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Ambiguous Figures of Otherness: Redoubtable Beasts in Princely Badges of the Late Middle Ages

Olga Vassilieva-Codognet

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Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages

Perspectives across disciplines

Edited by

Francisco de Asís García García
Mónica Ann Walker Vadillo
María Victoria Chico Picaza



BAR International Series 2500

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AMBIGUOUS FIGURES OF OTHERNESS: REDOUBTABLE BEASTS IN PRINCELY BADGES OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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To Michel Pastoureau on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday

Abstract

This paper addresses the symbolism of redoubtable beasts in princely heraldic badges of the late Middle Ages. It consists of three parts: first, a quantitative study of 894 heraldic badges dating from 1370 to 1520 which allows to apprehend the population and evolution of redoubtable beasts occurring in these badges; second, a series of four case-studies, namely Giangaleazzo Visconti's leopard, Jean de Berry's bear, Richard III's boar and Louis XII's porcupine, in order to shed light on the relationship between a prince and his emblematic animal; third, a study of the animal badges that can be found in the first modern treaty on heraldic badges, namely Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa militari e amorose* (Rome: Antonio Barre, 1555), in order to discover the metamorphosis of the medieval heraldic badge into the early modern times.

Keywords

Badge; emblem; heraldry; predator; prince

Louis d'Orléans's wolf

A fifteenth-century French manuscript¹ opens with a miniature (Figure 10-1) depicting a powerful lion giving the fatal blow to a grasping wolf that is attempting to reach for a crown. Read allegorically, as such things must be, this intriguing miniature reveals the lion as Burgundy's heraldic emblem. The wolf is Louis d'Orléans's heraldic badge, and the overall scene refers to the murder of said Louis d'Orléans, which was ordered by the Duke of Burgundy John the Fearless and took place on November 23, 1407. John the Fearless essentially reproached Louis d'Orléans for having unjustly tried to seize the

royal French crown then on the head of Charles VI, Louis d'Orléans's insane brother. The previous allegorical image retells the same story: the crown is grasped by the wolf and consequently no longer in equilibrium on the French lily.² The manuscript that contains this miniature is one of the four extant copies of a work known as the *Justification du duc de Bourgogne* ('Justification of the Duke of Burgundy'), an apology of the deeds of John the Fearless, and written by Jean Petit in March 1408.³ Regardless the political consequences of this

² On the facing folio of the aforementioned miniature, the following quatrain can be read: '*Par force le leu rompt et tire/A ses dens et gris la couronne,/Et le lyon par très-grant ire,/De sa pate grant coup lui donne*' ('By using his teeth and claws the wolf breaks and takes the crown by force, and the lion in great anger gives him a hard blow').

³ Michael Nordberg, "Les sources bourguignonnes des accusations portées contre la mémoire de Louis d'Orléans," *Annales de Bourgogne* 31 (1959): 82–98.

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¹ Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 878, fol. 2 (detail).

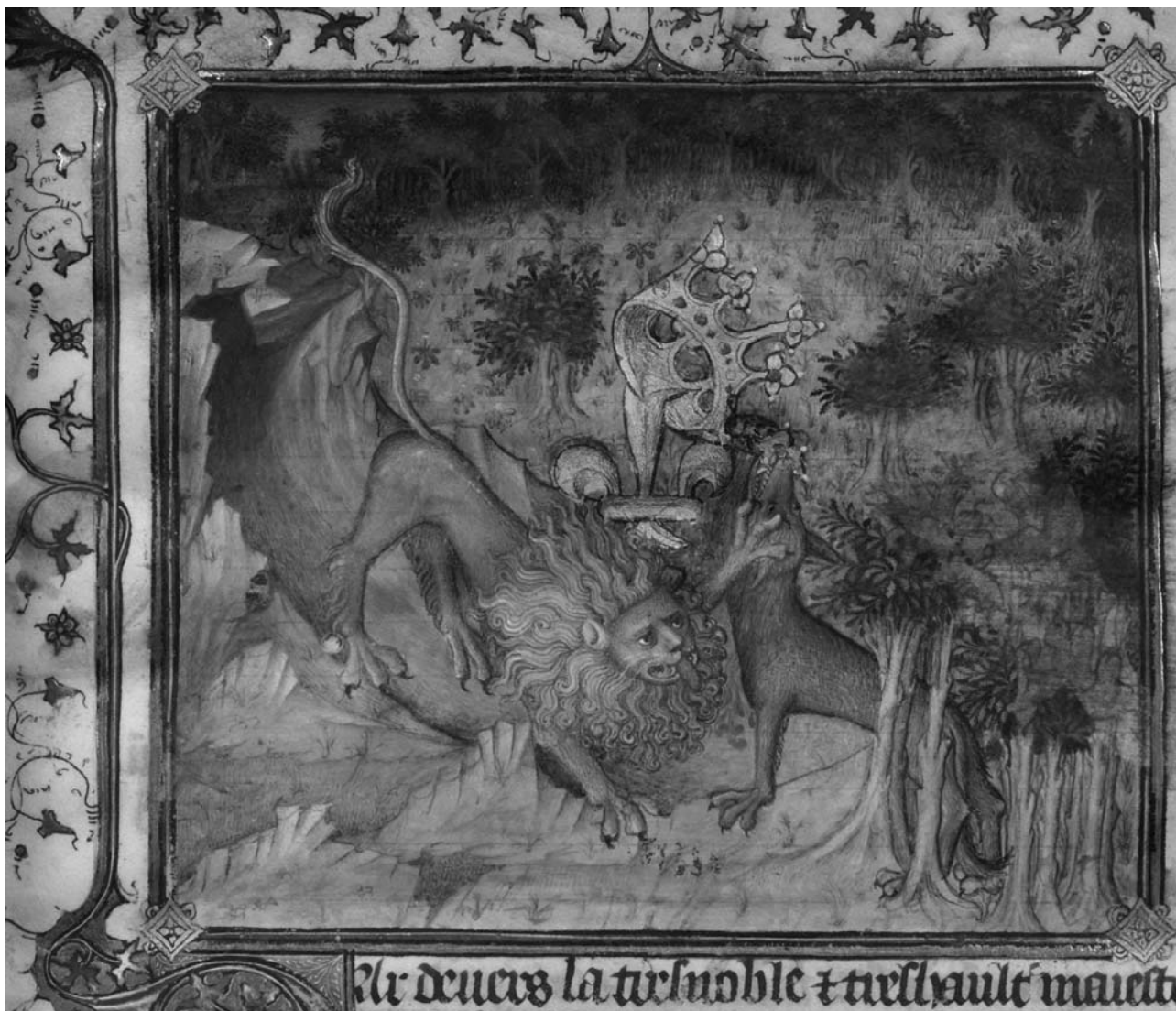


Figure 10-1. Lion giving a fatal blow to a wolf. Jean Petit's *Justification du duc de Bourgogne*, Pseudo-Jacquemart de Hesdin, Paris, 1408. Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 878, fol. 2 (detail).

murder, our analysis bears upon the animal symbolism within the miniature. The lion's symbolism is unproblematic both in form and content. Indeed, the lion was both a hereditary emblem – it was the Flemish lion John inherited from his mother, whose feudal possessions included Flanders – and a noble and highly positive animal, since by then the lion was already the king of all animals. On the other hand, the wolf's symbolism is much more uncommon. First, Louis's wolf was not an inherited heraldic coat-of-arms, but rather a personal emblem, deliberately chosen by Louis for his heraldic badge (Figures 10-5a and 10-5b). Second, the wolf symbolism was extremely pejorative since the medieval wolf was perceived as a violent, ferocious, bloodthirsty and cowardly animal – to name but a few of its

defects.⁴ If most animals were seen in the Middle Ages as ambivalent, viz. with both good and bad aspects, the wolf was not and, to a certain extent, it was the worst of all animals. Returning to Louis d'Orléans, it shall be further observed that Louis had 'etymological' (in the sense of the time) affinities with this animal: the French language allowing for a rather obvious pun between 'Louis' and 'loup' (the French word for 'wolf'). But the price Louis d'Orléans had to pay for this pun seems very high, and one may wonder if Louis's choice did not have some other motivation. Nevertheless, since among Louis's other heraldic badges can be found the porcupine, the nettle and

⁴ Michel Pastoureau, *Bestiaires du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 2011), 71–73. Regarding the presence of wolves in France at the times of Louis d'Orléans, see Jean-Marc Moriceau, *L'homme contre le loup: une guerre de deux mille ans* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 73–78.

the crossbow, i.e. equally aggressive animal, vegetal and object, it may safely be assumed that Louis d'Orléans perfectly understood all the consequences of the wolf symbolism and that he purposely turned to the wolf's otherness to present through his wolf badge his own radical otherness. As shown above by the *Justification du duc de Bourgogne's* opening miniature, this symbolism was not lost on John the Fearless. Actually, shortly after the death of Louis d'Orléans, the Duke of Burgundy outdid himself on the symbolic level: in the winter of 1408 he organized a wolf hunt on the outskirts of Paris, an act which can be seen as both a symbolic repetition of, and a claim for, his cousin's murder.

The previous, admittedly extreme, example of Louis d'Orléans⁵ brings us to the subject of our study, namely the symbolism of redoubtable beasts found in heraldic princely badges. Indeed, many late Middle Ages princes chose redoubtable beasts such as the boar, the bear, the dragon or the tiger for their badges. Our study will consist of three parts: first, a quantitative study of heraldic badges which will allow us to apprehend the population of redoubtable beasts occurring in heraldic badges, as well as to chart their evolution over 150 years from 1370 to 1520; second, a series of four case-studies on the animal symbolism that can be found in heraldic badges, namely Giangaleazzo Visconti's leopard, Jean de Berry's bear, Richard III's boar and Louis XII's porcupine; third and lastly, a study of the animal badges featured in Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresie militari e amorose* ('Dialogue on the military and amorous badges') (Rome: Antonio Barre, 1555), an extremely important para-heraldic treaty that would give us a taste of things (viz. badges) to come in the modern era. But before discovering the metamorphosis of the medieval heraldic badge into the modern *impresa*, we first need to present a brief account of its genesis and development.

Arms, crests and badges

The medieval heraldic badge is essentially the offspring of the coat-of-arms. Coats-of-arms first appeared on the mid-twelfth-century battlefields

⁵ Although Louis of Orléans's wolf symbolism is uncommon, it is not unique. For instance, Jasper Tudor, Jean de Daillon or Charles de Blois also had a wolf badge.

as a practical means to help fighters recognize their own. Heraldry soon developed into a rigorous system called blazon which constitutes the main semiotic system created by the Middle Ages and to which we owe our flags, road signs and sport insignia. Coats-of-arms having soon become hereditary, the knights' social elite invented a new sign of individuality, namely the crest, which appeared in the thirteenth century on the occasion of this kind of training and mock war that was the tournament. Crests were striking yet fragile⁶ assemblages made of metal, wood and *papier mâché* which very frequently took the form of animals, or rather of parts of animals: heads, wings, etc. The animals that these crests strived to evoke were most of the times frightening: dragons, eagles, boars and so on.⁷ It was actually so because the tournament's jousting aimed not only at being identified by his crest, but also at impressing his adversary by his crest's big horns, large teeth or long feathers. Generation after generation – and we are now arriving at the fourteenth century – tournaments were less and less for real, and more and more for the show, namely for the ladies who attended these by then courteous and courtly spectacles. It is at this time that the heraldic badge comes into its own.⁸ Natural heir of both arms and crests – but liveries, seals and *drueries* (love tokens) also attended to the cradle –, the medieval heraldic badge often consists in a figure, although it may alternatively consist in a brief sentence called motto.⁹ In any case, the badge says something of its owner's wishes – of a prince's dreams. Not untruly may the badge be called the ideal self of the prince.

⁶ Very fragile indeed: only five (one English and four continental) medieval heraldic crests are still extant. See Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, *Age of Chivalry. Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (exhibition catalogue) (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), 480 (cat. 627).

⁷ See generally on the topic Christiane Pantens-Van den Bergen, "La représentation et la signification des animaux comme cimiers héraldiques," *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* 62 (1993): 5–15.

⁸ Alternatively, the word 'device' (Middle and Modern French: *devise*) could be used. We nevertheless refrained from using it since we felt this peculiar meaning of the word 'device' is insufficiently known and would not have been properly understood – with all apologies to our emblemist friends.

⁹ For a modern, abstract reconstruction of this semiotic system which would actually distinguish between figure, motto, cipher and colours, see Michel Pastoureau, "L'emblématique princière à la fin du Moyen Age, essai de lexique et de typologie," in *Héraldique et emblématique de la maison de Savoie (XIV^e-XV^e s.)*, eds. Bernard Andenmatten, Annick Vadon and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Lausanne, 1994), 11–43.

Medieval heraldic badges come in many colours and shapes: a blue boar, a rose, a sail, a couple of turtledoves. Most of the times, these badges metaphorically refer to their owner's enterprises, whether military, amorous or something else. Yet this creative, indeed nearly poetic, aspect of the heraldic badge should not conceal the fact that its primary social function was that of creating, for the sole benefit of the prince, a clientele constituted by the princely badge's owners. For, contrary to the coat-of-arms or to the crest, the medieval heraldic badge was distributed among the prince's family members, retainers and partisans. Besides giving a material form to the princely household,¹⁰ sharing of the heraldic badge – exactly like that of the perfectly contemporary chivalry order's insignia – created a sense of belonging among the happy few who were lucky enough to bear it. In an age where a prince could hardly find men willing to fight for his cause, this was truly priceless and constituted the secret *raison d'être* of the heraldic badge. All in all, the heraldic badge must essentially be seen as a form of binding gift.

A quantitative study of heraldic badges (1370–1520)

The data on which this study is based consist of about one thousand heraldic badges dating from 1370 to 1520. This data collection has been patiently gathered by Laurent Hablot in his (yet) unpublished PhD dissertation.¹¹ These data have been collected in all available sources: artefacts (metallic badges, embroidered badges, woven badges, etc.), primary and secondary literature, iconic representations (miniatures, paintings, sculptures, seals, etc.). The owners of these heraldic badges come from all over Europe and belong to the topmost segment of western nobility, which is the reason why we refer to these badges as princely. It is important to observe that a given individual may have more than one heraldic badge, although, generally speaking, the less important the noble, the less numerous his badges. Let us move from the owner to his badge: what kind of picture does it present? Essentially, one can

find animals, plants, minerals and human artefacts. We will chiefly be interested with animals and more specifically with redoubtable beasts. The Middle French '*Bestes redoutables*' is frequently attested in the fifteenth century and that has roughly the same meaning as its modern English equivalent, denoting powerful animals of which men are scared. These redoubtable beasts are very often, but not necessarily, predators and they can be real as well as imaginary. In the view of medieval men, these redoubtable beasts differed both from peaceful domestic animals, such as the cow or the chicken, they used to breed, and also from the wild yet not ferocious animals, such as the hare or the partridge, they used to hunt. This category of redoubtable beasts contains animals such as the boar or the wolf that were readily encountered in medieval Europe, as well as animals such as the tiger or the dragon that would have been much harder to encounter. In any case, the ontological status of these animals was unquestioned at the time: they all really existed, as attested either by direct observation or/and by reliable texts (e.g., Scriptures), they all were part of the divine creation and each of them had its specific nature, according to God's will and design.

General evolution of animal badges

As stated before, the time period considered by this study encompasses the years 1370–1520. It will conveniently be divided into five thirty-year time periods: 1370–1400, 1400–1430, 1430–1460, 1460–1490 and 1490–1520. For each of these time periods, Table 10-1 gives the total number of badges (#T), the number of animal badges (#A), the number of badges featuring redoubtable beasts (#RB) as well as the ratios #A/#T and #RB/#A. Additional information is further provided by Table 10-2 which displays the corresponding lists of redoubtable beasts taken as heraldic badges during each thirty year period.

Table 10-1 calls for the following remarks. Regarding the data distribution over time, the ratio #A/#T has a mean value of 31%, showing that nearly one badge out of three is an animal. It can be observed that this figure is nearly the same as the proportion of coats-of-arms that contain an animal figure, since this proportion is equal to 30% for the fourteenth century and decreases to 25% in

¹⁰ David Starkey, "The age of the household: politics, society and the arts c. 1350–c. 1550," in *The later Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Medcalf (London: Methuen & Co, 1981), 264–268.

¹¹ Laurent Hablot, "La devise, mise en signe du prince, mise en scène du pouvoir" (PhD diss., University of Poitiers, 2001).

Period	Total (#T)	Animals (#A)	Redoubtable Beasts (#RB)	Ratio #A / #T	Ratio #RB / #A
1370–1400	88	53	35	60%	66%
1400–1430	205	68	39	33%	57%
1430–1460	160	38	26	24%	68%
1460–1490	262	80	52	31%	65%
1490–1520	179	42	21	23%	50%
Total/Average	894	281	173	31%	62%

Table 10-1. *Heraldic badges, 1370–1520.*

Period	List of redoubtable beast badges
1370–1400	boar (3), dolphin, dragon (2), eagle (7), falcon (4), greyhound (5), griffon (2), hunting dog (2), leopard, lion (6), salamander, unicorn
1400–1430	antelope (2), bear, boar, dolphin (2), eagle (5), falcon (4), greyhound (6), griffon, hunting dog (4), leopard, lion (4), porcupine, salamander (2), sparrow hawk, tiger (3), wolf
1430–1460	antelope, bear, boar, crow, dolphin, dragon (5), eagle (4), falcon, greyhound (4), hunting dog (2), lynx, sparrow hawk, unicorn, yale (2)
1460–1490	bear (5), boar (4), bull (3), dragon (3), eagle (2), elephant (2), falcon (6), genet, greyhound (3), hunting dog (4), hydra, leopard, lion (4), lynx (2), porcupine, ram, salamander (2), unicorn (4), yale, wolf (2)
1490–1520	bear, crow, dragon (5), eagle (2), elephant, falcon, genet, greyhound, griffon (2), hunting dog, porcupine, salamander, wolf (2), yale
1370–1520 (Total)	antelope (3), bear (8), boar (9), bull (3), crow (2), dolphin (4), dragon (15), eagle (20), elephant (3), falcon (16), genet (2), greyhound (19), griffon (5), hunting dog (13), hydra (1), leopard (3), lion (14), lynx (3), porcupine (3), ram (1), sparrow hawk (2), salamander (6), tiger (3), unicorn (6), yale (4), wolf (5)

Table 10-2. *Lists of redoubtable beast badges, 1370–1520.*

1500.¹² Returning to Table 10-1, we can see that the ratio #A/#T is relatively stable over time, except for the first time period where it is exceptionally higher, the very first stock of devices being much more (almost twice) animal-oriented than the subsequent ones. To explain this phenomenon, one can perhaps point to the influence of the badge’s predecessor, namely the crest, whose symbolism was mainly animal-based. The mean value of the ratio #RB/#A is 62%, indicating that nearly two out of three animal devices are redoubtable beasts.

With respect to time, the lowest number (viz. 50%) is reached in the last period, viz. the years 1490–1520. This last figure may very possibly be contingent and non-significant, but it could equally well hint to a slight disinterest for redoubtable beasts. As a matter of fact, we shall see in our study of Paolo Giovio’s *Dialogo dell’impresa militari e amorose* that it was the very essence of the heraldic badge that was changing at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Let us now consider Table 10-2 which displays the lists of the redoubtable beast badges taken

¹² Michel Pastoureaux, *Traité d’héraldique* (Paris: Picard, 1993), 134.

during the years 1370–1520. In order to construct this table one has to determine, for each animal badge, whether the animal in question is redoubtable or not. Generally speaking, this choice is unproblematic: if, according to medieval criteria, an animal can be seen as harmful to man then it is classified as redoubtable, otherwise it is not. Today's reader might be surprised to see the dolphin classified as a redoubtable beast. Yet, in the eyes of medieval men who almost never saw a real dolphin, this latter was an enormous fish whose flipper was bristling with spikes which were sharp enough to cut the skin of its intimate enemy, namely the crocodile – it is no coincidence if the heavily toothed mouths of hideous dolphins appear recurrently on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century armours. To a certain extent, the case of the antelope is similar. The medieval knowledge of this exotic animal mainly relied on bestiaries which, following the *Physiologus*,¹³ presented it as a cousin of the unicorn: although equipped with two saw-like horns instead of a single one, the antelope proved equally ferocious and impossible to catch. Speaking of horned beasts, a word should be said about one of their relatives: the yale. Originated in Pliny, and tentatively identified today with the buffalo,¹⁴ the yale, which possessed the amazing property of being able to swivel its horns at will, became an important and almost exclusively English royal heraldic in the late Middle Ages.¹⁵ A more problematic case is constituted by the pair of these domestic, yet powerful, predators that are the greyhound and the hunting dog: they are classified as redoubtable because at the time they were primarily seen as hunting auxiliaries, not pet animals. Another difficult case was the one of the crow: the emblematically black bird was considered to be redoubtable on the grounds that it is frequently presented as an extremely pejorative – indeed devilish – animal.¹⁶ And finally here is the list of the animals that were not classified as redoubtable and that, accordingly, do not appear on Table 10-2: alcyon, bee, cow, crane, deer, dove, ewe, hart, hind, ermine, horse, ostrich, peacock, pelican, swallow, swan, and turtledove.

¹³ *Physiologos: le bestiaire des bestiaires*, trans. Arnaud Zucker (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2005), 213.

¹⁴ Wilma George, "The yale," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968): 423–428.

¹⁵ Hugh Stanford London, *Royal Beasts* (East Knoyle Wilts: The Heraldic Society, 1956), 33–37.

¹⁶ Pastoureau, *Bestiaires*, 148–151.

Redoubtable beast badges vs. heraldic animals

Taking a look at Table 10-2, we can see that the ten most frequent animals are, in decreasing order: eagle (20 occurrences), greyhound (19), falcon (16), dragon (15), lion (14), hunting dog (13), boar (9), bear (8), salamander (6) and unicorn (6). Observe that, if they are all traditional heraldic animals, their relative importance among badges and among coat-of-arms is completely different. For instance the lion, the heraldic star *par excellence*, arrives here only in fifth position! One will recall that the lion is by far the most important heraldic figure since it occurs in 15% of all coats-of-arms¹⁷ and in six out of ten animal coats-of-arms. In other words, the number of heraldic lions exceeds the number of all other heraldic animals. Returning now to badges, the previous absolute domination of the heraldic lion over his forest of coats-of-arms is but an old memory. This phenomenon can probably be explained in the following manner: the lion's heraldic hegemony mainly reflects the conformism of the coat-of-arms' owners, a French heraldic saying going '*Qui n'a pas d'armes porte un lion*' ('Who does not have arms bears a lion'). Conversely, the low number of lion badges, as well as the amazing variety of animal badges, testifies to the badge owners' desire of individuality. On other grounds, the audience for the badges is not the same as the general audience of heraldry: while the former is restricted to the topmost segment of nobility, the latter encompasses not only the whole nobility, but also many bourgeois, craftsmen and peasants.

Let us then turn to the lion's perennial rival, the eagle. In heraldry, the eagle is the second most frequent animal – in truth, it is the *martlet* which constitutes the second heraldic animal, but this small generic bird is a mere heraldic invention, not a real (or imaginary, for that matter) animal and it can be discarded accordingly. The eagle is found about six times less than the lion and it represents around 10% of all animal coats-of-arms.¹⁸ Considering animal badges, we will discover that the eagle wins out narrowly over the greyhound. The eagle's results are consequently ambiguous, or rather ambivalent: on the one hand, the eagle keeps its relative rank, as it still goes before all other animals; on the other hand, its very narrow

¹⁷ Pastoureau, *Traité*, 136.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

success shows that, not unlike the lion but less dramatically, its important heraldic capital seems to have melted away when it comes to badges.

We will consider next the group of hunting animals altogether. The greyhound finishes second, the falcon third and the hunting dog fifth. Considered collectively, and with the addition of their hunting fellow the sparrow hawk, their cumulative scores are as follows: 31%, 38%, 31%, 25% and 14%. This indicates an initial non-negligible interest followed by a progressive disinterest. In the eyes of their owners, these hunting animal badges probably incarnate a form of familiar predator-prey symbolism, thus revealing their taste for mundane, as opposed to heroic or exotic, hunting metaphors. It can be further observed that all these animals are also traditional heraldic animals, even if the falcon is (inexplicably) rare in heraldry. Contrary to the lion and, to a lesser extent, to the eagle, these animals have managed to transfer and even increase their modest symbolic capital from heraldry to badges, although this symbolic capital proves in turn subject to some erosion in the last of our time periods.

Although the dragon and the unicorn are very important medieval figures, these mythical animals are rather rare in heraldry. Here they took their revenge, especially the dragon which finishes fourth. Dragon badges were borne by English princes, Central European sovereigns and Earls of Foix. Yet these dragons are not all alike: the first one refers to the archaic Welsh red dragon and is taken *in bona parte*;¹⁹ the second one is the devil incarnate and symbolizes the defeat of evil and the triumph of Christendom;²⁰ the third one remains unexplained.²¹

The boar and the bear are very common heraldic figures, but most of the time they function as *armoiries parlantes* (canting arms). Their heraldic representations display more frequently their head or their paws than their entire body, and most boar

coat-of-arms actually refer to domestic pigs rather than to their wild cousins.²² On the contrary, the wide-spread presence of boars and bears among animal badges seems to indicate the desire of their owners to appropriate the whole symbolic content of these common inhabitants of European forests. In this case, as opposed to the previous one (viz. the hunting animals), the badge owner is not the hunter chasing after its prey in the woods, but rather the wild predator itself: the boar badge's owner envying the unparalleled valiance of an animal that would die rather than flee, and the bear badge's owner the raw power of the woods' strongest animal. A case in point is Jean III de Brabant, an indefatigable and furious joustier who was nicknamed the Boar (Figure 10-4a) – observe, though, that this remarkable case of animal symbolism does not involve badges which were not yet in existence in 1300. Finally, the salamander badge owners are most of the times related to the Order of the Salamander²³ or, in a few cases, to the Orléans-Angoulême dynasty: in this last case, the salamander badge passed on generation after generation before ending up as François I's famous emblem.

Women's badges

Since 130 among our 894 badge owners are women (15%), we would like to present women's badges. First of all, as exhibited by the previous figures, women are very under-represented in the field of para-heraldry – less than one third with respect to gender parity. As could be expected, men and women do not choose exactly the same kind of badges. More surprisingly, women's badges also include their contingent of redoubtable beasts. When it comes to choosing a badge, women favour vegetal (40%) more than animal (28%) – this last figure being very close to the total average (31%). If among these animal badges non redoubtable animals such as the (innocent) lamb, the (immaculate) ermine or the (faithful) turtledove dominate, redoubtable beasts perform rather well: they number 15 out of 36 animal badges (42%). Here are the lists of redoubtable beast badges owned by women according to our five time periods: 1) dog, greyhound, lion; 2) unicorn, tiger; 3) lion, bear; 4)

¹⁹ London, *Royal Beasts*, 43–46.

²⁰ These badges refer to a Society of the Dragon founded by Emperor Sigismund from Luxemburg in 1408; see Jonathan Dacre Boulton D'Arcy, *The Knights of the Crown* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1987), 348–355.

²¹ Peter S. Lewis, "Une devise de chevalerie inconnue, créée par un comte de Foix," in *Essays in later medieval French history* (London – Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1985), 29–36.

²² Pastoureau, *Traité*, 146.

²³ Boulton D'Arcy, *Knights of the Crown*, 342–344.

eagle, genet, greyhound; 5) eagle, genet, fox, yale. Even if several of these badges come either from the lady's arms or from previous family badges – but the same is true of men badges! –, women also prove able to create their own badges. For instance, such is the case of the genet, the small animal allowing a play on words with the name of its owner (e.g., Jeanne de Laval, Jeanne de Valois) since the French word for genet, viz. *genette*, is very close to *Jeanette*, which is Jeanne's diminutive form. And such is also the case of Jane Seymour's panther. One cannot resist evoking here the episode that took place in the 1530s at the court of Henry VIII after Ann Boleyn had been succeeded by Jane Seymour. With a due regard to economy, ten of Ann Boleyn's leopards that stood in Hampton Court Palace's garden were transformed into Jane Seymour's panthers by 'new making of hedds and the taylls'!²⁴

Four case studies

Given the quantitative nature of the previous study as well as the very limited information about heraldic badges (viz. the name of the animal and the date of the badge), the reader must feel somewhat frustrated. Indeed, our investigation did not answer crucial questions such as: why did a given individual take such or such animal as his badge? What was the relationship between the owner and the animal? Did the emblematic animal correspond to an actual animal in real life? In order to address these issues, we will devote the present section to four case studies, namely Giangaleazzo Visconti's leopard, Jean de Berry's bear, Richard III's boar and Louis XII's porcupine. Actually, these case studies will not only give us the opportunity to better understand the relationships between these princes and their emblematic animals, they also will allow us to take into account the various material forms of heraldic badges. Up to now, we have essentially presented these badges as sheer abstract signs, and it is more than time to discover their concrete aspect.²⁵ As a

²⁴ London, *Royal Beasts*, 69.

²⁵ Regarding the material aspect of heraldic badges, the particular yet important case of princely dress has been addressed by the author: O. Vassilieva-Codognot, "L'étoffe de ses rêves : le vêtement du prince et ses parures emblématiques à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Se vêtir à la cour en Europe (1400–1815)*, eds. Isabelle Paresys and Natacha Coquery (Lille: IRHIS, 2011), 43–66.

matter of fact, these badges constituted a non negligible part of the material culture of their times for they often took on the shape of magnificent works of art, rightfully claiming their princely quality.

Bernabò Visconti's leopard

Bernabò Visconti's leopard is actually a cheetah. It is well known that the medieval sense of the word 'leopard' includes altogether the leopard, the panther and the cheetah. However, the leopard badge that was first taken by Bernabò Visconti and subsequently taken again by other members of the Visconti House (Figures 10-2c and 10-2d) refers beyond any doubt to the cheetah. Indeed, at the Visconti court one could find representations of cheetahs that were obviously taken from life (Figures 10-2e and 10-2f), as well as written accounts of hunting with the help of cheetah. Regarding this last point, one will recall that the cheetah was traditionally used in the Near East as a hunting auxiliary and that the feline was trained to be able to ride horses. Western crusaders in the Holy Land discovered this type of hunt and imported in Europe both the cheetah and the corresponding hunting practice. Throughout the Middle Ages, the world fastest animal could thus be seen (successfully) running after its prey in Frederic II's Sicily, in Angevine Naples and in Lusignan Cyprus. By importing the animal in his Milanese Earldom, Giangaleazzo Visconti's father, Galeazzo II, brilliantly renewed this tradition. Galeazzo II and his brother Bernabò, who reigned together over the Milanese Earldom in the 1360s and 1370s, were true hunting aficionados: Galeazzo II created at the time the so-called *parco vecchio* (old park) in the surroundings of Pavia, a game preserve that was to be later tremendously expanded by his son Giangaleazzo (up to c. 20 km²), while Bernabò's kennels numbered thousands of dogs.

Let us turn from the animal to the emblem: Bernabò's original badge was actually a *leopardo galeato* (helmeted cheetah) (Figure 10-2a),²⁶ a response to his brother Galeazzo II's canting badge which displayed the figure of a helmeted (Italian:

²⁶ Gianfranco Rocculi, "Un' impresa decifrata: il 'leopardo galeato'," in *Atti della Società Italiana di Studi Araldici* (Milan, 2009), 207–230.

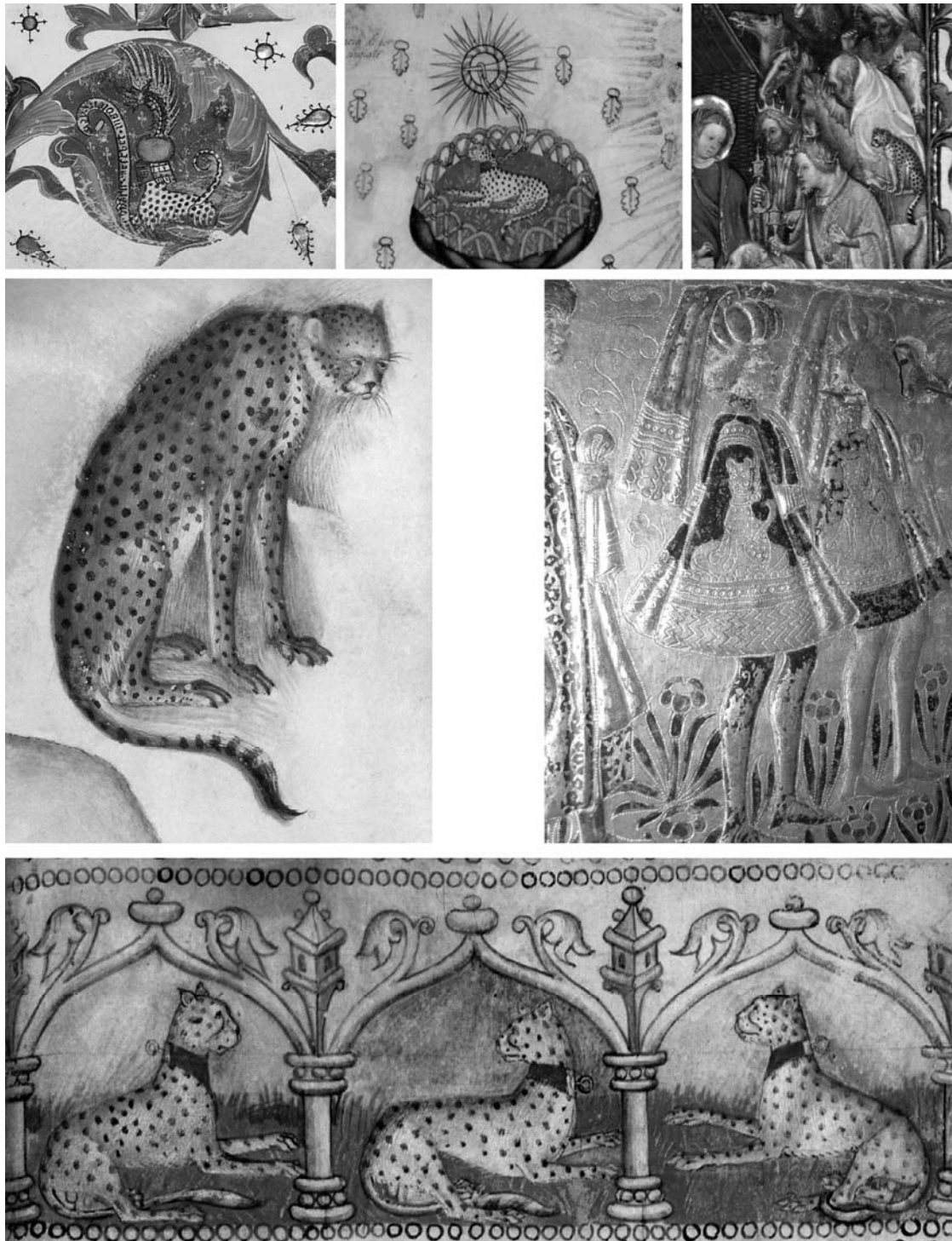


Figure 10-2. Clockwise from top left:

- 2a. Bernabò Visconti's Leopardo galeato badge. *Al-Faql ibn Sahl's Liber iudiciorum et consiliorum*, Workshop of Giovanni Benedetto da Como, Lombardy, before 1385. Paris, BnF, ms. latin 7323, fol. 5. (detail).
- 2b. Sketch for a badge with the inscription 'leon pardo in un giardino' ('leopard in a garden'). Drawing from Giovannino de' Grassi's sketch book, follower of Giovannino de' Grassi, c. 1400. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 1.21, fol. 17 (detail).
- 2c. Emblematic cheetah in an Adoration of the Magi scene. Visconti Prayer book, Michelino da Besozzo, Milan, c. 1410–1420. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. M 944, fol. 6.
- 2d. Sleeve with embroidered cheetah. Panel from a cassone, Northern Italy, second quarter of 15th century. London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. 8974-1863.
- 2e. Three cheetahs in front of their kennels. Giovannino de' Grassi's sketch book, Giovannino de' Grassi, 1380–1398. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 1.21, fol. 8 (detail).
- 2f. Cheetah, possibly drawn from life. Giovannino de' Grassi's sketch book, follower of Giovannino de' Grassi, c. 1400. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 1.21, fol. 21v (detail).



Figure 10-3. Clockwise from top left:

- 3a. Duke Jean de Berry kneeling in prayer while wearing his usual bear-fur hat, together with his bears and swans embroidered coat. Lectionary, Pseudo-Jacquemart de Hesdin, Paris, c. 1400. Bourges, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 35, fol. 17v (detail).
- 3b. Duke Jean de Berry, in his usual bear-fur hat, seated under a canopy decorated with collared bears and swans. Miniature from the calendar (January) of the Très Riches Heures of Jean de Berry, Limbourg Brothers, Bourges, c. 1416. Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 65, fol. 1v (detail).
- 3c. Bear in the margin of a book belonging to Jean de Berry. Evangeliary, Pseudo-Jacquemart de Hesdin, Paris, 1405–1410. Bourges, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 48, fol. 1 (detail).
- 3d. Bear resting at the feet of Jean de Berry's gisant. Marble, Jean de Cambrai, 1416–1438. Bourges, Saint-Étienne cathedral.

galeato) lion. Thus Bernabò's badge is the mere result of the substitution of the noblest feline by its more exotic cousin. And yet, in a certain way, it is also representative of its times, since it combines the perennial aristocratic taste for hunting with the craze for princely menageries. Concretely, this badge took several material forms, all of which involve precious materials and elaborated craftsmanship: jewels, woven fabrics, embroideries, etc. Fortunately, a sketch of such a precious jewel managed to survive to the present day (Figure 10-2b). It is a drawing executed by the workshop of Giovannino de' Grassi and dating from the last decade of the fourteenth century, which in all probability constitutes a design for a Visconti leopard badge. In this case, the owner of the badge in question could not have been Bernabò Visconti, but rather his nephew Giangaleazzo, Galeazzo II's son, who (poisoned and) succeeded him in 1385, and who also had a (non *galeato*) leopard for badge. As a final iconographic observation we note that the animal featured in this sketch is very similar to, and possibly taken from, the right-most cheetah of the previous drawing made by Giovannino de' Grassi himself (Figure 10-2e).

Jean de Berry's bear

Jean de Berry's bear (Figures 10-3a and 10-3d) is a very special case of human-animal identification, the bear being the Duke of Berry's animal *alter ego*. Well, at least his dreamed animal double, since this refined patron of the arts and thoughtful diplomat did probably very rarely behave like the king of the forest – that savage and truly redoubtable beast – he took for his emblem. In spite or because of his very polite manners, Jean de Berry's fascination for the humanoid quadruped leaves no room for doubt. Actually, the Duke of Berry had two different animal badges, the bear and the swan (Figure 10-3b). Taken altogether, both animals form a striking, antithetic pair: the dark and hairy bear vs. the white and pure swan, the most animal of all animals vs. the barely animal bird – Jean de Berry seemingly had a taste for contrast. The origin of his bear badge probably goes back to his youth and more specifically to his captivity in England. He was taken there at the age of twenty, in exchange for the release of his father, King Charles V, who had been previously taken prisoner by the

English at the battle of Poitiers in 1356. It was at the court of Edward III, where he was to spend seven years, that the young Duke of Berry presumably discovered, among other things, the practice of heraldic badges. He took the bear for his own badge very possibly because of the 'bear'/'Berry' phonetic similarity. Whatever his initial motivation may have been, his fascination for the quadruped increased with time. He owned successively three different bears to which he gave rhyming and meaningful names: Chapelain, Martin and Valentin.²⁷ He developed a close relationship with them, to the point that his familiar bear was supposed to follow him during his frequent travels from one place of residence to another! This mobile menagerie presupposed a dedicated staff and specially made carts and obviously incurred non negligible expenses, but for Jean de Berry the constant presence of his animal fetish seems to have been imperious. To his greatest delight, he could enjoy the company of his favourite bear beyond his earthly existence: in the Saint-Étienne cathedral in Bourges where his body rests, Jean de Berry's *gisant* is being faithfully watched over by none other than a stone likeness of his dear Valentin (Figure 10-3c).

Richard III's boar

Richard III's thirty-six month reign over England was the shortest of any adult king since the Norman Conquest and the most controversial one – Richard III's black legend is partly due to Shakespeare's eponymous play. Since Richard III's personality is as complex as his intentions are debatable, it would be foolish to pretend to know why he chose a white boar as his personal badge (Figures 10-4b and 10-4c). It can nevertheless be surmised that he took this emblem partly because his grand-grand-grand-father, King Edward III, included a blue boar among his many badges. During the many years of his long reign, Edward III – the founder of the Order of the Garter and the godfather of English heraldic badges – gathered a complete zoo of heraldic beasts: among them could be found a griffin, a bull, an eagle, a leopard, a unicorn, a dragon and a greyhound.²⁸ But if Edward III's boar is blue, Richard III's is

²⁷ Michel Pastoureau, *L'ours: histoire d'un roi déchu* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), 265.

²⁸ London, *Royal beasts*, 17.

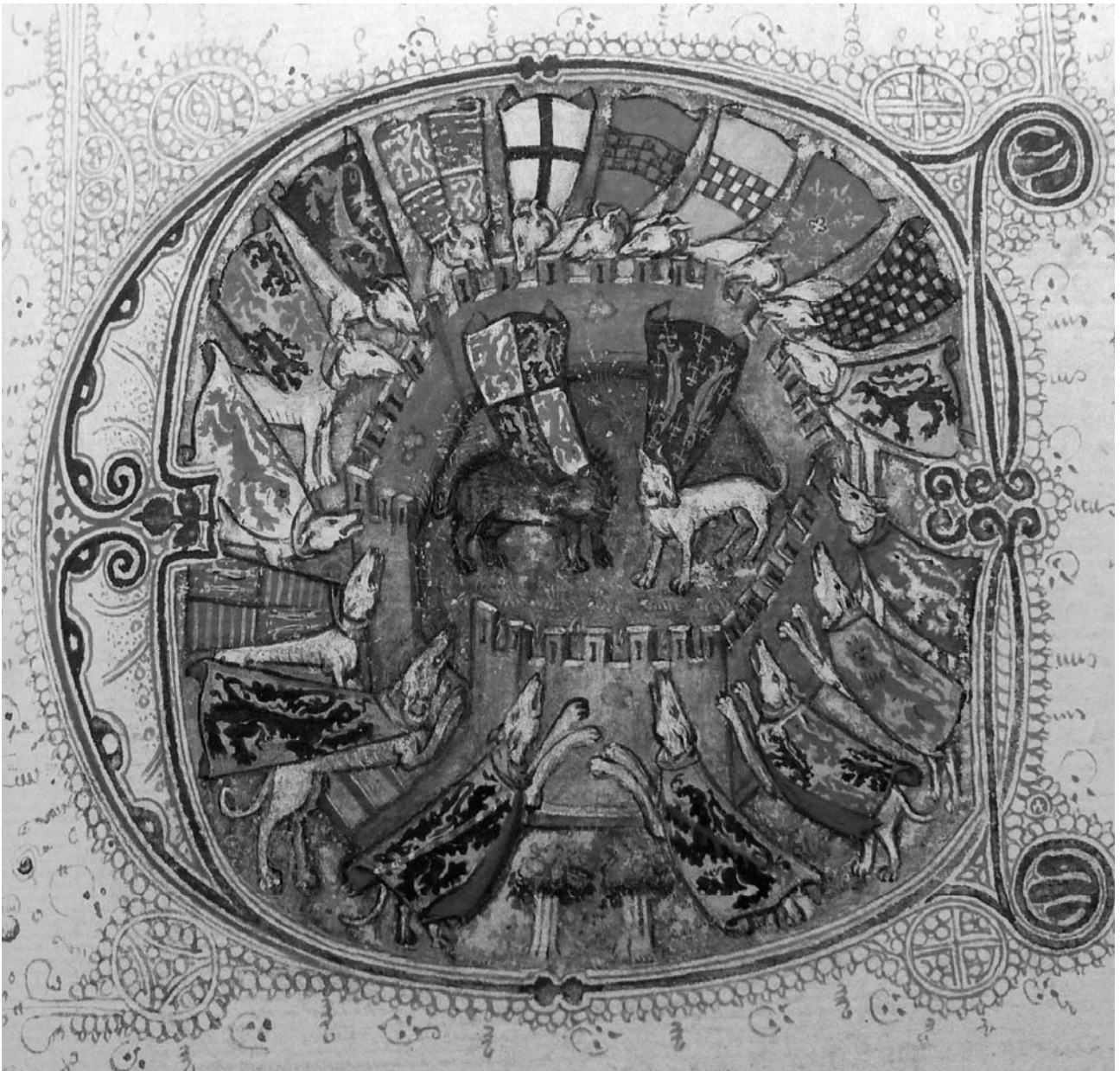


Figure 10-4. Clockwise from top left:

4a. Boar vs. greyhound fight, allegorical representation of the real fight between Jean III de Brabant and Édouard de Bar. *Inventaire des chartes de Brabant*, Adrien van der Ee, 1438. Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume, Manuscrits divers 983, fol. 266 (detail).

4b. Richard's III white boar badge found at Bosworth Field in 2009. Gilt silver, England, late 15th century. Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre.

4c. Richard III's white boar badge as livery collar pendant. Effigy of Ralph Fitzherbert, alabaster, late 15th century. Norbury church.

white: Richard III being a younger son, heraldry's laws, which in fifteenth-century England also applied to heraldic badges, compelled him to differentiate his own beast from his ancestor's, which he did by exchanging silver for azure. Whatever may have been his reasons for choosing this animal badge, it was marvellously fitting, Richard III being as courageous, headstrong and undisguised as the beast itself. He was indeed a valiant military man, a resolute ruler and a lifelong loyal supporter of his elder brother King Edward IV – Richard III's motto being: '*Loyaulté me lie*' ('Loyalty binds me'). But all this did not prevent him from being a man of his time who was well aware of the importance of public opinion. The War of Roses being also a war of signs, for purposes of propaganda he had made more than ten thousand of fustian badges that were to be distributed to his supporters! Indeed, in the Great Wardrobe accounts for the years 1483–1484 is a reference to '*iiij standardes of sarsynett beten with white bores and xiiijM^l conysances of fustian paynted with bores.*'²⁹ It was while he was carrying one of these banners that Sir Percival Thirlwall, Richard III's standard-bearer, died at the final battle of Bosworth Field, in the early morning of August 22, 1485. It is commonly believed that on seeing his barons' defection, Richard III himself hastened the battle's fatal outcome by stubbornly charging at the heart of the enemy's ranks, like the true boar he was – or rather had become in public opinion.

Louis XII's porcupine

Louis XII's porcupine is yet another illustration of the afterlife of heraldic badges. In this case, Louis XII revived the porcupine badge from his grandfather Louis d'Orléans. We have already seen that Louis d'Orléans's aggressiveness accounted for the choice of many of his badges. But what was the little rodent's status in Louis' days? Following Pliny, one thought that the animal was able not only to defend itself thanks to its pikes, but also to attack his enemies by throwing

the said pikes upon them. By the way, it may quite possibly be the case that Louis d'Orléans owned porcupines. There are actually two possibilities: the first one regards his father-in-law, who was none other than the well-known animal collector Giangaleazzo Visconti and who could perfectly have offered the little rodent to his son-in-law as a present since at the time his menagerie surely included porcupines (Figure 10-5c); the second possibility has to do with Cyprus, for one will recall that medieval Cyprus was a natural home to porcupines. Returning now to Louis XII, it is significant that the French King revived the porcupine badge in the 1480s, that is to say before embarking in his Italian wars. He did so both because he considered himself the legitimate heir of the Duchy of Milan through his grand-mother Valentina Visconti, Louis d'Orléans's wife, and because the aggressive symbolism of this badge presented him as a determined warrior, which suited him perfectly. Consequently, during the years of Louis XII's Italian wars, the porcupine made several appearances under different guises. Not only was its figure painted of the French soldiers' armours, but, more imaginatively, the animal was also featured in a *tableau vivant* that was staged on the occasion of Louis XII's first Joyous Entry into Paris in 1498: a large (viz. twenty-foot long and thirteen-foot high) mechanical porcupine was able to raise its gold and silver spikes, turn its head and move its eyes!³⁰ In the following years, Louis XII's aggressive porcupine badge seems to have been sidelined while a new, milder badge took centre stage. Its figure consisted of a large beehive and a swarm of bees, and whose motto was '*non utitur aculeo rex cui paremur*' ('the king to whom we are subject refrains from using his sting') (Figure 10-5e).³¹ Thanks to the influence of humanism, Latin was especially fashionable at the time, and all subsequent badges of the Kings of France would bear Latin mottoes. This is probably the reason why Louis XII's porcupine badge is retrospectively thought of as having been complemented by the '*cominus et eminus*' ('from near and far') motto. Nothing is less certain. Indeed, all contemporary artefacts displaying a porcupine we are aware of do not bear such a motto (Figure 10-5d). Actually,

²⁹ Anne F. Sutton and Peter W. Hammond, eds., *The Coronation of Richard III: the extant documents* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton – New York: St Martin Press, 1983), 174. The painter of these banners was called William Melborne, as is recorded in another document: 'William Melborne for betyng and gylding of iiij standards, beten with the bore and the Kynges worde upon sarsynett of the sore of the Great Warderobe, every pece beting xl s. : viij li.,' *ibid.* 133.

³⁰ Nicole Hochner, "Louis XII and the porcupine: transformations of a royal emblem," *Renaissance Studies* 15/1 (2001): 21–22.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 27.



Figure 10-5. Clockwise from top left:

- 5a. Embroidered wolves on the sleeve of Louis d'Orléans. Christine de Pizan's *Queen manuscript*, Cité des Dames Master, Paris, 1410–1414. London, British Library, Harley ms. 4431, fol. 95 (detail).
- 5b. Emblematic bell-collared wolves in the opening miniature of a manuscript dedicated to Louis d'Orléans. Sallust's *De conjuratione Catilinae*, Bedford Master, Paris, c. 1404–1407. Paris, BnF, ms. lat. 9684, fol. 1 (detail).
- 5c. Porcupine drawn from life and other animals. Giovannino de' Grassi's sketch book, Giovannino de' Grassi, 1380–1398. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. Cassaf. 1.21, fol. 5 (detail).
- 5d. Cannon with Louis XII's porcupine badge. Bronze, 1498–1515. Paris, Musée de l'Armée.
- 5e. Foreground: Louis XII's beehive badge; background: Louis XII's porcupine badge. Jean Marot's *Le Voyage de Gênes*, Jean Bourdichon, c. 1508. Paris, BnF, ms. fr. 5091, fol. 15v (detail).

the main source for the previous assertion seems to be a mid-sixteenth-century book, namely Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa militari e amorose* to which we shall now turn.

Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa militari e amorose*

Written at the very end of his life by the famous humanist during the summer *otium* of 1551 and published in 1555 three years after his death, Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa militari e amorose* is an extremely important treaty on heraldic badges. Well, at least on sixteenth-century badges, since its informative value regarding the actual genesis of fourteenth-century badges is close to zero. On the other hand, Paolo Giovio's treaty will perfectly introduce us to the developments of para-heraldry at that time that his book both recorded and accelerated, for it constituted partly a descriptive and partly a normative work. By the mid-sixteenth century, heraldic badges were more and more systematically composed of both a figure and a motto, this latter being written in a foreign language, preferably Latin. To put it in Giovio's words: the *impresa* needs both *corpo ed anima* (body and soul), i.e. figure and motto – the medieval heraldic badge is dead, long live the modern *impresa*! This collusion of word and image, as well as the introduction of (previously unheard) Latin, is the hint of the heraldic badge's intellectual turn. The prince's secretary, who now proudly calls himself a humanist, is more and more frequently involved in the making of his master's (and occasionally other princes') heraldic badges, and Paolo Giovio himself is the perfect exponent of this fashion. It may be observed in passing that this advent of a new category of heraldry specialists recalls the fourteenth-century advent of another semiotic specialist: the herald.

With respect to the collection of heraldic badges presented in the previous section, the *impresae* gathered and discussed by Paolo Giovio differ on numerous points: they are far (nearly ten times) less numerous; their owners are preponderantly Italian, whether they be dynastic princes or common *condottieri*; in the overwhelmingly majority of cases, they were creations from that time, several of which were due to Paolo Giovio himself. These *impresae* thus constituted the most

up-to-date personal emblems of their time and accordingly set the tone for the rest of Europe, not least because they appear in Paolo Giovio's influential and authoritative book. But what about the animals? Among the hundred *impresae* or so contained in the book there are thirty animals, fifteen of which are redoubtable beasts – these figures are perfectly in line with the previous figures for the years 1490–1520 (cf. Table 10-1). Here is the list of these redoubtable beasts, in their order of appearance in the book: lion, porcupine, salamander, greyhound, falcon, rhinoceros, unicorn, elephant, griffon, lion, scorpion, crocodile, lion, fox and wolf.³² Turning to the figures' intended meaning, Paolo Giovio's explanations can be summed up as follows: two of the lions are merely their owners' heraldic animals whereas the signification of the third one, which constituted Lorenzo de' Medici's badge, is completely lost to Paolo Giovio's contemporaries, as regretfully admitted by the author himself; the griffon is also the heraldic animal of its owner; the frightening crocodile is only featured for its tears, as stated by the motto which reads '*crocodili lacrimae*' ('crocodile's tears'), alluding to that proverbial token of hypocrisy; the porcupine and the salamander are the two French royal badges that were already accounted for; the unicorn and the scorpion are paradoxically only evoked for their curative, alexipharmic properties: both the horn of the first and the dead body of the second were believed to remove poison; the elephant, is fighting with, and eventually triumphing of, his mortal enemy, viz. the dragon; the greyhound is redoubtable, as explains the motto: '*quietum nemo impune lacesset*' ('no one attacks the quiet with impunity'); the falcon remains unexplained, but may possibly have been chosen because it is a redoubtable beast; the rhinoceros proves invincible (motto: '*non huelvo sin vencer*' – 'I do not come back without victory' –); the fox is as astute as ferocious, as stated in the motto: '*simul astu et dentibus utor*'; the wolf is represented while fleeing a couple of dogs, with a slaughtered sheep in its mouth, thus living up to its image of outlaw (motto: '*pavent oves, timent canes, intrepidus maneo*' – 'the sheep are scared, the dogs afraid, but I remain impassive' –).

³² They can be found respectively on pages 14, 25, 27, 38, 43, 51, 67, 78, 83, 93, 109, 120, 131, 145 and 146 of the first edition of Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresa militari e amorose* (Rome: Antonio Barre, 1555).

Obviously, some of these *imprese* conform to our notion of redoubtable beast. Leaving aside the animals that were brought in merely for heraldic reasons, we are left with the greyhound, the falcon, the rhinoceros, the fox and the wolf, all of which are essentially featured in the previous *imprese* because they are powerful animals. The first two may be discarded since they are old, fifteenth-century *imprese*: the (unexplained) falcon belonged to Pietro de' Medici and the greyhound to Francesco Sforza – his greyhound being actually the mere revival of an even older Visconti *impresa*. Now the remaining four *imprese* were designed by Paolo Giovio himself: he invented the rhinoceros *impresa* for Alessandro de' Medici by drawing his inspiration from the famous rhinoceros sent by the King of Portugal to the pope in 1515; he excerpted from Pliny the elephant vs. dragon story³³ in order to create the corresponding *impresa* which records the fierce and famous Fieschi vs. Fregosi vendetta; he conceived both the fox and wolf *imprese* for obscure *condottieri*. Regarding these last two *imprese*, it is worth observing that they come at the very end of a book which, in accordance with the usual practice of heraldic armorials, is hierarchically ordered, starting with the emperor and the king of France and ending with Italian *capitani di ventura*. In designing these four *imprese* the shrewd bishop of Nocera perfectly knew who deserved what, i.e. which animal was appropriate for which owner: the invincible rhinoceros for the Medici prince, the mighty³⁴ elephant for the eminent Genoese kin and the *Roman de Renart's* protagonists for the common people. Indeed, if at the end of the fourteenth century Louis d'Orléans still wanted to be seen as a wolf, it is significant that, one hundred and fifty years later, the *canis lupus* badge is then deemed to be only good for an obscure *condottiere*.

We previously noted that the elephant vs. dragon anecdote was taken from Pliny. It is also well worth noting that several of the previous, admittedly far-fetched, properties of redoubtable beasts are also drawn from Pliny (porcupine,³⁵

salamander³⁶ and scorpion),³⁷ Erasmus (crocodile)³⁸ or medieval lore (unicorn).³⁹ As a matter of fact, this is not peculiar to redoubtable beasts, and many of the other animals, as well as many of the remaining entities (plants, minerals, heavenly bodies, human artefacts, etc.), appearing in the book function in the same way: these figures are essentially the bearers of similar marvellous and mythical properties which are very often taken from Pliny, his *Naturalis historia* being Paolo Giovio's principal source of inspiration. Having arrived at this point, one cannot help thinking that the modern *impresa* is not so much interested in redoubtable beasts simply for their mere redoubtable character. Rather, it seems that the figure (whether animal or not, redoubtable or not) appearing in the modern *impresa* is but the vehicle for expressing an uncommon, erudite metaphor that is taken from, and refers to, the classical tradition. As regards this last topic, the importance of Antiquity in the book is truly remarkable, for numerous *imprese* refer not only to the great figures of Jupiter, Mercury, Atlas and other gods or demigods, but also to more obscure historical facts involving consul Fabritius, Phalaris's brazen bull, Mucius Scaevola's (right) hand, Juno Lacinia's or Diana Efesia's temples and so on. In addition to all this, several mottoes are directly taken from Virgil or Cicero, testifying to the book's fascination for Antiquity. There is nothing very surprising about this: Renaissance Italy was obsessed with its Roman past and Paolo Giovio himself was an historian. Going back to France and to Louis XII's porcupine, one will recall that, owing to archaeological evidence, the motto '*cominus et eminus*' – an elegant alliterative formulation obliquely alluding to Pliny's description of the animal – does not seem to have been in use, at least not widely, during the time of Louis XII, but appears instead to have been a later addition. If this is really the case, then the anecdote is very telling, for it implies that it was a must for a badge to have a (preferably Latin) motto in the 1550s. By then the porcupine was no longer seen primarily as a redoubtable exotic beast, but rather as the mere vehicle for an erudite and alliterative

³³ Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, VIII, 12.

³⁴ In Pliny's narrative the elephant is mighty but not invincible, for the elephant and the dragon both die at the end of the battle. In Paolo Giovio's rendering of the story, the issue of the battle is implicitly (and very probably intentionally) different, since in the end the elephant simply '*ammazza*' ('kills') the dragon – end of story.

³⁵ Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, VIII, 125.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, X, 188.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, XI, 90.

³⁸ Erasmus, *Collected works of Erasmus: Adage II i 1 to II vi 100*, trans. R.A.B. Mynors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 222 (adage II iv 60).

quotation. In the sixteenth century, at least in the more advanced intellectual circles, to be (a) redoubtable (beast) is not as fashionable as it was previously: it is simply no longer enough.

* * *

Looking back at the evolution of para-heraldic devices over time, and at the risk of grossly oversimplifying, the following picture emerges: the original thirteenth-century animal crest almost physically turns the knight who wears it into an animal, since the man actually bears the beast's horns, feathers or teeth. In the next century, the nascent heraldic badge indicates a further, yet slightly more removed, symbolic identification between man and animal. In the case of a collared animal, this identification is even more removed: the man is no longer the beast, but rather its owner, and he inherits its redoubtable character by a sort of transitivity – the one provided by the associative character of symbols and words. At the turn of the sixteenth century, the redoubtable beast metaphor – that archaic paradigm of aggressiveness – begins to lose some ground as the badge's owner prefers other metaphors to express his ideal self, turning to more subtle properties of animals, plants or minerals. And yet, during the Renaissance military men were as heroic as ever – or rather, as heroic as they ever pretended to be. But instead of dreaming of dazzling adventures in an Arthurian forest full of redoubtable beasts, they were gazing at humanity's most glorious past, namely Antiquity – exchanging thus animal otherness for cultural otherness. Consequently, their role models became Jason, Alexander, Ulysses and above all Hercules. Innumerable are the sixteenth-century princes and kings who have been allegorically portrayed under the guise – the Nemea lion's skin – of the great Stoic hero! Redoubtable beasts play hardly any role in this grandiose revival of heroic Antiquity, except that of designated victims: the crazy horses, the furious bull, the ubiquitous hydra are but the *faire-valoir* of (super)human valiance. At the threshold of the early modern times, the sixteenth-century hero definitively leaves the ancestral, mythical forest – abandoning to rust and dust the medieval *speculum* of redoubtable beasts.

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³⁹ Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 119–127.

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