

PalaDiary Day 2: Shield Design

One of the first things I did when I decided to more actively and consciously embrace a paladin identity was to design a shield. While modern heraldry is often familial or political, in the Arthurian stories I was reading, a knight's shield was how he identified himself to others. I wanted something that symbolically represented me and the values I wanted to carry forth as a paladin.

Here's the shield, I'll describe the symbolic meanings below:



The shield design is made of several horizontal blue and green bars. The lines between the bars have a wavy pattern. There are three silver shapes from top to bottom: A candle, a swallow in flight, and a cluster of three feathers.

The colors represent the values and virtues that matter to me. Argent (silver or white) means peace and sincerity. Blue is truth and loyalty. And green is for hope, joy, and loyalty in love. The blue values are the firmer, more strict side of paladinhood, the green ones incorporate joy and positivity, and the silver reminds me to seek peace rather than getting caught up in fighting alone, even for a good cause.

For ordinaries (geometric divisions) I went with a horizontal bar, also called a fess. Having more than one bar is called “barry”. In the sources I found, barry was specifically defined to mean “*One who sets the bar of conscience, religion and honour against angry passions and evil temptations*”. I’ll probably have a separate essay talking about wrath as a paladin flaw. In any case, the tendency toward passionate anger, which often felt righteous, was something I recognized as a flaw in myself. And I wanted my shield to warn me against that flaw and remind me of my goals.

For the line (the outline between divisions) I chose the Rayonne. It signifies the sun, glory, splendor and radiance. Light is integral to paladinhood for me. As a Romuva pagan, I worship a pantheon, as well as being generally animistic. But sun-worship specifically is especially important to me, and I wanted to include it in my shield design.

The charges (animals and objects) were hardest to choose. The candle represents light, life and spirituality. It overlaps in meaning with the Rayonne line, and doubles down on light motifs. My source defined the swallow as “*one who is prompt and ready in doing business; also bringer of good news*”. Prompt and ready seemed like a good fit for my personality traits of diligence and eagerness, my commitment to hard work. That was the more central meaning for me, but I certainly hope I can be a sign of good news to others. The plume of feathers (specifically described as ostrich feathers) means “*sign of willing obedience and serenity of mind*”. I’m a submissive, obedient person and that’s a core part of my paladinhood to me. While I have to be careful what liege I serve, the fact is I do serve, and can’t deny or separate that out from my true self.

For those curious, my heraldry symbol sources were:

<http://tinyton.org/hersymbols.htm>

<https://www.genesreunited.co.uk/blog/genes-reunited-blog/archive/2013/11/7/what-the-symbols-on-coats-of-arms,-family-crests-and-seals-mean>