Humilitie, ... (ll. 68-72)[303]

The heraldic allusion is to the badge of the Hastings family, a *maunch sable*, which is a black sleeve (see figure 18 below):

Figure 18.

This verse challenges the reader to accept that, although with marriage, Katherine was no longer entitled to display her family's arms alone, her true identity rests with the Hastings family. More significant, however, is the way in which Pestell introduces Katherine's humility; it is as though he is attempting to blazon the Hastings' arms (*argent, a maunch sable*) according to virtue, a practice which is commended in Henry Peacham's heraldry manual. However, according to Peacham's tables, the relevant virtues for argent are: 'Hope and Innocencie' (p. 7) and for sable: 'Prudence, Constancie' (p. 9). In choosing to commend Katherine's humility in this manner, Pestell seems to be offering his subject both a compliment and the possibility of an heraldic memorial of her own.

In the hands of such writers as Woodbridge and Pestell, it is evident that the armorial vocabulary could be manipulated in order to compliment, and commemorate, individual women. This, however, went against the grain of the technical rules of heraldry, and those who recognised the traditional boundaries of the language, chose to denounce an apparently outdated system of reference rather than to modify it. For Brathwait, heraldry was 'tainted' (l. 230), and could be of no use to him, other than as a backhanded compliment, in writing his elegy to Lady Herbert.

In spite of the assumptions of those writers of heraldic manuals who dismissed their involvement with heraldic culture, some women, including the five whose verse will be considered here, were using heraldic language to articulate their own concerns, without apology. They worked, of course, during a period in which the conservative model of the virtuous women was being challenged at many different levels. The striking example of Captain Francis Dalzell, 'quhom Carnwathe called his daghter', and who

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303. *Poems of Thomas Pestell,* pp. 12-13.

'hade the chairge of a troupe', provides an instance of a woman proclaiming her status heraldically in the midst of war. Although illegitimate, she led her troop of cavalry under the arms and motto of her family, a practice that was permitted if their paternity had been acknowledged. Her standard, or cornet, 'was black, and the motto wes "I dare"'.[304] Dalzell's combative rôle placed her in direct opposition to the traditional stereotype: according to Ferne, women 'neuer or at least very seldome aduanced [coate-armors] in the feeld, for to that sexe, warres and battaile been odious and fearefull' (p. 273). The traditional assumption, an example of which is provided below from Thomas Stanley's poem, 'Beauty II', from *Poems* (1651), was that Nature:

> Men with courage she supplies:
> But to Women these denies.
> What then gives she? Beauty this
> Both their arms and armour is:
> She, that can this weapon use,
> Fire and sword with ease subdues. (ll. 7-12)[305]

As Stanley's poem demonstrates, this notion continued to be disseminated even after (and perhaps because) the civil war had demonstrated the military abilities of a number of women. Beauty, however, was a weapon which could be turned back on the lady herself. A large number of heraldic references are found in poems which involve the seduction of a chosen lady, and the seducer's arguments frequently turn upon heraldic principles. Such verse cannot properly be read without some reference to Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, which was first printed in 1594, with nine further editions being produced by 1655. In an important article, the heraldic language of this poem has been re-examined by Nancy J. Vickers.[306] She locates *Lucrece* within the *blason* tradition, according to which poets catalogued the physical beauty of parts of the female body. One common comparision was that of the woman's face to a shield,

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304. Stuart Reid, 'Scots Officers in James King, Lord Eythin's Regiments', *English Civil War notes and queries*, 28, 25-7. See also Edward J. Cowan, *Montrose For Covenant and King* (London, 1977), p. 146. I am grateful to Dr Victoria Burke for this reference. The arms of Dalzell (Earl of Carnwath) are blazoned in full: *Sable a naked man with arms extended proper. Crest: a dagger erect proper, pomel and hilt or. Supporters: Two chevaliers in complete armour, each bearing a target on his exterior arm. Motto: I dare.*

305. *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley*, edited by Galbraith Miller Crump (Oxford, 1962), p. 75.

306. Georgio Melchiori also recognises the exploration of 'sexuality and power' in *Lucrece* in relation to his work on the Order of the Garter. See Georgio Melchiori, *Shakespeare's garter plays: Edward III to Merry Wives of Windsor* (Newark, NJ., 1994), pp. 131-2.

which, according to Vickers, 'literaliz[ed the] double extension of the term "blazon" - text describing a shield and text describing a body'(p. 176). Within this tradition, conventional compliments are locked into the language of heraldry. The red and white colour in Lucrece's face becomes 'This silent war of lilies and of roses/ Which Tarquin viewed in her fair face's field'[307] and, most directly, 'This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,/ Argued by beauty's red and virtue's white.' (ll. 64-5). When beauty is described in martial terms, however, the language has the potential to turn from compliment to combat. Thus, as Tarquin rapes Lucrece, her beauty is no longer passive, but is the spur to his attack. She pleads:

> Under what colour he commits this ill.
>
> Thus he replies: The colour in thy face,
> That even for anger makes the lily pale
> And the red rose blush at her own disgrace, (ll. 476-9)
> ....
> ...The fault is thine, (l. 482)

To be raped by Tarquin, is, in Vickers' words, 'the price Lucrece pays for having been described.' (p. 176). This conclusion is drawn from Vickers' analysis of the heraldic rhetoric in *Lucrece*; she demonstrates that the heraldic display of Lucrece is a 'celebratory conceit [which] inscribes woman's body between rivals' and she argues that 'to describe is ... to control, to possess, and ultimately, to use to one's own ends' (p. 181). Vickers' essay draws attention to the power of heraldic language, but her reading of the text avoids the fact that in *Lucrece* the heraldic vocabulary is neither merely destructive nor a solely masculine preserve. Shakespeare allows Lucrece herself to speak in heraldic and chivalrous terms. Lucrece believes, for instance, that by her death she will at least 'give/ A badge of fame to slander's livery' (ll. 1053-4) and, after the rape, she declares 'I am the mistress of my fate' (l. 1069). In the stanza which follows, Lucrece determines that 'My sable ground of sin I will not paint/ To hide the truth of this false night's abuses.' (ll. 1075-4). A pun on night /knight is surely intended, but, more significantly, Lucrece is now inscribing her own colours (the 'sable ground'), and her resolve implies that she will not cause the arms which represent her life to be falsified. Lucrece therefore comes to stand for the possibility of a purified chivalric code; although she has certainly been abused by a corrupt knight, the wrong that has

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307. *The Rape of Lucrece*, ll. 71-2. Further line references are given after quotations in the text.

been done is to be vindicated according to the codes of chivalry. As the poem draws to a close, Lucrece invokes the 'revengeful arms' of knights who, 'by their oaths, should right poor ladies' harms.' (ll. 1693-4).

Heraldic reference offered poets the opportunity to flatter and compliment within a mode which contained a dangerous subtext; if, according to the technicalities of heraldry, women were silenced, when seduction was described in heraldic terms, there was no room for any protest the woman might make to be heard. As seen above, Lucrece is silenced when her face is translated into heraldic colours, which Tarquin believes both signal and legitimise his attack upon her.

Following the conventions of the *blason* tradition, the characteristic most commonly shared among verses which include heraldic references to women is that of a description of a woman's body in heraldic terms, with her seduction being more or less explicit in any given example. The necessity of mastering the techniques of the blason is made clear in the verse by Leonard Lawrence, 'To all Faire Ladies, Famous for their Vertues, L.L. wisheth the enjoyment of their Desires; whether Coelestiall, or Terrestriall, but most especially to that Paragon of Perfection, the very Non-such of her Sexe, famous by the Name of Mistris M.S.', which prefaces his translation of *A Small Treastise betwixt Arnalte and Lucenda*:

> To touch your worths, you being most divine:
> What new-coyn'd Titles, what unheard of straines
> Shall I then frame, to blazon forth your fames?
> Alas, I'de best strike saile, waft to the shore,
> And Anchor there, not dare to venture o'er
> This Sea of Honour, 'lesse I had the Art
> Of *Heraldry*, your Titles to impart,
> Or skill to blaze them in their sev'rall Tables
> Drawne out with *Or*, with *Argent*, and with *Sables*;
> *Gules, Furres, & Azure, Bands, Barres, Chev'rons, crosses,*
> *Bulls, Beares,* and *Lyons,* with the well-shap't *Horses* (ll. 38-48)[308]

Robert Heath (fl. 1650) depends upon 'the Art/ Of Heraldry' for the success of his

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308. Leonard Lawrence, *A Small Treastise betwixt Arnalte and Lucenda Entituled The Evill-intreated Lover, Or The Melancholy Knight: Originally written in the Greeke Tongue, by an unknowne Author: Afterwards Translated into Spanish; after that, for the Excellency thereof, into the French Tongue by N.H. next by B.M. into the Thuscan, and now turn'd into English Verse by L.L. a well-wisher to the Muses* (London, 1639), sig. A1^r-v.

complimentary poem 'On Mrs E.H. having red haire on her head, and on her left side a pure white lock growing'. Heath describes:

> Her hair the richest *Metal* yields, (ll. 7)
>
> ....
>
> But here! behold a *silver beam*
> Which from this Blazing-star doth stream, (ll. 43-4)
>
> ....
>
> As in our Heraldry we deem
> These colours of the best esteem,
> With Sol and Luna blazing forth
> The nobler Arms of higher worth: (ll. 59-62)
>
> ....
>
> If in these outward parts we find
> Such worth; what bears her richer mind? (ll. 69-70)[309]

A reading of this work in the light of Vickers' article would conclude that the very naming of the woman's body in this way is a threatening act of possession by a man of a woman. It is dangerous, however, to read all heraldic references to women in this way, and, most importantly, denies the possibility that writers, men and women, used heraldic vocabulary as a pure expression, to evoke a system which they perceived to be good, powerful and Godly. Richard Lovelace's poem, in praise of his nieces, 'Paris's second Judgement, Upon the three Daughters of my Dear Brother Mr R. Caesar' which was published in 1649, is an example of this. The speaker's exclamatory: 'Behold! three Sister wonders' (l. 1) is followed by a list of the girls' virtues, and the comment that: 'All these were quarter'd in each snowy coat,/ With canton'd honours of their own to boot' (ll. 12-13).[310] Lovelace's distribution of the virtues demonstrates a conscientious use of heraldry. The implication is that some are shared, as is the family's coat of arms, and that some are unique to a particular sister, in the same way that an *augmentation of honour* would be awarded to an individual (and commonly placed on a canton in the corner of the shield). The references maintain some technical integrity, whilst also implying that each girl, at least within the confines of the poem, has a separate heraldic identity.

In contrast, heraldry, in the hands of Robert Herrick, is used quite explicitly to remodel

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309. Robert Heath, *Clarastella: Together with Poems occasional, Elegies, Epigrams, Satyrs* (London, 1650), pp. 15-16.

310. *Poems of Richard Lovelace*, p. 179 and note p. 319.

parts of the woman's body into an heraldic achievement. In 'The Descripcion: of a Woman', the woman is viewed through the eyes of an unidentified lover:

> Now loue invites me to survey her thighes
> swelling in likenes like twoe christall skyes
> With plumpe soft flesh of mettle pure & fine
> Resembling shields both smooth and christalline (ll. 77-80)[311]

Moreover, she has 'calues like silver' (l. 88) and 'silver coloured' (l. 98) arms; that such 'descripcion' may become seduction is implicit in the flirtatious sally of the final line, 'and thus I kisse thy foot' (l. 112). Herrick's awareness of the use of heraldic references in verse is underlined by his commonplace book, dated circa 1620-23, in which appears the following epitaph to one Frank Morly. Although this verse is in a different hand from other verse that is signed by Herrick, it appears in the pages before the signed verses, so it would seem likely that Herrick would have known them, even if he did not compose them himself:

> Heere lies Frank Morly, ye sonn of a beareward
> Who would needs beare armes in spight of ye herauld,
> A rampant lion as black as a jet-stone,
> With a sword in his hand in steed of a whetstone.
> Fine sonns had ye Syre It's worth ye revealing.
> ~~To~~ Two were errand lyers, and three were hanged for stealing. (ll. 1-6)[312]

In the extreme, heraldic description is employed to convey direct sexual conquest, as in the following song by Henry Bold: 'Song LX: A Round, at the Request of Sir W.S.'. The speaker considers 'Girles ith' Dark' (l. 13), who 'do the best they can/ To fit themselves, for Man' (ll. 19-20):

> If you'l feel,
> One Gentle
> She's Argent 'bout the Navel
> When she bears
> Right her Gears
> Her Honour point is sable (ll. 25-30)[313]

This lascivious verse, since it is advertised as having been written at the 'Request of Sir

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311. *Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, pp. 404-6.

312. HRHRC, pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 79, f. 68.

313. Bold, *Poems Lyrique Macaronique Heroique, &c.*, pp. 95-6.

W.S.', has an implied male audience and its intention appears to be a demonstration of possession rather than a particular conquest. Just as heraldry displayed at gateways to estates and over entrances to buildings marked the ownership of land and property, so proprietorship of women could, it seems, be marked by heraldic descriptions of the female body. Edmund Arwaker even describes one middle-aged man's polygamous relationship with his two wives in an heraldic satire. With grey hair, 'Bore, Countercharg'd, Argent, and Sable Hairs', recalling the 'sable silvered' beard of Hamlet's father (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 241), the man divides himself between his wives:

> That warm'd his cold, this cool'd his warmer Side:
> As if they had a Coat in Blazon been;
> The *Partys* They, and He the *Pale* between. (ll. 10-12)[314]

Even when seduction is embedded within the apparent innocence of pastoral convention, as in 'An Eclogue', by Robert Baron, heraldic references can mark the progress of sexual conquest. As Archus calls upon Plaindor to 'assume [his] slighted pipe' (l. 1), and 'warble amorous anthems' (l. 3), Plaindor admits that, like the knight returned from war, 'every meanes he'l prove/ To the lacivious pleasing of his love.' (ll. 35-6).[315] To this end, Plaindor's encomium to Floretta incorporates heraldic compliments, including those which draw upon the convention of using the names of jewels to blazon certain tinctures. So, while 'Argent and Gules in her cheekes kindly mix', (l. 157), he also praises 'Her pearl like teeth' (l. 161) and 'her fresh Rubie gumms' (l. 163). Plaindor also compliments the 'Warme azure vaines' (l. 167) that surround her breasts, and the relentless description/ seduction of Floretta implies that she will only be perfectly defined when she is finally possessed by his love:

> She's a chast *Emerald*, and that this list
> Might perfect be, her heart's an *Amethist*.
> Not stubborne and obdurate, but a heart
> Soone penetrated with loves wanton dart. (ll. 175-8)

Confirmation that the convention of blazoning according to jewels was still current in the seventeenth century is provided by a manuscript entitled 'Diatribe De Heraldorum origine, officio, collegio, etc.', the writer of which is unidentified. The work is,

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314. Edmund Arwaker, 'Fable XLVIII, The Polygamist Or, Two Wives, two Woes', pp. 160-2.

315. Robert Baron, *Erotopaignion: Or the Cyprian Academy* (London, 1647), pp. 68-9 and 73.

however, clearly dated 1655 at the end of the text. The author lists John Ferne's fourteen 'severall mann^{ers} of blazoning', and comments that ' most of these wayes of blazoning are phantasticall, & out of use' but later clarifies his opinion: 'Here I observe that 3 of these wayes of blazoning are now in use, that is 1. by planets 2. by pretious stones 3. by colours. all the rest are obselete & out of use.'[316]

In 'The Call', by John Hall, the natural world seems to become transmuted into an heraldic universe which conspires in the seduction:

> Romira, stay, (l. 1)
> ....
> I'le keep off harms,
> If thou'l be pleas'd to garrison mine arms;
> What dost thou fear
> I'le turn Traitour? may these Roses here
> To paleness shred,
> And Lilies stand disguised in new Red, (ll. 5-10)
> ....
> See see the Sunne
> Does slowly to his azure Lodging run (ll. 13-14)[317]

The heraldic references in 'Fuscara; or The Bee Errant' by John Cleveland may also be read in this light. Cleveland's narrator observes:

> Natures Confectioner, the Bee, (l. 1)
> ....
> Having rifled all the fields (l. 5)
> ....
> At my *Fuscara's* sleeve arriv'd, (l. 9)
> ....
> First on the Violets of her Veins,
> Whose tinckture, could it be more pure,
> His ravenous Kiss had made it bluer. (ll. 12-14)
> ....
> Her *Argent* skin with *or* so stream'd (l. 35)[318]

The choice of *argent*, the heraldic blazon for silver and *or*, which blazons gold, to

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316. HRHRC, pre-1700 manuscript collection, MS 88, f. 23 and f. 27. Further references to this manuscript are given after quotations in the text.

317. *The Metaphysical Poets*, edited by Helen Gardner (London, 1985), pp. 286-7.

318. *Poems of John Cleveland*, pp. 58-60. The Morris and Withington edition does not provide any notes on the heraldic imagery of these lines. Of line 13, the note is merely, 'tinckture. Hue or colour.' (p. 149)

describe the lady's skin is particularly significant. The placing of an heraldic metal upon another metal was often considered to be weak heraldry, because, as Peacham explained, such arms 'could not be discerned farre, neither of white and yellow onely, as participating too much of the light. Hence they say ... it is false armorie' (pp. 17-18). Cleveland was certainly aware of this rule, since in 'Upon Sir Thomas Martin, Who subscribed a Warrant thus: *We the Knights and Gentlemen of the Committee*, &c. when there was no Knight but himself', the speaker acknowledges: 'Mettal on Mettal is ill Armorie' (1. 24).[319] That Cleveland could reasonably have expected his readers to have known the code is also fair; the writers of heraldry manuals, from, for example, Wyrley in 1592 to Kent in 1718, had discussed the issue.[320] The possible implication of these lines, that weak heraldry reflected a weakness in the woman is not unreasonable when a comment in another of Cleveland's poems is taken into account. In 'The Hecatomb to His Mistresse', he writes:

> Metalls may blazon common beauties, she
> Makes pearls and planets humble herauldry. (ll. 29-30)[321]

If the woman in 'Fuscara' merits a description worthy of only a 'common beaut[y]', it

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319. *Poems of John Cleveland*, p. 54.

320. Their conclusions varied. For Kent, the matter was simple. He believed: 'That Coat is assuredly false, wherein there is Metal upon Metal only'. (Samuel Kent, *The Grammar of Heraldry; or, Gentleman's Vade Mecum, &c.*, second edition (London, 1718), p. xii.) According to Wyrley, although such arms 'be not so well to be discerned, as when mettal and colour be varied the one with the other, yet sithence the number be great of most woorthie men that haue borne their armes in such maner 1 will esteeme their marks as honorable as the rest'. (William Wyrley, *The Trve Vse Of Armorie, Shewed by Historie, and plainly proued by example: the necessitie thereof also discouered: with the maner of differings in ancient time, the lawfulnes of honorable funerals and moniments: with other matters of Antiquitie, incident to the aduancing of Banners, Ensignes, and marks of noblenesse and cheualrie* (London, 1592), p. 27). Cleveland himself was aware of the exceptions to the rule; the honourable men to whom Wyrley alludes include Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, who bore a gold cross on a silver ground and to whom Cleveland refers: 'And yet the known Godfrey of Bulloin's coat/ Shines in exception to the Heraulds vote.' ('Upon Sir Thomas Martin etc.' ll. 25-6). The arms of Jerusalem are: *argent, a cross potent between four crosslets or*. Alexander Nisbet gives an account of their origin, in the 'ensign of white silk, and upon it a red cross counter-potent, cantoned with four little crosses; which five crosses...did represent our Saviour's five wounds' that was 'brought to Charlemagne in the year 792'. Nisbet then explains that, 'afterwards, when Godfrey of Boulogne was made King of Jerusalem, he assumed these crosses for his royal ensign, and turned them from the red colour, to the metal gold, in a silver field, contrary to the practice in armories, to place metal upon metal, but was done with the consent of the princes of Europe, that his arms might move the beholders to enquire after them; for which they have the special name through all Europe of *Arma inquirenda*' (Alexander Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry, Speculative and Practical: with the True Art of Blazon, according to the most approved Heralds in Europe*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1722-42; reprinted, Edinburgh, 1984), I, 113). See also Ruth Berman, 'Cleveland's False Heraldry' in *Notes and Queries*, (December 1978), pp. 510-12, as discussed in chapter one.

321. *Poems of John Cleveland*, p. 50.

would seem that again heraldic description has been used to highlight the vulnerability of a woman whom the speaker, with his claim to 'my Fuscara', already seems to possess.

In the verses quoted so far, the subject has not been readily identifiable. However, when poets address their work to a particular individual, their use of heraldic imagery is moderated accordingly. The incorporation of details from the coat of arms of a patron or beloved lady was a technique which had been employed by Sir Philip Sidney in his sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella*, a work which continued to serve as a model for poets in the seventeenth century. In a competition contrived 'between Jove, Mars, and Love', Sidney gave Cupid the 'fairest' arms since:

> on his crest there lies
> Stella's fair hair, her face he makes his shield,
> Where roses gules are borne in silver field. (ll. 12-14)[322]

Here Sidney flatters Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, to whom he was engaged. The arms of her family were borne on a silver ground, and so blazoned: *argent a fesse gules in chief three torteaux*. The reference to the 'roses gules' therefore both compliments Penelope's cheeks and reinforces the heraldic identification; following the blason tradition, her face is like a shield, and in heraldry, the term *torteaux* describes red discs.

Rather more complex heraldic compliments were offered by James Howell in 'An Epithalamium Upon the Nuptials of that Princely Pair, Henry Lo. Marquiss of Dorchester, And the Lady Katherine, Daughter to the late Heroick Earl of Darby: In a Dialog Twixt Philemon and Sylvius'. Heraldic imagery is used to emphasise the predestined nature of the marriage. At one point, Philemon exclaims:

> What Object's that which I behold
> Dazzling my Eyes with Gems and Gold?
> Her Face, me thinks, darts such a Ray (ll. 1-3)
> ....
> A sparkling White and Black breaks from her sight
> Like to the Diamonds redoubling light;

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322. *Astrophil and Stella* 13. Katherine Duncan-Jones has noted this heraldic allusion in her edition, *Sir Philip Sidney Selected Poems* (Oxford, 1973), p. 216. This example is also referred to by Vickers in her article 'This Heraldry in Lucrece' Face', p. 181.

As she doth walk the very ground and stone,
Turn to Field-*Argent* which she treads upon. (ll. 7-10)
....
He likewise makes all *Argent* as he goes (l. 29)[323]

Such references to precious stones as well as to metals were particularly appropriate in a verse that was dedicated to a Marquess and to an Earl's daughter. The 'Diatribe De Heraldorum origine, officio, collegio, etc.' (1655) makes clear that: 'noble men (not of the royall blood) haue their cotes blazon'd by pretious stones; as Dukes, Marquisses, Earles, Viscounts, Barons' (p. 27). More importantly, the verse, with its heraldic references, inscribes elements of her husband's arms on the face of the bride-to-be. The arms of Carleton, Lord Dorchester are blazoned: *ermine on a bend sable, three pheons argent*. The diamond, according to Ferne, signified *sable* in a coat of arms, while a *pheon* is an arrowhead, or 'dart'. Ermine describes 'black tails on a white field', and so the darting 'Ray' (l. 3) and the diamond-like 'White and Black' (l. 7) which appear in Katherine's eyes and face must be seen as heraldic references to her husband's family's arms. Their union is also prefigured by heraldic allusion to the arms of both families. As they move, the couple's surroundings are united by a transformation to the colour silver. The Derby family's arms (*argent, on a bend azure three bucks heads cabossed or*) are placed on a silver field, and Dorchester's main charge is silver. Thus, Howell's verse anticipates and celebrates, through its combined references to both coats of arms, the union of two families, whose arms would be placed side by side in a new marital coat of arms.

Dryden's compliments 'To Her Grace The Dutchess of Ormond' also inscribe the arms of two families onto the face of the bride, whom the speaker salutes:

O Daughter of the Rose, whose Cheeks unite
The diff'ring Titles of the Red and White (ll. 151-2)[324]

Both the duchess' husband, James Butler, the second Duke of Ormonde, and her father, Henry Somerset, the Duke of Beaufort, were Knights of the Order of the Garter. The insignia of the order includes the collar, which is, according to statute, 'composed of

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323. James Howell, *Poems On several Choice and Various Subjects: Occasionally Composed By An Eminent Author: Collected and Published by Sergeant-Major P.F.* (London, 1663), pp. 40-2.

324. *The Poems of John Dryden*, edited by James Kinsley, 4 vols (Oxford, 1958), IV, 1463-1467.

twenty-four heraldic Tudor roses enamelled red and white',[325] and it is these which are implied as Dryden compliments his subject's complexion.

When Thomas Pestell invokes elements of the Cary coat of arms, his compliment extends beyond that particular family to the queen herself, Henrietta-Maria. 'On: Mrs Cary: or a Mayd of Honour' is addressed to Anne Cary, who was maid of honour to the queen and the daughter of Sir Henry Cary, First Viscount Falkland, and his wife Elizabeth. Pestell highlights the fleurs-de-lys of France, and is thus able to compliment the French queen while seeming to refer to an heraldic charge which, usefully, also appeared in the third quarter of the Cary coat of arms. He praised Anne, as being:

> ... neare of Kinne
> To hir's, whose glories will beginn,
> A female order, past the fleece,
> Or garter; ... (ll. 7-10)
> ....
> ... th'order of The Fleure d'elice. (l. 16)[326]

Pestell's notion of a female order of chivalry was not original. When Elias Ashmole's *The Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* was published, albeit in 1672, some thirteen years after Pestell's death, it included an account of 'The Feminine Cavaliers of the Torch in Tortosa'. In 1149 these women 'put on mens Clothes' to defend their besieged city, 'and by a resolute sally, forced the *Moors* to raise the Siege.' Their reward included the grant of a badge and an order that 'at all publick meetings, the Women should have precedence of the Men'.[327] The particular significance of the fleurs-de-lys is subject to endless interpretation; in the thirteenth century, for example, Guillaume de Nangis commented that the French fleurs-de-lys embodied the three virtues of faith, learning and chivalry.[328] The three petals are also said to represent the Trinity, so, by association, the poet also compliments the piety of those who might be involved with such an order.

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325. James Charles Risk, *British Orders and Decorations* (London, 1973), p. 27.

326. *Poems of Thomas Pestell*, p. 35.

327. Ashmole, *Institution, Laws, and Ceremonies*, pp. 125-6.

328. Guillaume de Nangis, *Life of Louis IX*, reproduced in William M. Hinkle, *The Fleurs de Lis of the Kings of France 1285-1488* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1991), p. 154.

Heraldic identification was not always complimentary. In the hands of John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, the women to whom the speaker refers in the poem 'Clanbrazil and Fox' are diseased and predatory: 'The Cootes black and white, Clanbrazil and Fox,/ Invade us with impudence, beauty and pox.' (ll. 7-8).[329] Of these lines, Rochester's editor, Paddy Lyons, comments that 'Cootes' is 'presumably alluding to women from the family of Charles Coote, second Earl of Mountrath.' An heraldic reading of the line demonstrates that this is undoubtedly the case.[330] The arms of Coote are: *argent a chevron engrailed between three coots, sable*. Thus the colours of the shield are *argent*, which is silver or white, and *sable*, which is black. This is clearly the source of Rochester's reference to the 'Cootes, black and white' (l. 7).

The discussion so far has demonstrated that women who chose to adopt the conventions of heraldic discourse in their own writing would have faced both the prejudice which was intrinsic to the system of heraldry itself, as well as the challenge of moving away from the belittling heraldic stereotypes of women that were found in the work of many male poets and versifiers. At the same time, any discussion of women's work in this area must recognise that some women did not feel the need consciously to challenge this system. In the letters and diaries of women such as Ann, Lady Fanshawe, in England, and Madame de La Fayette, in France, there is evidence of considerable enthusiasm for the subject, and a determination to pass the knowledge of their genealogies onto their children. Writing for her children, Lady Fanshawe is concerned that they know the whereabouts of their father's patents, which would have confirmed his title and the family's armorial bearings. She writes:

> when your father ... came out of Scotland he left behind him a box of writings in which his patent of baronnett was, and his patent of additional armes; which was safely sent him after the happy restauration of the King.[331]

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329. *Rochester: Complete Poems and Plays*, edited by Paddy Lyons (London, 1993), p. 84 and note p. 292. These lines were first published in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1704), although Lyons notes that the verse also 'appears as the postscript to a letter dated 20 March 1673'.

330. Evidence of Rochester's familiarity with heraldry can be found in a more straightforward reference in his pornographic verse 'On his Prick', with its opening couplet, 'Base mettle hanger by thy master's thigh,/ Shame and disgrace to all prick heraldry'. A base metal, of course, is an heraldic disgrace because only silver/argent and gold/or are heraldic metals. This verse was published in 1680; see *Rochester: Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 98.

331. *Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 135.

One Thursday in 1686, Madame de La Fayette wrote to a friend:

> Il y a longtemps que je ne vous ay veu ... J'ay aussi bien grand besoing de vostre secours, ou, du moins, de vos advis. Je songe à faire les quartiers de feu M^r de La Fayette. Il n'a jamais songé à s'instruire de sa maison; je ne veux pas laisser mes enfants dans cette mesme néglige[nce].[332]

The editor of her letters notes that, in addition, 'Pour établir la généalogie des La Fayette, la comtesse a consulté le spécialiste en la matière: Charles-René d'Hozier ... Il semble que d'Hozier ait refusé d'accepter des honoraires pour ses recherches' (p. 130).

Other women adopted a more creative, and sometimes more challenging, position with reference to heraldry. In order to consider the particular ways in which seventeenth-century women writers appropriated heraldic discourse for their own purposes, examples from the poetry of writers as diverse as Aphra Behn, 'Ephelia', Anne Killigrew and Katherine Philips, will now be examined.

In 1686, Anne Killigrew's 'The Miseries of Man' was printed in London. In this poem, her presentation of the devastating reality of war is constructed around a woman's experience of heraldry. The narrator describes:

> The faithful Wife, who late her Lord did Arm,
> And hop'd to shield, by holy Vows, from Harm, (ll. 117-18)
> ....
> May now go seek him, lying 'mong the Slain:
> Low on the Earth she'l find his lofty Crest,
> And those refulgent Arms which late his Breast
> Did guard, by rough Encounters broke and tore,
> His Face and Hair, with brains all clotted ore.
> And Warlike Weeds besmeer'd with Dust and Gore. (ll. 122-27)[333]

Killigrew has displaced the herald from his traditional duty of identifying the armigerous dead on the battlefield. Instead, the knight is both armed and identified by his wife, and, significantly, Killigrew thereby creates a new arbiter of honour, one that is private, intimate, and obviously female, and which stands in direct opposition to the

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332. *Madame de La Fayette: Correspondance, éditée d'après les travaux de André Beaunier,* (Paris, 1942), p. 138. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

333. Anne Killigrew, *Poems* (London, 1686), pp. 32-43.

established, male preserve of the College of Arms. In another poem, Killigrew again locates her argument in an heraldic metaphor. She addresses her verse 'To my Lady Berkeley, Afflicted upon her Son, My Lord Berkeley's Early Engaging in the Sea-Service' and, while recognising Lady Berkeley's concern for her son, Killigrew offers comfort in heraldic terms:

> Such bitter Sighs her tender Breast did rend;
> But had she known a God did him attend (ll. 5-6)
> ....
> Bright Thoughts would then have dispossess't her Pain. (l. 8)
> ....
> In bloody Conflicts he will Armour find, (l. 13)
> ....
> And still Triumphant will his Charge convey. (l. 16)[334]

The motto of the Berkeley family was 'dieu avec nous', and it is likely that, given her subsequent reference to the young Lord Berkeley's armour and charge, that Killigrew expected Lady Berkeley to understand that, in line six, she was being reminded of the family motto, the memory of which her son should always carry with him. This being the case, the verse provides evidence of heraldic discourse being current among women in a way that was certainly not acknowledged by writers of the traditional heraldry manuals.

The idea that women writers, by using heraldic imagery, were able to offer a challenge to, or even to subvert, the prevailing patriarchal culture is tempting. In Aphra Behn's work in particular, it is possible that her use of heraldic language can be understood as a further, and so far unrecognised, attempt to 'seize the means of seduction',[335] which is, in this case, the heraldic vocabulary, with its implicit possession of women by the heraldic description of their bodies. In both 'The Disappointment' and 'A Paraphrase on Ovid's Epistle of Œnone to Paris', it is arguable that the heraldic metaphors implicate John Hoyle, who, according to Behn's editor, was her lover at the time. In 'The Disappointment':

> All things did with his love conspire;

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334. Killigrew, *Poems*, pp. 24-6.

335. This phrase is Ros Ballaster's, from her chapter entitled 'Seizing the means of seduction: Fiction and feminine identity in Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley' in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*, edited by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London, 1992), pp. 93-108.

> The gilded planet of the day,
> In his gay chariot drawn by fire,
> Was now descending to the sea,
> And left no light to guide the world,
> But what from Cloris brighter eyes was hurled. (ll. 5-10)
>
> ....
> Than Cloris her fair hand withdrew,
> Finding that god of her desires
> Disarmed of all his awful fires (ll. 111-13)

The Hoyle crest comprises: *a demi lion rampant reguardant or holding between the paws a shield azure charged with a sun or* (see figure 19). Malcolm Hicks notes that this poem was sent to John Hoyle with a letter that encouraged him 'to repudiate grave scandals concerning his private life. Hoyle ... was thought to indulge in both homosexual and heterosexual activity.'[336] Given the crest detailed above, it is arguable that Behn intended to imply Hoyle in the first lines of the poem, with its emphasis on the setting sun. The image of the sun falling towards the sea might even be read as a riddle: Hoyle's crest having fallen, Hoyle crest-fallen, and so the subject of the poem, Hoyle's impotence, which is introduced in the first stanza.

Similarly, in 'A Paraphrase on Ovid's Epistle of Œnone to Paris', the speaker describes the sun:

> Upon the deck a canopy was spread
> Of antique work in gold and silver made,
> Which mixed with sun-beams dazzling light displayed. (pp. 44-52, ll. 201-2)

Hicks remarks, in his introduction, that 'scarcely veiled autobiographical reference frequently discloses a real hurt in Behn's verse (p. iv). The lines above provide an heraldic example. In the poem, Œnone describes her suffering at Paris's infatuation with Helen, and at one point she sees their ship sail by, with Helen sitting beneath a canopy and Paris lying on her bosom (l. 206). Hicks reads the poem as one of a study in love 'from a woman's standpoint, in this case a woman betrayed and deserted' (p. 100). Perhaps through heraldry, Behn personalises the suffering, alluding to Hoyle's disloyalty towards her by the image of the canopy, as gold and silver were the principal colours in Hoyle's coat of arms, and since, again, Behn makes reference to the sun, which figures in his crest.

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336. *Aphra Behn: Selected Poems*, edited by Malcolm Hicks (Manchester, 1993), p. 25 and note pp. 99-100. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

Perhaps more important than these examples, are those which demonstrate that women were in fact using heraldic references in many of the same ways as their male counterparts. 'Ephelia', for instance, makes a passing heraldic analogy in the course of a complimentary verse 'To Mr J. G. on his being chosen Steward of his Club, presented with the Laurel.' The narrator declares:

> Sir, by your merit led, to you I bring
> A Laurel-wreath, but 'tis too mean a thing
> For your high Worth and Parts, which we
> In vain wou'd Blazon by such Herauldry (ll. 1-4)[337]

Likewise, Anne Killigrew, in her poem 'Alexandreis', praising Alexander the Great, paints a picture full of typical military pageantry:

> I Sing the Man that never Equal knew,
> Whose Mighty Arms all Asia did subdue, (ll. 1-2)
> ....
> 'Twas at the time the golden Sun doth rise,
> And with his Beams enlights the azure skies,
> When lo a Troop in Silver Arms drew near,
> The glorious Sun did nere so bright appear;
> Dire Scarlet Plumes adorn'd their haughty Crests,
> And crescent Shields did shade their shining Brests (ll. 39-44)[338]

A measure of the extent to which women writers were aware of the heraldic aesthetic as well as its vocabulary is offered in the work of Katherine Philips, whose familiarity with heraldry is noted by John Aubrey, who recorded that Philips 'wrote out ... Mottos in windowes, in her table-booke'.[339] Philips's parenthetical comment that 'Friendship (like Heraldry) is hereby known,/ Richest when plainest, bravest when alone' (ll. 47-8)[340] alludes to a debate over the merit of displaying many different quarterings in one shield, which had continued from the sixteenth into the seventeenth century.[341]

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337. 'Ephelia', *Female Poems On Several Occasions,* second edition (London, 1682), p. 14.

338. Killigrew, *Poems,* pp. 1-3.

339. *Aubrey's Brief Lives,* edited by Oliver Lawson Dick (London, 1987), p. 307.

340. *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda,* edited by Patrick Thomas, 2 vols (Stump Cross, Essex, 1990), I, 151. Further references (to this edition, etc.) are given after quotations in the text.

341. William Wyrley, for example, called for the reformation of shields in *The Trve Vse Of Armorie* (1592). He complained of 'the quartering of many Marks in one shield, coate, or banner' which hindered easy identification in the field, and that the only excuse for recording them was for 'a pedegree or descent

Katherine Philips's work also demonstrates that women were equally capable of couching political arguments in heraldic terms within their poetry. Between 1650 and 1654, according to her editor, she wrote the poem 'Upon the double murther of K. Charles, in answer to a libellous rime made by V.P.', which includes the following lines:

> Silence were now a Sin: Nay passion now
> Wise men themselves for merit would allow.
> What noble eye could see, (and careless passe)
> The dying Lion kick'd by every asse?
> Hath Charles so broke God's lawes, he must not have
> A quiet crowne, nor yet a quiet grave? (pp. 69-70, ll. 7-12)

It is possible that the heraldic reference to the 'dying Lion' (l. 10) places the poem in the period around the 16 December 1653, when Oliver Cromwell was installed as Protector. As has already been discussed, when Cromwell became Protector, the lion was returned to the Commonwealth arms, as he placed his own shield, with a white lion rampant, in the centre of four others, with their combination of the crosses and harp of England, Scotland and Ireland respectively.[342] It is arguable that Philips chose to reflect on the 'double murther' of Charles I in terms of a 'dying Lion' that continued to suffer abuse because she was writing at the point when the symbol of English monarchy was being appropriated and displayed by the Commonwealth.

Philips turned to heraldic imagery again, to celebrate the formal coronation of Charles II on 23 April 1661. The king's arrival is announced:

> Hee comes; whose brows though for a crowne soe fit,
> Wounder and virtue have more crowned it.
> Soe truly greate in glory of his owne,
> While others rise, hee stoopes to take a crowne:
> Whose unimpaled head long since became
> The care of heaven, and the charge of fame.
> This ceremony dazzels vulgare eyes (pp. 249-59, ll. 1-7)

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to locke vp in an euidence chest, thereby to shew mens titles to their lands or the Alliances and kindreds of their houses' (pp. 4-5). His opinion was reprinted in William Dugdale's *The Ancient Usage In Bearing of such Ensigns of Honour As are commonly call'd Arms* (Oxford, 1682), p. 12. Dugdale believed *The true use of Armes* to have been written by one of 'the most learned men in *Herauldry* and *Antiquities* that this last age hath produced' (p. 3) although he cites the author as Sampson Erdswike, with Wyrley as publisher (p. 4).

342. C. Wilfred Scott-Giles, *The Romance of Heraldry* (London, 1951), pp. 88-90.

The opening declaration of 'On the Coronation' is 'Hee comes', which marks the triumphant fulfilment of a common dream. With Charles I's death, which many recorded in terms of a Christ-like sacrifice, royalists extended their analogy to express the hope that, as with the resurrected Christ, they could look for a time when the king would come again. At the Restoration of Charles II, Charles I's sacrifice was felt to have been satisfied, and so at the coronation, Philips hails the 'coming' of both monarchs. Her evocation of the memory of Charles I is expressed through an armorial vocabulary. Read in these terms, the monarch's 'glory of his owne' refers simultaneously to the honour which surrounds Charles II at the coronation and to the perception of a sanctified Charles I, since according to the conventions of heraldry, 'glory' is synonymous with 'halo'. The verse continues to focus the reader's attention on the martyred king, who stoops to the block to receive by his death a heavenly crown, and whose head, 'unimpaled,' (l. 5) or undivided from his body, has come to adorn the shield of fame (an *impaled* shield is one divided down the centre, and a *charge* (l. 6) denotes anything borne on a shield). It is unsurprising that the reader has to work to untangle this knot of heraldic references; in the last line from the quotation above, Philips seems to imply that the ability to do so is itself a mark of distinction, to which the vulgar cannot aspire.[343]

It is difficult to establish how far the work of individual women formed an effective challenge to those who adopted a traditional, exclusive attitude towards women with reference to heraldry. One group of references, however, highlights the unease which was felt, in some quarters at least, regarding the power of women in the armorial sphere. In the lines quoted below, Richard Brathwait's exclamation: 'The husbands badge is in the Womans will' (l. 80), points to an anxiety that is reflected in a number of poems. Brathwait describes the problem in 'Free, yet Bound: An Epigram Upon Marriage, dilating upon the servile Freedome, or free Servitude of such as are Married'. The speaker is concerned regarding:

> Children unjustly fathered; for the power
> Of women's such, and so it hath beene still,
> The husbands badge is in the Womans will.

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343. The significance of this group of references is not commented upon by Patrick Thomas in his edition. He only notes that the reference to an 'unimpaled head' is 'contrasting the king's head with the head of his executed father.' (p. 395).

And rather then they'l unrevenged be,
They will incurre the shame of Prostitute
Least that their husbands should be destitute
Of some fit crest Heraldrie. (ll. 78-84)[344]

Anxiety over this question spanned the period, as two examples, 'In praise of women in Generall' by Thomas Randolph, first published in 1638, and the 1732 publication, 'The Recantation, To a Lady', by Joseph Mitchell, demonstrate. Randolph (1605-1636) acknowledges, in the course of 'In praise of women in Generall', that women:

... are prov'd the better sex, and we
Must all repent that in our Pedigre.
We chose the fathers name, where should we take
The mothers, a more honour'd blood, 'twould make
Our generation sure, and certain be,
And I'de believe some faith in Heraldry! (ll. 45-50)[345]

Joseph Mitchell (1684-1738), in 'The Recantation, To a Lady', remarks similarly:

What Fools are Men in *Pedigree* of Names,
To chuse the *Father's*, while the *Mother's* claims
The first Regard? *Hers* is more honour'd Blood,
Wou'd fix our *Heraldry*, and make our Generation good. (ll. 26-9)[346]

This responsibility, of ensuring a continuing line of 'more honour'd Blood,' could however, become an excuse for insulting women, which, as in the following case, is justified by the assumption that the provision of a legitimate heir for a man was a right with which any reader would sympathise. The verse is addressed 'To a Black-moor that had married a deformed Spanish woman, and was jealous of an English Gentleman' and was written by Thomas Jordan (1620-1685?). The speaker demands of the 'Black-moor':

Dost think I'll line thy Buckram with my Tissue?
And contribute unto thy checquer'd Issue?
To fright the Midwife with a womb that swells
With a strip'd stripling arm'd in Tortoise shells? (ll. 25-8)[347]

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344. Richard Brathwait, *Times Curtaine Drawne; or, The Anotomie of Vanitie: With other choice poems, Entitled: Health from Helicon* (London, 1621), p. 145-50.

345. Thomas Randolph, *Poems: With the Muses Looking-Glasse; Amyntas; Jealous Lovers; Arystippus*, fourth edition, (London, 1652), pp. 129-31.

346. Joseph Mitchell, *Poems on Severall Occasions: in Two Volumes* (London, 1732), pp. 264-7.

347. The tortoise in heraldry was used as a reminder to act with caution, and to avoid hasty or rash

> Shall I pollute my Limbs with an embrace
> For a py'd Kitling with a dappled face? (ll. 35-6)
>
> A Coat parte-per-fess, sable and argent? (l. 38) [348]

The language of heraldry is transformed into one of insult. The denunciation of an imaginary mixed race child in terms of a shield which would be divided down the middle into two colours, *sable* (or black) for the Spanish mother, and *argent* (or white) for the potential English father, is provided as a justification for the abusive verse. The use of the heraldic reference reinforces the message that family honour, as encapsulated in a coat of arms, must not be compromised.

Heraldic satires were based on the inevitable infidelities and cuckoldry which is implicit in this group of verses. An example is 'In Praise of Horns', by Samuel Wesley, which attacked each member of questionable armigerous families and extended its criticism to those complicit heralds who fabricated arms for illegitimate children. The speaker observes a group of 'little Master[s]' (l. 19), strutting along, 'with Ribbons all bedresst' (l. 17), and asks:

> Which of the pretty Lads confess't
> Amongst 'em all their Fathers Crest?
> Tho' many a One his Glory owes
> Unto the Sweat of Mothers brows;
> Who by the Childrens looks could find
> She ever was to others kind? (ll. 21-26)
>
> A Princely pair of large Brow-antlets:
> Which if the Herauld plays his part,
> And draws his Hatchment out with Art;
> Tho' Fields of Gules should overwhelm it,
> Must peep at Top of Argent Helmet:
> The Motto - Decus & Tutamen,
> And I'll for Rhime, write under - Amen. (ll. 51-57) [349]

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decisions. The ensign of Cosmo de Medici, first Grand Duke of Tuscany, was a tortoise with a snail and his motto was, 'Hasten slowly'. (Pedrick, *Manual of Heraldry*, p. 57.)

348. Thomas Jordan, *The Muses Melody in a Consort of Poetry: With Diverse occasionall and Compendious Epistles* (London, 1680[?]), pp. 38-9.

349. Samuel Wesley, *Maggots; or, Poems on Several Subjects, Never before Handled By a Schollar* (London, 1685), pp. 152-4.

An impression of this coat of arms is offered in figure twenty. By ridiculing the armorial system, these satirical poems draw the reader's attention to the unease with which women were regarded with reference to matters of lineage and legitimacy. In contrast to Ferne's perception of a 'secreat' code, in which honour is 'shut vp' in women, these satires point to an awareness that women's behaviour determined matters of legitimacy and honourable succession, and was, thereby, the foundation of the heraldic system.

In the two hundred years since Christine de Pisan had written, the heraldic references in the poetry of Anne Killigrew, Aphra Behn, 'Ephelia' and Katherine Philips indicate that women had become quite accustomed to writing, without apology, about genealogical and heraldic matters. For Philips, heraldic language lends authority to the political implications of her verse; in Killigrew's work, it redefines and authorises a woman's experience of war.

While the heraldic system did not, technically, allow women an independent identity, or make provision for the recording of a female lineage, in two important ways, Ferne was mistaken in suggesting that women could 'not communicate, the brightness' of honour and nobility 'to an other'. The examples of Lady Anne Clifford, Ann, Lady Fanshawe and Madame de La Fayette show that a considerable interest existed among some educated women in passing knowledge of their nobility to their children. Moreover, arms could be inherited through women when, in the absence of male issue, daughters become heraldic heiresses, whose arms would eventually be inherited by their children as a quartering on their shields.

In this light, the judgement of critics, such as Brian Ragen, that heraldry 'encodes an ideology of gender' to the extent that, in Ragen's opinion: 'If there is any sign-system that deserves the epithet 'phallocentric' it is heraldry', would seem superficial.[350] Some heraldic references, which have been considered here, of course confirm this view. Those which appear in the poems of Leonard Lawrence, Robert Heath, Robert Herrick, Henry Bold and John Cleveland, for example, in which women are entirely subject to, and defined by, the speaker's heraldic description, do affirm heraldry as the language of

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350. Ragen, 'Semiotics and Heraldry', p. 27.

a patriarchal culture. However, there are other poems in which the use of heraldry is more equivocal. Those by Richard Brathwait, Thomas Randolph, Joseph Mitchell and Samuel Wesley, in which the anxiety of the speaker regarding legitimacy attributes a controlling power to women, subverts the notion of women as entirely subject to a dominant, patriarchal culture.

Ultimately, the use of heraldic discourse by several women writers in the seventeenth century, and the pride that some women expressed in their families, must not lead critics simply to consider that women using heraldic references were necessarily challenging a system. They could as easily have been using a language which they felt was already very much their own.

Conclusion

> Side by side, their faces blurred,
> The earl and countess lie in stone, (ll. 1-2)
>
> ....
>
> Now, helpless in the hollow of
> An unarmorial age, ... (ll. 32-33)
>
> ....
>
> ... The stone fidelity
> They hardly meant has come to be
> Their final blazon (ll. 38-40)
>
>   (Philip Larkin, 'An Arundel Tomb')[351]

In 'An Arundel Tomb', by Philip Larkin (1922-1985), the children of 'An unarmorial age' (l. 33), no longer 'read' but 'look' (l. 24) at the signs recorded on the worn tomb of the earl and countess of Arundel. The code according to which their effigies had been sculpted and their tomb inscribed is no longer shared by those who stand before it, and in consequence, the interpretation of their memorial is subject to a new authority, one which is individual and emotional, and defined by its reliance, as Larkin has it, upon the 'almost-instinct' (l. 41).

In the seventeenth century, by contrast, it is evident that great efforts were made to maintain and regulate the use of the heraldic code throughout the community: many heralds published manuals which were intended to disseminate the correct principles of blazon and heraldry; the Earl Marshal had the power to censor any books which, in his view, contravened these principles; cases involving the abuse of heraldry could be brought before the Court of Chivalry; the heralds, through a series of national Visitations, were able to monitor the use of coats of arms in manuscript and on public and private display. Against this background, it is unsurprising that heraldry was an important source of metaphor for poets and versifiers of the period. In the face of so much official activity, however, it would be reasonable to expect that the use of heraldry in verse and poetry during this period might have been rigid and disciplined. This study has, by contrast, revealed a far more dynamic language, one that was capable of being used, and published, by individuals whose concerns extended beyond the strict limits of the technical rules of blazon.

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351. Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*, edited by Anthony Thwaite (London, 1990), pp. 110-111.

The tensions which have been demonstrated between rule and practice are challenging to any attempt to understand the significance of heraldry at this time. The contrast which extant material presents, between the official heraldic culture and the realities of undisciplined, creative uses of heraldry, may simply be regarded as witnessing to the dialectical development of a vital form of language in common use. It may also merely reflect an ineffective system of regulation; certainly, historians continue to debate the effectiveness of the censorship. Thirdly, poetry which has been identified as challenging to the formal heraldic code may represent only temporary disruptions, by isolated individuals, to a generally accepted set of rules.

The first conclusion outlined above is challenged, however, by the work of J. S. A. Adamson, who maintains that the use of heraldic language was in decline at this time. Adamson regards chivalric culture, with which heraldry must be aligned, as 'redundant' by the second half of the century. Specifically, he has found that although:

> chivalry had played a central rôle in informing the language and even the values of the politics, that was a rôle which did not survive the civil war ... the "revolutions" of the 1640's ... induced a sense ... of the redundancy of the chivalric culture.[352]

These comments suggest that the existence of later examples of heraldic references in verse and poetry must not lead us necessarily to assume that the heraldic mode was either used with confidence or generally understood. Indeed, Adamson's work provides an important context for the observations made here, in chapter three, regarding the work of Thomas Brown, George Daniel, Robert Gould and John Oldham, who each declared that heraldry seemed irrelevant to their concerns.

Notwithstanding, this study has demonstrated that heraldic references in verse and poetry remained in use throughout the period. While the heralds sought to correct the use of heraldry in general, this study has found no evidence of the heralds' reaction to the creative use of heraldry in verse or poetry. In the development of their duties, the rôle of heralds with reference to literature seems to have been long-overlooked; G. A. Lester has investigated 'The Literary Activity of the Medieval English Heralds' and

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352. J. S. A. Adamson, 'Chivalry and political culture in Caroline England' in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, (London, 1994), p. 197.

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observes that 'heralds never realised their potential in the direction of consciously literary composition'.[353] In the seventeenth century, heralds seem neither to have developed any poetic skills of their own nor concerned themselves specifically with the strict regulation of heraldry in poetry and verse.[354]

It is evident that, lacking strict regulation, the use of heraldry in seventeenth-century poetry could evolve, in response to events and individual concerns. Heraldic references developed from those which adhere most closely to the pattern of the blazon, and which are most clearly associated with chivalric ideals, to those which condemn those principles and satirise the heraldic form. The reflection of heraldic authorities on their own work offers a helpful context for this evolution, and suggests that the challenges to heraldry contained in the verse that we have considered were not isolated examples, but, rather, reflected a general decline of interest in, and respect for, heraldry.

Among those writing about heraldry, doubts were expressed regarding the reception of their work in this period. John Bossewell's comments, from the later sixteenth-century, stand in contrast to those recorded in the following century by a senior herald, among others. Bossewell, in *Workes of Armorie* (1572) speaks of 'the science and skill of Armory' as 'Truely in my oppinion, a very fruitefull necessary, and honorable argument' (sig. A2^r). A generation later, individual regard for heraldry appears undiminished: John Guillim in *A Display of Heraldry* (1611) considers 'the generous Profession of Heraldry'; yet Guillim casts doubt on the wider reputation of the subject, declaring that its 'confused Mixture hath not a little discouraged many Persons (otherwise well affected to the Study of Armory) and impaired the Estimation of the Profession)' (sig. A2^r). In 1637, while William Camden, Clarenceux King of Arms affirms that heraldry is ingrained in the culture, it being 'anciently used in this Realme' (p. 205), he is cynical about the use of heraldry in his own time, writing that:

> whosoever would note the manners of our progenitours [sic] ... I doubt
> not, but that he will judge that our ancestors were as valiant and gallant
> as they have beene since they left off their Armes, and used the colours

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353. G. A. Lester, 'The Literary Activity of the Medieval English Heralds', *English Studies* 3 (1990), pp. 222-229 (p. 225).

354. For a consideration of the literary activities of the fourteenth-century German herald and poet Peter Suchenwirt, see Stephanie Cain van D'Elden, *Peter Suchenwirt and Heraldic Poetry* (Vienna, 1976).

and curtaines of their Mistris beds in steed of them.' (p. 223).

Finally, Adamson's conclusions would seem to be confirmed by Matthew Carter, who, in 1655, commented, in *Honor Redivivus: An Analsis of Honor and Armory*, that: 'I know not how few I shall ingratiate by my best demerits ... considering especially the present temper of the world' (p. 1).

Yet, other examples of heraldry in verse and poetry studied here would suggest that, in spite of such comments as these, Adamson's declaration of the 'redundancy' of chivalric culture is somewhat premature. Maurice Keen concludes his comprehensive survey of chivalry and heraldry in the later Middle Ages with a statement of his belief that the values of chivalry 'continued to have an immense impact, down to the end of the nineteenth century, on the "establishments" of European society.'[355] Here, examples such as Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* and Pope's *Windsor Forest* demonstrate the usefulness of heraldic references in exploring constitutional concerns, and confirm that the heraldic mode was a resource for poets far beyond the civil war.

An explanation for the tension between a perceived decline in interest in heraldry, among contemporaries as well as critics, and the existence of heraldic references throughout the seventeenth century, may lie in the nature of the preconceptions which heraldry can invite. Tessa Watt has noted the importance of Roger Chartier's challenge to the assumption:

> that it is possible to establish exclusive relationships between specific cultural forms and particular social groups. This assumption has led historians to pre-define certain cultural cleavages, which they then proceeded to describe.[356]

To a greater extent than many other 'cultural forms', heraldry appears to predetermine a relationship between itself and a particular social group, an élite armigerous class, who are entitled to bear a coat of arms. To limit a discussion of heraldic references to those verses written by members of this group might indeed favour conclusions that the

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355. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 253.

356. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 2. Watt quotes Roger Chartier, *The cultural uses of print in early modern France*, translated by Lydia C. Cochrane (Princeton, 1987), p. 3; and Roger Chartier, *Cultural history: Between practices and representations*, translated by Lydia C. Cochrane (Cambridge, 1988), p. 30.

subject was in decline; heraldry may appear nostalgic, as, for example, in the later epic verse of Sir Richard Blackmore, or introverted, as in the private reflections of Mildmay Fane, Earl of Westmorland.

However, this study has avoided such pre-definitions, and has considered the significance of heraldry in a wider range of work. Not unexpectedly for a mode which is primarily concerned with identifying individuals, personal concerns are often to the fore. It has been argued that Aphra Behn's use of heraldry, for example, was to implicate John Hoyle in her work. The vitality of the language is more evident when it engages with wider social and political concerns. James Yorke's manual of heraldry proclaims the right of a blacksmith to use the language, and the late seventeenth-century song 'A Herald to Himself', published in *Merry Drollery Compleat*, affirms that an appropriation of heraldry had come to signify an individual's sense of social and political participation, rather than the authority of a 'gentle' class. Hobbes recognised heraldry as a sign of power, and the enduring value of heraldry seems often to have been its ability to express the possession or transition of authority, in social and political terms, as we have seen, and also in the literary and religious spheres. George Daniel, for example, in 'Parted per Pale', defines his creative independence against a background of heraldry, declaring that he is out of love with the colours of the heralds' rolls, but does love the black and white with which he writes. Chapter five has shown that heraldic meditations served to express the possession of faith by a number of individuals, including John Donne and Mildmay Fane. For Vaughan, the ability to read heraldry identified those with the authority to remain within the community of the godly.

In the twentieth century, the heraldic scholar Arthur Charles Fox-Davies opined that 'Arms are the sign of the technical rank of gentility ... the use of arms is the advertisement of one's claim to that gentility. Arms mean nothing more.' [357] That seventeenth-century writers used the vocabulary of heraldry to discuss a great deal more than an individual's technical rank is evident. In twentieth-century literature too, the use of armory has more than a technical significance. For George Steiner, heraldry inspired a meditation on his own appreciation of the 'wonder' of the world as a child,

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357. Fox-Davies, *Complete Guide to Heraldry*, p. 23.

into which Nazism intruded.[358] To George Mackay Brown, the landscape of Orkney appears 'heraldic' and he is inspired by this thought to write a defence of the traditions of the island. [359] Chris Tysh has a written a 'stream of consciousness' poem entitled *Coat of Arms*, which employs the vocabulary of heraldry in a poem that explores issues of human sexuality and identity.[360]

If heraldry is avoided, in the midst of an 'unarmorial age', then the implications of many important verse references from earlier periods, as well as the significance of the work of twentieth-century writers, will continue to be misinterpreted or overlooked entirely. The fate of the earl and countess of Arundel, as Larkin has it, is to languish in a world where the signs according to which they had intended their lives to be read and judged are passed blindly, or misunderstood. This study has attempted to identify and interpret the heraldic mode as used by writers of seventeenth-century poetry and verse, and to provide a context for understanding this dimension of their work.

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358. George Steiner, 'Heraldry', *Granta* 58 (1997), pp. 147-56 (p. 149).

359. George Mackay Brown, 'The Broken Heraldry', in *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, edited by Karl Miller (London, 1970), pp. 136-150 (p. 143).

360. Chris Tysh, *Coat of Arms* (New York, 1992).

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been adopted for the Bibliography and the Footnotes:

Libraries:

BL	The British Library, London
Bod	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Broth	Brotherton Library, Leeds
CoA	The College of Arms, London
DUL	Durham University Library, Durham
FSL	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.
HRHRC	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas
IU	Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana
NLS	The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
LC	Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
QC	The Queen's College Library, Oxford

This bibliography does not attempt to provide exhaustive documentation of all the various aspects of seventeenth-century English poetry and of heraldry which have been touched on in this study, but gives the main sources from which information has been gained in its preparation. Rather, its aim is to provide a comprehensive record of works pertaining to the study of heraldry and literature. To this end, reference is included to foreign language publications and to works concerned with heraldry in literature from periods other than the seventeenth century and which therefore have not necessarily been cited in this study. The works of reference given are those which have provided important information; many other common reference works that have been consulted incidentally have been omitted. Similarly, the only modern anthologies included are those specifically referred to in the text. Where a good modern edition exists of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century works, this has generally been preferred.

A. *Manuscript Sources*

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BL, Additional MS 19,255

Lenton, Francis, 'The Muses Oblation presented In a Memoriall of Love & Hono^r: expressed In Epithalamigue Odes, Sonnetts Fancys and Devices on the Name, Coate-Armour and happy Nuptialls of the most Honourable &: Heroick William Lewys Esqr: And the most Vertuous, Beauteous and Bounteous chaste Virgin M^{ris} Margarite Banister: The formall Heire of that antient Family of the Banisters &c', 1649
FSL, MS X. d. 484, f. 14

Seager, William, 'A Blazon of Papistes, Anno Domini 1587', in Robert Commaundre, 'The Booke of Heraldrye and other thinges, togither with the Order of Coronacions' (undated)
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B. *Printed Works*

1. *Works of Reference*

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