

Our South African (Afrikaner) Heraldic Heritage – a Mythical Creation?

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Introduction

Public ignorance of heraldry

“The fascinating subject of heraldry is neither [as] dead nor [as] moribund as some would make us think. It is a living science and still enters into our everyday life more than many realise.”¹ It is one of the most visible art-forms to which people in South Africa are exposed on a daily basis. The national coat of arms (both old and new) appears on all coinage. In Gauteng, and to some extent Limpopo, the provincial coat of arms now appears on vehicle registration plates. Many school-going children wear blazers or caps on which the insignia of their particular school appear. Adults proudly wear ties, cuff-links and blazer badges that boldly proclaim their affiliations and status, either as graduates of institutions of higher learning, or as members of some club or professional body. Yet, with all this visibility, members of the public at large generally have only the most rudimentary knowledge of heraldry. It does not appear as a subject in school, college or university curricula. “The man in the street tends to associate heraldry with colourful illustrations of coats of arms, while being blissfully unaware of what heraldry encompasses.”²

The Heraldry Society of Southern Africa receives a steady stream of mail from people who want to know how they can find their family’s coat of arms.³ Many of these are the parents of pupils who have been given a project to research their family tree.

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1 C G Botha, *The Study of Heraldry in South Africa*, Cape Town Archives Repository (hereafter CAR): Original MS in A1813 (101) – ca 1960

2 H M Brownell, “The Origins and Development of the South Africa Law of Heraldry” LLB mini-thesis, University of Pretoria, 1993, p 1

3 This has been my personal experience as chair of the Society (1995-2002) and as honorary editor of its journal *Arma* (1994-)

Although this is an excellent way of introducing children to the pleasure of history by way of the more personal family history or genealogy,⁴ it seems that the project is incomplete if there is no coat of arms.⁵ This is due to the perception, by the general public, that every 'family' has a coat of arms. What they are totally unaware of, is that arms are generally associated with individuals and not with surnames.⁶

It is a popular misconception that there is a coat of arms for each surname and that everyone bearing that surname is entitled to use those arms. Nothing could be further from the truth. To lay claim to an existing authentic coat of arms, one must be able to prove direct lineal descent from an ancestor known to have lawfully borne those arms. A mere similarity in surname is totally irrelevant and even kinship, as opposed to descent, does not give one any claim to a specific coat of arms.⁷

Sir Bernard Burke's *General Armory*⁸ details over three hundred different arms for various individuals named 'Smith'. It would not be unusual if certain elements, such as hammers and anvils, were found in many of these. However, there is no generic coat of arms that belongs to all persons with the surname Smith. The surname is derived from the trade of blacksmith and there was one in every village. "From whence comes Smith, all be he knight or squire, but from the smith that forgoeth at the fire?"⁹

4 R A Laing, "Family History - a Useful Project for Scholars and a Hobby for the Whole Family", *Education and Culture*, 11, 2, June 1988

5 It was brought to my attention that in a school in the Eastern Cape a teacher had given her pupils an assignment of drawing up a family tree, which had to include a coat of arms "She was going to deduct marks if there wasn't one" Personal information: M Oettle, 28 April 2000 Mike Oettle is a member of the Historical Society of South Africa He holds a BA Honours (History) degree from the University of South Africa and has worked as a journalist since 1974 He is currently compiling an encyclopaedic Afrikaans-English dictionary of heraldic terminology

6 An exception occurs in Poland where arms are associated with "families", who sometimes bear unrelated surnames W Lesiecki, "The Noble Tribe", *The Coat of Arms*, 6, 132, Winter 1984/5, p 97, draws attention to what he refers to as "the first notable difference between Polish and Western heraldry" In the latter case the object of heraldry is to identify each individual person by his or her coat of arms However, in the great majority of cases in Poland "more than one family, often unrelated, used the same undifferenced arms" He cites an example where "out of a total of 1 238 coats of arms used by the Polish nobility, only 749 are individual ones belonging to one family The rest, 489, serve the rest of the Polish nobility, that is to say 22 000 families!" Baron Christopher von Warnstedt confirms this usage in his article, "The Heraldic Provinces of Europe", *The Coat of Arms*, 11, 84, October 1970, p 129

7 Anon, (Compiled by the then State Herald, F G Brownell), *South African Personal ("Family") Coats of Arms* (Information leaflet from the South African Bureau of Heraldry, Pretoria, s a)

8 J Burke & J B Burke, (Burke's General Armory), *Encyclopaedia of Heraldry, General Armory of England, Scotland and Ireland etc, etc*. 1st edition: *General Armory of England, Scotland and Ireland* (Churton, London, 1842 Revised 1843); 3rd edition: *Encyclopaedia of Heraldry, or General Armory of England, Scotland and Ireland* (H G Bohn, London, 1844 Reprints in 1847 and 1851); enlarged edition: *General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (Harrison and Sons, London, 1878); new editions (with supplements): 1883, 1884 (this was the last edition); reprint (of the 1884 edition): Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, 1961, also 1967, 1969, and 1976; Clowes and Sons, London, 1962; *Heraldry Today*, London, 1984

9 C de J Smith, "Persoonlike Wapens in Suid-Afrika: 'n Heraldiese Studie" MA verhandelung, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1995 The quote is on his personal bookplate, which appears as a frontispiece

The principle is slightly different in Scotland where the Lord Lyon generally grants arms that are based on the arms of the 'Chief of the Name', even in cases where such name was assumed by Deed Poll. Thus anyone named Campbell could have arms that were based on the *gyronny Or and Sable* of the Duke of Argyll, Chief of Clan Campbell.

A well known feature of Scots heraldry is the care that is taken to assign versions of the arms of a chiefly house not only to the proven cadet branches but even to 'indeterminate' cadets, i.e. those whose ancestry cannot be traced in unbroken line to the main stem, but who, bearing the name, claim membership of the clan. The present Lord Lyon has indeed stated that the would-be armiger must not think of concealing his involvement in the clan by the use of arms which are not so derived.¹⁰

This would then visually demonstrate the 'real' or 'presumed' heritage of the grantee. An example can be seen in **Figure 1**: The arms of Professor Ian Campbell, which demonstrate his Campbell ancestry.



Although "the basic meaning of heritage as an 'individual's inheritance from a deceased forefather' has changed quite significantly,"¹¹ heraldry as a symbol of 'heritage' seems to be manifested by the need to have 'historical' or inherited arms. In most parts of the world people can and often do assume arms at will.¹² 'Assume' in this case has its original meaning of 'to take to oneself, adopt.' This was the manner in which arms were originally taken into use before there was codification and regulation. However, there was a general restraint that a man did not intentionally assume the arms of someone else. Inherited arms derive from one's ancestors and descend according to the laws of arms in the country of origin.

Many members of the public who want to know whether they are entitled to a coat of arms have only the vaguest knowledge of their antecedents. Genealogy is an important adjunct to the study of personal heraldry. Conversely, almost every budding genealogist wants to know what the 'family coat of arms' is. These inquirers, in South Africa, would generally make their way to a library where they could consult copies of *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek*, *Heraldry of South African families* or *Die wapens van ou Afrikaanse families*.¹³ All were works of the late Cornelis Pama, a prolific writer on the subject.

10 H MacKay, "Different Arms within the Name", *The Armorial*, 5, 3, May 1966, p 125. At that stage the Lord Lyon was the late Sir Thomas Innes of Learney.

11 L W F Grundlingh, "Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage? Heritage and Tourism at the beginning of the 21st century in South Africa." Draft paper delivered at the Conference of the South African Historical Society on Heritage Creation and Research: The restructuring of Historical Studies in Southern Africa, June 2002, Rand Afrikaans University, p 1.

12 M Pastoureau, *Heraldry its Origins and Meaning* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1997), p 14. Michel Pastoureau is director of Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, where he has held the chair of Western Symbolism since 1983. He is a member of the International Academy of Heraldry. See also O Cavallar, S Degenring & J Kirshner, *A Grammar of Signs – Bartolo de Sassoferrato's Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms* (University of California, Berkeley, 1994). Bartolo de Sassoferrato (1314-1357) was the Medieval jurist who wrote *De insigniis et armis*. This is the first legal treatise relating to the assumption and bearing of arms and is used as a source by all later scholars.

13 C Pama, *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek* (Human & Rousseau, Kaapstad, 1983); C Pama, *Heraldry of South African Families: Coats of Arms, Crests and Ancestry*.

A book club, the “Afrikaanse Leserskring” endorsed *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familiënaamboek* and as a result the ‘big’ book (45 000 copies) found its way into not only many Afrikaans households, but also numerous libraries nation-wide.¹⁴ This endorsement by “Leserskring” gave the book an aura of authenticity. The author and ultimately the ‘authenticator’ was no less a personage than ‘Dr’ Cor Pama – designer, in 1962, of the gold parliamentary mace of the Republic of South Africa. The ‘big’ book differed from its predecessors, in that it also gave the meaning of the surnames.

If the inquirers could not find their ‘family arms’ in the popular works, they had to do further investigation. Where their background was British and the librarian interested enough, they may have been directed to Burke’s *General Armory*. If their ancestors hailed from continental Europe, the most likely reference work would have been Victor Rolland’s illustrations to J.B. Rietstap’s *Armorial Général*.¹⁵ After doing their investigation and hopefully having obtained some photocopies, these budding researchers would leave the library content to use borrowed plumes.¹⁶ The need for instant heritage had been gratified.

Prostituted heritage?

The exploitation of both the public and the principles of heraldry for the purpose of profit are not a modern manifestation. Heraldry has been used to sell books, engraved glass and silver, as well as many other heritage artefacts. The advent of the Industrial Revolution brought with it a class of people who enjoyed more expendable income than their predecessors. This they used in buying luxuries out of the reach of their ancestors. Silversmiths were quick to take advantage of these new customers. Pattern-books were soon in circulation in the United Kingdom and Western Europe that illustrated the ‘family crests’ of the general public.¹⁷ These, engraved onto silver and

(AA Balkema, Cape Town, 1972); C Pama, *Die Wapens van die ou Afrikaanse Families* (AA Balkema, Kaapstad, 1959)

- 14 Personal information: C Pama, 31 March 1983 Pama writes: “The publishers, Human & Rousseau, are printing 45 000 copies of which 35 000 will be distributed by a Book Club ‘Afrikaanse Leserskring’ which has now 120 000 members. These figures are quite staggering considering that 4 years ago, when I was still in publishing, an edition of 3000 of a book in Afrikaans was already considered large!”
- 15 J B Rietstap, *Armorial général, precede d’un dictionnaire des termes du blazon I & II* (1st edition G B van Goor, Gouda, 1861) Further editions: 1875 (*I*); 1884-87 (*I & II*) Reprints: Berlin, 1934; Baltimore, 1965; Heraldry Today, London, 1965; also 1972 Supplement: V & H Rolland, *Armorial général de J. B. Rietstap, Supplément* (M Nijhoff, La Haye, 1926-1954, 7 volumes) Illustrations of Rietstap in V Rolland, *Armoiries des familles contenues dans l’Armorial général de J. B. Rietstap* (Institut Héraldique Universel, Paris, 1903-1926, 6 volumes)
- 16 Before the advent of electrostatic photocopies, libraries had a serious problem with the mutilation of Rolland. People would cut out the illustrations with razor-blades. While working in the Public Library (Johannesburg) during the late 1960s I often came across defaced plates.
- 17 J Fairbairn, *Fairbairn’s Crests of the Families of Great Britain and Ireland* (First published 1859, new edition, Edinburgh, 1905, facsimile reprint, Rutland, Vermont, 1968) This is an example of a pattern-book. The common use of crests alone on silverware (as opposed to the full achievement of shield and crest), led to the popular notion that a crest was an alternative name for a coat of arms. Fairbairn’s book contributed to this misconception, because it is an illustrated armorial of crests only, without shields. People then came to believe that a crest identified a family. This book is useful as an auxiliary in identifying a coat of arms. C R Humprey-Smith (in a review of a further edition of “Fairbairn’s Crests”, *The Coat of Arms*, 8, 57, January 1964, p 11), placed this work amongst “old compilations of good, bad, indifferent and virtually unedited material culled from suspect sources and few authorities.” The reviewer was director of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, Canterbury, England

silver-plated cutlery, made a much grander display than plain flatware and in addition allowed the owners to flaunt “a remembered or supposed past.”¹⁸ This practice brought into being the misuse of the term ‘family crest’ to signify the whole ‘achievement’ or ‘coat of arms’.

The term ‘coat of arms’ is derived from the surcoat worn over armour, on which was embroidered the same device as on the shield. The essence of any coat of arms is the shield. This is the one element that has to exist, unless it appears on a banner or flag. In addition there could be a helmet, crest and mantling.¹⁹ Depending upon the country of origin there are other accessories that may be present. These could include supporters holding up the shield, coronets, mottoes and symbols of office.

The exploitation of heraldry for profit was exacerbated in the last two decades of the twentieth century, which brought the personal computer into the lives of nearly everyone in the First World. It brought about a major change in the way people work, study and play. Many children (and adults) spend their spare-time playing computer games or ‘surfing’ the Internet. There is sophisticated software available covering most fields of interest. The famous *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, for example, is available on CD-ROM. It was inevitable that genealogy and heraldry would not escape. Compact discs are available that contain data on thousands of families and in many cases they also have information on coats of arms.

What this means, is that any entrepreneurs who can afford the hardware and software can establish their own little businesses, taking space at ‘flea’ markets and in shopping malls. Thus bucket-shop ‘heraldists’²⁰ exist who, for a fee, will supply a computer-printed ‘parchment scroll’ that gives the meaning and origin of any particular surname together with arms ‘associated with that surname in the past’. This is nothing less than a ‘prostitution of heritage’.²¹ No research is undertaken by the supplier on behalf of the client and the arms are simply lifted out of popular heraldic books without any attempt at veracity. The reason that they are able to ‘prey’ on a gullible public is that the perception exists that every family ‘has’ a coat of arms. “And just as heritage practitioners take pride in creating artifice, the public enjoys consuming it.”²²

This is not a modern manifestation. Over fifty years ago, Colin Graham Botha drew attention to the fact that there was a public perception that all people with the same surname were entitled to the same arms and that nothing could be more spurious and misleading.²³ Graham Botha felt that many people were so gullible that they only had

18 Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”, p 2 Grundlingh is referring to heritage tourism, however the sentiment is equally valid here

19 In German heraldry one often finds several helmets and crests In French heraldry one often only finds coronets

20 The term ‘heraldist’ is used to describe these heraldry hobbyists This is in contradistinction with the term ‘herald’, which infers deep professional knowledge of the subject as well as the law of arms

21 In his paper on Heritage and Tourism, Grundlingh validly comments that “some [heritage providers] have already prostituted the concept of heritage purely for commercial gain” See Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”, p 1

22 D Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, *History & Memory*, 10, 1, (Inaugural Heritage Lecture, St Mary’s University College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, England, 7 Dec 1995), p 6 at <http://iupjournals.org/history/ham10-1.html> Thanks to Professor Louis Grundlingh for identifying this work, quoted in Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”

23 M M (pseudonym C G Botha), “Familiewapens”, *Die Huisgenoot*, 12 April 1946, p 7 “Niks kan bedriegliker en misleidender wees nie” Lt-Col Colin Graham Botha (1883-1973) was

to hear that a certain similarly named family had a coat of arms and they believed that they had a right to use these arms. They made no attempt to prove that they were descendants of the original owner of the arms.²⁴ The lure of a coat of arms was intoxicating – the acquisition of the same was a sop to their vanity.²⁵

Public perception – a willing myth?

The public perception of ‘our’ heraldic heritage from previous centuries, in South Africa, is an inaccurate reflection of the truth. This misperception is understandable when seen in the light of the mythology created by the majority of twentieth century South African writers on the subject.²⁶ The major myth is that if a coat of arms ever existed in the past it may be used in the present by anyone with the same or similar surname. The absence of legal provisions or other regulatory measures before 1962 made it possible for the attribution of arms not only by mere peddlers but also by heraldists to become fairly widespread. The public at large seems to be easily duped by the desire to believe in the possession of arms by families. Heritage is exalted “not because it *is* true but because it *ought* to be.”²⁷

It seems that most local writers who dabbled in heraldry during the twentieth century were enthusiastic amateurs with little if any formal training in heraldry, history, the law or science.²⁸ They used coats of arms to illustrate works that were predominantly genealogical in nature. Where they did find arms in use under a particular surname they retrospectively ascribed these to the original founding fathers that came to South Africa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁹ When they could not find arms in use they assigned, attributed or pretended arms. These were generally derived from Rietstap’s *Armorial Général* (or the various publications of Burke³⁰) and based entirely on a coincidence of the same (homonymous) or similar family name.

Sometimes the attempt at homonymy is stretched to the limit. For example Ms Kannemeyer assigns the arms of an Italian family of Nauti (Vicence) to Naudé and those of the German family of Rettau (Prussia) to Retief.³¹ Abracadabra, two Huguenot families now have a hijacked heraldic heritage. The writer feels that most

South Africa’s first Chief Archivist Initially he wanted to become a magistrate and attended law classes at the South African College (now the University of Cape Town), passing the Civil Service Law Examination and obtaining the Cape Law Certificate He was affectionately called ‘The Father of South African Archives’ Although his surname was Botha he was always known as ‘Graham Botha’

24 Botha, “Familiewapens”, p 7 Translation and emphasis: Laing

25 Botha, “Familiewapens”, p 38

26 These works are discussed in detail in R A Laing, “South African Heraldic Writers of the 20th Century: Enthusiastic Amateurs”, *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 13, 2, November 1999; revised & updated as “The Myth of 20th Century SA Heraldic Writing”, *Arma*, New Series 6, 1, Spring 2000

27 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, p 4

28 See note 26

29 A case in point seems to be the arms of ‘Vermeulen’ in A G Loxton, *Die Afrikaner-voorgeslag met Familiewapens* (s 1, 1933), p 55 Here a coat of arms found on a seal (1786) from Batavia is attributed to the Vermeulen ancestor in South Africa, who in fact arrived at the Cape from Utrecht prior to 1685

30 The latter seems to be the case with Loxton’s articles on “British” arms and Mitford-Barberton’s work on the 1820 Settler families In the case of N H Theunissen he devised arms loosely based on Rolland’s illustrations to Rietstap’s *Armorial Général*.

31 A J Kannemeyer, *Hugenate-familieboek* (Unie-Volkspers Beperk, Kaapstad, 1940) The arms are illustrated - Ms Kannemeyer does not give the source

of the ‘newly manufactured’ arms devised by N.H. Theunissen and published in *Die Brandwag* (a popular weekly magazine) between 1944 and 1947 fall into the same category.³² These arms were soon displayed on artefacts celebrating ‘a remembered or supposed past.’

The need for heritage or background seems to be particularly strong and it is most likely that the public and heraldically ignorant have not only been party to the deception or mythology, but they have also actively contributed to the confusion. “To be sure, heritage consumers are readily duped; producers happily connive to gull them.”³³ The question arises why people in general (or their ancestors) had a need to be represented heraldically. “The pursuit seems tied up with human behaviour that thrives on one-upmanship, elitism, snobbery and respectability.”³⁴ This echoes the “Prejudiced pride in the past” which Lowenthal feels “is not the sorry upshot of heritage but its essential aim. Heritage attests our identity and affirms our worth.”³⁵

“Even *bona fide* heralds cannot get past a wilful public intent on (mis)using heraldry for its own purposes.”³⁶ The erstwhile State Herald (1982-2002), Fred Brownell, rightly points out that there is a general perception that arms are associated with gentility or ‘class’. Gentility of ‘birth’ or ‘office’ is one of the requirements for obtaining a grant of arms from the College of Arms in London. “Therefore, if you have arms, you must be a gentleman.”³⁷ This only holds true for arms in the United Kingdom. On the continent of Europe, and particularly in France, a coat of arms is no indication of nobility although “certain rather unscrupulous dealers actually try to encourage this illusion.”³⁸ Pastoureau gives as example the *Armorial Général* (1696) of the French herald Charles d’Hozier, where of the hundred and twenty thousand or so arms listed, only one-sixth belongs to nobles or noble families. “But the general public is often unaware of this. In their frantic search for blue blood, people continue to believe that, if they can only discover an ancestor – or even the same surname! – in this immense compilation, they will be able to prove their noble ancestry.”³⁹

The question of status was also raised by Theunissen in the first of the articles that he wrote for *Die Brandwag*. These articles were mainly genealogical, but illustrated, where possible, with the ‘family arms’ (*familiewapen*) of the families being discussed. “Arms – more correctly, devises or badges – arose during the Middle Ages for various reasons.”⁴⁰ “In those days not one person in a thousand could read and hence it was necessary to have seals made that displayed the badge (*kenteken*).” Theunissen stressed that a ‘family coat of arms’ was no indication of aristocratic ancestry. Every person could assume a badge at his whim (*na willekeur*). If a family was ennobled

32 These were titled “Afrikaner, Ken Usel” and echo the Latin maxim *nosce te ipsum*. They appeared most weeks over the period from 30 June 1944 to 30 May 1947. See also note 26

33 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, p 7

34 Personal information: M G Upham, 10 December 1999. Advocate Mansell Upham, BA (Honours), LLB, was at the time editor of *Capensis*, Journal of the Genealogical Society of SA (Western Cape). He specialises in legal and genealogical history of the early period of the Dutch East India Company

35 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, p 3

36 Personal information: M G Upham, 10 December 1999

37 Personal information: F G Brownell, 24 Hamilton Street, Pretoria, 3 May 2000

38 Pastoureau, *Heraldry its Origins and Meaning*, p 35

39 Pastoureau, *Heraldry its Origins and Meaning*, p 35

40 N H Theunissen, “Afrikaner, Ken Usel”, *Die Brandwag*, 30 Junie 1944. “Wapens – korrekter, devise of kentekens – het in die Middeleeue om verskillende redes ontstaan ”

then their arms, perhaps in use for centuries, were simply registered as such.⁴¹ As the 'newly manufactured' arms were creations of Theunissen's imagination, with ideas derived mainly from Rietstap (or Rolland's illustrations), there could be no indication of aristocratic ancestry. Yet it was not unusual that people who eagerly awaited the articles presumed that the arms, that were to appear in the series, had been in use for centuries.

The majority of South African heraldic writers have used secondary sources uncritically, adding their own contribution and publishing the results. There has been a process of accretion that culminates in the work of Pama, whose contribution will be discussed later. None of these local heraldists have, to any extent, either explored why individuals wished to acquire armorial bearings, nor have they done any noticeable analysis of the heraldry found to be in use. The known heraldists are (chronologically according to earliest heraldic output):⁴²

- (Lt-Col) Colin Graham Botha (1883-1973)
- A.W.B. Smuts (1879-1944)
- (Rev) Andries Dreyer (1872-1938)
- Allen G. Loxton (1898-1969)
- (Ms) A.J. Kannemeyer (1891-1961)
- N.H. Theunissen (1897-1985)
- Ivan Mitford-Barborton (1896-1976)
- Peter Hugh Philip (1916-1987)
- Cornelis Pama (1916-1994)

There seems a strong possibility that the false and generally misleading statements that characterise the literature of heraldry in South Africa stem from a lack of formal training on the part of the heraldists. However, it has been difficult to establish the educational background of some of the heraldists. Formal training in history, law, science or the subject of heraldry may have prevented the traps into which many of the heraldists have walked. The first of these was to presume that the mere existence of arms signified that everyone bearing the same or similar surnames would be entitled to use the arms, despite there being no evidence of relationship nor direct descent in the male line from the (legitimate?) owner of the arms.

41 Theunissen, "Afrikaner, Ken UselF"

42 The dates for Smuts, Loxton, Kannemeyer and Theunissen are given by Christo Smith, who obtained this information from Pama. Personal information: C de J Smith, 4 February 1999. No biographical information has been traced on these four heraldists, their first names are not even known to us. See Smith, "Persoonlike wapens in Suid-Afrika", pp 15-16

The second trap was presuming that because, for example, a certain Adriaan van Jaarsveld used an armorial seal in 1783, this meant that his similarly named ancestor must have used the same arms eighty years previously, thereby creating a 'pseudo-event'.⁴³ This seal is illustrated in Loxton⁴⁴ (see Figure 2). These arms show a *rider on horseback*. *Crest* A tree issuant from the wreath, between two flags. The arms are canting and represent a 'jager' on the 'veld' and echoes many of the other arms found at the Cape. These are the easiest kind to verify, as they are a visual 'pun' on the surname (or occupation) of the bearer. The probable reality is that the later Adriaan needed a seal as a function of his office as 'Velt Commandant, Camdebo' and that he was therefore the first to assume arms.



Figure 2: The armorial seal of 1783
From: A G Loxton, *Die Afrikaner-voorgeslag met Familiewapens* (s 1, 1933), p 20

The two major sources used by the heraldists have been Rietstap's *Armorial Général* and the Bell-Krynauw Collection in the National Library in Cape Town.⁴⁵ These will be briefly discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Rietstap's *Armorial Général*

The armorial⁴⁶ compiled by J.B. Rietstap in the middle 1800s was first published at Gouda in 1861. It covers most of Europe, listing over 100 000 arms. Heraldists generally consider it reliable, even though it contains errors and is far from complete.⁴⁷ The biggest drawback is that it seldomly gives references. The information is limited to name (generally only the surname), origin (country or province) and arms (often with

- 43 Term used by J Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (Sage Publications, London, 1990), p 7 Cited in Grundlingh, "Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?", p 5
- 44 Working from Loxton, Pama identified the owner as Adriaan van Jaarsveld, baptised 20 June 1745; in C Pama, *Die Wapens van die ou Afrikaanse Families* (AA Balkema, Kaapstad, 1959), p 168, endnote 646 – "Afgebeeld deur Loxton, *Afrikaner-Voorgeslag*, p 20 Ek het dié seël nie in dié Kaapse Argief kon terugvind nie." R A Laing, *Catalogue of Seals in Accession A1396 (No. 58 in the Object Register) in the Cape Town Archives Repository* (Johannesburg, 1998) found the seal there as Seal 3 5
- 45 Bell-Krynauw Collection, National Library, Cape Town (Accession MSB69) The latter collection consists of over 230 pages and merits scientific study in its own right
- 46 Armorial list family names alphabetically and then provide blazons (verbal descriptions) of the coats of arms They differ from ordinaries, which list coats of arms analytically by their major features and then provide the name(s) of families who bore those arms Both Rietstap's *Armorial Général* and *Burke's General Armory* are examples of armorials
- 47 A known error that impacts South Africans is the arms of *Kirsten* This Rietstap records as "Schoor (van) – *Cap de Bonne Espérance*" in J B Rietstap, *Armorial Général, precede d'un dictionnaire des termes du blazon II*. (2nd edition, G B van Goor, Gouda, s a), p 726 It is possible to determine how this error came about In the church of Oudshoorn, Holland, is the hatchment of Baron William Ferdinand van Reede van Oudshoorn This shows his arms of *Van Reede* between those of his two wives The arms of *Van Schoor* (the first wife) and *Kirsten* (the second wife) are reversed on the hatchment It is possible that Rietstap had sight of this hatchment and this might explain how the error came about

crest/s, supporters and motto). Victor Rolland illustrated all the arms in Rietstap and its supplements and published these over the period 1903 to 1926 in six volumes. These only contain plates, illustrating some 113 000 coats of arms (shields only).⁴⁸

The Bell-Krynauw Collection

The earliest known investigation into the state of heraldry in South Africa is the nineteenth century Bell-Krynauw Collection. Charles Davidson Bell (1813-1882) laid the foundation by making drawings of the arms that he found on tombstones and other funerary monuments from the old Groote Kerk in Cape Town (prior to it being rebuilt),⁴⁹ stained-glass, etcetera in the Moeder Kerk in Stellenbosch,⁵⁰ as well as other sources. An unsuccessful attempt was made to publish this work in September 1861.⁵¹ When Bell returned to Scotland in the 1870s, his research material passed to his brother-in-law, Daniel Krynauw (1840-1912), who not only brought some order to the collection, but also augmented it considerably. Krynauw was also responsible for making drawings of the seals associated with this collection. These seals were at one time in the Koopmans-de Wet House, but have subsequently been lost. The still unpublished manuscript collection is now in the National Library, Cape Town. Pama partially fulfilled Charles Davidson Bell's dream when he included the illustrations and blazons from the collection in his work *Die wapens van die ou Afrikaanse families* and its successors.

However, the Bell-Krynauw Collection does contain errors. Known examples are the arms ascribed to Laubscher, Meyer and Dreyer.⁵² To date no one has undertaken a scientific evaluation of the manuscript. This would require a detailed analysis of not only the collection as a whole but also the individual contributions of both Bell and Krynauw, which falls outside the scope of this article.

Bell created his own heraldic artefact in a beautiful brass tray (now in MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg) engraved with some forty heraldic representations to commemorate his second marriage (at Cape Town on 7 July 1859) to Helena Geertruida Johanna Krynauw. Although many of the arms are derived from Rietstap's *Armorial Général* and Burke's *General Armory*, the tray was for private use and the arms were for display only.⁵³

As far as can be established, the only arms that have migrated into the Bell-Krynauw Collection are to be found in that part of the collection that can be attributed to Daniel Krynauw and relate to the ancestors of Daniel and Helena Krynauw. Examples

48 See footnote 15

49 F Oudschans Dentz, "Hatchments in the Groote Kerk, Cape Town" (Revised & updated from the original article in *Hertzog Annale*, December 1955, R A Laing (ed), *Arma*, New Series 2, 1, July 1996

50 R A Laing, "Stained Glass at the Cape during the DEIC period", *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 15, 1, June 2001, pp 74-84

51 It is possible to accurately date parts of the Bell-Krynauw Collection as Bell listed the coats of arms already in his possession in an advertisement in the *Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette* of 10 September 1861

52 R A Laing, "Popham (Identification of the arms of Popham and an explanation why the arms given for Laubscher in the Bell-Krynauw collection cannot be associated with the family)", *Arma*, 64, 1973, & "Meyer, Dreyer, et al - Incorrectly attributed arms in the Bell-Krynauw Collection", *Arma*, New Series 1, 1, August 1995

53 See R A Laing, "The Bell-Krynauw Tray", *Africana Notes and News*, 27, 1, March 1986, pp 16-24

include the arms of Hurter (and possibly De Villiers – see later). These however seem to have come into the public domain through the work of Smuts.⁵⁴ Daniel Krynauw may have been the first person to assume the arms of *Krynauw* as they are generally accepted at present (see Figure 3):

*Three fishes, one in pale over two in saltire.*⁵⁵ This can be inferred from the fact the arms Bell assigned to *Krynauw* on the tray are derived from those of *Crisenois Crisenoy* in Rietstap's *Armorial Général*. Thus in 1859, Bell had no knowledge of the later arms of *Krynauw* and they are not listed in the 1861 advertisement,⁵⁶ yet by the late nineteenth century they were in existence and are illustrated at BK327. It is also likely that Krynauw designed and engraved the original seal⁵⁷ – (compare his drawings at MSB69 7:24 & 7:25).



Figure 3: The arms of Krynauw
From: Bell-Krynauw Collection, National Library, Cape Town (Accession MSB69)

Authenticity and authentication

Although Cornelis Pama appears last in the list of ‘heraldists’ given above, he had already been a student of heraldry for two decades prior to immigrating to South Africa in the 1950s. He joined the Heraldry Society of Southern Africa (HSSA) shortly after his arrival. Thus Graham Botha, Mitford-Barberton, Philip and Pama were contemporaneous members of the HSSA for almost twenty years. Pama had tutelage from some of the foremost heraldic scholars in the world, most notably Ottfried Neubecker and Anthony Wagner.⁵⁸ Pama was a member of the Committee of Enquiry established in the mid-1950s to investigate and report on the feasibility of

- 54 A W B Smuts was the author of an article “Some Old Cape Families – their History and Romance” This appeared in the *Argus Union – pageant souvenir and Xmas number, 1910*. Smuts used 35 coats of arms to illustrate a two-and-a-half page article that took a romantic look at some of the more prominent Cape families I am of the opinion that the arms came directly from Daniel Krynauw See sources in footnote 26
- 55 The arms are interesting when one realises that the design actually looks like two capital letters ‘K’ placed back to back (MSB69 7:24 illustrated in the text)
- 56 See footnote 51
- 57 It is known that Daniel Krynauw designed seals for individuals In the Bell-Krynauw manuscript there are drawings of seals for *Hendriksz* (MSB69 4:3) and *Southey* (MSB69 6:9 – 6:12) The blazon for *Hendriksz* is derived from Rietstap – presumably the first edition as Krynauw gives the reference as “*Armorial Général*, page 499”. Krynauw misinterpreted the French blazon and three pallets became three barrulets In the case of *Southey* it is evident that *Fairbairn’s crests ...* is the source for the crest (See footnote 17) Neither of these two seals is in the main part of the Bell-Krynauw Collection
- 58 Brownell considers Doctor Hans Werner Otto Friedrich (Ottfried) Neubecker and Sir Anthony Richard Wagner to be among the most eminent heraldic scholars of the current era Personal information: F G Brownell, 24 Hamilton Street, Pretoria, 20 May 1999

establishing a heraldic authority in South Africa and served on the Heraldry Council of South Africa from its inception in 1963 until 1989. Although this should have placed him in a privileged position to arrest the phenomenon of heraldic prostitution, he unfortunately compounded the problem. He argued that the right to assume arms existed under Roman-Dutch Law, but then assigned or attributed arms in the same questionable way as most of his South African predecessor heraldists did. It must be mentioned here that Pama had no formal tertiary education – the ‘doctorate’, which gave him enormous prestige among many South Africans and added considerable verisimilitude to his heraldic writing, was an honorary one!

Nevertheless, his heraldic credentials were impressive. Piet Westra, former director of the South African [now National] Library in Cape Town wrote in an obituary [partially edited] that:

Dr Cor Pama, heraldry expert and genealogist, died on Sunday, 23 October 1994 at the age of 77. Cor Pama was born in Rotterdam on 5 November 1916, and received his schooling in the Netherlands. Even at an early age he had developed a strong interest in heraldry and genealogy - by the age of 21 he became joint founder and editor of the journal *Nederlands Archief voor Genealogie en Heraldiek*. This stimulated his journalistic talents and he published numerous books and a torrent of contributions to magazines and newspapers chiefly on the subjects of genealogy and heraldry, but also on a variety of other topics ...

It was in the field of heraldry and genealogy that Cor Pama broke new ground in South Africa. Barely a year after his arrival at the Cape, A A Balkema published his book *Heraldiek in Suid-Afrika*. This was followed by *Die Unievlag* (1958), *Die Wapens van die ou Afrikaanse families* (1959), and *Simbole van die Unie* (1960). The year 1965 saw the publication of his book *Lions and Virgins*, an overview of the symbols of the state in South Africa from 1487 to 1962. The following year his magnum opus was published, the revised and augmented reissue of C C de Villiers' *Geslagsregister van die Ou Kaapse Families* in three volumes.

... He was also the driving force behind the founding of the South African Bureau of Heraldry and was a Member of the Heraldry Council of S A until 1989. He was for many years Chairman of the Heraldry Society of S A and editor of their journal *ARMA*. Dr Pama was also a foundation member and for many years Chairman of the Genealogical Society of South Africa and until recently editor of this society's journal *FAMILIA*. Important works he completed more recently include *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familiënaamboek* (1983) and *British Families in South Africa* (1992) which describes over 1100 surnames of British origin and provides the coats of arms of 140 families.

Several outstanding books of a more popular nature which also issued from his pen dealt with the history and cultural heritage of the Cape, such as *Vintage Cape Town: Historic houses and families in and around the old Cape* (1973), *Regency Cape Town* (1975), *Bowler's Cape Town: Life at the Cape...1834-1868* (1977), *The Wine Estates of South Africa* (1979), and *Wagon Road to Wynberg* (1979).⁵⁹

In a recent paper relating to heritage tourism, Professor Louis Grundlingh raised the question of authenticity and authentication.⁶⁰ This is an important point that the writer feels is very pertinent in a discussion of ‘our’ South African heraldic heritage. The publication in 1983 of *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familiënaamboek*, with the endorsement of “Afrikaanse Leserskring”, meant that for the first time a book of this nature was printed in large quantities and as a result found its way into many Afrikaans households.⁶¹ The opinion has already been expressed that this endorsement by “Leserskring” gave the book an aura of authenticity. Grundlingh “raises the question

59 P Westra, “Death of Cornelis Pama”, *Arma*, 37, II-IV, 146-148, 1994, pp 2345-2346

60 Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”, p 5

61 See footnote 14

of authentication and especially who is authenticating.”⁶² In this case the ultimate ‘authenticator’ and author was no less a personage than ‘Dr’ Cor Pama. One then has to consider the validity of the authentication.

I am a great lover of the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. I have a great deal of empathy with the character Pooh-Bah (Lord High Everything Else) in the ‘Mikado’ who, finding himself in the invidious position of having to swear to a non-existent execution, says: “Choose your fiction, and I’ll endorse it!”⁶³ Pama may have found himself in a similar situation of having to endorse someone else’s fiction.

It seems as though Pama’s original intention had been to be “very frank” about the source of the arms in his ‘big’ book. In a letter dated 31 March 1983 he wrote:

I myself have now finished the ms of the ‘Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek’ It will be published in June and have some 600 pages in 2 columns, covering almost 3000 families with 500 coats of arms in colour It will be a **very frank** book and if the arms are not older than 1945 (when a great number were invented by Kannemeyer en [sic] Theunissen) it will say so A novelty is that in every case the meaning of the surname is given ⁶⁴

One can only speculate why the ‘frankness’ was toned down. Such frankness may have had an adverse affect on sales. At that stage Pama was 67 with a young son (and heir) from a second marriage - it may have been important to sell as many copies as possible to augment an otherwise limited income, since he did not have a pension.

Eventually only 445 coats of arms were illustrated, all ‘in colour’. Some of these had no indication of colour in the previous works.⁶⁵ Others were supplied with crests where none had formerly existed. In some cases the original crest was changed. For example in the case of *Watermeyer*, the crest had been changed from a demi-merman to a full merman. I did an epistemological analysis of all the arms illustrated in Pama’s ‘big’ book in an attempt to establish (and date) the source material – as far as could be inferred from both this and earlier volumes.⁶⁶ The results can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2.

A third of the arms seem to be derived from the Bell-Krynauw Collection. By far the largest group is drawn from Pama’s earlier works of which at least a hundred are based on arms devised by Theunissen to illustrate his articles in *Die Brandwag* in the period 1944 to 1947. Although Pama often gives the date when the arms first appeared (particularly those from *Die Brandwag*) - he does cloud their spurious origin. For example, in the case of *Coetzee*, Pama merely states that these arms were first mentioned in 1945, although the origin is unknown.⁶⁷ (Some of the Theunissen arms have been so re-worked that they amount to totally new coats of arms, for example *Niemand*.) It was at the insistence of the Heraldry Council that Pama inserted a chapter “Eg of oneg” into his ‘big’ book.⁶⁸ It seems likely that people using Pama’s

62 Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”, p 5

63 W S Gilbert & A Sullivan, Vocal Score of *The Mikado or The Town of Titipu*. The Savoy Edition, VII (Alston Rivers Co, London, 1885)

64 Personal information: C Pama, 31 March 1983 Emphasis: Laing

65 The arms are based on a handful of basic templates The artist is named as Sidney Ivey Where new crests have been added these are either derived from elements in the arms or consist of “a vol” (pair of wings) in the principal colours of the shield

66 The volumes concerned are those given in footnote 13 The earlier volumes are far more specific in indicating the sources than *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek* indicates

67 Pama, *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek*, p 81 “Hierdie wapen is in 1945 die eerste keer vermeld Die herkoms is onbekend”

68 Personal information: F G Brownell, 24 Hamilton Street, Pretoria, 20 May 1999

book rarely read this chapter and hence are not aware of the origins of most of the arms illustrated. However, this did not stop many members of the public from presuming that these were the arms used by their ancestors who had come to South Africa in the time of the Dutch East India Company.

SOURCE	INSTANCES
Argus Union – Pageant Souvenir etc.	2
Armorial Général	60
Bell-Krynauw Collection	148
De Goede Hoop	5
<i>Die Brandwag</i> (Theunissen)	100
Family information	12
Fox-Davies	2
Grant or Confirmation of Arms	4
Kannemeyer	13
Laing	1
Loxton	7
Nederlands Adelsboek	3
Nederlands Leeuw	1
Nederlands Patriciaat	5
Pama	49
Seal Collection (CAR)	22
Sept and Clan Arms	11
TOTAL	445

Table 1: Source of Arms in *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek*.

DATE RECORD IN SOUTH AFRICA	ARMS FIRST APPEARED ON	INSTANCES
Bell-Krynauw (listed in <i>CGH Govt Gazette</i>) 1861		101
Bell-Krynauw Collection after 1861		47
Seals in CAR & Argus Union 1910		24
Loxton 1933		7
Kannemeyer 1939		13
Theunissen (<i>Die Brandwag</i>) 1944/47		100
Pama (ex <i>Armorial Général</i>) 1972		61
Pama (new) 1983		60
Sundry & Unknown		32
GRAND TOTAL		445

Table 2: Earliest recorded date of Arms in *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek*.

The earlier *Heraldry of South African families* was similar to its successor but did not give the meaning of the surname. In this book the 'disclaimer' appeared in endnotes at the end of the volume.⁶⁹ The writer considers *Die wapens van die ou Afrikaanse families* to be the most academically sound of Pama's heraldic compendia. It was divided into five sections, the first of which dealt with 'Burgher' (i.e. non-noble) heraldry in the lands of origin. The second dealt with the Bell-Krynauw Collection (actually only the easy sections, namely the combined drawings and Bell's blazons). It has been shown that this collection does contain errors and requires detailed investigation, which falls outside the scope of this article. The third chapter discussed coats of arms from other sources and encompassed the seal collection in the Cape Town Archives Repository, the hatchments hanging in the *Groote Kerk*, Cape Town, and certain items in the Elliot Collection. The seal collection was partially handled, with some items only known from Loxton's work in the same source.⁷⁰ The fourth part covered coats of arms assumed later.⁷¹ These were mainly culled from Kannemeyer and Theunissen. Here Pama was fastidious in mentioning all the sources in his endnotes. It is a great pity that this attention to detail in identifying sources was omitted from *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familiënaamboek*, where it would greatly have enhanced the value of the work. The final chapter contained coats of arms with no Cape connection. These were mainly drawn from the Seal Collection in the Cape Town Archives Repository.

In every case the entry started with the name of the family followed by the blazon. Thereafter followed a narrative, unfortunately in the general format 'The ancestor was X who arrived at the Cape in YYYY. He was a member of the Z regiment or department.' It is not difficult to understand why people reading the work would logically presume that these were the authentic arms of their ancestors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The need for heraldic representation

We have seen that *Die Groot Afrikaanse Familiënaamboek* had illustrations of 445 coats of arms and that some 3 000 families are mentioned. This would seem to indicate that some 15 per cent of South African 'Afrikaner' families dealt with by Pama are armigerous. This incidence is very high when compared with European statistics. In 1961 Mitford-Barberton wrote in a letter "About 3,000 [English-speaking] Settlers came out in 1820, so that one would expect at least 100 of them to have coats of arms. Up to the present I have only been able to collect about ten."⁷² There was an expected incidence of 3,33 per cent. Eventually Mitford-Barberton found only some fifty coats of arms, in other words an incidence of 1.67 per cent.⁷³ Luc Duerloo gives figures for the spread of heraldry in the Netherlands at the end of the seventeenth century. He found an incidence of between one-and-a-half and two per cent amongst the rural, and five per cent amongst the urban population.⁷⁴

69 There the reference for *Coetzee* was BR 30 3 1945, indicating that the arms first appeared in *Die Brandwag* of 30 March 1945

70 Loxton, *Die Afrikaner voorgeslag met familiewapens*

71 Pama, *Die wapens*, Inhoud, "IV Wapens wat later aangeneem is "

72 I Mitford-Barberton, Letter to the editor of *Arma*, 15, September 1961, p 358

73 I Mitford-Barberton & V White, *Some frontier families* (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1968)

74 L Duerloo, "'Onze post ... is om alle menschen dienst te doen' – De Zuid-Nederlandse Wapenkoningen en hun Klanten in het Noorden", *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor*

Social stratification was very marked within VOC establishments. “At the top of the social ladder were the noble lords (*Edele Heeren*) of the Political Council. They were followed by the secretaries, clerks, ministers [of religion] and military officers; next came the assistants, bookkeepers and non-commissioned officers. They were followed in turn by the midshipmen or cadets (*adelborste of borsten van de pen*), who were generally young boys. Finally there were the soldiers and sailors.”⁷⁵ Duerloo found that there was a strong correlation between social and political factors and the spread of heraldry. I also found these factors in operation at the Cape during the VOC period, particularly in the use of seals and in funeral practices.⁷⁶

In South Africa the use of seals commenced with the establishment of a settlement by the VOC in 1652. In the early days of the VOC, senior officials were empowered to notarise legal documents. A resolution passed during the tenure (1714-1724) of Maurits Pasques de Chavonnes was to increase greatly the use of seals at the Cape. On 26 June 1714 and 9 July 1714, decisions were taken that no legal transaction would be valid unless the relevant documents were properly sealed.⁷⁷ This included all notarial or judicial acts⁷⁸ and every public or particular instrument. Failure to follow this ruling drew fixed penalties. Anyone reporting an infringement would receive a third of the fine, the balance going to the Council of Justice. The resolution also specified that it had to be a ‘proper’ seal.⁷⁹ That these were not necessarily heraldic can be seen from numerous examples in the Seal Collection in the Cape Town Archives Repository.⁸⁰

According to Leonard Guelke:

The Cape settlers came from widely different social and economic backgrounds. Most of them came as individuals or families, not in groups. Amongst each of the major national groups (Dutch, German and French) were farmers, skilled artisans and labourers. Some were reasonably affluent, but many more were poverty-stricken immigrants from the lower rungs of European society. The VOC – with its low pay and high death rate – employed many down-at-heel adventurers, some of whom eventually became freeburghers. There were also some well-educated and many talented individuals,

Genealogie 2000, 54, (CBG, Den Haag, 2000), p 50; L. Duerloo, *Privileges uitbeelden de Zuidnederlandse Wapenkoningen en Wapenkunde in de Eeuw der Verlichting* (Paleis der Academiën, Brussel, 1991), pp 177-178. Prof Dr Duerloo is senior lecturer in history at the Economische Hogeschool Sint-Aloysius in Brussels.

75 G C de Wet, “Suid-Afrikaanse Stamouers op die 17de eeuse VOC-soustrein”, *CAPENSIS*, 3, September 2002, pp 5-15. Translation: Laing. An original note mentions “Dr Dan Sleigh beweert selfs dat die soldate hulself ‘n trappie hoër as die matrose geag het”.

76 See R A Laing, “‘Het behoorlijk zegel’ - Seals at the Cape during the Period of Dutch Administration”, *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 17, 1/2, June 2003. See also “The Panoply of Death: Funeral Rituals at the Cape under the DEIC” Unpublished paper delivered at the Conference of the South African Society for Cultural History, September 2001, Mossel Bay.

77 M K Jeffreys, S D Naudé & P J Venter, *Kaapse Plakkaatboek II (1707-1753)* (Cape Times Ltd, Kaapstad, 1948), pp 27-33. When reading the preamble, it seems that the primary motive was to increase revenue. Stamp duty (more correctly ‘seal’ duty) was laid down on a sliding scale.

78 Jeffreys, Naudé & Venter, *Kaapse Plakkaatboek II*, p 27. “... geene acten notariael of judicieel, en souden zijn van waerden, of dat daerop regt soude mogen gedaen werden, tenzij denselven met een kleijn zegel waere bevestigd ...”

79 Jeffreys, Naudé & Venter, *Kaapse Plakkaatboek II*, p 28. “... te hebben het behoorlijk zegel ...”

80 R A Laing, *Catalogue of Seals in Accession A1396 (No. 58 in the Object Register) in the Cape Town Archives Repository* (Johannesburg, 1998).

especially among the Huguenots and the German-speakers. Many of the latter had been unable to get ahead in the rigidly stratified and economically depressed societies of Central Europe recovering from the devastation of the Thirty Years War⁸¹

Dr Con de Wet expresses a similar sentiment:

Veral die Afrikaanssprekendes het 'n baie beskeie herkoms en is hoofsaaklik die afstammelingen van diegene wat hulle aan die verkeerde kant van die destydse sosiale skeidslyn bevind het - handewerkers, soldate, matrose en slawe⁸²

When reviewing the arms that Pama included from the Bell-Krynauw Collection, it can be shown that the majority of arms are those of people who were either aristocrats, VOC officials or involved in the law and administration. Thus members of a caste that would have had notarial power and therefore require a seal. Caste here refers to: "Any social class separated from others by distinction of hereditary rank, profession, or the like."⁸³ The majority of these individuals were situated in the urban areas of Cape Town and Stellenbosch. Many of them were transients who used their time at the Cape to climb the company ladder and get promoted to a better position in Batavia. Dr Con de Wet compares them to modern day yuppies whose aim in life seems to be "higher, better and stay at least one step ahead of the next fellow!"⁸⁴ Very few of these officials left descendants at the Cape.

Although the sons of freeburghers had the prospect of enlisting as soldiers or sailors with the VOC, "Chances of promotion for someone with a poor education were slight."⁸⁵ On the frontier there was little prospect of receiving a decent education. Unless one rose to higher ranks in the Company, there would be no need for a seal and hence a coat of arms. An example can be found in the armorial seal (1783), mentioned earlier, of Adriaan van Jaarsveld, which was probably required as a function of his office as 'Velt Commandant, Camdebo'. It is likely that he was the first member of this family to assume arms.

Conclusion

"Too many people – too few surnames"

In an analysis (1985) of the most numerous surnames found amongst Afrikaners, Nienaber identified more than eighty families where the number of individuals with the same surname varied from 95 000 for *Jacobs* down to 4 000 for *Langenhoven*⁸⁶ (see Table 3). This data was derived from the Census of 1970 and as a result is considerably out of date. The numbers could only have increased in the interim and it is likely that the distribution has not suffered a major change.⁸⁷ However, when one compares the surnames in Nienaber's analysis with those in the Bell-Krynauw

81 L Guelke, "The white settlers, 1652-1780", in R Elphick & H Giliomee (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820* (Longman, Cape Town, 1979), p 43

82 De Wet, "Suid-Afrikaanse Stamouers op die 17de eeuse VOC-soustrein", p 15

83 *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary* (Reader's Digest Association, London, 1988)

84 De Wet, "Suid-Afrikaanse Stamouers op die 17de eeuse VOC-soustrein", p 13

85 Guelke, "The white settlers, 1652-1780", p 65

86 G S Nienaber, "Te veel Mense – Te min Vanne", in J A Heese, G S Nienaber & C Pama, *Families, Familiename en Familiewapens* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1975), pp 146-147

87 In an aside made on Television SABC2, during the running of the 2002 Comrades Marathon, a commentator mentioned that over the years the most popular surname for runners had been *Smith* and *Jacobs*. If the figures for *Smith* and *Smit* from Nienaber were added together they would be in majority

Collection, one first finds a match with *De Villiers* at position 41 in Nienaber. There are three different coats of arms for *De Villiers* in Bell-Krynauw. Two of these relate to female ancestors and are not pertinent here. The third, although appearing on the tray that Bell made to commemorate his marriage (1859) to Helena Krynauw,⁸⁸ only appears in the section of the Bell-Krynauw Collection that can be attributed to Daniel Krynauw.⁸⁹

95 000:	Jacobs.
90 000:	Botha.
85 000-90 000:	Smith.
70 000-75 000:	Van der Merwe, Van Wyk.
55 000-60 000:	Du Plessis, Nel, Venter.
50 000-55 000:	Coetsee/Coetzee, Fourie, Louw, Pretorius, Smit, Van Rensburg, Van Zyl.
45 000-50 000:	Du Toit, Hendrickse, Kruger, Meyer, Van Niekerk.
30 000-35 000:	Booyens, Le Roux, Marais, Muller, Steyn, Swanepoel, Swart, Van der Westhuizen, Van Rooyen, Viljoen.
25 000-30 000:	Bezuidenhout, Burger, Du Preez, Joubert, Olivier, Oosthuizen, Pienaar, Potgieter.
20 000-25 000:	Barnard, De Beer, De Villiers, Grobler, Lombard, Prinsloo, Van Heerden, Vorster, Visagie.
15 000-20000:	Arendse, Botes, De Wet, Groenewald, Hattingh, Human, Kotze, Labuschagne, Scheepers, Schoeman, Snyman, Steenkamp, Theron, Wessels.
10 000-15 000:	Badenhorst, Becker, Bosman, Brits/Britz, De Kock, Fouche, Liebenberg, Roux, Scholtz, Vermaak.
9 000:	Bouwer, Fick, Koekemoer, Opperman.
8 000:	Vosloo.
7 000:	Grobbelaar, Marx, Murray, Rautenbach.
6 000:	Hanekom.
5 000:	Bronkhorst, De Klerk, Kock.
4 000:	Langenhoven.

Table 3: Surname distribution according to the census of 1970

From: G S Nienaber, "Te veel Mense – Te min Vanne", in J A Heese, G S Nienaber & C Pama, *Families, Familiename en Familiewapens* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1975), pp 146-147

There are four further matches, namely *De Wet* (50), *Scheepers* (56), *Theron* (60) and *Becker* (63). It seems likely that only the arms of *De Wet* should be included. There is a seal (1781) of Olof Godlieb de Wet (1739-1811), President of the Council of Justice, in the Seal Collection in the Cape Town Archives Repository.⁹⁰ His nephew Johannes de Wet (1794-1875), renowned Cape Jurist, was the owner of one of the

88 See footnote 53

89 Bell-Krynauw Collection, see folios 4:9 & 4:41 (Courtesy of the Trustees)

90 Laing, *Catalogue of Seals in Accession A1396 ...* Seal 10 9

earliest armorial bookplates found for a South African.⁹¹ Uncle and nephew thus fall within the notarial caste defined earlier. The arms of *Scheepers* relate to Isaac Scheepers who left no male descendants.⁹² *Theron* is unusual in that the arms appear on a lozenge (used by women) with the letters IDP within the arms. This makes it unlikely that these are (or ever were) the arms of *Theron*. There are two different *Becker* coats – one probably comes from a funerary monument of Cornelis Beaumont, Independent Fiscal, who died at the Cape on 14 June 1724 and indicates a female ancestor. The second one is that generally in use and looks like a *memento mori*. The only reference to it appears in the part attributable to Krynauw.⁹³

There are families having over 50 000 individuals who are not represented at all. Where are *Jacobs* (95 000), *Botha* (90 000), *Smith*, *Van der Merwe*, *Van Wyk*, *Du Plessis*, *Nel* and *Venter*? Neither Theunissen nor Pama had the temerity to claim a coat of arms for *Jacobs*. There were at least a dozen immigrants of that name during the VOC period and many more thereafter. *Jacobs* (and its variants) is one of the numerous patronymic surnames found in this country. There are doubts as to whether the ancestors of families such as *Van Rensburg* and *Van Vuuren* ever used these surnames prior to their use on South African soil. It is most likely that these ancestors arrived here using plain patronyms, but that their place of origin (*van*, or coming from) was used as a locative in addition to the patronym to distinguish them from other persons bearing the same patronym, and thus became a surname.

“At the Cape it occasionally happened that a person was called after his place of origin. For example, Jan van Eeden was formerly Jan van Oldenburg and Nicolaas Janse van Rensburg was firstly Nicolaas Jansz.”⁹⁴ One still finds people who insist that their surname is *Janse van Rensburg* or *Jansen van Vuuren*. In the writer’s case an ancestor Kenne Nicholaas Volsteedt is recorded by a clerk as “Sieur Nicolaas Volsteed, dog bij S.E. Comp’s boeken bekend staande as Sempe Nicolaas Volsteerd van Rendsburg...”⁹⁵ The VOC kept track of its servants and it is likely that a number of the surnames derived from place-names arose here at the Cape. It is just as likely that a number of the coats of arms were assumed here. An example is probably that of Adriaan van Jaarsveld mentioned earlier.

Assumed or assigned?

The right to assume arms is a complex question beyond the scope of this paper. In an article by Hylton Hobbs, there is an interesting statement that: “Dr Pama and others, while accepting that we can assume arms in South Africa, deny that such arms have legal protection. I think that there *is* legal protection given by the Roman-Dutch

91 R A Laing, “Two early South African Bookplates”, *Arma* New Series 6, 1, Spring 2000, pp 2-5 Johannes de Wet was the father of the famous Marie Koopmans-de Wet. He had trained at the University of Leiden and graduated in Law (Dr Juris) in 1821, returning to the Cape in 1823

92 Laing, “Stained Glass at the Cape during the DEIC period”, pp 74-84

93 Bell-Krynauw Collection, see folio 4:21 (Courtesy of the Trustees)

94 J A Heese (comp) & R T J Lombard (ed), *South African Genealogies I, A-C* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1986), p 360

95 CAR: Will – MOOC 7/1/20 dd 1770: The title “Sieur” was accorded to a particular rank. On 19 April 1786 a resolution was passed according titles to various officials, civilians and members of the military establishment. See S D Naudé & P J Venter, *Kaapse Plakkaatboek III (1754-1786)* (Cape Times Ltd, Kaapstad, 1949), p 184

Law.”⁹⁶ Hobbs then cites Bartolus de Sassoferrato, Grotius and Van Leeuwen before coming to the conclusion that there is some authority in Roman-Dutch Law for the right of a man to assume arms. In a letter to Hobbs (dated 31 August 1977), Pama commented on the article:

It is always pleasant to see familiar material handled in quite a different manner With your opinion that arms not registered with the State Herald may nevertheless be protected under Roman-Dutch Law you are breaking new ground and I hope you are right There are however, a number of obstacles (besides the well-known ones) In the case of Botha some 80 000 people could claim the arms Who is going to claim rightful ownership?⁹⁷

This comment by Pama is unusually naïve. There were at least two unrelated *Botha* ancestors from different parts of Europe.⁹⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Graham Botha ‘officer and gentleman’ and a descendant of the smaller branch was a close friend of Pama, who would have seen the 1947 grant from the College of Arms in his friend’s home. Pama was fully aware that the *Botha (Die Brandwag)* ‘arms’ were ‘newly manufactured’ by Theunissen in the 1940s and therefore patently bogus. As a result, nobody could claim them. In *Die wapens ...* Pama mentioned that the arms first saw the light of day in *Die Brandwag* of 29 June 1945 and felt that they might have been derived from the arms of the Mecklenburg family *Bothmar*.⁹⁹ It is more likely that the arms were in fact derived from those of the Breton family *Bodeau (Bodean)*.¹⁰⁰

It cannot be established why Theunissen made this selection. He may have created a problem for himself when he chose the family *Botma* to be the first family discussed in the series “Afrikaner, ken uself”.¹⁰¹ Steven Jansz Botma was amongst the original freeburghers who received ground at the Cape in 1657. Dr Jan Visagie found the surname *Botma* problematic in that the progenitor of the family was only known as Steven Jansz in the Netherlands.¹⁰² Theunissen stated that:

The family Botma (or Bothma) originated in Friesland In the distant past (*oertyd*) when our ancestors were still split into tribes a chief must have existed known as Bote or Both The Botmas were thus members of the tribe of Bote (Take note that the surnames Botes and Botha are also derived from ancestors who bore the name Bote Bote is still a well-known baptismal name in Friesian circles)¹⁰³

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- 96 H L Hobbs, “Lion, Lyon or Leeuw: a Comparative Look at the Development of the Law of Heraldry in South Africa”, *Responsa Meridiana*, 3, 4, August 1977 Reprinted in *Arma*, Nos 79-80, 1977
- 97 C Pama, Newlands, Cape Town – H Hobbs, 31 August 1977 Private collection R A Laing, P O Box 81011, Parkhurst, 2120 I inherited Hobbs’ heraldic library and correspondence
- 98 Friedrich Both (later Botha) came to the Cape as a soldier in 1678 from Wangenheim in Gotha He is ancestor of the majority of Bothas in South Africa Samuel Friedrich Bode (later Botha) came to the Cape from Luneburg in Germany in 1767 (traditionally Huguenot) His descendants are far less One of them was Colin Graham Botha See J A Heese (comp) & R T J Lombard (ed), *South African Genealogies I, A-C* (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1986), pp 360-388
- 99 Pama, *Heraldry of South African Families*, endnote 440
- 100 Rietstap, *Armorial Général I* (2nd edition G B van Goor, Gouda, s a), p 225 “**Bodean** – Bret. D’arg à l’aigle de sa , acc en chef de deux merlettes du même ” Rolland says Bodeau
- 101 *Die Brandwag*, 14 Julie 1944
- 102 J C Visagie, “Navorsing in Europa oor die Herkoms en Verhuising van Afrikaanse Stamvaders na die Kaap”, *Familia*, 39, 1, 2002, pp 74-75
- 103 *Die Brandwag*, 14 Julie 1944 Translation: Laing

The arms Theunissen assigned to *Botma* were those of the Utrecht family of *Both van der Eem*. Having assigned these arms to *Botma* he had to find other arms for *Botha*. There is neither indication that Theunissen did any archival research nor that he knew about the seal collection in the Cape Archives. If he had he might have found the seal used by Aletta Botma at Stellenbosch in 1720 (see Figure 4). This shows “*a flounder (bot) naïant to sinister*”¹⁰⁴ This was illustrated in Loxton and is a good example of canting arms.



Figure 4: Seal used by Aletta Botma **From:**
A G Loxton, *Die Afrikaner-voorgeslag met Familiewapens* (s 1, 1933)

It is not feasible to do a full analysis of all the ‘newly manufactured’ or assigned arms. A few examples must serve to illustrate the whole.

Theunissen argued that any person could ‘at his whim’ assume a badge or coat of arms. The writer agrees with Theunissen, Pama, Hobbs and others that such a right does exist under Roman-Dutch Law and that this can be exemplified by reference to Medieval and Renaissance jurists. However, this did not mean that some self-appointed heraldist was at liberty to invent and assign scores of coats of arms at his own whim. This notwithstanding an eager and willing public ready to accept a prostituted heritage ‘not because it *is* true but because it *ought* to be.’ The arms devised by Theunissen have no standing whatsoever. This is regardless of the fact that they graced the homes of many Afrikaners. Pama argued for their acceptance as a consequence of ‘time elapsed’. Was this a case of ‘choose your fiction, and I’ll endorse it?’ However, the writer feels that these were invalid *ab initio* and should be totally disregarded. In fact, the Heraldry Council decided that they should not be used as the basis for any new designs!¹⁰⁵

Indications are that an article on *Familiewapens*, published by Colin Graham Botha in 1946,¹⁰⁶ was written in reaction to the articles by Theunissen. (This may also have prompted Graham Botha to obtain a grant of arms from the College of Arms in London.) It seems apparent that Graham Botha was aware of the source of the arms (namely Rietstap’s *Armorial Général* or Rolland’s illustrations of the same), and proposed that publications which described the arms of different European families, could not be accepted as lawful evidence for their use without proof of descent. He decried the sale of illustrations to individuals who were both willing to pay and accept these as their ‘family’ coat of arms. “As heritage practitioners took pride in creating artifice, the public enjoyed consuming it.”¹⁰⁷ Graham Botha mentioned that these illustrations could also be seen in genealogical articles on South African families. This would seem to be a clear reference to Theunissen’s series of articles. For a particular

104 Laing, *Catalogue of Seals in Accession A1396*, Seal 3 13 (Drawing from Loxton)

105 Personal information: F G Brownell, 24 Hamilton Street, Pretoria, 20 May 1999 This must have happened before 1984 as I only have the minutes of the Heraldry Council for the period 1984-1996, when I was a member of the Council

106 M M (C G Botha), “Familiewapens”, *Die Huisgenoot*, 12 April 1946, pp 7 & 38

107 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, p 6

family, genealogical information was supplied and a ‘complicated’ drawing of a coat of arms with the surname below was illustrated. He rightly stated that the only conclusion that a reader could reach was that the arms were those of the family described in the article. This practice made a mockery of the lawful use of the coat of arms and reduced the value that the legal owner attached thereto.¹⁰⁸

Graham Botha also mentioned the practice of travelling from farm to farm offering coats of arms and genealogies for sale.¹⁰⁹ As Chief Archivist he was rightly upset that prospective buyers of coats of arms were referred to the archives for corroboration. The archives had a good selection of heraldic books, presumably including Rietstap’s *Armorial Général*. By referring customers to the archives rather than to some library, the seller implied that he was acting as an agent for the archives. The culmination came when the archives started receiving correspondence about drawings that had not yet arrived. Eventually the police were called in to halt the malpractice.¹¹⁰

Since 1 June 1963, when the Heraldry Act, 1962 (Act No. 18 of 1962) came into force, there has been legislative provision for the formal registration of arms in South Africa by the Bureau of Heraldry. There can be no question as to the legitimacy of arms so registered but, sadly, the trade in bogus arms continues. This despite a provision later incorporated into the Act that arms may not be supplied without the supplier being in possession of a certificate of authenticity issued by the State Herald. Until the beginning of 2002, not a single certificate of authenticity of arms (within the terms of the Act) had been provided by the State Herald.¹¹¹ For the police to act, a charge must be laid and, in effect, the supplier must be caught in the act. However, they tend to move from shopping mall to shopping mall with their computers, providing a dubious service to a gullible public.

Caveat emptor - Mythical creation or a grain or two of truth!

There is a mistaken perception amongst the general public that if something is in print, it must be valid and authentic, not because they believe it *is* true but because they believe it *ought* to be. Recently, Professor Louis Grundlingh raised the question of authenticity and authentication, as well as who was doing the authentication.¹¹² Published South African heraldic writers have given ‘our’ heraldic heritage an aura of authenticity merely by appearing in print. This authentication has, in the main, been shown to stand on legs of clay.

Any student of personal or family heraldry has to be not only an accomplished genealogist, but also a determined historian who can conform to accepted tenets of evidence, because: “Historians ignore at professional peril the whole corpus of past knowledge that heritage [providers] can airily transgress.”¹¹³ This all notwithstanding,

108 Botha, “Familiewapens”, p 38 “Die enigste gevolgtrekking waartoe die leser kan kom, is dat dit die familiewapen is van die familie wat in die artikel beskryf word Maak bostaande gebruike nie selfs die wettige gebruik van familiewapens belaglik, en verminder dit nie die waarde wat die wettige eienaar daaraan heg nie?”

109 Botha does not mention Theunissen by name but it seems apparent that he is the person intended Theunissen sold one of the writer’s relatives a scroll with the Ley genealogy out of C C de Villiers all changed to Laing, together with the arms of Laineck out of Rolland’s illustrations of Rietstap Unfortunately my exposure of this fraud (circa 1970) resulted in the destruction of the evidence Personal information: Leon Laing, Parkhurst, 4 September 1999

110 Botha, “Familiewapens”, p 38

111 Personal information: F G Brownell, 155 Beckett Street, Arcadia, 31 October 2002

112 Grundlingh, “Uneasy Bedfellows or a Happy Marriage?”

113 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”

it is a fact that some South African families do have coats of arms that can be traced back for centuries (in some cases back to the Middle Ages). However, even situations resting on seemingly irrefutable proofs have to be investigated in great detail.

A prime example is the family *Van Reede*, one member of which married the heiress of *Oudshoorn* [sic] and founded the branch that thus became *here* or 'lords' of Oudtshoorn and hence *Van Reede van Oudtshoorn*. Their coat of arms already appeared on the seal of a certain Bitter van Reede in 1313. By the middle of the eighteenth century at least four descendants of this Bitter van Reede had spent some time at the Cape. The major players were Hendrik Adriaan van R(h)eede tot Drakestein, Lord of Mijdrecht (1636/7-1691) who spent time at the Cape in 1685 as a representative of the Council of Seventeen and Pieter, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn tot Nederhorst (1714-1773), an official of the VOC and who was the only member of this family who left descendants at the Cape. The other members of the family, namely Adriaan and Bitter, were military officers and left no known descendants at the Cape. However this does not mean that everyone bearing the surname *Van Reede* is a descendant of the original Bitter van Reede.

In South Africa there are persons bearing the surname *Van Rhe(e)de van Oudtshoorn* who have no descent from the noble family of *van Reede*, perhaps not even a descent from the noble family of *Oudshoorn*. In 1730 a soldier from Leiden in the Netherlands arrived in the Cape. This soldier was Willem Willemsz *Oudshoorn*. *Oudshoorn* here may merely be a locative. This Willem was repatriated in 1743 and left his two sons and their mother at the Cape.¹¹⁴ In the early nineteenth century his great-grandson Wilhelm Petrus was using the surname *Van Rhe(e)de van Oudtshoorn* and founded a very fruitful family in the Boer Republics. Wilhelm Petrus (also known as Petrus Wilhelmus van Rhede van Oudtshoorn) was baptised in Cape Town on 1 October 1797, and died on the farm 'Driefontein', in the Wakkerstroom District in February 1865.

It is a mystery why Wilhelm Petrus OUDSHOORN changed his name. He first used the form *van OUDTSHOORN*, but later he called himself *van RHEDE van OUDTSHOORN*. He was in no way connected with the family of *van REEDE van OUDTSHOORN*. At that time Baron William Ferdinand van REEDE van OUDTSHOORN was a member of the Council of Policy and a person of great social importance and influence at the Cape. The name change may have been an attempt to link the family of OUDSHOORN to a family highly esteemed at the Cape as well as in the Netherlands. However the real reason is probably lost forever and can only be cause for conjecture.¹¹⁵

Wilhelm Petrus seems to have created his own myth and this borrowed heritage was passed on to successive generations. A photograph of a son, Frederik Petrus van Rheede van Oudtshoorn (1829-1906), together with his ten sons wearing velskoens, hats and 'Boer' uniforms "ready to go to war against the English" appeared in the popular press during the Boer War.¹¹⁶ It had sufficient impact in the Netherlands for the entry of Pieter, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn's biography in the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek* to comment on the fact and claim them as descendants of the Baron's youngest son.¹¹⁷ This son died young.¹¹⁸

114 R A Laing, "Oudshoorn (Oudtshoorn)", *Familia*, 10, 3, 1973, pp 38-39 & 42-43

115 Laing, "Oudshoorn (Oudtshoorn)", p 39, original note from the 1973 article

116 G L Kepper, *Gedenkboek de Zuid-Afrikaansche Oorlog – Historisch Gedenkboek* (Leiden (also at Antwerp), s a [1901?]), p 91

117 P C Molhuysen & P J Blok, *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (A W Sijthoff, Leiden, 1911) "Tot dezen tak behoorde Frederik Petrus, wiens afbeelding met zijn tien zoons, gereed om tegen de Engelschen ten strijde te trekken, in 1900 in vele geïllustreerde bladen

It has been shown that there was a resurgence of heraldic interest in South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s, probably in part due to Theunissen's articles and possibly due to a reawakening of Afrikaner self-identity. Shortly after World War II, a descendant of Wilhem Petrus went on a trip to the Netherlands. While there he made a visit to The Hague to obtain a copy of the family coat of arms (*familiewapen*). It is not clear whether this was obtained from the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* or from the *Hoge Raad van Adel*.¹¹⁹ Based on all the mythology and the 'printed evidence' the arms obtained were those of the aristocratic family of *Van Reede van Oudtshoorn*. The coat of arms was painted without the 'baronial' crown. This was only allowed to those descendants of the Baron that had not only returned to the Netherlands, but also had their title confirmed by the Dutch Crown in the 1820s. A myth had been created and maintained. The fact that some of the Baron's South African descendants today use the surname *Van Rheeede van Oudtshoorn* or just *Van Oudtshoorn* has further clouded the issue.

Let the buyer beware - much of 'our' heraldic heritage is a mythical creation. Nevertheless, there is 'a grain or two of truth among the chaff'. Certain people do have historical, inherited coats of arms – this requires serious genealogical research. In addition, numerous coats of arms have been assumed in South Africa in the past and these assumptions would seem to be valid under Roman-Dutch Law. However, such assumptions should be recognised for what they are (or were) and not transferred backwards in time to create 'pseudo-events'. The Latin maxim *caveat emptor* cannot be ignored, as there are heritage providers eager to con a gullible and willing public into accepting an instant heritage. The large-scale invention of coats of arms by certain self-proclaimed heralds is totally invalid.

Oh, winnow all my folly, folly, folly,
and you'll find a grain or two of truth among the chaff!¹²⁰

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- word opgenemen en algemeen de aandacht trok" Cited, as a source is "G L Kepper, Gedenkboek Z -Afr Oorlog 91"
- 118 R A Laing, "The Ancestry and Children of Pieter, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn tot Nederhorst", *Familia*, 9, 2, 1972, pp 48-52; R A Laing, "The sons of Pieter, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn tot Nederhorst and their children", *Familia*, 14, 2/3, 1977, pp 54-57
- 119 I have spent thirty years researching the noble family *Van Reede* and it was during this research that anomalies were found. The only way to resolve this was to research the descendants of Willem Willemsz *Oudshoorn*. The results were published – see footnote 114 (the genealogy did not include the later descendants). In the late 1970s I was contacted by W P van Rheeede van Oudtshoorn (at that time archivist of the Supreme Court). He wanted to continue the research. As the problem was resolved as far as I was concerned, I happily gave away all the relevant research.
- 120 W S Gilbert & A Sullivan, Vocal Score of *The Yeomen of The Guard or The Merryman and His Maid*. The Savoy Edition IX (Alston Rivers Co, London, 1888)

Abstract

This article is an attempt to establish to what extent 'our' SA Afrikaans heraldic heritage conforms to the accepted historical tenets of evidence. There is a mistaken perception amongst the general public that if something is in print it must be valid and authentic, not because it *is* true but because they believe it *ought* to be. The need for heritage or background seems to be particularly strong and it seems likely that the public and heraldically ignorant have not only been party to the deception or mythology, but they have also actively contributed to the confusion. It seems that most local writers who dabbled in heraldry during the twentieth century were enthusiastic amateurs with little if any formal training in heraldry, history, the law or science. Wittingly or unwittingly, many local writers have contributed to the mythology that every family has a coat of arms and this dates back to earlier times.

Caveat emptor - in the article it is shown that much of 'our' heraldic heritage is a mythical creation. Heritage should not be confused with history. History seeks to convince by truth, and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error. Time and hindsight alter history, too. But historians' revisions must conform [to] accepted tenets of evidence. Heritage is more flexibly emended. Historians ignore at professional peril the whole corpus of past knowledge that heritage can airily transgress.

Opsomming

Ons Suid-Afrikaanse (Afrikaner-) Heraldiese Erfenis – 'n Mitiese Skepping?

Hierdie artikel poog om vas te stel in watter mate 'ons' Suid-Afrikaanse Afrikaanse heraldiese erfenis voldoen aan die aanvaarde historiese beoordeling van bewysmateriaal. Daar bestaan 'n wanpersepsie onder die breë publiek dat dit wat in boeke staan, geldig en eg moet wees, nie omdat dit waar *is* nie, maar omdat hulle glo dat dit *behoort* te wees. Die behoefte aan erfenis of agtergrond blyk besonder sterk te wees en dit is waarskynlik dat die publiek en die heraldies-oningeligtes nie net meegedoen het aan die misleiding en mitologie nie, maar dat hulle ook aktief bygedra het tot die verwarring. Dit kom voor asof die meeste plaaslike skrywers wat hulle hand gedurende die twintigste eeu aan heraldiek geslaan het, entoesiastiese amateurs was met weinig, indien enige, formele opleiding in heraldiek, geskiedenis, die regte of wetenskap. Wetens of onwetens het talle plaaslike skrywers bygedra tot die mitologie dat elke familie 'n wapen het en dat dit terugdateer na vroeëre tye.

Caveat emptor - Daar word in die artikel aangedui dat 'ons' heraldiese erfenis in 'n groot mate 'n mitiese skepping is. Erfenis moet nie met geskiedenis verwar word nie. Geskiedenis wil oortuig deur waarheid, en verwerp valsheid. Erfenis oordryf en ignoreer, skep en vergeet goedsmoeds, en floreer op onkunde en foute. Tyd en nawete verander geskiedenis weliswaar ook. Maar historici se hersiening moet konformeer tot aanvaarde voorkeur aan bewyse. Erfenis word meer buigsaam aangepas. Historici ignoreer op professionele risiko die hele korpus van kennis oor die verlede wat erfenis argeloos kan oortree.

Key words

heraldry, coat of arms, heritage, ignorance, myth, identity, falsehood, authenticity.