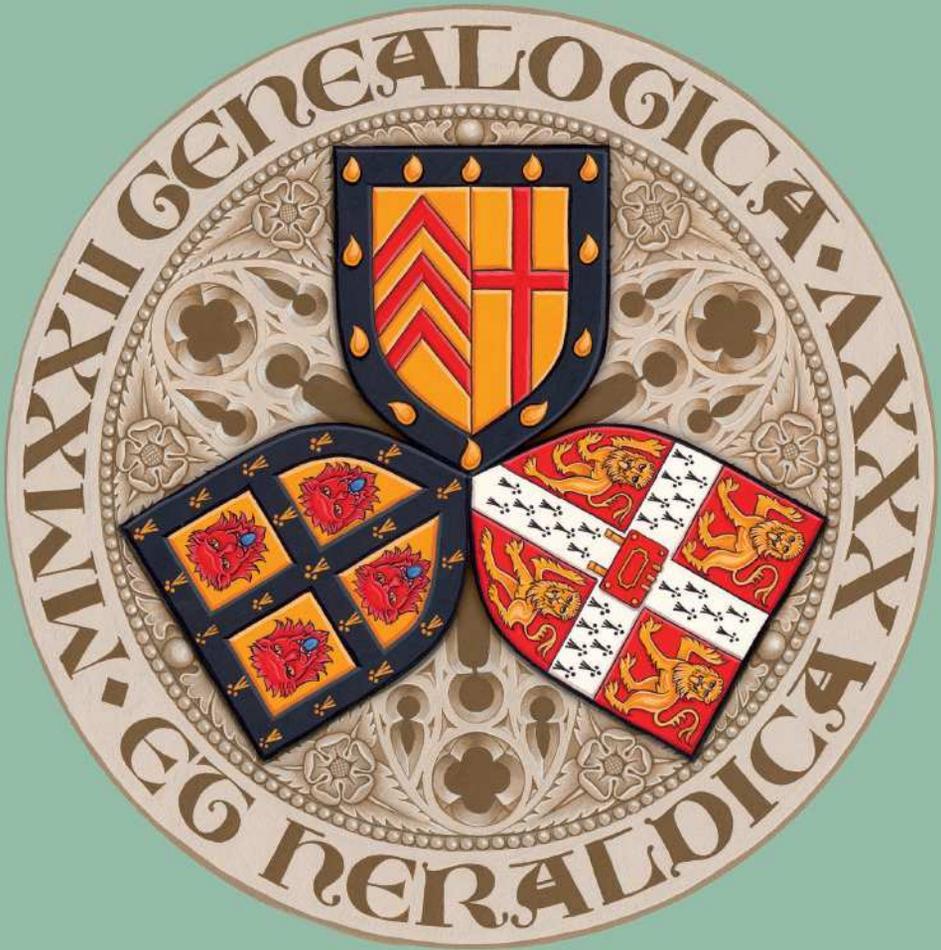


# GENEALOGICA & HERALDICA XXXV

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# RESTORATION OF FORM, REFORM OF MATTER: HERALDRY IN LATE PROSE ROMANCES BY WILLIAM MORRIS

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Heraldry in fiction is examined mostly by historians; their interest has been to find data about its origin and development in Medieval and Early Modern texts.<sup>1</sup> Heraldry in nineteenth and twentieth century texts has seemed, with few exceptions<sup>2</sup>, less interesting both for historians and literary scholars. William Morris gives a perfect example of how heraldry can provide new ways to interpret fictional plots. This paper will examine the late prose romances of William Morris, paying attention to the distribution of heraldic and proto-heraldic emblems therein. It will explore the function of this heraldry, its sources of inspiration, and the ways in which that heraldry coincides with Morris's social beliefs.

Morris's corpus of late prose romances include: *The House of the Wolfings* (1888), *The Roots of the Mountains* (1889), *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (1890), *The Well at the World's End* (1892), *The Wood Beyond the World* (1895), *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair* (1895)<sup>3</sup>, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1896) and *The Sundering Flood* (1898). They can be divided in two groups, firstly, Germanic romances (*The House of the Wolfings*, *The Roots of the Mountains* and *The Story of the Glittering Plains*) which focus on Germanic tribes of late Antiquity and Dark Ages; secondly, those which imitate the world of the High Middle Ages with its feudal structure, architecture, and chivalric code.<sup>4</sup>

Precise dating of the action of Germanic romances is highly problematic because the books do not refer to actual historical events, and the indications are frequently contradictory. *The House of the Wolfings* may suggest the first century A.D. because the battle between the Men of the Mark and the Romans is clearly modelled after the battle of the Teutoburg Forest.<sup>5</sup> However, the Mark-men are labelled Goths (who did not interact with the Romans until the fourth century A.D.), and it is mentioned that the main character Thiodolf in his youth fought with three Hun kings, which might also indicate the fourth century. Nonetheless, in *The Roots of the Mountains*, a folk of Dusky Men can be easily identified with the Huns<sup>6</sup> which suggests both romances should be dated in the Migration Period. It is extremely difficult to reconcile a statement that the Mark-men fought with the Huns with the information given that many generations later the Huns represent an unknown and a sudden danger for the Mark-men's distant descendants. Therefore, we should agree with Thomas Shippey that "[Morris] took pains...to avoid anachronistically direct datings and placings".<sup>7</sup> This is a crucial factor in understanding the peculiarities of Morris's heraldry and proto-heraldry: he did not aim to imitate the rules characteristic of a particular time and place. When a German archaeologist wrote to him expressing his admiration for his excellent research on the daily life and social structure of Teutonic tribes, and asked for the specific sources, Morris reacted furiously: "Doesn't the fool realise that it's a romance, a work of fiction – that it's all LIES!"<sup>8</sup>

For the romances of the second group the situation is clearer, Morris deliberately removed all reference to actual historical events. Therefore, while Germanic romances



**Chapter XXI. Of the fight of the Champions in  
the Hall of the Ravagers. ❀❀**

*Figure 1: the duel of Hallblithe and Puny Fox. Woodcut by Walter Crane from *The Story of the Glittering Plains*, Kelmescott Press, London 1894, p. 152.*

are usually recognized as pseudo-historical, the High Medieval romances are the predecessors of fantasy genre.<sup>9</sup>

Proto-heraldic emblems in Germanic romances are determined by the social structure of the presented world. A characteristic aspect of his writings is that Morris does not employ the concept of a tribe, his imaginary society rather consists of Houses which can be defined as extended families. The number of their members varies from a hundred to about a thousand people. All members of the House are treated as one family, so marriages or sexual relationships within the House are strictly forbidden as incest.<sup>10</sup> There is almost no social hierarchy because the function of an alderman of the House is mostly ceremonial, and all decisions are made by the mote; on major issues, such as war,

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all Houses gather in one mote. Such a gathering could be easily identified as a tribe (it shares language, manners and law) but it does not bear a distinguishing symbol (name or emblem). However, the symbolic identification of Houses is remarkably expressive. All Houses have visual emblems which are usually associated with their names (for example, the sign of the Wolfings is a wolf). Another symptomatic detail is that the author does not provide a complete list of the names of the Houses, although a complete list of their signs (35) is exposed and revealed in the crucial scene of *The House of the Wolfings* during the burial of the main character, Thiodolf, alongside other warriors who have fallen in the battle with Romans.

The signs of the Houses can be compared with the vexilla of actual Germanic tribes of the Dark Ages, with some important differences. Firstly, the vexillum's function was probably primarily sacral. Vexilla stood for the Gods or, even more generally, for a set of divine attributes, as represented by a particular animal.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, they were not firmly assigned to specific tribes, and the same sign was frequently shared by different tribes.<sup>12</sup> In Morris's Germanic romances, the war-signs serve as visual representations of the House's identity. It is illustrated by an episode in *The Roots of the Mountains*: when the Woodlanders discover their kinship with the Wolfings, they ceremonially present their new banner which celebrates this affinity, by creating and adopting a modified image of the Wolf. Charlotte Oberg claims that the scene should be interpreted as "a type of the future world-renewal, when all things fragmentary come together as one and are transmuted into a new creation."<sup>13</sup>

Morris did not abandon the sacred aspect of the war-signs. The Houses worship their mythical Fathers who can be identified with the creatures represented by the signs. However, it is suggested that the choice of sign is dictated mostly by the environment in which the House lives (for instance Wolf and Elk for forest, Bull and Sickle for fields) with no sacral component. That sacral function was added only secondarily: first there was establishment of the House as a social fact which led to the choice of the sign, and only later is the abstract concept transformed into the figure of a God-father. This fact, along with the stability of the particular sign (for example, the sign of the Wolf Jaw not being modified over many generations, despite the House having splintered into smaller groups<sup>14</sup> and having migrated from their original homeland) allow us to recognize the war-signs as quasi-national emblems.<sup>15</sup>

The comparison of the signs of the Houses with the medieval war-signs (**Table 1**) reveals that their 'anachronic' characteristics link them with heraldry, both in terms of function and in terms of the physical objects the emblem was displayed on (the banners were made of fabric, while the vexilla were usually made of metal or other stiff material and attached to the staff). In *The Roots of the Mountains* we encounter an example of two vexilla used in replacement of a fabric banner:

*As for the Woodlanders, they said that they were abiding their great banner, but it should come in good time; 'and meantime,' said they, 'here are the war-tokens that we shall fight under; for they are good enough banners for us poor men, the remnant of the valiant of time past.' Therewith they showed two great spears, and athwart the one was tied an arrow, its point dipped in blood, its feathers singed with fire; and they said, 'This is the banner of the War-shaft.'*

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*On the other spear there was nought; but the head thereof was great and long, and they had so burnished the steel that the sun smote out a ray of light from it, so that it might be seen from afar. And they said: 'This is the Banner of the Spear!'<sup>16</sup>*

	Tribal vexilla	War-signs in Germanic romances
Primary function	sacral	identity
Identification with tribe	fluent	strict
Stability	low	high
Material	mostly metal	fabric

*Table 1:* Comparison between authentic vexilla and war-signs of Germanic romances

The “banner of the War-shaft”, a vexillum of the Woodlanders, is the same arrow which was sent by the mote as a sign to gather all the tribes for the war with the Dusky Men. Therefore, it does not identify the Woodlanders as a House (that function will be taken by their new fabric banner with the Wolf and Sunburst) but their obedience to the call for war. The Germanic romances contain other allusions to real heraldic or proto-heraldic practices. In *The House of the Wolfings* every House has its banner-wagon. Here is the description of the wagon of the Wolfings:

*from the midst of this wain arose a mast made of a tall straight fir-tree, and thereon hung the banner of the Wolfings, wherein was wrought the image of the Wolf, but red of hue as a token of war; and with his mouth open and gaping upon the foemen. (...) the wain of the banner was drawn by ten black bulls of the mightiest of the herd, deep-dewlapped, high-crested and curly-browed; and their harness was decked with gold, and so was the wain itself, and the woodwork of it painted red with vermilion.<sup>17</sup>*

The banner-wagons have a crucial role in a collective identification of the House, a loss of one of them in battle is considered the highest disgrace for the tribe. That feature allows comparison with Italian carroccio<sup>18</sup> and, to a lesser extent, with banner-wagons used occasionally in Northern Europe (such as in Battle of Northallerton<sup>19</sup>).

Another interesting detail is the House of the Raven from *The Story of Glittering Plains*, and their banner which vividly resembles the actual Raven Banner of the Vikings, which is recorded as having been used since the ninth century.<sup>20</sup> Its use is paradoxical because in the book another tribe (the Sea-eagles), not the House of the Raven, can be identified with the Vikings. As in the case of the vexilla, the Raven Banner was a sacred and magical symbol, a vehicle of valour and war fortune, whereas the function of the banner of the House of the Raven is primarily as a marker of identity.

The sign of the House of the Raven is the only example we have of a visual representation authorised by Morris himself in the woodcuts by Walter Crane (**Figures 1 and 9**) which illustrate the second edition in Kelmscott Press (1894). The shape of the shield is renaissance rather than medieval, and the armour corresponds with the images of ancient heroes presented in renaissance art (Figure 1). This is neither an accident nor a mistake – the physical form of the books published in Kelmscott Press (fonts, initials, woodcuts) indicate that incunables and books of the early sixteenth century were a source of inspiration. It corresponds with the language: many archaic devices Morris applied

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became literary or obsolete during the sixteenth century. This metatextual quality, shared by the romances of both groups, justifies their anachronisms because they imitate a genre of chivalric romance.

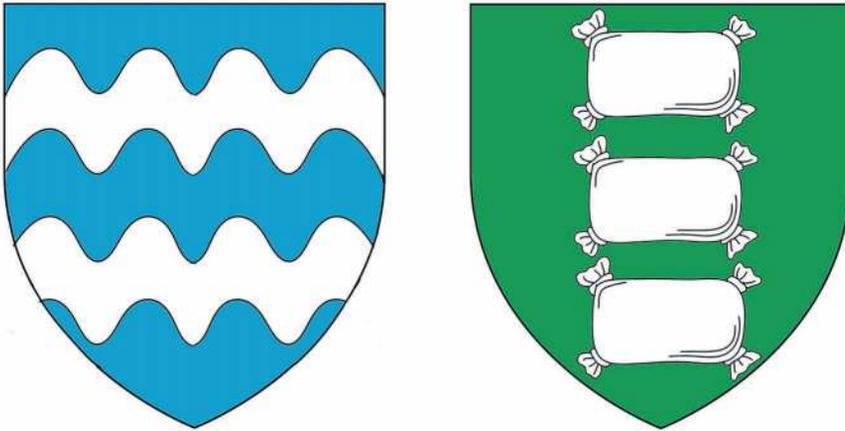
The influence of the chivalric epic on the romances of the second group (high medieval romances) has been widely discussed.<sup>21</sup> Amanda Hodgson has claimed that Thomas Malory, with the episodic structure of his prose, and his strings of coordinated clauses, strongly influenced Morris's style, especially in *The Well at the World's End*.<sup>22</sup> It is an established fact that the material culture of the late romances was more inspired by Victorian 'medievalism' than by the actual medieval reality as it was described by nineteenth-century historians.<sup>23</sup> This observation corresponds with Morris's library: he had numerous editions of medieval romances but few historical books.<sup>24</sup> The discussion of these matters has to date almost completely omitted the heraldic aspects.

In his blazoning Morris did not use heraldic terms or word-order. Only about half of his arms are described completely (**Table 2**). The symbolic function of heraldry is particularly evident, which suggests that chivalric romances were his major inspiration; a genre that similarly employs heraldry for its symbolic qualities.<sup>25</sup> There are some examples of canting, for instance the Land of the Tower has "a silver tower on a blue sky bestarred with gold"<sup>26</sup> and Brookside has "blue and white waves"<sup>27</sup> (**Figure 2**).

	Complete	No tincture of the field	Only charge, no tinctures	Other incomplete	No information	Total
<i>The Wood...</i>	-	-	1	1	-	2
<i>Child Christopher ...</i>	2	-	2	-	2	6
<i>The Well...</i>	8	-	6	-	-	14
<i>The Water...</i>	2	-	-	1	-	3
<i>The Sundering...</i>	4	1	-	-	unknown number	5 + unknown number
Total	16	1	9	2	2 + unknown number	30 + unknown number

Table 2: The completeness of blazon in medieval romances

Allusive arms constitute a separate group. Among the examples of simple arms are a sword reddened with blood for the nameless tyrant of the town Cheaping Knowe, and three wool packs for Eastcheaping (the town which the main source of income was a wool trade) (**Figure 3**). Other symbols are more complex. The arms of Sir Medard, a commander of the city guard of Eastcheaping are "a Tower and an Eagle sitting therein"<sup>28</sup> which may suggest vigilance. The arm of Gandolf of Utterbol (in *The Well at the World's End*) can be interpreted as a symbolic message about a heroine, Ursula, the etymology of whose name ("a bear") is an important trope in the plot.<sup>29</sup> When the protagonist, Ralph, sees the arms of Gandolf "a black bear on a castle-wall on a field of gold"<sup>30</sup> (**Figure 4**), the arms are intended to symbolically inform him that Ursula is imprisoned in the castle of Utterbol. Sometimes the symbolism of arms can be a key to interpret the entire plot. Amanda Hodgson observes that Ralph, through all his quest, bears his purpose on

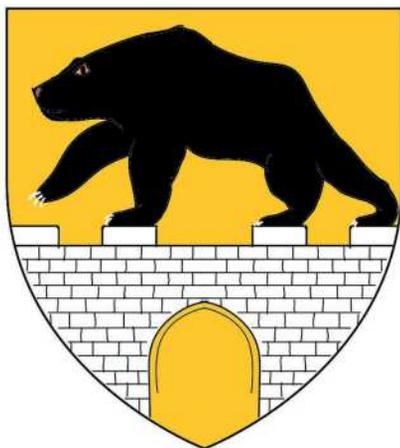


Left, *Figure 2*: arms of Sir Mark of Brookside; right, *Figure 3*: arms of the town Eastcheaping. Both from *The Sundering Flood*.

his shield because the “fruitful tree and river” (**Figure 5**) is a representation of earthly paradise.<sup>31</sup> The true purpose of Ralph’s quest is not the Well at the World’s End but his homeland, which he can rejuvenate due to his spiritual change symbolized by drinking the water of the Well. An earthly paradise: embodied in a small, egalitarian country (which is perceived as the opposite of both primitive nature and of a highly technical society) is a characteristic feature of Morris’s social philosophy and its transformation into fantasy romance (see the discussion below).

The influence of chivalric romance is revealed by numerous characters with plain shields. Such knights are a common figure in Arthurian romances, for example the Green Knight from *Sir Gawen and the Green Knight*, the Red Knight from Hartmann von Aue’s *Erec* and numerous characters from Thomas Malory’s *La Morte d’Arthur*.<sup>32</sup> Bruno Quast has shown that monochromatic knights undermine the stabile social structures marked by multi-coloured clothing and by the arms that were characteristic of the medieval elites; heroes use the monochrome shield in disguise to perform their quest outside the structures they are constrained to live in, while villains use them to emphasize their incompatibility with human society.<sup>33</sup> Morris uses such figure in three romances: *The Well at the Worlds End*, *The Sundering Flood* and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*. In the last of these romances three central male characters are consequently called Golden Knight, Green Knight and Black Squire, although their shields are not actually plain (**Figures 6, 7, 8**). The names of their beloved women represent the same colours: Aurea, Viridis and Atra. In the same novel there is also a nameless character, called Black Knight, who kidnaps the main character, Birdalone. Amanda Hodson claims that the Black Knight is acting as a complementary opposition of Arthur the Black Squire, so that Birdalone’s unlawful desire towards the Black Squire is impersonated in the figure of Black Knight.<sup>34</sup> Such a Jungian interpretation (where the Black Squire act as a Persona and Black Knight as a Shadow) can be supported by their common characteristics as monochromatic knights. In *Well at the World’s End* a character, Walter the Black (who bears plain sable shield),

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Left, *Figure 4*: arms of Lord Gandolf of Utterbol; right, *Figure 5*: arms of Upmeads. Both from *The Well at the World's End*.

also endangers a female character by his unlawful desire. In *The Sundering Flood* there is an episodic character called the White Knight who is a traitor and abuser of women. In Morris's works (not only the late prose romances, but also the political romances such as *News from Nowhere*) bright colours mark moral values, while plain argent and plain sable, by breaking the aesthetical code of the society, pose a threat to its morality.<sup>35</sup>

A comparison of the heraldry in the late prose romances with that in the early prose romances (written between 1850 and 1860 for *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*) and with poems published in *The Defence of Guinevere and Other Poems* (1858) reveals a substantial difference. In the early works, heraldry was much more visible. For instance, in *The Hollow Land* the narrator makes reference to crucial moments for his family (the House of the Lilies) such as military victories and defeats, and to the symbolism of their arms:

*"our house had done deeds enough of blood and horror to turn our white lilies red, and our blue cross to a fiery one"*<sup>36</sup>, *"there were four thousand bodies to be buried, which bodies wore neither cross nor lily"*<sup>37</sup>, and finally, *"they cast down their notched swords and dented, lilled shields"*.<sup>38</sup>

In *Golden Wings* the charge and crest of the protagonist is the very foundation of his identity and his public image; he has no other basis for his identity because he does not know his lineage or even his father's name. In the poems collected in *The Defence of Guinevere* there are numerous arms mentioned, sometimes also properly blazoned. In both the corpus of arms of early romances and in the poems, the exposition of arms and their role in the plot is much bigger than in late prose romances. For instance, the coat of arms of the protagonist is mentioned nine times in *Golden Wings* and only four times in *Well at the World's End*, though the last novel is about 3000% longer. One of the reasons is the change of Morris's aesthetic views. In early works he used many words and expressions of French and Latin origin, but later his goal was to purify the language of these borrowings and to restore vocabulary characteristic for Germanic languages.<sup>39</sup>In



Left, *Figure 6*: arms of Sir Baudoin the Golden Knight; centre, *Figure 7*: arms of Sir Hugh the Green Knight; right, *Figure 8*: arms of Sir Arthur the Black Squire. All from *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*.

late prose romances he even avoided vocabulary of French origin that was indispensable for English blazon. It should be defined as a purposefully creative decision because at the same time in his letters (an even in private correspondence) Morris applied proper blazoning, with heraldic terms and word-order. In a letter to Montague Rhodes James, Morris described the arms illuminated in a manuscript he owned:

*there are 3 shields of arms, the first (Grandison) chequy or and azure with a bend gules charged with 3 lioncels argent the 2nd Barry of 6 (az) argent and azure, on a bend gules 3 stars or 3rd gules a cross engrailed or.*<sup>40</sup>

and in a letter to his friend Emery Walker, he recollected his impressions on the cathedral of Beauvais, mentioning the arms of the Chapter: “*gules a cross argent with 4 keys of the same cantonnell.*”<sup>41</sup>

The crucial factor is that between 1850 and 1889 (when *The House of the Wolfings* was published) Morris’s social ideas transformed into socialism. The first reviewers and critics did not agree over whether the late prose romances represented socialist ideas. The opinion which seems to dominate is that although these romances are not allegories<sup>42</sup> (contrary to the political romances, *News from Nowhere* and *A Dream of John Ball*), the socialist propaganda is still observable.<sup>43</sup> Philippa Bennet wrote an extensive study on how fantasy themes act as a vehicle for social ideas.<sup>44</sup> She employed Mark Kingwell’s concept of threefold structure of *wonder*, *wonderful* and *to wonder* which captures how the sense of wonder transforms into questioning the social environment that the reader lives in.<sup>45</sup>

Numerous models for society presented in the late prose romances had been morally evaluated by the author. Societies which are positively evaluated can be characterised as small, egalitarian communities, while those presented as morally corrupted are tyrannies or oligarchies with a developed social ladder. In the Germanic romances the dominant social institution is “Germanic democracy”<sup>46</sup>, an idea which was widespread among Victorian historians and writers.<sup>47</sup> In medieval romances the possibilities for a morally good society are more diverse. It can be a monarchy (such as Upmeads from *The Well at the World’s End* and Oakenrealm in *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair*), a city-state (such as City of Sundering Flood from *The Sundering Flood* or Starkwall from *The Wood*

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*Beyond the World*), or a self-governing village community (such as Dale of Sundering Flood). In moral evaluation the source of legitimization of power is unimportant: it may be inheritance or tradition (for instance in Upmeads, Oakenrealm and Starkwall), direct election (for instance in Dale of Sundering Flood) or even violence (such as the rule of Bull Stokehead in Utterbol in *The Well at the World's End*); the real measure is interaction between the ruling elites and the rest of the society. Power, regardless of its source, is perpetuated by the will of the entire society; important decisions are made by the mote or, if a community is too large, by a parliament with strong representation of the least privileged groups (for example, after revolution in the City of Sundering Flood the role of "lesser crafts" in the Porte was advantaged). The mote is a recurring motive (it appears in *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at the World's End*, *The Sundering Flood* and in all three Germanic romances); remarkably, it resembles the moots described in *News from Nowhere* which can serve as a model of Morris's utopian society.

These ideas are strongly reflected in the heraldry. In the Germanic romances all the emblems represent communities, not individuals, ranks or families. All members of the community use the same sign without any modification, reflecting maximal equality. The arms are a source of pride and supply a sense of belonging which does not exclude anyone, even the poorest and those with the least authority.<sup>48</sup> A significant group of the arms in Morris's medieval romances represent communities, such as countries, guilds or chivalric orders (**Table 3**).

	Countries/rulers	Cities	Aristocrats	Knights	Guilds/ Orders	Personal tokens	Total
<i>The Wood...</i>	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
<i>Child Christopher</i>	1	-	4	-	-	1	6
<i>The Well...</i>	5	2	-	2	5	-	14
<i>The Water...</i>	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
<i>The Sundering...</i>	-	1	1 + unknown number	3	unknown number	-	5 + unknown number
Total	5	3	5 + unknown number	8	5 + unknown number	3	30 + unknown number

*Table 3:* Distribution of coats of arms in Morris's medieval romances

For example, in *Child Christopher* hundreds of knights use only the arms of their senior (rather than their individual or family arms) which makes them more equal to members of the lower social classes who use the same emblems. There is no example of abatements or cadencies because these figures could suggest a developed social stratification. A lack of brisures to represent the hierarchy within a family is a particularly important feature of the plot in *The Well at the World's End*. Here Ralph, although he is the youngest of four brothers, inherits the crown because he is the best man there, while his oldest brother and potential heir of the kingdom becomes a merchant. The possibility of such an inheritance

is inherently linked with the heraldic system where the king, his family, the elites of the country and all citizens share the same arms.

Morris propagated radically egalitarian social postulates; this perhaps suggests that he might have come to perceive heraldry negatively, as an instrument for perpetuating and justifying social hierarchies. Conversely, heraldic and proto-heraldic elements are an important component of a world full of colours, pride and a sense of belonging. To accommodate these two polarities, Morris modified heraldry in his imaginary worlds so that it represented the idea of fellowship, defined as voluntary cooperation of people with a common identity (and, in a broader sense, as a community of all human beings in utopian world without violence; but that ideal pattern is not presented in his late prose romances). This concept is crucial for Morris's interpretation of social development, which contrasted fellowship with mastership.<sup>49</sup>

The use of these specific characteristics of heraldry in his late prose romances, both in terms of its form (inspired by chivalric romances) and its implications for the social interpretation of the novels, has had far-reaching consequences. Morris's influence on later fantasy authors, direct or indirect, cannot be overestimated, and we find many analogies between heraldic elements in the late prose romances (though not in early prose romances and poems) and the heraldry presented in twentieth-century fantasy. Despite a fundamental difference in social beliefs between Morris and J.R.R. Tolkien, heraldry in their works is surprisingly similar. Tolkien in his *legendarium* included significantly fewer arms, and his arms often represent communities (such as countries or city guilds) rather than families or ranks. Just as with Morris's late prose romances, Tolkien's heraldry (with no abatements, cadency or heraldic terminology) reflects a remarkably flat social structure.

Tolkien, just as Morris, created imaginary arms mostly for their symbolic qualities, and was also influenced by chivalric romances.<sup>50</sup> Many other fantasy authors have used heraldry as a vehicle for elaborating imaginary societies which have a very flat social stratification and high social mobility. Complex and proper blazons can be found mostly in satirical works (such as *Feet of Clay* by Terry Pratchett) or in those which are consciously anachronic (such as *Once and Future King* by Terence Hanbury White). The influence of William Morris's late prose should be regarded among the factors which produced such interpretations of heraldry in fantasy literature. Thus can be seen that the personal literary taste and the social beliefs of a single prominent author have massively influenced an entire genre.



**Chapter XX. So now saileth Hallblithe away from  
the Glittering Plains** ❁❁

Hallblithe sails away, woodcut by Walter Crane from *The Story of the Glittering Plains*, Kelmscott Press, London 1894, p. 139.

<sup>1</sup> There is a substantial number of studies about heraldry in Arthurian romances. See for example: Michel Pastoureaux, *Armorial des chevaliers de la Table Ronde. Etude sur Vhéraldique imaginaire à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 2006); Rolf Sutter, *Im Frühling der Heraldik*, in James Floyd (ed.) *Genealogica & Heraldica, Origin and Evolution. Proceedings of the XXXII International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldical Sciences. Glasgow, 2016* (Edinburgh, 2021), pp. 339–362; Kenneth Tiller, ‘The Rise of Sir Gareth and Hermeneutics of Heraldry’, in *Arthuriana*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2007), pp. 74–91.

<sup>2</sup> See especially: Fiona Robertson, ‘Hyperobtrusive Signs: heraldry in nineteenth-century British and American Literature’, in Fiona Robertson and Peter N. Lindfield (edd.) *The Display of Heraldry, The Heraldic Imagination in Arts and Culture* (London 2019), pp. 176–190; Michael O’Shea, *James Joyce and Heraldry* (New York, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair* is usually recognized as a translation of Middle English romance *Havelock the Dane* rather than original work. However, *Havelock the Dane* was for Morris only the inspiration for a much longer and more complex story; Morris introduced new subplots and characters, and, what is crucial for the present discussion, four coats of arms which are completely absent in the original story.

<sup>4</sup> The structure of *The Story of the Glittering Plains*, with focus on a protagonist and his personal quest instead of community, makes it related to the High Medieval romances. Therefore, it is usually discussed along with that group rather than with *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*. The social structure,

manners and, consequently, proto-heraldic emblems in *The Story of the Glittering Plains* allow us to classify it as a Germanic romance.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Adams, *Liberal Epic, The Victorian Practice of History from Gobbon to Churchill* (Charlottesville and London, 2011), p. 200; Charlotte Oberg, *A Pagan Prophet William Morris* (Charlottesville, 1978), p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Allan Shippey, 'Goths and Huns: the rediscovery of the Northern cultures in the nineteenth century', in: Andreas Haarder et al (edd.) *6th International Symposium on the Mediaeval Legacy* (Odense, 1982), pp. 51–69, at p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Halliday Spading, *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris, Master-Craftsman* (London, 1924), p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Mathews, *Fantasy, Liberation from Imaginations* (London, 2011), p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> The concept is inspired by the theory of exogamous and endogamous marriages in tribal communities developed by John McLennan. See Nicholas Salmon, 'A Study in Victorian Historiography: William Morris's Germanic Romances', in *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2001), pp. 59–89.

<sup>11</sup> Georg Scheibelreiter, *Tiernamen und Wappenwesen* (Vienna, 1992), pp. 58–63.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> Oberg, *op. cit.*, p. 110 observes that the roots of the mountains, signalized in the title, are mentioned in Snorri's *Edda* as one of the components of Fenrir's chain. These things were lost and can be restored only after Ragnarok when Fenrir breaks his fetters. Thus the banner of the Wolf heralds a cosmic battle and rejuvenation which comes after.

<sup>14</sup> Such divisions are obligatory when marriages within the group are precluded (see the discussion above). At the same time the concept of division of a too numerous House contributes to Morris's social ideas: he believed only small communities can nurture the ideas of equality and justice.

<sup>15</sup> The concept of 'nation' or of 'national identity' is of course highly anachronical when applied to discuss the tribes of the Dark Ages, but it is important as a means of understanding Morris's social ideas. See the further discussion on the role of heraldry in social propaganda in late prose romances.

<sup>16</sup> William Morris, *The Roots of the Mountains*, in May Morris (ed.), *The Collected Works of William Morris*, vol. 15 (Cambridge 2012), pp. 225–6.

<sup>17</sup> Banner-wagons of other Houses are not described in such detail but often there is other information provided such as, for example, on the beasts that drew the wagons (sometimes associated with the name of the House, for instance the wagon of the Elks was drawn by the trained Elks).

<sup>18</sup> The function of carroccio in identity communication in medieval Italy was discussed by Ernst Voltmer 'Standart, Carroccio, Fahnenwagen, Zur Funktion der Feld- und Herrschaftszeichen mittelalterlicher Städte am Beispiel der Schlacht von Worringen 1288', in *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, vol. 14 (1988), pp. 187–209, at pp. 188–9; Johannes Bernwieser, *Honor civitatis. Kommunikation, Interaktion und Konfliktbeilegung im hochmittelalterlichen Oberitalien* (Munich, 2012), p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> See Oliver Creighton and Duncan Wright, *The Anarchy: War and Status in the 12<sup>th</sup>-Century Landscapes of Conflict* (Liverpool, 2016), pp. 43–47. The banner-wagon which served as a command point in the battle of Norhallerton bore standards belonging to minsters, so its function was sacral (and strategic) rather than relating to identity.

<sup>20</sup> Niels Lukman, 'The Raven Banner and the Changing Ravens: A Viking Miracle from Carolingian Court Poetry to Saga and Arthurian Romance', in *Classica et Medievalia*, vol. 19 (1958), pp. 133–51.

<sup>21</sup> See especially: Frederick Kirchoff, 'Heroic Disintegration: Morris's Medievalism and the Disappearance of Self', in Carole Silver (ed.) *The Golden Chain. Essays on William Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism* (London, 1982), pp. 75–96; Ch. Oberg, *op.cit.*; Carole Silver, *The Romance of William Morris* (Athens, Ohio, 1982); Amanda Hodgson, *The Romances of William Morris* (Cambridge, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Amanda Hodgson, *op.cit.*, pp. 167–9.

<sup>23</sup> Yuri Cowan, *William Morris and Medieval Material Culture*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto 2008.

<sup>24</sup> An incomplete catalogue of Morris's library is available on <https://williammorrislibrary.wordpress.com/>.

<sup>25</sup> William McDonald, 'The Crown Endures: Concerning Heraldry as Narrative Discourse in the Erec of Hartmann von Aue', in *Colloquia Germanica*, vol. 33, no. 4 (2000), pp. 317–322.

<sup>26</sup> William Morris, *The Well at the World's End*, vol. I, in, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, *op.cit.*, vol. 18, p. 176.

<sup>27</sup> William Morris, *The Sundering Flood*, p. 217.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>29</sup> Amanda Hodgson, *op.cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>30</sup> William Morris, *The Well at the World's End*, vol. I, p. 286.

<sup>31</sup> Amanda Hodgson, *op.cit.*, p. 192. Hodgson claims that the apple-tree in the arms of Upmeads is a complementary opposition of the Dry Tree which guards the Well at the World's End. Dry Tree surrounded by a pond of poisonous water is a symbol of death, a necessary complement of the Well – the symbol of life.

<sup>32</sup> Michael O'Shea, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

## HERALDRY IN WILLIAM MORRIS

<sup>33</sup> Bruno Quast, 'Monochrome Ritter. Über Farbe und Ordnung in höfischen Erzähltexten des Mittelalters', in M. Schausten (ed.) *Die Farben Imaginierten Welten. Zur Kulturgeschichte ihrer Codierung in Literatur und Kunst vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, (Berlin, 2012), pp. 169–182 (171,176).

<sup>34</sup> Hodgson, op. cit., pp. 175–6. Hodgson does not use Jungian terms of Persona and Shadow but her interpretation reveals a strong influence of that concept.

<sup>35</sup> Beauty was one of the central concepts of Morris's social philosophy; he mourned the beauty of craft lost by industrialization and postulated that the ideal society might be possible only with restoration of beauty in everyday life, not only in art (see especially 'The Lesser Arts. Delivered Before the Trades' Guild of Learning, December 4, 1877', in *The Collected Works of William Morris*, op. cit., vol. 22, pp. 3–27). Bright colours are indispensable part of that code of beauty (in *News from Nowhere* people of the utopia wonder on the ugliness and dull colours of the modern clothing worn by the narrator).

<sup>36</sup> William Morris, *The Hollow Land*, in: idem, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, op. cit. vol. 1, p. 268.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264–5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>39</sup> Linda Gallash, *Use of Compounds and Archaic Diction in the Works of William Morris* (Berne, Frankfurt am Main, Las Vegas, 1979), p. 30. Morris developed that strategy while translating Old Icelandic sagas with Eric Magnusson.

<sup>40</sup> William Morris, *Collected Letters of William Morris*, vol. 4: 1893–1896 (Princeton, 1996), p. 174.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3: 1889–1892, p. 341.

<sup>42</sup> Morris argued fiercely against the interpretation of his late prose romances as political allegories. An unsigned reviewer wrote in *The Spectator* that *The Wood Beyond the World* illustrates the fight between Capital (the Lady) and Labour (the Maiden), *The Spectator*, July 1895, pp. 52–3, reprinted in: Peter Faulkner, *William Morris*, p. 380–4). Morris wrote the editor a letter stating that: "I had not the least intention of thrusting an allegory into *The Wood Beyond the World*; it is meant for a tale pure and simple, with nothing didactic about it. If I have to write or speak on social problems, I always try to be as direct as I possibly can be. On the other hand, I should consider it bad art in anyone writing an allegory not to make it clear from the first that this was his intention" (William Morris, *Collected Letters of William Morris*, vol. 4, p. 291).

<sup>43</sup> See for example: C. Silver, op.cit., pp. 170–1; 'Socialism Internalized: The Last Romances of William Morris', in: *Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris* (London, 1990), pp. 117–126; A. Hodgson, op.cit., pp. 158–164; Florence Boos, 'William Morris's "Lesser Arts" and "The Commercial War"', in *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss*, pp. 35–55; Philippa Bennett, 'Radical Tales: Rethinking the Politics of William Morris's Last Romances', in: *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss*, pp. 85–105; Anna Vaninskaya, *William Morris and the Idea of Community. Romance, History and Propaganda 1880–1914* (Edinburgh, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> *Wonderlands. The Last Romances of William Morris* (Bern, 2015).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> See A. Vaninskaya, op.cit., Dustin Geeraert, 'The land which ye seek is the land which I seek to flee from'. The Story of the Glittering Plain and Teutonic Democracy', in *William Morris Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1, (2012) pp. 18–35; T.A. Shippey, op.cit.

<sup>47</sup> Rosemary Jann, 'Democratic Myths in Victorian Medievalism', in *Browning Institute Studies*, vol. 8 (1980), pp. 129–149.

<sup>48</sup> Florence Boos claims the moots in prose romances suggest the socialist gatherings in London with their colourful banners and temporal federations Florence Boos, 'Morris's German Romances as Socialist History', in *Victorian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, (1984) pp. 321–342, at p. 338.

<sup>49</sup> William Morris, *Dawn of a New Epoch*, in *The Collected Works of William Morris*, op. cit., vol. 23, pp. 121–140, at p. 122; about a universal fellowship see: *A Dream of John Ball*: "Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell: fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them"; (*The Collected Works of William Morris*, op. cit., vol. 16, p. 230; "ye know who is the foeman, and that is the proud man, the oppressor, who scorneth fellowship, and himself is a world to himself and needeth no helper nor helpeth any, but, heeding no law, layeth law on other men because he is rich" (*ibid.*, p. 234).

<sup>50</sup> See detailed discussion in: Agnieszka Żurek, 'Heraldry in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Legendarium*', in *CoA* no. 239 (2022), pp. 145–182.