

Practical Heraldry for the Self-Isolator

Week 4—Theme 4: The Griffin

The result of a morganatic marriage between the King of Birds and the King of Beasts, the Griffin, or Gryphon, of Griffon, has a pedigree dating back to the ancient Greeks and beyond. They are mentioned several times in Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis* although he is sceptical of claims that they can mine for gold.

Griffins appear as charges, supporters and crests. We begin with a supporter—and a crest for bonus—as it shows well the structure of the beast, having the body and hind legs of a lion joined to the wings, claws and head on an eagle.



Lord Birsay's crest from his former stall in the Thistle Chapel, now kept in the Chancery of the Order.



A demi-griffin contourny regardant Proper is the crest for Knight of the Thistle of the Thistle, Lord Birsay.

The body of the crest is facing to the sinister, hence **CONTOURNY** (turned round) but the head is swivelled round hence **REGARDANT**.



Gules a griffin passant wings elevated Or

Herraghty 33/70 1939



Or a gryphon statant Sable wings elevated armed and beaked Gules.

Paterson 35/1 1944

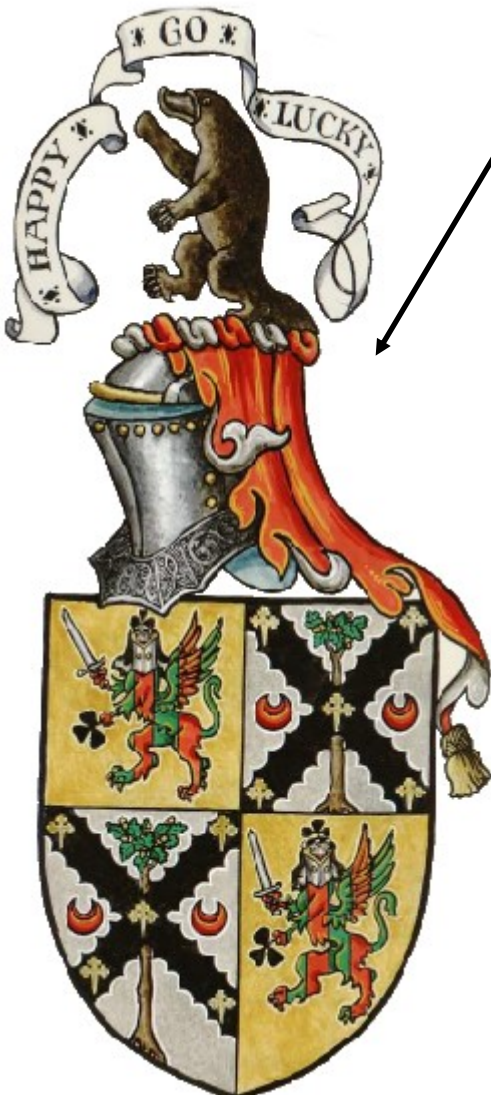
Or a griffin passant wings elevated Azure

Shortt 4/75 1843



So far so good. Apart from remembering to say something about the tincture and position of the wings, the general vocabulary is the same as for a lion—STATANT, PASSANT etc.

However there is a big exception: **GRIFFINS/GRYPHONS** are never rampant but **SEGREANT**—forelegs up and wings raised.



This coat has in its first and fourth quarters:

Or, a gryphon segreant guardant paly of six Gules and Vert its head within a knight's helmet Proper

SEGREANT = up ready for action, like a lion rampant

GUARDANT = head turned to look out at us.

PALY of SIX = having six vertical stripes.

Roadknight 37/134 1950

*Right: Argent a gryphon sergeant Gules armed beaked and wings elevated Or.....
St Clair College, Canada 50/45 1968*



Right: Vert a griffin sergeant Or...

Collins 12/4 1888



Argent a gryphon segreant Vert armed Or langued Gules holding between its talons a cross moline Gules.....

Miller-Thomas of Ley 33/68 1939





Here are two splendid gryphons supporting the ancient arms of Clannfhearguis of Strachur, matriculated in 1940 along with this standard.



From a slightly earlier era, the achievement of the Earl of Mar and Kellie, matriculated in 1923. You may remember the KEY and BATON on saltire denote the Earl's position s Keeper of Stirling Castle. When a standard was granted in 1955. the griffin was allowed to lie down ...



Can you colour in the griffins in accordance with the instructions?



A griffin passant paly of six Gules and Or.



A griffin statant Or winged Argent langued and clawed Gules.



A griffin segreant Vert, langued GULES, Winged Purple, clawed Or.