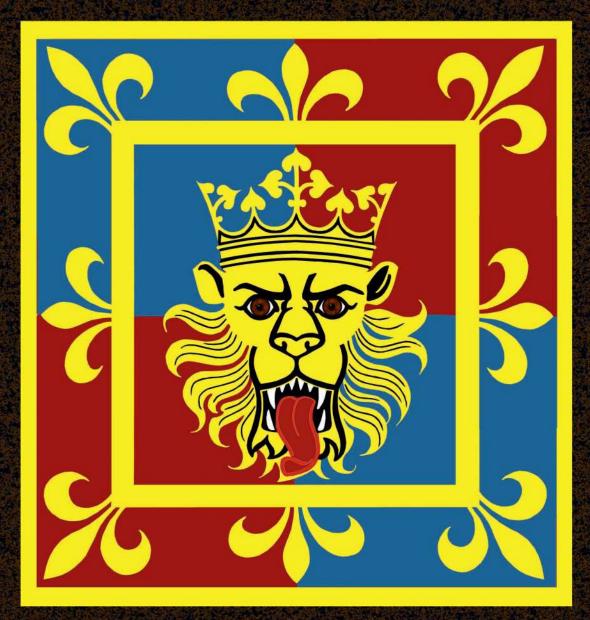
The Coal of the Heraldry Society



Series 4 Volume 4 Number 238 2021

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THE TWO COATS OF ARMS OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

DARIA STAROSKOLSKAIA Ph.D.

Abstract

Simon de Montfort (d.1265) and his kinsmen were unusual for their times in using one coat of arms on the shield and a different device on the banner, a peculiarity which has stimulated much scholarly debate. Despite the fact that the banner arms are the basis of the arms of Hinckley in Leicestershire and of Castres in France, it has been called into question whether Simon de Montfort actually used them. This paper reviews the available evidence on the origin and function of the second arms.

Glover's Roll is one of the earliest known rolls of arms, surviving in several sixteenth and seventeenth century copies.¹ All of the complete copies derive from two rolls owned during the Tudor period by a Mr Harvey of Leicestershire, both copied by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald in 1585/6, and now in the possession of the College of Arms.² According to Glover the originals were written on parchment and date to the reign of Henry III. An abridged and updated version of the roll (known as the St George version from a later owner) was created in 1258.³ Here the roll is headed by the Prince Edward as Earl of Chester, with Simon de Montfort at no. 2 (**Figure 1**). Glover's Roll is organized by rank, starting with the arms of the king, his son (future king Edward I), his brother Richard of Cornwall, followed by the arms of the earls, and then by a selective list of king's attendants and members of the household. The analysis of the names included in the roll and their comparison to the summons rolls of Henry III suggest that the original roll was compiled circa 1253, that is, before the baronial opposition was formed.⁴

Simon de Montfort is the fourth on the list, yielding only to the king and his family, but being the first of the earls. Rather unusually, besides the proper arms of the Montforts, *Gules a lion rampant queue fourchée argent*, the Earl of Leicester is said to bear a banner *Party indented argent and gules.*⁵ Thus not only does he occupy a position on the roll ahead of the Marshal of England, Roger Bigod, but is the only one to boast two coats of arms instead of one. N. Denholm-Young suggests that such pretention, even from the king's brother-in-law, may be a sign that the Roll was ordered by Simon himself, designed to promote his political ambitions.⁶ The white two-tailed lion is a well-known

The Coat of Arms 4th ser. 4 (2021), no. 238 pp. 157-176.

¹ CEMRA, pp. 37; Hugh Stanford London, Aspilogia II, Rolls of arms Henry III (London, 1967) pp. 89–96, 115–166.

 $^{^{\}rm 2}\,$ CA Ms 2 G 3; Ms L 14.

³ Aspilogia II, pp. 94–5.

⁴ Aspilogia II, pp. 912.

⁵ Aspilogia II, p. 115.

⁶ N. Denholm-Young, *History and Heraldry: 1254 to 1310* (Oxford, 1965), p. 43. See also D.S. Ryzhova, 'Armorials as an instrument of political influence in the era of Edward I', *Signum* vol. 9 (2017), pp. 39–40.

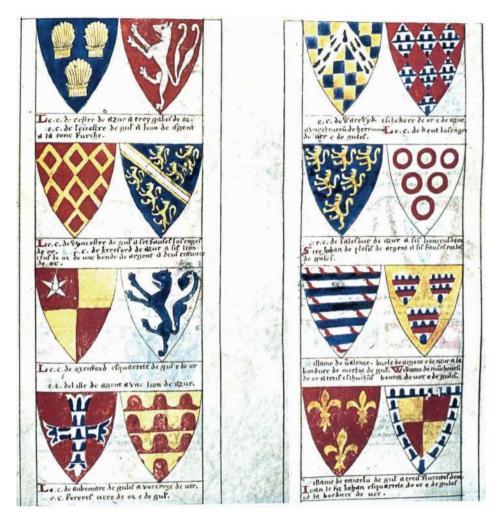


Figure 1: The Hatton-Dugdale facsimile of the lost St George's version of Glover's Roll. The original thirteenth-century roll from which this was copied was on a long narrow strip of parchment with shields drawn in pairs. Society of Antiquaries Ms 664 part 1 f.23. Source: Heraldry Society image library.



Figure 2. Above: seal of Simon IV de Montfort, 1195. Douët D'Arcq no.707; below, his counter-seal of 1211, Douët D'Arcq no.708. Source: Archives Nationale de Paris J216 no.4 and J890 no.2.

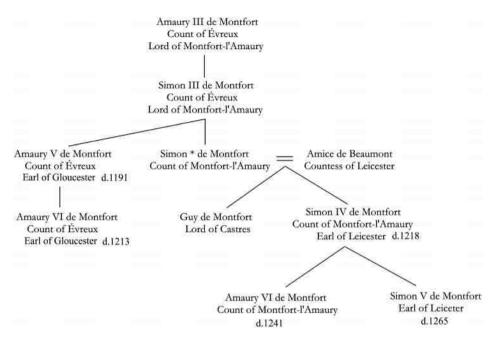


Figure 3. The Montforts 1150–1250 (the tree shows only members mentioned in the article)

family emblem found on seals and other artefacts associated with the Montforts from the twelfth century (**Figure 2**) and barely raises any question, but the purpose and origin of the second arms presented on a banner is not clear.

For several generations the Montforts remained direct vassals to both the kings of England and of France, playing an active part in the political processes on both sides of the Channel.⁷ (Pedigree **Figure 3**). Amaury III, Lord of Monfort-l'Amaury and Count of Évreux (d.1137) was one of the leaders of rebellion against Henry I in Normandy.⁸ His son Simon III (d.1181), still holding large fiefs in France, supported Henry II in his claim for the county of Toulouse, and proved his loyalty during the revolt of king's heirs and the intervention of Louis VII. His son, another Simon (who by the inaccuracy of many historians remained without a number ⁹) married Amice be Beaumont, daughter to the 3rd Earl of Leicester. That brought the family new lands in England, and the earldom of Leicester. Simon IV de Montfort, the 5th Earl of Leicester (1165–1218) known through his feats of arms during the Albigensian crusade, added to his domain Toulouse, (becoming the Count of Toulouse), Narbonne, Saint-Gilles, Carcassonne and Béziers.¹⁰

⁷ G.W. Prothero, *The Life of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester: with special reference to the parliamentary history of his time* (London, 1877) pp. 31–59.

⁸ C.W Hollister, *Henry I* (New Haven, 2003), pp. 224–260.

⁹ This Simon was supposed to be the 4th lord of Montfort-l'Amaury of that name but held the title for only 7 years till his early death in 1188, that left him unnoticed by earlier researchers, adding his lifetime to his father's. See GEC vol.7 p. 716. In the pedigree he is marked with an asterisk (*).

¹⁰ G.E.M. Lippiatt, Simon V of Montfort and Baronial Government, 1195–1218 (Oxford, 2017) pp. 99–104.

(seal **Figure 2**). The subject of our current enquiry is his son Simon V de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester, Lord High Steward of England (1239–1265), associate and confidant to Henry III. He is primarily remembered as the initiator of the first two parliaments that played such a major role in the constitutional development of England.

In the period leading up to the creation of Glover's Roll he proved himself a talented administrator. In 1248 he was assigned seneschal (*locum-tenens*) to restless Gascony.¹¹ He was so highly regarded that in 1252 after the demise of Blanche of Castile (regent during her son Louis IX's crusade) he was invited to take charge of the kingdom of France until the king's return, which however he refused.¹² This was the context in which Glover's Roll was created in 1253, a year when we might say that he was the second man in England after only king himself, and an armiger with two coats of arms.

The possession of two (and even more) arms is not unique in the Middle Ages. We know quite a few examples from later centuries. For the people of the thirteenth century however it might have seemed a little eccentric. There are various reasons why certain families, even single individuals, came to be associated with multiple coats of arms.¹³ In the case of Simon de Montfort, there has been much scholarly debate as to the reason for his dual arms. Denholm-Young suggested that the second arms were a visual epitome of his office of High Steward.¹⁴ This hereditary office was established in the twelfth century by King Henry II following the example of the office of seneschal of France. It was granted to an Anglo-Norman aristocrat Robert de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Leicester (1104–1168) together with large land holdings in Normandy (actually restored to him) to reward him for his loyalty and support.

Simon IV de Montfort inherited Leicester and a number of neighboring manors (including Hinckley) in right of his mother Amice de Beaumont, sister and heir to the 4th Earl of Leicester, who died childless.¹⁵ His position in the kingdom was unsteady as he was mostly preoccupied with the French part of his holdings. After siding with the French king against King John he suffered confiscation of his lands in England in 1210. The office of High Steward remained vacant until 1239. Simon V won back the royal goodwill. He was so close to Henry III that he even married king's sister Eleanor in 1238. In 1231 the crown granted him his father's English lands, while the French part of the Montfort heritage went to his elder brother Amaury VI. Amaury (d.1241) surrendered his claim to the earldom of Leicester in 1239, whereupon Simon was invested with the honour. Together with the title of Earl of Leicester Simon assumed that he was now the High Steward as well, even though it was not really clear exactly what the office stood for. He began to sign his documents in the style of *senescallus Angliae* right after his return from Gascony and after the declining of the same office on the French side. Vernon-Harcourt suggested that it was a part of Simon's policy of self-promotion.¹⁶

¹¹ Prothero, op. cit., pp. 87–108.

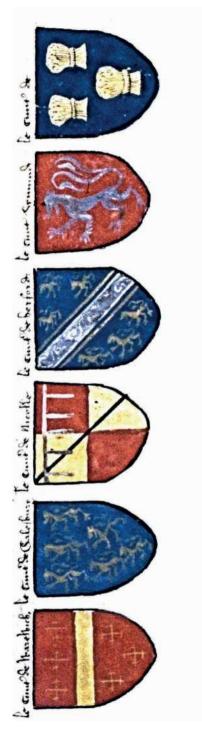
¹² Sir Maurice Powicke, The Thirteenth Century: 1216–1307 (Oxford, 1991) p. 114.

¹³ C.R.Humphery-Smith, 'Heralds' Influence in Medieval Armory', *CoA* no.168 (Winter1994), pp. 330–44 (333).

¹⁴ Denholm-Young, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁵ Lippiatt, op. cit., p. 100.

¹⁶ L.W. Vernon-Harcourt *His Grace the steward and trial of peers* (London, New York, 1907) p. 121–125.



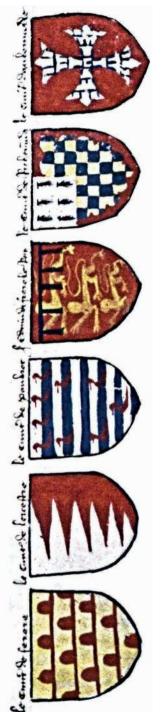


Figure 4. The two arms of Montfort in the Herald's Roll, Fitzwilliam Museum version, from the Hatton-Dugdale facsimile at the Society of Antiquaries Ms 664 part 2 f.1v. Source, Heraldry Society image library. Aspilogia III nos 43-54 pp.88-90. Top row: Beauchamp, Longespée, Lacy, Bohun, 'count Simon' (Montfort), earldom of Chester; bottom row: Ferrers, 'earldom of Leicester' (Montfort), Valence, Lancaster, Brittany, Aumale.



 Figure 5. Arms of Simon de Montfort in the Hatton Dugdale facsimile of Segar's Roll, Society of Antiquaries Ms 664 part 8 f.4. Source, Heraldry Society image library.
Aspilogia III nos 25–48 pp. 310–2. Row five, fourth shield 'earl of Leicester'; row six third shield 'old shield of Leicester'.

Later Simon used his office to seize control of the realm following his defeat of the king at the battle of Lewes in 1264. In an attempt to consolidate his position in 1265, a couple of months before battle of Evesham, Simon sent a letter to a remote relative from the Beaumonts, those who were first assigned High Stewards, asking him to clarify duties and privileges of this office.¹⁷ Unfortunately we do not know if he ever received an answer. Despite the importance of the title of Steward to him Simon sealed only with the lion, and the *party indented* arms are nowhere else to be found. That makes it doubtful that the second arms stood for the office of Steward of England.

Sir Harris Nicolas investigating the same problem mentions that "some early rolls in the College of Arms and the British Museum" refer to these arms as "*the old shield of Leicester*".¹⁸ The rolls in question are evidently the Heralds' Roll (c.1270–1280) and Segar's Roll (c.1285).¹⁹ They both list the two arms. The Herald's Roll puts the lion arms as "the earl Simon" and the party indented as "the earl of Leicester" as if it were two different people (**Figure 4**).

Segar's Roll on the contrary attributes the lion to 'the earl of Leicester', and calls the party indented arms 'the old shield of Leicester' (**Figure 5**). The two rolls were compiled not more than twenty years after Simon's death and about 30 years after Glover's Roll. Some confusion seems to have arisen. This might have been a consequence of the execution of Simon de Montfort in 1265, and the transfer of his land and titles. Henry III initially prepared a decree to assign his second son Edmund Crouchback as the Lord High Steward and Earl of Leicester, but the document was not sealed, and the responsibility was taken by his brother the Lord Edward. It was not until 1268 that Edmund gained possession.²⁰ Since that time Leicester has belonged to the earls (later dukes) of Lancaster. None of them ever used the party indented arms to represent either the earldom or the position of High Steward.

Why the author of Segar' Roll styled the party indented arms as the 'old arms of Leicester' is not clear. The Beaumonts never used any such emblem. The arms associated with them was *Gules a cinquefoil pierced ermine*, which can be found in Glover's Roll borne by Robert de Quincy, the son of Amice's sister.²¹ These are now the arms of the city of Leicester. Amice herself used her husband's lion on her seal (**Figure 5**). Thus the arms cannot be attributed to the first earls of Leicester.

A century later however the party indented arms resurfaced as the arms of the town of Hinckley in Leicestershire. Nichols in his *History and Antiquities of Hinckley, in the County of Leicester* (1782) mentions the "valuable volume of records belonging to the office of the Duchy of Lancaster (...) [with] the blazonry of the ducal arms, accompanied by the banners of the various lordships which centered in that distinguished title. Among these is the banner borne by the old earls of Leicester in right of their honour of Hinckley,

¹⁷ Vernon-Harcourt, op.cit.

¹⁸ N.H.Nicolas, Rolls of Arms of the Reigns of Henry III and Edward III (London, 1829), p. xiii.

¹⁹ Gerard Brault, Aspilogia III, Rolls of arms of Edward I, 2 vols (Woodbridge, 1997), vol.1, pp. 79–142, 307–22.

²⁰ Denholm-Young, op.cit. p. 45.

²¹ Aspilogia II pp. 144–5, Glover's Roll no.153.



Figure 6: Seal of Amice de Beaumont-le-Roger, countess of Leicester and Lady of Montfort circa 1210–20, with the Montfort arms. Source: BNF Manuscrits Latins 5441 p. 260.

viz. *Party per pale indented, argent and gules*^{37,22}The volume in question is the Great Coucher Book of the Duchy of Lancaster, dating to the reign of Henry IV. ²³ The arms of the various possessions of the Duchy of Lancaster were illustrated in 1598 by William Smith, Rouge Dragon, on the frontispiece of his copy of the 1567 visitation of Lancashire (**Figure 7**). Church notes made by the pursuivants Sampson Lennard, Bluemantle and Augustine Vincent, Rouge Croix from St. Mary's Church in Hinckley as part of the

²² John Nichols, The History and Antiquities of Hinckley in the County of Leicester (London, 1782) p. 69.

²³ CEMRA p. 80.

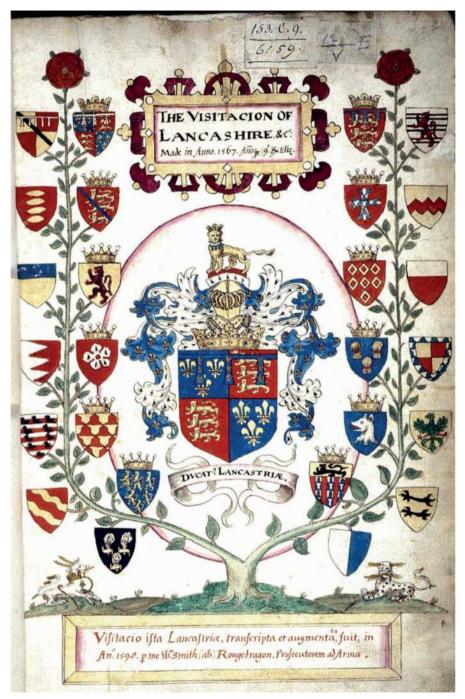


Figure 7: The Visitation of Lancaster with the party indented arms of Montfort next to the cinquefoil of the Beaumonts (BL Harley 6159 f.2). © British Library Board.

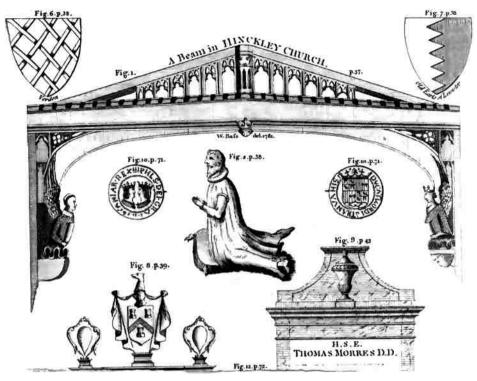


Figure 8: Interior of St.Mary's Church in Hinckley. Reprint from Nichols, op. cit. plate VI p.38.

1619 Visitation of Leicestershire show that they found the arms there, understanding them to have belonged to "the old earls of Leister".²⁴ These were illustrated by Nichols (**Figure 8**). The church was built circa 1240, but the date when these arms were added is unknown. The attribution of the arms again to the "old earls" might have followed the ascription in Segar's Roll, which came into the possession of William Segar, Garter in 1605.²⁵ Unfortunately, following reconstruction in 1875–1878, the original interior of the church was lost.

The arms still form the basis of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough arms as granted in 1974 following the amalgamation of the districts of Hinckley and Market Bosworth: *Per pale indented argent and gules on a chief or three torteaux, the centre charged with a pierced cinquefoil ermine, the others each charged with a mascle or* (Figure 9). This represents a rich amalgam of the arms of five prominent local families. The chief is from the arms of Sir Wolstan Dixie (d.1660) who founded the local grammar school, the cinquefoil is for the Beaumont earls of Leicester, the mascles for Ferrers of *Groby, adopted from de Quincy, and the torteaux are from the lords Grey of Ruthin. The crest of the dragon gules preying on a boar passant argent* is an allusion to the Battle

²⁴ Nichols, op. cit. p. 38.

²⁵ CEMRA, p. 18.

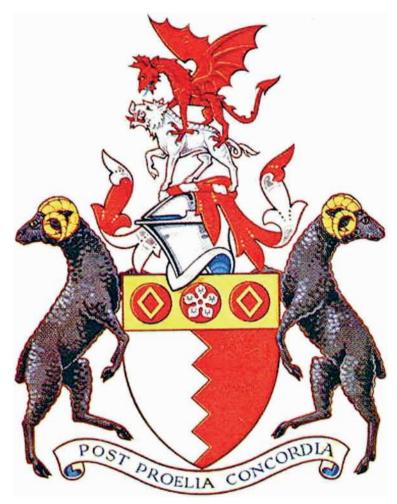


Figure 9: Modern Arms of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough granted in 1974.

of Bosworth which took place in the district.²⁶ The paly indented arms were in turn incorporated into badges and logos by the local football team (**Figure 10**). Local citizens themselves explain the emblem as "The zigzag division of the shield into silver and red represents the banner of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, thought to have been borne by later Earls of Leicester in connection with their honour of Hinckley".

There is no evidence that the *party indented* arms were used in Leicestershire before Simon V. This leaves only the possibility that the arms were brought to England from France and are somehow connected with earlier history of the Montforts. More evidence can be found on the other side of the Channel. Montfort l'Amaury is within the diocese of Chartres, and the magnificent thirteenth century glass in the cathedral of Chartres

²⁶ http://www.hinckleypastpresent.org.



Figure 10: Logos and badges used by Emblems of Hinckley United Football Club from 1997–2013 and by Hinckley Athletic Football Club, based on the *paly indented* arms and those of the borough. Note the ram's horns coloured blue and red, these being the club colours.

includes two great rose windows depicting heads of the de Montfort family. These are almost certainly for Simon's brother Amaury VI (1192–1241), and his father Simon IV (d.1218) (**Figure 11**).Both men are depicted with the lion arms on their shields and the party indented banner.

It is important to note that Amaury VI never had anything to do with Leicester or Hinckley or the Office of High Steward but still he bears the same banner. The restoration of Chartres following a great fire in 1194 took place in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, preceding the creation of Glover's Roll. There being no other evidence that Simon V ever used it as his personal banner has led to the suggestion that the author of Glover's Roll might have copied it from the glass window at Chartres. Major T.R. Davies suggested that the banner arms might have been added much later by

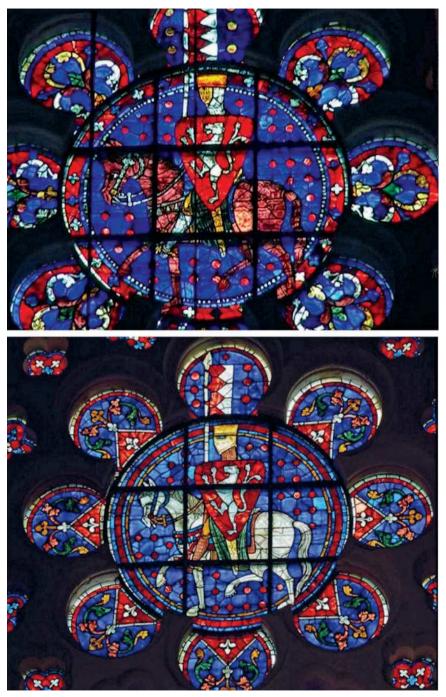


Figure 11: The rose windows of two de Montfort knights from Chartres cathedral, almost certainly for Amaury VI de Montfort (d.1241) and his father Simon IV (d.1218).



Figure 12: Above: second seal of Amaury VI de Montfort, Count of Montfort-l'Amaury. 1230, Douët D'Arcq no. 711; below: counterseal of 1234, Douët D'Arcq no. 712. Source: Archives Nationale de Paris J241 no.5 and S4373.



Figure 13: Seal and counter seal of Amaury (VI) de Montfort (d.1213) Count of Évreux and earl of Gloucester, with kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries, Museum drawer F27, photograph by Paul A.Fox.

a copyist based on the Chartres windows.²⁷ A major shortcoming of this theory is that the banners at Chartres are *Per pale indented gules and argent*, whereas in Glover's Roll (Cooke's version) they are *Per pale indented argent and gules*. To add further to the confusion, on the seal of Amaury VI de Montfort, Count of Montfort the shading gives the suggestion that gules is dexter and argent is sinister corresponding with the Chartres window, but as the shaft of the banner is on the other side the blazon might be interpreted as *Party indented argent and gules*, as in Glover's Roll (**Figure 12**). Inaccuracies of this kind are often found in early rolls. Thus Matthew Paris described Montfort as bearing a lion without specifying that it has two tails, but he was well aware that it was forked and mentioned it elsewhere.²⁸ His tinctures are also inverted, as *Argent a lion rampant gules*. Some other sources also show the lion with only one tail. One might suspect that in the middle of the thirteenth century, before the first armorials, such differences were not considered to be very important.

Fox-Davies, following Nichols, also attributed the party arms to the Honour of Hinckley, while drawing attention to the seal of Amaury VI de Montfort, count of Évreux and earl of Gloucester (1170–1213), representative of another line of the French Montforts (**Figure 13**).²⁹ A modern heraldist would definitely say that his arms are not really a 'party indented', but is difficult not to agree that it is the same arms. On the basis of this seal Davies, noting that the *party indented* arms were only used on the shield by

²⁷ T.R. Davies, 'The merciless Montforts: some problems', CoA no. 96 (Winter 1975), pp. 231-42 (232).

²⁸ Aspilogia II, p. 62.

²⁹ A.C. Fox-Davis. A Complete Guide to Heraldry (London, 1909) p. 117.

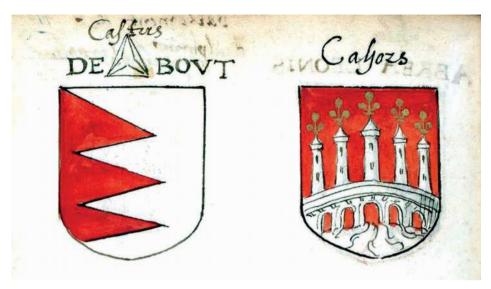


Figure 14: The arms of Castres in *Recueil de blasons peints*, sixteenth century (BNF Ms Fr 17256 f.115v).

those representatives of the family who styled themselves as of Évreux, concluded that the arms are connected to that very fief.³⁰ The arms were only ever used on the banner by their kinsmen of Montfort-l'Amaury. This idea was disputed by Civel, who noted that surviving evidence of the arms belongs to the period after Évreux was granted by King John as a dowry to Louis of France in 1200 in marriage to his niece Blanche.³¹ Amaury VI agree to secede Évreux in exchange for the right to call himself earl of Gloucester. Clemmensen supports Civel's suggestion that what might be called the arms of Évreux were perhaps introduced after he lost it, "in remembrance of that great fief", creating a second family coat of arms later displayed on a shield.³² He also suggests that Amaury VI of Montfort-l'Amaury had the same idea when he had to give up the great Languedoc possessions, re-adopting the emblem of the family's most important fief, but choosing to represent it on the banner.

Similar ornament can be found on the arms of a French town of Castres (department Tarn) which is connected to the family of Montfort (**Figure 14**). In the twelfth century Castres was a large center of the Albigensians which surrendered to Simon IV de Montfort during the Crusade there. In 1211 the land came into possession of his brother Guy de Montfort, so it can be suggested that Castres received its arms from him, perhaps

³⁰ Davies, op. cit., pp. 238–240.

³¹ N. Civel, 'Sceaux et armes de Simon comte de Leicester et de la maison de Montfort', *Revue Francaise d'Héraldique et Sigillographie*, vol. 66 (1996) pp. 83–106.

³² Steen Clemmensen, *The arms of Montfort-l'Amaury* (Farum, Denmark, 2011) www.armorial.dk.

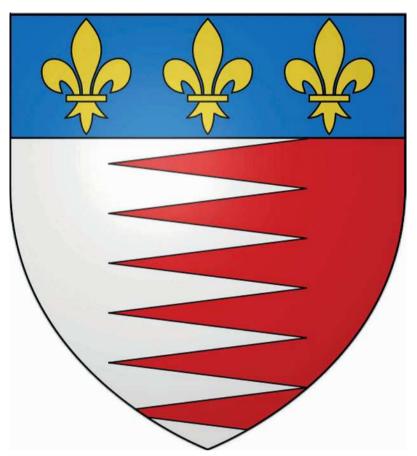
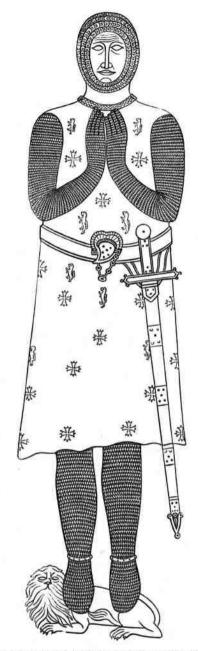


Figure 15: Modern arms of Castres. Source, Wikimedia Commons.

in the way Hinckley did.³³ Modern Castres still uses the arms (**Figure 15**), but less enthusiastically than Hinckley, giving preference to the Languedoc cross. The blazon here is different: *Argent four emmanches* (sleeves) *gules issuant from the sinister side, on a chief azure three fleurs de lis or*. The arms in base might also be blazoned as *Party* émanché *argent and gules*. This better describes the arms on Amaury d' Évreux's seal. The English blazon is less elegant: *Argent four piles fesswise issuant from the sinister side gules*. The idea that the Montforts were using dual arms to vaunt their status and power finds support from another direction. A slab found in the cathedral of Carcassonne is now considered to be an effigy of Simon IV de Montfort (**Figure 16**). The great crusader is shown in a surcoat decorated with lions (single-tailed) and Toulouse crosses. John Goodall in describing this monument drew the logical assumption that Simon was

³³ G. Langlois, Les sceaux de Simon de Montfort: un itinéraire politique, *Actes du colloque d'historiens* du 14 novembre 2009 organisé par l'Association de recherches baziégeoise racines et environnement. Baziège: ARBRE, 2010. p. 132.



Incised Slab in the Cathedral of Carcassonne, in France, BELLEVED TO BE A MEMORIAL OF SIMON DE MONTORT, SLAIN AT THE SIEGE OF TOULOUSE, JUNE 25, 1218. [Length of the figure 5 feet 4 inches.]

Figure 16: Simon IV de Montfort effigy found in Carcassonne with two emblems, the lion and Languedoc cross from The Archaeological Journal, vol. 12 (1855), p. 281.

representing himself both as the Count of Toulouse and as a member of the Montfort lineage.³⁴

In conclusion, the banner arms of Simon V de Montfort, were certainly not those of either Hinckley or of the earldom of Leicester. It was perhaps the finding of the arms in St. Mary's church that made the heralds attribute the arms to Hinckley. It remains an open question how the *party indented* arms originated in France. Were they the arms of a large fief in possession, or a means devised to emphasize the status of its bearer is difficult to say without more evidence.

My suggestion is that Amaury V and his offspring became detached from the Montfort-l'Amaury land and felt it improper to continue using its lion coat of arms. When his son Amaury VI ended the line without an heir, the arms were adopted as their banner by the senior Montfort-l'Amaury line. This might have been done in part to reclaim what was left of Amaury VI's domain back to the family. The fact that there is no evidence that Simon V, Earl of Leicester has ever used the *party indented* arms, and the assumption that it stood for the Evreux part of Montforts' heritage which he had no claim for, suggest that the banner in Glover's Roll might be the compiler's initiative and a mere copy of the image he had seen or heard of.

Nevertheless this case demonstrates the extraordinary durability of heraldic emblems that have survived their armigers and exist today in the arms of two different localities in two different countries.

³⁴ J.A. Goodall, 'Simon de Montfort (c. 1170–1218) and an Unusual Marshalling of Arms', *The Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 78 (1998), pp. 433–9.