

# Baronage

## New Arms for MacTavish.

The most intriguing heraldic event of the winter was not the Lord Lyon's straight re-grant 1 to MacTavish of Dunardry of the arms of the Chief of MacTavish, but rather the widespread comment in magazines and on websites it created. One suspects this must have been fed by a press release ~ in which case, looking at the errors in just one example (see the linked attachment), typical of the others, there can be little doubt about its author. Can it be anyone other than the Chief himself?

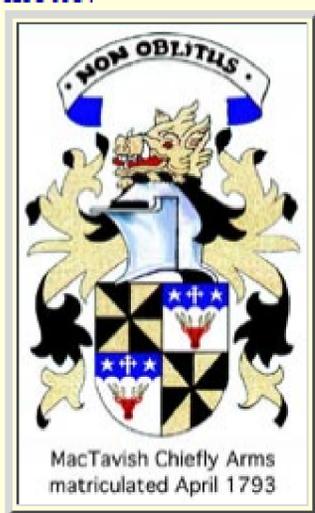


Look at this ~

*“Under the MacTavish motto Non Oblitus - Do Not Forget Me After Death - the shield in the centre of the arms had the Campbell colours of black and gold in the first and third - the predominant - quarters .....*”

Disregard the motto for the moment and don't worry about “the shield in the centre of the arms” ~ consider the “first and third” predominant quarters (sic). The author appears to believe that quarters are numbered clockwise. Accordingly, our artist has prepared the picture above right, and if Dunardry just runs his mouse across it slowly, the correct numbering of the quarters will then appear on little balloons. This should help him avoid such an embarrassing error in future.

The reference to “the shield in the centre of the arms” is odd. The arms are quite clearly on the shield, not the reverse. And the motto Non Oblitus means “Not forgetful” ~ it can mean nothing else, so it clearly answers in the implied “I am not forgetful” the Ne obliviscaris (Do not forget) of the Campbell Chiefs. The absurd “Do not forget me after death” looks like a dishonest attempt to persuade those who have forgotten all their Latin that there is no link to the Campbell motto.



These two pictures were circulated with the press release to illustrate the change approved by the Lord Lyon. The Sable and Or gyronny has moved from the 1st and 4th quarters to the 2nd and 3rd, so the principal tinctures of Or and Sable have been replaced by Argent and Azure, the wreath and mantling being modified accordingly.

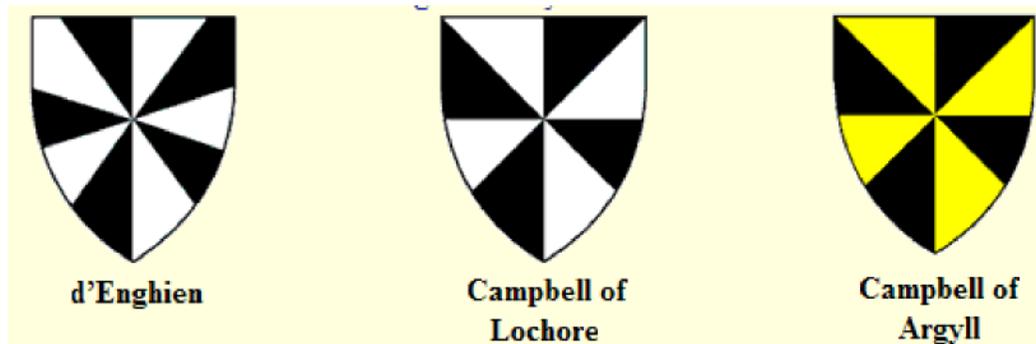
It is this Campbell gyronny that has so irritated MacTavish of Dunardry. He insisted that it made him look like a Campbell and diminished the standing of all MacTavishes, but the reality is more complex than that.



## The Origins of the Campbells

The first Campbell of whose existence genealogists are generally agreed was Gillespic (translated as Erkenbald in Flemish and Archibald in Scots) who died circa 1280 and may have married Eva O'Duine, the heiress of Lochow. He may have been the first to use the surname Campo Bello, and thus to bequeath the Campbell name to his descendants, but that honour may belong to his father or grandfather, as also the richly endowed Eva. The mists of antiquity are very thick here.

The same uncertainty applies to the earliest Campbell arms, both to their blazon and to the date at which they first appeared. Stodart in his *Collection of Armorial Bearings 1370-1678* reveals that the gyronny was as often Argent and Sable as Or and Sable, and it is generally held to have become fixed as the latter as late as the mid-15th century. The similarity of the Campbell gyronny to the arms of Flanders must be noted, for it is unlikely that the first armigerous de Campo Bello could have used such arms among so many Flemish families without reason.



The armorial evidence supports the hypothesis that the man who first took the name of de Campo Bello was a Fleming (as were so many of the incoming “Anglo-Normans”), the gyronny partition lines not being then in use other than with Flemish families. Moreover, as Beryl Platts 2 has reported, the first Campbell lands marched with those of the Engayne Morvilles at Cunningham (the d’Enghien family in Flanders bearing Gyronny Argent and Sable), and in those early days the adoption “for affection” of similar arms was not uncommon.

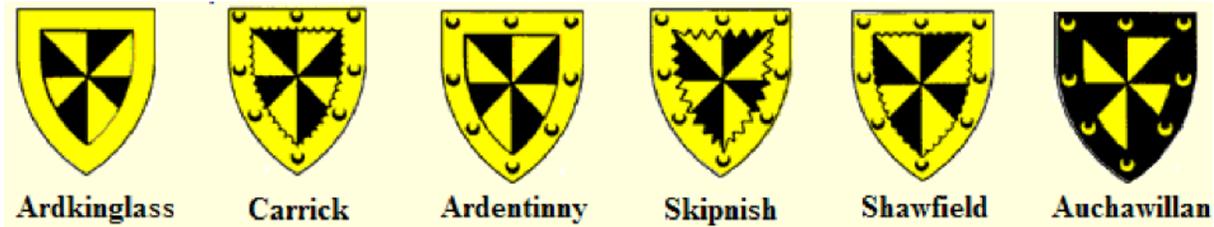
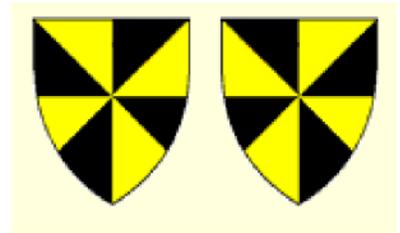
Alternatively, of course, the first Campbell may have been a d’Enghien cadet surnamed de Campo Bello who had gone to Scotland with his de Morville cousins in search of fortune. Peering through the murky mists then we may speculate that the first Campbell arrived in Scotland in the 12th century, doubtless travelling north with the newly succeeded King David, that as a d’Enghien cadet he bore a version of the d’Enghien arms, and that he or one of his descendants down as far as the Gillespic/Erkenbald in the next century gave the heiress of Lochow the Campbell name.

Some genealogists claim to have traced the clan’s ancestry back much further than this, but in reality their efforts have been spent in tracing the line of Eva and the O’Duine clan, not that of the Campbells who, after the King had given the O’Duine heiress in marriage, were henceforth the chiefs. Claims made by some of the name of MacTavish to the effect that they are senior to the Campbells are based on a misunderstanding of this position. Eva was the heiress of Lochore and the chiefship of the old O’Duine clan passed through her to her Campbell descendants

## The Campbell Heraldry

The first matter to be examined must be the blazon. In very early heraldry there was no difference between these two shields (right). Gyronny Or and Sable and Gyronny Sable and Or 3 could be painted exactly the same. How much significance can then be drawn from the fact that today the Chief of Campbell bears the first of these gyronny partitions and the Chief of MacTavish the second?

Let us look at some Campbell cadets ~ Ardkinglass, Auchawillan, Ardentinny, Shawfield, Skipnish and Carrick. The first Campbell of Ardkinglass was the third son of Sir Colin Campbell of Lochow and bore the gyronny, as did his father, Or and Sable. Robert Campbell of Carrick, the second son of his eldest son, bore Sable and Or. Colin Campbell of Ardentinny, the elder son of his second son, also bore Sable and Or, and from him came two cadet lines. The first of these, Skipnish, begun by Walter, bore Or and Sable, as did the second, Shawfield, begun by Donald, but Ardentinny's younger brother, Donald Campbell of Auchawillan, bore Sable and Or.



It appears then that the distinction between Or and Sable and Sable and Or, after it became heraldically significant, was applied arbitrarily. There may have been, of course, a meaning for cadency which has been forgotten. Perhaps one of our readers may have an answer to this. But for the present we may assume that the difference between the Campbell of Argyll and the MacTavish of Dunardry order of gyronny tinctures is of no relevance.

### The Meaning of the Quarters

It is useful to distinguish between arms which are quarterly and those which are composed of quarters. The most famous example of the former are the Royal Arms which, in England, are 1 and 4 England, 2 Scotland, and 3 Ireland. Such quarters are said to be marshalled, and each represents a family or lordship represented by the bearer of the arms. Arms which are said to be composed of quarters do not carry such representation.

The MacTavish of Dunardry arms belong to this second group, of which J.H. Stevenson, Unicorn Pursuivant, wrote ninety years ago ~

“An interesting and important class of shields, mainly of Western Highland Chiefs, such as those of the Macdonalds, ought to be considered in the main as a variety of arms parted per cross, rather than as arms marshalled quarterly.” 4

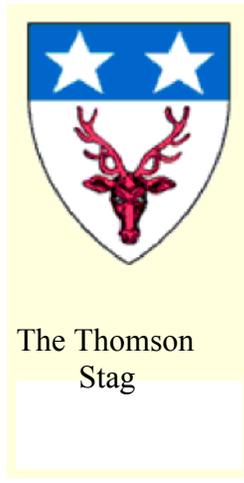
*It is evident that the Campbell gyronny in the MacTavish coat could never have represented a proven Campbell descent in the male line.* Certainly the present Chief has Campbells among his maternal ancestors, and certainly for long periods the MacTavish clansmen were dependers on those of the name of Campbell, as tacksmen and in other positions, but where the MacTavish Chief currently claims his male line meets the Campbell line, in 1105-1107, is at a point in history before the Campbells married the Lochore heiress and brought in to the clan the gyronny arms.

Accordingly, the MacTavish Clan cannot represent a Campbell descent heraldically. Why then did the Lord Lyon, John Hooke-Campbell of Bangeston, include gyronny quarters in the tinctures of Argyll in the grant of 1793? It must have been because he sought, in the style of the arms of other Western Highland chiefs, to use what might be termed themed quarters similar to those of a galley, a fist clutching a cross, a lion rampant, a tower, etc, etc. 5 And he chose the gyronny because the Campbells dominated the MacTavish lands and the MacTavishes ranked as a sept.

The blazon of the second and third quarters then makes a little more sense. The MacTavish name is anglicised as Thomson (**NOTE: MacTavish is already Anglicized from the Gaelic - you cannot “Anglicize” an already Anglicized name! – MacTavish have used this erroneous statement in all their ‘histories’ online and**

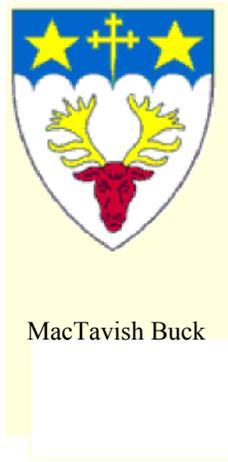
elsewhere and most never question it! Lyon recognized this when considering the Clan Thom(p)son Society grant of arms: CTS note) and Lyon took a heavily differenced version of the arms of the Thomson Chief (engrailed the chief and adding to it a cross crosslet fitchée, and changing the tinctures of the stag's antlers and the mullets 6 to gold) to theme the Thomson name. The four differences denied any hint, of course, that the MacTavishes might have a claim to the chiefship of the Thomsons, a denial which was to be emphasised two hundred years later.

So John Hooke-Campbell composed a coat of four quarters which, although theming the Campbell dominance and the anglicised MacTavish name, made no claim to representation of either Campbells or Thomsons.



The Thomson Stag

He did not explicitly recognise MacTavish of Dunardry as Chief of the Name of MacTavish, and he did not grant the heraldic supporters which would have acknowledged the grantee as Chief of a major clan. The twentieth century matriculation did recognise Dunardry as Chief of the MacTavishes, but changed the Thomson stag to a buck !!!



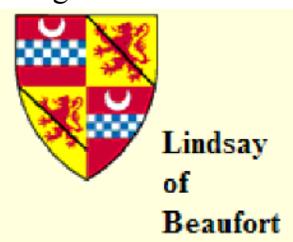
MacTavish Buck

The change of stag to buck in the first matriculation of the present Laird of Dunardry increased to five the number of differences from the arms of Thomson of that Ilk, so there is no possible case for him to claim (as he does) the

Thomsons as one of his septs. (While a chief can add septs he chooses - it is not appropriate to add one that has its own arms/clan as MacTavish has done - CTS note) The second matriculation this winter did not change this 7. What it did do in one way was to diminish misunderstandings about a possible Campbell descent in the male line. (Despite the blazons of both the 1997 and 2003 matriculations stating that the charge is a buck's head, Dunardry continues to portray it as a stag's.) 8

**Footnotes ~**

1. "A re-grant where a coat of arms which is already in the petitioner's possession is desired by him with an alteration ..... is treated as a matriculation." Heraldry in Scotland, Volume One, page 127, J.H. Stevenson, Maclehose, Edinburgh 1914. This implies that Dunardry's re-grant with a different order of the quarters was not such a rare event as has been suggested, nor required the "courage" boasted repetitively by his followers in their public postings. (Arms that profess their bearer to be someone else are always eligible for change.)
2. Scottish Hazard Volume Two, page 96, Beryl Platts, Procter Press, London, 1990
3. The blazoning of the tinctures begins in dexter chief.
4. Heraldry in Scotland, Volume One, footnote on page 165, J.H. Stevenson, Maclehose, Edinburgh 1914.
5. A further illustration of the difference between marshalling and composing may be seen with these two examples. Lindsay of Beaufort on the left marshalls 1 and 4 Lindsay of Beaufort, 2 and 3 Abernethy, while MacNaghten of Dundarave bears as the 1st and 4th quarters the fist clutching a cross crosslet fitchée, and as the 2nd and 3rd quarters a single tower. Both these features, the cross crosslet fitchée in a fist and the single tower, are effectively totems among the arms of the Western Highlands and do not alone identify specific families.



Lindsay of Beaufort



MacNaghten of Dundarave

6. Portrayals on the Internet emblazoned the charges on the chief as Argent, whereas the 1793 and 1997 blazons were clearly Or ~ but see the next footnote. (Where emblazoned arms differ from their blazon, the blazon is the authority and overrides the painting.)

7. This 2003 matriculation, according to the blazon published on the Electric Scotland website (we have seen no other), has changed the tincture of the charges on the chief from Or to Argent.

8. At the end of such a lengthy examination of the MacTavish arms and their matriculations, a brief summary may be useful as a footnote ~

a. The 2003 re-grant is treated as a matriculation and is no big deal.

b. Non oblitus means “Not forgetful”. The given “Do not forget me after death” is ridiculous (for that would obviously translate as Post mortem non me obliviscaris ~ which even a dunce would not confuse).

c. Non oblitus answers the motto of the Campbell Chief. (Curiously, the MacTavish motto on the 1793 grant was Ne obliviscaris ~ the same as that of the Campbell Chief ~ and this is listed for MacTavish in C.N. Elvin’s 1860 Handbook of Mottoes.)

d. Quarters are not numbered clockwise ~ they are numbered dexter to sinister, chief to base.

e. That the MacTavish arms bear the gyronny Sable and Or, whereas the Campbell Chief’s gyronny is Or and Sable, has no significance.

f. MacTavish of Dunardry, on his own profession of the relevant dates (“1105-1107” on his website), has no heraldic descent from the Campbells.

g. The MacTavish coat is composed of quarters in the manner of other Western Highland chiefs, and does not marshal arms which the MacTavish Chief may claim to represent. Thus the new coat can never be described as “1 and 4 MacTavish, 2 and 3 Campbell”. The whole coat is MacTavish.

h. **The “Thomson” quarter represents a theme, not a blood relationship, and still less a claim to all the Thomsons as a sept of Clan MacTavish. (And, certainly, not as an “alternative spelling” of his clan name! - CTS note)** (The claim that the Campbells are a sept of Clan MacTavish is even more absurd.)

i. The 1997 matriculation’s change of the stag’s head to a buck’s head emphasised the gulf between the arms of Thomson of that Ilk (recorded mid-16th century) and MacTavish (granted 1793 and re-granted 2003) and can only have been introduced by the Lord Lyon deliberately to do so.

j. As the MacTavish of Dunardry arms are composed of quarters and are not marshalled quarters, the full arms are the pronominal arms. If at some future time an alliance with an heiress justified the arms being quartered so that her arms could be marshalled on the shield, MacTavish of Dunardry would go into the 1st and 4th quarters as grand quarters, the heiress’s arms into the 2nd and 3rd. Thus the heiress’s arms would not replace one of the gyronny quarters, and, unless the Lord Lyon rules otherwise, the buck’s head and engrailed chief without the gyronny quarters do not represent MacTavish (or Thomson).

### [The Arms of the Thomsons](#)

Baronage Press icon



[The Baronage Contents Page](#)

© 2003 The Baronage Press and Pegasus Associates Ltd