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*Cities, Citizens, and their Signs: Heraldic
Communication and Urban Visual Culture in Late
Medieval England and Germany*

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**Cities, Citizens, and their Signs:
Heraldic Communication and Urban Visual Culture
in Late Medieval England and Germany**

Marcus Meer

2019

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Abstract

Whereas historians and heraldists tend to discuss heraldry in terms of the nobility, this thesis demonstrates that heraldic communication was a ubiquitous and versatile element of urban visual culture in the cities of late medieval England and Germany. To understand its role in urban societies—and in contrast to the systematisation and interpretation of armorial design in traditional heraldic scholarship—emphasis is placed on the contemporary perceptions and communicative functions of coats of arms. Whose arms did townspeople see in the urban space? Which meanings did they attribute to their display? For which purposes did they themselves employ heraldry? Were oft-alleged differences between English and German cities reflected in the heraldic practices of their inhabitants? Four chapters explore these questions with regard to the heraldic signs of burgess families, craft and merchant guilds, municipal bodies, and ‘outsiders’ such as kings, princes, and other nobles in a multi-medial, cross-disciplinary context of textual sources (chronicles, council and court records, legislation, account books, grants of arms), material evidence (houses, town and guild halls, gates, monuments, churches), and ephemeral occasions (processions, entries, funerals, warfare, revolt). Heraldic signs emerge as visual embodiments of their bearers’ identity which functioned beyond mere identification. Late medieval townspeople related heraldry to concepts of chivalry, morality, antiquity, and lineage, and perceived arms in relation to notions of ‘honour’ that formed a fundamental component of individual and collective identity. This perception allowed for townsmen (as well as noble outsiders) to use heraldry and its display—but also its defacement and destruction—to represent, reinforce, and improve their place in the urban hierarchy, to visualise, perpetuate, and alter social relations and political structures, and to communicate, contest, and reassert claims to possession and power in the urban space.

Conventions

Unless a translator is acknowledged, all translations from languages other than English are mine. Square brackets inside quotes indicate additions, omissions, or changes to the original text. Names of German persons and places are given in their German form unless an English version is more established (e.g. Nuremberg and Cologne, Emperor Charles IV and Anne of Bohemia). All URIs have been checked on 25 June 2019.

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Abbreviations

ASSB: Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, Augsburg

BL: British Library, London

Bod.: Bodleian Libraries, Oxford

BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

CA: College of Arms, London

CDS: *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*

CLB: Harris, *The Coventry Leet Book*

GNM: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

HAB: Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

HAK: Historisches Archiv, Cologne

KHV: Kuske, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kölner Handels und Verkehrs*

LMA: Metropolitan Archives, London

NA: National Archives, London

PAS: *Portable Antiquities Scheme*

REED: *Records of Early English Drama*

RIO: *Regesta Imperii Online*

UBB: Hänselmann, *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Braunschweig*

YCR: Raine, *York Civic Records*

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1 Introduction: History, Heraldry, and the Late Medieval City

Would there were schools of ‘visual history’ paralleling ‘oral history’! For if historians have become more sensitive to juxtaposing what people said against what they read, we still have a long way to go in ‘seeing’ what people saw, and in interpreting the significance of visual signs. [...] Heraldic devices, inn signs, funeral effigies, wall posters, heads on coins, and so forth—how should these be ‘read’? How far should the historian see them as primarily ornamental, merely duplicating, at most reinforcing, the information and sentiments which people derive from other sources, above all from the spoken and printed word? Or were they integral and special to the processes of creating and conveying the wider sign-systems of former times?¹

Ever since Roy Porter’s call to arms almost thirty years ago, scholarship has done much to tackle this lack of interest in visual matters. W. J. Mitchell soon observed a ‘pictorial turn’ analogous to the emphasis on the communicative construction of society proposed by the ‘linguistic turn’.² Under the umbrella term of ‘visual culture’,³ this approach now takes a broad interest in ‘the visual’, from painting, sculpture, photography, and film to fashion, advertisements, and emoticons, in fact ‘all human products with a pronounced visual aspect—including those that do not, as a matter of social practice, carry the imprimatur of art’.⁴ At the core lies an interest in ‘values and identities that are constructed in and communicated by visual culture’,⁵ combined with the belief that any analysis of the visual ‘must be grounded not just in the interpretation of images, but also in the description of the social field of the gaze, the construction of subjectivity, identity, desire, memory, and imagination’.⁶

In this effort, scholars not only turned towards the pragmatic uses of the visual for the purpose of communication, but also towards the mind-sets fundamental to

¹ Roy Porter, ‘Seeing the Past’, *Past & Present*, 118 (1988), pp. 186–187.

² W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, 1994). On the wider development of the pictorial (or iconic) turn in relation to the linguistic turn, see Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture* (Berlin; Boston, 2016), ch. 7.

³ For overviews of this ‘interdiscipline’, see Margaret Dikovitskaya, *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn* (Cambridge [Mass.], 2005), esp. pp. 1–45; Stuart Hall and Jessica Evans, ‘What Is Visual Culture?’, in Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds), *Visual Culture: The Reader* (London; Thousand Oaks, 1999).

⁴ James D. Herbert, ‘Visual Culture/Visual Studies’, in Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (eds), *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago, 2012), p. 452.

⁵ Malcolm Barnard, *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture* (Basingstoke; New York, 2001), p. 1.

⁶ W. J. T. Mitchell, ‘Interdisciplinarity and Visual Culture’, *Art Bulletin*, 77.4 (1995), p. 544.

perceptions of the visual, which enable it to function as a means of communication in the first place. Visual culture studies, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright propose, thus comprise a quest for specific ‘practices of looking’ at visual matters, a search for ‘the assumptions that we and others bring to them at different times and in different places and to decode the visual language that they “speak”’.⁷ ‘Seeing’ is seen as specific to cultural, historical, and situational contexts, which means that ‘meaning’ becomes the result of ‘processes of interpretation, engagement, and negotiation’.⁸ In the same vein, Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall propose that ‘thinking of “visual culture” is in terms of historically specific combinations of meanings and subjects—“scopic regimes” whose histories remain to be written’.⁹ Here, the idea of ‘scopic regimes’ corresponds to Martin Jay’s sense of the word as ‘the dominant protocols of seeing and being on view in a specific culture at a specific time’.¹⁰

What such approaches to visual culture have in common is a fundamentally historical perspective. ‘Seeing’ is understood diachronically, as a cultural practice changing over time, although synchronically, too, ‘visual culture is always contested’, as Nicholas Mirzoeff warns: ‘no one way of seeing is ever wholly accepted in a particular historical moment.’¹¹ Among the first proponents of this historical line of thought was Michael Baxandall, who in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* framed the relationship between Renaissance paintings and their beholder in terms of ‘the period eye’, that is the ‘mental equipment [...] determined by the society which has influenced his [the beholder’s] experience’.¹² This sentiment was echoed in David Freedberg’s *The Power of Images*, dedicated to ‘the extraordinarily abundant evidence for the ways in which people of all classes and cultures have responded to images’, ‘high’ as well as

⁷ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford; New York, 2001), p. 46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁹ Hall and Evans, ‘What Is Visual Culture?’, p. 6.

¹⁰ Martin Jay, ‘Scopic Regime’, *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Chichester, 2008), <<http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/9781405186407.wbiecs017>>.

¹¹ Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London; New York, 1999), p. 44.

¹² Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd edn (Oxford; New York, 1988), p. 40.

'low'.¹³ Freedberg emphasised the 'conditioning role of context', and stressed that 'responses are forged on the anvil of culture and in the fire of particular history'.¹⁴

Advocates of the cultural turn such as Pierre Bourdieu and Clifford Geertz went one step further still and called for a *sociologie de perception* and a 'history of signs and symbols' respectively,¹⁵ echoing Mitchell's vision of visual culture as a subject concerned with 'the visual construction of the social, not just the social construction of vision'.¹⁶ In the wake of the various 'turns' towards the communicative construction of society, this impetus subsequently fell on particularly fruitful soil in the field of art history.¹⁷ At the same time, it also prompted the emergence of a 'visual history' as a field in its own right with much broader interests.¹⁸ Inspired by the work of Baxandall and Freedberg, the medieval period remained no exception.

1.1 Medieval Communication, the Visual, and the Urban Sphere

In medieval scholarship, too, the linguistic turn prompted an increased interest in the role of communication for 'culture' understood as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life', to quote Peter Burke.¹⁹ Albrecht Classen in the *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, for instance, acknowledges that 'communication has been of central importance for all human societies throughout time, and so also in

¹³ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989), p. xix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and Yvette Delsaut, 'Pour une sociologie de la perception', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 40.1 (1981); Clifford Geertz, 'Art as a Cultural System', *Modern Language Notes*, 91.6 (1976), p. 1498.

¹⁶ W. J.T. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 1.2 (2002), p. 170.

¹⁷ Iván Castañeda, 'Visual Culture, Art History and the Humanities', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 8.1 (2009); Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (London, 2007).

¹⁸ Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?*, 2nd edn (Cambridge; Malden, 2008), p. 136. See also Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Images and the Historian', in Axel Bolvig and Phillip G. Lindley (eds), *History and Images: Towards a New Iconology* (Turnhout, 2003).

¹⁹ Peter Burke, 'Communication', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *A Concise Companion to History* (Oxford, 2011), p. 234.

the Middle Ages, insofar as it establishes structure, community, and institutions'.²⁰ In 1999 already, Marco Mostert has likewise noted a 'rising tide' of studies on the various forms and social functions of medieval communication throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and the size of the most recent edition of his *Bibliography of Works in Medieval Communication* clearly shows 'the continuing interest of medievalists in matters relating to medieval communication'.²¹

Although initially it was mainly language in the form of written and—to a somewhat lesser extent—oral communication, medievalists have since embraced visual communication as well.²² Important impulses came from research on rituals, which are now seen as more than mere 'superficialities' (*Äußerlichkeiten*), as Franz-Josef Arlinghaus puts it, but instead as crucial performances that 'did' things in the sense of John Austin's speech act theory, capable of changing and forging reality.²³ Attention is now being paid to non-verbal, 'symbolic' forms of communication associated with senses such as sound and smell, but first and foremost sight—from facial expressions, gestures, and position and movement in space to dress, insignia, images, architecture, and other visible matters. At the core is the conviction that such forms of symbolic communication, just like communication in general, served a constitutive function in

²⁰ Albrecht Classen, 'Communication in Medieval Studies', in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends* (Berlin; New York, 2010), I, p. 330. See also Hedwig Röckelein, 'Kommunikation – Chancen und Grenzen eines mediävistischen Forschungszweiges', *Das Mittelalter*, 6.1 (2001).

²¹ Marco Mostert, 'New Approaches to Medieval Communication?', in Marco Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), p. 15; Marco Mostert, *A Bibliography of Works in Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 2012), p. xiii.

²² E.g. Yoshihisa Hattori (ed.), *Political Order and Forms of Communication in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Rome, 2014); Christian Krötzel and Miikka Tamminen (eds), *Changing Minds: Communication and Influence in the High and Later Middle Ages* (Rome, 2013); Marco Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999); Romy Günthart and Michael Jucker (eds), *Kommunikation im Spätmittelalter: Spielarten – Wahrnehmungen – Deutungen* (Zurich, 2005); Karl-Heinz Spiess and Oliver Auge (eds), *Medien der Kommunikation im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2003); Gerd Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2001); Helmut Hundsbichler (ed.), *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Vienna, 1992).

²³ Franz-Josef Arlinghaus, 'Rituale in der historischen Forschung der Vormoderne', *Zeitschrift für Neuere Rechtsgeschichte*, 31.3–4 (2009), p. 291. See also Gerhard Jaritz, 'Ritual and Performance', in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends* (Berlin; New York, 2010), II.

representing, perpetuating, and changing social order in the Middle Ages.²⁴ Today ‘the visual’ is firmly established as a research topic of medieval studies.²⁵ Even the term ‘visual culture’ has been appropriated by medieval history, showing that, to quote Kathryn Starkey, ‘from the perspective of the medievalist, understanding visual communication and concepts of perception in the Middle Ages is crucial to understanding medieval culture’.²⁶

A similar picture presents itself in urban history, which took the same ‘turns’ towards culture, communication, and the visual.²⁷ Derek Keen calls communication ‘the most fundamental element in town life’, just like Irmgard Christa Becker conceives of the city as a ‘space for communication’ (*Kommunikationsraum*), a place of ‘concentrated communication’ (*verdichtete Kommunikation*) in the words of Jörg Oberste, a pre-modern ‘public sphere’ (*Öffentlichkeit*) even, which enabled and encouraged the exchange of information through various forms of communication, as Christian Liddy, Pierre Monnet, and Gerd Schwerhoff argue.²⁸ While this did include verbal forms of

²⁴ In German academic discourse, such approaches are gathered under the label of ‘symbolic communication’, albeit in different schools of thought. For the Münster school, see for instance Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Tim Neu and Christina Brauner (eds), *Alles nur symbolisch? Bilanz und Perspektiven der Erforschung symbolischer Kommunikation* (Berlin; Boston, 2013). For its counterpart based in Constance, see Rudolf Schlögl, ‘Symbole in der Kommunikation: Zur Einführung’, in Rudolf Schlögl, Bernhard Giesen, and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds), *Die Wirklichkeit der Symbole: Grundlagen der Kommunikation in historischen und gegenwärtigen Gesellschaften* (Konstanz, 2004).

²⁵ In addition to the literature cited in n. 22 above, see also Janet Backhouse, John Cherry and Ann Payne (eds), *Signs and Symbols: Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2009); Mariëlle Hageman and Marco Mostert (eds), *Reading Images and Texts: Medieval Images and Texts as Forms of Communication* (Turnhout, 2005); Wim Blockmans and A. Janse (eds), *Showing Status: Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1999); Klaus Schreiner and Gabriela Signori (eds), *Bilder, Texte, Rituale: Wirklichkeitsbezug und Wirklichkeitskonstruktion politisch-rechtlicher Kommunikationsmedien in Stadt- und Adelsgesellschaften des späten Mittelalters* (Berlin, 2000); Andrea Löther et al. (eds), *Mundus in imagine: Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter: Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner* (Munich, 1996).

²⁶ Kathryn Starkey, ‘Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages’, in Kathryn Starkey (ed.), *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages* (New York, 2005), p. 2. See also Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 2009); Thomas Tolley, ‘Visual Culture’, in Raluca L. Radulescu and Alison Truelove (eds), *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester; New York, 2005); Colin F. Richmond, ‘The Visual Culture of Fifteenth-Century England’, in A. F. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 2001).

²⁷ See also Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn, ‘Medieval Urban Culture: Conceptual and Historiographical Problems’, in Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn (eds), *Medieval Urban Culture* (Turnhout, 2017).

²⁸ Derek Keene, ‘Communication in Medieval Towns’, in Neven Budak, Finn-Einar Eliassen, and Katlin Szende (eds), *Towns and Communication: Communication in Towns* (Akron, 2011), p. 10; Irmgard Christa

communication such as administrative records, town chronicles or ceremonial addresses of the citizens as well as rumours and slander, recent scholarship also emphasises the performative, material, and visual dimensions of urban communication in the later Middle Ages:²⁹ illuminations in written documents; depictions in the stained glass of urban churches and houses; textiles such as tapestries, dresses, and banners; objects such as furniture, weapons, and silverware; architecture of buildings and fortifications; the sound and significance of bells and chants; and of course a diverse calendar of urban rituals.³⁰ Important contributions come from historians interested in 'space' as another socially constructed and fundamentally visible subject of research. In this context, social hierarchies are understood as reflected in and shaped by the built architecture of the city (e.g. churches, town and guild halls, houses, monuments, marketplaces) just like the ephemeral spaces of urban ritual (e.g. processions, entries,

Becker, 'Die Stadt als Kommunikationsraum – Eine Einführung', in Irmgard Christa Becker (ed.), *Die Stadt als Kommunikationsraum: Reden, Schreiben und Schauen in Großstädten des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Ostfildern, 2011), p. 9; Jörg Oberste, 'Verdichtete Kommunikation und städtische Kultur', in Jörg Oberste (ed.), *Kommunikation in mittelalterlichen Städten* (Regensburg, 2007), p. 9; Christian D. Liddy, 'Bill Casting and Political Communication: A Public Sphere in Late Medieval English Towns?', in Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea and Beatriz Arizaga Bolumburu (eds), *La gobernanza de la ciudad Europea en la Edad Media* (Logroño, 2011); Pierre Monnet, 'Die Stadt, ein Ort der politischen Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter?', in Martin Kintzinger (ed.), *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2011); Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Öffentliche Räume und politische Kultur in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt: Eine Skizze am Beispiel der Reichsstadt Köln', in Uwe Goppold and Rudolf Schlögl (eds), *Interaktion und Herrschaft: Die Politik der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt* (Constance, 2004).

²⁹ Jan Dumolyn et al. (eds), *The Voices of the People in Late Medieval Europe: Communication and Popular Politics* (Turnhout, 2014); Never Budak, Finn-Einar Eilassen and Katalin Szende (eds), *Towns and Communication: Communication in Towns* (Zagreb, 2011); Jörg Oberste (ed.), *Kommunikation in mittelalterlichen Städten* (Regensburg, 2007); Helmut Bräuer and Elke Schlenkrich (eds), *Die Stadt als Kommunikationsraum: Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Karl Czok zum 75. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 2001); Alfred Haverkamp and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds), *Information, Kommunikation und Selbstdarstellung in mittelalterlichen Gemeinden* (Munich, 1998).

³⁰ In addition to the works referenced in nn. 28 and 29, see also Gerrit Deutschländer, Marc von der Höh and Andreas Ranft (eds), *Symbolische Interaktion in der Residenzstadt des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2013); Stefanie Rüter (ed.), *Integration und Konkurrenz: Symbolische Kommunikation in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt* (Münster, 2009); Jörg Oberste and Edith Feistner (eds), *Repräsentationen der mittelalterlichen Stadt* (Regensburg, 2008); Jacoba Van Leeuwen (ed.), *Symbolic Communication Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven, 2006); Marc Boone, Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Jean-Pierre Sosson (eds), *Le verbe, l'image et les représentations de la société urbaine au Moyen Âge* (Antwerp, 2002).



Fig. 1.1: Fifteenth-century manuscript illumination commissioned by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, showing the defeated citizens of Ghent surrendering their guilds' banners to him in 1453. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. 2583, fol. 349v.

funerals, tournaments, election and inauguration of municipal officials) are interpreted as indicative and constitutive of the order of medieval urban society.³¹

³¹ Michel Pauly, 'Space and History as Exemplified by Urban History Research', in Martin Scheutz and Michel Pauly (eds), *Cities and Their Spaces: Concepts and Their Use in Europe* (Cologne; Vienna, 2014). For applications, see Caroline Goodson, Anne Elisabeth Lester and Carol Symes (eds), *Cities, Texts, and Social*

This emphasis on visual matters leads Rudolf Schlögl to conclude that the political and social structure of the medieval city was fundamentally reliant on ‘visibility’ (*Sichtbarkeit*) in order to perpetuate, reinforce, and manipulate the values and norms that constituted urban identities and contributed to a sense of community as well as the inequality of the urban hierarchy.³² Similarly, Mark Mersiowsky echoes Porter’s earlier call for an ambitious visual history, urging that urban historians ought to aim for a ‘history of perception’ (*Wahrnehmungsgeschichte*) that analyses, in depth, the diversity of signs and symbols on display in the urban space, and the processes of (potentially contradictory) interpretation that enabled their role in the communicative constitution of medieval urban society.³³

Historians have since stressed the social and political dimensions of urban signs of identification such as seals and banners, for instance. Just as seals of townsmen and their corporate bodies served as signs of individual and collective identity,³⁴ so banners reinforced a shared sense of togetherness during processions, warfare, and revolt (fig.

Networks, 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space (Farnham; Burlington [Verm.], 2010); Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Historical, Mental, Cultural, and Socio-Economic Investigations* (Berlin; New York, 2009); Peter Arnade, Martha Howell and Walter Simons, ‘Fertile Spaces: The Productivity of Urban Space in Northern Europe’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32.4 (2002); Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobińska (eds), *Medieval Practices of Space* (Minneapolis, 2000); Martha C. Howell, ‘The Spaces of Late Medieval Urbanity’, in Marc Boone and Peter Stabel (eds), *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe* (Leuven, 2000); Susanne Ehrlich and Jörg Oberste (eds), *Städtische Räume im Mittelalter* (Regensburg, 2009); Christoph Dartmann, Marian Füssel and Stefanie Rüther (eds), *Raum und Konflikt: Zur symbolischen Konstituierung gesellschaftlicher Ordnung* (Münster, 2004).

³² Rudolf Schlögl, ‘Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden: Zur kommunikativen Form des Politischen in der vormodernen Stadt’, in Rudolf Schlögl (ed.), *Interaktion und Herrschaft: Die Politik der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt* (Constance, 2004), p. 46.

³³ Mark Mersiowsky, ‘Wege zur Öffentlichkeit: Kommunikation und Medieneinsatz in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt’, in Stephan Albrecht (ed.), *Stadtgestalt und Öffentlichkeit: Die Entstehung politischer Räume in der Stadt der Vormoderne* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2010), p. 16.

³⁴ Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, ‘Towns and Seals: Representation and Signification in Medieval France’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University of Manchester*, 72.3 (1990); John McEwan, ‘The Seals of London’s Governing Elite in the Thirteenth Century’, in Janet Burton (ed.), *Thirteenth Century England XIV: Proceedings of the Aberystwyth and Lampeter Conference, 2011* (Aberystwyth, 2013); Markus Späth, ‘Zeichen bürgerschaftlicher Repräsentation – reichsstädtische Siegel und ihre künstlerischen Kontexte’, in Helge Wittmann (ed.), *Reichszeichen: Darstellungen und Symbole des Reichs in Reichsstädten* (Petersberg, 2015); Franz-Josef Arlinghaus, ‘Konstruktionen von Identität mittelalterlicher Korporationen’, in Markus Späth (ed.), *Die Bildlichkeit korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter: Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2009).



Fig. 1.2: Detailed view of the background of the fifteenth-century Mérode Altarpiece, showing various signs and arms displayed outside the buildings of the city of Liège. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 56.70a–c.

1.1).³⁵ At the same time, Michael Camille highlights, the streets of the medieval city were furnished with a multitude of less prominent signs of identification, which are often disregarded as a ‘mere’ backdrop for more impressive visual matters: signs outside houses, shops, and inns helped to navigate the streets as they made ‘location distinguishable and memorable’ (fig. 1.2).³⁶ They ‘had to announce things for sale and services offered’, while ‘an elaborate sign on one’s house signalled status’.³⁷ Such signifiers even ‘carried powers of jurisdiction and were taken more seriously than decorations suggest’.³⁸

³⁵ Peter Arnade, ‘Crowds, Banners and the Marketplace: Symbols of Defiance and Defeat during the Ghent War of 1452–1453’, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24 (1994); Igor Knezevic, ‘The Green Banner of La Feria: Popular Revolt and Municipal Politics in Early Sixteenth-Century Seville’, in Jan Dumolyn et al. (eds), *The Voices of the People in Late Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2014); Richard C. Trexler, ‘Follow the Flag: The Ciompi Revolt Seen from the Streets’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 46.2 (1984).

³⁶ Michael Camille, ‘Signs of the City: Place, Power, and Public Fantasy in Medieval Paris’, in Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (eds), *Medieval Practices of Space* (Minneapolis, 2000), p. 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 20.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17. See also Werner Paravicini, ‘Krieg der Zeichen? Funktionen, Medien, Formen bürgerlicher und höfischer Repräsentation in Residenzstädten des Alten Reichs: Einführung und Zusammenfassung’, in Jan Hirschbiegel, Kurt Andermann, and Werner Paravicini (eds), *In der Residenzstadt: Funktionen,*

1.2 Towards a Cultural History of Heraldry

Camille briefly mentions another ‘sign system’, namely the ‘heraldic devices’ also included in Porter’s vision of a comprehensive ‘history of seeing’. Coats of arms have received relatively little dedicated attention beyond cursory mentions so far. A tendency to associate heraldry only with the nobility might be to blame for this lack of interest among urban historians, even among those otherwise well aware of the visual diversity of the urban landscape and the prominent place of heraldry inside it. While Camille, for example, stresses the presence of heraldry all over the late medieval city, ‘which announced more radically than any other sign in medieval culture the elision of image and identity’, he still refers to heraldry in terms of ‘sign systems of the aristocracy’, and in explicit opposition to the ‘small urban signs’ with which he is most concerned.³⁹ Adrian Ailes likewise emphasises the importance of the urban space as a preferred place for heraldic display, but his focus, too, is primarily on ‘displays of royal, national, civic, even celestial heraldry at official entries into towns, royal progresses, civic pageants, coronations and possibly royal funeral processions’.⁴⁰ Werner Paravicini’s demonstration of the ubiquity of heraldry in late medieval society is striking in this respect, as it is a city that provides the stage for the exercise.⁴¹ Still, it is through the eyes of a fictional nobleman perambulating the city that coats of arms are seen, although the Lord of Fleckenstein does note the arms of urban families, the arms of guilds, and the municipal arms of the city displayed in the context of town houses, parish churches, guild halls, gates, towers, marketplaces, and other public buildings.

Medien, Formen bürgerlicher und höfischer Repräsentation (Ostfildern, 2014); Valentin Groebner, ‘Zu einigen Parametern der Sichtbarmachung städtischer Ordnung im späten Mittelalter’, in Pierre Monnet and Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds), *Stadt und Recht im Mittelalter = La ville et le droit au Moyen Âge* (Göttingen, 2003); Robert Jütte, ‘Funktion und Zeichen: Zur Semiotik herrschaftlicher Kommunikation in der Stadtgesellschaft’, in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen – Abzeichen – Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993).

³⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁰ Adrian Ailes, ‘Heraldry in Medieval England: Symbols of Politics and Propaganda’, in Peter R. Coss and Maurice Keen (eds), *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge; New York, 2002), p. 102.

⁴¹ Werner Paravicini, ‘Gruppe und Person: Repräsentation durch Wappen im späteren Mittelalter’, in Otto Gerhard Oexle and Andrea von Hülsen-Esch (eds), *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen: Texte, Bilder, Objekte* (Göttingen, 1998).

Next to an association with nobility, another reason for the lack of interest in heraldry in the late medieval city is a more general lack of interest in heraldic matters. Since heraldry as an academic discipline emerged in the eighteenth century, the study of heraldic signs has for the most part been left to heraldists and—in the United Kingdom—the heralds themselves, who are first and foremost interested in practical application and connoisseurial appreciation. Besides an almost obligatory chapter on ‘the heralds’, heraldic textbooks thus focus on the appearance of shields, helmets, and crests, the ‘vocabulary’ of divisions, ordinaries, charges, and tinctures, the ‘grammar’ governing their arrangement, and ‘good practice’ for their textual description in the form of the blazon.⁴² Heraldry, from this point of view, tends to appear as a continuous, universal, and definite system of signification, unsusceptible to historical change and contextual ambiguities. Perceived as narrow, over-specialised interests from the perspective of history, historians thus often seem to share the sentiment of herald (!) Peter le Neve, who in 1696 judged heraldry ‘a study which only loads the memory without improving the understanding’.⁴³ ‘Styles, colours and the gradual shift from symbols to pictures have all been examined in depth’, Fergus Cannan criticises more recently, ‘and yet the wider picture has remained hidden from us.’⁴⁴

However, while newer textbooks still generally tend to follow the established pattern, this narrow focus has begun to broaden.⁴⁵ Historians have started to demonstrate that heraldry, after all, does possess untapped potential as a source for questions of social and cultural history beyond its usefulness as an ancillary science for matters of identification and provenance. Although their emphasis often also remained

⁴² Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (London; Edinburgh, 1909); Charles Boutell, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular* (London, 1863); James Dallaway, *Inquiries into the Origin and Progress of the Science of Heraldry in England: With Explanatory Observations on Armorial Ensigns* (Gloucester, 1793); Gustav A. Seyler, *Geschichte der Heraldik (Wappenwesen, Wappenkunst, Wappenwissenschaft)* (Neustadt [Aisch], 1970); Otto Titan von Hefner, *Handbuch der theoretischen und praktischen Heraldik* (Munich, 1861); Christian Samuel Theodor Bernd, *Handbuch der Wappenwissenschaft* (Leipzig, 1856).

⁴³ BL, Harley 5802, fol. 23r.

⁴⁴ Fergus Cannan, ‘The Myths of Medieval Heraldry’, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 47 (2003), p. 198. See also Michel Pastoureau, *Traité d’héraldique*, 4th edn (Paris, 2003), pp. 11–12; Paravicini, ‘Wappen’, p. 341.

⁴⁵ Pastoureau, *Traité*; Georg Scheibelreiter, *Heraldik* (Vienna, 2006); Donald L. Galbreath and Léon Jéquier, *Handbuch der Heraldik* (Augsburg, 1990); Ottfried Neubecker, *Heraldry: Sources, Symbols & Meaning*, trans. by Nicholas Fry (London, 1999); Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford et al., 1990).

on the heraldry of the nobility, in England important contributions came from Maurice Keen, who paid close attention to the relevance of heraldic sources for the idea of chivalry, and Georg Scheibelreiter in Germany, who similarly approaches heraldic signs as a core aspect of noble self-perception and representation.⁴⁶ In France, it was Michel Pastoureau's intensive study of heraldry that led him to call for a 'history of symbolic systems' (*histoire des systèmes symboliques*), which instead of psychological archetypes seeks to explore the modes of perception and political applications of such signs in their historical contexts.⁴⁷ As a result, Heiko Hartmann in 2010 noted that 'a tendency towards analysis of coats of arms using, for example, theories drawn from media studies, semiotics, sociology, and symbol theory can be observed in recent scholarship', just as Laurent Hablot in 2017 summarises his core pursuit as 'the place of heraldry in medieval visual culture'.⁴⁸

In the last decade, a growing number of historical studies thus demonstrated that medieval heraldry was more than a mere means of identification on the battlefield, on properties, or in churches. Instead, heraldic signs are now explored as a versatile, multi-medial, and ubiquitous form of visual communication at 'the core of (late) medieval culture and society'.⁴⁹ Arms were displayed to claim control over territories and people

⁴⁶ E.g. Maurice Hugh Keen, *Chivalry* (Yale, 2005), chs 7 and 9. Georg Scheibelreiter, 'Wappen und adeliges Selbstverständnis', in Georg Scheibelreiter (ed.), *Wappenbild und Verwandtschaftsgeflecht: Kultur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Forschungen zu Heraldik und Genealogie* (Vienna; Munich, 2006).

⁴⁷ Michel Pastoureau and Claudia Rabel, 'Historie des images, des symboles et de l'imaginaire', in Jean-Claude Schmitt and Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds), *Les tendances actuelles de l'histoire de Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne* (Paris, 2002), esp. pp. 602–603. See also Michel Pastoureau, *L'art héraldique au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2009); Pastoureau, *Traité*.

⁴⁸ Heiko Hartmann, 'Heraldry', in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends* (Berlin; New York, 2010), I, p. 623; Laurent Hablot, 'Heraldic Imagery, Definition, and Principles', in Colum P. Hourihane (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography* (London, 2017), p. 396. See also Ludwig Biewer, 'Wappen als Träger von Kommunikation im Mittelalter: Einige ausgewählte Beispiele', in Karl-Heinz Spiess and Oliver Auge (eds), *Medien der Kommunikation im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2003).

⁴⁹ Torsten Hiltmann, 'Heraldry and History – Why Is There so Much and at the Same Time so Little Heraldry in Historical Research?', *Heraldica Nova*, 2013, <<http://heraldica.hypotheses.org/364>>. For English-language examples, see Fiona Robertson and Peter N. Lindfield (eds), *Semy-de-Lys: Speaking of Arms, 1400–2016* (online publication, 2016), <<https://heraldics2014.wordpress.com/publication-semy-de-lys/>>; Nigel Ramsay (ed.), *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England* (Donington, 2014); Peter R. Coss and Maurice Keen (eds), *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge; New York, 2002). The journal of the German medievalists' association dedicated an entire issue to the subject of 'arms as signs' (*Wappen als Zeichen*), see *Das Mittelalter*, 11.2 (2006). Also in Germany the 'Coats of

just like they were borne to demonstrate personal loyalty and delegated authority;⁵⁰ they were meant to ensure the commemoration of a person and make visible ties of kinship;⁵¹ they gave expression to social hierarchies and communicated ideas about political order;⁵² they visualised and promoted social ambitions,⁵³ which often included genealogical claims as part of political programmes and ‘propaganda’.⁵⁴ In contrast to their display, the removal of heraldic signs expressed social degradation,⁵⁵ while ‘heraldoclastic’ practices of destruction and defacement also allowed for the expression

Arms in Practice’ (*Die Performanz der Wappen*) project at the University of Münster is dedicated to a ‘cultural history of heraldry’. For first results of this project, see Torsten Hiltmann and Laurent Hablot (eds), *Heraldic Artists and Painters in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (Ostfildern, 2017).

⁵⁰ Thomas Schauerte, ‘Heraldische Fiktion als genealogisches Argument: Anmerkungen zur Wiener Neustädter Wappenwand Friedrichs III. und zu ihrer Nachwirkung bei Maximilian’, in Tobias Bulang et al. (eds), *Erzählen und Episteme: Literatur im 16. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 2011); Laurent Hablot, ‘Revêtir le prince: Le héraut en tabard, une image idéale du prince: Pour une tentative d’interprétation du partage emblématique entre prince et héraut à la fin du Moyen Âge à travers le cas bourguignon’, *Revue du Nord*, 366–367.3 (2006).

⁵¹ Laurent Hablot, ‘La mémoire héraldique des Visconti dans la France du XVe siècle’, in Alessandro Savorelli and Laura Cirri (eds), *L’arme segreta: Araldica e storia dell’arte nel Medioevo (secoli XIII–XV)* (Florence, 2015); Michael A. Michael, ‘The Privilege of “Proximity”: Towards a Re-Definition of the Function of Armorial’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 23 (1997); Hans-Rudolf Meier and Sabine Sommerer, ‘Von der kollektiven Identität zur individuellen Ahnenprobe: Heraldik in der spätmittelalterlichen Profanraumdekoration’, in Conrad Lutz and Dominique Rigaux (eds), *Paroles de murs: Peinture murale, littérature et histoire au Moyen Âge/Sprechende Wände: Wandmalerei, Literature und Geschichte im Mittelalter* (Grenoble, 2007).

⁵² Torsten Hiltmann, ‘Potentialities and Limitations of Medieval Armorial as Historical Source: The Representation of Hierarchy and Princely Rank in Late Medieval Collections of Arms in France and Germany’, in Thorsten Huthwelker, Jörg Peltzer, and Maximilian Wemhöner (eds), *Princely Rank in Late Medieval Europe: Trodden Paths and Promising Avenues* (Ostfildern, 2011); Thorsten Huthwelker, *Die Darstellung des Rangs in Wappen und Wappenrollen des späten Mittelalters* (Ostfildern, 2013).

⁵³ Adrian Ailes, ‘Royal Grants of Arms in England before 1484’, in Peter R. Coss and Christopher Tyerman (eds), *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen* (Woodbridge, 2009); Claudia Kajatin, ‘Königliche Macht und bürgerlicher Stolz: Wappen- und Adelsbriefe in Zürich’, in Peter Niederhäuser (ed.), *Alter Adel – neuer Adel?* (Munich, 2000).

⁵⁴ Laurent Hablot, ‘The Sacralisation of the Royal Coats of Arms in Medieval Europe’, in Herrero López Montserrat, Aurell Cardona Jaume, and Angela C. Miceli Stout (eds), *Political Theology in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Discourses, Rites, and Representations* (Turnhout, 2017); Ronald Salzer, ‘Des Kaisers süße Propaganda: Ein Habsburgerwappenmodell für Festbäckerei aus der Burg Grafendorf in Stockerau, Niederösterreich’, *Beiträge zur Mittelalterarchäologie in Österreich*, 27 (2011); Ailes, ‘Propaganda’.

⁵⁵ Laurent Hablot, ‘Emblèmes outragés, corps ravagés: L’utilisation de l’emblématique dans les châtiments à la fin du Moyen Âge’, in Lydie Bodiou, Véronique Mehl, and Myriam Soria (eds), *Corps outragés, corps ravagés de l’Antiquité au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, 2011); Matthew Strickland, ‘“All Brought to Nought and Thy State Undone”: Treason, Disinvestiture and the Disgracing of Arms under Edward II’, in Peter R. Coss and Christopher Tyerman (eds), *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen* (Woodbridge, 2009).

of dislike, discontent, and public protest.⁵⁶ With regard to contemporary perceptions at the core of such communicative functions, heraldry is now understood as a visual representation of identity. From Christian values of piety and charity, norms of chivalry such as loyalty and martial prowess, corporate associations and social relations, and notions of descent linking genealogy, history, and memory, to ideas of honour as symbolic capital that eventually defined one's rank in society: all of these aspects of medieval identity, historians now believe, contemporaries 'saw' represented in coats of arms.⁵⁷ Some historians even argue that the medieval perception of heraldic identity went as far as the contemporaries 'seeing' heraldic signs as symbols in an Eucharistic sense, as substantially synonymous with their owners who through heraldry became physically present even when absent.⁵⁸

In scholarship, there is thus now a conceptual departure from the 'traditional' approach to heraldry 'as a stable system of signification and even as a fixed system of meaning' towards an analysis of medieval perceptions that allowed for arms to perform specific functions 'as a communicative medium which is—necessarily—contingent, culturally and historically specific, and open to interpretation', as Fiona Robertson and

⁵⁶ Steven Thiry, *Matter(s) of State: Heraldic Display and Discourse in the Early Modern Monarchy (c. 1480–1650)* (Ostfildern, 2018), p. 262. See also Laurent Hablot, 'Le bris des armes: L'iconoclasme héraldique dans la société médiévale', in Pascale Charron, Marc Gil, and Ambre Vilain (eds), *La pensée du regard: Études d'histoire de l'art du Moyen Âge offertes à Christian Heck* (Turnhout, 2016).

⁵⁷ Laurent Hablot, 'Les armoiries, un marqueur du rang dans les sociétés médiévales?', in Jörg Peltzer (ed.), *Rank and Order: The Formation of Aristocratic Elites in Western and Central Europe, 500–1500* (Ostfildern, 2015); Adrian Ailes, 'Heraldry as Markers of Identity in the Medieval Literature: Fact or Fiction', in Catalina Gîrbea, Laurent Hablot, and Raluca L. Radulescu (eds), *Marqueurs d'identité dans la littérature médiévale* (Turnhout, 2014); Rolf E. Sutter (ed.), *Identität in Genealogie und Heraldik/Identity in Genealogy and Heraldry/La notion d'identité en genealogie et en heraldique* (Stuttgart, 2012); Paravicini, 'Wappen'.

⁵⁸ Laurent Hablot, "'Ubi Armae Ibi Princeps": Medieval Emblematics as the Real Presence of the Prince', in Frédérique Lachaud and Michael A. Penman (eds), *Absentee Authority across Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2017); Hans Belting, 'Wappen und Porträt: Zwei Medien des Körpers', in Martin Büchsel and Peter Schmidt (eds), *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts* (Mainz, 2003); Walter Seitter, 'Das Wappen als Zweitkörper und Körperkonzept', in Dagmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf (eds), *Die Wiederkehr des Körpers* (Frankfurt [Main], 1982). On the 'real-presence' of symbols, see also Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Ten Brief Reflections on Institutions and Re/Presentation', in Gert Melville (ed.), *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung: Verstetigungen kultureller Ordnungsmuster in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Cologne, 2001), esp. pp. 70–71.

Peter Lindfield observe.⁵⁹ The challenge of this research agenda towards a ‘new heraldry’, then, is to ask: ‘In what ways and in which circumstances, historically and culturally, and under what assumed privileges and adopted constraints of knowledge, do heraldic signs “speak”? Who do they speak to, how, when, and why?’⁶⁰

1.3 Heraldic Communication in the City

When it comes to the late medieval urban sphere, these questions remain unexplored for the most part. On occasion, the acquisitiveness of heraldists also touched upon the heraldic signs of urban ‘non-nobles’ and their entities, from the arms of urban families and guilds to the municipal arms of cities as a whole.⁶¹ Although their emphasis is not normally on the late medieval period, their studies demonstrate that heraldry began to spread to the urban sphere soon after it emerged in the twelfth century, and can be considered well established in European towns and cities by the fourteenth and fifteenth.⁶² Close attention has been paid to the iconographic choices of urban arms, so that it is now a commonplace that burgess arms either closely resembled those of the nobility or instead incorporated obvious allusions to their owners’ occupation, that guild arms frequently displayed charges indicative of their profession or association with a specific patron saint, and that municipal arms often punned on the city’s name,

⁵⁹ Fiona Robertson and Peter N. Lindfield, ‘Introduction: Speaking of Arms’, in Fiona Robertson and Peter N. Lindfield (eds), *Semy-de-Lys: Speaking of Arms, 1400–2016* (online publication, 2016), <<https://heraldics2014.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/introduction1.pdf>>, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Jeane-Claude Muller (ed.), *La ville et ses habitants: Aspects généalogiques, héraldiques et emblématiques* (Luxembourg, 1999); Hervé Pinoteau, Michel Pastoureau and Michel Popoff (eds), *Les armoiries non nobles en Europe: XIIIe–XVIIe s.: IIIe Colloque international d’héraldique, Montmorency, 19–23 septembre 1983* (Paris, 1986); John Goodall, ‘The Use of Armorial Bearings by London Aldermen in the Middle Ages’, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 20 (1961); Konrad Friedrich Bauer, *Das Bürgerwappen: Ein Buch von den Wappen und Eigenmarken der deutschen Bürger und Bauern* (Frankfurt [Main], 1935); Jiří Louda, *European Civic Coats of Arms*, ed. by Dermot Morrah (London, 1966); Wilfried Schöntag, *Kommunale Siegel und Wappen in Südwestdeutschland: Ihre Bildersprache vom 12. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern, 2010); Otto Titan von Hefner, *Wappen der Städte und Märkte in Deutschland und den angrenzenden Ländern* (Neustadt [Aisch], 1974); C. Wilfrid Scott-Giles, *Civic Heraldry of England and Wales*, 2nd edn (London, 1953); Geoffrey Briggs, *Civic and Corporate Heraldry: A Dictionary of Impersonal Arms of England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (London, 1971); Alfred Grenser, *Zunftwappen und Handwerkerinsignien: Eine Heraldik der Zünfte und Gewerbe* (Frankfurt [Main], 1889).

⁶² Pastoureau, *Traité*, p. 53; Woodcock and Robinson, *Guide*, pp. 19–20; Seyler, *Heraldik*, pp. 334–337.

featured characteristic buildings, or alluded to their political position by including elements of their lord's arms.⁶³

Maybe precisely because of this predilection for form over function, urban historians have taken little to no interest in the topic, although there are some notable exceptions. Some studies dedicated to the uses of the urban space as a stage for princely, royal, and imperial self-representation have echoed Paravicini's observations on the ubiquity of heraldry in the late medieval city, for instance.⁶⁴ Similarly, in both England and Germany, scholarship on the urban elite mentions heraldic practices as a common and important aspect of strategies of burgher self-representation, particularly with regard to seals, residences, and commemoration.⁶⁵ Historians of towns and cities of late medieval Italy were the first to attempt a more detailed analysis of the forms and functions of heraldic communication in urban societies. Peter Seiler has emphasised the ubiquity of heraldry in Florence, arguing that its display gave expression to contemporary ideas about political and social order in the late medieval city, both in the context of permanent decorations of town halls, for instance, and ephemeral occasions such as processions and funerals, where social hierarchies were likewise communicated by means of heraldry, often in the form of banners.⁶⁶ In the same vein, Christoph Weber

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Helge Wittmann (ed.), *Reichszeichen: Darstellungen und Symbole des Reichs in Reichsstädten* (Petersberg, 2015); Mario Damen, 'The Town as a Stage? Urban Space and Tournaments in Late Medieval Brussels', *Urban History*, 42.1 (2015); Marc von der Höh, 'Symbolische Interaktion in der Residenzstadt des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit: Zur Einleitung', in Gerrit Deutschländer, Marc von der Höh, and Andreas Ranft (eds), *Symbolische Interaktion in der Residenzstadt des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2013), esp. p. 25.

⁶⁵ Mark Addison Amos, "'Somme Lordes & Somme Other of Lower Astates': London's Urban Elite and the Symbolic Battle for Status', in Douglas Biggs, A. Compton Reeves, and Sharon D. Michalove (eds), *Traditions and Transformations in Late Medieval England* (Leiden, 2002), esp. p. 168; Caroline M. Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London', in Peter R. Coss and Maurice Keen (eds), *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge; New York, 2002), pp. 234–235; Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London (1300–1500)* (Chicago; Cambridge, 1948), pp. 239–256; Michael Hecht, *Patriziatsbildung als kommunikativer Prozess: Die Salzstädte Lüneburg, Halle und Werl in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2010), pp. 216, 231, 250; Stefanie Rütter, *Prestige und Herrschaft: Zur Repräsentation der Lübecker Ratsherren in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 178–218; Rudolf Endres, 'Adel und Patriziat in Oberdeutschland', in Winfried Schulze and Helmut Gabel (eds), *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität* (Munich, 1988), pp. 227–228.

⁶⁶ Peter Seiler, 'Kommunale Heraldik und die Visibilität politischer Ordnung: Beobachtungen zu einem wenig beachteten Phänomen der Stadtästhetik von Florenz, 1250–1400', in Michael Stolleis and Ruth

has provided a comparative analysis of urban heraldic practices with a special emphasis on the municipal arms of Italy's city-states from the perspective of the methodological framework of 'symbolic communication'.⁶⁷ Weber argues that municipal arms functioned as 'signs of order', which reflected and reinforced social structures and hierarchies in contexts such as urban rituals, public architecture, and the identification and authorisation of communal officers and products, for instance. At the same time, arms also served as 'signs of upheaval' which provided groups with a visual point of collective reference and reassurance in times of warfare and revolt, when the municipal arms were carried into battle, or when 'a change in rulership often precipitated multiple changes in the heraldry displayed in public spaces', to quote the English summary.⁶⁸ The functional relevance of heraldic signs to communal life and the importance accorded to them in contemporary perception Weber finally sees most clearly represented in urban historiography, where municipal arms were fashioned as 'sign[s] of lordship', 'as symbols of communal honour', and indeed 'as sign[s] of urban identity, which was rooted in an imagined pre-history'.⁶⁹ Weber's observations on the perceptions and functions of heraldic communication in Italian cities have since been echoed by Alessandro Savorelli, Vieri Favini, and Matteo Ferrari, for example, whose studies prompt Alice Cavinato to state that '[b]y the end of the fourteenth century, heraldry's visual language had become familiar to citizens of all social classes and its use was so common that, in special circumstances, even people of lesser social standing could avail themselves of it'.⁷⁰ In contrast to the tendentious association of heraldry

Wolff (eds), *La bellezza della città: Stadtrecht und Stadtgestaltung im Italien des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Tübingen, 2004).

⁶⁷ Christoph Friedrich Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung und des Aufruhrs: Heraldische Symbolik in italienischen Stadtkommunen des Mittelalters* (Cologne, 2011). See also Christoph Friedrich Weber, 'Eine eigene Sprache der Politik: Heraldische Symbolik in italienischen Stadtkommunen des Mittelalters', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 33.4 (2006); Christoph Friedrich Weber, 'Exempla im Schilde führen: Zur Funktionalität "redender Wappen" in der kommunalen Geschichtsschreibung des Trecento', *Das Mittelalter*, 11.2 (2006).

⁶⁸ Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung*, p. 540.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 544–545.

⁷⁰ Alice Cavinato, 'Imaginary Heraldry and Self-Portrayal in Fifteenth-Century Siena', in Fiona Robertson and Peter N. Lindfield (eds), *Semy-de-Lys: Speaking of Arms, 1400–2016* (online publication, 2016), <<http://heraldics2014.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/2-cavinato.pdf>>, p. 32. See also Matteo Ferrari, 'Héraldique et organisation de l'espace dans les Communes de l'Italie du nord: Les enseignes des tribunaux', in Miguel Metelo de Seixas and Maria de Lurdes Rosa (eds), *Estudos de heráldica medieval*

with the nobility, Cavinato's study of the historiographical ambitions of Sieneese merchants and their composition of their own heraldic signs shows the late medieval perception and function of heraldry 'as the universal code used to celebrate individuals who achieved honour and fame, regardless of their social background'⁷¹.

Outside Italy this proposed universality of heraldry as a means of communication in the European late medieval city still warrants a question mark. Fortunately, first steps towards a more comparative history of heraldry in urban visual culture in the later Middle Ages are now being taken in Portugal,⁷² for instance, and regarding German-speaking cities. Similarly to Claudia Kajatin's study of grants of arms to Zurich families, Christof Rolker explores the place of heraldic signs as a visual means of social distinction in the urban sphere for the famous armorial of Konrad Grünenberg (d. 1494), 'knight and burgher' of Constance.⁷³ While Grünenberg notably ignored his fellow citizens and instead focused on the arms of noblemen, his contemporary Hermann Bote (d. 1520) incorporated the heraldic signs of Brunswick's elite into an armorial as part of his town chronicle, as Elmar Hofman shows.⁷⁴ Contrarily, little attention has been paid to the heraldic practices of townspeople in late medieval England beyond the cursory remarks of Caroline Barron, Mark Amos, and Sylvia Thrupp.⁷⁵ Somewhat of an exception is Weber, who aims to situate his Italian case study in a wider European

(Lisbon, 2012); Vieri Favini and Alessandro Savorelli, *Segni di Toscana: Identità e territorio attraverso l'araldica dei comuni: Storia e invenzione grafica (secoli XIII–XVII)* (Firenze, 2006).

⁷¹ Cavinato, 'Heraldry and Self-Portrayal', p. 42.

⁷² Miguel Metelo de Seixas, 'Heráldica municipal e apropriação simbólica do espaço urbano medieval português', in Amélia Aguiar Andrade et al. (eds), *Espaços e poderes na Europa urbana medieval* (Lisbon, 2018); Mário Sérgio da Silva Farelo, 'A heráldica das elites dirigentes de Lisboa, sécs. XIII–XIV', in Miguel Metelo de Seixas and Maria de Lurdes Rosa (eds), *Estudos de heráldica medieval* (Lisbon, 2012); Marta Gomes dos Santos, 'Heráldica concelhia no Portugal medievo (sécs. XIII–XV)' (unpublished PhD, University of Coimbra, 2019).

⁷³ Kajatin, 'Königliche Macht und bürgerlicher Stolz: Wappen- und Adelsbriefe in Zürich'; Christof Rolker, 'Heraldische Orgien und sozialer Aufstieg: Oder: Wo ist eigentlich „oben“ in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt?', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 42.2 (2015); Christof Rolker, 'Das Wappenbuch des Konrad Grünenberg: Acta et agenda', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 162 (2014).

⁷⁴ Elmar Hofman, 'Armorial behind the Schichtbuch: A Material and Visual Exploration', in Henning Steinführer, Christian Heitzmann, and Thomas Scharff (eds), *500 Jahre Schichtbuch: Aspekte und Perspektiven der Hermann-Bote-Forschung* (Appelhaus, 2017).

⁷⁵ See above, p. 16, n. 65.

context by briefly comparing it to the situation in London and Ghent.⁷⁶ In terms of London's municipal arms, for example, Weber finds similar heraldic practices with regard to warfare, but claims that 'the heraldry of the northern European cities was affected by their being bound into a monarchical power structure', and thus tended to reflect the cities' loyalty towards the monarchy.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, Weber reckons that heraldry constituted 'a common symbolic culture of the medieval city',⁷⁸ and the proceedings of a 2015 conference on the topic of 'Heraldry in the Medieval City: The Case of Italy in the European Context' promise to underline this claim.⁷⁹ But for now, a European history of heraldry as an element of urban visual culture in the later Middle Ages remains incomplete.

1.4 Sources, Questions, and Structure

This thesis takes a comparative look at the place of heraldry in the European city of the later Middle Ages by exploring the place of heraldic communication in the urban sphere of modern England and Germany. The focus will be on a 'long fifteenth century',⁸⁰ spanning from the second half of the fourteenth century, when both the urban source material and references to heraldry become increasingly prolific, until about 1530. At this point in time, the beginning of the heralds' visitations in England marked the end of the unregulated heraldic customs characteristic of the late medieval period,⁸¹ whilst in Germany the impact of the Reformation not only fundamentally altered established urban structures, but simultaneously also prompted often hostile changes in attitudes towards the visual.⁸²

⁷⁶ Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung*, pp. 473–481.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 546.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Torsten Hiltmann and Laurent Hablot (eds), *Heraldry in the Medieval City: The Case of Italy in the European Context* (Ostfildern, forthcoming).

⁸⁰ On analogous conceptions of a 'long fifteenth century', see Matthew Woodcock, 'England in the Long Fifteenth Century', in Corinne J. Saunders (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Poetry* (Chichester, 2010), esp. pp. 501–502; Erich Meuthen, *Das 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin; Boston, 2012), p. 2.

⁸¹ Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Function of Heralds*, 2nd edn (Oxford; New York, 2000), pp. 9–11; Adrian Ailes, 'The Development of the Heralds' Visitations in England and Wales 1450–1600', *The Coat of Arms: Third Series*, 5.1 (2009).

⁸² On the relation of Reformation and visual culture, see Bridget Heal, 'Visual and Material Culture', ed. by Ulinka Rublack, *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations* (Oxford, 2016), <<http://doi.org/>

An emphasis is furthermore placed on heraldic signs *stricto sensu*, characteristic combinations of divisions, ordinaries, charges, and tinctures placed on a shield as the defining element of a coat of arms. Of course, once established as distinct identifiers, these characteristic combinations might remain recognisable and attributable even when displayed without the shape of the shield, notably on banners, tabards, or caparisons, to name but three of the many media of heraldry.⁸³ ‘Para-heraldic’ signs such as crests, helmets, supporters, badges, and mottoes are therefore not in focus, although their presence will occasionally have to be discussed, not least because they often accompanied ‘proper’ heraldic signs and constituted similarly ubiquitous aspects of late medieval visual culture.

However, in contrast to more heraldic approaches, this thesis deliberately does not attempt to catalogue, categorise, and describe the coats of arms of cities, guilds, or individual townspeople, nor does it try to systematise any distinct iconographic vocabulary of urban heraldry. Likewise, considerations of possible symbolic allusions of heraldic signs are only of interest if the contemporaries themselves were concerned with such issues. After all, their accounts point precisely to the late medieval perceptions and functions of heraldic communication in the urban sphere meant to be at the core of the thesis.

In line with the methodologies of visual culture scholars and the observations of historians on heraldic communication, the argument is thus guided by three central questions seeking to define ‘practices of looking’ at heraldry in the late medieval city. First, who used heraldic communication in the urban space, in which contexts, and in which forms? Thus, whose arms were displayed in the city? This might include the heraldic signs of the townspeople, their families, their guilds, and the city as a whole, but also those of noble ‘outsiders’ who visited or regularly inhabited the urban space.

10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199646920.013.16>; Elke Anna Werner, ‘Martin Luther and Visual Culture’, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford, 2017), <<http://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.296>>. The English Reformation affected heraldic practices as well, not least with regards to the urban sphere, see Jonathan Good, ‘London Guild and Diocesan Heraldry during the Reformation’, *The Coat of Arms: New Series*, 12 (1997).

⁸³ Clive Cheesman, ‘Heraldry’, *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Malden, 2008), <<https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9781405131995.2008.x>>; Hablot, ‘Heraldic Imagery’; Woodcock and Robinson, *Guide*, p. 1.

Where was heraldry visible in the city, from the outside and inside of urban architecture to the less permanent, ephemeral spaces of ritual performances that made up the festive calendar of urban life? Was it, in fact, the permanent or ephemeral display of heraldic signs only, or were other forms of heraldic communication such as the defacement and destruction of heraldic signs part of the repertoire of urban heraldic practices in the later Middle Ages as well? Second, how were heraldic signs perceived by urban contemporaries? Were they held to convey connotations that went beyond the mere denotative identification of their owner? Was there 'seen' to be a close relation between heraldry and identity—individual and collective—in urban society, as scholars argue for other, non-urban parts of late medieval society? Were there conflicts prompted by the presence (or absence) of heraldic signs in the urban space? How did townspeople react towards the display (or indeed the defacement and destruction) of heraldic signs? Were such perceptions fixed and shared by the urban contemporaries, or were they dependent on specific contexts and subjective interpretations? Third, what were the social and political functions of heraldic communication enabled by such perceptions? In the light of more recent research on heraldic communication, this means to ask: were heraldic signs, as (potential) representations of identity, part of strategies of visual self-representation and the communication of claims to social and political status in the late medieval city? Was heraldic communication used to visualise genealogical links, social networks, hierarchies, and concepts of political order that underpinned the life of townsmen and their institutions? Were heraldic signs displayed to show possession or control over the urban space and its inhabitants? In turn, did heraldic display in the urban space also provide townspeople with opportunities for the expression of dislike, discontent and public protest?

Answers to these questions will eventually also be judged against the comparative perspective of the thesis. Since historical comparison identifies parallel or even universal developments at the same time as it increases awareness of local and temporal peculiarities,⁸⁴ a simultaneous look at two geographical areas promises a more nuanced

⁸⁴ Chris Wickham, 'Problems in Doing Comparative History', in Patricia Skinner (ed.), *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 6; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems', in Deborah Cohen and Maura

view on heraldry and its place in the specific (urban) society in which it presents itself. Thus, did the users, forms, places, perceptions, and functions of heraldry in German cities differ from those in England, or was heraldic communication in late medieval cities a pan-European phenomenon, contradicting assumptions about ‘national’ uniqueness?

Weber’s claim that the display of heraldry in cities north of the Alps was generally more orientated towards the monarchy is bound to be at loggerheads with historians differentiating cities in England and the Empire based on degrees of centralisation, for instance. It has become a commonplace that English cities were more dependent on the king and seigneurial powers than in Germany, where historians since the nineteenth century have often diagnosed burgesses with an emancipatory spirit of ‘communalism’ longing for independence from such external forces.⁸⁵ In this scenario, whereas German citizens would be expected to favour their own signs over those of external and potentially hostile political entities, in England royal heraldry ought to outshine that of the city and its citizens, as R. B. Dobson suggests with regard to the representation of communal autonomy more broadly: ‘even the most self-assured of British urban governments generally failed to evolve those more conspicuous and enduring visual displays of fully articulated civic pride so common—in their very different ways—within the towns of northern Italy, the Netherlands and even the German Reich.’⁸⁶

The need for prominent displays of corporate heraldry emerges as another potential difference between English and German cities: whereas in Germany revolts against the urban ‘establishment’ led by guilds of craftsmen, who in some places subsequently obtained a share in government of the city, testify to their self-confidence and their need for (visual) self-representation, in comparison ‘craft representation was

O’Connor (eds), *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York, 2004), esp. pp. 28–30.

⁸⁵ Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300*, 2nd edn (Oxford; New York, 1997), esp. pp. xxii, 179–180; Peter Clark, *European Cities and Towns, 400–2000* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 98–99; Peter Blickle, ‘Communalism as a Concept’, in Troels Dahlerup and Per Ingesman (eds), *New Approaches to the History of Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Copenhagen, 2009), p. 69.

⁸⁶ R. B. Dobson, ‘General Survey 1300–1540’, in David Michael Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2009), I, p. 289.

very much the exception on British town councils', as Stephen Rigby and Elizabeth Ewan summarise.⁸⁷

Similar assumptions can be made regarding the arms of individual burgesses and their families, since the existence of exclusive groups of descent-conscious, self-confident 'patricians' of inherited wealth and political status in German cities might have promoted the use of heraldic signs in emulation of noble habits.⁸⁸ At least, this is suggested by the regret of historians expressed over English urban elites, which juxtaposed with their counterparts on the Continent—and the Empire in particular—are held to have lacked comparable patrician dynasties and thus might not have felt the same need for such means of visual self-representation.⁸⁹

To answer these questions and enable such comparisons, a wide range of sources within the intersection of sources typical for the study of heraldry and sources of urban history is available.⁹⁰ In addition to 'typical' heraldic sources such as seals, coins, and (sometimes) banners, these include other material evidence, from stone- and woodwork to silverware and stained glass visible on the outside and inside of urban sites such as houses, halls, churches, walls, and monuments. Of course, for the most part this

⁸⁷ Stephen Rigby and Elizabeth L. Ewan, 'Government, Power and Authority 1300–1540', in David Michael Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2009), I, p. 312. See also Heather Swanson, 'The Illusion of Economic Structure: Craft Guilds in Late Medieval English Towns', *Past & Present*, 121.1 (1988), esp. p. 47; Sylvia L. Thrupp, 'The Gilds', in M. M. Postan, E. E. Rich, and E. Miller (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1963), esp. p. 243.

⁸⁸ Pierre Monnet, 'Zwischen Reproduktion und Repräsentation: Formierungsprozesse von Eliten in westeuropäischen Städten des Spätmittelalters: Terminologie, Typologie, Dynamik', in Elisabeth Gruber et al. (eds), *Städte im lateinischen Westen und im griechischen Osten zwischen Spätantike und Früher Neuzeit* (Vienna, 2016); Gerhard Fouquet, 'Stadt-Adel: Chancen und Risiken sozialer Mobilität im späten Mittelalter', in Günther Schulz (ed.), *Sozialer Aufstieg: Funktionseliten im Spätmittelalter* (Munich, 2002); Endres, 'Adel und Patriziat'.

⁸⁹ Christian D. Liddy, 'Family, Lineage and Dynasty in the Late Medieval City: Re-Thinking the English Evidence', *Urban History*, forthcoming. See also Rigby and Ewan, 'Government', I, p. 302; Gerald Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England 1360–1461* (Oxford; New York, 2005), p. 305.

⁹⁰ Caroline M. Barron, 'The Sources for Medieval Urban History', in Joel Thomas Rosenthal (ed.), *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using Historical Sources to Discover Medieval Europe* (London; New York, 2012); Derek J. Keene, 'Sources for Medieval Urban History', *Archives*, 11 (1974); Roger Harmignies (ed.), *Sources de l'héraldique en Europe occidentale: Actes du 4e colloque international d'héraldique* (Brussels, 1985); Eckart Henning, 'Wappen', in Friedrich Beck and Eckart Henning (eds), *Die archivalischen Quellen: Mit einer Einführung in die Hilfswissenschaften*, 5th edn (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2012), pp. 361–364.

materiality—at least *in situ*—has been lost through decay, fire, iconoclasm, warfare, and changes in architectural fashion. This is true even more so for the communicative intentions of those who created these heraldic displays and the interpretations of contemporaries who encountered them in their original appearance. But since precisely these aspects of heraldry are supposed to be at the core of this thesis, an emphasis was initially placed on the analysis of written sources. In late medieval cities, heraldic treatises, armorials, and grants of arms were acquired or even produced, just like city, guild, and family chronicles frequently alluded to heraldic signs in the urban space. The same holds true for other ego-documents such as wills and testaments, but also for court records, legislation, inventories, expense accounts and other administrative documents. Such texts are not only able to recall now lost material forms of heraldry in the late medieval city, not least with regard to heraldic decorations never meant to survive for long periods of times in the ephemeral context of urban rituals. Texts also promise to approximate the perceptions and functions of heraldic communication in urban society: they may include reflections of the author on its meaning, thus explaining how heraldry was ‘seen’—or meant to be ‘seen’—by the contemporaries. They may also point to urban audiences of heraldic display and record reactions towards their presence (or absence). In this context, they may also indicate whether heraldic signs displayed in the late medieval city were ‘handled’, that is whether people engaged with them not just visually but materially also.

The corpus of specific sources analysed for the thesis was obtained in a three-step process. In a first step, the printed sources of ten well-studied English and German cities were scanned for references to or even discussions of heraldic signs. In Germany, these cities included Nuremberg and Augsburg in the South, Cologne in the Rhineland and Brunswick and Lüneburg in the North. For England, London stood out due to its wealth of evidence, and so did the self-proclaimed ‘second cities’ of Bristol, Coventry, Norwich, and York. Furthermore, two ‘national’ corpora of sources have proven insightful, on the one hand the numerous town chronicles printed in the thirty-seven volumes of the series *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, and on the other hand the countless text

fragments relating to urban pageantry in the *Records of Early English Drama*.⁹¹ The sum of references to heraldic signs in these sources identified key sites for heraldic display in the late medieval city. While in-depth discussions or even mentions of heraldic seals or coins were absent or scarce, for instance, the houses of burgesses, town and guild halls as well as the residences of nobles and rulers emerged as a prominent canvas for heraldic decorations as a part of representative facades, stained glass windows, painted walls, embroidered textiles, wooden furniture, and prized silverware. The same was the case for urban churches, where tombs, epitaphs, altarpieces and similar exhibits provided opportunities for heraldic display, and so did the walls, gates, and towers of the urban fortifications and other public monuments such as fountains or market-crosses. An overlooked site for the display of heraldry finally proved to be the ephemeral space of civic processions, religious plays, and joyous entries, but also their use in moments of conflict, from litigation to warfare and revolt. In a second step, secondary literature concerned with these sites was consulted, not only to situate specific heraldic display in these larger communicative contexts but also to augment the geographical scope of the thesis beyond the ten sample cities, with additional examples nuancing the use(s) of heraldic communication in the urban space. Finally, references obtained in the first and second step were further contextualised through targeted probes of archival materials (e.g. unpublished chronicles, grants of arms, and specific court cases) as well as consultations of relevant material/archaeological evidence (e.g. badges of municipal servants and beggars as well as trademark tokens).

The nature of a large part of these sources causes the argument to be almost inevitably biased towards the upper layers of urban society: administrative documents and city chronicles were produced by and for ‘experts’, well-to-do burgesses were more likely to leave behind extensive wills and family records or purchase chivalric literature and grants of arms, just like material evidence is more readily available for the well-built and well-maintained halls and monuments of rich townsmen and urban institutions. The majority of examples thus testifies to the heraldic practices of affluent and influential merchants and craftsmen part of the urban elite, the *de facto* ‘patriciate’

⁹¹ *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte* (Leipzig et al., 1862–1968), henceforth cited as CDS; *Records of Early English Drama* (Toronto; Manchester; London, 1979–2018), henceforth cited as REED.

or the self-proclaimed *probi homines* constitutive of the urban government. Still, there will also be valuable glimpses at the heraldic awareness and repertoire of less affluent ‘commoners’, who took to the streets to express their discontent with municipal, princely, or royal politics, for instance.

But first, Chapter 2 investigates grants of arms and the production and consumption of heraldic manuscripts to demonstrate that townspeople consciously perceived and widely used coats of arms as embodiments of (family) honour and identity—modern and medieval conceptions of a restrictive ‘law of arms’ notwithstanding. In conjunction with explorations of the use of heraldic communication for self-representation in town houses, funeral ceremonies, urban churches, and other public places, it will become clear that heraldic signs functioned as a versatile means of communication that played an important part in the representation, perpetuation, and reinforcement of social status in urban society. Chapter 3 discusses the heraldic practices of guildsmen in relation to their corporate arms. Like the arms of burgesses, the heraldic signs of craft and merchant guilds were perceived to relate to ideals of collective honour and identity. In this case, too, grants of arms and historical narratives merged heraldry, history, and collective identity, and fashioned corporate arms as embodiments of corporate honour, which were put on display in the context of the built environment of guildhalls, and the competition of heraldic signs in the ephemeral spaces of civic ritual. Chapter 4 continues to show that late medieval townspeople perceived the coats of arms of their cities as closely connected to collective identity, in this instance that of the corporate body of citizens as a whole. This link was expressed and reinforced in the pursuit and rhetoric of grants of arms, while narrative constructions in town chronicles consciously intertwined heraldry and history to support a collective sense of honour. The use of municipal arms in contexts dedicated to collective identity underlines this connection further, from town halls, walls and gates to the performance of civic rituals and the authorisation of civic officials and urban products. Finally, Chapter 5 considers townspeople’s encounters with ‘outsiders’ such as emperors, kings, princes, knights, and episcopal magnates. Here, the heraldic signs of non-urban figures displayed in the urban space provide yet another look at the urban ‘practices of looking’ at heraldry, either because it was the townspeople who staged

such displays, because they constituted the audience, or because they visibly and violently reacted to the presence of heraldry in the late medieval city.

2 Citizens: Constructing and Contesting Signs of Honour

Any enquiry into the relationship of heraldry and identity of late medieval townspeople has to address the matter of ‘honour’, since this abstract quality was ‘fundamental to the construction of personal and familial identity as well as the establishment of social and political relationships’ in the Middle Ages.¹ Honour was not least derived from belonging to social groups, whose members adhered to a shared behavioural ‘code’ defining what was ‘honourable’ and thus common to and distinctive of members inside the group. In this sense, honour is understood as a cluster of norms and values particular to a collective of people,² although different ‘codes of honour’ often exhibited remarkable intersections, even across ‘different axes of social inequality’.³

In the late medieval city, too, social strata were distinguished through ‘different degree[s] of honour ascribed to each status group’.⁴ At the same time, multiple ‘codes of honour’ coexisted within urban society, and late medieval townspeople usually tended to conform to more than one at the same time, depending on the number of their associations with social groups within the urban landscape. Often these ‘codes’ fundamentally relied on values shared throughout all spheres of late medieval society: ‘Men could attain or protect their honour through martial prowess, effective physical-

¹ Daniel E. Thiery, ‘Honour and Shame’, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2010), p. 809. See also Mervyn James, ‘English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485–1642’, in Mervyn James (ed.), *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986); Miri Rubin, ‘Identities’, in Rosemary Horrox and Mark Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 2006).

² Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhoff, ‘Verletzte Ehre – Überlegungen zu einem Forschungskonzept’, in Gerd Schwerhoff and Klaus Schreiner (eds), *Verletzte Ehre: Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne et al., 1995), p. 4. See also Craig David Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 56.

³ Stephen Rigby, ‘Social Structure and Economic Change in Late Medieval England’, in Rosemary Horrox and Mark Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 1. On the difficulties of terminology and theory in terms of medieval urban society, see also Jürgen Ellermeyer, “Schichtung” und “Sozialstruktur” in spätmittelalterlichen Städten’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 6 (1980).

⁴ Rodney Howard Hilton, ‘Status and Class in the Medieval Town’, in Terry R. Slater and Gervase Rosser (eds), *The Church in the Medieval Town* (Aldershot, 1998), p. 9. On ‘honour’ as a research topic of urban history, see also Martin Dinges, ‘Die Ehre als Thema der Stadtgeschichte: Eine Semantik im Übergang vom Ancien Régime zur Moderne’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 16.4 (1989).

verbal aggression, careful vigilance of familial reputation, especially the sexual purity of female kin, honest/loyal business transactions or service, and successful litigation.⁵ When it comes to the top layer of urban society in particular, merchants as well as affluent craftsmen were fascinated by chivalric ideals, as Peter Coss points out: ‘Urban society [...] was imbued with the notion of precedence and deeply affected by the language of gentility’.⁶ Concepts of ‘heritage and family’ were thus equally important in the urban environment, so much so that there hardly existed a sense of individual identity outside the burghess family. The permanent celebration of social relations and the commemoration of deceased ancestors, claims to property and political office as well as financial ability to enjoy leisure and education added to the ‘socio-political values’ constitutive of the family identity created by this kind of ‘urban aristocracy’.⁷ But since this elite was ‘a social amalgam combining values of the burghers and the nobility’,⁸ the urban code of honour was also inspired by Christian virtues such as *prudentia* and *iustitia*, demanding assiduity, frugality, chastity, and community as the prerequisites of welfare in life and the wealth of the city.⁹ Thrupp, for example, shows that it was ‘restraint as the essence of the behavioural code taught to privileged boys’ in the schools of London, including ‘not only the inculcation of abstract moral values but also [...] training in all those social attitudes that were by convention suited to their role in the community’.¹⁰ Next to ‘the avoidance of the sin’, this also entailed ‘calmness of manner’ and ‘respect for authority’.¹¹ Similar sentiments fed into the notion of the

⁵ Thiery, ‘Honour and Shame’, p. 810.

⁶ Peter R. Coss, ‘An Age of Deference’, in Rosemary Horrox and Mark Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 72.

⁷ On the English urban elite, see the contributions by Rosemary Horrox and Stephen Rigby in John A. F. Thomson (ed.), *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1988). See also Hilton, ‘Status and Class’, esp. p. 13. On Germany, see Hans-Jörg Gilomen, ‘Wirtschaftliche Eliten im spätmittelalterlichen Reich’, in Rainer Christoph Schwinges, Christian Hesse, and Peter Moraw (eds), *Europa im späten Mittelalter: Politik – Gesellschaft – Kultur* (Munich, 2006); Fouquet, ‘Stadt-Adel’.

⁸ Eberhard Isenmann, ‘Norms and Values in the European City, 1300–1800’, in Peter Blickle (ed.), *Resistance, Representation, and Community* (Oxford, 1997), p. 188.

⁹ Peter Schuster, ‘Ehre und Recht: Überlegungen zu einer Begriffs- und Sozialgeschichte zweier Grundbegriffe der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft’, in Sibylle Backmann et al. (eds), *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1998), p. 49; Friedrich Zunkel, ‘Ehre, Reputation’, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Stuttgart, 1975), II, pp. 12–15.

¹⁰ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, pp. 164–165.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

‘honourable craftsman’, who derived his particular sense of honour from ideals of skillfully and traditionally executed craftsmanship fundamental to ‘the establishment of a good personal reputation’.¹²

The sum of such claims to honour through birth, wealth, education, office, and various kinds of virtuous, ‘honourable’ conduct and achievement constituted—in the sense of Bourdieu¹³—the symbolic capital that was of fundamental importance to any person’s status in late medieval society.¹⁴ The notion of ‘capital’ seems particularly fitting in the setting of the late medieval city. In this mercantile environment, the idea of increasing honour and thus social status through personal and familial efforts—a ‘quantitative dimension’ of honour—was willingly accepted in addition to the purely ‘qualitative dimension’ of honour prevalent in noble circles, which favoured birth as the defining criterion of status.¹⁵ The *Book of Vices and Virtues* (c. 1375) thus characterised the urban pursuit of honour aptly: ‘The burgeis hopeth [...] to be riche and noble in his lif holden and moche honoured.’¹⁶

However, at all times this symbolic capital of honour was ultimately dependent on and derived from the recognition of others, as the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers notes: ‘Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim [...]’¹⁷ This was no less the case in the Middle Ages,

¹² Gervase Rosser, ‘Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town’, *Past and Present*, 154 (1997), p. 9. See also below, p. 117.

¹³ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society’, in J. G. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (London, 1965); Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Symbolic Capital and Social Classes’, trans. by Loïc Wacquant, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 13.2 (2013).

¹⁴ Gerd Althoff, ‘Kulturen der Ehre – Kulturen der Scham’, in Katja Gvozdeva and Hans Rudolf Velten (eds), *Scham und Schamlosigkeit: Grenzverletzungen in Literatur und Kultur der Vormoderne* (Berlin, 2011), p. 49; Andreas Deutsch, ‘Was ist Ehre? Ein Rechtsbegriff im historischen Vergleich’, in Ditte Bandini and Ulrich Kronauer (eds), *Früchte vom Baum des Wissens: Eine Festschrift der wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiter* (Heidelberg, 2009), p. 180.

¹⁵ Jörg Rogge, ‘Ehrverletzungen und Entehrungen in politischen Konflikten in spätmittelalterlichen Städten’, in Gerd Schwerhoff and Klaus Schreiner (eds), *Verletzte Ehre: Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne et. al., 1995), p. 142.

¹⁶ Laurent d’Orleans, *The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the Somme Le Roi*, ed. & trans. by W. Nelson Francis (London, 1942), p. 161.

¹⁷ Julian Pitt-Rivers, ‘Honour and Social Status’, in J. G. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (London, 1965), p. 21. See also Bourdieu, ‘Symbolic Capital’, pp. 296–297.

where honour was likewise ‘dependent upon the perception of one’s peers’, who ‘tacitly or openly judge actions as reputable or disreputable on the basis of a common code of honour’.¹⁸ In order to maintain or increase a person’s status, their internal sense of honour had to match their external reputation, which is why claims to honour had to be constantly put on display for evaluation by this person’s peers.¹⁹

Heraldry, this chapter will argue, was a visual means of communication to put honour—and thus identity—on display to assert, defend, or even increase social status in urban society. The first section shows that whereas modern scholars—and some late medieval writers—saw heraldry as a system of signification exclusive to the nobility, townspeople in the later Middle Ages did not share this perception and instead took a matter-of-course approach to the appropriation, exhibition, and administration of heraldic signs. Still, townspeople, shared the view that heraldic signs were inextricably intertwined with the honour of their bearers. This perception, the second section will demonstrate, becomes particularly tangible in the pursuit of ‘official’ grants, confirmations, and augmentations of arms. The same connection between heraldry and honour is further explored in the third section, which focuses on narratives written by German burgesses trying to link their heraldic signs to formative narratives in their (allegedly) ancient past, and on similar sentiments in ‘heraldic’ literature owned by English townsmen. The remainder of the chapter then turns to the urban spaces in which these ‘signs of honour’ were put on display. The fourth section addresses the functions of heraldic communication as a means of representing and reinforcing honour in town houses, while the fifth section underlines the role that heraldic display played in the ephemeral space of the urban funeral. The sixth section concludes this chapter with a discussion of the function of heraldry for late medieval *memoria* in urban churches and other public buildings as another important stage of honour.

¹⁸ Thiery, ‘Honour and Shame’, p. 810. See also Schreiner and Schwerhoff, ‘Verletzte Ehre’, p. 5; James, ‘Honour’, pp. 22–27.

¹⁹ See Althoff, ‘Kulturen der Ehre’, p. 48.

2.1 Law and Custom: Juxtaposing Heraldic Theory and Urban Reality

The idea that heraldry has always been a prerogative of the nobility enforced by kings, princes, and their heralds under a strict ‘law of arms’ has been prolific. In both English and German scholarship there existed—and sometimes still exists—the conviction that non-noble ‘commoners’ such as townsmen were at least *de iure* excluded from the right to bear heraldic signs. With regard to England, Arthur Fox-Davies, for example, declared that ‘armory is, and always has been, the prerogative of the privileged class’, the ‘outward and visible sign of the technical rank of gentility’.²⁰ For this reason, William Newton had argued earlier already, ‘wealthy merchants in the Middle Ages both here and abroad’ were ‘not being allowed to assume devices of an heraldic character’.²¹ In Germany, Felix Hauptmann proclaimed with the same confidence that precisely because arms were a central characteristic of the nobility, non-nobles were necessarily forbidden from bearing arms.²² The only exception, as Heinrich von Kohlhagen added, were ‘official’ grants of arms which occasionally blessed urban families with heraldic signs as a special ‘gift of grace’.²³ The same contention seems to exist in England, where over the centuries the heralds incorporated in the College of Arms have grown to control the use and conferral of arms.²⁴

This section will argue that this alleged noble exclusivity resulted from nineteenth-century projections of early modern developments by theorists keen to establish a supra-temporal ‘law of arms’ rather than a late medieval reality.²⁵ In this period there were few who challenged the right of non-nobles to assume and use

²⁰ Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *The Right to Bear Arms*, 2nd edn (London, 1900), p. 10.

²¹ William Newton, *A Display of Heraldry* (London, 1846), p. 395.

²² Felix Hauptmann, *Das Wappenrecht: Historische und dogmatische Darstellung der im Wappenwesen geltenden Rechtssätze: Ein Beitrag zum deutschen Privatrecht* (Bonn, 1896), pp. 50–60.

²³ Heinrich Theodor von Kohlhagen, ‘Wodurch unterscheidet sich das bürgerliche von adeligen Wappen?’, *Heraldisch-genealogische Blätter für adelige und bürgerliche Geschlechter*, 1.1 (1904), p. 20.

²⁴ On the institutional development of the College of Arms, see Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 10; Peter M. Ashman, ‘Heraldry and the Law of Arms in England’, *The Journal of Legal History*, 9.1 (1988).

²⁵ See also Paul Adam-Even, ‘De l’acquisition et du port des armoiries: Armes nobles et bourgeoises: Études d’héraldique comparée’, in Office généalogique & héraldique de Belgique (ed.), *Recueil du IVe Congrès International des Sciences Généalogique & Héraldique* (Brussels, 1958), pp. 105–106; Ian de Minvielle-Devaux, *The Laws of Arms in England, France & Scotland* (London, 2007), p. 37; Adrian Ailes, ‘Medieval Grants of Arms, 1300–1461’ (unpublished MA, University of London, 1997), p. 66.

heraldic signs, and in fact influential authorities on heraldic matters explicitly stressed any person's right to arms. This *laissez-faire* approach also becomes apparent regarding the marks of merchants and craftsmen, who did not necessarily abandon their established signs in favour of 'proper' arms. Instead, they eagerly incorporated the former into a specifically urban 'dialect' of heraldry. Finally, this heraldic proficiency of late medieval townspeople is also expressed in their ability to take the 'law of arms' into their own hands.

2.1.1 *The Myth of Noble Exclusivity*

Rather than declaring heraldry a prerogative of the nobility, late medieval attempts at establishing an authoritative 'law of arms' focused on its nature as a *droit de régale* that required royal authorisation of heraldic signs. In Germany, an outspoken move against non-noble heraldic practices happened in 1467, when Emperor Frederick III challenged the unauthorised use of heraldry, notably with townspeople in mind: 'several presume to be of nobility although they are not noble by birth', in particular 'burgesses in the cities of the Empire' who 'dared to possess and use arms'.²⁶ As a countermeasure, the emperor commissioned Caspar von Freyberg to approach, reprimand, and punish anyone who refused to cease bearing unauthorised arms. However, this position does not appear to have had much impact before 1682, when eventually Emperor Leopold I did effectively exclude German townsmen from assuming arms.²⁷ In England, heraldists claim that the famous *Scrope v Grosvenor* case brought before the Court of Chivalry in 1389 implied 'that the Crown and the Sovereign had supreme control and jurisdiction over arms, and that the Sovereign could and did grant arms'.²⁸ A more explicit attempt to regulate the use of arms followed in 1417, when Henry V decreed that 'no man of whatsoever estate, degree or condition shall assume arms or coats of arms called "cotearmures" unless he possess or ought to possess the same in right of an ancestor or by gift of one having sufficient power'.²⁹ As in the German example, this decree remained without effect, not least because 'the writ was not [...] legislation, its object

²⁶ Chmel no. 5264, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1467-11-26_1_o_13_o_o_5263_5264>.

²⁷ Hauptmann, *Wappenrecht*, p. 77.

²⁸ Fox-Davies, *Guide to Heraldry*, p. 22.

²⁹ Alfred Edward Stamp (ed.), *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Henry V* (London, 1929), I, p. 433.

being to regulate the army on a particular expedition'.³⁰ Still, in the 1450s, the lawyer Richard Strangways refused to accept as legal 'armys witowt an herowds or porsuawant',³¹ while the *Ashmolean Tract* (c. 1500) with special reference to the heraldic ambitions of merchants declared that 'noo merchaunte shulde be so hardye to bere noo armes' unless they had been granted by an authority.³² Only in 1512 the English king explicitly set out that 'shield or scochin is the token of noblesse', tasking his heralds 'to reforme all false Armory and arms devised without auctorite',³³ thus already adumbrating their visitations conducted between 1530 and 1688.³⁴

Still, it is an overstatement to claim that by the fifteenth century already 'armorial bearings were the accepted hallmark of gentility' in England,³⁵ and the same is true for Germany. Contemporary treatises on heraldry were more likely to stress that neither was the use of heraldic signs restricted to a particular social class, nor was their assumption dependent on any sort of heraldic authority. The most influential account is the treatise *De insigniis at armis* (c. 1355) by Italian lawyer Bartolus de Saxoferrato. When enumerating the ways to bear arms legally, next to conquest, inheritance, and grant, he also declared:

Some assume arms and insignia on their own initiative, and we should consider whether they are permitted to do it. I think that they are permitted. Just like names are created to identify persons, so insignia and arms are devised for this purpose. Anyone is permitted to use such names for himself, and thus anyone can bear these insignia and depict them on his own belongings, but not on another's.³⁶

This opinion set the tone for various scholars in Europe. Honoré de Bonet, a French cleric, in his *Arbre des batailles* (1387) followed Bartolus, claiming that 'arms as may be

³⁰ George Drewry Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry: A Study of the Civil Law in England* (Oxford, 1959), p. 182.

³¹ BL, Harl. MS. 2259, 10.

³² George R. Keiser (ed.), 'A Tretys of Armes: A Revision of the "Ashmolean Tract"', *The Coat of Arms: New Series*, 11 (1993), p. 186.

³³ Quoted in George Drewry Squibb (ed.), *Munimenta Heraldica* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 129.

³⁴ On the heralds' visitations, see Ailes, 'Heralds' Visitations'; Wagner, *Heralds*, pp. 9–11; Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), pp. 161–162.

³⁵ D. A. L. Morgan, 'The Individual Style of the English Gentleman', in Michael Jones (ed.), *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe* (New York, 1986), pp. 17–18.

³⁶ Bartolus de Saxoferrato, 'De Insigniis et Armis', in Osvaldo Cavallar, Susanne Degenring, and Julius Kirshner (eds and transll.), *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 145–146.

chosen at pleasure each may take as he wishes'.³⁷ Honoré de Bonet's treatise was in turn translated and edited by Diego de Valera, who in his *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* (1440) especially noted the widespread and unchallenged use of heraldic signs in cities: 'We see a common custom in Germany, Bohemia, France, England, and Italy among all the burgesses to take arms as they please, which they place on their houses and in the churches of which they are parishioners.'³⁸ The same was noted in the *Argentaye Tract* (c. 1480) from Brittany, which stated that the use of heraldic signs was 'very common in cities and *bonnes villes*, where everyone takes and bears arms at their pleasure and discretion'.³⁹

German writers on the topic such as Peter von Andlau in *De imperio Romano* (c. 1460) followed Bartolus as well.⁴⁰ Felix Hemmerlin, in his *Dialogus de nobilitate et rusticitate* (1444), answered the question whether it was possible to assume arms on one's own accord positively,⁴¹ and three decades later Johannes Salzmänn, too, in his treatise *Was ist Adel* (1476–1483) on the concept of nobility, stated that at some point 'everyone begun to assume arms at their pleasure'.⁴²

On the British Isles, de Bonet's treatise popularised the notion of a general availability of heraldry. A copy was included in Gilbert of Haye's *Buke of the Law of Armes* (1456), which declared that next to grants from kings, princes, and their heralds, there are arms 'that beris [...] tuke at thair awin plesaunce'.⁴³ At first sight, Nicholas Upton's *De studio militari* (1440) seems to be somewhat of an exception, as it addressed the question whether a *nobleman* can assume arms: 'Such signs and arms any nobleman may use and bear on his shield.'⁴⁴ What made a man noble and thus entitled to a heraldic

³⁷ Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. by G. W. Coopland (Liverpool, 1949), p. 204.

³⁸ Diego de Valera, 'Tratado de las armas', in Mario Penna (ed.), *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1959), I, p. 135.

³⁹ Alan Manning (ed.), *The Argentaye Tract: Edited from Paris, BN, Fonds Français 11, 464* (Toronto; Buffalo; London, 1983), vv. 1186–1193.

⁴⁰ Peter von Andlau, *De imperio Romano, regis et Augusti creatione, inavgvratione, administratione*, ed. by Marquard Freher (Strasbourg, 1603), p. 124.

⁴¹ Felix Hemmerlin, *De nobilitate et rusticitate dialogus et alia opuscula* (Strasbourg, 1500), p. cix verso.

⁴² Johannes Salzmänn, 'Die Entstehung des Adels', ed. by Theodor von Liebenau, *Korrespondenzblatt des Gesamtvereins der Deutschen Geschichts- und Alterthumsvereine*, 34 (1886), p. 18.

⁴³ Gilbert Hay, *Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript (A.D.1456)*, ed. by J. H. Stevenson (Edinburgh; London, 1901), I, pp. 276–277.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Upton, *De Studio Militari: Libri Quatuor*, ed. by Edward Bysshe (London, 1654), p. 59.

sign remained an open question in this text. The *Boke of Saint-Albans* (1486) certainly held that ‘poore men by their grace fauoure, laboure or deseruyng ar made nobuls’, and for this reason they were deemed well within their rights to assume arms ‘by theyr awne autorite’.⁴⁵

2.1.2 Marks and the Heraldic Authorities

Some elements of burgess heraldry deemed ‘un-heraldic’ did occasionally become an issue for heraldic authorities in England, namely the rune-like marks used by merchants and craftsmen (fig. 2.1). At about the same time as their shield-shaped counterparts, these distinctive signs were adopted as a means of marking and identifying products and properties.⁴⁶ In this capacity, ‘merchandis merkes’ were mentioned in the *Wynnere and Wastoure* (c. 1340–1350), where they were depicted on ‘wolle’ and on ‘wyne tounnues’, for instance,⁴⁷ just like the Cologne merchant Hermann Weinsberg recalled ‘the mark that my grandfather [...] scratched into barrels of wine and beer’—notably ‘next to his arms’.⁴⁸ Fifteenth-century ordinances in Frankfurt required weavers to mark their textiles with ‘signs’ (*zeichen*) and threatened anyone who appropriated and applied signs that did not belong to them to their products.⁴⁹ The same custom existed in Coventry, where ‘euery fuller set his marke upon the cloth that he fullith’,⁵⁰ while in

⁴⁵ Juliana Berners, *The Boke of St Albans*, ed. by William Blades (London, 1901), pp. 207–208.

⁴⁶ On England, see F. A. Girling, *English Merchants’ Marks* (London; New York; Toronto, 1964); Edward M. Elmhirst, *Merchants’ Marks* (London, 1959); F. W. Kuhlicke, ‘Merchant Marks and the Like: Their Origin and Use’, *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, 9 (1952); J. Paul Rylands, *Merchants’ Marks and Other Mediæval Personal Marks: Reprinted from the Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire* (Edinburgh; London, 1910). With regard to Germany, see Karin Czaja, ‘Hausmarken: Praxis und Genese’, in Gabriela Signori (ed.), *Das Siegel: Gebrauch und Bedeutung* (Darmstadt, 2007); Evamaria Engel, ‘*Signum mercatoris – signum societas*: Zeichen und Marke im Wirtschaftsleben deutscher Städte des Spätmittelalters’, in Gertrud Blaschitz et al. (eds), *Symbole des Alltags, Alltag der Symbole: Festschrift für Harry Kühnel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Graz, 1992); Carl Gustav Homeyer, *Die Haus- und Hofmarken* (Berlin, 1870).

⁴⁷ Stephanie Trigg (ed.), *Wynnere and Wastoure* (Oxford, 1990), vv. 189–190.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Wolfgang Schmid, ‘Ein Bürger und seine Zeichen: Hausmarken und Wappen in den Tagebüchern des Kölner Chronisten Hermann Weinsberg’, in Karin Czaja and Gabriela Signori (eds), *Häuser, Namen, Identitäten: Beiträge zur spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadtgeschichte* (Konstanz, 2009), p. 57.

⁴⁹ Emanuel Fromm, ‘Frankfurts Textilgewerbe im Mittelalter’, *Archiv für Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst*, 3,6 (1899), pp. 144–148.

⁵⁰ CLB, p. 640.

Bristol bakers ‘put their marks on the loaves they make’.⁵¹ Next to this pragmatic application, analogous to heraldry, marks were soon associated with the collective body of the family. Sons inherited their fathers’ mark or, in the case of second sons, distinguished their sign by modifying its design or by adding their initials.⁵²

Especially in England, scholars have taken this development to be a reaction of burgesses ‘jealous’ of the arms of noblemen, adopted ‘as a substitute for heraldic ensigns which were not conceded to them’.⁵³ After all, some late medieval contemporaries were

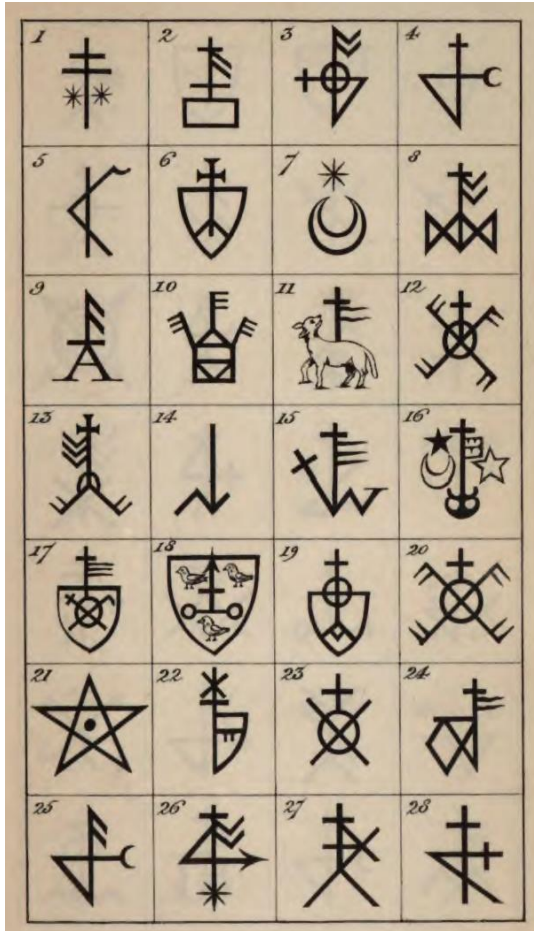


Fig. 2.1: Medieval marks collected by William C. Ewing, ‘Notices of the Norwich Merchant Marks’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 3 (1852), plate 1.

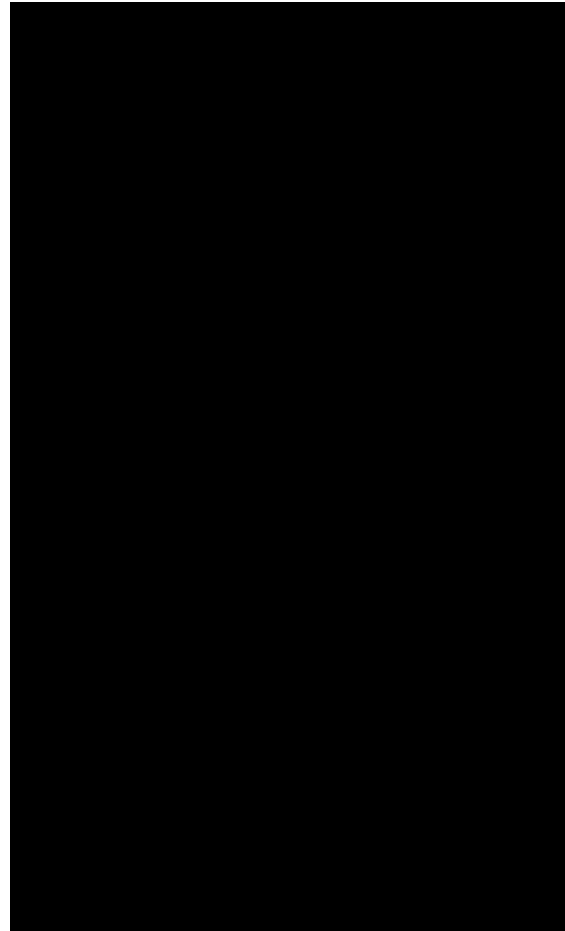


Fig. 2.2: Water-colour painting by Robert Leigh of Nicholas Wyfold (c. 1450). London Metropolitan Archives, Cat.-No. K1306385.

⁵¹ Francis B. Bickley (ed.), *The Little Red Book of Bristol* (Bristol, 1900), II, p. 224.

⁵² Kathrin Stutz, ‘Die Hausmarke: Zur Genese eines Rechtsbegriffs’, in Karin Czaja and Gabriela Signori (eds), *Häuser, Namen, Identitäten: Beiträge zur spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadtgeschichte* (Constance, 2009), p. 40; Edward M. Elmhirst, ‘Merchant Marks and Heraldry’, *The Coat of Arms*, 3 (1955), p. 227.

⁵³ Charles Boutell, *English Heraldry*, 8th edn (London, 1904), p. 139. See also Newton, *Heraldry*, p. 395; Dallaway, *Inquiries*, p. 120.

keen to promote a distinction between marks and ‘proper’ arms. Although the *Ashmolean Tract* did not challenge the right of non-nobles to use heraldic signs (if granted by an authority), its author tried to maintain the pre-eminence of anciently inherited arms by explicitly juxtaposing them with marks as used by merchants. Whereas originally, since the times of ancient Troy, noble men excelling in combat ‘bere a marke into keyning that he had wonne a point of worship’, he argued, more recently English merchants ‘toke vp a gyse amongste hem and made merkes vpon there packes of merchandyse’.⁵⁴ In order to allow for a distinction between these two types of ‘marks’, a linguistic distinction was proposed: ‘these men of worshipp that cam from Troye their merkes shulde be turned and callyd armes in tokenyng that they were gotten with strengþe of menis armes’.⁵⁵ To safeguard ‘armes’ as witnesses of their bearers’ prowess as warriors, the officers of arms were created and obliged ‘to take hede that merchauntes shulde bere no armes though they had never so grete riches’.⁵⁶ In the author’s eyes wealth alone, as many merchants had acquired it, did not suffice to be entitled to a heraldic sign—only chivalric achievements and a ‘noble’ lineage ought to be ‘seen’ in a ‘proper’ heraldic sign.

Other contemporary ‘connoisseurs’ of heraldry were more concerned with the ‘purity’ of the heraldic vocabulary, as some merchants and craftsmen began to ‘heraldicise’ their marks by placing them in a shield.⁵⁷ Such arrangements were to be considered ‘un-heraldic’, so that Richard Strangways, for example, described shields bearing marks as ‘non armys’.⁵⁸ Similar sentiments might have caused five shields to have been left blank in the mid-fifteenth-century *Leigh Book* (fig. 2.2). While this document prominently displays the arms of London aldermen, those of Stephen Forster, for example, were omitted, and indeed Foster otherwise used a heraldicised mark.⁵⁹ More aggressively, the royal patent that commanded the heralds’ first visitation in 1530

⁵⁴ Keiser, ‘Ashmolean Tract’, pp. 184–185.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 185–186.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵⁷ Czaja, ‘Hausmarken’, p. 178; Wolfgang von Stromer, ‘Marken und Zeichen des Wirtschaftslebens’, in Getrud Blaschnitz (ed.), *Symbole des Alltags, Alltag der Symbole: Festschrift für Harry Kühnel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Graz, 1992), p. 236.

⁵⁸ BL, Harley 2259, fols 110r, 119v, 139v.

⁵⁹ Barron, ‘Merchant Culture’, p. 235.

sanctioned this aversion towards marks by ordering ‘to reforme all false armorye’, including ‘marks onlawfully sett or made in scochens squares or lozengis’, which the heralds were ‘to deface and take away wheresoever they be sett’.⁶⁰ Although subsequently Carlisle Herald obediently ‘defaced and tooke away dyverse [...] Scochynse wth markes and tokinse’ when visiting the churches of London,⁶¹ this was far from an attack on the right of Londoners to bear heraldic signs as such. On the contrary, the herald explicitly acknowledged the ‘good repytaschons’ of ‘dyvers worschipfull Marchands’ buried in these churches,⁶² and, as Thrupp observes, there is ‘no evidence that heralds ever used their authority to challenge the validity of arms that conformed to the conventions of heraldic art’.⁶³

Urban reality was hardly affected by such opinions or even sanctions against marks. Nor, for that matter, did townsmen abandon their established marks even once ‘proper’ arms had eventually been ‘conceded’ to them. The heralds’ corrective efforts never reached Salisbury, for instance, where they would have needed to challenge the commemorative displays of mayor William Swayne. In 1445/1446, he had supported the reconstruction of a chapel in the church of St Thomas, and although he received a grant of arms in 1461, the chapel continued to feature his ‘old’ mark, heraldicised and placed on a shield, alongside his ‘new’ heraldic sign.⁶⁴ Whether Swayne had used or even inherited these arms before he received official authorisation to do so is unknown, but the decision to incorporate both signs into a chapel that was to become his final resting place strongly points to the comparable—if not equal—esteem the two identifiers had in the townsman’s eyes.⁶⁵ As Thrupp further notes regarding London, ‘the fact that a merchant sealed with a trade-mark on a shield therefore did not mean that a merchant

⁶⁰ Quoted in Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 9.

⁶¹ Printed in *ibid.*, pp. 139–143.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶³ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 249, n. 34.

⁶⁴ Charles Haskins, *The Ancient Trade Guilds and Companies of Salisbury* (Salisbury, 1912), pp. 137–138; Edward Duke, *Prolusiones Historicæ; or, Essays Illustrative of the Halle of John Halle, Citizen, and Marchant of Salisbury, in the Reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV.* (Salisbury, 1837), p. 84.

⁶⁵ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 254.

had no coat-of-arms; often a man had two shields displayed about his house, one with his trade-mark and one with his arms'.⁶⁶



Fig. 2.3: Hans Fugger (d. 1408) and his wives depicted in the family's *Ehrenbuch* (1545–1547). BSB, Cgm. 9460, p. 18.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

The same was true for German townsmen.⁶⁷ For example, although the Fugger family of Augsburg was granted their famous lily arms in 1473,⁶⁸ the proud use of their mark did not cease. Not only did their mark still feature in a chapel commissioned in 1509,⁶⁹ but some thirty years later their lavishly illuminated and heraldically abounding *Ehrenbuch* (1545–1547) still began its account of the history of the Fugger family with a depiction of their heraldicised mark (fig. 2.3), ‘the right ancient Fuggerian sign [...] borne and used by Hans Fugger, the first Fugger in Augsburg, in 1370.’⁷⁰ Here, too, the unproblematic co-presence of heraldic signs and marks suggests that they were of equal importance as a means of identification and an expression of identity, with no regard for the personal preferences and legal opinions of heraldic experts such as heralds.

2.1.3 *Heraldic Cases in the Urban Jurisdiction*

If questions concerning heraldic signs and the ‘law of arms’ arose, late medieval townspeople were perfectly capable of dealing with such issues within the urban institutions. In 1380, for example, arbitrators in Nuremberg discussed a heraldic case involving two prominent local families, the Stromer and Nützel, who fought over the same heraldic sign. Ulman Stromer remarked that his family ‘had approached the Nützel regarding our arms, that is that they should abstain from using it as they are not entitled to bear it by law’.⁷¹ But the urban arbitrators instead proposed an amicable solution that did not favour either side and instead stressed their familial connection:

Be it known that we found the Stromer to have used the aforementioned arms earlier than the Nützel. However, since both parties are related and have held the same arms for many a day, we ordain that they and their descendants on both sides shall bear the aforementioned arms together without any quarrel.⁷²

Rather than divesting one of the families of their established arms, this decision was meant to strengthen the relationship between the two families: the arbitrators in Nuremberg proposed to see the fact that the two families bore the same heraldic sign as

⁶⁷ See also Heinrich Kramm, *Studien über die Oberschichten der mitteldeutschen Städte im 16. Jahrhundert: Sachsen, Thüringen, Anhalt* (Cologne; Vienna, 1981), p. 544.

⁶⁸ RI XIII H. 17 no. 274, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1473-06-09_1_0_13_17_0_276_274>.

⁶⁹ See below, p. 97.

⁷⁰ BSB, Cgm. 9460, fol. 4r.

⁷¹ CDS 1, p. 74.

⁷² Ibid.

an expression of their cognatic links and kinship, analogous to the way in which heraldic signs (normally) expressed the direct descent of an agnatic lineage.⁷³ They thus found a pragmatic solution particularly suitable for an urban society, in which cognatic relations defined one's social network and status just as much as agnatic blood.⁷⁴

Similarly, while urban authorities did not themselves grant arms, the mayor and council of Ravensburg in 1384 still confidently issued a document to Rapern von Rosenhart confirming that 'he and his ancestors—among them knights and squires—are armigers having their own arms, namely three roses in a silver shield'.⁷⁵ The Rosenhart were a Swabian family of knights who had been denied participation in a nearby tournament due to insufficient standing,⁷⁶ but supported by the city's confirmation of his arms and status—alongside other documents issued by Swabian knights as well as the Count of Montfort—Rapern von Rosenhart was triumphant in the end.⁷⁷ The urban institutions of Ravensburg, it seems, were deemed sufficiently acquainted with heraldic matters to testify to their status, even amongst the ranks of the countryside nobility otherwise increasingly keen to exclude non-noble *parvenus*—not least those from the cities—from their tournaments.⁷⁸

Urban institutions in England appear to have been equally able to address heraldic cases. A London court was called upon to establish the ownership of a heraldic sign in 1377, when William Bardolf, lord of Wormegay, launched a complaint against the goldsmith William Fitz Hugh 'for refusing to surrender four "scochons" with

⁷³ See also Joseph Morsel, 'Geschlecht und Repräsentation: Beobachtungen zur Verwandtschaftskonstruktion im fränkischen Adel des späten Mittelalters', in Otto Gerhard Oexle and Andrea von Hülsen-Esch (eds), *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen: Texte, Bilder, Objekte* (Göttingen, 1998), p. 272, n. 31.

⁷⁴ Simon Teuscher, *Bekannte, Klienten, Verwandte: Soziabilität und Politik in der Stadt Bern um 1500* (Cologne et al., 1998), esp. pp. 80–82.

⁷⁵ Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 822.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, 'Ernsthafter Rangstreit und Wappenwechsel', *Archiv für Geschichte, Statistik, Literatur und Kunst*, 95–96 (1827), p. 523.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Rudolf Endres, 'Turniere und Gesellenstechen in Nürnberg', in Helmut Bräuer and Elke Schlenkrich (eds), *Die Stadt als Kommunikationsraum: Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Karl Czok zum 75. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 2001), pp. 271–272. See also Thomas Zotz, 'Adel, Bürgertum und Turniere in deutschen Städten vom 13 bis 15. Jahrhundert', in Josef Fleckenstein (ed.), *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums* (Göttingen, 1985).

hatchments of his arms, which were found in the said William's possession' on the grounds that Fitz Hugh had no claim to them.⁷⁹ The goldsmith replied that he had purchased the arms from a foreign minstrel, and Bardolf's rightful claim to the (abstract) heraldic sign notwithstanding, the court let Fitz Hugh keep the (material) shields. Judges in Bristol had no trouble dealing with armorial bearings as evidence in criminal matters either. In 1477, after Thomas Norton had denigrated the mayor, William Spencer, by accusing him of high treason, the main piece of evidence brought forward against Thomas was a letter 'writin With his oune hande and sealid with the seale of his armes'.⁸⁰ Since a comprehensive and widespread grasp of the arms of local people was fundamental to their general function as a means of identification (and in this case authentication), the urban court did not need to consult with heralds to establish the ownership of the arms in question.

2.2 'Token of Honner': Granting, Confirming, and Augmenting Arms

Due to the absence of a coherent and enforced 'law of arms' in the later Middle Ages, there was no legal need to obtain an 'official' grant of arms from a heraldic authority. 'The Middle Ages spawned many hundreds of coats of arms', as Ailes observes, 'yet documented grants of arms cover but a tiny proportion'.⁸¹ Still, there were some late medieval contemporaries who—sometimes even when already in possession of a heraldic sign—petitioned and paid for grants, confirmations, and augmentations of their arms. Not only was the visual appearance of these documents as impressive as it was expensive, their texts also promised to confirm and increase the grantee's honour: 'Firstly, [...] they [...] speak of the grantees as being worthy recipients. Secondly, they [...] refer to the grantors' desire to augment the grantees in honour and noblesse and of

⁷⁹ Arthur H. Thomas, *Calendar of Select Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London* (Cambridge, 1929), I, pp. 255–256.

⁸⁰ E. W. W. Veale (ed.), *The Great Red Book of Bristol* (Bristol, 1953), IV, p. 72. See also *ibid.*, p. 75.

⁸¹ Ailes, 'Grants', p. 66. For England, see also Clive Cheesman, 'Grants and Confirmations of Arms', in Nigel Ramsay (ed.), *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England* (Donington, 2014). For Germany, see Hanns Jäger-Sunstenau, 'Über die Wappenverleihungen der deutschen Kaiser 1328 bis 1806', *Genealogie*, 34 (1985); Jürgen Arndt, 'Die Entwicklung der Wappenbriefe von 1350 bis 1806 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Palatinatswappenbriefe', *Der Herold*, 7 (1969).

increasing their estate, that is their status or station in life, by granting them ensigns of that nobility and gentility.’⁸²

Although grants of arms did not (normally) confer noble or gentle status in a legal sense,⁸³ this section will show that citizens of late medieval cities in England and Germany pursued such documents and the signs they conferred to promote and increase their symbolic capital.⁸⁴ Grant of arms claimed that the formal act of granting, confirming, or augmenting heraldic signs recognised ‘honourable’ personal qualities and achievements, whilst simultaneously suggesting that heraldic signs were to be seen as visual expressions of this honour. In this sense, grants of arms point to the ways in which townspeople perceived (and wished others to perceive) their heraldic signs: the grants’ rhetoric not only relates key components of urban identity to heraldry, it also points to the ends urban grantees sought to achieve, namely a consolidation or even improvement of their social status. This expectation will become most apparent in two cases in which the pursuit of a grant of arms was a strategic decision of urban ‘upstarts’ keen to receive (heraldic) recognition of their claims to status in the late medieval city.

2.2.1 *Rewarding and Representing Honourable Townsmen*

Grants of arms presented the heraldic signs they conferred as the result and as a visual expression of personal qualities defined in terms of ‘honour’, ‘virtue’, ‘noblesse’, and ‘gentleness’ in the sense of reputable, moral conduct according to general social expectations. In England, the rationale of a grant issued to John Randolf in 1453/1454 thus singled out the London mercer among ‘persons movd of noble courage’ and ‘vertuous manners and condicions’, by means of which ‘they shall with goddes grace more come to the perfection of greate honor’.⁸⁵ The same rhetoric featured in the 1461 grant to the aforementioned William Swayne of Salisbury. He was praised as ‘a discrete and notable man’, who in reward of the ‘woorshipfull disposition of his person & habilitie in all gentilnes’ was granted arms ‘to beare and use in war & peace [...] without

⁸² Ailes, ‘Grants’, p. 33.

⁸³ Cheesman, ‘Grants and Confirmations’, pp. 69–70; Arndt, ‘Entwicklung der Wappenbriefe’, p. 181.

⁸⁴ For Germany, see also Werner Constantin von Arnswaldt, ‘Wappenverleihungen an bürgerliche Familien’, *Familiengeschichtliche Blätter*, 10 (1912); Felix Hauptmann, ‘Bürgerliche Wappenbriefe’, *Mitteilungen der Westdeutschen Gesellschaft für Familienkunde*, 1 (1913).

⁸⁵ Bod., Ashmole 834, fol. 3v.

clayme or empeachment of any person'.⁸⁶ With even more bombast a grant from 1492 acknowledged that because London merchant Nicholas Mattock 'hath well and honorably guided and governed himself', he deserved to be admitted and counted 'unto the number and into the company of our ancient gentle and noble men'.⁸⁷ For this reason, the herald furthermore stressed, Mattock was awarded arms 'in consideration of the same his gentleness, virtue, and ability'.⁸⁸

While terms such as 'gentleness' or 'noblesse' indicative of a *nobilitas virtutis* acquired by personal conduct are strikingly absent in grants to German townsmen, they still chose the same rhetoric of 'honour' stressing exemplary conduct and presenting heraldic signs as its outward expression. Several citizens of Constance, for example, received imperial grants of arms modelled on a document issued to Hans and Conrad Schwartzach in 1408, who were proclaimed to be deserving of arms due to their 'special virtue and good demeanour'.⁸⁹ In 1417, King Sigismund granted arms to Hans, Ulrich, and Hans Stark from Nuremberg, similarly praising their 'honesty and probity',⁹⁰ just as the archbishop of Magdeburg in 1455 granted arms in reward for 'reputable probity, commendable life and reason', which 'the diligent Bastian Hughen virtuously possesses and exhibits'.⁹¹

Some grants were more explicit regarding the accomplishments of urban grantees, notably loyal and martial services rendered to the issuing authority. The earliest imperial grant from 1400 to the sons of Folze Eyermenger, citizens of Mainz, for instance, praised the 'service' they had provided, and desired that the grantees 'may continue to do so in the future'.⁹² The nature of such 'services' was explained in the case of Sebald Schreyer, son of an affluent furrier and citizen of Nuremberg, who received a

⁸⁶ Willoughby Aston Littledale (ed.), *A Collection of Miscellaneous Grants, Crests, Confirmations, Augmentations and Exemplifications of Arms in the Mss. Preserved in the British Museum, Ashmolean Library, Queen's College, Oxford, and Elsewhere* (London, 1926), II, p. 192.

⁸⁷ BL, Harley 1507, fol. 6r.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Alfred von Siegenfeld, 'Die Wappenbriefe und Standeserhebungen des Römischen Königs Ruprecht von der Pfalz', *Jahrbuch der k. k. heraldischen Gesellschaft 'Adler'*, 5–6 (1895), p. 408.

⁹⁰ Johann Christian Siebenkees (ed.), *Materialien zur Nürnbergischen Geschichte* (Nuremberg, 1792), I, p. 293.

⁹¹ Gustav Hertel (ed.), *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Magdeburg* (Halle [Saale], 1894), II, pp. 685–686.

⁹² Printed in Siegenfeld, 'Wappenbriefe', p. 396.

confirmation of arms not just for his ‘reason, virtue, and honesty’, but also for his ‘diligent services’ provided to Frederick III.⁹³ Sebald had initially served Count Ulrich of Grafeneck, but when the latter conspired against the emperor, the townsman defected and revealed the plot.⁹⁴ Wolf Holzschuher of Nuremberg, who was described as ‘seeking to increase the nobility of his parents and his ancestors’, managed to receive an augmentation of his arms from the king of Portugal on account of his courage fighting against the Moors, for which the Holzschuher arms received a Moor’s head and the cross of the Order of Christ.⁹⁵

For equally martial accomplishments, a grant (allegedly) issued in 1306 by James Hedingley, Guyan King of Arms, emphasised ‘the loyal and valiant service’ towards the king of England that Peter Dodge, a native of Stockport, had supposedly provided ‘in several battles against his great enemy and rebel King Baliol of Scotland as well as during the Siege of Berwick and Dunbar, where in his duty and valiant courage he [Peter] advanced both his own renown and good content of my sovereign lord’.⁹⁶ As a reward, Dodge had not only received a lordship from the king, Hedingley also ‘thought it fitting in the performance of my office to grant him arms’.⁹⁷ After all, Hedingley explained, it was the duty of the herald’s office to ‘distribute such ensigns and arms of honour’.⁹⁸ There is reason to treat this particular case with caution: Anthony Wagner lists herald James Hedingley as ‘otherwise unknown’, and notes that a later reference to this fourteenth-century grant only appears in a confirmation of arms issued in 1546.⁹⁹ The earlier grant may thus well have been fabricated to legitimise this sixteenth-century confirmation. But even if the grant to Peter Dodge is a forgery, it is still indicative of the late medieval legacy, as it echoes the regular concern of earlier grants of arms regarding arms as a consequence of ‘honour’ and ‘noblesse’. In this particular case, as

⁹³ Printed in Elisabeth Caesar, ‘Sebald Schreyer: Ein Lebensbild aus dem vorreformatorischen Nürnberg’, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 56 (1969), p. 172.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 837.

⁹⁶ Printed in John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Herald and Genealogist* (London, 1863), I, pp. 515–516.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Walter H. Godfrey, *The College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street* (London, 1963), p. 261.

in the German case of Wolf Holzschuher, it was derived from ‘feats of arms’ on the battlefield.

This attempt to locate the origins of a heraldic sign in the past resembles another common thread of grants of arms to townsmen, namely a strong emphasis on genealogy and antiquity, which the heraldic signs granted or confirmed were supposed to exhibit. For this purpose, the confirmation of ‘old’ arms—as opposed to the grant of ‘new’ arms—was the tool of choice, as Clive Cheesman points out: ‘the confirmation of a person’s right to arms was a way to establish their arms without implying that they had not hitherto been of gentle status.’¹⁰⁰ In contrast to an abstract *nobilitas virtutis*, the qualities associated with honour—and the heraldic sign which embodied them—could be claimed to have been the inherited result of a *nobilitas carnis*. The brothers Thomas and Richard Barowe of Winthorpe, the latter of whom was described as ‘Marchaunt of the Staple’ in their 1495 confirmations of arms, chose this approach, for example.¹⁰¹ Here, the entitlement of the Barowe brothers to arms was suggested by linking them to ‘the oldest and chefe of the house Stok’, from which Thomas and Richard supposedly ‘comen and descended’.¹⁰² This heritage, the grant stressed, was indicative of their virtue, since ‘nobles is oons in a name or bloode [and] it may not be lost w’oute to longe contynuaunce in slowthe and vicys’.¹⁰³

Another English grant issued by Henry VIII struck a similar note, although it was in fact given to a German citizen, namely Nuremberg citizen Lorenz Stauber, who visited England in 1503. He was deemed a *nobilis vir* from a *nobilis familia*, ‘gifted in spirit and body’, in reward of which Stauber received an augmentation (fig. 2.4) of the arms that have ‘anciently been used by his ancestors’.¹⁰⁴ The same value attributed to ‘old’ and ‘noble’ arms must have motivated Jost Lauwer of Memmingen: he obtained imperial permission to use ‘the arms of the Swabelsberg, his next of kin from his

¹⁰⁰ Cheesman, ‘Grants and Confirmations’, p. 76.

¹⁰¹ Society of Antiquaries (ed.), *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries: November 21, 1895, to June 17, 1897* (London, 1898), pp. 347–348.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Printed in Michael Powell Siddons, *The Heraldry of Foreigners in England 1400–1700* (London, 2010), p. 312.

mother's side, who have now become extinct', and their arms thus available, it seems.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Paul Ruggli, a citizen of Leutkirchen, requested permission to use the arms of his mother's family after it had become available due to failure of the male line.¹⁰⁶



Fig. 2.4: Wood-carving (1521) by Albrecht Dürer of the arms of Lorenz Stauber augmented by Henry VIII of England.

¹⁰⁵ Siegenfeld, 'Wappenbriefe', p. 397.

2.2.2 *Augmenting the Symbolic Capital of Honour*

Rather than just a recognition of existing honour, grants, confirmations, and augmentations of arms were also perceived to add to the value of heraldic signs and the symbolic capital of honour associated with their bearers. This perception is not just suggested by the mysterious Guyan King of Arms, whose grant stated that arms were given to grantees ‘for the advancement of their honour’,¹⁰⁷ but also by Bartolus de Saxoferrato, who claimed that arms issued by a prince, king, or herald were ‘of greater dignity’ than heraldic signs that lacked such an ‘official’ source.¹⁰⁸

Of course, augmentations of arms, in this respect, promised to be particularly effective, since the change in appearance of the established sign visibly pointed to its changed, augmented value. This intention was made explicit by a grant to London mayor Richard Gresham in 1537, for example, which added helmet and crest to Gresham’s arms as ‘token of honner to preference the said Armes [...] and for the Rememberance of the said noblese’.¹⁰⁹ That augmentations of arms were perceived to increase the recipients’ honour—or at least claiming an increase in honour—is also suggested by ordinances issued in Nuremberg. Here, an augmentation granted to a group of citizens in 1433 by Emperor Sigismund became a cause for concern. After Erhart and Paul Haller, Franz Rummel, and Martin Hayden had travelled to Rome to witness the coronation of Sigismund, the emperor rewarded his loyal subjects from Nuremberg by ‘knighting them on the bridge across the Tiber, alongside other knights from Venice and Zurich’, as a chronicler noted.¹¹⁰ Part of this ennoblement, the *Geschlechtsbuch* (1536) of Konrad Haller recorded, was an augmentation of their existing arms: Sigismund bestowed upon them the privilege ‘to bear the honour of the colour gold on the helmet of their shield’.¹¹¹ In the fifteenth century, golden coronets were

¹⁰⁶ Regg. Pfalzgrafen 2 no. 2118, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1402-03-31_2_o_10_o_o_2119_2118>.

¹⁰⁷ Printed in Nichols, *Herald*, I, pp. 515–516.

¹⁰⁸ Saxoferrato, ‘De Insigniis’, pp. 147–148.

¹⁰⁹ Printed in Joseph Jackson Howard, *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* (London, 1876), II, pp. 311–312.

¹¹⁰ CDS 1, p. 387. See also XI.2 no. 9461, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1433-05-31_36_o_11_2_o_3633_9461>; XI.2 no. 9540, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1433-07-10_1_o_11_2_o_3715_9540>.

¹¹¹ CDS 1, p. 387, n. 4.

repeatedly given to grantees of arms to denote their leap into the lower nobility,¹¹² but in this instance the townsmen's claims to this new status expressed by the augmented arms were opposed by the council. Alongside other sumptuary laws in defiance of 'the vice of vanity' and 'in praise of the almighty God and to the benefit of the common weal and the city of Nuremberg's honour',¹¹³ 'the honourable council decreed that hereafter no citizen may have, bear, pursue, display, depict, or use a crowned helmet in any way'.¹¹⁴ In a letter sent to the emperor in 1436, the aldermen justified their actions on grounds of 'the decent reign of our ancestors which instilled modesty and humility [...] in prevention of vanity and pomposity'.¹¹⁵ It seems that the council feared the ennoblement of the four citizens—and their coronets as its outward signs—implied an attempt to rise above the elite collective of *nobiles Norimbergensis*, as the families occupying the positions in the inner council of Nuremberg preferred to call themselves.¹¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, the bearers of golden coronets were reluctant to comply: the prohibition had to be repeated in 1447,¹¹⁷ and eventually the council sought imperial confirmation of their ordinances against crowned helmets:

We understand that our dear mayor and council of Nuremberg have issued a statute to avoid envy, vanity, and adversity, so that each may stay in the estate that is appropriate, forbidding your citizens to obtain, bear, and use crowned helmets. This statute is violated by many [...] which is why we, the Roman emperor, ordain that they ought to adhere to the statute from now on irrevocably.¹¹⁸

Through prohibiting the display of heraldic signs associated with elevated status, the council of Nuremberg was able to ignore the increase in the grantees' honour proclaimed by their augmented arms, which would have risked placing them above their peers.

¹¹² E. Wernicke, 'Die "heraldischen" Kronen', *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, 26 (1879), cols 324–325.

¹¹³ Joseph Baader (ed.), *Nürnberger Polizeiordnungen aus dem XIII. bis XV. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1861), p. 95.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹¹⁵ CDS 1, p. 387, n. 7.

¹¹⁶ See also Endres, 'Gesellenstechen', p. 274.

¹¹⁷ Johannes Müllner, *Die Annalen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg von 1623*, ed. by Gerhard Hirschmann (Nuremberg, 1984), II, p. 304.

¹¹⁸ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 833.

That grants and confirmations of arms were also pursued by townsmen in concrete need of consolidating their social status *qua* an increase in honour is equally indicative of the perceived relation between heraldic signs and honour. In England, '[w]ealth was the usual source of political power in towns',¹¹⁹ and in 1469 the mayor and aldermen of London cast this connection into law when they decreed that any prospective alderman had to possess £1,000 in goods and chattels to qualify for office. In the wake of this manifest equation of wealth and political power, the later grantee of arms Peter Pekham mocked the aldermen John Tate by proclaiming that he, Pekham, 'was as good as John Tate and had a thousand pounds'.¹²⁰ The implications of this taunt were not lost on London's officials: Pekham was charged with scandalous speech against an alderman—an attack on Tate's honour. 'Pekham was drawing upon, and subverting, the belief that rule by the rich was justifiable because they were the more honourable and virtuous; economic inequalities were linked to relative moral worth.'¹²¹ Aware that political power in the form of office (*honor* in the Roman sense of the *cursus honorum*) was explicitly linked to material wealth, Pekham—in possession of the required monetary means—was keen to claim the same honour and reverence that aldermen such as John Tate commanded.

Pekham appears as quite conscious of his own social status, and determined to increase it. In 1496, Pekham 'purchased an extensive estate in Denham, Buckinghamshire', just like other affluent London citizens eager to join the ranks of the gentry.¹²² That Pekham had also pursued a confirmation of arms two years earlier, in 1494, must be seen in the same light, as part of his struggle to assert and increase his symbolic capital constitutive of his place in the urban hierarchy. This document placed Pekham among 'noble and gentle courage advance' who 'exercise good and virtuous acts with commendable manners and gentil concience', before it conferred arms to Pekham and his successors 'to have [...] to their honnour without any impediment or

¹¹⁹ Christian D. Liddy, "'Sir ye be not Kyng": Citizenship and Speech in Late Medieval and Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 60.3 (2016), p. 14.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹²² Charles W. Peckham, *The Peckham Family* (Dexter [Mich.], 2009), p. 30.

contradiction'.¹²³ Again, it is noteworthy that Pekham chose to petition for a confirmation rather than a grant of arms. Instead of a 'new' heraldic sign, Pekham had asked the herald for a 'thorowe serch for the verray armes of this predecessours'.¹²⁴ An emphasis was thus again placed on the lineage from which he had inherited the sign in question rather than 'just' his own conduct.

However, the consolidation or improvement of social status might fail when the recognition of symbolic capital promised by an augmentation, confirmation, or grant of arms was rejected. This is illustrated by the case of Ludeke Holland, a skinner from Brunswick, who became a pivotal figure in the *Schicht* revolt of 1488.¹²⁵ When after yet another debasement of Brunswick's coin the less affluent townsmen turned against the established government, Ludeke Holland acted as their spokesperson and managed to gain concessions from the aldermen. He was no stranger to politics or political office, having previously served as mayor of the Sack district, one of the five districts (*Weichbilde*) of Brunswick. But although his success in 1488 eventually made him mayor of all of Brunswick, Ludeke Holland became the target of insults targeting his humble origins. Due to their dealings with dead animals, skimmers ranked lowest in the city's internal hierarchy of crafts, just as Sack came last in the hierarchy of districts which constituted the pentapolis of Brunswick. In the annual processions of the commune, for instance, Sack residents had to march at the back.¹²⁶ For these reasons, some felt, Ludeke Holland lacked the honour they deemed necessary to be eligible for the position of mayor of Brunswick.

It appears that Holland himself was quite conscious of this lack in honour, but keen to rectify it.¹²⁷ Among the first steps Holland took was to move into a 'better' part of the city, Neustadt, which was considered one of the more eminent districts of Brunswick. Here, Holland also left the craft of skimmers to 'translate' to the much more prestigious mercers' guild. Soon, a grant of (new) arms became part of Holland's

¹²³ Queen's College, Oxford, 38, fol. 15r.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Wilfried Ehbrecht, 'Die Braunschweiger Schicht von 1488: Ein Stadtkonflikt als Exempel für Mißgunst und Ehrgeiz in den städtischen Führungsfamilien', in Wilfried Ehbrecht (ed.), *Konsens und Konflikt* (Cologne, 1991).

¹²⁶ UBB, pp. 145–184.

¹²⁷ Rogge, 'Ehrverletzungen und Entehrungen', p. 119.

strategy of improving his honour, as the town clerk and chronicler Hermann Bote recalled: ‘That summer the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg invited Holland to his residence, and on that occasion the duke granted Holland arms, namely two cranes conjoined at their necks.’¹²⁸ Bote concluded, disapprovingly, that ‘this went to Holland’s head; he presumed himself to be from the line of David—the cat’s head he did not want to be anymore’.¹²⁹

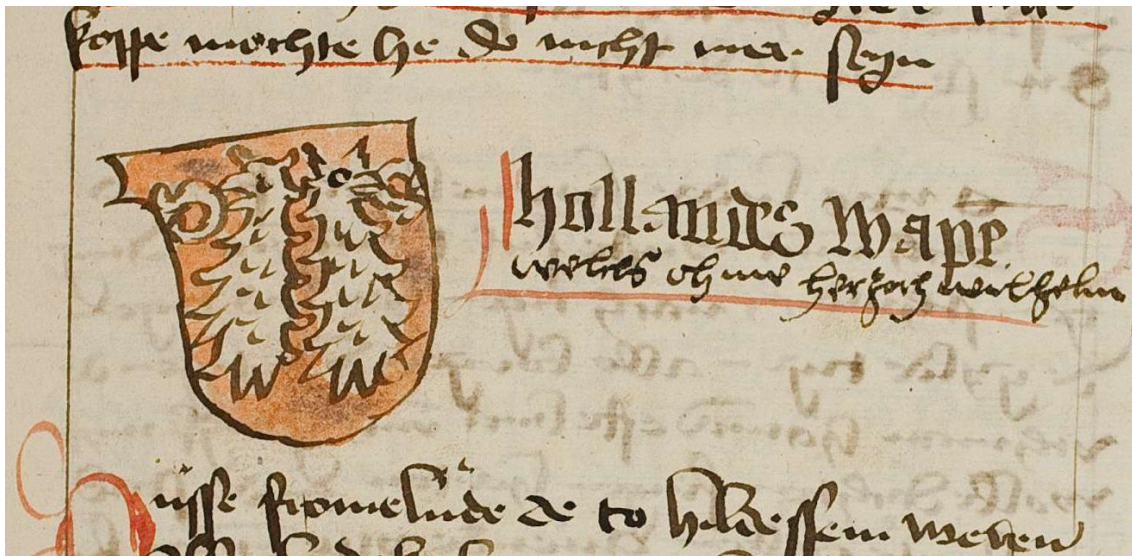


Fig. 2.5: Arms granted to Ludeke Holland in 1488, depicted in Herman Bote’s *Schichtbuch* (1514). HAB, Hs. 120 Extrav., fol. 82r.

The last part of the sentence perhaps suggests that Ludeke Holland previously possessed another heraldic sign that was replaced by this grant of arms, and that this previous sign displayed a cat or a cat’s head.¹³⁰ This might explain why Holland was mocked as a ‘cat’ by people critical of his ambitions and position in Brunswick.¹³¹ Cats tended to have a negative connotation and were often associated with skimmers, whose craft was deemed equally impure.¹³² For this reason, Jörg Rogge rejects the possibility that feline arms could have been cause of the mockery, as he doubts that Holland would have chosen a cat given the animal’s negative connotations. Yet there are examples of

¹²⁸ CDS 16, p. 376.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ See also Rochus Liliencron, *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1866), II, p. 212.

¹³¹ See also Herbert Blume, ‘Hermann Botes Ludeke-Holland-Lieder und ihre Überlieferung’, *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch*, 66 (1985), p. 72.

¹³² Rogge, ‘Ehrverletzungen und Entehrungen’, p. 120.

townsmen deliberately choosing and using cats as their heraldic charge,¹³³ and proudly and publicly embracing the pejorative symbolism of the cat may have been a somewhat self-deprecating and yet strategic move to lessen the chance for future derision of others. This, however, remains speculation, just like Rogge's interpretation of the crane granted as part of Holland's new arms (fig. 2.5). Since there is no contemporary rationale explaining this particular choice, scholarly interpretations such as the crane representing unity and vigilance—as fitting and tempting as they seem in the context of his ambitious revolutionary reign—remain tentative.¹³⁴

It seems more likely that Ludeke Holland obtained a grant of arms as part of more general efforts to increase his honour, which, due to his humble social background, was seen to be insufficient for a man in his privileged position. Yet the efficacy of the grant and the sign it conferred depended on the willingness of others to accept this claim to honour, and in Holland's case this acceptance was ultimately denied. While Holland had failed to put promised social reforms into practice, he had also exhibited quite 'un-mayoral' behaviour once in office. In a drunken rage, he had the mayor of the Altstadt district arrested, and when it was rumoured that Holland was attempting to hand control over the city to the duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the people eventually turned against him, forcing him to flee Brunswick in 1490.¹³⁵ The symbolic capital of honour that Ludeke Holland was keen to claim by means of a grant of arms (and similar status-elevating moves) was not recognised by the citizens of Brunswick, in whose eyes, as Bote phrased it, the mayor was now nothing but 'an arrogant cat'.¹³⁶ A late sixteenth-century family book of the Pfister family from Augsburg, too, pointed to this risk of failing recognition of heraldically claimed honour: 'Keep in mind that extraneous virtue does not adorn you, even if you bear the most splendid arms.'¹³⁷

¹³³ Regg. Pfalzgrafen 2 no. 4274, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1405-12-12_1_1_0_10_0_0_4278_4274>; Klaus Graf, 'Autoritäten auf den Wandbildern des Augsburger Pfettner-Hauses', *Archivalia*, 2014, <<https://archivalia.hypotheses.org/3191>>.

¹³⁴ Rogge, 'Ehrverletzungen und Entehrungen', pp. 121–122. On the crane as a heraldic symbol, see also Fox-Davies, *Guide to Heraldry*, p. 247.

¹³⁵ Rogge, 'Ehrverletzungen und Entehrungen', pp. 124–125.

¹³⁶ Printed in Blume, 'Holland-Lieder', p. 72.

¹³⁷ CDS 34, p. 371.

2.3 Manuscripts and Literature: Intertwining Heraldry and History

The emphasis that grants of arms placed on honour derived from a long, distinguished lineage, expressed in the shape of the heraldic sign, is symptomatic of heraldry's relationship with late medieval identity: because arms were passed on from generation to generation, soon they came to be seen as expressions of and evidence for this genealogy.¹³⁸ This perception was not just echoed by the performance of 'proofs of nobility', which relied heavily on heraldry as 'a show-case of descent'.¹³⁹ Chivalric literature, too, abounded in heraldic signs attributed to historical and mythical figures, presented as indicative of their achievements on the battlefield, their exemplary conduct, and their eminent descent.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps most clearly this connection of heraldry and genealogy emerges from the genre of heraldic aetiologies—'myths of arms' (*Wappensagen*)—which sought to locate the origin of a particular heraldic sign among heroic and distinguished ancestors in a distant past. Whereas older scholarship tended to disregard such narratives as 'legends' or 'fables' due to a frequent lack of authenticity, historians now stress their significance as sources for the construction of late medieval identities and strategies of (heraldic) self-representation.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Maurice Keen, 'Chivalry and the Aristocracy', in Michael Jones (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 2008), VI, p. 208; Birgit Studt, 'Symbole fürstlicher Politik: Stammtafeln, Wappenreihen und Ahnengalerien in Text und Bild', in Martin Gosman and Volker Honemann (eds), *The Mediation of Symbol in Late Medieval and Early Modern Times* (Frankfurt [Main], 2005), esp. pp. 244–248.

¹³⁹ Malcolm Graham Allan Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981), p. 88. See also Elizabeth Harding and Michael Hecht, 'Ahnentproben als soziale Phänomene des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine Einführung', in Elizabeth Harding and Michael Hecht (eds), *Die Ahnentprobe in der Vormoderne: Selektion, Initiation, Repräsentation* (Münster, 2011), pp. 11–12; Harald Lönnecker, 'Die Ahnentprobe und ihre heraldisch-genealogischen Voraussetzungen', in Peter Rück (ed.), *Mabillons Spur: Zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Heinemeyer* (Marburg, 1992).

¹⁴⁰ Ailes, 'Markers of Identity'; Haiko Wandhoff, 'The Shield as a Poetic Screen: Early Blazon and the Visualization of Medieval German Literature', in Kathryn Starkey (ed.), *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages* (New York, 2005); Hans Jürgen Scheuer, 'Wahrnehmen – Blasonieren – Dichten: Das Heraldisch-Imaginäre als poetische Denkform in der Literatur des Mittelalters', *Das Mittelalter*, 11.2 (2006).

¹⁴¹ Georg Scheibelreiter, 'Mythische Genealogie und Fabelheraldik: Merowingisches und französisches Königstum', in Georg Scheibelreiter (ed.), *Wappenbild und Verwandtschaftsgeflecht: Kultur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Forschungen zu Heraldik und Genealogie* (Vienna; Munich, 2009); Luc Duerloo, 'Transcending the Frontiers of Reality: The Significance of Heraldic Legends', in Daniel Cogné, Claire

With a specific focus on the urban sphere, this section will demonstrate how manuscripts and literature produced and owned by townspeople in late medieval England and Germany likewise presented heraldic signs as expressions of honour derived from lineage and historical achievement. In Germany, it was the arms of families themselves that were repeatedly fashioned this way: family books written or commissioned by German townsmen interwove family history and genealogy with family heraldry. While ‘ego-documents’ similarly interested in heraldry do not exist in England, the ownership of books characteristic of late medieval attitudes towards arms as signs of honour suggests that similar perceptions existed in English cities as well.

2.3.1 *Constructing the Heraldic Past in Germany*

The ‘family books’ (*Familienbücher*) of German burgesses—compiling documents and texts relating to their professional practices, their charitable and commemorative endowments, and their history and genealogy—are seen as crucial sources for the self-perception of the late medieval German urban elite.¹⁴² Another common and yet often overlooked element of these literary expressions of burgess identity was heraldry,¹⁴³ and whereas German grants of arms might have been less likely to allude to notions of ‘nobility’ or ‘gentility’, these documents—meant to underline their authors’ social

Boudreau, and Auguste Vachon (eds), *Genealogica & Heraldica: Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences in Ottawa, August 18–23, 1996* (Ottawa, 1998); Bernd Ulrich Hucker, ‘Zum Quellenwert historischer Wappen- und Namensagen: Mit einem Anhang unbekannter Wappensagen der Hodenberger Chronik’, in Bernhart Jähmig (ed.), *Festschrift zum 125jährigen Bestehen des Herold zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1994).

¹⁴² Birgit Studt, ‘Erinnerung und Identität: Die Repräsentation städtischer Eliten in spätmittelalterlichen Haus- und Familienbüchern’, in Birgit Studt (ed.), *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft* (Cologne et al., 2007); Marco Tomaszewski, *Familienbücher als Medien städtischer Kommunikation: Untersuchungen zur Basler Geschichtsschreibung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 2017). See also Andreas Ranft, ‘Adlige Wappen-, Turnier-, Haus- und Familienbücher: Zur Notationspraxis von Wappen und Namenslisten’, in Heinz-Dieter Heimann (ed.), *Adelige Welt und familiäre Beziehung: Aspekte der ‘privaten Welt’ des Adels in böhmischen, polnischen und deutschen Beispielen vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Potsdam, 2000), pp. 131–132.

¹⁴³ But see also Marc von der Höh, ‘Familienerinnerungen: Überlegungen zu Aspekten familienbezogener Gedächtnispraktiken in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt’, in Jörg Oberste and Sabine Reichert (eds), *Stadtgeschichte(n): Erinnerungskulturen der vormodernen Stadt* (Regensburg, 2017), p. 129; Kerstin Seidel, *Freunde und Verwandte: Soziale Beziehungen in einer spätmittelalterlichen Stadt* (Frankfurt [Main]; New York, 2009), pp. 170–171.

distinction from other townsmen—did insist on their owners’ distinguished, quasi-noble status as evidenced by their heraldic signs.

A hot-spot for such documents was Nuremberg, where they were often lavishly and heraldically illuminated.¹⁴⁴ In 1546, it was said about the local book painter Jacob Elßner, that affluent burgesses spent a lot of time in his workshop, where he ‘illuminated their fair books and painted the arms they had received from emperors and kings into their grants of arms’.¹⁴⁵ While visually less impressive, in 1390 already the patrician Ulman Stromer completed a curious collection of notes with a particular interest in the history of his family.¹⁴⁶ In this history, the Stromer arms were accorded a central position and linked to the very founder of the lineage: ‘I have been told that my forefather’s name was Gerhart of Reichenbach, knight, [...] and that he was granted our coat of arms with the three-lily-triangle by King Conrad.’¹⁴⁷ It is improbable that Stromer refers to a genuine document, as grants of arms only began to appear at the end of the fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth centuries—there are no extant grants even for the most recent ‘King Conrad’, Conrad IV (*r.* 1237–1254). Similarly, the claim to a Gerhart von Reichenbach being the Stromer family’s common ancestor cannot be verified.¹⁴⁸ Of course, Ulman Stromer may not have been the inventor of this apparently fabricated narrative, but merely a propagator of a belief well established within the

¹⁴⁴ Karin Czaja, ‘The Nuremberg *Familienbücher*: Archives of Family Identity’, in Marco Mostert and Anna Adamska (eds), *Uses of the Written Word in Medieval Towns* (Turnhout, 2014); Martial Staub, ‘Zwischen Denkmal und Dokument: Nürnberger Geschlechterbücher und das Wissen von der Vergangenheit’, *Pirckheimer-Jahrbuch für Renaissance- und Humanismusforschung*, 14 (1999); Urs Martin Zahnd, ‘Einige Bemerkungen zu spätmittelalterlichen Familienbüchern aus Nürnberg und Bern’, in Urs Martin Zahnd and Rudolf Endres (eds), *Nürnberg, Bern: Zwei Reichsstädte und ihr Landgebiet* (Erlangen, 1990); Helmut Haller von Hallerstein, ‘Nürnberger Geschlechterbücher’, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 65 (1978).

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Johann Neudörffer, *Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Künstlern und Werkleuten so innerhalb hundert Jahren in Nürnberg gelebt haben 1546* (Nuremberg, 1828), p. 41. See also Anja Grebe, ‘“Er illuminiret ihnen schöne Bücher und machet ihnen ihre Wappen und Kleinot in ihre Wappenbrief”’: Nürnberger Buchmalerei von der Dürerzeit bis zum Barock’, in Thomas Eser (ed.), *Heilige und Hasen: Bücherschätze der Dürerzeit* (Nuremberg, 2008).

¹⁴⁶ Gesine Mierke, ‘Stromer, Ulman’, *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (Leiden, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_02366>; Lotte Kurras, ‘Stromer, Ulman’, *Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn (Berlin, 2011); Joachim Schneider, ‘Stromer, Ulman’, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1996).

¹⁴⁷ CDS 1, p. 60.

¹⁴⁸ Walter Emil Vock, ‘Ulman Stromer (1329–1407) und sein Buch: Nachträge zur Hegelschen Ausgabe’, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 29 (1928), pp. 105–106.

Stromer family. He himself claimed to ‘have been told’ about the origin of the Stromer and their arms by undisclosed sources.¹⁴⁹ Certainly, by claiming that the Stromer family had received their heraldic signs long ago from King Conrad through a distant forefather, Ulman Stromer was able to maintain the antiquity of the family’s heraldic sign (and the family’s lineage), whilst at the same time appropriating the official distinction a grant of arms had begun to acknowledge in his own time.

An even more explicit emphasis on heraldic signs as testimony to a family’s antiquity, reinforced by a demonstration of a genealogically well-connected lineage, is found in a similar document from Augsburg.¹⁵⁰ Finished in 1469 by the patrician Hans Gossembrot, the introduction of the so-called *Gossembrot Armorial* set out that the manuscript contained ‘all old burghers’ arms of lineage’ (the arms of the established patrician families) as well as ‘the old arms of the guilds’ (the arms of families with a craft background); ‘foreign or newly assumed arms’, on the other hand, were explicitly excluded.¹⁵¹ Antiquity was the crucial criterion, so that ‘new’ arms were not deemed acceptable of being collected in the manuscript. Heraldic signs had to be old to be relevant—they had to have history. But within the ranks of the ‘old’ families, represented by their ‘old’ arms collected in the armorial, there also existed further nuances in terms of antiquity and dignity—different degrees of honour. The juxtaposition of ‘burghers’ arms of lineage’ in one part of the manuscript and ‘arms of the guilds’ in the other reflected a fundamental social distinction of Augsburg’s fifteenth-century elite, which strictly distinguished between families of the traditional patriciate and families with a mercantile or artisan background, who had climbed the social ladder more recently.¹⁵² This distinction developed in the aftermath of a revolt in 1368, when the patrician families had to accept the political participation of the guilds.

¹⁴⁹ CDS1, p. 71.

¹⁵⁰ Peter Geffcken, ‘Wappen- und Familienbuch des Hans Gossembrot’, in Christoph Emmendorffer and Helmut Zäh (eds), *Bürgermacht und Bücherpracht: Augsburger Ehren- und Familienbücher der Renaissance: Katalogband zur Ausstellung im Maximilianmuseum Augsburg vom 18. März bis 19. Juni 2011* (Luzern, 2011); Helmut Zäh, ‘Das Geschlechterbuch von Hans Burgkmair d. J. und Heinrich Vogtherr d. J. im Kontext der Augsburger Familien- und Ehrenbücher’, in Hans-Martin Kaulbach et al. (eds), *Das Augsburger Geschlechterbuch – Wappenpracht und Figurenkunst: Ein Kriegsverlust kehrt zurück* (Luzern, 2012), p. 12.

¹⁵¹ BSB, Cgm. 98, fol. 1v.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, fols 2v–7v.

While the patriciate eventually began intermarrying with the guilds' most successful representatives, it still insisted on their traditional preeminence.¹⁵³ Of course, the arms of the Gossembrots were located among the more eminent and ancient 'burghers of



Fig. 2.6: Arms of women married to Gossembrot men, depicted in the *Gossembrot Armorial* (1469). BSB, Cgm. 98, fol. 8r.

¹⁵³ Pius Dirr, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Augsburger Zunftverfassung, 1368–1548', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben*, 39 (1913), pp. 149–151.

lineage', but Hans Gossembrot added other heraldic hints at the family's history and its social relations still. In another section, the *Gossembrot Armorial* also collected the arms of families who had marital ties to the Gossembrot family (fig. 2.6).¹⁵⁴ When this collection is compared to a textual narrative on the history of the family, which is likewise part of the *Gossembrot Armorial*,¹⁵⁵ the marriages mentioned in the text correspond to the arms of families gathered in the 'catalogue' of Gossembrot relatives, all of whom conspicuously featured in the sections on the 'old', distinguished families 'of lineage' and 'of the guilds'.

In Cologne, the patrician Werner Overstolz between 1444 and 1446 compiled a similarly heraldry-heavy selection of documents and notes meant to illustrate the long lineage and ancient past of his family.¹⁵⁶ In the manner of a proof of nobility, he listed sixteen ancestors each for his father and mother, meticulously blasoning all of their heraldic signs without discriminating between paternal and maternal lines.¹⁵⁷ In the same way, Overstolz included the ancestors of his wife, Elisabeth Roitstock, although in her case heraldic descriptions were added less frequently.¹⁵⁸ A narrative on the origins of their heraldic sign further linked his family's heraldic sign to the family's history. A brief explanation of the custom of cadency combines a demonstration of Werner Overstolz' heraldic expertise with an argument in favour of his family's claims to honour thus: 'One has to know that there has been a custom amongst the knighthood ever since—still respected in many lands—that allows the eldest of a line to bear their arms without any marks of difference.'¹⁵⁹ The first bearer of the unaltered Overstolz arms, according to the narrative, was a thirteenth-century Richolf Overstolz. Although

¹⁵⁴ BSB, Cgm. 98, fols 8r–v, 11v–12r.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, fols 25r–31v.

¹⁵⁶ Marc von der Höh, 'Historiografie zwischen Privatheit und Geheimnis – das Familienbuch des Werner Overstolz', in Stefan Benz, Susanne Rau, and Birgit Studt (eds), *Geschichte schreiben: Ein Quellen- und Studienbuch zur Historiographie (ca. 1350–1750)* (Berlin, 2010); Marc von der Höh, 'Zwischen religiöser Memoria und Familiengeschichte: Das Familienbuch des Werner Overstolz', in Birgit Studt (ed.), *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft* (Cologne, 2007); Wolfgang Herborn, 'Bürgerliches Selbstverständnis im spätmittelalterlichen Köln: Bemerkungen zu zwei Hausbüchern aus der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts', in Werner Besch et al. (eds), *Die Stadt in der europäischen Geschichte: Festschrift Edith Ennen* (Bonn, 1972), pp. 490–498.

¹⁵⁷ Werner Overstolz, *Das Buch des Werner Overstolz*, ed. by Marc von der Höh, forthcoming, pp. 578–585.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 585–588.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

this claim remains unverifiable, the arms of the Overstolz are in fact the oldest extant heraldic sign from Cologne, first found on a seal of the sons of the first known Overstolz, Gottschalk, in 1233.¹⁶⁰ But ‘because my ancestors and I were of a younger line’, Werner Overstolz continued, ‘our shield is *sable three labels of a total of twelve points or*’.¹⁶¹ This heraldic difference he actively changed in 1442:

When the son of Richolf Overstolz [...] remained without issue and the [direct] male line became extinct, I became the eldest of the Overstolz line. And so that our family’s shield [...] would neither become defunct nor pass to the peasants, which unfortunately has happened to some [patrician] families [...] through misalliances, I, Werner Overstolz [...], have embraced my and my ancestors’ shield *argent three labels of twelve points sable*, and left behind the shield *sable three labels of a total of twelve points or*.¹⁶²

The concern over the arms passing ‘to the peasants’—people descended from patrician families who had entered a marriage (possibly even outside the city) not befitting their rank—is telling. Maybe there was a branch of the Overstolz family that—while entitled to bear the unaltered arms—in the eyes of Werner Overstolz was not of sufficient social standing to maintain the claim to the original arms. As was argued regarding grants of arms, heraldic signs were not necessarily perceived to confer but to represent honour. If the bearer lacked this honour, the *Overstolzenbuch* appears to suggest, the arms ought to pass on to the most deserving member of the family, genealogical precedence and heraldic custom notwithstanding. Consequently and conveniently, Werner Overstolz felt that only he himself was left entitled to bear the original sign, thus removing the heraldic blemish of the later-born indicated by cadency, and visually claiming precedence as head of the family.

In this effort, Werner Overstolz located himself at the end of a lineage that, at least in his eyes, dated back not only centuries but millennia, since the undifferenced Overstolz arms supposedly came into existence in classical antiquity.¹⁶³ This belief in a descent from Roman senatorial nobility, evidenced by heraldic signs, was not a product of Overstolz imagination alone. Instead, it appears as firmly established among Cologne’s patricians, evidenced by the Koelhoff chronicle (1499), for instance, which

¹⁶⁰ Manfred Groten, *Köln im 13. Jahrhundert: Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und Verfassungsentwicklung* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 1998), pp. 85–87, 141.

¹⁶¹ Overstolz, *Overstolz-Buch*, p. 576.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

likewise held (fig. 2.7): 'These fifteen families, who were noble Romans and whose successors and heirs still partly survive, the mighty Emperor Trajan endowed with

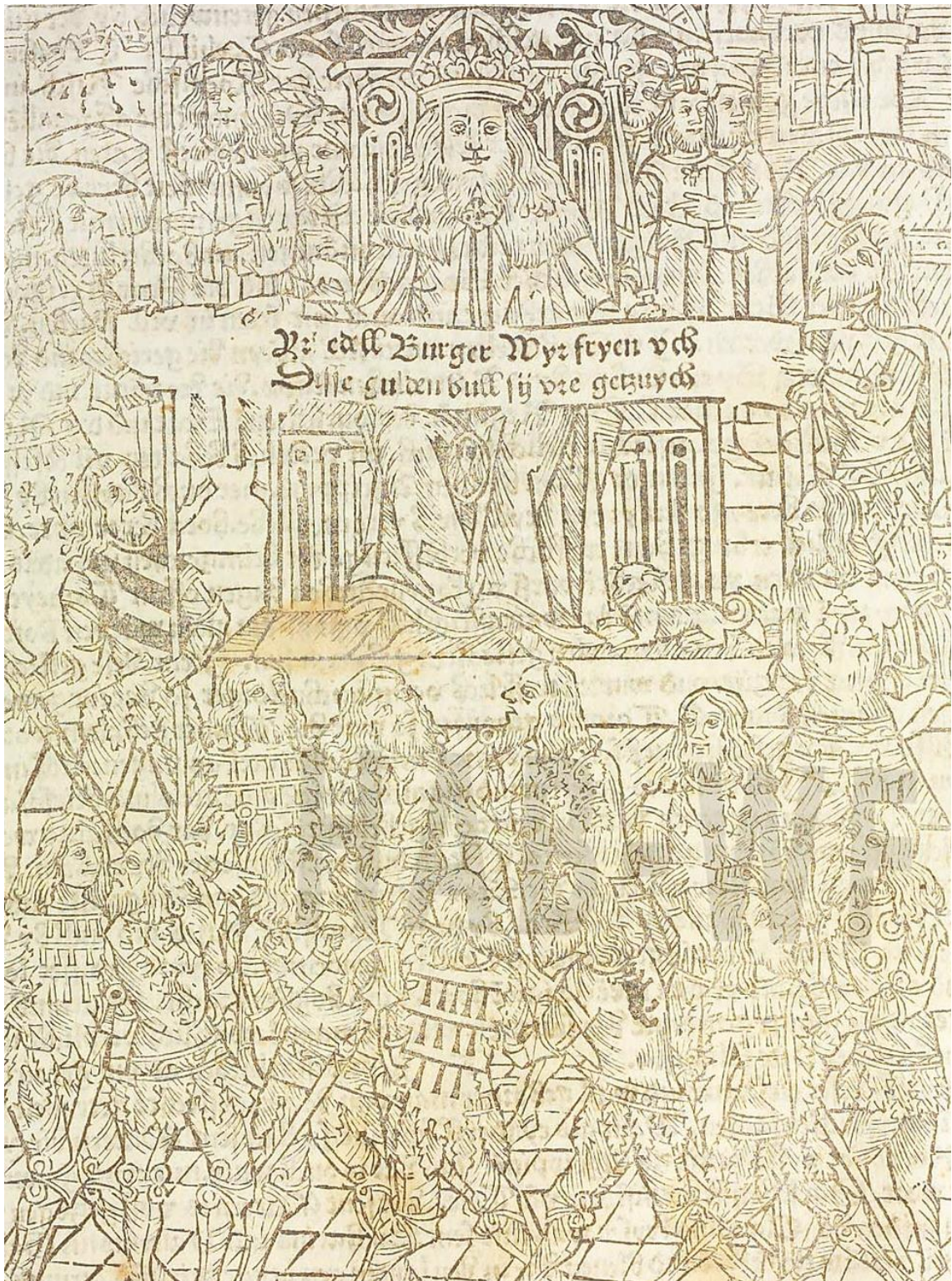


Fig. 2.7: Emperor Trajan being worshipped by the ancient families of Cologne, depicted in the Koelhoff chronicle (1499), fol. 103r.

noble shields and crests.’¹⁶⁴

The same sentiment of arms as evidence for the antiquity and dignity of their owners was shared by chronicler Felix Fabri in another piece of urban elite historiography. In his *Tractatus de civitate Ulmensi* (1488–1497), he listed twelve reasons in favour of the *nobilitas* of Ulm’s most eminent patrician families, trying to ground their self-perceived equality with the rural nobility in history, but notably ownership of arms *per se* was not one of them: while the nobility accepted some citizens ‘adorned with arms in signification of their ancient civility’ to take part in their tournaments, they would never do so in the case of citizens from the city’s guilds.¹⁶⁵ Even if they possessed a heraldic sign, ‘their arms are not recognised’, and they would not be admitted to the tournament, ‘unless to mock them’.¹⁶⁶ While both patricians and craftsmen might (and apparently did) bear arms, it was the quality of the sign *qua* the antiquity of its bearer that made the difference: ‘That [the patricians] are noble follows from their *ancient* arms and ensigns.’¹⁶⁷

A very similar sentiment was finally expressed in Augsburg, when thirty-eight families of the urban elite with a craft background were officially elevated and proclaimed equal to the continuously declining number of patrician families in 1538: ‘When but eight families were still alive [...] it was ordained to replace the ancient, extinct families with families from the crafts, since they engaged in combat and possessed honour, dignity, and property, as their shields and helmets prove.’¹⁶⁸ While the possession of arms as part of the ‘viewing of the helmets’ (*Helmschau*) became an important criterion for participating in tournaments in Germany,¹⁶⁹ it was the lineage

¹⁶⁴ CDS 13, pp. 324–325.

¹⁶⁵ Felix Fabri, *Tractatus de civitate ulmensi: De eius origine, ordine, regimine*, ed. by G. Veesenmayer (Tübingen, 1889), p. 71.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Fabri, *Tractatus*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁸ CDS 34, p. 365. On implications of the term *Wappengenosse/Schildgenosse/Helmgengenosse*, see Jürgen Arndt, *Hoffpfalzgrafen-Register* (Neustadt [Aisch], 1971), II, p. xxv; Christine Reinle, ‘Wappengenossen und Landleute: Der bayerische Niederadel zwischen Aufstieg und Ausgrenzung’, in Kurt Andermann and Peter Johaneck (eds), *Zwischen Nicht-Adel und Adel* (Stuttgart, 2001), p. 129.

¹⁶⁹ Morsel, ‘Geschlecht und Repräsentation: Beobachtungen zur Verwandtschaftskonstruktion im fränkischen Adel des späten Mittelalters’, p. 296; Thomas Zotz, ‘Adel in der Stadt des deutschen Spätmittelalters: Erscheinungsformen und Verhaltensweisen’, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 141 (1993), p. 46.

behind these signs that mattered, not the signs themselves—after all, ‘even’ the craftsmen of Ulm possessed arms, notwithstanding their apparent lack in all other honourable qualities, as Fabri had explained.¹⁷⁰

Maybe it was precisely this continued proliferation of heraldic signs throughout the various layers of urban society, combined with the desire of ‘lesser’ townsmen to climb the social ladder and the simultaneous extinction of established lineages, that gave rise to these narratives. After all, just as Felix Fabri was keen to distinguish the arms of established patrician families from the arms of guildsmen, so Hans Gossembrot visually maintained a distinction not only between the arms of patrician and guild families, but also between ‘old’ arms and ‘new’ arms, which were excluded from his armorial entirely. More imminent fears become tangible in Werner Overstolz’s case. Here, the concern with the family’s history and heraldry was aimed at the future and had the genealogical body of the family as a community—of the living and the dead—working towards mutual salvation in mind: ‘God grant that my successors will likewise bear this shield so that it pleases God and saves their souls [...]’¹⁷¹ In past, present, and future, all individual members of the family were seen as connected through their common heraldic sign. However, Werner Overstolz’ high hopes for his heirs did not come to pass: only two years after his death in 1451, the last remaining Overstolz son who had not taken the holy orders, Wynant, died without issue aged fifteen, and the Overstolz of Cologne ceased to exist.¹⁷²

2.3.2 *Reading about Heraldry in England*

In contrast, it seems remarkable that in England even the *probi homines* of London did not produce comparable documents. This situation may be explained by Thrupp’s proposition that English late medieval cities, although they also saw the rise and fall of affluent and powerful families, never established the kind of long-lasting, lineage-conscious patriciate found in Germany.¹⁷³ Granted, there are at least two English examples of urban manuscripts that rivalled the heraldic splendour found in Hans

¹⁷⁰ Fabri, *Tractatus*, p. 71.

¹⁷¹ Overstolz, *Overstolz-Buch*, p. 577.

¹⁷² Herborn, ‘Hausbücher’, p. 497.

¹⁷³ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, ch. 5. See also above, p. 23.

Gossembrot's armorial. The most famous case is the aforementioned *Leigh Book* (fig. 2.2), painted in 1446/1447, which 'may have been instigated by one of the Aldermen or by the City and intended as an on-going, permanent document of service to the City in the manner of a Benefactor's Book', as Kathleen Scott reckons.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, a manuscript from c. 1470, containing fifty-seven painted badges and 'signed' with a mark, might point to the heraldic interests of a mercantile owner from the town of Hadleigh, Suffolk.¹⁷⁵ However, neither of these documents took an interest in the heraldry of a particular family, and even where there are dedicated commonplace books or household miscellanies in England, they are silent with regard to heraldic matters.¹⁷⁶ The *Liber Lynne* (c. 1430), 'maybe the earliest family book of the kind that has come to light', does not mention any heraldic sign of the Lawneye family to which it belonged, for example.¹⁷⁷

Still, Scott's list of texts owned by English merchants—mostly Londoners—might suggest that similar literary associations of heraldry with honour derived from ancient history and eminent genealogy were familiar to English citizens as well.¹⁷⁸ In his will of 1433, Thomas Roos, citizen and mercer of London, mentioned a *librum vocatum piers*

¹⁷⁴ Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490* (London, 1996), II, pp. 246–247. See also Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540–1640* (Oxford, 2013), p. 117; Barron, 'Merchant Culture', pp. 234–235.

¹⁷⁵ BL, Add. 40742, fol. 2r. See also Kathleen L. Scott, 'Past Ownership: Evidence of Book Ownership by English Merchants in the Later Middle Ages', in Carol M. Meale (ed.), *Makers and Users of Medieval Books: Essays in Honour of A. S. G. Edwards* (Suffolk, 2014), p. 10; Anthony Wagner, *A Catalogue of English Mediaeval Rolls of Arms* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester [New York], 1950), p. 106.

¹⁷⁶ See the absence of such works in studies of Londoners as authors and audiences, e.g. Malcolm Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London, 2016); Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge, 2005). See also David R. Parker, *The Commonplace Book in Tudor London: An Examination of BL MSS Egerton 1995, Harley 2252, Lansdowne 762, and Oxford Balliol College MS 354* (Lanham, 1998); Amanda Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales: A London Fifteenth-Century Household Miscellany', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003); Eric Ketelaar, 'The Genealogical Gaze: Family Identities and Family Archives in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries', *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 44.1 (2008), pp. 14–17.

¹⁷⁷ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 123. See also Richardson, *London Writing*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁸ Scott, 'Past Ownership'. On the literary culture of English/London merchants, see also Caroline M. Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', in Martin Allen and Matthew P. Davies (eds), *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton* (London, 2016); Julia Boffey, 'London Books and London Readers', in James Simpson (ed.), *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford, 2010).

plowman,¹⁷⁹ a popular text ‘inspired by London experiences’ attributed to William Langland.¹⁸⁰ In this text, the poet not only attributed arms to the figure of Piers Plowman, but also described ‘schapen scheldes’—juxtaposed with the ‘merkes of marchauntes’—in the windows of a Dominican church, reminiscent of similar commemorative devices of pious benefactors displayed in urban churches.¹⁸¹ Heraldic signs in church windows are likewise mentioned in the *Tayle of Beryn*,¹⁸² a fifteenth-century addition to the *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400) by Chaucer, who was popular with late medieval townspeople. Copies of his *Tales* were found in the collections of tailor John Brinchele in 1420, draper William Holgrave (*fl.* 1435), and *civis Londona* Thomas Heed (*c.* 1450–1470), for example.¹⁸³ In this and other Chaucerian texts, urban readers encountered frequent references to heraldry ‘as a visual sign-system, capable of broadcasting powerful messages about genealogy, military achievement, and social standing’.¹⁸⁴

In a sense, Chaucer’s portrayal of heraldry reflects its general place in chivalric literature, where heraldic signs ‘gave expression to the world of honour and virtue’ created by the pursuit of chivalry as a code of knightly norms and values.¹⁸⁵ Several Londoners owned copies of John Lydgate’s *Troy Book* (1412), for instance, which was larded with ‘technical details about military tactics, armour, and heraldry’.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, John Colyns, a mercer, owned a volume (1525–1539) that among other texts included *Le Morte d’Arthur*,¹⁸⁷ an epic in which shields of arms were meant to represent ‘a range of

¹⁷⁹ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 172.

¹⁸⁰ Caroline M. Barron, ‘William Langland: A London Poet’, in Barbara Hanawalt (ed.), *Chaucer’s England: Literature in Historical Context* (Minneapolis [Minn.], 1992), p. 98.

¹⁸¹ Walter William Skeat (ed.), *Pierce the Ploughmans Crede (about 1394 A.D.)* (Oxford, 1906), p. 8; Stephen A. Barney, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (Philadelphia, 2006), v, pp. 21, 107.

¹⁸² David K. Coley, ‘“Withyn a Temple Ymad of Glas”: Glazing, Glossing, and Patronage in Chaucer’s *House of Fame*’, *The Chaucer Review*, 45.1 (2010), pp. 70–71.

¹⁸³ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, pp. 160, 167, 170.

¹⁸⁴ Amy Elizabeth Fahey, ‘Heralds and Heraldry in English Literature, c. 1350–1600’ (unpublished PhD, University of Washington, 2005), p. 2. See also Michael J. O’Shea, *James Joyce and Heraldry* (Albany [New York], 1986), p. 29; Dorothy F. Atkinson, ‘Some Notes on Heraldry and Chaucer’, *Modern Language Notes*, 51.5 (1936).

¹⁸⁵ Ailes, ‘Markers of Identity’, p. 181.

¹⁸⁶ Walter Franz Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. by Anne F. Keep (Berkeley, 1961), p. 45. On Lydgate’s heraldic motifs, see also below, p. 269.

¹⁸⁷ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 158.

information about a knight—his battlefield history, fealty, character, lineage'.¹⁸⁸ If, as Carol Meale argues, 'it is clear that with respect to romance, merchants formed one part of a socially diverse textual community', and, as Sheila Lindenbaum adds, 'the romances owned by merchants helped to construct them as an urban aristocracy on a par with the rural gentry',¹⁸⁹ then heraldry and its associations with honour of descent and martial achievement were part of these efforts.

The same can be said for chronicles read in London. Chroniclers eagerly recorded the heraldic signs of historical figures and creatively attributed arms to fictional, pre-heraldic 'heroes' such as the Knights of the Round Table and the rulers of Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁹⁰ The *Brut* chronicles, for instance, were fascinated with 'chivalry, coats of arms, jousts and battles',¹⁹¹ and so, perhaps, were the London merchants who owned copies of them.¹⁹² A historically interested fifteenth-century volume compiled by 'a rising city burgher' contained various references to heraldry, too: there was a poem on the Siege of Rouen with references to the 'cotys of armys' of kings, heralds, and pursuivants, for instance, but also John Lydgate's verses on English kings, remembering that Edward III 'Bare in his armys quartle the floure delyce'.¹⁹³ On a more local level, the volume further incorporated the so-called *Gregory's Chronicle*, which, to name but two examples, noted 'the armys of London' on the maces borne before the mayor on the occasion of civic processions, and the provocation of Richard of York, who in 1460 entered London accompanied by banners 'with the hole armys of Inghlonde with owte any dyversyte'.¹⁹⁴ Robert Fabyan, among other chroniclers, even recorded an urban interest in heraldically decorated food served to London mayor and aldermen: when

¹⁸⁸ Fahey, 'Heraldry in English Literature', esp. p. 101.

¹⁸⁹ Carol M. Meale, 'The *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye* and Mercantile Literary Culture in Late-Medieval London', in Julia Boffey and Pamela C. King (eds), *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1995), p. 186; Sheila Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', in David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 302.

¹⁹⁰ Gérard Joseph Brault, *Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Literature* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 52–54; Ailes, 'Markers of Identity', pp. 182–183.

¹⁹¹ Edward Donald Kennedy, *Chronicles and Other Historical Writing* (New Haven [Conn.], 1989), p. 2629.

¹⁹² Scott, 'Past Ownership', pp. 152, 156, 162–164.

¹⁹³ James Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1876), pp. 31, 52.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 208. On Richard of York, see also below, p. 299.

King James IV of Scotland married Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII, in 1503, the wedding dinner concluded with desert course comprised of various ‘gelys’, one ‘with tharmys of Scotland’, one ‘with tharmys of England’, and another with those of England and Scotland ‘of party colours’ in apparent signification of the anticipated Anglo-Scottish alliance.¹⁹⁵

An avid supplier of such literary interests was London citizen and printer William Caxton (d. 1491), who translated and published a range of works, from histories and romances to conduct books. Especially the latter offered ‘a shared set of ideals specific to merchants, in the way that chivalric literature offered the nobility a system of values’.¹⁹⁶ The same might have been true for other, more chivalric and heraldic primers distributed by Caxton, in which arms were presented as signs indicative of honour, especially with regard to genealogy and military success. In his 1484 translation of Ramon Llull’s *Llibre de l’ordre de cavalleria* (1274), the emphasis was on the martial dimensions of heraldic signs:

A token or esseygnal of armes is gyuen to a knyghte in his shelde and in his cote / by cause that he be knowen in the bataylle / And that he be allowed yf he be hardy / & yf he do grete & fayr feates of armes / and yf he be coward faulty / or recreaunt / the eynsegnal is gyuen to hym by cause that he be blamed / vytupered and repreuyd / Theeseygnal is also gyuen to a knyght / to thende that he be knowen yf he be a frende or enemy of chyualrye / wherfor euery knyght ought to honoure his esseygnal [...].¹⁹⁷

The *Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye* (1490) was translated from Christine de Pisan’s *Livre de fais de armes et de chevalerie* (1410), who had herself based her work on Honoré de Bonet’s heraldic treatise. Here, a wider approach was chosen, distinguishing between armes borne ‘purely by sucessyon of lynage’, and those indicative of a ‘noblesse of vertue’, assumed ‘by the suffisaunce of the persones / other in fayt of armes

¹⁹⁵ Robert Fabyan, *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. by Arthur H. Thomas and Isobel D. Thornley (London, 1938), p. 324. See also Nicholas Harris Nicolas (ed.), *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483; Written in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1827), p. 164; Gairdner, *Historical Collections*, pp. 169–170.

¹⁹⁶ Tracy Adams, “Noble, Wyse and Grete Lordes, Gentilmen and Marchauntes”: Caxton’s Prologues as Conduct Books’, *Parergon*, 22 (2005), p. 55. See also Mark Addison Amos, “For Manners Make Man”: Bourdieu, De Certeau, and the Common Appropriation of Noble Manners in the Book of Courtesy’, in Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark (eds), *Medieval Conduct* (Minneapolis [Minn.], 2001).

¹⁹⁷ Ramón Lull, *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, trans. by William Caxton, ed. by Alfred T. P. Byles (London, 1926), p. 88.

/ or in syceny / wysedom / or counseyll / or by som other vertue that they haue'.¹⁹⁸ While this text does not feature among known books of London citizens compiled by Scott, the London mercer Thomas Crispe in the late fifteenth-century certainly owned a copy of Nicholas Upton's heraldic treatise *De studio militari*,¹⁹⁹ which in this instance was prominently identified by Crispe's merchant mark.

As a matter of fact, while they did not create documents as visually impressive as those of their German counterparts, English citizens at least repeatedly augmented the books they owned with visual identifiers,²⁰⁰ sometimes of a heraldic nature. A 'boke be longyth on to Thomas Goodonston gerdeler of london', for instance, bore the mark of its owner, heraldicised and placed on a shield.²⁰¹ At the end of a copy of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* also owned by the aforementioned Thomas Crispe, the mercer likewise added his mark in a heraldicised manner, pendant from a tree (fig. 2.8).²⁰² Similarly, the alderman and London chronicler Robert Fabyan augmented his copy of Hartmann Schedel's heraldically rich *Liber chronicarum* by placing the Fabyan arms at the bottom of the frontispiece, accompanied by two shields of the arms of the City of London and the Drapers' Company respectively, 'stressing very much his civic identity as the former alderman, eminent past master of the Drapers' Company, flourishing merchant, sheriff of London and potential mayor, successful and

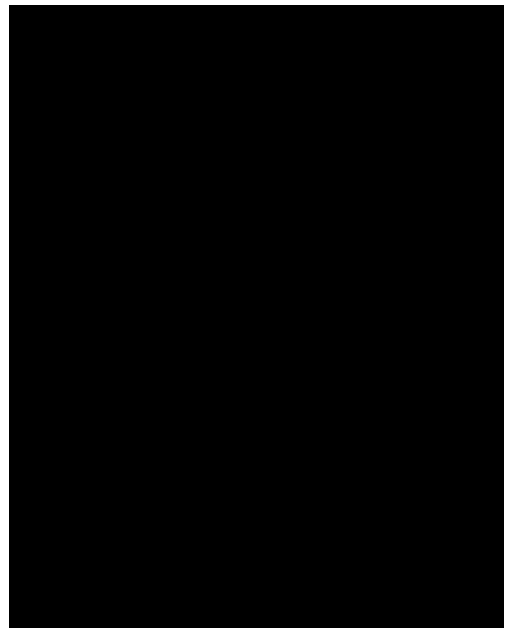


Fig. 2.8: Heraldicised merchant's mark of Thomas Crispe depicted in his early fifteenth-century copy of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 67, 208v.

¹⁹⁸ William Caxton, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye*, ed. by Alfred T. P. Byles (London, 1937), p. 286.

¹⁹⁹ Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 158; William Henry Black, *Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms* (London, 1829), p. 132.

²⁰⁰ Scott, 'Past Ownership', pp. 154, 156–173.

²⁰¹ Black, *Arundel Manuscripts*, pp. 70–71.

²⁰² Rodney M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 34.

important in London affairs'.²⁰³ Perhaps expensive books marked in this heraldic manner also added to the heraldic communication of burgher identity in town houses, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 Town Houses: Locating and Representing Civic Identity

The town house of the later Middle Ages is now deemed 'another important material expression of public status and a shared cultural identity and lifestyle by the city's mercantile elite'.²⁰⁴ These spaces, Chris King adds, 'provided an essential context for the negotiation of social relationships within and between mercantile households, as a venue for the display of status and wealth in architecture and furnishings'.²⁰⁵ A key concern according to Roger Leech was 'to symbolise the lineage and honour of wealthy families', and in this effort 'old furniture, coats of arms and other ancestral possessions served much the same purpose'.²⁰⁶

This section seeks to explore the place of heraldry in the houses of late medieval citizens in more detail. In both England and Germany, the arms of townsmen—as 'signs of honour' perceived to represent their history, genealogy, and reputable conduct—were ubiquitously displayed in these display areas of burgher identity. Of course, it is true

²⁰³ M. T. W. Payne, 'Robert Fabyan's Civic Identity', in Hannes Kleineke and Christian Steer (eds), *The Yorkist Age: Proceedings of the 2011 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2013), pp. 285–286.

²⁰⁴ Chris King, 'The Interpretation of Urban Buildings: Power, Memory and Appropriation in Norwich Merchants' Houses, c. 1400–1660', *World Archaeology*, 41 (2009), p. 481.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Roger H. Leech, 'The Symbolic Hall: Historical Context and Merchant Culture in the Early Modern City', *Vernacular Architecture*, 31.1 (2000), pp. 6–7. For English town houses, see also Sarah Rees Jones et al., 'The Later Medieval English Urban Household', *History Compass*, 5 (2007); P. J. P. Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity in Later Medieval England: A Material Culture Perspective', in Maryanne Kowaleski and P. J. P. Goldberg (eds), *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2008); J. T. Smith, 'English Town Houses of the XVth and XVIth Centuries', in André Chastel and Jean Guillaume (eds), *La maison de ville à la Renaissance: Recherches sur l'habitat urbain en Europe aux XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1983). For their German counterparts, see Konrad Bedal, 'Wohnen wie zu Dürers Zeiten: Stuben und Wohnräume im süddeutschen, insbesondere fränkischen Bürgerhaus des späten Mittelalters', in G. Ulrich Grossmann and Franz Sonnenberger (eds), *Das Dürer-Haus: Neue Ergebnisse der Forschung* (Nuremberg, 2007); Harry Kühnel, 'Die Sachkultur bürgerlicher und patrizischer Nürnberger Haushalte des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit', in Trude Ehlert (ed.), *Haushalt und Familie in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit: Vorträge des Symposiums vom 6.–9. Juni 1990 in Bonn* (Wiesbaden, 1991); Ruth E. Mohrmann, 'Wohnen und Wohnkultur in nordwestdeutschen Städten im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit', in Cord Meckseper (ed.), *Stadt im Wandel: Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland 1150–1650* (Stuttgart, 1985), III.



Fig. 2.9: Arms of the Fugger family above the gate above their residence *Am Rindermarkt* (1493).

that any surviving late medieval town house is now ‘a palimpsest, built and rebuilt over and over again’, rarely ever mirroring its original appearance.²⁰⁷ Still, the extant evidence shows that heraldry furnished late medieval town houses in a range of forms and in various places. In addition to the arms of the homeowner which identified and demarcated the domestic space, other heraldic signs further added to this visual self-representation. The arms of friends and relatives, urban corporate bodies, and ‘outsiders’ such as kings and princes were likewise displayed in late medieval town houses, locating the residents in wider society and underlining their sense of honour derived from membership of social groups and closeness to influential figures.

2.4.1 *Furnishing the Family Home*

Heraldic display was often visible to anyone approaching a late medieval town house’s outside, where it indicated the ownership of the building and demarcated the domestic space of the burgess family within the city. In Germany, townspeople placed heraldic

²⁰⁷ W. A. Pantin, ‘The Merchants’ Houses and Warehouses of King’s Lynn’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 6–7 (1962), p. 181. See also Anthony Quiney, *Town Houses of Medieval Britain* (New Haven, 2003).

signs on, above, or next to their houses' entrances,²⁰⁸ although they were seldom as lavish as the gate of the Fugger house *Am Rindermarkt* in Augsburg, purchased in 1488 (fig. 2.9).²⁰⁹ In England, too, heraldry was displayed on the outside of town houses. The antiquarian Benjamin Mackerell, writing in 1737, was still able to see the arms of Norwich mayor Edward Rede (d. 1544) 'at the gate' of the townsman's former house,²¹⁰ for instance. Five carved-stone shields from c. 1415 embellishing 'the principal external doorway' of a Norwich trading complex known as Dragon Hall can still be seen today.²¹¹ While none of the shields can now be identified, its former owner Robert Toppes (d. c. 1467), merchant, sheriff and eventually mayor of the city, was certainly armigerous, as his arms (and mark) in the church of St Peter Mancroft show.²¹² Much clearer evidence for the demarcation of English town houses survives from Southampton, where a carriage arch of the so-called Medieval Merchant's House (c. 1540) bears 'an incised merchant's mark, perhaps that of William Payn', a local ship-master in the reign of Henry V, notably heraldicised and placed on a shield (see also fig. 2.10).²¹³

A transitional element seen from both the outside and the inside of the late medieval town house was stained glass decorated with heraldic signs. In Norwich, merchant, aldermen, and sheriff William Barly displayed a heraldicised mark in a window of his houses,²¹⁴ just as 'colleagues' in London and Cologne used to do (fig.

²⁰⁸ E.g. Peter-Jürgen Klippstein, 'Familienwappen an historischen Bürgerhäusern und anderen Erfurter Baulichkeiten', *Jahrbuch für Erfurter Geschichte*, 7 (2012); Wilhelm Reinecke, *Das Lüneburger Bürgerhaus* (Berlin, 1947), p. 4; Friedrich Bonhoff, 'Namen und Wappen an Celler Bürgerhäusern', *Zeitschrift der Zentralstelle für Niedersächsische Familiengeschichte*, 2 (1920); Anonymous, 'Familienwappen an alten Häusern der Stadt Braunschweig', *Heraldische Mitteilungen*, 15 (1904).

²⁰⁹ Gabriele von Trauchburg, *Häuser und Gärten Augsburger Patrizier* (Munich; Berlin, 2001), p. 110.

²¹⁰ Quoted in Anonymous, 'Annual Meeting of the British Archaeological Association', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 203 (1857), p. 437.

²¹¹ Robert Smith, 'Dragon Hall: Description and Interpretation', in Andy Shelley (ed.), *Dragon Hall, King Street, Norwich: Excavation and Survey* (Norwich, 2005), pp. 21, 25.

²¹² David King, 'Art in an Urban Context: The Toppes Window in St Peter Mancroft, Norwich', in Rüdiger Becksmann (ed.), *Glasmalerei im Kontext: Bildprogramme und Raumfunktionen: Akten des XXII. internationalen Colloquiums des Corpus Vitrearum, Nürnberg, 29. August–1. September 2004* (Nuremberg, 2005). See also Richard Matthew, *Robert Toppes: Medieval Mercer of Norwich* (Norwich, 2013).

²¹³ Glyn Coppack, *Medieval Merchant's House, Southampton* (London, 1991), p. 6.

²¹⁴ Susan M. Margeson, *Norwich Households: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971–1978* (Norwich, 1993), p. 172.

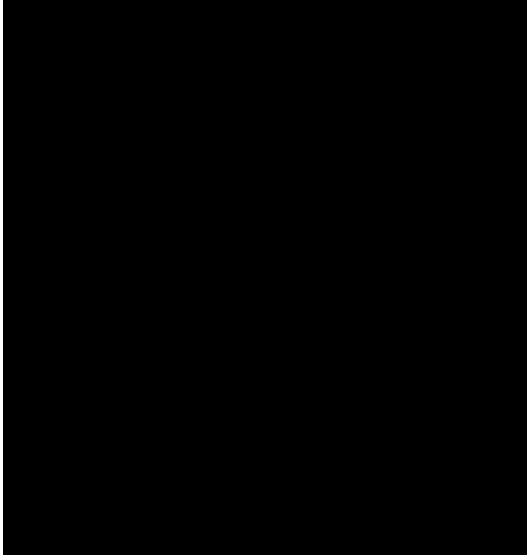


Fig. 2.10: Early fourteenth-century merchant mark, heraldicised, in the Medieval Merchant's House, Southampton.



Fig. 2.11: Heraldic stained glass, perhaps from Cologne, depicting a heraldicised mark placed in a shield. GNM, MM251.

2.11).²¹⁵ In the latter city, the merchant Hermann von Weinsberg (b. 1518), for instance, in the sixteenth century noted regarding the appearance of his father's house in 1529 'glass windows with the arms and marks in the small room, in the hall, in the bedrooms upstairs and downstairs'.²¹⁶

An analogous sixteenth-century perspective on the interior heraldic decorations of late medieval town houses survives in John Stow's *Survey of London*, where the author recorded the lavish display in the 'hall' of the Basing merchant family 'before the olde building was taken downe' in 1558:

In forme of a noble mans house [...] the Armes of that family were of olde time so abundantly placed in sundry parts of that house, euen in the stone worke, but more especially on the wals of the hall, which carried a continuall painting of them on euerie side so close together, as one es-cutcheon could be placed by another.²¹⁷

The hall of grocer and alderman John Crosby (d. 1476) gave pride of place to his crest in the central boss above the bay window,²¹⁸ while in Norwich the house of Nicholas Sotherton (c. 1480–1540), grocer and mayor of the city, similarly collected 'various

²¹⁵ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 254; Hans Vogts, *Das Kölner Wohnhaus bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Neuss, 1966), pp. 279–280.

²¹⁶ Hermann Weinsberg, *Das Buch Weinsberg: Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Konstantin Höhlbaum (Leipzig, 1886), I, p. 60. See also Schmid, 'Ein Bürger und seine Zeichen'.

²¹⁷ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. by Charles L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), I, p. 288.

²¹⁸ Philip Norman, *Crosby Place* (London, 1908), p. 16.

aspects of the identity of its owner', which included elaborate heraldic decorations.²¹⁹ Shields in wooden spandrels at the end of each side of the hall still bear the arms of St George and the mark of Sotherton, which was repeated on the mantelpiece, here impaling the arms of the grocers' guild, while a passage-way upstairs was clad with oak panels featuring the 'proper' arms of Sotherton.²²⁰

Textiles embellished with the arms of their owners further added to the visual splendour of the late medieval town house. In Germany, curtains with the heraldic signs of urban families were displayed behind benches in Lüneburg,²²¹ for example, while in Cologne and elsewhere cushions were frequently marked with arms (fig. 2.12).²²² In Nuremberg, merchant, alderman, and mayor Michael Behaim in 1501 even noted expenses for the painting of a 'stained cloth with shields for my garden'.²²³ While Margaret Wood observes that '[h]eraldic tapestry was extremely popular' in English houses as well, and although Maryanne Kowalewski and P. J. P. Goldberg likewise point

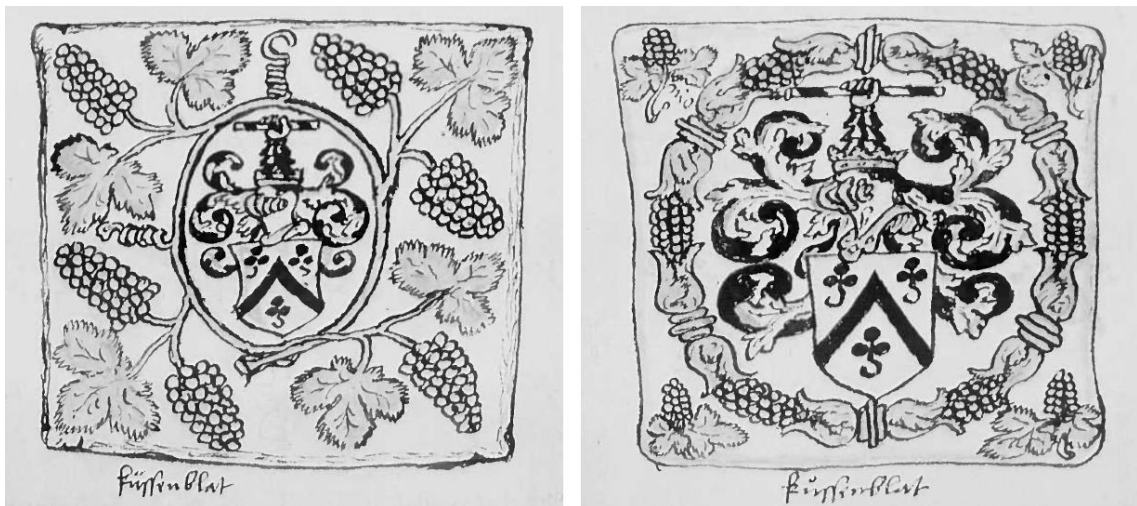


Fig. 2.12: Sketches of cushions with the Weinsberg arms depicted in the *Buch Weinsberg* (1553). HAK, Best. 7030, 52, fol. 199v and 200r.

²¹⁹ Tara Hamling, '“Wanting Arms”: Heraldic Decoration in Lesser Houses', in Nigel Ramsay (ed.), *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England* (Donington, 2014), p. 208.

²²⁰ A. B. Whittingham, 'The Strangers' Hall', *Archaeological Journal*, 106 (1949); F. R. Beecheno, *Notes on the Stranger's Hall, Norwich* (Norwich, 1897), pp. 11–15.

²²¹ Susanne Mosler-Christoph, 'Die materielle Kultur in den Lüneburger Testamenten 1323 bis 1500' (unpublished Dr. phil., Göttingen University, 1998), p. 185.

²²² Urs Martin Zahnd, 'Spätmittelalterliche Bürgertestamente als Quellen zu Realienkunde und Sozialgeschichte', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 96 (1988), p. 66; KHV 3, p. 196.

²²³ Johann Kamann, 'Aus Nürnberger Haushaltungs- und Rechnungsbüchern des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 6 (1886), p. 88.

out that ‘cushions were fashionable must-have accessories in bourgeois halls and chambers from the earlier fourteenth century’,²²⁴ explicit references to heraldic textiles in urban England are harder to find. London corder John de Coggeshale in 1385 listed among his household’s chattels ‘quysshyns’ marked with *signo meo*, although this ‘sign’ might well have been a plain mark rather than a shield of arms.²²⁵ For John Skevington, a taylor from London, there survives a reference to eighteen cushions ‘with Angelles holdyng tharmes of the said Mr Skevyngton’,²²⁶ although these cushions were not designated for Skevington’s household, but gifted to the hall of the tailors’ guild when he was master of the guild, some time before 1512.²²⁷ William Taylour (d. 1483), grocer and once mayor of London, certainly possessed a heraldic textile with his own arms, namely ‘my vestment with my armes’, which he kept in a private chapel part of his ‘dwelling place’.²²⁸

The aforementioned Bury merchant John Baret, in his will from 1467, listed ‘my grene hanggyd bedde steyned with my armys’ among his possessions, although it remains an open question whether his arms were painted on the bed’s hangings, a coverlet, or its cushions.²²⁹ From Lüneburg survives a more detailed account of similar heraldically decorated furniture. In Margarete Grönhagen’s will from 1544, several wardrobes in different rooms of the house were described as decorated with the arms of Grönhagen and Sanckenstede, representing the marriage of Margarete *née* Sanckenstede to Heinrich Grönhagen.²³⁰ The arms of the married couple were also

²²⁴ Margaret Wood, *The English Mediaeval House* (London, 1994), p. 405; Maryanne Kowaleski and P. J. P. Goldberg (eds), ‘Introduction’, *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 7.

²²⁵ Reginald R. Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258–A.D. 1688* (London, 1890), II, p. 250.

²²⁶ Charles M. Clode, *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist, in the City of London* (London, 1875), p. 85.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ Leland Lewis Duncan, ‘Medieval & Tudor Kent P.C.C. & C.C.C. Wills’, *Kent Archaeological Society*, 2017, <<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/Wills/WillsIntro.htm>>.

²²⁹ Samuel Tymms (ed.), *Wills and Inventories from the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury* (London, 1850), p. 22.

²³⁰ Karoline A. Terlau-Friemann, *Lüneburger Patrizierarchitektur des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Bautradition einer städtischen Oberschicht* (Lüneburg, 1994), pp. 172–174.

noted with reference to various pieces of silverware, including cutlery, jugs, cups and a goblet engraved with the Grönhagen and Sanckenstede arms.²³¹

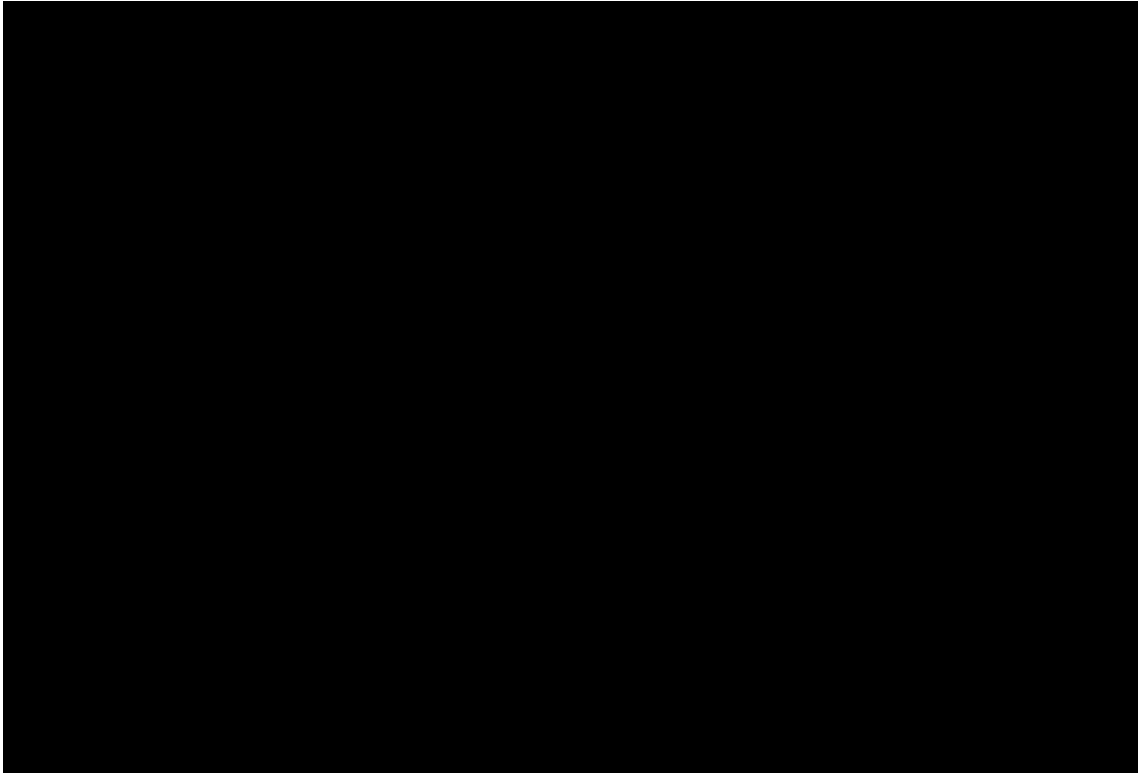


Fig. 2.13: Silver spoons of London mayor Richard Whittington (c. 1400–1420).

Similar traces of silverware with heraldic signs feature rather frequently in German wills and testaments,²³² likely because of their significant financial value and the need to distinguish different pieces precisely. The same is true for town houses in England. John Ludlow, *de villa South[a]mpton*, in 1488 gave to his son two silver plates *cum armis meis signatis*,²³³ just as London chandler John Hatfeld in 1363 left various household items to his children, among them ‘a cup called “Biker” with silver covercle bearing his arms’.²³⁴ The most famous heraldically marked example of urban silverware from London comes in the form of four spoons that once belonged to mayor Richard Whittington (d. 1423). Showing, on the back of the bowl, Whittington’s heraldic sign,

²³¹ Ibid. See also Mosler-Christoph, ‘Materielle Kultur in Lüneburg’, pp. 205–206.

²³² For Brunswick and Lübeck, see Max Hasse, ‘Neues Hausgerät, neue Häuser, neue Kleider – Eine Betrachtung der städtischen Kultur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert sowie ein Katalog der metallenenen Hausgeräte’, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 7 (1979), pp. 15, 65, 75, 80. For Cologne, see KHV 2, p. 849.

²³³ NA, Prob. 11/8, fol. 70v.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 81. See also *ibid.*, p. 478.

they 'are exactly the form one would expect of spoons made especially for Royalty or some important person at the beginning of the fifteenth century' (fig. 2.13).²³⁵

Sometimes, it is altogether impossible to determine whether 'arms' or 'shields' mentioned in the sources refer to the arms of the house owners or some other heraldic sign. The will of the Beverley mason John Cadeby (d. c. 1451), for instance, simply mentioned 'a pair of heraldic shields with arms and crest' among the possessions in his house,²³⁶ just as John de Armenters, London merchant and sheriff, in 1300 already bequeathed three silver cups with 'four lions upon a shield' to his son, which may or may not somehow relate to their 'Flemish manufacture'.²³⁷ Similarly vague is an archaeological find from York, where fittings that presumably belonged to a coffer or casket have been found, including a discoidal mount bearing 'a border of fleurs-de-lys surrounding a central shield bearing an illegible heraldic motif'.²³⁸ In Nuremberg, the heraldry inside the house of the Behaim family remains equally unspecific, as the accounts of Michael Behaim for 1501 only recorded a payment to 'Master Sebolt, painter, for thirty-four shields in the hallway of my house', with no distinctive description or attribution.²³⁹ Perhaps such unspecific 'collections' of unspecific arms were an expression of a more general fascination with heraldry as a matter-of-course, habitual element of domestic decorations. With regard to late medieval wall and ceiling paintings in northern Germany, Thomas Brockow observes that in Lübeck houses heraldic depictions did not necessarily incorporate the arms of owners or other known townsmen. Instead, he argues, townspeople participated in the 'fashionable' (*modischen*) practice of heraldic display, destined to suggest the owners' gentility and exclusivity without actually trying to establish any specific references.²⁴⁰ Notably, Tara Hamling

²³⁵ George E. P. How and Jane P. How, *English and Scottish Silver Spoons: Medieval to Late Stuart and Pre-Elizabethan Hall-Marks on English Plate* (London, 1952), I, p. 78.

²³⁶ Philip Stell (ed.), *Probate Inventories of the York Diocese, 1350–1500* (York, 2006), p. 559.

²³⁷ Reginald R. Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258–A.D. 1688* (London, 1889), I, p. 179.

²³⁸ Lisa Jane Howarth Liddy, 'Domestic Objects in York c. 1400–1600: Consumption, Neighbourhood and Choice' (unpublished PhD, University of York, 2015), p. 228.

²³⁹ Printed in Kamann, 'Nürnberger Rechnungsbücher', p. 88.

²⁴⁰ Thomas Brockow, *Spätmittelalterliche Wand- und Deckenmalereien in Bürgerhäusern der Ostseestädte Lübeck, Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund und Greifswald: Ein Beitrag zur Erfassung und Auswertung von Quellen der Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte in norddeutschen Hansestädten* (Hamburg, 2001), p. 89. See also Vogts, *Kölner Wohnhaus*, p. 221.

diagnoses the same fascination with heraldry for the heraldic decorations of ‘lesser’ and in some cases even urban houses in Shakespeare’s post-medieval England.²⁴¹

2.4.2 *Locating the Family in Society*

Maybe these now nondescript arms were once meant to be identifiable after all. Certainly, the majority of family heraldry in town houses did not appear in isolation, but in close proximity to other heraldic signs. A desire to communicate associations with powerful figures and the honour this closeness implied by means of heraldry is visible in the earliest known heraldic painting in German town houses. A thirteenth-century ceiling beam in the residence of the patrician family Quatermarkt of Cologne displayed a total of thirty-five shields surrounded by floral ornaments.²⁴² Although the majority of the shields cannot be identified, some bore the royal arms England, Castile, France, Bohemia, Jerusalem, and Denmark. In their heraldic form, the Quatermarkt family’s home thus ‘hosted’ the *potentates* of the late medieval world.²⁴³ The honour derived from hosting the German emperor in his corporeal form motivated the Rinck family of Cologne to construct a palatial mansion, whose tower was painted with an extensive heraldic programme, showing the imperial arms alongside those of Spain, Burgundy, Brabant, France, and England in addition to the arms of the pope and the city. In contrast to the Quatermarkt residence, the Rinck family located themselves amongst these political entities by adding their own arms and the paternal arms of two wives of Johannes Rinck (d. 1516) to this heraldic programme.²⁴⁴ The two cases from Cologne call to mind the *Schönes Haus* in Basel, where a painted ceiling beam likewise exhibited many arms of patrician families of the city and members of the local nobility.²⁴⁵ Here, Sabine Sommerer identifies a conscious attempt to represent and

²⁴¹ Hamling, ‘Wanting Arms’, esp. pp. 205–206.

²⁴² Friedrich Carl Heimann, ‘Frühgotische Balkendecken- und Wand-Malerei aus einem Kölner Wohnhause’, *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst*, 19 (1906); Paul Clemen, *Die gotischen Monumentalmalereien der Rheinlande* (Düsseldorf, 1930), I, p. 228.

²⁴³ Heimann, ‘Kölner Malerei’, p. 240.

²⁴⁴ Brigitte Corley, *Maler und Stifter des Spätmittelalters in Köln 1300–1500* (Kiel, 2009), p. 37.

²⁴⁵ Sabine Sommerer, ‘Die Balkenmalereien im “Schönen Haus” in Basel: Ein Beitrag zur Funktionsweise standesgemäßer Bildsprache’, in Eckart Conrad Lutz, Johanna Thali, and René Wetzels (eds), *Literatur und Wandmalerei II: Konventionalität und Konversation* (Tübingen, 2005); Günter Mattern, ‘Der Wappenbalken im “Schönen Haus” zu Basel, ein Beitrag zur oberrheinischen Wappengeschichte’, *Archivum Heraldicum*, 92 (1978).

reinforce the owner's position within 'elite circles', and thus an attempt to give heraldic expression to the honour derived from membership of such exclusive social groups.²⁴⁶

The same interpretation lends itself to heraldic signs of princes and kings found in English urban households. An inventory of John Talkan, taverner, vintner, and mayor of York in 1499, among other possessions listed 'two red tapestries with the arms of Lord Hastings' in his *camera*,²⁴⁷ just as fellow York citizen William Stillington in his will from 1485 referred to 'one blue bed with the arms of the king'.²⁴⁸ London felmonger Philip Gentil in 1346 left a cup 'with an ancient escutcheon (*scuto*) of the lord king on the bottom' to his grandson,²⁴⁹ and John Botiller, who died in 1361 must have been in the possession of a similar vessel, as he gave 'a silver cup with the royal arms of England enamelled on the bottom' to St Nicholas' church 'for making a chalice therewith'.²⁵⁰ On a much larger scale, comparable to the elaborate display of the Rinck family of Cologne, the royal arms were also incorporated into the arched doorway of the so-called Bassingham Gate, built in the early sixteenth century as part of goldsmith John Bassingham's house.²⁵¹ In the spandrels above the archway, floral stone work framed a shield of the royal arms, accompanied by supporters (fig. 2.14).

But John Bassingham identified himself not only as a loyal subject, but also as a citizen and guildsman: the arms of England were accompanied by the arms of the city to the dexter and the arms of the Norwich goldsmiths' guild to the sinister. As in the case of Nicholas Sotherton discussed earlier, English citizens repeatedly incorporated heraldic references to their corporate memberships into the visual display of their town houses. To name another example from Norwich: in 1518, John Marsham, mayor

²⁴⁶ Sommerer, 'Balkenmalereien im "Schönen Haus"', p. 434. See also Meier and Sommerer, 'Profanraumdekoration', p. 176; Hans-Rudolf Meier, 'Dekorationssysteme profaner Raumausstattungen im ausgehenden Mittelalter', in Eckart Conrad Lutz, Johanna Thali, and René Wetzel (eds), *Literatur und Wandmalerei II: Konventionalität und Konversation* (Tübingen, 2005), p. 407.

²⁴⁷ James Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York* (Durham; London; Edinburgh, 1865), III, p. 88. See also Charles Kightly, "'The Hangings about the Hall": An Overview of Textile Wall Hangings in Late Medieval York, 1394–1505', *Medieval Textiles*, 28 (2001), p. 4.

²⁴⁸ Raine, *Testamenta Eboracensia*, III, p. 191.

²⁴⁹ Sharpe, *Husting Wills*, I, pp. 487–488.

²⁵⁰ Sharpe, *Husting Wills*, II, p. 51.

²⁵¹ Ian Dunn and Helen Sutermeister, *The Norwich Guildhall* (Norwich, 1977), p. 12. See also Arnold Kent, *Norwich Inheritance* (Jarrold & Sons, 1949), p. 88.

juxtaposed his personal arms—impaling those of his wife—with a shield of the Norwich grocers’ guild, pointing to the importance of these social circles for his identity.²⁵²

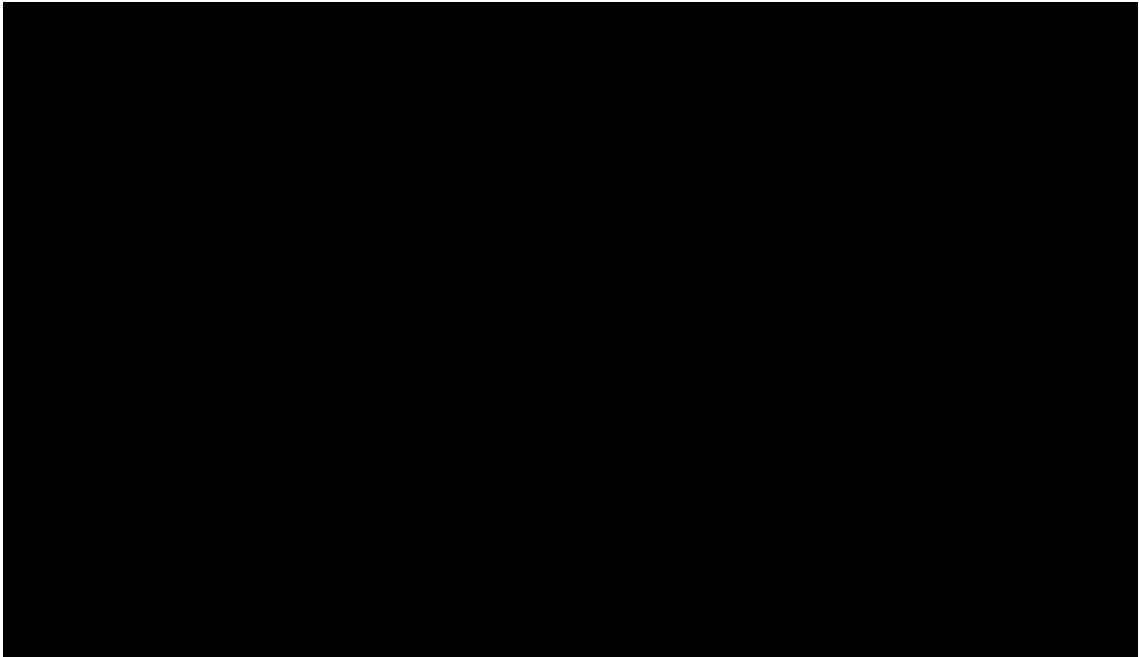


Fig. 2.14: Arms carved in the spandrels of the Bassingham Gate now part of Norwich’s town hall.

An impressive combination of burgess, noble, and municipal heraldry complemented with the arms of important relatives survives from the house of John Halle (d. 1479) in Salisbury, where seventeenth-century antiquarian John Aubrey noted that ‘in the glass-windowes are many Scutchions of his Armes and severall merchant markes yet remaining’.²⁵³ Thrice the arms of Halle were displayed throughout the east windows, for instance, all impaling his mark (fig. 2.15), suggesting that ‘by uniting his heraldic honours with his merchant’s mark he wished to show to his contemporaries, and to posterity, that they held an equal share in his esteem’.²⁵⁴ Again, these personal identifiers were accompanied by royal and princely heraldry which acknowledged the wider political landscape in which Halle participated as an MP and as an admirer of the Neville family: alongside the royal arms of England and the arms of the Prince of Wales, a number of shields represented members of the Neville family, notably the Earl of

²⁵² Mostyn John Armstrong, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Norfolk: North Erpingham, South Erpingham, and Eynsford* (Norwich, 1781), pp. 296–297.

²⁵³ John Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, ed. by John Britton (London, 1847), p. 113.

²⁵⁴ Duke, *John Halle*, p. 54.

Warwick, the Earl of Salisbury, Baron Monthermer, and Lord Montague.²⁵⁵ Halle's involvement in the politics of Salisbury as mayor was celebrated heraldically in the form of the city's municipal arms likewise incorporated into the stained glass of his house. Finally, heraldic signs also visualised the family's marital ties to the nobility: Halle's daughter Christina had married Sir Thomas Hungerford, eldest son of Sir Edmund Hungerford, and this match was commemorated by a shield impaling the arms of Hungerford and Halle, with the Hungerford arms differenced by a label of three points for Thomas as the eldest son. The undifferenced Hungerford arms of Sir Edmund Hungerford, the father-in-law, appeared in the windows as well, underlining the pride John Halle took in the alliance he had forged between the two families.²⁵⁶

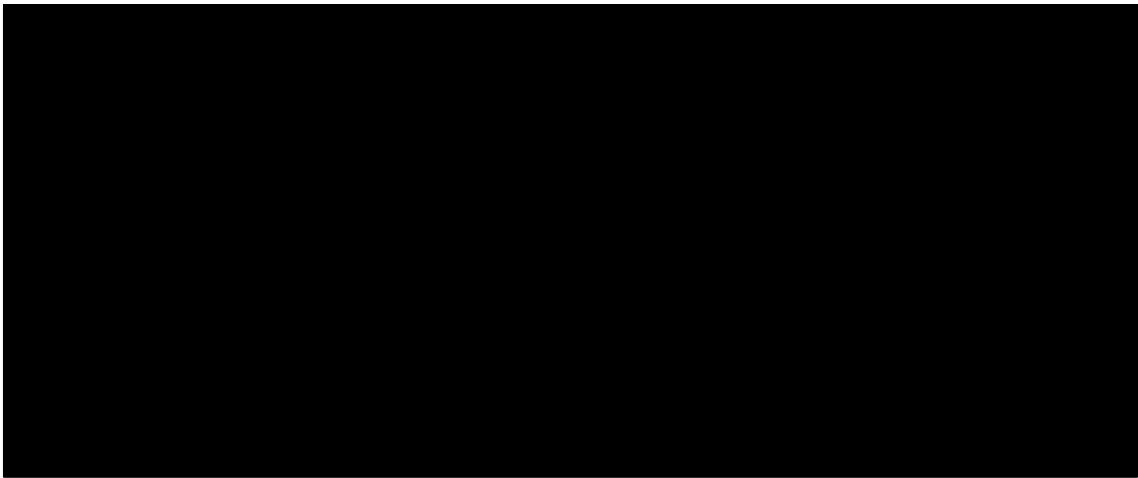


Fig. 2.15: English royal arms and arms of Halle in the far east upper window of John Halle's town house, Salisbury (c. 1470).

Although the will of Hans Junge from Lüneburg in 1430 noted 'a silver plate with the arms of my lords of the Lüneburg council therein',²⁵⁷ overall German townsmen preferred to heraldically visualise such genealogical ties over their belonging to corporate bodies. Thus, quite like a proof of nobility, a plate placed on the facade of a house built by the Erfurt citizen Johannes Hüttner in 1445 showed a total of four shields: at the top, to the dexter, were placed his own arms inherited from his father, juxtaposed, to the sinister, with the arms of his mother, while at the bottom the arms of Hüttner's

²⁵⁵ John Bate, *The Salisbury Guide, or, an Account, Historical and Descriptive, of the Objects of Interest in Salisbury and Its Neighbourhood* (Salisbury, 1848), p. 67.

²⁵⁶ Duke, *John Halle*, p. 44.

²⁵⁷ Uta Reinhardt (ed.), *Lüneburger Testamente des Mittelalters: 1323 bis 1500* (Hanover, 1996), p. 224.

paternal and maternal grandmother faced each other.²⁵⁸ Stone staircases that affluent people in Lüneburg added to their homes—quasi-porches with benches to both sides of the entrance—were often likewise decorated with arms of husband and wife, or other relatives relevant to their lineage.²⁵⁹ Sometimes these heraldic representations of the home owners' genealogy were updated when familial relations changed: on the occasion of Lutke von Dassel's second marriage in 1527, for instance, a stone slab that had previously borne the arms of his first wife, Geske Stöterogge, was replaced with a version bearing the arms of Ilsabe Sanckenstede.²⁶⁰ Heraldic stained glass was used to paint similar pictures, as a chronicle of the Welser family of Augsburg shows, noting with regard to the house of Lucas Welser in the context of his wedding celebrations in 1449: 'Said building displays on the outside, above the gate, and in the central windows of the hall fairly-made arms of this Welser man and his wife, to signify that he was the first Welser to own this house.'²⁶¹ Job Rorbach (d. 1502), a canon descended from a family of Frankfurt patricians, stated that in 1496 his mother 'had my late father's and her arms painted' in their town house, not least, it seems 'to the better memory and confirmation' of the fact that his grandfather, Heinrich Rorbach, had received a knighthood and augmentation of his arms in the form of a golden coronet in 1469, as Job Rorbach claimed later in the text.²⁶² A combination of paternal and maternal arms was also chosen by Cologne merchant Hermann von Weinsberg, who recorded that in 1537 he himself had a dabble at painting the walls of his house, trying to visualise the fruits of his genealogical studies in the form of heraldry:

Assisted by my nephew, in this year I began painting my father's pedigree in an upstairs room of the Weinsberg's house, from Heinrich van Weinsberg, knight, down to my father [...] with their wives and children and all their arms etc.²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Klippstein, 'Erfurter Familienwappen', p. 288.

²⁵⁹ Joachim Matthaui, 'Das Lüneburger Bürgerhaus', *Jahrbuch für Hausforschung*, 30 (1980); Franz A. Krüger, 'Beischläge in Lüneburg', *Jahresberichte des Museums-Vereins für das Fürstentum Lüneburg*, 1899.

²⁶⁰ Terlau-Friemann, *Patrizierarchitektur*, p. 112.

²⁶¹ Quoted in Trauchburg, *Augsburger Patrizierhäuser*, p. 67.

²⁶² Richard Froning (ed.), *Frankfurter Chroniken und annalistische Aufzeichnungen des Mittelalters* (Frankfurt [Main], 1884), pp. 269, 402. On the augmentation, see also RI XIII H. 4, no. 498, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1470-05-18_1_0_13_4_0_10070_498>.

²⁶³ Weinsberg, *Buch Weinsberg*, I, p. 117.

The heraldic representation of kinship in Cologne town houses was also alluded to by Werner Overstolz, who stressed that the heraldic signs of his family and their relatives ‘can be found embroidered in our tapestries and cushions’.²⁶⁴ Cushions embroidered with the arms of relatives and friends were repeatedly referred to in the inventories of town houses in Germany, particularly in Cologne.²⁶⁵ In 1443, Johann Sudermann noted twenty-six cushions with the arms of the Stollen and van Welde families belonging to a bed,²⁶⁶ while Ailheit van Wesel, another Cologne burgess, in her 1518 will distinguished cushions by means of their heraldic motifs: the cushions ‘with her parents arms therein’ she gifted to three different churches, but those with the arms of her husband, Gerhard von Wesel, she gave to his remaining relatives.²⁶⁷

An impressive example of such genealogical and heraldic textiles from early sixteenth-century Augsburg is a tapestry now held at the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 2.16): four shields, placed around a biblical motif in the centre, feature the arms of the Gossembrot, Rehlinger, and Welser families of Augsburg. All the families were interrelated, but the twofold presence of the Gossembrot arms might suggest that the tapestry was once displayed in a house of the Gossembrot family, commemorating two important marriages: the Gossembrot arms in the dexter position at the top face the Rehlinger arms to the sinister in courtoisie, likely in reference to the marriage of Sigmund Gossembrot to Anna Rehlinger in 1476; the Gossembrot arms at the bottom, now to the sinister with the Welser arms to the dexter, must in turn commemorate the marriage of Lucas Welser to Ursula Gossembrot in 1498.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Overstolz, *Overstolz-Buch*, p. 588.

²⁶⁵ Zahnd, ‘Bürgertestamente als Quellen’, p. 66; KHV 3, p. 196.

²⁶⁶ KHV 3, p. 348.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

²⁶⁸ Mark Häberlein et al., *Augsburger Eliten des 16. Jahrhunderts: Prosopographie wirtschaftlicher und politischer Führungsgruppen 1500–1620* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 23, 192. Gabriele von Trauchburg equally convincingly proposes that the tapestry was once displayed in the house of Lucas Welser (d. 1536), possibly made on the occasion of the wedding of Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg to Duchess Susanna of Bavaria in 1518, who then stayed in the house of the Welser family. See Trauchburg, *Augsburger Patrizierhäuser*, p. 62.



Fig. 2.16: Early sixteenth-century tapestry from Augsburg depicting the biblical scene of Susanna and the Elders. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 546-1872.

There are also traces of a gift-giving culture that relied on heraldically decorated objects for reinforcing amicable or familial bonds. In his 'diary', Augsburg burgess

Lucas Rem, for example, recorded to have given his brother ‘a silver water jar with his and his wife’s arms’ in 1518, just as he gave a similar ‘silver and gilt goblet with both their arms’ to his brother-in-law and wife on the occasion of their wedding.²⁶⁹ With a similar sentiment, the will of Marie Suderman of Cologne in 1500 presented ‘a vessel with fair arms’ to her ‘especially good friend’ Johann Muysgin, and a silver dish with the arms of the Scherffgin family to the wife of Johann van der Eren, who thus might have been a Scherffgin by birth.²⁷⁰ The *Schenkbuch* of Nuremberg patrician Walburg Kress, which meticulously recorded gifts to family and friends between 1416 and 1438, noted the commission of an infant bed given to her son and daughter-in-law, which included a ribbon ‘embroidered with shields of the Kress and the Stromer lilies’ used to fasten the duvet.²⁷¹ When Adelheid Glümer married Tilo von Broitzem in 1495, the connection between these two members of Brunswick’s urban elite was commemorated in the form of a chest bearing the heraldic signs of the two newlyweds.²⁷² In Lüneburg, finally, the saline master Hermann Bardewick (d. 1527) opted for a more extensive heraldic present when commissioning a similar chest for the wedding of his daughter. In addition to the married couple’s arms of alliance, eight smaller shields represented the lineage of the family by means of heraldry in the manner of a proof of nobility, showing the heraldic signs of eminent Lüneburg families such as the Stöterogge, Töbing, Schellepeper, and Springintgut.²⁷³

2.5 Urban Funerals: Furnishing the Streets of the City

The central ritual that connected the town house to the parish church—according to fifteenth-century scholar Diego de Valera the two foremost places of heraldic self-representation of late medieval citizens²⁷⁴—was the funeral. ‘Only in theory was death the great leveller, in practice the funeral—in all periods—reflected and reinforced social

²⁶⁹ Lucas Rem, *Tagebuch des Lucas Rem aus den Jahren 1494–1541: Ein Beitrag zur Handelsgeschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, ed. by B. Greiff (Augsburg, 1861), pp. 46, 54.

²⁷⁰ KHV 3, p. 350.

²⁷¹ Georg Kress von Kressenstein (ed.), ‘Das Schenkbuch einer Nürnberger Patriciersfrau von 1416 bis 1438’, *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, 23 (1876), col. 71.

²⁷² Heinrich Kreisel and Georg Himmelheber, *Die Kunst des deutschen Möbels* (Munich, 1968), p. 32.

²⁷³ Hans-Cord Sarnighausen, ‘Zur Lüneburger Sülzmeisterfamilie von Bardewick von 1292 bis 1560’, in Martin Barz (ed.), *Entwicklungen* (Husum, 2008), p. 77.

²⁷⁴ See above, p. 35.

distinctions'.²⁷⁵ This competitive concern with social status even after death was widely visible in the late medieval city, and not least because of its reliance on heraldry, as this section will show. Even though the ephemeral nature of funerals means that material evidence of such rituals is scarce, references to heraldic display in textual accounts still paint a colourful picture of the role played by heraldic communication as a means of self-representation: from the solemn procession which transferred the body of the deceased from their home to their church and the 'lying-in-state' during the liturgical service to the final burial, townsmen conscious of their social status used these ceremonies as the final opportunity to utilise heraldry in order to exhibit core elements of their identity.

2.5.1 'Heraldic Funerals' in English Cities

In England, over the course of the fifteenth century, the 'heraldic funeral' became a common practice of the nobility and the privileged citizenry.²⁷⁶ The will of London merchant John Norborough, for example, provided detailed instructions for the execution of his funeral, which eventually took place in 1525.²⁷⁷ Torches were 'to be borne with 8 pour persones aboute my body', while the pall-bearers 'pray for my soule' as they brought the deceased to the church. Once the procession had arrived, 'I will v yards of blak cloth be bought and laide over me [...] with vj scochyns upon it wherin

²⁷⁵ Steven Bassett and Christopher Dyer, 'Introduction', in Steven Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead* (Leicester, 1992), p. 6. On English funerals, see also Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 1984); Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London, 2002). On urban funerals in Germany, see Ludwig Schnurrer, 'Tod und Begräbnis im Spätmittelalter: Das Leichenbegängnis für den Rothenburger Wollhändler Michael Otnat 1488', *Die Linde*, 67 (1985); Thomas Weller, 'Das Begräbnis des Bürgermeisters: Städtische Begräbniskultur, Trauerzeremoniell und soziale Repräsentation im frühneuzeitlichen Leipzig', in Marian Füssel and Thomas Weller (eds), *Ordnung und Distinktion: Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft* (Münster, 2005).

²⁷⁶ Clare Gittings, 'Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England', in Steven Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600* (Leicester; New York, 1992); J. F. R. Day, 'Buried "the King's Trew Subject": The Late Medieval English Heraldic Funeral in Decline', *The Coat of Arms: New Series*, 13 (2000); Roger Kuin, 'Colours of Continuity: The Heraldic Funeral', in Nigel Ramsay (ed.), *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England* (Donington, 2014).

²⁷⁷ While his will describes John Norborough as 'London gentleman', a royal petition from the times of Henry VIII refers to a John Norborough as 'merchant'. See NA, SP 46/186/f0105.

shall be myn armes conterned.’²⁷⁸ A slightly different design for a similar ‘buryall clothe’ was requested for ‘Maister Gardener, late Alderman’ in 1503, who had asked for ‘his armes yn the border of it’.²⁷⁹ Again, personal arms were not the only heraldic signs exhibited on such occasions: the *Vintners’ Company Ordinance Book* of London, for instance, noted ‘an hearse cloth of gold with the arms of the vintners and the arms of the said Mr Husee’,²⁸⁰ the deceased, on the occasion of his funeral in 1539. This visible presence of corporate arms alongside personal arms once more points to the importance of belonging to urban craft associations, which late medieval townsmen also wished to preserve in death.

A combination of personal and corporate heraldry also furnished the funeral of Thomas Bradbury in 1510. In this case, the parish church of St Stephen in Coleman Street, London, ‘was soo lytyll there mygth be noo hers’ that could have supported Bradbury’s arms. But this did not stop the deceased from receiving a splendid (heraldic) funeral, as the account of John Joyner, officer of arms and chief-organiser of the event, shows.²⁸¹ His detailed description of the funeral ceremonies and his meticulous account of the expenses incurred for decorations amply illustrate the diversity of the material and visual forms in which heraldic signs were part of such an ephemeral performance.

Bradbury (b. c. 1439) was an important man in late medieval London: he had held wardenships of the Mercers’ Company in 1489 and 1496, and served as MP in 1495. In 1498/1499, he became sheriff of London, in 1502/1503 master of the mercers. In the same year, Bradbury was made alderman, and in 1509, when he was eventually elected mayor, ‘Thomas and Joan Bradbury were now among the most worshipful of the citizens of London.’²⁸² His funeral had to be appropriately representative, and when his body was

²⁷⁸ Duncan, ‘Medieval & Tudor Kent P.C.C. & C.C.C. Wills’, <<https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/Wills/Bk09/267.htm>>.

²⁷⁹ Lætitia Lyell and Frank D. Watney (eds), *Acts of Court of the Mercers’ Company, 1453–1527* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 263. An earlier request by the said ‘Maister Gardener’ in 1501 similarly refers to ‘a herse cloth [...] uppon the said clooth his Armes’, *ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁸⁰ Quoted in Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066–1550* (London, 2005), p. 48.

²⁸¹ BL, Add. 45131, fols 151r–152r.

²⁸² Anne F. Sutton, ‘Lady Joan Bradbury († 1530)’, in Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton (eds), *Medieval London Widows, 1300–1500* (London, 1994), p. 216.

taken from his house to St Stephen, ‘the halle, the court, al the strete to the churche, the qwere [choir] and chappel’ were ‘hangyd w^t black clothe garnyshed w^t scochins off his armes’.²⁸³ These ‘sochins’ were attached to the black cloth furnishing the space through which the funeral procession moved: the ‘peynters bill’ mentioned ten dozen ‘scochuns in metall’ and four dozen ‘sochyns in color’; another six escutcheons ‘apon bokeram’,²⁸⁴ an expensive cloth which was possibly embroidered, may also have been displayed on the way from Bradbury’s home to the church. Inside the church, the deceased was likely placed between the four candles ‘garnyshed w^t pencells’,²⁸⁵ that is small streamers. A large number of such flags decorated the church and the street, as the painter’s bill recorded the purchase of eight dozen pieces. While Joyner’s account did not explicitly mention it, it is likely that these ‘pencells’, too, bore the Bradbury arms. The funeral procession proper began with a group of friars followed by liveried ‘gentlemen’, ‘then odir of his blode’, his chaplains, and his executors. The deceased was announced heraldically in the form of ‘the pennon of his armes’ borne by William Bradbury, nephew to Thomas, followed by John Joyner bearing the ‘cote of arms’, which in this context may refer to a tabard of the Bradbury arms.

At the heart of the procession was the body of Thomas Bradbury, carried by four pall-bearers, around whom four banners were located ‘at every corner’, which located the deceased within urban society. Three banners distinguished Thomas as a London citizen who had diligently served the *bonum commune* in the institutions of the urban government: ‘that is to say a ban[n]er of saint Paul [...], a banner of saint Thomas [...], [and] a pennon of tharmes of the cyte’. The fourth heraldic banner identified the second, smaller, social circle in which Thomas Bradbury had spent most of his life, namely the Mercers’ Company represented by ‘a pennon of the mercers arms’. The procession was concluded by a host of mourners, including the widow, Joan Bradbury.²⁸⁶ Once they arrived in the church, the participants adjourned for the day to feast in Bradbury’s hall. The following morning they returned for mass, during which all elements of Bradbury’s armorial achievement—shield, helmet, crest, and even ‘velvet & sylke for the mantell

²⁸³ BL, Add. 45131, fol. 151r.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 152r.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ BL, Add. 45131, fol. 151r–151v.

[mantling] of the helme’—had their material part to play in the performance of the ‘offering’ ritual:²⁸⁷

Dame Jane Bradbury [offered] the massepeny, led by Sir Robert Dymock, aftir William & Henry Bradbury offred the cote of armes, Mr Broke & Mr Josselyn offred the sheld, Mr Tyrell & Mr Leche offred the helme & crest [...].²⁸⁸

While Joyner’s account is silent on the details of this ‘offering’ (and any contemporary interpretations), the exact procedure emerges from accounts on similar heraldic funerals. It took place at the same time as the priest’s offering, ‘whereby the deceased was associated symbolically with the sacrifice of the mass, which made available to him benefits which might shorten the pains of purgatory’.²⁸⁹ At the same time, this performance emphasised the continuity of the lineage notwithstanding the death of one of its members:²⁹⁰ during the funeral of Sir Richard Neville in 1462, once the heir, Sir Thomas, had offered the cote-armour, ‘the Bishop then delivered it back to the Earl of Warwick, in token that it belonged to him as the heir’, while the shield, helm and crest were placed on the deceased’s tomb.²⁹¹ For the same reason, it would appear, William and Henry Bradbury offered the cote-armour, as they were the next living male relatives of Thomas Bradbury.

The funeral of Mayor William Roche in 1523 was conducted in a similar manner. It likewise featured a ‘standard of his crest’, ‘a pyncon of his armys’, ‘his cote armo^r’ and the ‘offering’ of target, sword and helmet’ at the altar,²⁹² as did the funerals of other Londoners in the remainder of the sixteenth century.²⁹³ That such rituals were common much earlier is underlined by the *Liber albus* (c. 1419), which suggests that such practices had already existed in the mid-fourteenth century:

²⁸⁷ Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570–1625* (Woodbridge; Rochester [New York], 1997), pp. 30–35.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 151v.

²⁸⁹ Mervyn James, ‘Two Tudor Funerals’, in Mervyn James (ed.), *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 180.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

²⁹¹ Anthony Richard Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967), p. 107.

²⁹² Quoted in William Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London* (London, 1834), I, pp. 445–446, n. *.

²⁹³ Gittings, ‘Urban Funerals’, pp. 176–177. See also the accounts in Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A. D. 1550 to A. D. 1563*, ed. by John Gough Nichols (London, 1848).

For it is a matter of experience that ever since the year of our Lord 1350, at the sepulture of Aldermen the ancient custom of interment with baronial honours was observed; for in the church where the Alderman was about to be buried, a person appeared upon a caparisoned horse, arrayed in the armour of the deceased, bearing a banner in his hand, and carrying upon him his shield, helmet, and the rest of his arms, along with the banner, as is still the usage at the sepulture of lords of Baronial rank.²⁹⁴

The will of Hugh Brice (d. 1496), once mayor of London, points in the same direction, despite the fact that Brice deliberately chose to break with this apparently firmly established tradition:

Nor I wolle have noone armes Sworde Helmett nor cote of armes borne offered ne sett vp as it is vsed within the Citie but only myne armes vpon Papers in certeyn places of the church for the better remembraunce of my soule ffor I lout no suche pompes but my Litell goodes to bestowed in other cheritable dedes more profitable for my soules.²⁹⁵

2.5.2 *Funerals and Heraldry in Germany*

An elaborate account of Anton Fugger's funeral in Augsburg shows that similar rituals were performed in German cities as well. Although this account dates from 1560, the detailed description of the heraldic decorations of this ceremony warrants a mention, since it closely mirrors the English heraldic funeral and indicatively hints at the continuation of this practice in the later sixteenth century. Anton Fugger's body was first carried to the church of St Maurice on a hearse covered in a 'fair white fabric and a black cloth, on which was embroidered a cross made from silk on both sides, and at the front the arms of the late Fugger lord were affixed in the form of a painted piece of paper depicting both the escutcheon and the helmet'.²⁹⁶ The cloth appears to have exhibited a complete heraldic achievement, if 'helmet' is meant to include the crest *pars pro toto*. The procession was accompanied by 'twenty-four poor boys and men wearing black gowns and caps and carrying two torches each with the arms of the late Fugger attached on painted paper'.²⁹⁷ Inside the church and during mass, the arms of the deceased merchant decorated the altar, which was covered in black cloth 'and four shields of arms attached to it'.²⁹⁸ When mass finished, the funeral procession took the

²⁹⁴ John Carpenter, *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London*, ed. by Henry T. Riley (London, 1861), p. 29.

²⁹⁵ NA, Prob. 11/11/62, fol. 16v. See also Goodall, 'Aldermen', p. 19.

²⁹⁶ CDS 33, p. 60.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

body out of the church to Anton Fugger's final resting place: 'For this purpose the body was put on a hearse, covered in black cloth, likewise embroidered with a white silk cross and the arms.'²⁹⁹

A more late medieval insight into heraldic display as part of German urban funeral ceremonies is provided by Bernard Rorbach, a patrician from Frankfurt. In his *Stirps Rorbach* (1478–1482), a curious collection of family-related documents, Bernard recalled the funeral of his grandfather, Johann Rorbach, in 1459: 'He was honoured in the choir of the church, and his shield and helmet were offered [...] as has been the custom for aldermen since time out of memory.'³⁰⁰ This custom 'to honour a deceased aldermen' is subsequently explained in more detail:

All bells in all churches and elsewhere are rung. A municipal messenger carries a candle [at the head of the procession], after whom follows the supreme judge bearing the shroud. Then follow the two oldest judges, one carrying the helmet, the other carrying the shield turned upside-down [...]. Then another messenger with a candle [...]. When they come to the church, the messengers put down the candles, the supreme judge unfolds the shroud, and the elder judges place the helmet on one, the shield on the other side of the choir-stalls, where the monks are standing for the duration of the service, until the offering begins.³⁰¹

Here, too, heraldic signs emerge as an integral part of the funeral ritual's performance. Rather than a mere decoration displayed on fabric or paper, the heraldic sign participated as a material object carried in the procession and then placed in prescribed locations of the church for the purpose of mass.³⁰² That the presence of the arms was ultimately meant to communicate more than merely the identity of the deceased is also suggested by the fact that the shield with the Rorbach arms was carried 'turned upside-down': while the *subversio armorum* was a semantically ambiguous practice, in the context of funerals the reversal of heraldic shields often underlined that its bearer had died.³⁰³ To onlookers in Frankfurt, heraldic communication thus left no doubt as to the nature of the procession moving through the urban space, namely that of a ritual of mourning.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Froning, *Frankfurter Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 168–169.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Mikhail A. Boytsov, 'Ghostly Knights: Kings' Funerals in Fourteenth-Century', in Joëlle Rollo-Koster (ed.), *Death in Medieval Europe: Death Scripted and Death Choreographed* (London; New York, 2017), p. 156. See also below, p. 293.

Eventually, the transition of such rituals and their heraldic decorations to the realm of permanent commemoration in the afterlife was seamless. When Heinrich von Haren, alderman of Lübeck, died in 1427, ‘his wife took care that honest people carry him to the Blackfriars, where he himself had provided for his burial’, which included ‘a splendid tombstone placed [on Heinrich van Hare’s grave], bearing shield and helmet and brass borders.’³⁰⁴ Similarly, John Joyner ended the account on Thomas Bradbury’s funeral in London with a reference to arms ‘sett abowt hys tombe aftirwards’.³⁰⁵

2.6 Churches, Chapels, and the City:

Commemorating Piety and Vanity

Countless stained glass windows, brasses, tombs, and devotional artefacts still stand witness to the elaborate and extensive material culture with which townspeople sought to preserve their memory by means of inscriptions, figural representations, and often also heraldic signs. Modern scholarship understands such displays to have served a dual purpose: medieval *memoria* in general encouraged observers, especially family and friends, to pray for the deceased and thereby ease their souls’ fate in purgatory; simultaneously, the display of costly ‘remembrances’ in particular attested to the honour of the deceased, alluding to their wealth and genealogical links as well as membership of exclusive corporate bodies as key components of their identity.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Ferdinand Heinrich Grauthoff (ed.), *Chronik des Franciscaner Lesemeisters Detmar: Nach der Urschrift und mit Ergänzungen aus andern Chroniken* (1830), II, p. 767.

³⁰⁵ BL, Add. MS 45131, fol. 152r.

³⁰⁶ Sally F. Badham, ‘Status and Salvation: The Design of Medieval English Brasses and Incised Slabs’, *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, 15 (1996); Elisabeth Vavra, ‘*Pro remedio animae*: Motivation oder leere Formel: Überlegungen zur Stiftung religiöser Kunstobjekte’, in Gerhard Jaritz and Heinrich Appelt (eds), *Materielle Kultur und religiöse Stiftung im Spätmittelalter* (Vienna, 1990); Harry Kühnel, ‘Sinn und Motivation mittelalterlicher Stiftungen’, in Heinrich Appelt and Gerhard Jaritz (eds), *Materielle Kultur und religiöse Stiftung im Spätmittelalter* (Vienna, 1990). With an emphasis on the medieval city, see also Otto Gerhard Oexle, ‘Die Stadtkultur des Mittelalters als Erinnerungskultur’, in Thomas Schilp (ed.), *Dortmund und Conrad von Soest im spätmittelalterlichen Europa* (Bielefeld, 2004); Hanno Brand, Pierre Monnet and Martial Staub (eds), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Ostfildern, 2003); Thomas Zotz, ‘Der Stadtadel im spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland und seine Erinnerungskultur’, in Werner Rösener (ed.), *Adelige und bürgerliche Erinnerungskulturen des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 2000); Thomas Schilp, ‘Memoria in der mittelalterlichen Stadtgesellschaft’, *Lectiones eruditorum extraneorum in facultate philosophica Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis factae*, 5 (1998).

In this commemorative effort, the name of the deceased was of central importance, whether inscribed in epitaphs or articulated as part of the performance of chantries.³⁰⁷ This significance of the name for medieval *memoria* might explain the popularity of heraldic signs as another form of identification that was often part of commemorative monuments, as Olivier Richard believes. Notably with regard to urban heraldry, he argues that heraldic signs used as a means of commemoration ‘functioned as an extension of the name’ (*fonctionnée comme un prolongement du nom*).³⁰⁸ But except for Richard’s study, the role of heraldic signs in the commemorative spaces of English and German cities—the urban churches but also other public places such as town and guild halls—and their relation to the communication of identity remains unexplored.

This section approaches this important role of heraldry as a means of commemoration in English and German cities of the later Middle Ages. The heraldic signs of citizens were involved in preserving the memory of the deceased and evoking pious prayer after their death, whilst simultaneously testifying to their social status in life. This status was not only alluded to by their own arms so firmly associated with honour, but also by the communication of claims of patronage conveyed by heraldic signs, which immortalised the piety, generosity, and prosperity of late medieval townsmen. As in the case of town houses and funeral ceremonies, other heraldic signs played an important role in depicting social relations and genealogical links as constitutive aspects of late medieval burgher identity, too.

2.6.1 *Ensuring Commemoration*

That heraldic signs displayed in urban churches were meant to be perceived as pious reminders of the deceaseds’ souls was a sentiment shared in both England and Germany. In 1409, the London draper John Claveryng left twenty pounds (‘or more if needed’) to St Christopher’s church to purchase a liturgical garment embroidered with Claveryng’s shield (*scochon*), surrounded by an inscription admonishing to ‘pray for the soul of John

³⁰⁷ Otto Gerhard Oexle, ‘Memoria als Kultur’, in Otto Gerhard Oexle (ed.), *Memoria als Kultur* (Göttingen, 1995), p. 50.

³⁰⁸ Olivier Richard, ‘Mémoires bourgeoises, mémoires civiques: Memoria et identité urbaine: Ratisbonne à la fin du Moyen Âge’, *Bulletin d’Information de la Mission Historique Française en Allemagne*, 42 (2006), p. 61. See also Rubin, ‘Identities’, p. 387; Scheibelreiter, ‘Selbstverständnis’, p. 124.

Claveryng, son of Roger’, and ‘for his ancestors, and all of their benefactors’.³⁰⁹ Likely for lesser clerics or acolytes, Claveryng also commissioned another ‘five vestments of white Worstede or Fustian with albs, amices, and other apparel, stained with similar *scochons* and legend’.³¹⁰ The will of Richard Wartere, who described himself as ‘alderman, citizen, and merchant of York’, similarly requested heraldic reminders in the form of liturgical garments and a sarcophagus in 1465:

I want my executors to add a shield with my arms to said vestment, in the same way as it is made above the sarcophagus of my tomb, [...] with the intention that the people may pray especially for my soul.³¹¹

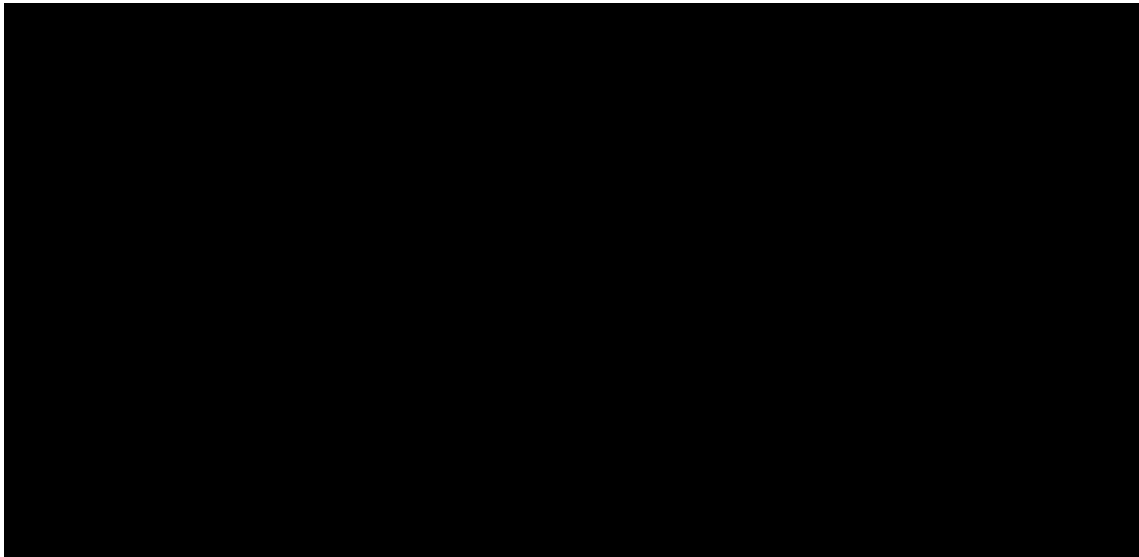


Fig. 2.17: Tomb of the Bury cloth merchant John Baret (d. 1467) in St Mary’s church, Bury.

The wealthiest of burgesses might even afford their own chapel. In England, Bury merchant John Baret (d. 1467) was ‘anxious to survive in wood and stone, in the memories and on the lips of his successors, and—helped by this—to find peace for his soul’.³¹² In this effort, heraldic signs were an all-important tool, although the tomb in his chantry chapel in the church of St Mary does not feature his heraldic sign (anymore). However, two carved shields survive on the front panel of his tomb, below the cadaver,

³⁰⁹ Sharpe, *Husting Wills*, II, p. 383.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ James Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York* (Durham; London; Edinburgh, 1855), II, p. 274.

³¹² Margaret Aston, ‘Death’, in Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 227.

framed by two monograms of the interlaced letters 'J' and 'B' on either side (fig. 2.17).³¹³ In the centre appears a figure bearing a Collar of Esses, which Baret had received for his services to Henry IV upon the king's visit to Bury in 1433/1434,³¹⁴ and a scroll with the word 'me', which with two adjacent scrolls spells Baret's motto 'Grace me governe'. In this context, Samuel Tymms' conjecture that the shields 'formerly had the arms thereon in brass' seems probable,³¹⁵ not least because the ceiling above the tomb is spangled with motto, monogram, and shields of the Baret arms (fig. 2.18). Next to these heraldic representations a priest was supposed to 'seye a messe of oure lady at Seynt Marie avter and to rehearse John Baretys name opynly' to encourage the audience's prayer for the deceased.³¹⁶ In this process, the priest was to wear a garment which Baret, just as John Claveryng and Richard Wartere, had commissioned with 'a remembrance of my armys and my reson therto, Grace me gouerne'.³¹⁷

Vestments and other liturgical devices as well as religious artwork decorated with burgess heraldry were likewise commissioned in Germany,³¹⁸ and stained glass was explicitly said to serve the same commemorative purpose in Nuremberg. Here, Sebald Schreyer (d. 1520) among many other heraldic reminders in the city's churches also noted windows with the Schreyer arms as a 'remembrance' (*gedechtnus*) of his late father,³¹⁹ just as the Nuremberg chronicler Johannes Müllner in the sixteenth century still spoke of the arms of fourteenth-century patrician Kuntz Ott, which Müllner found in the churches of St Sebald and St Lawrence, as a 'remembrance'.³²⁰

³¹³ Samuel Tymms, *An Architectural and Historical Account of the Church of St. Mary, Bury St. Edmunds* (Bury St Edmunds; London, 1854), pp. 184–186; Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture* (Leiden; Boston, 2013), pp. 177–180.

³¹⁴ Margaret Statham, 'John Baret of Bury', *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), pp. 429–430.

³¹⁵ Tymms, *St Mary's Church*, p. 96.

³¹⁶ Tymms, *Bury Wills*, p. 18.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ E.g. Corine Schleif, *Donatio et memoria: Stifter, Stiftungen und Motivationen an Beispielen aus der Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg* (Munich, 1990), pp. 87–88; Wolfgang Schmid, 'Kölner Hansekaufleute als Stifter und Mäzene', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 113 (1995), p. 129; Johannes Wilhelm, *Augsburger Wandmalerei, 1368–1530* (Augsburg, 1983), p. 55. See also Ahasver von Brandt, *Regesten der Lübecker Bürgertestamente des Mittelalters* (Lübeck, 1973), II, p. 79.

³¹⁹ Quoted in Albert Gumbel, 'Kirchliche Stiftungen Sebald Schreyers 1477–1517', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 18 (1908), p. 101.

³²⁰ Müllner, *Annalen*, II, p. 65.



Fig. 2.18: Ceiling above the tomb of John Baret (d. 1467) in St Mary's church, Bury.

A German example able to match the heraldic splendour of John Baret's chapel and its explicit acknowledgements of heraldry's commemorative functions is the Fugger chapel in the church of St Anne in Augsburg. Commissioned by the brothers Jacob and Ulrich, also in the name of their deceased brother Georg Fugger, in 1509, it was the culmination of a whole array of commemorative displays that often relied on heraldry. Earlier, in 1478, the brothers had already paid to depict their arms at the altar of St Ulrich and Afra, and two years later they had financed a choir stall decorated with their arms.³²¹ But in their chapel commissioned at the Carmelite church of St Anne, the Fugger's lily arms were omnipresent: the outside of the chapel showed them carved into stone below the chapel's pediment; on the inside, the same arms were prominently placed on the epitaphs of the three brothers (fig. 2.19).³²² A detailed draft charter written in anticipation of this commission explained the functions these signs were meant to serve: the charter reserved the Fugger brothers' exclusive right 'to affix or paint onto the walls our arms and shields', explicitly barring anyone from 'detaching or changing

³²¹ Mark Häberlein, *Die Fugger: Geschichte einer Augsburger Familie (1367–1650)* (Stuttgart, 2006), p. 34.

³²² Benjamin Scheller, *Memoria an der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers des Reichen vor und während der Reformation (ca. 1505–1555)* (Berlin, 2004), pp. 47–80; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Adel, Memoria und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Bemerkungen zur Memorial-Kapelle der Fugger in Augsburg', in Chantal Grell, Werner Paravicini, and Jürgen Voss (eds), *Les princes et l'histoire du XIVe au XVIIIe siècle* (Bonn, 1998); Bruno Bushart, *Die Fuggerkapelle bei St. Anna in Augsburg* (Munich, 1994).

[the arms], or giving consent for their removal'.³²³ After all, the provisions stressed, these signs were 'placed and arranged there for the praise of God and our commemoration'.³²⁴ A confirmation charter issued by the Carmelite convent struck the same note, equally explicitly mentioning 'arms for the purpose of their commemoration'.³²⁵

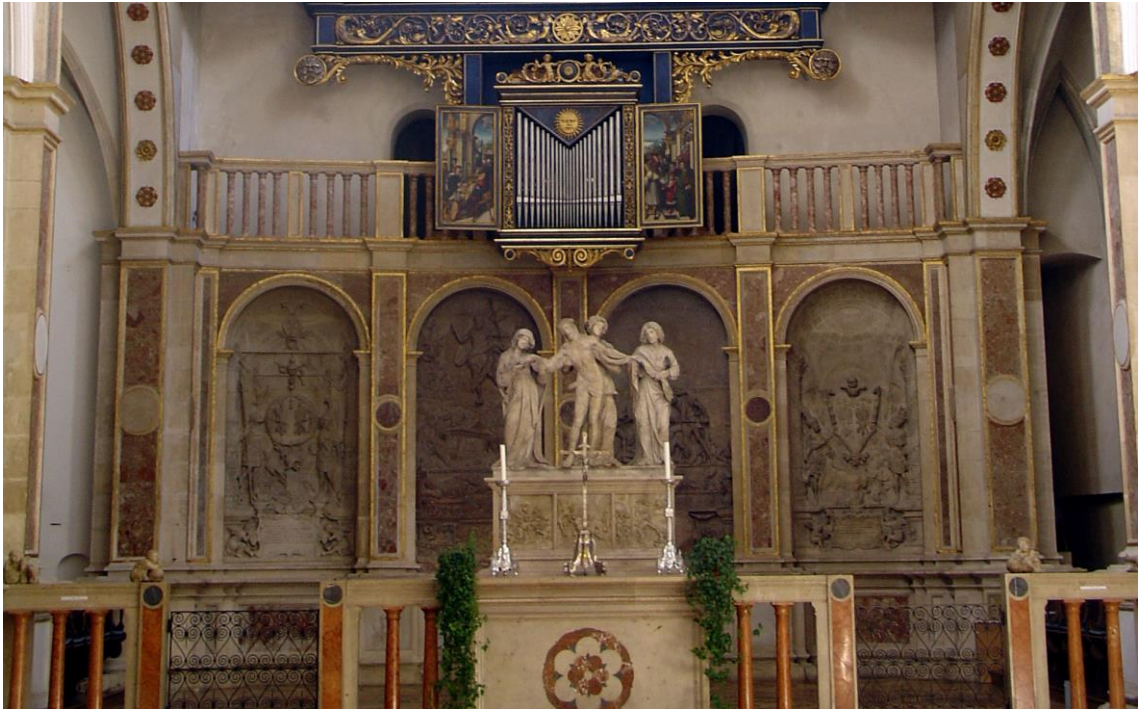


Fig. 2.19: Epitaphs (1518) of Ulrich, Georg, and Jacob Fugger in their chapel in St Anne's church, Augsburg.

Of course, heraldic commemoration in the late medieval city was by no means confined to urban churches. Other places in the city, as subsequent discussions of guild and town halls will show as well, were likewise furnished with burgess arms hoped to ensure the commemoration of their bearers. To name but two cases that made their commissioners' intentions particularly explicit at this point: the will of Lüneburg apothecary Matthias Must requested 'a large silver dish to be made and given to the town hall, whereby they ought to remember me', and said dish is still found among the silverware of Lüneburg's town hall, marked with Must's arms and the date 1476.³²⁶ In

³²³ Printed in Scheller, *Memoria*, p. 287.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ Printed in Bushart, *Fuggerkapelle*, p. 415.

³²⁶ Nikolaus Gussone, 'Das Ratssilber: Geschichte – Gebrauch – Gestalt', in Stefan Bursche, Nikolaus Gussone, and Dietrich Poeck (eds), *Das Lüneburger Ratssilber* (Munich, 2008), p. 58.

London, financial troubles forced the mercer Avereŷ Rawson in 1515 to retrieve a tapestry from the mercers' hall, which he had previously gifted to the company 'for a memoriall that his Father and mother shuld the better be remembred and prayde for'.³²⁷ For the same purpose, Rawson had also commissioned 'certen scochyns of their armes to be sett aboute oure Hall', with inscriptions 'wrytten aboute the same' encouraging the assembled guildsmen to pray for his parents' souls.³²⁸

2.6.2 *Preserving Social Relations*

As in the case of town houses and urban funerals, often multiple arms were part of commemorative displays in urban churches, visualising the genealogical and social relations of the deceased. London sheriff and merchant Nicholas Leveson (d. 1539) and his wife Denise, daughter of the London tailor Thomas Bodley, for instance, combined their arms on their memorial brass to underline the two families' alliance (fig. 2.20): to the left of a figural representation of Nicholas Leveson stood a shield of the Leveson arms, and to the right of that of his wife was a shield of the Bodley arms, while the third shield, placed between the two figures, united both heraldic signs in a single shield *party per pale*.³²⁹

In the chapel of the Barstaple Almshouse in Bristol, two (separate) monuments were dedicated to the memory of its founders John and Isabel Barstaple (fig. 2.21).³³⁰ John (d. 1411) was bailiff, sheriff, and eventually thrice mayor of Bristol between 1395 and 1405. While his brass showed a heraldicised mark was placed below a figural representation, the effigy of his wife Isabel (d. c. 1411) featured 'proper' arms, likely those of her father, Walter de Derby, son of a 'prominent Bristol burgess' himself.³³¹ In this case, too, the prestigious marital connection between the Barstaples and the de Derbys would have been underlined through her family's arms. However, other arms have been

³²⁷ Lyell and Watney, *Mercers' Court Acts*, pp. 431–432.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ W. H. Overall, 'Notes on Two Monumental Brasses in Saint Andrew-under-Shaft, Leadenhall Street', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 4 (1875), pp. 287–296.

³³⁰ Cecil Tudor Davis, *The Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire* (London, 1899), pp. 28–30; James Dallaway, *Antiquities of Bristow in the Middle Centuries* (Bristol, 1834), p. 75.

³³¹ Christian D. Liddy, *War, Politics and Finance in Late Medieval English Towns: Bristol, York and the Crown, 1350–1400* (Woodbridge; Rochester [New York], 2005), p. 53. See also *ibid.*, p. 77.

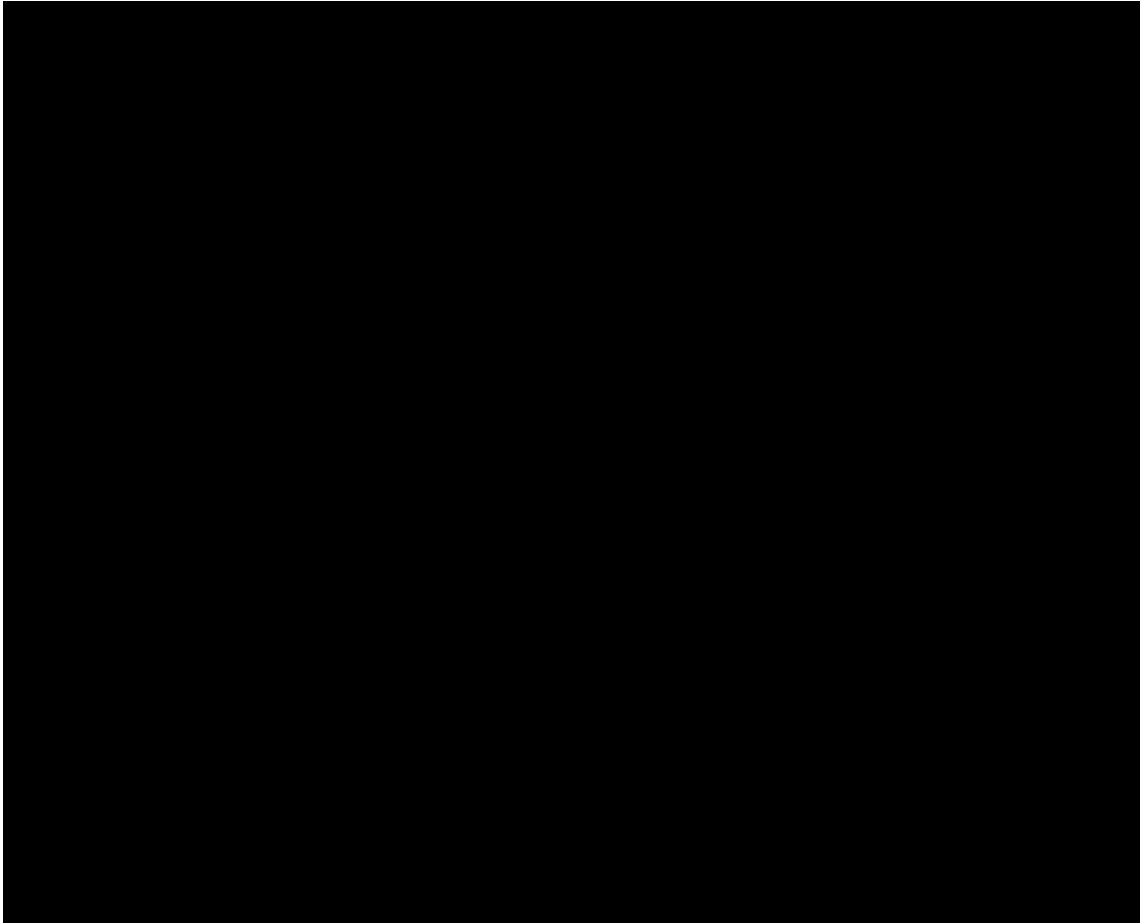


Fig. 2.20: Early eighteenth-century painting of the monument to Nicholas Leveson and his wife in St Andrew Undershaft, London. London Metropolitan Archives, Cat.-No. V9028394.

attributed to the de Derby family,³³² perhaps indicating that the arms on Isabel's brass belong to her first, unknown husband;³³³ as she died after John Barstaple, she might have wished to commemorate this potentially more prestigious marriage by means of heraldry.

A similar arrangement featured in the famous brass of Ipswich merchant Thomas Pounder (d. 1525), which showed figural representations of him and his wife accompanied by shields. Strikingly, the shields did not bear the arms of the deceased, but instead juxtaposed the municipal arms of Ipswich with those of the Merchant

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Davis, *The Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire*, p. 30. However, her will makes no reference to another husband, see Thomas P. Wadley (ed.), *Notes or Abstracts of the Wills Contained in the Volume Entitled 'The Great Orphan Book' and 'Book of Wills' in the Council House at Bristol* (Bristol, 1886), pp. 86–87.

Adventurers' Company (fig. 2.22).³³⁴ A heraldic reference to Thomas Pounder himself was added nonetheless, namely in the form of another heraldicised mark placed at the bottom of the brass. A very similar acknowledgement of the importance of professional collectives features in the case of Norwich citizen John Terri (d. 1524), whose tomb impaled the arms of the Merchant Adventurers' Company with those of the mercers' guild, adding his mark and initials in the base of the shield.³³⁵

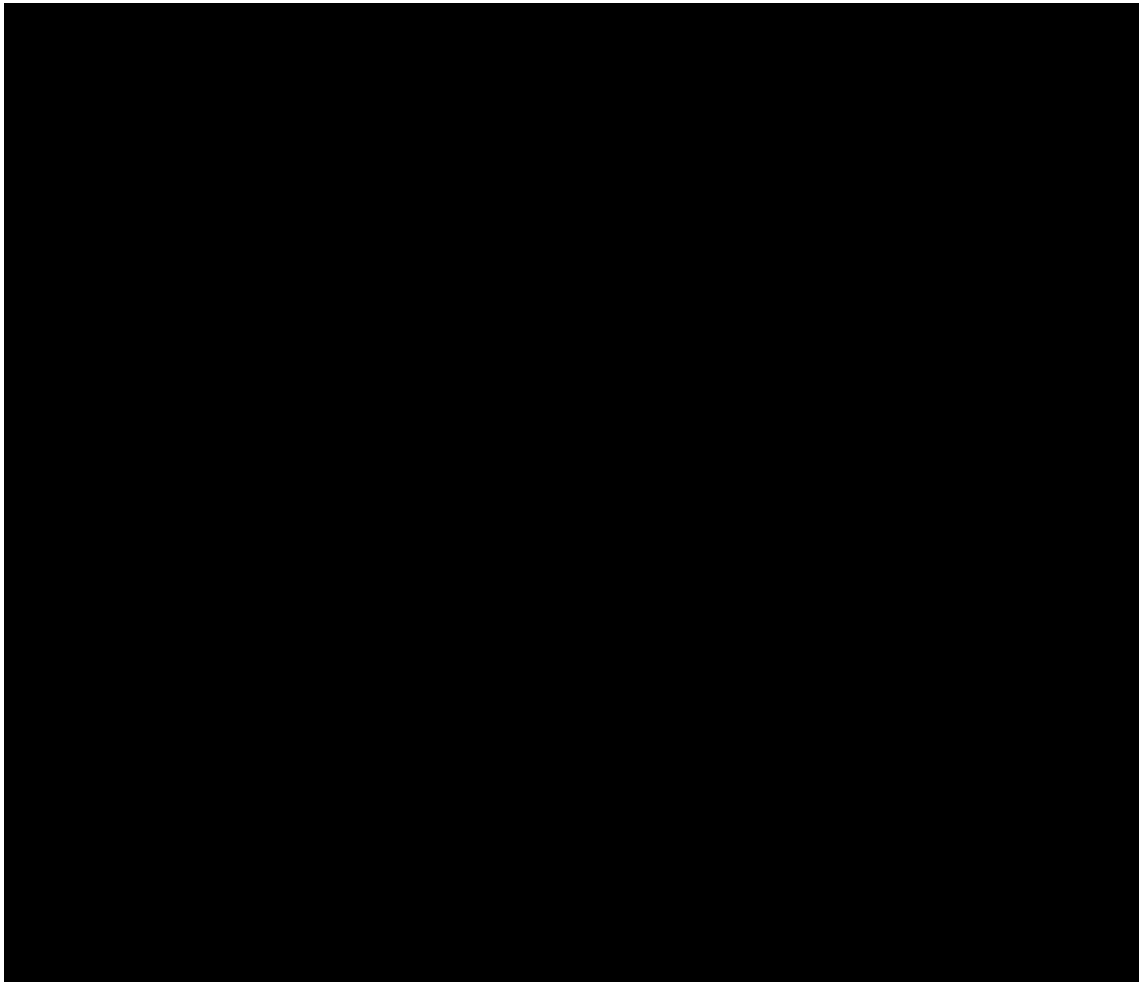


Fig. 2.21: Sketches by Hugh O'Neill (d. 1834) of the brasses belonging to John and Isabel Barstaple in the chapel of their Bristol almshouse. Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, M2770 and M2771.

As a fellow Norwich citizen and eventual successor in the mayor's office, merchant Thomas Elys (d. 1534) opted for an even more elaborate heraldic monument to visualise his relations in the stained glass of the church of St Peter Mancroft (fig.

³³⁴ John Marcus Blatchly and Peter Northeast, 'The Pounder Memorial in St Mary at the Quay Church, Ipswich', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, 41 (2005).

³³⁵ John Sell Cotman, *Engravings of Sepulchral Brasses in Norfolk and Suffolk* (London, 1839), I, p. 32.

2.23).³³⁶ In addition to the quartered arms of Elys and his wife Margaret's father depicted on a prayer desk, the family's social ties implied by their children's marriages were proudly remembered by means of heraldry as well. Their daughter Matilda had married Edmund Garnys, whose arms appear quartered with those of Ely in another shield.³³⁷ But the genealogical information is more complex still, as both the Ely and the Garnys arms are themselves again quartered to represent paternal and maternal lines: the arms of Garnys quarter those of Edmund's mother's Ramsey heritage, which added considerably to the Garnys' estate.³³⁸ The same method was chosen for another panel with a shield representing the marriage of their son William, which quartered the arms of Thomas and Margaret Elys on the dexter side, with the quartered arms of the parents of William's wife on the sinister. Alongside this more immediate social network, the Elys-Garnys Window also incorporated royal heraldry in the form of the arms of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. While these do not survive *in situ*, they 'were clearly meant

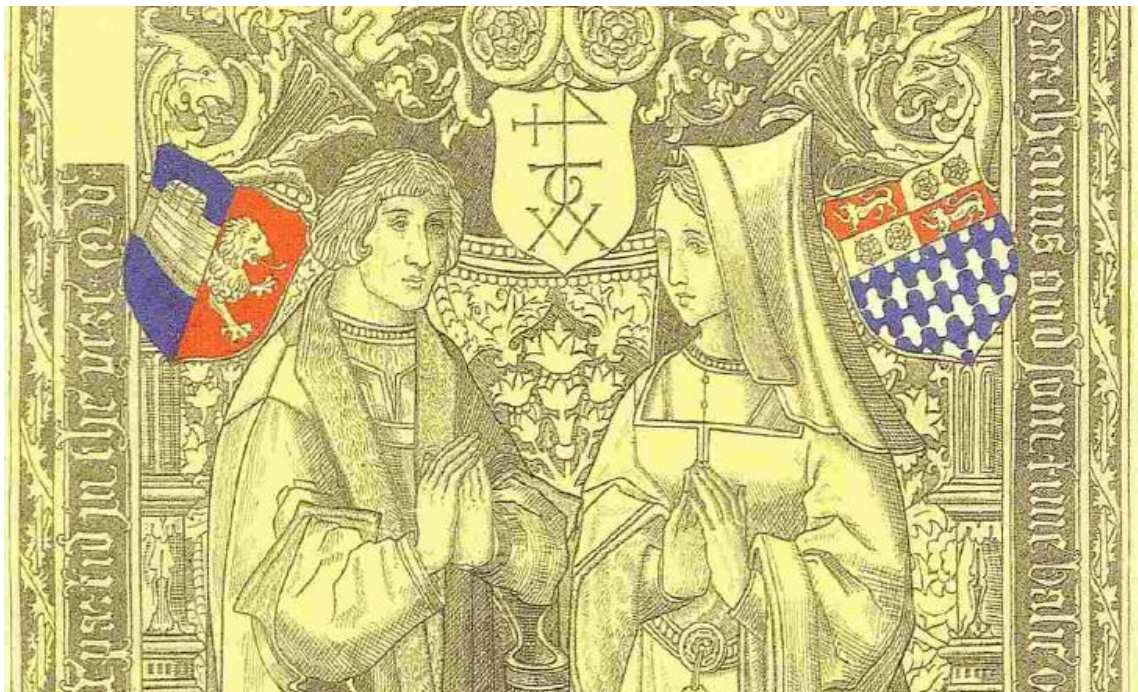


Fig. 2.22: Brass of Thomas Pounder (d. 1525) in the church of St Mary at the Quay, Ipswich.

³³⁶ David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich* (Oxford et al., 2006), pp. cxcix–ccvi; Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (London, 1805), IV, pp. 198–199.

³³⁷ Blomefield and Parkin, *Norfolk*, IV, p. 199.

³³⁸ John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank* (London, 1838), IV, p. 564.

to confirm status by association'.³³⁹ Whereas incorporating princely and royal arms into the heraldic ensemble of town houses was rather common, a reference to the ruler in commemorative contexts appears rather unusual. In conjunction, the heraldic communication of marital relations to the landed gentry and the heraldic reference to the monarchy thus suggest the elevated, 'honourable' status of the Elys family, while requests for prayer expressed in the windows' inscriptions once more underline that this was a concern of this elaborate display also.



Fig. 2.23: Thomas and Margaret Elys sat at a prayer desk with the Elys arms, depicted in a stained glass panel (c. 1526–1533) in St Peter Mancroft, Norwich.

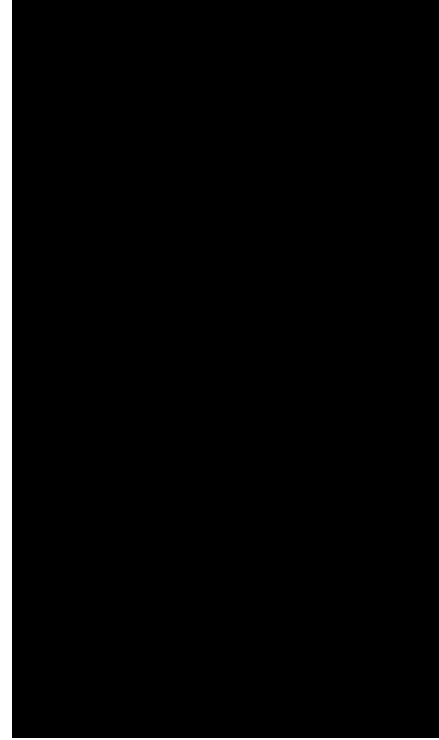


Fig. 2.24: Slab of Peter Wutschetze (d. 1390) with a heraldicised mark in the Abbey of the Holy Cross, Rostock.

An analogous picture presents itself in the churches of German cities. While commemorative displays might rely on individual heraldic signs—or as in the case of the slab of Conrad Feuerbach, mayor of Butzbach, a heraldicised mark (see also fig. 2.24)³⁴⁰—often multiple heraldic signs were combined and thus testified to their bearers' relations in life. In Lüneburg, for example, the tomb of mayor Ludolf Dassel (d. 1537)

³³⁹ King, *St Peter Mancroft Glass*, p. ccv.

³⁴⁰ Friedrich Karl Azzola and Dieter Wolf, 'Die spätmittelalterliche Kreuzplatte in der Butzbacher Stadtpfarrkirche – die Grabplatte des Butzbacher Bürgermeisters Conrad Fauerbach, um 1460/70?', *Wetterauer Geschichtsblätter*, 41 (1992), pp. 69–71.

displayed his heraldic sign alongside the arms of his two wives,³⁴¹ just as Sebald Schreyer's elaboration on the family's stained glass commissions in Nuremberg repeatedly referred to the presence of the arms of spouses next to those of the Schreyer family as 'customary'.³⁴² In Augsburg, the Walther family commissioned several stained glass windows and tombstones with arms of relevance to his lineage. Similar to the case of the Elys-Garnys window, this included heraldic references to the marital relations of Walther children, but also the arms of their ancestors:

In 1506, Hans Walther commissioned stained glass and a vault [in the church of St Ulrich] with his and his wife's arms, accompanied by the heraldic signs of his two sons-in-law and his daughters therein; also in the stained glass of Ulrich Walther there are the arms of his father and mother, a Wielender daughter, and opposite are his arms and those of his wife, a Ridler daughter.³⁴³

A related form of heraldic commemoration particularly popular in Nuremberg and Ulm—but also known from Brunswick, for instance—was the funerary hatchment (*Totenschild*), often designed to combine arms of relatives within a single shield (fig. 2.25), or arranged to group relatives together.³⁴⁴ In the latter form, funerary hatchments in Nuremberg's Franciscan church embellished the monument of Franz Koler (d. 1280), a descendant of one of the most ancient families in the city, for example.³⁴⁵ Here, the commemorative ensemble comprised a carved figural representation of Franz Koler himself accompanied by figures of his two wives praying to Christ. Below each figure was placed a shield of arms quartering the Koler arms with the arms of his wife's father, whereas Franz Koler quartered the Koler arms with those of his mother. Underneath this arrangement, a further eight shields of the deceased's ancestors completes this impressive genealogy of the Koler family.

³⁴¹ Otto von Dassel, 'Die Familiendenkmäler in und bei Lüneburg', *Familiengeschichtliche Blätter*, 3 (1905).

³⁴² Gümbel, 'Sebald Schreyers Stiftungen', p. 101.

³⁴³ CDS 22, p. 394.

³⁴⁴ Günter Mattern, 'Totenschilder und -fahnen', in Lard Wikström (ed.), *Genealogica and Heraldica: Report of the 20th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences in Uppsala, 9-13 August 1992* (Stockholm, 1996); Kurt Pilz, 'Der Totenschild in Nürnberg und seine deutschen Vorstufen', *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1939; Max Bach, 'Die Grabdenkmale und Totenschilder des Münsters zu Ulm', *Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte*, 2 (1893). For examples from Brunswick, see also DI 35, Stadt Braunschweig, nos 92, 93, 256, *Deutsche Inschriften Online*, <<http://www.inschriften.net>>.

³⁴⁵ See also Studt, 'Erinnerung und Identität', p. 24; Staub, 'Denkmal und Dokument', p. 104.

In Cologne, Werner Overstolz likewise viewed arms displayed in urban churches as important evidence for the distinction of his lineage. In Cologne's churches, he claimed, there survived 'quite a few sarcophagi with our shields of arms in the churches', and for this reason, he stressed, 'I know where my ancestors were buried'—unlike random 'upstarts' who did not possess this kind of visible proof for their distinguished descent, it would appear.³⁴⁶ In this sense, heraldic communication played an important role in churches as 'theatres of memory', as Nigel Saul labels ecclesiastical



Fig. 2.25: Funerary hatchment of Nuremberg patrician Heinrich Grundherr (d. 1351). GNM, KG33.

³⁴⁶ Overstolz, *Overstolz-Buch*, p. 121.

spaces in England: ‘A family’s lineage could be captured quickly on a few shields on a tomb.’³⁴⁷ The display of heraldic signs—perceived in a close relation with the genealogical body of the family, as the previous sections have shown—contributed to the visualisation and thus conservation of the genealogical-historical knowledge of urban families.

Analogous to the incorporation of municipal and guild arms in commemorative displays in England, in Brunswick heraldry also contributed to the celebration of the role of individuals played in the ‘corporate family’ of the city. During an unsuccessful revolt against the urban establishment in 1374, eight aldermen lost their lives at the hands of the rebels, the *Schichtbuch* (1514) recorded.³⁴⁸ As a result, eight shields, with

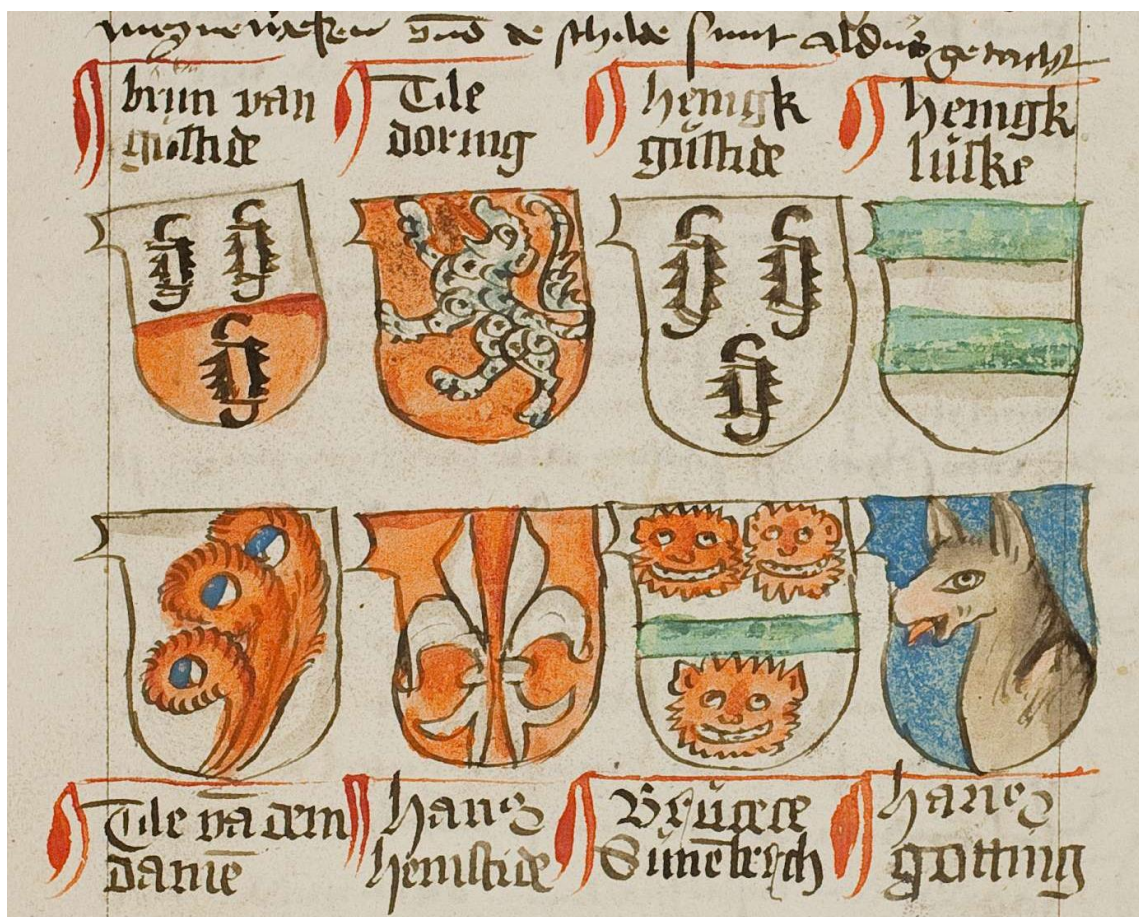


Fig. 2.26: Arms of eight aldermen killed in the revolt of 1374, depicted in Hermann Bote’s *Schichtbuch* (1514). HAB, Hs. 120 Extrav., 20r.

³⁴⁷ Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford; New York, 2009), pp. 141, 165. See also Sally F. Badham and H. Martin Stuchfield, *Monumental Brasses* (Oxford, 2009), p. 40.

³⁴⁸ CDS 16, p. 318.

their arms, were hung in the chapel of St Auctor, next to the town hall, where ‘the shields are thus remembered’ (fig. 2.26).³⁴⁹ Gathered in the chapel, the heraldic signs of fallen aldermen served as a monument to an exclusive circle of exemplary local heroes who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the *bonum commune*.

2.6.3 Communicating and Challenging Patronage

A desire to remember good deeds was inherent to many heraldic displays in urban churches. After all, the arms of the Fugger brothers from Augsburg or John Baret from Bury displayed in their chapels, just like many smaller commissions of vestments and other liturgical devices for urban churches, testified to the generous patronage and god-fearing piety of their donors. But in guild halls, town halls, and other public places, too, heraldic signs provided a widely visible opportunity to showcase and preserve their bearers’ concern with the welfare of their fellow citizens.

York mayor William Todd’s contribution to the reconstruction of the wall near Fishergate in 1487, for instance, was evidenced by Todd’s heraldicised mark placed on a plaque, which commemorated his concern with this

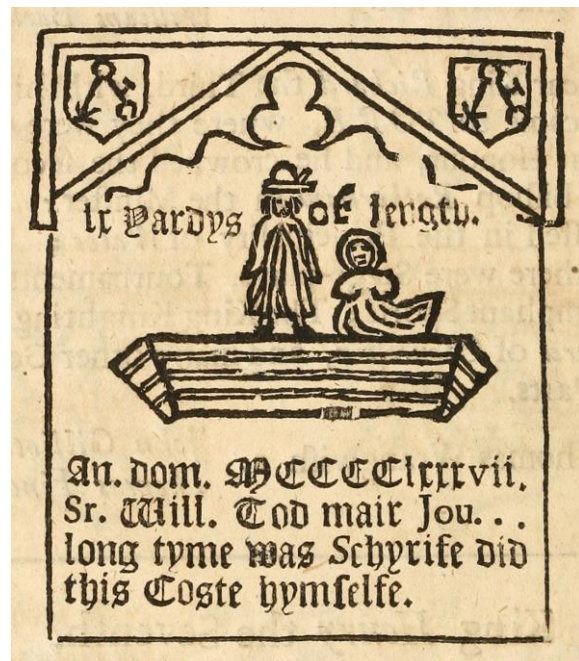


Fig. 2.27: Heraldicised mark of William Todd depicted in a seventeenth-century woodcut of a commemorative plaque from 1487, displayed near Fishergate, York.

prestigious aspect of York’s collective identity as a well-fortified city (fig. 2.27).³⁵⁰ Because of similar reminders, John Stow in the sixteenth century was able to recall many generous contributors to public projects in the later Middle Ages. That Richard Whittington (d. 1423) had built Guildhall Library, Stow noted, was evidenced by the fact that ‘the armes of Whittington are placed on the one side in the stone worke’, for

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ On the symbolic significance of city walls, see below, p. 207.

instance.³⁵¹ Stephen Forster, mayor of London in 1454/1455, had commissioned ‘a large walking place’ at the prison in Ludgate, ‘all for fresh ayre, and ease of prisoners’, commemorated by a copper plate engraved with ‘his Armes, three broad Arrow heades’.³⁵² Likewise, that the city’s wall between Allhallows and Mooregate had been repaired by the executors of John Crosby (d. 1476), merchant, alderman, and MP, ‘may appeare by his armes, in two places there fixed’, and that they also supported the renovation of the library at St Peter’s upon Cornhill church, ‘his Armes on the south end doth witness’.³⁵³

Precisely this capacity of heraldry to indicate patronage (and eventually ensure commemoration) also emerges from a case in which the right to display heraldic signs was used as a bargaining chip to enforce promised patronage. When the mercers of London refurbished their hall in Cheapside in the second half of the fifteenth century, John Stokton, former master of the guild, promised to give money towards a new ceiling before his death in 1473.³⁵⁴ At least, this is suggested by records of the mercers’ court, where fellow guildsmen complained about Stokton’s widow, Katherine. She was reluctant to release the funds her husband may (or may not) have agreed to give to the cause, which is why she was threatened with heraldic consequences:

It is desyred that the Wardens shall speke to my lady Stokton as for the Sylling of the Halle, and if she will not fynysse it than it is agreed to haue it made uppe the costes of the boxe and that no Armes nor bages to be sett upp but oonly the Armes of oure Craft &c.³⁵⁵

It seems that the mercers hoped to persuade Stokton’s widow by threatening to bar her husband from being commemorated as a contributor to the guild’s corporate space. After all, such commemoration was meant to ease the fate of the deceased’s soul in purgatory, an aim Katherine ought to have been concerned about. Perhaps the mercers’ insistence on their own, corporate arms being set up instead further suggests that the presence of Stokton’s heraldic signs on a ceiling for whose construction he had not actually paid was perceived to risk an inaccurate depiction of the ceiling’s patronage.

³⁵¹ Stow, *Survey*, I, p. 194.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 194.

³⁵⁴ Lyell and Watney, *Mercers’ Court Acts*, pp. 77, 81, 99–100.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Similar concerns surfaced in Nuremberg, where merchant Endres Zeringer in 1463 was permitted to attach a crucifix to the city's first ever stone bridge. However, permission was only given under the explicit condition 'that he does not affix any shield to it'.³⁵⁶ Needless to say, Endres Zeringer did not adhere to the council's condition and attached his family's arms to the donated crucifix, prompting the council to demand the shield be removed. But the offender was not in a hurry to follow the council's orders. It was further recorded that 'the arms remained there for quite a while, for the Zeringer did not remove them'.³⁵⁷ His desire for heraldic self-representation appears to have been strong enough to ignore the explicit prohibition of adding a heraldic sign to the donation, and to delay the removal of the arms for as long as possible. Eventually, the arms were 'painted over' and thus erased, although it remained unclear whether Endres Zeringer had done so himself, or whether a third party had engaged in an act of 'heraldoclasm'. It appears that potential misinterpretations of this sign were the reason for the council's concern.³⁵⁸ The bridge had been built and paid for by the city, yet the crucifix with the Zeringer arms might have been understood to indicate this particular townsman's patronage over the entire bridge.

A case from Augsburg demonstrates that power games of influential and affluent townsmen might also result in the prohibition of heraldic display as a means of communicating claims to patronage. Another element of Jacob Fugger's strategies of heraldic self-representation was meant to be the hall of the city's tavern society, a timocratic association in which the families of the established Augsburg patriciate mingled and match-made with a select few families of non-patrician, mercantile or craft background.³⁵⁹ Jacob Fugger offered to rebuild the hall at his own expense, but members of the society outright refused this generous offer, apparently, a draft copy of the Fugger

³⁵⁶ Endres Tucher, *Baumeisterbuch der Stadt Nürnberg (1464–1475)*, ed. by Friedrich von Weech and Matthias Lexer (Stuttgart, 1862), p. 202.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ Cf. Wolfgang von Stromer, 'Die Zeringer: Steirisch-Nürnberger innovatorische Montanunternehmer und Fernhändler im 15. Jahrhundert', in Herwig Ebner (ed.), *Festschrift Othmar Pickl zum 60. Geburtstag* (Graz; Vienna, 1987), p. 613.

³⁵⁹ Rolf Kießling, 'Das Augsburger Bürgertum im 15. Jahrhundert: Ein Versuch zur Bestimmung spezifischer Verhaltensweisen gegenüber der Kirche und ihrem Wertsystem', in Karl Bosl (ed.), *Die mittelalterliche Stadt in Bayern* (Munich, 1974), pp. 165–166; Karl Bosl, *Die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung des Augsburger Bürgertums vom 10. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1969).

family's *Ehrenbuch* claimed, because Jacob Fugger had tied his monetary support to the condition that 'the Fugger arms of the lily be displayed there in gratitude and for the honour of the Fuggerian name'.³⁶⁰ Although the Fugger family had recently been admitted to the tavern society due to their financial status and their marriages within the established elite of Augsburg,³⁶¹ the presence of the arms in their communal space appears to have been deemed inappropriate. Although ambitious climbers on Augsburg's social ladder, the Fugger family was still disparaged by the more established families of the city, and they might have seen the Fuggers' attempt to add their arms to the society's communal space as a step too far.³⁶²

Finally, the function of heraldic communication for the expression of patronage also becomes apparent in religiously motivated objections to heraldic display in urban churches. Criticisms of preachers, scholars, and even concerned urban governments in Germany equated the display of heraldry as such with sinful vanity, arguing that the heraldic expression of status and patronage might not have been a convenient side effect of heraldic *memoria*, but in fact its tacit end.³⁶³ The Dominican preacher Johannes Tauler (c. 1260–1328) is said to have addressed an audience in Cologne with the observation:

If you wish to see that many people crave nothing more than their own praise and honour, look at what they do: they furnish the churches with windows, vestments and altars, and mark them with their arms and names so that their generosity may be seen by everyone.³⁶⁴

He accused donors of stained glass, altars and vestments of having ulterior motives, claiming 'they want people to know [of their generosity], which is why they mark them with shields so that all people can see'.³⁶⁵ In 1469, similar opinions on heraldry in churches may have moved Johannes Philippi, vicar general of the Franciscans, upon his

³⁶⁰ Johann Jakob Fugger and Clemens Jäger, *Das Ehrenbuch der Fugger*, ed. by Gregor Rohmann and Jörg Breu (Augsburg, 2004), II, p. 175.

³⁶¹ Häberlein, *Fugger*, p. 34.

³⁶² See also Scheller, *Memoria*, p. 37.

³⁶³ See also Marcus Meer, 'Heraldry Is Vanity! Moral Criticism of Heraldic Commemoration in Germany – A European Phenomenon?', *Heraldica Nova*, 2018, <<https://heraldica.hypotheses.org/6122>>; Luisa Clotilde Gentile, "Ambitiosa decorandi arrogantia": La querelle sur l'usage des armoiries dans la pensée religieuse italienne entre Moyen Âge et Âge Moderne', in International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences (ed.), *La place de la généalogie et de l'héraldique en ces temps de mutations [CD-ROM]* (Dublin, 2002).

³⁶⁴ Alfred Peltzer, *Deutsche Mystik und deutsche Kunst* (Strasbourg, 1899), p. 91.

³⁶⁵ Johannes Tauler, *Die Predigten aus der Engelberger und der Freiburger Handschrift sowie aus Schmidts Abschriften der ehemaligen Strassburger Handschriften*, ed. by Ferdinand Vetter (Hildesheim, 1910), p. 185.

visitation of their convent in Nuremberg. He ordained that the arms of donors were to be removed from all liturgical vestments in the city, although without long-lasting effect.³⁶⁶

At about the same time, and equally futile, the council of the city similarly objected to the uncontrolled growth of funerary hatchments in Nuremberg's churches. Hence, it was forbidden 'to engrave, affix, or paint any shields, signs or plates' inside the city's main churches and chapels, 'and neither may there be shields or signs on any tombstones' without the knowledge and consent of a church custodian.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, in order to 'suppress haughtiness, pomposity, and squandering', the council declared that 'memorial shields and stained glass' ought not cost more than three guildens in total, since previously 'the size and splendour of memorial shields in the churches caused bountiful copiousness', whose 'costly vanity' was believed to contradict the common weal and the proper praise of God.³⁶⁸ Given that the *Ehrenbuch* of the Fugger family, for instance, openly spoke of arms displayed for the purpose of patronage and 'for the honour' of the family, this accusation was, perhaps, not that far-fetched.

2.7 Conclusion: Constructing and Contesting Signs of Honour

While the early modern period witnessed attempts to control and restrict the use of heraldry in society, in the later Middle Ages there was nothing yet to keep townspeople from assuming and using heraldic signs. The 'law of arms' was at least ambiguous or, at the most, ill enforced. Thus, any claims of historians that suggested heraldry to have been restricted to the nobility and controlled by strict heraldic authorities appear to reflect early modern developments and modern mind-sets rather than late medieval reality. In fact, if necessary, contemporary townsmen showed a remarkable aptitude for dealing with heraldic matters in their own, urban institutions.

But although heraldry was not yet a prerogative of the nobility, there existed a widespread perception that saw arms as 'tokens of noblesse', albeit in the sense of personal qualities rather than legal status, and the burgesses of late medieval cities were

³⁶⁶ See Collegii S. Bonaventurae (ed.), *Analecta Franciscana sive chronica allaque varia documenta ad historiam Fratrum Minorum spectantia* (Ad Claras Aquas/Quaracchi, 1887), II, pp. 440-441.

³⁶⁷ Baader, *Polizeiordnungen*, p. 114.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

no exception, as this chapter has shown. Here, heraldic signs were perceived and consciously constructed as connoting key aspects of medieval identity, particularly a sense of honour derived from claims to a long lineage, martial prowess, and good conduct.

In both England and Germany, this perception is echoed by the rhetoric of grants, confirmations, and augmentations of arms. These texts presented heraldic signs as representations of honour and other key components of burgher identity, allowing the documents and the signs they conferred to become part of strategies of self-aggrandisement meant to acknowledge or increase claimed symbolic capital. The pursuit of such documents by 'upstarts' keen to improve and assert their status is particularly indicative, as it underlines the efficacy attributed to heraldic signs as a means of social distinction, especially when authorised and thus recognised by an authority. In decided opposition to such strategies, and yet with similar assumptions about the semantic dimensions of heraldic signs, the 'family books' of German patricians located the origin of their arms in the early days of their history, eager to distinguish their 'ancient' lineage evidenced by their 'ancient' arms from 'new' families and their 'new' arms. Not all arms were created equal, they suggested, and just as different citizens commanded or claimed different degrees of honour, so did their heraldic representations. And while English burghers did not produce similarly expressive documents, comparable associations of arms with honour and virtue, history and genealogy still resonated throughout the chronicles, stories, and romances they read.

This pride of place late medieval burghers accorded to their heraldic signs also included merchant marks, which have often been disregarded as an inferior sign system quickly abandoned for 'proper' heraldry. In the light of this chapter, it seems highly doubtful that marks were simply the result of 'disavowals of the heraldic system', 'the invention of alternative signs and the appropriation of a disjointed heraldic lexicon', as Vance Smith believes, for example.³⁶⁹ On the contrary, townspeople liberally and elaborately combined and conjoined marks and arms without definitive preference for one or the other as a matter of course and tradition, unhindered by any heraldic

³⁶⁹ D. Vance Smith, *Arts of Possession: The Middle English Household Imaginary* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. 94.

authority or the nobility. In the late medieval city, marks in fact became part of a specifically urban dialect of heraldry.

The significance late medieval burgesses placed on their arms as signs of their identity—whether in the form of heraldicised marks or ‘proper’ arms—is not least demonstrated by their ubiquitous display in spaces vital to burgess self-representation. In the domestic space of the town house, arms—displayed on stone carvings, stained glass, wall paintings, wooden furniture, silverware, embroidered tapestries, and cushions—demarcated the home of the burgess family and assured guests as well as the residents themselves of their honour and lineage. For the same purpose, the lavish decorations of urban funeral rituals relied on heraldic signs displayed on shields, flags, and hearse cloths. They attested to the deceased’s status in life, just as heraldry played a key role during the performance of the liturgical service to indicate the continuity of the genealogical body even after death. This sentiment becomes even more so tangible in the context of commemorative strategies in churches, town halls, guild halls, and other public places. Citizens added arms to tombstones and brasses, windows, tapestries, liturgical vestments and silverware to preserve their status and indicate their patronage. At the same time, heraldic signs were meant to serve as a ‘remembrance’ or *gedechtnus* attracting pious prayer for the deceased.

In turn, the display of burgess arms in places so firmly associated with burgess identity further reinforced the mental association of these signs with their respective owners. This association included, on the one hand, the denotative identification of the signs with the families inhabiting the domestic space of town houses, the bodies of deceased citizens proceeding through the streets of the city, or the monuments recalling their names in the urban churches, for instance. On the other hand, the wider, connotative sense of identity staged by means of houses, funerals, and churches, became associated with the heraldic signs displayed in these contexts, too.

In all of these contexts the arms of late medieval citizens seldom featured in isolation. Instead, they were frequently accompanied by heraldic signs of other individuals and collectives from within and outside the city, visualising social relations similarly important to the burgess sense of identity. Collections of burgess arms in German ‘armorials’ visualised the networks of the urban elite within which the authors

wished to locate themselves (and tried to distinguish themselves) by means of heraldry. In both German and English cities, town houses and places of commemoration often incorporated the arms of spouses and relatives in a similar manner, especially if they were drawn from the lesser nobility or gentry: they rendered visible the honour and thus social status derived from important and extensive genealogical links in past and present. Similarly, arms of kings, princes, and local lords visualised (or at least suggested) ties to the *potentates* of the region or the realm at large, expressing allegiances and sympathies meant to showcase social distinction, and ensuring protection.

While English townsmen alluded to distinguished ancestors, living relatives, and non-urban entities as well, here the heraldic presence of collective bodies—guilds and the cities—was particularly common and indicative of the importance attributed to belonging to collective bodies. ‘Membership of a guild’, as Rosser argues, ‘was an assurance of credit and status in society’,³⁷⁰ and guild arms, displayed next to or combined with a guildsman’s own heraldic sign, communicated this claim to status in life and death. In conjunction with the lack of family books in England, this prominence of corporate and communal arms may suggest that English townspeople were more orientated towards collective bodies due to an oft-alleged absence of urban ‘dynasties’,³⁷¹ which would otherwise have subsumed the individual’s sense of belonging to a specific genealogical body. In contrast, the family books, town houses, and commemorative displays of German townsmen showed no interest in corporate heraldry, although that is not to say that guild arms did not feature in other contexts that saw the guild act as a whole, as the next chapter will show.

But notions of English exceptionalism in heraldic matters ought not to be overemphasised, as Mervyn James does when noting that ‘[a] long-established urban aristocracy, adopting the symbols and styles of the lineage and honour culture of the gentry and nobility did not develop in late medieval English towns’, for instance.³⁷² James is certainly aware of the fact that heraldic signs cannot be counted among the

³⁷⁰ Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England 1250–1550* (Oxford, 2015), p. 87.

³⁷¹ See above, p. 23.

³⁷² James, ‘Honour’, p. 19, n. 58.

symbols of the gentry and nobility that were generally unavailable to English burgesses, but he suggests that if ever there was something like an English urban nobility, ‘the armorial bearings which went with it, arose out of urban office’.³⁷³ However, whereas John Randolph, Peter Pekham, and Nicholas Mattock, for example, all obtained a grant of arms, they do not appear to have held higher offices. Likewise, not every office holder felt the need to possess ‘proper’ arms visually reminiscent of those borne by the nobility: London mayor Stephen Forster as well as his counterpart in York, William Todd, were quite content with a heraldicised mark, their mayoralty notwithstanding. Only an extensive prosopographic study of heraldry in the late medieval city could illuminate Mervyn’s conjecture and the larger question of heraldry’s social proliferation, and the same applies to Germany. Certainly, at least within the English urban elite, there existed a fascination with notions of nobility, chivalry, honour, and lineage comparable to that of their German counterparts,³⁷⁴ as this chapter has demonstrated with regard to heraldry.

These perceptions and functions of burgesse arms as a means of visual communication are further underlined by reactions and conflicts prompted by the display of burgesse heraldry: challenges to the presence of arms because they were perceived to communicate inaccurate or problematic claims to patronage—as in the case of John Stokton in London—show precisely the ability of heraldry to communicate claims to patronage; criticism or even ordinances against the assumption and exhibition of arms due to accusations of vain self-aggrandisement that threatened social order—as in Nuremberg—point to their efficacy in communicating status and pre-eminence; an attack on heraldic signs displayed on the town house in order to challenge the honour of the bearer testifies to the link of heraldry and honour in the perception of medieval townspeople.

Finally, this emotional investment in heraldic signs—especially those displayed in the context of the family home—was also expressed by heraldically communicated attacks on the honour of house owners. In Augsburg, punishment by removal of

³⁷³ Mervyn James, ‘Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town’, *Past and Present*, 98 (1983), p. 19, n. 58.

³⁷⁴ See also Barron, ‘Merchant Culture’; Coss, ‘Deference’, p. 71.

armorial bearings was employed to shame tax evaders in 1477: ‘The arms of those [...] who had not paid taxes appropriate to their assets ought to be ripped off’.³⁷⁵ Similarly, in 1462, after Jacob and Sigismund von Argon had fallen out with the emperor, an imperial representative was ordered to seize their properties and possessions, first and foremost the family’s house: ‘He sold all he could find, placing the arms of the Emperor above that of the Argon.’³⁷⁶ Although comparable cases do not survive from English cities, the same sentiment was still literarily echoed in a complaint of the later Henry IV in Shakespeare’s *King Richard II*:

From my own windows torn my household coat,
Rased out my imprese, leaving me no sign
Save men’s opinions and my living blood
To show the world I am a gentleman.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Marcus Welser and Achilles Pirmin Gasser, *Chronica der weitberuempten keyserlichen freyen vnd deß H. Reichs Statt Augspurg in Schwaben* (Frankfurt [Main], 1595), II, p. 233.

³⁷⁶ CDS 22, p. 513.

³⁷⁷ William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, ed. by Charles R. Forker (London; New York, 2002), p. 312.

3 Guilds: Emblazoning ‘Worshipful’ and ‘Noble’ Corporations

Just as townspeople cultivated a sense of family identity which placed a particular emphasis on the concept of honour, so they often derived a sense of collective identity and honour from their membership of urban guilds.¹ In both England and Germany, these associations also showed a conspicuous concern with honour on a corporate level, revolving around professional, religious, and social norms meant to guide each member’s behaviour towards the guilds’ core values of unity, solidarity and continuity. After all, the honour of the individual member was seen in a reciprocal relationship with that of the guild as a whole.²

Where work-related aspects such as the regulation of practices and prices of crafts were at the heart of the corporation’s *raison d’être*, this collective honour was also derived from skilful labour and traditional craftsmanship as ‘the most genuinely urban values’ of the Middle Ages.³ Gervase Rosser further states that ‘devotional and charitable activities of the guilds also reflected honour upon their members’, which involved collective celebrations of mass and patron saints, dedications of guild chapels,

¹ ‘Guild’, in this chapter, is understood as a corporation bound by oath in the widest possible sense. It does not attempt to untangle the differing and often intersecting pre-occupations of individual ‘guilds’ as professional associations of merchants and craftsmen, primarily social and religious ‘fraternities’, and homonymous corporate bodies with explicit political functions that—*de facto* or *de iure*—exercised power in the urban government. On the difficulties of functional and terminological distinctions, see also Franz Irsigler, ‘Zur Problematik der Gilde- und Zunftterminologie’, in Berent Schweineköper (ed.), *Gilden und Zünfte: Kaufmännische und gewerbliche Genossenschaften im frühen und hohen Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1985).

² Gervase Rosser, ‘Guilds and Confraternities: Architects of Unnatural Community’, in Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (eds), *De Bono Communi: The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City* (Turnhout, 2010); Gervase Rosser, ‘Finding Oneself in a Medieval Fraternity: Individual and Collective Identities in the English Guilds’, in Monika Escher-Apsner (ed.), *Mittelalterliche Bruderschaften in Europäischen Städten/Medieval Confraternities in European Towns* (Frankfurt [Main], 2009); Miri Rubin, ‘Small Groups, Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages’, in Jenny Kermode (ed.), *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991); Marcel Korge, *Der gute Ruf des Handwerks: Normative Ehrvorstellungen und soziale Praxis in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Das Beispiel der Leipziger Schneider- und Goldschmiedeinnung (1470–1730)* (Magdeburg, 2010), esp. pp. 142–143; Hans-Ulrich Thamer, ‘Handwerksehre und Handwerkerstolz’, in Paul Hugger (ed.), *Handwerk zwischen Idealbild und Wirklichkeit: Kultur- und sozialgeschichtliche Beiträge* (Bern, 1991).

³ Isenmann, ‘Norms and Values’, p. 188. See also Antony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (Ithaca, 1984), esp. pp. 15–16.

festive burials of deceased members and their solemn commemoration, as well as care for the sick and poor in the pursuit of Christian piety.⁴ At the same time, late medieval guilds cherished martial and chivalric ideals, taking an active interest in the defence of their city and their accomplishments as knight-like warriors.⁵ In general, guilds conceptualised their corporate sense of honour along popular notions of honourable and chivalric conduct, notably, as Sylvia Thrupp observes, ‘qualities of dignity, decency, and courtesy’, which were part of what Rosser calls ‘an aspiration to respectability’.⁶ An important aspect of this aspiration was the regulation of speech and behaviour meant to enforce ‘proper’ (*zünftig*) conduct of members appropriate to the honour of the guild, often also with regard to ‘honourable’ descent, especially to birth in wedlock.⁷

Written records codified these corporate norms and values, thus becoming ‘expressions of identity, tradition and community’ in their own right.⁸ Here, each guild was commemorated as ‘an important, old, and honourable institution’ (*eine wichtige, alte und ehrwürdige Einrichtung*), distinguished throughout its history by royal and

⁴ Rosser, ‘Medieval Fraternity’, p. 37. See also Monika Escher-Apsner, ‘*Dedes of charyte and to the commewelth*: Bruderschaften und ihre baulichen und karitativen Beiträge zur *utilitas communis*’, in Monika Escher-Apsner (ed.), *Mittelalterliche Bruderschaften in europäischen Städten/Medieval Confraternities in European Towns* (Frankfurt [Main], 2009); Thomas Schilp, ‘Zunft und Memoria: Überlegungen zur Selbstdeutung von Zünften im mittelalterlichen Westfalen’, in Wilfried Reininghaus (ed.), *Zunftlandschaften in Deutschland und den Niederlanden im Vergleich* (Münster, 2000).

⁵ Sabine von Heusinger, ‘Von “antwerk” bis “zunft”: Methodische Überlegungen zu den Zünften im Mittelalter’, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 37 (2010), p. 39; Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004), p. 232. In Coventry, too, the militia ‘for the preseruacion of the pece withe-in the Cite’ was structured along craft lines, see CLB, pp. 244–252.

⁶ Sylvia L. Thrupp, ‘Medieval Gilds Reconsidered’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 2 (1942), p. 172; Rosser, ‘Crafts’, p. 10.

⁷ Benjamin R. McRee, ‘Religious Gilds and Regulation of Behaviour in Late Medieval Towns’, in Joel Thomas Rosenthal and Colin F. Richmond (eds), *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages* (Gloucester; New York, 1987); Knut Schulz, ‘Geburt, Herkunft und Integrität: Zur Handwerksehre vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert’, in Elizabeth Harding and Michael Hecht (eds), *Die Ahnenprobe in der Vormoderne: Selektion, Initiation, Repräsentation* (Münster, 2011); Knut Schulz, ‘Die Norm der Ehelichkeit im Zunft- und Bürgerrecht spätmittelalterlicher Städte’, in Béatrice Wiggenhauser and Ludwig Schmugge (eds), *Illegitimität im Spätmittelalter* (Munich, 1994).

⁸ Matthew Davies, ‘“Wrytyng, Making and Engrocyng”: Clerks, Guilds and Identity in Late Medieval London’, in Martin Allen (ed.), *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton* (London, 2016), p. 22.

princely benefactions such as royal charters and their involvement in decisive battles.⁹ Such ‘stories’ were also perpetuated by more material reminders of the past, notably ‘plate, books, relics, pictures, eating utensils, hangings, and costly liturgical vessels’ displayed in the guilds’ halls as spaces constitutive of and dedicated to their collective identity.¹⁰ In this setting, rituals feasts fostered a sense of togetherness,¹¹ just as the guilds’ participation in public rituals provided a stage on which their distinct collective identities—with all their professional, political, and religious components—‘were constructed, contested, and complicated year in and year out by their performance’.¹²

In these contexts, Rosser adds, outward markers of ‘altered identity’ such as ‘hoods, gowns and badges’ had an important part to play: they served as visual expressions of membership, employed ‘to convey the sense of shared identity within the guilds’.¹³ In the same vein, Arie van Steensel points to the particular significance of corporate heraldic signs, which alongside constitutive charters expressed ‘the guilds’ autonomy and identity, and therefore had important symbolic value’.¹⁴ Regrettably, neither explores the relation of corporate heraldry and collective identity of medieval

⁹ Helmut Bräuer, ‘Das Bild des Handwerks und der Zunft in der obersächsisch-lausitzischen Städtechronistik des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts’, in Peter Johaneck (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2000), p. 278.

¹⁰ Rubin, ‘Small Groups’, p. 138. See also Andreas Tacke, Birgit Ulrike Münch and Wolfgang Augustyn (eds), *Material Culture: Präsenz und Sichtbarkeit von Künstlern, Zünften und Bruderschaften in der Vormoderne/Presence and Visibility of Artists, Guilds and Brotherhoods in the Pre-Modern Era* (Petersberg, 2018).

¹¹ Gervase Rosser, ‘Going to the Fraternity Feast: Commensality and Social Relations in Late Medieval England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 33 (1994); Otto Gerhard Oexle, ‘Die mittelalterlichen Gilden: Ihre Selbstdeutung und ihr Beitrag zur Formung sozialer Strukturen’, in Gudrun Vuillemin-Diem and Albert Zimmermann (eds), *Soziale Ordnungen im Selbstverständnis des Mittelalters* (Berlin; New York, 1979), I, pp. 212–216.

¹² Christina M. Fitzgerald, *The Drama of Masculinity and Medieval English Guild Culture* (New York; Basingstoke, 2007), p. 7.

¹³ Rosser, *Solidarity*, pp. 66, 126.

¹⁴ Arie van Steensel, ‘Guilds and Politics in Medieval Urban Europe: Towards a Comparative Institutional Analysis’, in Eva Jullien and Michel Pauly (eds), *Craftsmen and Guilds in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Stuttgart, 2016), p. 53. See also Wilfried Reininghaus, ‘Sachgut und handwerkliche Gruppenkultur: Neue Fragen an die “Zunftaltertümer”’, in Otto Gerhard Oexle and Andrea von Hülsen-Esch (eds), *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen: Texte – Bilder – Objekte* (Göttingen, 1998), esp. p. 454; Péter Nagybakay, ‘Historischer Quellenwert der Zunftgegenstände: Internationale Zusammenhänge zwischen den Zunftzeichen’, in Péter Nagybakay and Gábor Németh (eds), *Internationales Handwerksgeschichtliches Symposium Veszprém (1978)* (Veszprém, 1979), esp. pp. 89–90.

guilds beyond these brief remarks.

This chapter will explore the contemporary perceptions and specific functions of corporate arms in the life of late medieval guilds in more detail. In the context of English grants of arms and German guild records, the first section will explore how corporate heraldry was related to norms and values constitutive of guild identity. Here, corporate arms were fashioned as representations of collective honour meant to underline social distinction, and expected to strengthen a sense of unity within the occasionally divided corporate body. In this capacity, the second section will show, corporate arms were a ubiquitous visual element of guild halls, where they contributed to the constitution of the hall as a distinct corporate space promoting social cohesion among the guildsmen. Even more so than halls, the third section will argue, their participation in urban rituals allowed for guilds to relate themselves to wider (urban) society. In this process, corporate heraldry played an important part in the visual communication of place and precedence within the urban hierarchy. However, it will also become clear that the display of heraldic communication as a visual marker of identity and unity risked revealing—or even causing—internal divisions and disputes as well, not only within the corporate body of the guild, but in the community of the late medieval city as a whole.

3.1 Grants and Legends: Claiming Pre-Eminence in the City

Like most late medieval townsmen, their guilds normally assumed arms without petitioning a heraldic authority and obtaining an ‘official’ grant of arms. In fact, looking at late medieval England and Germany, it was only the livery companies of London that took the latter route. Still, as was the case for English and German burgesses, an ‘official’ grant issued by a herald promised certain benefits. Firstly, it was a distinction awarded on behalf of the monarch, suggesting a strong and stable relationship with the king. Secondly, alongside a rhetoric laden with allusions to important aspects of corporate identity, grants of arms promised to add to the guilds’ symbolic capital by conferring or confirming their heraldic signs as visual expressions of—and contributions to—their collective honour. For this reason, this section will argue, grants of arms in fifteenth-century London were sought-after weapons in an environment of increased social competition that saw guilds fight over precedence in the urban hierarchy. In Germany,

the situation was somewhat different, as there were no grants of arms in the late medieval period that would allow for similar observations. Still, a ‘myth of arms’ from Augsburg suggests that in German cities there must have existed similar perceptions which equated the heraldic signs of guilds with claims to honour, and thus saw corporate heraldry in an intimate relationship with collective corporate identity. As two case studies from London and Frankfurt will finally demonstrate, in both England and Germany corporate arms were deliberately fashioned as collective symbols meant to promote the unity of the corporate body.

3.1.1 *England: Reassuring Livery Companies under Pressure*

Although guilds in other English cities also used heraldic signs, as the remainder of this chapter will show, unlike their counterparts in London they never sought any ‘official’ authorisation from the heralds. The first grant to a company outside London was only issued in 1564, namely to the weavers and tuckers of Exeter. Still, it featured the same rhetoric of corporate arms given ‘to the honur and wourshippe of their Companye’ that presents itself in late medieval grants to London’s guilds.¹⁵ Here, beginning with the drapers’ grant in 1439, the city saw a steady production of these lavishly decorated documents (fig. 3.1), which eventually slowed down after 1500.¹⁶ As a matter of fact, Anthony Wagner calculates, the London guilds were among the heralds’ best customers, since their corporate grants ‘form a large proportion of the whole output in this formative period of heraldry’.¹⁷ Although in some cases no extant text remains,¹⁸ a total of twenty-four surviving grants of arms suggests that guild arms were seen as outward marks of distinction, serving as visual representations of (corporate) honour.

¹⁵ CA, Original Patents, Impersonal, no. 38. See also Beatrix F. Cresswell, *A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of the City and County of Exeter* (Exeter, 1930), pp. 37–44.

¹⁶ On grants to London’s livery companies, see John Bromley and Heather Child, *The Armorial Bearings of the Guilds of London: A Record of the Heraldry of the Surviving Companies with Historical Notes* (London; New York, 1960); Colin, ‘Devises of Arms during the Fifteenth Century’, *The Coat of Arms*, 4 (1956); Nichols, *Herald*, 1, pp. 120–124.

¹⁷ Anthony Wagner, ‘Foreword’, in John Bromley and Heather Child, *The Armorial Bearings of the Guilds of London: A Record of the Heraldry of the Surviving Companies with Historical Notes* (London; New York, 1960), p. viii.

¹⁸ Circumstantial evidence in the form of later references to earlier grants exists for the vintners (1447), broderers (1485–1509), blacksmiths (1490), surgeons (1492), stockfishmongers (1494), cooks (1464), freemen (1466 and again 1520), and cutlers (1486).



Fig. 3.1: Grant of arms to the tallow-chandlers of London by John Smert, Garter King of Arms, from 1456.

The rationale of the 1451 grant to the barbers' guild, for example, considered 'the noble estate of the Cite of London by the name of Erle & Barons', subsequently singling out 'the craft of Barbouris' as of particularly 'gode disposition'.¹⁹ Similarly, the 1480 grant to the tailors described the guild as a 'laudable and right honourable craft' due to its 'good and commendable, virtuous, discreet, and honourable persons', thus echoing the guilds' general concern with proper behaviour of their members.²⁰ The tailors' grant continued that the craft 'hath continued without reproach in honour and noblesse out of time of mind'.²¹ Time and time again, the grants to London companies explained in their preamble that arms were granted upon the petition of 'worshipfull & well-disposed persons',²² as in the case of the greytawyers in 1476, or, in similar words, the ironmongers in 1455.²³ Grants to brewers (1464), carpenters (1466), fletchers (1467), and masons (1472) even formulistically explained that their members excelled 'in suche

¹⁹ Joseph Jackson Howard (ed.), *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* (London, 1868), I, p. 11.

²⁰ Clode, *Merchant Taylors*, p. 97.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² CA, *Miscellaneous Grants* 2, fol. 199r.

²³ CA, *Old Grants* O, fol. 15r-v.

laudable manners and fourme as may best sounde unto Genterye by the which they shall move with goddes Grace atteyne unto honoure'.²⁴ The grant issued to the upholders in 1465 struck a similar note, arguing that among 'many Persons [...] purposing to exercise virtuous condicions and manners', the upholders were 'in especial entending to alle Gentilnesse', whereby they were deemed worthy of being granted arms 'considering the gode disposition of the said Craft'.²⁵

Strikingly, sometimes grants to London guilds did not just emphasise an abstract *nobilitas virtutum* to justify claims to 'honour' and 'noblesse' through qualities such as *industria* and *ingenia*, which would be expected to resonate in a social environment that valued work as a virtue. Rather, several grants also framed the guilds' achievements in terms of a *nobilitas carnis* their members supposedly possessed.²⁶ Grants issued to waxchandlers (1485), painters (1486), bowyers (1488), and weavers (1490) thus described these London guilds—which were notably *not* counted among the 'Great Twelve' formally set out in 1515²⁷—as 'linially descended from noble blood', a claim from which then their alleged excellence in 'honour' and 'noblesse' was deduced.²⁸ These inherited qualities, the grants suggested, inspired 'laudable' conduct, and as a reward, arms were granted for the explicit 'preferment and encesse thereof to honeur and nobles'.²⁹

The drapers' grant had similarly stressed that the craft was 'striving to ever increase all that may conduce to the honour of the said Mystery', and suggested that, in this effort, its members were keen to obtain a heraldic sign 'as their dignity requires'.³⁰ In the same vein, the grant to the coopers in 1509 underlined its function as a reward

²⁴ CA, Miscellaneous Grants 1, fol. 79v (brewers). See also Edward Basil Jupp, *An Historical Account of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters of the City of London* (London, 1848), pp. 10–11 (carpenters); CA, OG 2, fol. 208r (fletchers); BL, Add. 19135 (masons).

²⁵ CA, C 24.2, fol. 381r.

²⁶ On contested concepts of nobility in the later Middle Ages, see Maurice Keen, 'Some Late Medieval Ideas about Nobility', in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996); Volker Honemann, 'Aspekte des "Tugendadels" im europäischen Spätmittelalter', in Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (eds), *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit* (Stuttgart, 1984).

²⁷ LMA, COL/CA/01/01/003, fol. 66v.

²⁸ CA, OG 1, fol. 246r (waxchandlers). See also Misc. Grants 6, fol. 72v (painters); Misc. Grants 6, fol. 72v (painters); Misc. Grants 5, fol. 25r (bowyers).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ A. H. Johnson, *The History of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London Preceded by an Introduction on London and Her Gilds up to the Close of the XVth Century* (Oxford, 1914), I, p. 223.

for exemplary conduct of the craft: after an ‘invocation of equity and reason as the twin sponsors of social distinction’, which Cheesman identifies as a common element of late medieval and early modern grants of arms,³¹ the document explained ‘that vertuose men & of honest occupation [should] bee by their merit remunered & rewarded in this Worlde’.³² Again, it was implied that a heraldic sign was an appropriate means to do so, thus constructing a close relation between heraldic signs on the one, and desirable corporate qualities of ‘honour’ and ‘noblesse’ on the other side. Both grants given to the haberdashers stated that the arms were awarded ‘for the honour’ of the craft,³³ just as the leathersellers received their heraldic sign ‘to have and to hold for evermore to their honor’.³⁴ The grant to the merchant tailors made this relation even more explicit, as it explained that the arms had been ‘devised, ordained, and granted [...] in sign and token of noblesse’.³⁵

Grants to weavers and bowyers furthermore stressed that the arms were given ‘for evermore to have and to hold’.³⁶ As was the case for individual grantees, the qualities of ‘honour’ and ‘noblesse’, which were to be represented and increased by means of the grants, were also meant to be preserved for the future; ‘to be hadde & contynued to Have’ in the words of the grants to the haberdashers.³⁷ After all, just as the genealogical body of the burgess family, urban corporate bodies were meant to exist in perpetuity, and so their arms were granted with explicit future use by ‘their successours’ in mind,³⁸ ‘for evermore to their honor’,³⁹ to ‘the great Honour and Worship that hereafter may fall to them’,⁴⁰ and ‘to remain to the said honourable Mystery as a perpetual memorial’.⁴¹

However, this emphasis on the future might, in fact, betray the guilds’ anxiety

³¹ Cheesman, ‘Grants and Confirmations’, p. 80.

³² CA, OG 2, fol. 56. See also the grant to the clothworkers in 1530, Howard, *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, II, p. 173.

³³ CA, OG 2, pp. 125 (1446), 126 (1503).

³⁴ CA, Misc. Grants 1, fol. 50v.

³⁵ Clode, *Merchant Tailors*, p. 97.

³⁶ CA, Misc. Grants 5, fol. 25r (bowyers). See also BL, Add. 12225, fol. 116r (weavers).

³⁷ CA, OG 2, p. 125.

³⁸ CA, Old Grants O, fol. 15r–v.

³⁹ CA, Misc. Grants 1, fol. 50v.

⁴⁰ CA, C 24.2, fol. 381r.

⁴¹ Johnson, *Drapers*, I, p. 223.

about their continued existence. Just like the pursuit of grants of arms by townsmen was part of more extensive efforts of increasing symbolic capital, so the heraldic desire of London's guilds was situated in a specific historical context that saw the corporations enter into a harsh competition for social status. Since the fourteenth century and increasingly so throughout the fifteenth century, many guilds sought written ratification of their ordinances from the court of aldermen, and often they also applied for a royal charter.⁴² Of course, such documents 'secured for the companies rights that were important: legal incorporation, a common livery, power to hold assemblies and elect officers [...] and carry out rights of search, the right to make ordinances and to hold land'.⁴³ But they also possessed an important symbolic dimension as confirmations of the guilds' integrity and identity. For this reason, as Malcolm Richardson observes, 'in the oldest surviving record books of the London companies, the royal charter usually has pride of place, following the obligatory religious texts'.⁴⁴ At the same time, some guilds quarrelled over their precedence in civic processions, where the place in the ephemeral space of the ritual was equated with the place in the urban hierarchy. Such animosities arose between the skimmers and tailors, for example, and ultimately required the mayor's arbitration in 1484.⁴⁵

This increased concern with such symbolic matters might have been prompted by the economic insecurity of the 'mid-fifteenth-century slump', when 'towns must have suffered appreciably as trading conditions worsened'.⁴⁶ From the 1470s onward, London in particular furthermore felt the negative effects of continued population growth: while elsewhere population numbers declined, here a surplus of labour increased competition between the city's craftsmen, contributing to a sense of crisis that increased the need

⁴² Barron, *London*, pp. 208–210.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁴ Richardson, *London Writing*, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Matthew P. Davies, 'Artisans, Guilds and Government in London', in Richard H. Britnell (ed.), *Daily Life in the Late Middle Ages* (Stroud, 1998), p. 143. For similar conflicts, see also Barbara Hanawalt, *Ceremony and Civility: Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (New York, 2017), pp. 118–120.

⁴⁶ John Hatcher, 'The Great Slump of the Mid-Fifteenth Century', in Richard H. Britnell and John Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 266.

for collective reassurance among the guilds.⁴⁷ Anne Sutton, for instance, notes how fifteenth-century mercers were beset by the same ‘economic problems for everyone’,⁴⁸ just as Pamela Nightingale paints a bleak picture of the impact the contemporary economy had on the grocers’ guild: ‘in 1444 what concerned the Company was preserving its own strength and unity to protect its trade’.⁴⁹ Frances Consitt had earlier characterised the fate of the weavers along the same lines, stating that they, ‘though preserving their association, passed through an extremely critical period in the fifteenth century’.⁵⁰

The impact of economic decline and population growth on the prosperity of London’s livery companies can explain ‘the prickly conflicts over social precedence between the crafts’ that marked the fifteenth century.⁵¹ In this context, the enthusiasm for grants of arms—with their emphasis on the guilds’ honour and the expectation of its future continuity—can be understood as more than just ‘extra glamour [...] to embellish their new corporate status’.⁵² Admittedly, not all London companies affected by this fifteenth-century decline pursued a grant of arms. Although the goldsmiths, for instance, also suffered from ‘fifteenth-century problems’,⁵³ received a royal charter in 1327, and otherwise proudly displayed their heraldic sign,⁵⁴ they did not obtain a grant of arms until 1571.⁵⁵ Still, in many cases, grants of arms and the heraldic signs they conferred or confirmed were gladly paid for—winning and dining Garter King of Arms and obtaining a grant of arms cost the drapers a total of four pounds, eighteen shillings, and two pennies, for instance.⁵⁶ Amid a climate of decline, these documents and the

⁴⁷ Richard H. Britnell, ‘The English Economy and the Government, 1450–1550’, in John Watts (ed.), *The End of the Middle Ages?* (Stroud, 1998), p. 95.

⁴⁸ Anne F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130–1578* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 235.

⁴⁹ Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers’ Company & the Politics & Trade of London; 1000–1485* (New Haven [Conn.], 1995), p. 461.

⁵⁰ Frances Consitt, *The London Weavers’ Company* (Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 105.

⁵¹ Christian D. Liddy, ‘Cultures of Surveillance in Late Medieval English Towns: The Monitoring of Speech and the Fear of Revolt’, in Justine Firnhaber-Baker and Dirk Schoenard (eds), *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt* (London, 2017), p. 322.

⁵² Barron, *London*, p. 211.

⁵³ Thomas F. Reddaway, *The Early History of the Goldsmiths’ Company, 1327–1509* (London, 1975), ch. 6.

⁵⁴ See below, p. 137.

⁵⁵ CA, C 24.2, fol. 219r.

⁵⁶ A. H. Johnson, *The History of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London Preceded by an Introduction on London and Her Gilds up to the Close of the XVth Century* (Oxford, 1915), II, pp. 336–337.

signs they granted or confirmed promised to increase the symbolic capital of the guild when economic capital was failing by reinforcing the collective identity of the crafts—‘great’ and small—as ‘worshipful’, ‘ancient’, and therefore ‘resilient’ corporate bodies.

3.1.2 *Germany: Myth-Making and the Corporate Past*

In contrast to this colourful picture from London, the absence of corporate grants of arms in late medieval Germany is striking, especially since simultaneously there was a noticeable interest in such documents in other urban parts of the Holy Roman Empire such as Prague, for instance.⁵⁷ But the first ‘proper’ grant of arms to a German guild does not appear before 1535, when Ferdinand I granted arms to the cutlers of the towns of Amberg and Neumarkt ‘to use like other masters, craftsmen, and merchants in other towns’.⁵⁸

Other supposedly late medieval grants of arms to German guilds are usually the result of early modern ‘myth-making’. In the eighteenth century, associations of printers claimed to have received arms from Frederick III in 1450,⁵⁹ and at about the same time barbers believed to have been granted arms by Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia in 1406.⁶⁰ Early modern shoemakers told stories of the fictitious hero Hans von Sagen, whose martial courage was held to have been rewarded with the imperial eagle that shoemaker guilds, in various cities, bore in their arms.⁶¹ The bakers’ guild of Munich similarly believed that their predecessors’ participation in the Battle of Mühldorf (1322) had been rewarded with a grant of arms by Emperor Louis IV,⁶² while the cloth-shearers of Würzburg pursued the origins of their heraldic sign back even further. They claimed to possess a grant of arms issued by Frederick I in 1156/1157, although in reality the

⁵⁷ On (the absence of) grants of arms to German companies and similar Continental examples, see Péter Nagybakay, ‘Über Verleihungen von Zunftwappen, im besonderen an die Wassermüller in Sármedlyék’, *Adler: Zeitschrift für Genealogie und Heraldik*, 13 (1983); Grenser, *Zunftwappen*, pp. 4–5; Siegfried Sieber, ‘Etwas über Zunftsagen, mit Bezugnahme auf das Egerer Fahnen-schwingen’, *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*, 54.1–2 (1915), pp. 53–55.

⁵⁸ Printed in Grenser, *Zunftwappen*, pp. 68–69.

⁵⁹ Gustav A. Seyler, *Berufswappen* (Nuremberg, 1898), pp. 31–33.

⁶⁰ Grenser, *Zunftwappen*, pp. 16–17.

⁶¹ Andreas Griebinger, *Das symbolische Kapital der Ehre: Streikbewegungen und kollektives Bewußtsein deutscher Handwerks-gesellen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt [Main]; Berlin; Vienna, 1981), p. 131.

⁶² Sieber, ‘Zunftsagen’, p. 53.

document had been forged in the late sixteenth century.⁶³ Still, it shared the sentiment of heraldic signs granted in recognition and reflection of the ‘honourable’ and ‘worshipful’ qualities of the craft.⁶⁴

The weavers of Augsburg located the origins of their arms in an even more remote past, and in their case there is reason to believe that similar beliefs already circulated at the end of the Middle Ages. In his *Weavers’ Chronicle* from 1544, the cobbler and chronicler Clemens Jäger traced back the ‘historical’ origins of the craft’s heraldic sign (fig. 3.2) to the decisive victory that King Otto I won over Hungarian tribes at the Battle of Lechfeld in 955. Allegedly, the weavers of Augsburg had taken part in this battle, and in this effort gained ‘their ancient and worshipful shield and arms, which the honourable guild of weavers still rightfully uses today.’⁶⁵ Jäger set out in great detail the chain of events that led to this moment: since the weavers’ guild had shown exemplary unity and bravery, they were able to kill a Hungarian nobleman:

They wrestled from him his arms and his banner for the glory, honour, and dignity of themselves and all their successors in the honourable craft of weavers. As a token of their victory they kept and cherished them, and much praise and honour they received for them.⁶⁶

In Jäger’s chronicle the weavers’ arms thus emerge as a commemorative symbol that called to mind a formative episode of the guild’s (alleged) past. The ‘historical’ narrative related the heraldic sign to crucial aspects of guild identity, namely corporate unity, proven antiquity, chivalric prowess, and loyal service to the king, all of which were supposed to have contributed to overcoming the enemy and finally obtaining their arms.

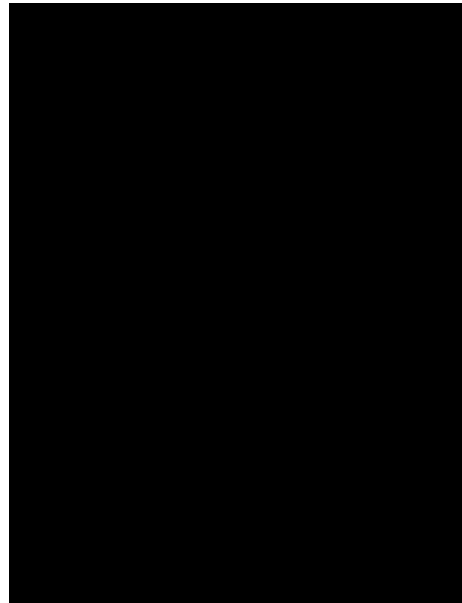


Fig. 3.2: Arms of the Augsburg weavers, depicted in a seventeenth-century chronicle by brewer Georg Siedler. ASSB, *Chroniken* 20.

⁶³ Gustav A. Seyler, ‘Das heraldische Lehensrecht’, *Vierteljahrsschrift für Wappen-, Siegel- und Familienkunde*, 1 (1873), p. 21.

⁶⁴ Printed in Carl Gottfried Scharold, ‘Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Zunftwesens’, *Archiv des historischen Vereins für Unterfranken*, 4.1 (1838), pp. 162–164.

⁶⁵ CDS 34, pp. 42–43.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

The *Weavers' Chronicle* thus created the same connection between 'ancient' heraldry and the 'honourable' identity of the craftsmen's corporate body that featured so prominently in the grants of arms to London companies.

Admittedly, since the avid producer of historical texts Jäger only wrote this particular chronicle in 1544,⁶⁷ it seems possible that he simply attempted to appeal to the guild's sense of honour and heritage. But it seems equally plausible that precisely because Jäger had to cater to the weavers' predilections, he included matters that were non-controversial and established aspects of their 'history'. In fact, the foreword, written from the perspective of the guild's masters, claimed that the contents of the chronicle were compiled from 'any and all old and new writings, contracts, records, and knowledge we have found in our honourable corporation and have inherited from our predecessors'.⁶⁸ The remarkable heraldic story of the *Weavers' Chronicle* may thus well have been the continuation of a late medieval tradition. Certainly, it echoed prevalent late medieval perceptions of heraldic signs as fundamentally historical symbols, and certainly this 'myth' proved to be persistent. In 1601, the weavers' alleged role in the Battle of Lechfeld, their exemplary unity, and their therefore 'well-deserved' conquest of their corporate arms were depicted on the facade of their hall, for instance.⁶⁹

3.1.3 *Uniting and Dividing Craft Guilds*

The *Weavers' Chronicle* of Augsburg emphasised the 'historical' unity of their guild as a core value of their corporate identity and conspicuously related it to their corporate heraldry. But guilds did not just perceive their heraldic signs as representations or reminders of this ideal of unity. Apparently they also expected arms to actively promote social cohesion within their communities. After all, corporate arms were collective signs that demarcated and thereby united a particular social group in opposition to those who were not identified by the sign. Of course, this 'unifying force' of corporate arms—in addition to increasing the symbolic capital of honour—might have been involved in the

⁶⁷ Pius Dirr, 'Clemens Jäger und seine Augsburger Ehrenbücher und Zunftchroniken: Zur Kenntnis der Historiographie des 16. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg*, 36 (1910).

⁶⁸ CDS 34, pp. 39–40.

⁶⁹ Monika Meine-Schawe, 'Die Augsburger Weberstube im Bayerischen Nationalmuseum', *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 46 (1995), pp. 38–39.

pursuit of grants of arms by London guilds faced with economic pressures and external competition that nurtured internal divisions. But the significance that late medieval contemporaries attributed to corporate arms as signs promoting unity becomes most visible in the case of craft unifications.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the London aldermen, for instance, were determined to unite the crafts of fishmongers and stockfishmongers into a single guild, the resistance of some guildsmen notwithstanding.⁷⁰ In signification of the two guilds' new status as a single, united corporation, in 1512 they received an 'official' grant of arms that was to give a visual expression to their new unity and identity. The grant's rationale emphasised the hopes to overcome 'discorde and dissension' between the two crafts in favour of 'the great good vtilitie & profit' that was seen to be determined 'by love vnitie & concord' of the members united in the new guild.⁷¹ In this effort, to have 'but one seale of their armes' was given an important role.⁷² Notably, instead of an altogether new heraldic design, the corporate arms of the united guild combined the dolphins of the fishmongers' established arms with the lucies of the stockfishmongers. This decision might well have been an attempt to demonstrate the equal importance of the two crafts in their newly shared corporate body by ensuring equal visibility of the two predecessor corporations in the form of heraldry. The stockfishmongers were especially keen 'to have their voice heard among the more prosperous and prestigious Fishmongers', as Justin Colson argues,⁷³ and in this effort the preservation of their traditional heraldic sign must have been a welcome way of situating their distinct identity in relation to the larger corporate body, not least because it had originally been adopted in a struggle for independence.

As a matter of fact, the stockfishmongers and fishmongers had been united in a single guild before. The former had separated from this union only a few decades before the two crafts were again merged into a single corporate body in 1512. As Colson's

⁷⁰ Justin Colson, 'Negotiating Merchant Identities: The Fishmongers and London's Companies Merging and Dividing, c. 1450–1550', in Martin Allen (ed.), *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton* (London, 2016). See also William Herbert, *History of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers of London* (London, 1837), pp. 5–26.

⁷¹ CA, Old Grants +, pp. 7–8.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Colson, 'Merchant Identities', p. 10.

analysis of the later 'merger' states, 'how this separation had occurred was undocumented, but the stockfishmongers were certainly determined to forge an independent identity',⁷⁴ and an important part of this strategy was to obtain a collective sign. The first trace of the stockfishmongers' independence relates to a grant of arms they allegedly received in 1494.⁷⁵ At the time, this document and heraldic sign appear to have been enough of a recognition of their independence, as the stockfishmongers did not seek an additional letters patent to confirm their incorporation until 1508.⁷⁶ Just as the grant to the united craft of fish- and stockfishmongers, the latter's earlier pursuit of their own heraldic sign thus suggests that corporate arms were perceived as signs able to promote the unity of a divided corporate body. But precisely because of this ability, collective heraldic signs also demarcated internal divisions when they were appropriated to give a visual expression to an emancipatory group seeking independence.

This observation is supported by a similar case from fifteenth-century Frankfurt, although again the German guildsmen did not feel a need for an 'official' grant of arms, and instead dealt with the entire process of 'designing' and assuming the heraldic sign meant to unite quarrelling crafts themselves. Here, the crafts of whittawers and pouch-makers made up a single guild as well, but as with the London fishmongers there remained internal divisions between the two professions that required mediation. After an amicable solution had been proposed to end 'quarrels and discord', an ordinance recorded in 1452 that the two crafts once more solemnly agreed 'that they shall have a fraternity with each other in unity, for the praise of God and the Virgin Mary'.⁷⁷ Crucially, this renewed pledge for unity was to be given a two-fold symbolic reinforcement as well. Firstly, with regard to the performance of urban rituals such as funerals, the guild ordained that 'whenever one is to march with the candles, a whittawer and a pouch-maker each shall march together'.⁷⁸ Secondly, in the same manner as the London fishmongers, the two Frankfurt crafts decided to express their

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁵ Colin, 'Devises', p. 283.

⁷⁶ Herbert, *London Fishmongers*, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Benno C. Schmidt (ed.), *Frankfurter Zunfturkunden bis zum Jahre 1612* (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 145–146.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 146.

restored unity in the form of heraldry, as it was agreed ‘that they should have and hold a single shield with one another’.⁷⁹

As in the London case, particular attention was paid to ensuring an egalitarian representation of the guild’s two branches. Thus, it was decided that the shield was to show but two charges, each characteristic of one of the two crafts united in the guild: for the whittawers, a pole was chosen, while the pouch-makers were represented by a pouch.⁸⁰ A lot of thought was dedicated to avoiding any arrangement risking to suggest a hierarchical perception of the design: it was explained that the charges were to be placed side by side, ‘so that one may not see nor seek [to see] any quarterings’.⁸¹ In heraldic theory, different quarters of the shield are attributed with different ranks of precedence,⁸² and evidently the whittawers and pouch-makers of Frankfurt were well aware of such perceptions. Certainly, there was a concern that the unifying force of the corporate arms might be threatened by those who still desired precedence for their respective part of the guild, and who might thus try to express this precedence in the same heraldic medium that was supposed to overcome the guild’s divisions. It appears to have been anticipated that guildsmen might later try to meddle with the design, perhaps to give one of the crafts heraldic precedence, as it was finally stressed that ‘henceforth no-one may add any signs to the shield of the fraternity’.⁸³ Just like in London, the Frankfurt case shows that heraldic communication was consciously used to foster a sense of social cohesion in the face of internal antagonisms. But at the same time, the ability to promote unity attributed to heraldic signs also risked furthering division if it was used to give visual precedence to a sub-group desirous of precedence within the corporate body collectively identified by the sign.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Woodcock and Robinson, *Guide*, pp. 128–138; Scheibelreiter, *Heraldik*, pp. 120–121.

⁸³ Schmidt, *Frankfurter Zunfturkunden*, p. 146.

3.2 Guild Halls: Augmenting the Heart of Corporate Identity

Historians attribute halls with a constitutive role in promoting social cohesion among the members of late medieval guilds.⁸⁴ Kate Giles argues, for example, that the built architecture of these corporate spaces fostered an ‘inclusive sense of collective identity’, as it ‘created a boundary of exclusion which stressed the distinction of fraternities and guilds from other sections of urban society’.⁸⁵ Along similar lines, Knut Schulz stresses that in Germany halls spatially marked guilds as separate bodies and provided a stage for elaborate strategies of visual self-representation that expressed the guilds’ claims to honour and precedence in the city.⁸⁶

As Rosser notes, late medieval guild halls impressed members and guests with a ‘theatrical magnificence’ that framed the guilds’ regular social functions and festivities.⁸⁷ An important part of such efforts were cherished material artifacts.⁸⁸ Such ‘corporate antiquities’ (*Zunftaltertümer*) included expensive furniture and silverware, which testified to the wealth of the guild, just as much as religious depictions in stained glass and colourful tapestries, which reminded of the corporate obligation towards charity, piety, and patron saints.⁸⁹ Since these material and visual elements often referred back to the guilds’ real (or imagined) past, late medieval guild halls already

⁸⁴ With regard to England, see Kate Giles, *An Archaeology of Social Identity: Guildhalls in York, c. 1350–1630* (Oxford, 2000); Rosser, *Solidarity*, pp. 133–137. For studies on German guild halls, see Gerhard Fouquet, ‘Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften – soziale Orte in den Städten des Spätmittelalters: Zusammenfassung’, in Gerhard Fouquet, Matthias Steinbrink, and Gabriel Zeilinger (eds), *Geschlechtergesellschaften, Zunft-Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten: 40. Arbeitstagung in Pforzheim, 16.–18. November 2001* (Ostfildern, 2003); Katharina Simon-Muscheid, ‘Zunft-Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften: “Soziale Orte” und Beziehungsnetze im spätmittelalterliche Basel’, in Gerhard Fouquet, Matthias Steinbrink, and Gabriel Zeilinger (eds), *Geschlechtergesellschaften, Zunft-Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten: 40. Arbeitstagung in Pforzheim, 16.–18. November 2001* (Ostfildern, 2003); Knut Schulz, ‘Gesellentrinkstuben und Gesellenherbergen im 14./15. und 16. Jahrhundert’, in Hans Conrad Peyer and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds), *Gastfreundschaft, Taverne und Gasthaus im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1983).

⁸⁵ Giles, *Social Identity*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ Knut Schulz, ‘Zünfte am Oberrhein im Spätmittelalter: Selbstdarstellung und Ausstrahlung’, in Peter Kurmann (ed.), *Historische Landschaft – Kunstlandschaft? Der Oberrhein im späten Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2008), pp. 326–332.

⁸⁷ Rosser, *Solidarity*, p. 134.

⁸⁸ Reininghaus, ‘Zunftaltertümer’, p. 434.

⁸⁹ Nagybakay, ‘Zunftgegenstände’; Karl Gröber, *Alte deutsche Zunft Herrlichkeit* (Munich, 1936).

resembled the ‘theatres of memory’ that Ian Archer finds in the halls of early modern London.⁹⁰

Embedded in this architectural display of corporate identity, as this section will demonstrate, corporate heraldry emerges as an often overlooked component of guild halls. In both England and Germany, corporate arms acted as constant reminders of the corporate body, reinforcing the halls’ function as expressions of collective identity as they marked them as spaces dedicated to the life, heritage, and ideals of guilds. However, like in the case of burgess arms in town houses, the arms of guilds did not feature in isolation in these corporate spaces either. Instead, they were frequently displayed together with other heraldic signs, locating the guilds within the larger social body of the city and late medieval society as a whole.

3.2.1 *Demarcating Corporate Spaces*

In the same way that heraldry featured on the outside of town houses, evidence from Germany shows that corporate arms likewise played a role in identifying guild halls as distinct corporate spaces. When the butchers’ guild of Hildesheim created an elaborately carved facade for their hall in 1529, they also placed their corporate arms, a shield charged with the *agnus dei*, above the entrance.⁹¹ A few years later, a similarly ovine heraldic sign was used by the coopers of Cologne to embellish the outside of a hall they purchased in 1537. Here, a shield with a ram and tools typical for the craft, held by lions for supporters, identified the location of their guild hall in the urban space in the same manner.⁹² A carved stone portal survives in Constance, too, where colleagues of the Hildesheim butchers in 1454 marked the entrance to their hall with two heraldic shields: the first depicted a rose garden, alluding to the hall’s popular name *Rosgarten*, while the other was charged with yet another ram (fig. 3.3). Whereas this beast might refer to the name of a neighbouring building (*Zum schwarzen Widder*) incorporated into

⁹⁰ Ian Archer, ‘The Arts and Acts of Memorialization in Early Modern London’, in Julia F. Merritt (ed.), *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Potrayals of the City from Stow to Strype* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 90.

⁹¹ Adolf Zeller, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Hannover: II. Regierungsbezirk Hildesheim: 4. Stadt Hildesheim: Bürgerliche Bauten* (Hanover, 1902), p. 110. On the *agnus dei* and other heraldic signs of the butchers’ craft, see Seyler, *Berufswappen*, pp. 57–58.

⁹² Hans Vogts, ‘Das Faßbinderzunftthaus’, *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins*, 10 (1928), p. 109.

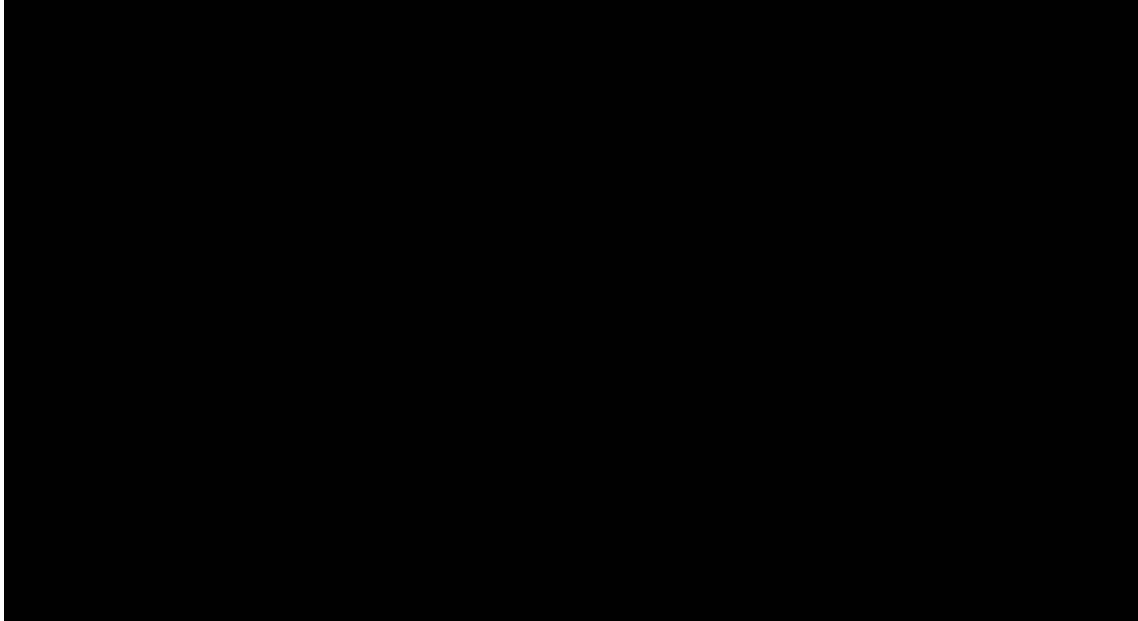


Fig. 3.3: Portal of the butchers' hall in Constance (1454), showing a shield charged with a rose garden on the left, and a shield with a ram on the right.

the hall of 1454, it featured in the Constance butchers' arms.⁹³ Certainly, the heraldic signs on the outside of the hall demarcated a distinct social space, as the liminal aspect of the gate was underlined by an inscription between the two arms urging anyone entering their hall: 'Behave properly in this place so that people will speak well of you!'⁹⁴ Here, corporate heraldry was conspicuously placed in a context that called to mind the guildsmen's obligations towards the norms and values of their corporation.

Another 'in-between' of late medieval guild halls that confronted guildsmen and their guests with corporate arms was stained glass. This is suggested by a stained glass panel of the Nuremberg clothiers, which showed tools of their craft in a manner typical of corporate arms with an inscription dating it to 1528, although the characteristic shape of the shield is absent in this instance (fig. 3.4).⁹⁵ Accounts of English guilds are much more indicative in this respect. In the wake of their grant of arms in 1439, the London drapers must have felt it appropriate to refurbish their hall, including the 'setting off

⁹³ Paul Motz, 'Die Rat- und Zunfthäuser in Konstanz', *Badische Heimat*, 13 (1926), p. 58.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Thomas Schindler (ed.), *Zünftig! Geheimnisvolles Handwerk 1500–1800: Ausstellung im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, 21. März bis 7. Juli 2013* (Nuremberg, 2013), no. 2.60. Seyler, *Berufswappen*, pp. 85–86.

our Armys in Glas wyndowys in drapers halle'.⁹⁶ Likewise, just as the mercers of London paid a glazier for a maiden's head in the windows of their hall in 1447/1448,⁹⁷ a sign which they incorporated into their arms,⁹⁸ so the grocers embellished their hall with their heraldic sign in 1449. Here, a 'magnificent bay window' that 'rose almost to the full height of the wall' was 'crowned by a parapet bearing the Grocers' arms', as Pamela Nightingale notes, while the windows in the gables were embellished with 'armorial glass' also.⁹⁹ A stained glass panel now in the hall of the London fishmongers, 'in a style peculiar to the time of Henry VIII', may be counted among the material traces of such heraldic displays as well, showing the arms of the fishmongers as used before their unification with the stockfishmongers in 1512 or 1536 respectively (fig. 3.5).¹⁰⁰



Fig. 3.4: Stained glass of the Nuremberg clothiers with the date 1528, depicting tools characteristic of the craft and an imperial eagle. GNM, Mm 733.

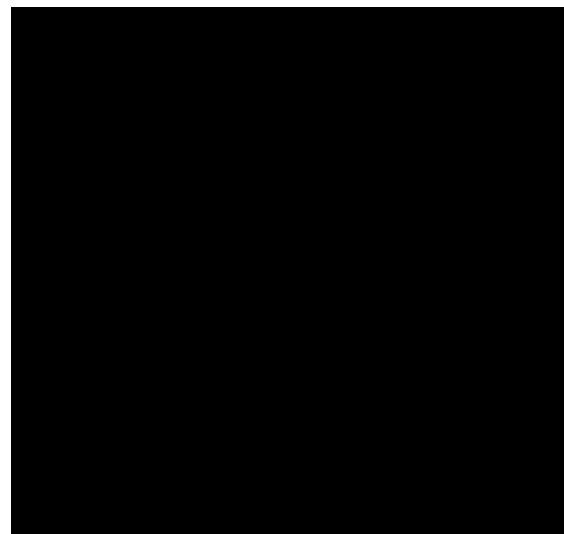


Fig. 3.5: Stained glass with the fishmongers' arms, now in their hall, likely dating from before their union with the stockfishmongers in 1512.

As part of the decorations and furniture of the halls' interior, too, corporate arms contributed to the visual frame of guild functions and festivities. The grant of arms to the tallow-chandlers of London explicitly referred to such uses, claiming that 'it is well-known use and custom in all regions, kingdoms, and countries that [...] companies and

⁹⁶ Johnson, *Drapers*, II, p. 522.

⁹⁷ Lisa Jefferson, *The Medieval Account Books of the Mercers of London: An Edition and Translation* (Aldershot, 2009), p. 645.

⁹⁸ See below, p. 149.

⁹⁹ Nightingale, *Grocers*, pp. 260, 412.

¹⁰⁰ Priscilla Metcalf, *The Halls of the Fishmongers' Company: An Architectural History of a Riverside Site* (London; Chichester, 1977), p. 17.

fraternities [...] are distinguished in signification of their nobility by arms [...] to use in their communal affairs', notably 'their houses and communal spaces where they hold their meetings and councils'.¹⁰¹

Heraldically decorated silverware, for example, must have been a common sight at the ritual feasts of London guilds. In 1431 already, the grocers noted 'x sowsys [...] w^t Gryffons and þe armes off þe Crafft',¹⁰² just as the goldsmiths in 1473 bought plate with their arms engraved.¹⁰³ In the same way, tailors, drapers, vintners, and carpenters recorded expenses for heraldically marked tableware throughout the long fifteenth century, including spoons and drinking vessels.¹⁰⁴ Although silverware was an equally important asset of early modern guilds in Germany,¹⁰⁵ for the Middle Ages evidence here is scarce. The account of Clemens Jäger's chronicle on the Augsburg weavers in 1544 proclaimed that 'until this day the said [weavers'] arms are found in their halls and houses, on their properties, silverware, seals, chattels, and indeed everything that pertains to an honourable guild'.¹⁰⁶ In London, this also included delicate garlands with corporate arms owned by the pewterers (fig. 3.6) and haberdashers, used as part of inaugurations ceremonies for the guild's masters, as Barbara Hanawalt reckons.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps a silver pendant with the heraldic sign of the arms and armour makers of Cologne, from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, had a similarly official function (fig. 3.7).

¹⁰¹ CA, Misc. Grants 1, fol. 49r.

¹⁰² John Abernathy Kingdon, *Facsimile of First Volume of MS. Archives of the Worshipful Company of Grocers of the City of London, A.D. 1345–1463* (London, 1886), II, p. 206.

¹⁰³ Reddaway, *Goldsmiths*, p. 162, n. 125.

¹⁰⁴ Clode, *Merchant Taylors*, pp. 82–83, 88–90; Johnson, *Drapers*, II, p. 522; Thomas Milbourn, *The Vintners' Company, Their Muniments, Plate, and Eminent Members, with Some Account of the Ward of Vintry* (London, 1888), p. 56; Bower Marsh and John Ainsworth (eds), *Records of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters* (Oxford, 1913), II, p. 243.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Schindler, 'Der Rest des Inventariums: Kulturgeschichtliches zum ältesten Belegstück Nürnberger Zunftsilbers', *Kulturgut: Aus der Forschung des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 48 (2016); Dagmar Thormann, *Zunftzinn und Zunftsilber im Germanischen Nationalmuseum* (Nuremberg, 1991); Dieter Nadolski and Sigrid Schmidt, *Zunftzinn: Formenvielfalt und Gebrauch bei Fest und Alltag des Handwerks* (Munich, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ CDS 34, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Hanawalt, *Ceremony and Civility*, p. 108. See also John L. Nevinson, 'Crowns and Garlands of the Livery Companies', *Guildhall Studies in London*, 1.2 (1987), pp. 69, 79.

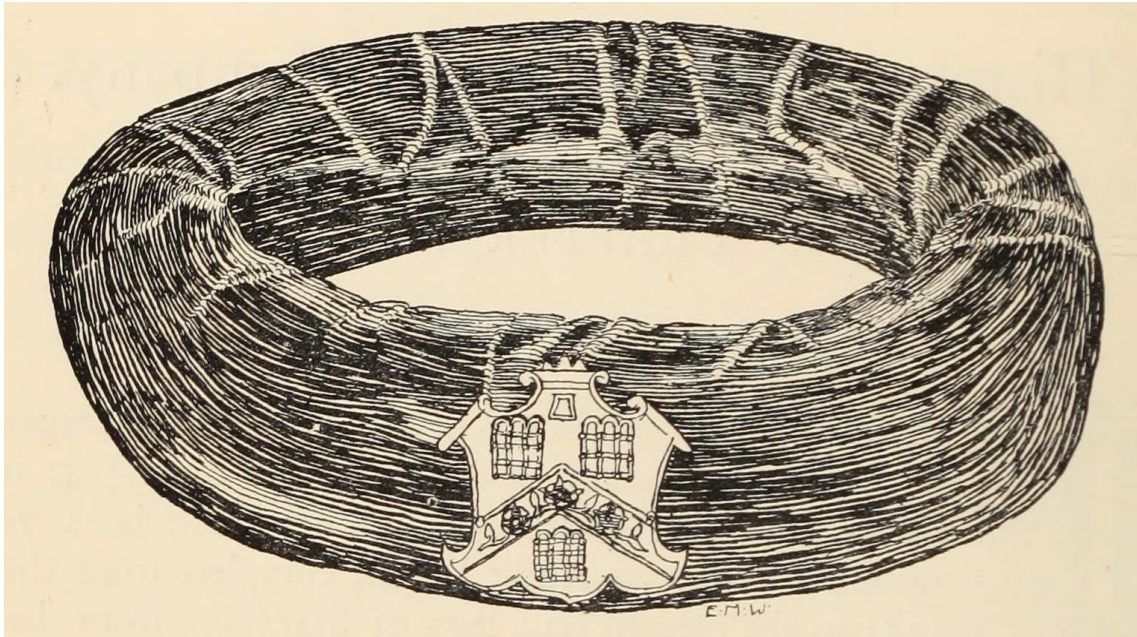


Fig. 3.6: Election garland worn by the masters of the London pewterers, gifted to the guild in 1463. Welch, *Pewterers*, 1, p. 34.

In Germany, corporate arms certainly marked a number of chests that served as a ‘centre-piece’ (*Herzstück*) of late medieval guild identity.¹⁰⁸ They contained the guild’s historical records and formative charters, and performed a constitutive function during assemblies and feasts, with their opening and closing signalling the beginning and ending of such rituals. A chest of the Osnabrück shoemakers’ guild from 1476, for example, showed two juxtaposed shields of arms that bore charges characteristic of their craft—on the left a shield with a ram, on the right shield a knife used for the manufacture of leather (fig. 3.8).¹⁰⁹ The guild’s heraldic identifiers were framed by two other visual representations of important aspects of corporate identity, namely figures of the shoemakers’ patron saints, Crispin and Crispinian. The fishermen of Bremen possessed a similar chest from c. 1480, which showed a carved figure of St Anthony, patron of fishermen, likewise accompanied by a carved shield of arms.¹¹⁰ While its once painted surface has since faded, it is probable that the shield originally featured the

¹⁰⁸ Jochen Voigt, *Ritus und Symbol: Sächsische Innungsladen aus fünf Jahrhunderten* (Chemnitz, 2002), p. 12. See also Horst Appuhn, *Briefladen aus Niedersachsen und Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Cappenberg, 1971), esp. p. 5; Axel Lindloff, ‘Zunft- und Innungsladen im ehemaligen Fürstentum Lüneburg’, in Thorsten Albrecht (ed.), *Truhen, Kisten, Laden vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Petersberg, 1997).

¹⁰⁹ Margarete Pieper-Lippe, *Westfälische Zunftsiegel* (Münster, 1963), p. 39.

¹¹⁰ Appuhn, *Briefladen*, no. 18.

fishermen's corporate heraldry, in their case a salmon.¹¹¹ The girdlers of Freiberg unquestionably chose this approach for the decoration of their chest in 1523. Here, paper sheets painted with figures of guildsmen and shields charged with tools of the girdlers' craft were attached to the inside of their chest, only to be revealed during assemblies of the guild when the chest was opened to indicate that the meeting was 'in session'.¹¹²



Fig. 3.7: Pendant with the arms of the Cologne armour makers, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

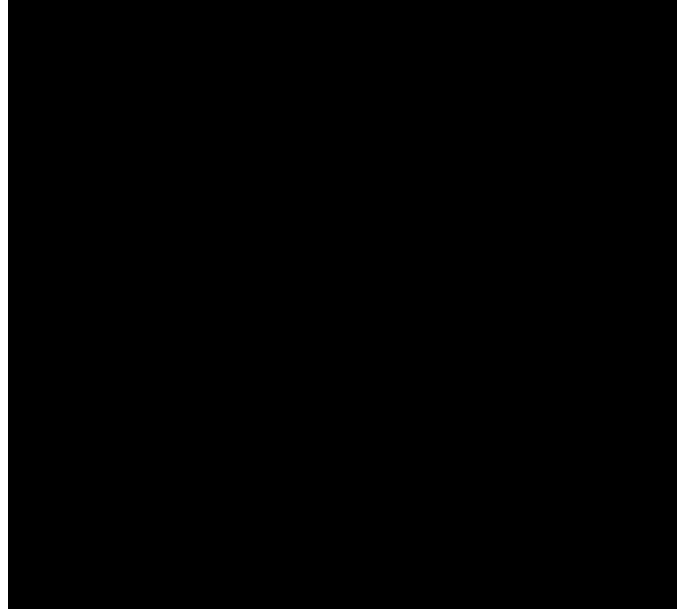


Fig. 3.8: Chest of the shoemakers' guild of Osnabrück (1476), decorated with the arms of the craft. Osnabrück, Kulturgeschichtliches Museum.

Guilds in London, too, possessed containers that might well have been embellished with their heraldic signs, since they were similarly destined for the safekeeping of items constitutive of their collective identity, including their grants of arms. The 1504 inventory of the leathersellers thus mentioned 'a nodere box w^t the Letters of owre Armyes',¹¹³ while the 'lytell chest' of the ironmongers, recorded in 1517, contained 'our comyn seale of syluyr' and 'the [letter of] corpuration' in addition to 'the chartyr of armyes',¹¹⁴ for which the peweterers likewise bought 'a case' in

¹¹¹ Johann Georg Kohl, *Der Ratsweinkeller zu Bremen* (Bremen, 1866), p. 202.

¹¹² Voigt, *Ritus*, p. 19.

¹¹³ William Henry Black, *History and Antiquities of the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, of the City of London* (London, 1871), p. 100.

¹¹⁴ Printed in William Herbert, *History of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers of London, Principally Compiled from Their Own Records* (London, 1837), p. 600.

1532/1533.¹¹⁵

Similar sources also point to the presence of heraldically decorated textiles in the halls of London's guilds. Records of the goldsmiths refer to a tapestry embroidered with their corporate arms in 1466, and between 1483 and 1486 they also noted the acquisition and donation of a number of cushions embellished with the same heraldic sign.¹¹⁶ The tailors received gifts of 'quysshens' from deceased members, as an inventory of their 'parlour' in 1512 indicates.¹¹⁷ Their 'browdered' heraldic motif was taken from the crest of the tailors' arms, namely 'a holy lamb', which was also placed on 'a banker', a cover for a bench or, as in the case of the goldsmiths, a tapestry.¹¹⁸ An inventory of the grocers in 1452 similarly noted 'xij koschanes of Rede Worstede w^t our Armes',¹¹⁹ and a list of their possessions in their 'gret Chaumbre' from 1454 suggests that heraldic banners furnished the halls of medieval London guilds as well: 'xvij baneris w^t the armes of the feleshepe frengid for trumpettes' were recorded, next to two small pennons and two larger banners 'w^t ye armis'.¹²⁰

Shields painted with the corporate arms decorated the walls of the halls also. In 1431, the grocers of London paid a painter for 'þe crestes scheldys and oþer images',¹²¹ which Pamela Nightingale, too, believes to refer to 'the carved and painted images, crests and shields on the walls [of their hall], each resting on a representation of the Company's coat of arms with their supporting griffins'.¹²² The London drapers likewise paid for 'peynting of scochouns with our Armys in the parlour' in 1439,¹²³ and the same 'fascination with painting coats of arms' might have existed in late medieval York, although tangible evidence in the halls of merchant adventurers, tailors, and the guild

¹¹⁵ Charles Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London, Based upon Their Own Records* (London, 1902), I, p. 126.

¹¹⁶ Reddaway, *Goldsmiths*, p. 162, n. 125; Walter Sherburne Prideux, *Memorials of the Goldsmiths' Company: Being Gleanings from Their Records between the Years 1335 and 1815* (London, 1896), I, p. 28.

¹¹⁷ Clode, *Merchant Taylors*, p. 85.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Kingdon, *Grocers' Archives*, II, p. 315.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹²² Nightingale, *Grocers*, p. 412.

¹²³ Drapers' Company (ed.), *Transcripts of the Earliest Records in the Possession of the Company* (London, 1910), p. 68.

of St Anthony only survives from the later sixteenth century.¹²⁴

Guild halls in late medieval Germany were embellished with painted arms in an analogous manner: in the hall of the brewers of Cologne, the guild's heraldic sign appeared as part of a pious painting showing Christ on the cross (fig. 3.9), for example.¹²⁵ Here, the corporate arms were placed in the context of the key moment of the Christian faith, and thus again related to Christianity as a key aspect of the guild's identity as a religious community, echoing Giles' concept of 'corporate Christianity' observed in York.¹²⁶ In Ravensburg, the goldsmiths' guild had their arms painted in a more secular context in 1536, although in this instance, crucially, the arms of the goldsmiths were not the only heraldic signs displayed (fig. 3.10).¹²⁷

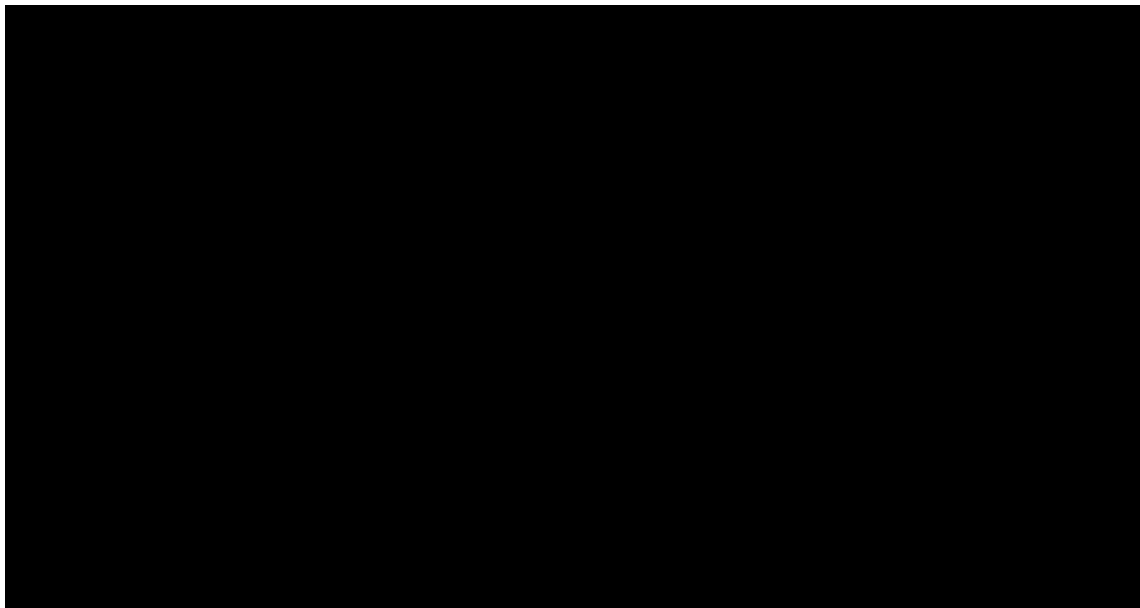


Fig. 3.9: Painting of Christ on the cross from the brewers' hall in Cologne (c. 1530). Cologne, Wallraff-Richartz Museum, 212.

3.2.2 *Expressing Social Relations*

Late medieval guild halls were also furnished with heraldic signs other than corporate arms. Particularly common were the municipal arms of the city and the royal or imperial

¹²⁴ Pamela Hartshorne, *The York Merchant Adventurers and Their Hall* (London, 2011), p. 123.

¹²⁵ Frank Günter Zehnder, *Katalog der altkölnischen Malerei* (Cologne, 1990), pp. 196–198.

¹²⁶ Giles, *Social Identity*, p. 16.

¹²⁷ Jens Kremb, 'Zunftscheibe, Zunfttafel, Totentafel oder Meistertafel? Die runden Wappenschilder der Zünfte', in Andreas Tacke, Birgit Ulrike Münch, and Wolfgang Augustyn (eds), *Material Culture: Präsenz und Sichtbarkeit von Künstlern, Zünften und Bruderschaften in der Vormoderne/Presence and Visibility of Artists, Guilds and Brotherhoods in the Pre-Modern Era* (Petersberg, 2018), p. 372.

arms of the realm as the larger social units within which guilds located themselves, and from which they derived their legal status and privileges.

The pious painting of the Cologne brewers, for example, displayed the arms of the city to the left of Christ, while in the case of the goldsmiths of Ravensburg the corporate arms were juxtaposed not only with the municipal arms but also with the arms of the Empire, which also featured in the stained glass panel of the Nuremberg clothiers (fig. 3.4). The perhaps most impressive heraldic celebration of the Empire in a corporate context survives in the national museum of Bavaria, where the interior of the hall of Augsburg's weavers can still be seen. Painted in 1457, wooden panels show the figures of the seven prince-electors and Emperor Frederick III, all accompanied by a shield of arms, as are panels with the Nine Worthies including Charlemagne.¹²⁸

That in Coventry an inventory of the Holy Trinity guild from 1441 noted 'six cushions with elephants in red and green', which must refer to the municipal arms of the city, is less surprising, since St Mary's Hall doubled as a guild and town hall.¹²⁹ But in the hall of St Anthony's guild in York, too, late fifteenth-century roof bosses showed the arms of the city, notably alongside the arms of the diocese and further visual references to royal badges in the form of a portcullis and a Tudor rose.¹³⁰ The tailors of London likewise incorporated royal heraldry into their hall, as an inventory from 1512 demonstrates, recording a banker 'wth tharmes of Quene Elizabeth, late decessed'.¹³¹ In 1547/1548, the presence of the king's arms becomes apparent, when the tailors paid for a 'cloth of the King's arms in the parlour' besides stained glass with 'the king's arms'.¹³²

German guild halls frequently featured the heraldic signs of their members, as in the case of Hector Müllich's reference to the hall of Augsburg's elite 'tavern society' of 1451, for example, where the arms of the society's members were supposedly 'painted

¹²⁸ Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, MA 856, <http://www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de/index.php?id=545&tx_paintingdb_pi%5Bdetail%5D=122>. See also Meine-Schawe, 'Weberstube'. On the Nine Worthies, see below, p. 199.

¹²⁹ Translated in A. R. Myers (ed.), *English Historical Documents* (London, 1969), IV, no. 641.

¹³⁰ J. S. Purvis and Eric Arthur Gee, *St. Anthony's Hall, York: A History and Architectural Description* (London, 1954), pp. 9, 14.

¹³¹ Clode, *Merchant Tailors*, p. 85.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 572.

on the table of the society'.¹³³ A fifteenth-century ordinance of the Cologne bakers decreed regarding the 'proper' procedure of guild assemblies that the guild's masters ought to sit 'beneath the shields'.¹³⁴ In 1505, the city's fishmongers similarly decided that any newly appointed member was to pay twenty white pennies 'before he may hang his shield in the hall'.¹³⁵ Likewise, in Villingen statutes of the innkeepers' guild from 1491 expected 'shields' of all their members to be displayed in their hall, notably in a spatial hierarchy that saw the shield of the most senior guildsmen placed in a privileged position, something which they claimed was a 'customary' thing to do for guilds generally.¹³⁶

This picture of German guild halls is also supported by condemnations of iconoclastic attacks on heraldic signs displayed in these spaces. The innkeepers of Villingen established fines for 'erasing' shields displayed in their hall,¹³⁷ and so did the merchants of Augsburg with regard to 'the names, arms and ordinances written and painted on the panels of the honourable corporation' in 1541.¹³⁸ In the second half of the fifteenth century, the coopers of Cologne threatened anyone who 'injured' someone else's shield in the hall 'out of anger, hatred, or malice for him' with a fine.¹³⁹ Quarrels at an institutional level led to similar results in the case of the fustian, linen, and bedclothes weavers of Cologne, who in 1477 decreed that 'those who had their shields removed are allowed to have them reinstated'.¹⁴⁰ Notably, this was to be done 'where they had been before', an addition that might again suggest that the guild's social hierarchy was translated into a spatial order, which the guildsmen were keen to preserve through the positioning of heraldic signs.¹⁴¹

¹³³ ASSB, 2 Cod. H. 1, fol. 117v.

¹³⁴ Heinrich von Loesch (ed.), *Die Kölner Zunfturkunden nebst anderen Kölner Gewerbeurkunden bis zum Jahre 1500* (Bonn, 1907), II, p. 14.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

¹³⁶ Christian Roder, 'Das Zunftwesen im alten Villingen (Stadtarchiv Villingen-Schwenningen Bestand 2.1, Faszikel BBB 14, 267–320)' (online publication, 2009), <https://www.villingen-schwenningen.de/fileadmin/pdf/Kultur/Stadtarchiv/Roder_Zunftwesen20042009.pdf>, p. 11.

¹³⁷ Roder, 'Villinger Zunftwesen', p. 11.

¹³⁸ Pius Dirr, 'Kaufleutezunft und Kaufleutestube in Augsburg zur Zeit des Zunftregiments (1368–1548)', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg*, 35 (1909), p. 149.

¹³⁹ Loesch, *Kölner Zunfturkunden*, II, p. 58.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The removal of a guildsman's arms from the guild hall was also used as an official sanction. In fact, the presence of the shield in the hall was tied to proper conduct in line with the guild's norms and values, as the ordinance of the Cologne coopers further suggests: 'As soon as someone has their shield placed on the panel, he shall swear to our masters that he will adhere to all things decreed by the masters and the guild's ordinances [...] without malice'.¹⁴² The corporation of Cologne's merchants decreed around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that overdue fees or fines may be enforced by 'covering their shields' displayed in the hall.¹⁴³ Measures of the merchants' guild of Augsburg in 1541 were more drastic still, as anyone who failed to pay their annual fee 'was to have their name and arms removed from the panel, without recourse or mercy and be expelled from the society of the hall'.¹⁴⁴

Arms of guildsmen displayed in guild halls thus served as a register of members that could be 'updated' when new members joined the guild, but also when members failed to meet the obligations expected of guildsmen. Jens Kremb stresses that similar, circular heraldic panels served commemorative purposes as well, especially in the longer term.¹⁴⁵ In Augsburg, the hall of the goldsmiths was home to such a painted panel, showing the arms of the guild's members aligned around a bible quotation and the date 1347, although the workmanship makes a sixteenth-century origin more likely (fig. 3.10).¹⁴⁶ The smiths of Ravensburg chose a similar approach for a panel in 1505 and arranged the arms and names of their members concentrically, whereas a panel of the Ulm goldsmiths showed the heraldic signs of the guild's past masters to the left and right of a depiction of typical goldsmith labour. Here, the panel was continued into the early modern period, notably for 'the especial honour' of the 'honourable and daedal craft of the goldsmiths', as an inscription explained.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Loesch, *Kölner Zunfturkunden*, II, p. 59.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁴ Dirr, 'Augsburger Kaufleutezunft', p. 147.

¹⁴⁵ Kremb, 'Zunftscheibe', esp. pp. 375–377.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Adolf Häberle, *Die Zunftaltertümer des Museums der Stadt Ulm* (Ulm, 1929), p. 70.

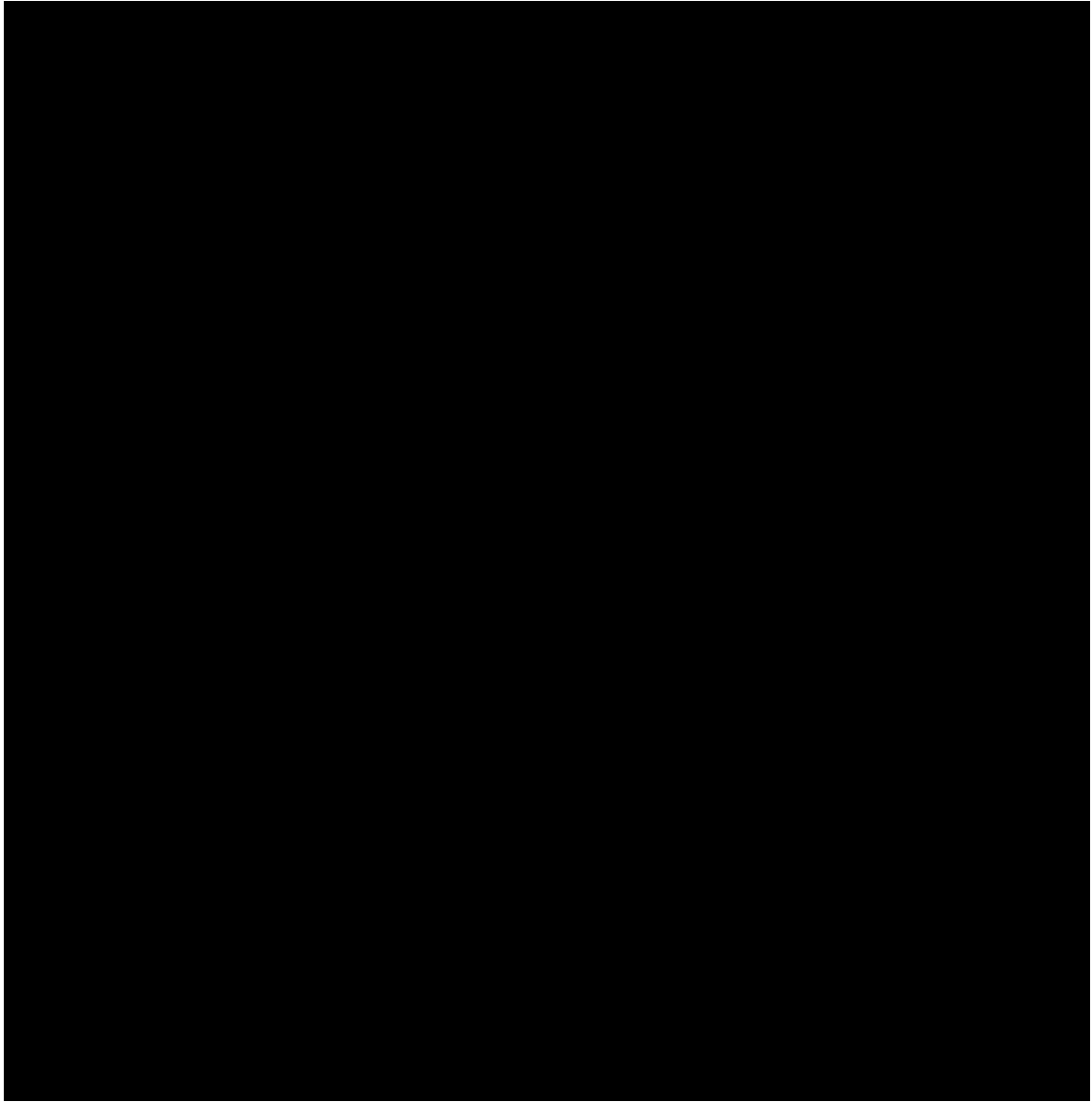


Fig. 3.10: Circular panel with the arms of the goldsmiths of Augsburg, according to the inscription from 1347, but more likely from the sixteenth century. Maximilianmuseum, Augsburg, no. 2686.

While as dedicated ‘registers’ of guild members do not survive for late medieval England, guild halls in London featured heraldic signs of their members as well. The hall of the fishmongers contained stained glass with the arms of members who had served as mayors and sheriffs in the city, although it is unclear whether this glass is indeed medieval.¹⁴⁸ The pewterers of London certainly counted a late medieval mazer ‘of the gifte of William Smalwodde [...] w^t his Armes’ among their possessions,¹⁴⁹ just as the

¹⁴⁸ William Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London* (London, 1836), II, p. 74.

¹⁴⁹ Welch, *Pewterers*, I, p. 66.

drapers in 1489 noted 'Basons', 'pottes', and 'cuppes', all gilt, 'of the gyfte of William Waldyngfeld with his Armys in the Bosse' next to several other heraldically identified donations from past guildsmen.¹⁵⁰ The tailors in 1512 recorded a donation of 'a Basyn and An Ewar of Siluer' by master Henry Dacres, again 'w^t his Armes in the Botom',¹⁵¹ and two years later, as was discussed earlier, Averej Rawson embellished the hall of the London mercers with a reminder of his father and mother in the form of 'certen scochyns of their armes to be sett aboute oure Hall'.¹⁵² Similarly, it was shown earlier that questions of the presence or absence of heraldic signs were used to enforce compliance with expectations of the guild towards its members in England, namely in the case of John Stokton (d. 1473), whose arms were supposed to be added to the ceiling of the mercers' hall.¹⁵³

3.3 Rituals and Revolt: Performing the Corporate Arms

Urban rituals such as processions and pageants can be interpreted as attempts to foster a sense of unity and community among the many members of the late medieval city's idealised corporate body.¹⁵⁴ But at the same time, they also 'produced bitter disputes over questions of status and precedence as competing groups jockeyed for position in the march', with guilds among the most vocal contenders.¹⁵⁵ After all, the position in the ephemeral space of the ritual was equated with the symbolic capital of honour and, thus, the place in the city's hierarchy.¹⁵⁶ The same was true in England, where 'guilds

¹⁵⁰ Printed in Johnson, *Drapers*, II, p. 521. See also *ibid.*, p. 523.

¹⁵¹ Clode, *Merchant Tailors*, p. 90.

¹⁵² Lyell and Watney, *Mercers' Court Acts*, p. 431.

¹⁵³ See above, p. 108.

¹⁵⁴ Andrea Löther, 'Städtische Prozession zwischen repräsentativer Öffentlichkeit, Teilhabe und Publikum', in Gert Melville (ed.), *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne* (Cologne et al., 1998), p. 451; Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450–1550', in Gervase Rosser and Richard A. Holt (eds), *The English Medieval Town: A Reader* (London, 1990), esp. p. 262.

¹⁵⁵ Benjamin R. McRee, 'The Social Meaning of Guild Ceremony in Urban Communities', in Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (eds), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), p. 189.

¹⁵⁶ Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Das Ritual als Kampfplatz: Konflikte um Prozessionen in der spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadt', in Dietrich Boschung, Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, and Claudia Sode (eds), *Raum und Performanz: Rituale in Residenzen von der Antike bis 1815* (Stuttgart, 2015), p. 314; Andrea Löther, *Prozessionen in spätmittelalterlichen Städten: Politische Partizipation, obrigkeitliche Inszenierung, städtische Einheit* (Cologne et al., 1999), p. 334.

were obsessed with their relative status in the community, which would be reflected (and above all confirmed) in their relative positions in a procession'.¹⁵⁷ Here, James argues with regard to English 'mystery plays' staged on Corpus Christi, late medieval guilds 'defined the identity and projected the honour of occupational community in relation to the social body' of the city.¹⁵⁸ This ritual projection of guild honour was above all an effort of visual communication: 'The honour of a gild became visible in its painted decorated pageant waggon, as well as in the wealth of costumes, accessories and histrionic skills which the latter involved—all giving visible proof of its vitality, and of the surplus resources among its members which could be put to this communal use.'¹⁵⁹

While James does not mention heraldic display, Glynne Wickham suggests that in English cities 'it seems evident that movable pageants were carried by the gild in connection with the gild banner, and usually bore the insignia or arms of the gild'.¹⁶⁰ Knut Schulz similarly stresses that German guilds placed an emphasis on the visibility of their collective signs, arguing that this was done with the explicit purpose of self-representation and the outward demonstration of solidarity, unity, and collective honour on the occasion of urban rituals in mind.¹⁶¹ Other historians point to the special significance of corporate heraldry in moments of external crisis and intramural conflict, notably the numerous revolts against the established elites of German cities, where (heraldic) banners functioned as a rallying symbol of the rebelling guildsmen.¹⁶²

In these performative contexts, this section will show, corporate heraldic signs—perceived as visual expressions of (collective) honour and identity—were a firm part of

¹⁵⁷ Tom Pettitt, 'Medieval Performance Culture and the English Guilds: Custom, Pageantry, Drama', in Tom Pettitt, Lars Bisgaard, and Lars Boje Mortensen (eds), *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North 1300–1500* (Odense, 2013), p. 144.

¹⁵⁸ James, 'Ritual', p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1918), I, p. 19.

¹⁶¹ Knut Schulz, *Handwerk, Zünfte und Gewerbe: Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Darmstadt, 2010), p. 253.

¹⁶² Peter Johaneck, 'Bürgerkämpfe und Verfassung in den mittelalterlichen deutschen Städten', in Hans Eugen Specker (ed.), *Einwohner und Bürger auf dem Weg zur Demokratie* (Ulm; Stuttgart, 1997); Wilfried Ehbrecht, 'Eintracht und Zwietracht: Ursache, Anlaß, Verlauf und Wirkung von Stadtkonflikten', in Peter Johaneck (ed.), *Konsens und Konflikt: Skizzen und Überlegungen zur älteren Verfassungsgeschichte deutscher Städte* (Cologne, 2001); Herbert Schwarzwälder, "'Bannerlauf" und "Verrat" in Bremen 1365–1366', *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, 53 (1975).

late medieval guilds' strategies of self-representation. In the process of identifying the guild in the ephemeral space of the ritual and thus marking its place in the urban hierarchy, corporate arms promised to promote the unity of the corporate body gathered under its collective sign. However, it will also become clear that simultaneously corporate heraldry risked reflecting and in fact reinforcing divisions inside the body of the city.

3.3.1 *England: Fostering Unity and Division*

John Stow claimed that in 1300 the guilds of London were already distinguished by 'cognisances of their misteries embroydered vpon their sleeues' when welcoming Edward I.¹⁶³ Evidence from more contemporary chroniclers only emerges somewhat later. Jean Froissart (d. c. 1405), for instance, knew of distinctive visual signs exhibited by London guilds on the occasion of Henry IV's entry in 1399, who 'rode through London with a great number of lords, every lord's servant in their master's livery, all the burgesses and Lombards merchants in London, and every craft with their livery and device'.¹⁶⁴ The *Gesta Henrici Quinti* recorded that when the guilds of London welcomed the king again in 1415, 'each craft had certain elaborate devices, by means of which one craft was distinguished from the other',¹⁶⁵ and when yet another Henry (VI) entered London in 1432, the guildsmen likewise wore 'white garmentes brawderid wyth conycaunces of ever craftt', as Robert Fabyan as well as the *Letter Books* noted.¹⁶⁶ Chroniclers often mentioned conspicuous 'cognizances' on subsequent occasions,¹⁶⁷ although it is unclear if these terms referred to actual heraldic signs or other visual identifiers such as badges. Wagner holds that 'these devices would no doubt be the tools of the several trades and others, perhaps, the emblems of their patron saints, both these

¹⁶³ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. by Charles L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), II, p. 193.

¹⁶⁴ Jean Froissart, *The Chronicles of Froissart*, ed. by George Campbell Macaulay, trans. by John Bourchier Berners (London, 1899), p. 470.

¹⁶⁵ Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell (eds and transl.), *Gesta Henrici Quinti* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 102–103.

¹⁶⁶ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, pp. 156–157. See also REED 24, p. 120.

¹⁶⁷ John Gough Nichols, *London Pageants: Accounts of Fifty-Five Royal Processions and Entertainments in the City of London; Chiefly Extracted from Contemporary Writers* (London, 1837), I, p. 21; Gairdner, *Historical Collections*; Charles L. Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles of London* (Oxford, 1905); John Leland (ed.), *Antiquarii de Rebus Britannicis Collectanea* (London, 1770), IV, p. 202.

elements being afterwards found in their arms'.¹⁶⁸ Prominent examples for such proto- or para-heraldic signs were the maiden's head of the mercers or the leopard's head of the goldsmiths.¹⁶⁹

Eventually, 'proper' heraldic signs became a firm part of London rituals. This is perhaps best illustrated by the description of the post-medieval Lord Mayor's Show provided by herald and haberdasher William Smith in 1575, who demonstrated his professional eye for the interplay of corporate, municipal, and burgess heraldry shown on this occasion:

He [the Lord Mayor] goeth by water to Westmynster, in most tryvmplyke maner. His barge [...] garnished with the armes of the Citie: and nere the sayd barge goeth a shyppbote [...] with dyvers pices of ordnance, standards, penons, and targetts of the proper armes of the sayd Mayor, the armes of the Citie, of his Companie [...]. Next before hym goeth the barge of the lyvery of his owne company, decked with their owne proper armes [...], and so all the companies in London, in order, euery one havine their owne proper barge garnished with the armes of their company.¹⁷⁰

Once they disembarked at Westminster, a procession was formed, led by two standards, 'one havinge the armes of the citie, and the other the armes of the Mayor's company', followed by 'poore men' carrying shields with the arms of previous mayors from that guild, two more banners, 'one of the kynges armes, the other of the Mayor's owne proper armes', and concluded by a large number of trumpeters, all equipped with heraldic banners of the current mayor's guild.¹⁷¹

That similar displays of corporate heraldry furnished the rituals of London's festive calendar in the later Middle Ages already is indicated by the grant of arms to the pewterers, which in 1451 spoke of 'signes of armes for every crafte in banner wyse [were] to be borne conveniently in the worship of the Cyte'.¹⁷² This use was witnessed on the occasion of the arrival of Elizabeth of York in 1487, for instance, when herald John Writhe (d. 1504) described the barges prepared by the city's guilds on the river. All were 'furnysshed with baners and stremers of silk, richely besen with the armes and

¹⁶⁸ Wagner, 'Foreword', pp. vi–vii.

¹⁶⁹ Anne F. Sutton, *I Sing of a Maiden: The Story of the Maiden of the Mercers' Company* (London, 1998), esp. pp. 1–9; Reddaway, *Goldsmiths*, pp. 161–162, n. 125; Bromley and Child, *London Guilds*, pp. 125, 169–172.

¹⁷⁰ William Smith, 'A Breffe Description of the Royall Citie of London', in Egerton Brydges (ed.), *The British Bibliographer* (London, 1810), pp. 540–542.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

¹⁷² CA, R 21, fol. 97r.

bagges of ther craftes'.¹⁷³ Piecemeal evidence from the guilds' accounts supports this picture. The grocers were the first to mention 'baneris betyn with the armes of the feleshepe frengid for trumpettes', which were 'to stonde be foore the barge'.¹⁷⁴ In 1457/1458, the tailors likewise redecorated their barge with eight 'trumpet banners with scutcheons of arms',¹⁷⁵ just as the mercers purchased heraldic banners *pur le barge* in the same year.¹⁷⁶ The drapers, too, acquired banners and streamers 'for the Bachillers barge' in 1521, after they had done the same for the explicit purpose of the Midsummer Watch just a year earlier.¹⁷⁷

Banners bought by vintners and skinners in the early sixteenth century might have been destined for similar ritual occasions, as might the 'vj skochons of Metall of the Craftes Armys' recorded by the bakers and the 'iiij Scochyns With the Armes of the Crafte to sett on [...] Cottes' owned by the wax-chandlers.¹⁷⁸ But the martial use of corporate heraldry on banners and shields remained an option also, at least theoretically. The tallow-chandlers grant of 1456 encouraged the guildsmen to show their arms 'on their banners, standards, and pennons [...] during military expeditions if necessary',¹⁷⁹ and the ironmongers were urged to use their arms in both peace and war, 'in all maner seruices of our souerayne lorde the Kyng, [...] and atte all tymes, in honor and defence of the said cite of London'.¹⁸⁰

Just as in these contexts corporate arms visually underlined the unity of different guilds in distinction to each another (and within the corporate body of the city), they also marked funeral processions as dedicated corporate occasions. Like in the case of the Bradbury funeral in 1510,¹⁸¹ 'the nobility were not the only social class in whose last rites visual culture played an important role', as Nigel Llewellyn remarks regarding the

¹⁷³ Emma Cavell (ed.), 'A Memoir of the Court of Henry VII: An Edition of BL, MS Cotton Julius B. XII, Fols. 8v-66r, with Textual and General Introduction' (unpublished MA, University of Tasmania, 2001), p. 302.

¹⁷⁴ REED 24, pp. 175, 180.

¹⁷⁵ Clode, *Merchant Taylors*, p. 519.

¹⁷⁶ REED 24, p. 182.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 373. Printed in William Herbert, *History of the Worshipful Company of Drapers of London* (London, 1837), p. 454.

¹⁷⁸ REED 24, p. 352 (vintners), p. 363 (skinners), p. 472 (bakers), p. 496 (wax chandlers).

¹⁷⁹ CA, Misc. Grants 1, fol. 49r.

¹⁸⁰ CA, Old Grants O, fol. 15v.

¹⁸¹ See above, p. 87.

funeral paraphernalia of London's guilds.¹⁸² Here, 'the collective symbols of the guild' assumed a significant role, as Rosser argues, for they reassured the bereaved 'that the soul would continue on its way towards salvation, not in perilous isolation, but as a member of the great community of the blessed'.¹⁸³ Normally, as Caroline Barron notes, dead brothers and sisters of the guilds were 'covered with the richly embroidered cloth of the company',¹⁸⁴ and frequently these funeral palls incorporated the guilds' heraldic signs. Similar to the fishmongers (fig. 3.11), the pewterers possessed 'an hers clothe of gold w^t the tharmys of the crafte theron browdyred' according to an inventory from 1489/1490.¹⁸⁵ In 1469/1470, John Blanche gave to the grocers a pall embroidered with

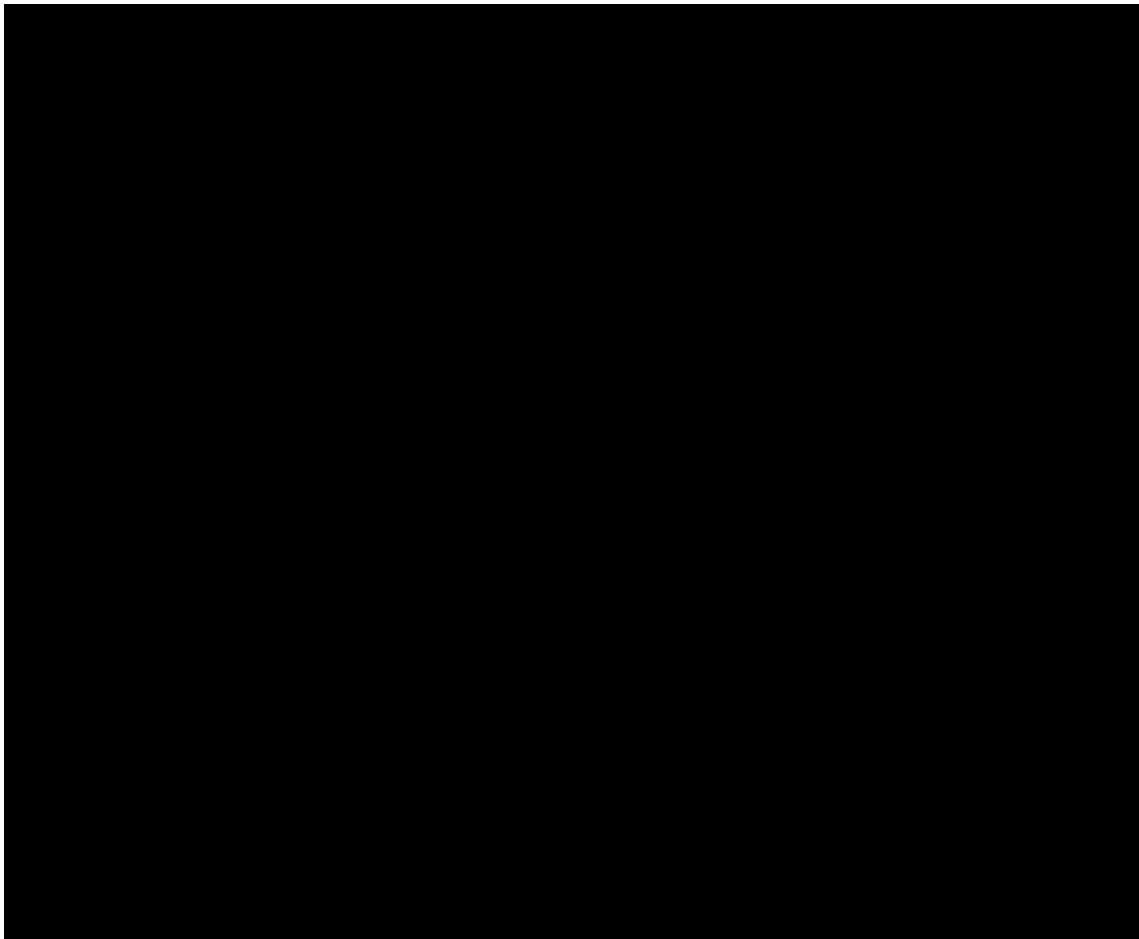


Fig. 3.11: Funeral pall of the London fishmongers, 'from about the reign of Henry VII. or Henry VIII., but rather the latter', according to Herbert, *London Companies*, I, p. 73.

¹⁸² Nigel Llewellyn, *Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500–c.1800* (London, 2013), p. 73.

¹⁸³ Rosser, *Solidarity*, p. 222.

¹⁸⁴ Barron, *London*, p. 217.

¹⁸⁵ Printed in Welch, *Pewterers*, I, p. 70.

their arms,¹⁸⁶ just as John Gyva in 1515 left the ironmongers a hearse cloth with various figures of saints, ‘beyond the figures on each side the Company’s arms [...], and at each end [...] inscribed with the name and date of John Gyva and Elizabeth, his wife’.¹⁸⁷ The carpenters’ guild must have been particularly keen to represent their arms ‘properly’, as they ‘spent a pon Mastyr lankestyr the harrad of Armys for the ovrsyght of your clothe ijs. viijd.’¹⁸⁸

This visual splendour accompanying London guildsmen in death was a familiar sight in other English cities as well. The guild of St Michael in Lincoln, for example, ordained in 1389 that ‘the banner of the guild shall be brought to the house of the dead, and there openly shown, that men may know that the dead was a brother or sister of the guild; and that this banner shall be carried, before the body, to the church’.¹⁸⁹ In 1529, Margarete Pepis gave money to all guilds of the town of Cottenham ‘so that they come with their banners to bring my body to burial’,¹⁹⁰ and at about the same time the cappers of Coventry used a funeral pall with the arms of the craft embroidered in all four corners of the cloth.¹⁹¹

In the same way, heraldic communication was a central visual aspect of other urban rituals outside of London. In Coventry, the guild of dyers in 1496 recorded expenses for ‘the brngyn of they deyers Arms’ from London, where they had been painted on ‘stremers’ for the civic procession on Midsummer Eve.¹⁹² Similarly, on the occasion of the mystery plays performed on Corpus Christi in 1490, the smiths’ guild of Coventry paid for two pieces of ‘bokeram w^t hamers crowned’, the charge found in their corporate arms.¹⁹³ In Norwich, the procession of the guild of St George was a regular part of the city’s calendar and featured an ample supply of corporate heraldry, as the

¹⁸⁶ Nightingale, *Grocers*, p. 542.

¹⁸⁷ T. C. Noble, *A Brief History of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, London, A. D. 1351–1889* (London, 1889), p. 56.

¹⁸⁸ Marsh and Ainsworth, *Carpenter’s Records*, II, p. 230.

¹⁸⁹ Translated in Myers, *Documents*, IV, no. 624.

¹⁹⁰ Virginia R. Bainbridge, ‘The Medieval Way of Death: Commemoration and the Afterlife in Pre-Reformation Cambridgeshire’, in Michael Wilks (ed.), *Prophecy and Eschatology* (Oxford, 1994), p. 196.

¹⁹¹ Peter King, *The Mystery of the Coventry Cappers* (London, 2004), pp. 62–65.

¹⁹² REED 3, p. 86.

¹⁹³ Printed in Thomas Sharp, *A Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently Performed at Coventry* (Coventry, 1825), p. 16.

guild's inventories from the second half of the fifteenth century demonstrate. The procession's centrepiece was a figure of the guild's patron saint, St George, equipped with a sword and dressed in 'a Cote armour for þe George beten with syluer'.¹⁹⁴ This 'cote armour' was likely a heraldic tabard embroidered with the arms of St George, as the figure also bore 'a collar for George of silver-plated copper with the arms of St George in the middle'.¹⁹⁵ It seems likely that the guild used this heraldic sign as their corporate arms, since analogous to London guilds, members of Norwich's guild of St George possessed almost a dozen banners and streamers 'made with þe ymage of Seynt George', 'silver-plated copper harnesses with the arms' for four horses,¹⁹⁶ and 'two silver shields with the arms of St George' to be carried in said procession.¹⁹⁷ The guild's public display of collective devotion to their patron saint as a key component of their collective identity was conveniently combined with the display of their heraldic sign, just as it was in Nottingham, where a correspondent St George's guild likewise decorated numerous torches to be carried on Corpus Christi with the arms of St George.¹⁹⁸

In York, too, heraldic signs were a common aspect of ritual self-representation, which Alexandra Johnston calls a 'mirror of the self identity of the city's numerous crafts' with regard to the plays staged for Corpus Christi.¹⁹⁹ However, here the city's *Memorandum Book* shows that the display of guild arms risked being perceived as a potential threat to the urban peace that had to be regulated. In 1432, it was recorded that although the guilds of saucemakers, tilemakers, millers as well as the guild of turners, hayresters and fullers used to stage separate pageants on Corpus Christi, they were now supposed to merge their efforts into a single pageant. As a result, 'they fought among each other about the way to deal with said pageant', which prompted the mayor to

¹⁹⁴ Mary Grace (ed.), *Records of the Gild of St. George in Norwich, 1389–1547* (Norwich, 1937), p. 32.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Robert Frank Byron Hodgkinson and Leonard Victor Davies Owen (eds), *The Account Books of the Gilds of St. George and of St. Mary in the Church of St. Peter, Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1939), pp. 52, 59.

¹⁹⁹ Alexandra F. Johnston, 'The Guild of Corpus Christi and the Procession of Corpus Christi in York', *Mediaeval Studies*, 38 (1976), p. 157.

intervene.²⁰⁰ Amongst other practicalities, which mainly related to matters of money, it was ordained that ‘none of the four aforementioned crafts must place signs, arms, or insignia on the aforementioned pageants’; instead, crucially, ‘only the arms of this honourable city’ ought to be displayed.²⁰¹ Given that York’s guilds were occasionally ‘unenthusiastic’ about their costly financial obligations towards the plays,²⁰² it seems likely that the guilds in question tried to increase their ‘return of investment’ by appropriating the pageants ‘as a means of advertizement’, as Maude Sellers puts it,²⁰³ in this case as a stage for collective self-representation by means of their corporate heraldry. But for the mayor the potential presence of their heraldic signs on the pageants was a cause for concern. Maybe their display for the benefit of the guilds’ symbolic capital was held to be at odds with the plays’ devotional visual programme ‘to be imprinted upon the imagination of the spectators for future pietistic purposes’.²⁰⁴

Certainly, questions of precedence and pre-eminence in the ephemeral space of urban processions were a frequent worry of late medieval guilds, as has been noted with regard to London earlier.²⁰⁵ In this context, visual signs that marked their position in the performed hierarchy of the city were highly relevant, as an example from Shrewsbury shows. Here, in 1461, ‘diuers contrauercyes and debatz’ about ‘that goyng in procession on Corpus christi’ had arisen between several of the city’s guilds, and the definitive order that was subsequently decreed made explicit reference to ‘the baner’ of each guild that marked their position in the ephemeral space of the procession.²⁰⁶ The decision of York’s mayor in 1432 might thus have to be understood as a similar attempt to avoid tedious discussions about questions of visual—and thus social—precedence by removing potentially divisive visual markers. In the case of quarrelling York guilds collaboratively expected to fund and stage a pageant, corporate heraldry, otherwise a

²⁰⁰ Maud Sellers (ed.), *York Memorandum Book* (Durham; London, 1915), II, pp. 171–172.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁰² Clifford Davidson, ‘York Guilds and the Corpus Christi Plays: Unwilling Participants?’, *Early Theatre*, 9.2 (2006), p. 11.

²⁰³ Sellers, *Memorandum*, II, p. xlvii.

²⁰⁴ Katherine Walker, ‘Spectatorship and Vision in the York Corpus Christi Plays’, *Comitatus*, 45 (2014), p. 171.

²⁰⁵ See above, p. 125.

²⁰⁶ REED 11, pp. 141–142.

firm part of such performances, thus appears to have been perceived at risk of furthering divisions and discord within the city.

3.3.2 *Germany: Rallying Guildsmen for Peace and War*

The double function of corporate arms as signs expressing the unity of guilds whilst at the same time underlining the fragmentation and division of the corporate body of the city becomes even more visible in Germany. Here, too, as Neil Brooks asserts, on the occasion of public processions there ‘marched the trade guilds behind their respective banners’, which, as Knut Schulz adds, frequently featured corporate arms as a means of promoting solidarity and representing collective honour.²⁰⁷ The Lüneburg guild of St Theodore, an association comprising the wealthiest families of the city, in 1461 issued a number of ordinances that emphasised the importance of its members’ outward appearance on public occasions. The ‘proper’ use of its visual identifiers, ‘especially regarding the arms of said society’ but also in relation to ‘the badge or collar’, was ordered to be observed ‘for the especial honour and distinction of public matters’, and ‘in token of the love and concord of the spirits of both sexes in the said society’.²⁰⁸

As in England, such ‘public matters’ must have included funerals with heraldically decorated hearse cloths as well, although in the case of Germany evidence is scarcer, since no German funeral palls survive before the seventeenth century.²⁰⁹ Still, the heraldic unification of the whittawers and pouch-makers of Frankfurt from 1452 also ordained that ‘they ought to have four shields on their hearse cloth’ with the arms of the craft,²¹⁰ and it seems probable that the candle holders of the Ingolstadt fishermen from about 1509, decorated with three shields displaying the guild’s heraldic charges, a rudder and a hook, were used for such occasions and other civic and religious

²⁰⁷ Neil C. Brooks, ‘Processional Drama and Dramatic Procession in Germany in the Late Middle Ages’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 32.2 (1933), p. 141; Schulz, *Handwerk*, p. 253. See also Katharina Simon-Muscheid, *Die Dinge im Schnittpunkt sozialer Beziehungsnetze: Reden und Objekte im Alltag (Oberrhein, 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert)* (Göttingen, 2004), p. 59.

²⁰⁸ Theodor Meyer (ed.), ‘Die Satzungen der *societas domicellorum* (Theodori-Gilde) zu Lüneburg vom Tage St. Antonii 1461’, *Jahresbericht des Museums-Vereins für das Fürstentum Lüneburg*, 7–9 (1885), p. 84.

²⁰⁹ Schindler, *Handwerk*, pp. 195–196; Peter Löffler, *Studien zum Totenbrauchtum in den Gilden, Bruderschaften und Nachbarschaften Westfalens vom Ende des 15. bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1975); Hans Wentzel, ‘Bahre, Bahrtuch, Bahrschild’, *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1937), <<http://www.rdklabor.de/w/?oldid=89980>>.

²¹⁰ Loesch, *Kölner Zunfturkunden*, II, p. 146.

processions.²¹¹

Clemens Jäger's chronicle on the weavers of Augsburg furthermore points to the display of corporate heraldry as part of dedicated guild festivities in Germany: 'Until today', he explained, on the occasion of the 'dancing day' or the anniversary of the Battle of Lechfeld, it was custom that 'the honourable craftsmen carry their laudably conquered shield of arms and banner'.²¹² Participation in such events and proximity to the guild's heraldic sign was jealously guarded, as the chronicler Jäger stressed that 'without the guild's admission and agreement no-one may walk under their flag and banner'.²¹³ This was no less the case when the guild actually did go to war, as the chronicler elaborated that 'the honourable weavers marched to battle under their conquered arms and banners; they charged under them, fought under them, and always returned them to the city with honour'.²¹⁴ The same was true for the guildsmen of Frankfurt and Cologne, for example, who also gathered for war under their respective (heraldic) banner.²¹⁵

The use of corporate arms as shared symbols that promised unity, not least in the face of adversity, becomes especially visible in the context of urban revolts, both violent and peaceful, which shook the cities of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Germany. In these moments of crisis, Wilfried Ehbrecht notes, guilds were particularly fond of displaying their arms on their banners,²¹⁶ although often the sources do not make explicit reference to the presence of heraldic signs as opposed to other visual identifiers associated with particular guilds.

In 1293, for example, Brunswick witnessed a protest against the dominant role of patricians and merchants in the city's government.²¹⁷ A crowd of craftsmen gathered under their collective signs to force the aldermen into concessions, at least according to

²¹¹ Helene Finkenstaedt and Thomas Finkenstaedt, *Stanglsitzerheilige und Große Kerzen: Stäbe, Kerzen und Stangen der Bruderschaften und Zünfte in Bayern* (Weißenhorn, 1968), p. 95.

²¹² CDS 34, p. 66.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Schmidt, *Frankfurter Zunfturkunden*, pp. 180 (fishermen), 230 (weavers); Leonhard Ennen, *Geschichte der Stadt Köln* (Cologne, 1869), III, pp. 9–10.

²¹⁶ Ehbrecht, 'Zwietracht', pp. 162–163. See also Johanek, 'Bürgerkämpfe', p. 69.

²¹⁷ Brigide Schwarz, 'Ein Bruderswist im Welfenhaus und die "Schicht der Gildemeister" in Braunschweig 1292–1299', *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 78 (2006), esp. pp. 231–240.

the later chronicler Hermann Bote (d. 1520), who stated that the rebels ‘came in their mail, the guilds with their banners and shields’.²¹⁸ Whether these ‘banners’ and ‘shields’ already featured any heraldic signs of Brunswick’s guilds—and indeed whether this description of the guilds’ march is not just an invention inspired by Bote’s personal experience with similar revolts—remains unclear.

The same is the case for a revolt of Augsburg craft guilds in 1368, which likewise demanded an increase in political participation at the expense of the city’s patrician elite.²¹⁹ Like in Brunswick, the Augsburg craftsmen rallied under shared signs and marched towards the town hall: ‘On St Severin’s day there came to Perlach square twenty-four crafts and their banners, all armed.’²²⁰ This mode of expression was again chosen thirty years later, when the guilds protested the much dreaded *Ungeld* tax: ‘After the *Ungeld* was reintroduced in 1399, higher than ever, a crowd gathered when five guilds joined together at the Franciscan church, armed and with their banners, and determined to prevent this.’²²¹ An illumination added to an anonymous fifteenth-century chronicle even shows the rebellious guildsmen of 1368 gathered on Perlach square under a common banner of a potentially heraldic design, although it does not correspond to any of the arms known to have been used by Augsburg guilds.²²² Nineteenth-century historians assumed that it was only after the revolt of 1368 that the guilds of Augsburg assumed heraldic signs.²²³ As self-evident as the assumption of (new) arms after the guilds’ (re-)incorporation, acknowledging their new political importance in the city, might appear, the charters issued in the same year confirming

²¹⁸ CDS 16, p. 303.

²¹⁹ Friedrich Blendinger, ‘Die Zunfterhebung von 1368 in der Reichsstadt Augsburg: Ihre Voraussetzungen, Durchführung und Auswirkung’, in Franz Quarthal and Wilfried Setzler (eds), *Stadtverfassung – Verfassungsstaat – Pressepolitik: Festschrift für Eberhard Naujoks zum 65. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1980).

²²⁰ CDS 22, p. 5.

²²¹ CDS 22, p. 47. See also CDS 4, p. 316.

²²² Eduard Zimmermann, *Augsburger Zeichen und Wappen* (Augsburg, 1970), esp. nos 1246–1257; Gröber, *Zunftherrlichkeit*, plate 65.

²²³ Carl Jäger, *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg, von ihrem Anfang bis auf die neuesten Zeiten* (Darmstadt, 1837), p. 56; Franz Eugen von Seida und Landensberg, *Augsburgs Geschichte von Erbauung der Stadt bis zum Tode Maximilian-Josephs, ersten Königs von Bayern, 1825* (Leipzig, 1826), pp. 197–198; Friedrich Karl Gullmann, *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg seit ihrer Entstehung bis zum Jahre 1806* (Augsburg, 1818), p. 62.

the new system of government in Augsburg made no mention of guild arms.²²⁴ It appears that these historians have taken a mere conjecture of their eighteenth-century predecessor David Langenmantel at face value. He had stated that, in the wake of the revolt, many guilds must have assumed arms and seals to be able to act and authorise just as the (partly) disempowered patricians used to do.²²⁵ Yet, Langenmantel had also stressed that some guilds in fact used arms prior to the revolt.²²⁶ At the very least, this leaves the possibility that the banners under which the rebellious Augsburg guilds had gathered on Perlach square in 1368 might have shown their arms after all.

More indicative of corporate heraldry is the case of the Cologne weavers' revolt in 1371, which already anticipated the change forced onto urban government structures in 1396, introducing a much more active political role of the city's guilds. Although in fact an alliance of different, 'lesser' guilds that also incorporated tailors and smiths, the rebels operated under the name of 'weavers', feeling that the government of established patricians and affluent merchants was no longer representative of their political needs.²²⁷ In 1371, this antagonism led to a decisive battle, with 'burgesses and commune'—that is the patricians, merchants, and their supporters in favour of the *status quo*—on the one side, and the weavers on the other side, who 'rose up in large numbers and gathered near the convent of the brothers of Our Lady', notably, again, 'under their banners'.²²⁸ Whether these banners did mirror their heraldic signs is, again, not made explicit by the chronicler. Certainly, many corporate seals attached to the *Verbundbrief* of 1396, a charter which governed the political role of the Cologne guilds, showed corporate arms,²²⁹ and illuminations that embellished an account of the revolt in the

²²⁴ CDS 4, p. 129–149.

²²⁵ David Langenmantel, *Historie des Regiments in des Heil. Röm. Reichs Stadt Augspurg* (Frankfurt [Oder]; Leipzig, 1725), p. 57.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Klaus Militzer, *Ursachen und Folgen der innerstädtischen Auseinandersetzungen in Köln in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 1980), pp. 163–164.

²²⁸ CDS 14, p. 710.

²²⁹ Berthold Marcus, 'Die Siegel des Kölner Verbundbriefes vom Jahre 1396', *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins*, 6–7 (1925).

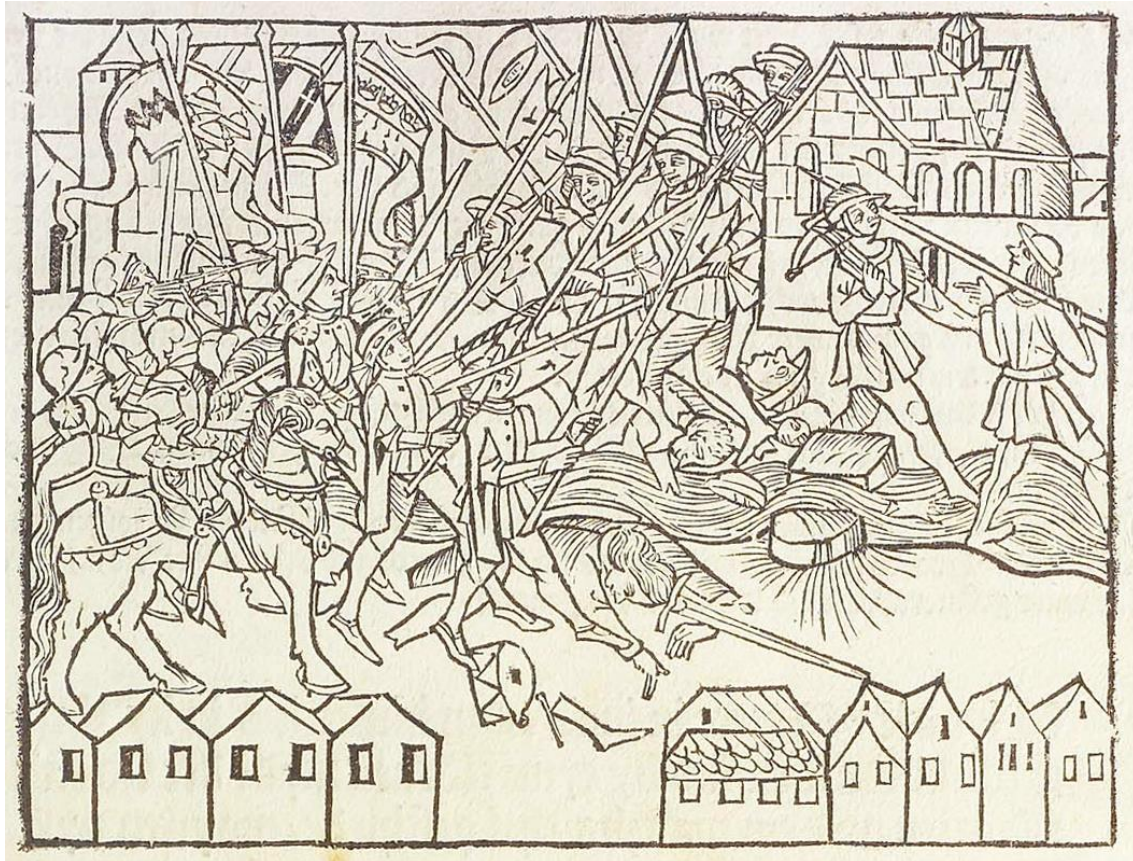


Fig. 3.12: The Cologne weavers' revolt of 1371, depicted in the Koelhoff chronicle (1499), fol. 275r.

Koelhoff Chronicle also imagined the banners to have shown the guilds' arms. Here, the 'establishment' of Cologne, on horseback, can be seen fighting the (poorer) weavers on foot (fig. 3.12). On the one side, a banner with a double 'W', perhaps indicative of the Windeck merchant guild, can be seen right next to a banner bearing three vessels, the charge of the goldsmiths' arms,²³⁰ alongside another banner showing the municipal arms of Cologne. The weavers' banner, on the other side, bears the characteristic charge of a 'shuttle' often found in the arms of weavers' guilds.²³¹ Surprisingly, the shield depicted on the Cologne weavers' seal from 1396 did not contain a shuttle, instead featuring the texture of a linen cloth beneath three crowns reminiscent of Cologne's municipal arms.²³² The weavers' banner as a symbol for the rebels' cause was certainly made an example of after the victory of the established elite, when it was 'hacked,

²³⁰ On the arms used by Cologne's guilds, see Elisabeth Mick, *Köln im Mittelalter* (1990), p. 204.

²³¹ Seyler, *Berufswappen*, pp. 84–85.

²³² Marcus, 'Siegel', p. 154.

ripped, and split into pieces'.²³³ Notably, this loss of their collective artifact coincided with the abolition of all visual and legal expressions of their identity as a corporate body: their assemblies were forbidden, their halls were seized, and their charters of incorporation were withdrawn.²³⁴

In Constance, too, the dissolution of rebellious corporations and the abolition of their collective symbols as a result of urban revolts went hand in hand. After several uprisings of the craft guilds,²³⁵ Emperor Sigismund in 1430 not only ordained that the guilds of tanners and linen-weavers were to be abolished, but also declared 'that no guild may own a banner, and instead remain under the banner of the city whenever it is necessary'.²³⁶ Thus, similarly to the case of York guilds being forbidden from displaying their corporate arms, the destruction (or prohibition) of guild banners in Germany points to a perception that attributed banners, and the heraldic signs they often displayed, with an active function in promoting urban unrest. It appears that due to their role in the performance of revolts, they were not just seen as signs that encouraged unity and solidarity among the corporate body of guildsmen, but also perceived as an efficacious tool of division able to threaten the cohesion of urban society and the peace of the city.

3.4 Conclusion: Emblazoning 'Worshipful' and 'Noble' Corporations

For urban guilds in late medieval England and Germany, heraldic communication was a crucial component of collective self-representation. As a decorative element of their halls, corporate arms featured in carved stone and wood, painted both on the outside and inside, depicted in stained glass, embroidered on textiles such as tapestries, banners, and cushions, and attached to various pieces of interior furniture, from painted panels, cherished chests, plates, and silverware to actual shields of arms attached to the walls. At the same time, corporate heraldry was part and parcel of civic processions, joyous

²³³ CDS 14, p. 711. See also CDS 12, p. 256.

²³⁴ Militzer, *Auseinandersetzungen*, pp. 178–179.

²³⁵ Friedrich Horsch, *Die Konstanzer Zünfte in der Zeit der Zunftbewegung bis 1430: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Zunftbuches und der Zunftbriefe* (Sigmaringen, 1979), pp. 20–28.

²³⁶ Philipp Ruppert (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Konstanz* (Constance, 1891), p. 366.

entries, religious plays, solemn funerals, and martial exercises in warfare or revolt. The heraldic signs of late medieval guilds featured on banners and shields carried by guildsmen, or exhibited on representative barges and pageant floats, just as they decorated candle holders, funeral palls, and the bodies of the participants themselves in the form of collars and badges.

But guildsmen not only identified with these signs because they were identified by them within these permanent and ephemeral spaces of the late medieval body corporate. The arms of guilds were also fashioned as specific representations (and reminders) of central norms and values constitutive of corporate identity, framed in terms of collective honour. The grants to London corporations as well as the chronicle of the Augsburg weavers explicitly spoke of heraldic signs as representations of corporate honour, while their presence in the context of documents, halls, and ritual performances more implicitly related corporate heraldry to the norms and values constitutive of the guilds' identity. Grants of corporate arms in England showed a particular concern with proper conduct and descent, for instance, and suggested the granted arms to be seen as visible proof thereof. Religious obligations towards revered patron saints and Christian piety and charity in general make up another core aspect of corporate identity, and correspondingly corporate arms often accompanied religious decorations of halls and pious efforts exercised in urban rituals, not least the funeral of deceased members. This particular link between corporate heraldry and corporate piety was also celebrated in churches and chapels, where heraldic signs frequently testified to the piety and charity of late medieval guilds, too.²³⁷ In a fundamentally different context, the honour of the guild was related to the guildsmen's skills as warriors

²³⁷ In Germany, the bakers of Munich paid for a stained glass window in the cathedral, which showed their characteristic shield of arms in 1471 (Susanne Fischer, *Die Münchner Schule der Glasmalerei: Studien zu den Glasgemälden des späten 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts im Münchner Raum* [Munich, 1997], p. 93); the furriers of Lüneburg donated a chandelier with their corporate arms to the church of St John at the end of the fifteenth-century (Willi Meyne, *Lüneburger Plastik des XV. Jahrhunderts* [Lüneburg, 1959], p. 126); the metalworkers of Nuremberg in 1520 commissioned an alterpiece with their arms (Gröber, *Zunft Herrlichkeit*, p. 104). In England, the grant to the ironmongers referred to 'baners to the honour and [worship] of God in holy churches' (CA, Old Grants O, fol. 15v), just as the haberdashers were encouraged 'to use & shewe in all places honest in the worship of God' (CA, OG 2, fol. 126r). The London grocers 1491/1492 noted 'typserye', 'cusshonis', and 'paintes' with the corporate arms in their chapel of St Mary at Hill (Kingdon, *Grocers' Archives*, II, p. 353), while the London pewterers paid for stained glass with 'the armes in the same wendowe' at Allhallow's church in 1518/1519 (Welch, *Pewterers*, I, p. 104).

involved in the defence of city and monarchy, or, in fact, urban revolts. In these moments of crisis, heraldic banners as collective signs assumed a special significance, as the weavers of Augsburg stressed, for example. Their corporate arms were to be seen as a monument to their chivalric prowess, notably in a causal relation to a formative event in their history representative of their exemplary unity. After all, as cases of heraldic unification of separate guilds demonstrate, corporate arms were seen to be inherently beneficial to the social cohesion of the corporate bodies they identified.

As in the case of burgess arms, corporate heraldry was rarely displayed in isolation, but instead often appeared in the context of other heraldic signs. These included the arms of individual guildsmen, serving as comprehensive registers of active members and as a means of commemorating distinguished individuals inside guild halls, or announcing the loss of a fellow member during funeral processions. While heraldic representations of the realm or the monarch can be regarded as visual allusions to the important role royal or imperial benefactions played for the collective identity of guilds, the display of corporate arms in the context of municipal arms paints a more ambivalent picture.

Indeed, precisely because corporate heraldry visually distinguished and thereby underlined the differences between the various corporate bodies within the city as a whole, urban governments in Germany and England feared that the display of corporate heraldry risked contradicting ideals of unity and solidarity within the larger *communitas*. This divisive potential of heraldic communication was already implicit in the pursuit of grants of arms by London guilds keen to defend and extend their social distinction. It was more pronounced in the case of urban rituals in York, where guilds appear to have been vying with each other for a particularly prominent display of their arms in urban rituals. The most expressive case for division promoted by means of heraldry is that of rebellious German guildsmen rallying under their arms to change the established social order, which subsequently led to the abolition of their collective signs lest they encourage further discord. Of course, the contexts of corporate heraldry were fundamentally different in these cases, which may in fact point to differences in the political role of guilds played in England and Germany respectively:²³⁸ whereas German

²³⁸ See above, p. 23.

guilds used their arms in open revolt against the established social structures of urban government, the quarrels about precedence in York (or Shrewsbury) were less revolutionary, fighting over their position within the urban hierarchy without seeking to overturn it.

However, in both England and Germany, the 'remedy' prescribed against the potentially divisive effect of corporate arms was again of a heraldic nature: to counter the fragmentation of urban society that was seen to be promoted by the arms of competing guilds, the visibility of their heraldic signs was restricted in favour of the arms of the city. As the next chapter will show, this visual emphasis on the municipal arms must have been hoped to utilise the unifying force of heraldic signs in order to promote a focus towards the unity of the *civitas* as a whole, not a 'petty' pursuit of corporate parochialism.

4 Cities: Representing the *civitas* in Past and Present

An all too simplistic interpretation of the late medieval city as a homogeneous community bound by a single collective identity is ‘a notoriously slippery concept’, as Miri Rubin warns.¹ As the chapters on townsmen and their guilds competing for social distinction have shown, such a perspective tends to gloss over the fact that urban society was highly fragmented, socially divided, and politically contested.² Still, in any group, there are ‘interlocking experiences of personal identity through participation in collective, communal endeavours, alongside a consideration of individual identity as an entity’.³ In this sense, late medieval townspeople did constitute ‘a social unit which, however internally divided, they and their neighbours feel to be distinct’.⁴ They cherished and celebrated a set of shared values, norms, and stories that offered a distinct collective identity to the individual members of the *civitas*.

At the core was a concern with the welfare of the city as a whole.⁵ For this reason, ‘justice, peace and the common weal are the norms most frequently mentioned’ in urban sources, as Hans-Christoph Rublack notes with regard to German cities, just as in England an emphasis on ‘internal harmony [...] forged unique identities for medieval towns’, as Lorraine Attreed likewise concludes.⁶ As was the case for townsmen and their

¹ Rubin, ‘Identities’, p. 402.

² See also Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel, ‘Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, in Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel (eds), *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe* (London, 2017); Christian D. Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250–1530* (Oxford, 2017); Franz-Josef Arlinghaus, ‘The Myth of Urban Unity: Religion and Social Performance in Late Medieval Braunschweig’, in Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester, and Carol Symes (eds), *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400–1500* (Farnham; Burlington [Verm.], 2010); Rigby, ‘Urban Oligarchy’.

³ Rubin, ‘Identities’, p. 403.

⁴ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 156.

⁵ Eberhard Isenmann, ‘The Notion of the Common Good, the Concept of Politics, and Practical Policies in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Cities’, in Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure van Bruaene (eds), *De Bono Communi: The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City (13th–16th c.)* (Turnhout, 2010); Isenmann, ‘Norms and Values’.

⁶ Hans-Christoph Rublack, ‘Political and Social Norms in Urban Communities in the Holy Roman Empire’, in Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.), *Religion, Politics and Social Protest: Three Studies on Early Modern Germany*

guilds, the perhaps most important quality of collective urban identity—and the end of its norms and values—was the ‘honour’ accorded to the city as a corporate body. For late medieval townsmen, ‘peace is law, the honour of the city is its law, the honour of the city and the honour of God can be identified with one another, law and justice are cited as the foundation of peace and unity, and honour and the common weal are seen as identical’.⁷ In this mindset, the ‘good’, ‘honest’ and ‘Christian’ conduct of each citizen was of utmost importance, so that ‘to take action against immorality was to ensure the honour of the city’, as Stephanie Tarbin stresses.⁸ Individual misconduct threatened to discredit the entire community, not only in human but also in divine eyes. It was the collective reputation of the ‘sacred community’ (*Sakralgemeinschaft*) and the intercession of venerated patron saints before God that were held to ensure the city’s welfare in this world, but also the redemption of its citizens in the next.⁹

In this effort, collective rituals such as processions promoted an all too often absent unity of the city and thus furthered its honour.¹⁰ The honour of a city united in harmony—composed of well-behaved citizens guided by a good government concerned with the *bonum commune*—was also held to be exemplified by ‘the beauty and representativeness of its buildings’ as visible proof of its welfare.¹¹ If necessary, this welfare was also defended on the battlefield. Analogous to the chivalric ambitions of townsmen and their guilds, military achievements were a formative aspect of the

(London, 1984), p. 27; Lorraine Attreed, ‘Urban Identity in Medieval English Towns’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32.4 (2002), p. 591.

⁷ Rublack, ‘Norms in Urban Communities’, p. 48.

⁸ Stephanie Tarbin, ‘Moral Regulation and Civic Identity in London 1400–1530’, in Linda Rasmussen et al. (eds), *Our Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of John Tillotson for His 60th Birthday* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 135.

⁹ Enno Bünz, ‘Klerus und Bürger: Die Bedeutung der Kirche für die Identität deutscher Städte im Spätmittelalter’, in Giorgio Chittolini and Peter Johanek (eds), *Aspetti e componenti dell’identità urbana in Italia e in Germania* (Bologna; Berlin, 2003), esp. p. 354; Helen Mary Carrel, ‘Civic Government and Identity in the Provincial Towns of Late Medieval England, c. 1370 to c. 1500’ (unpublished PhD, University of Cambridge, 2007), p. 191; Sarah Rees Jones, ‘Cities and Their Saints in England, circa 1150–1300: The Development of Bourgeois Values in the Cults of Saint William of York and Saint Kenelm of Winchcombe’, in Caroline Goodson, Anne Elisabeth Lester, and Carol Symes (eds), *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space* (Farnham; Burlington [Verm.], 2010), esp. p. 208.

¹⁰ See above, p. 146, and below, p. 225.

¹¹ Isenmann, ‘Norms and Values’, p. 191.

identity of the city and its sense of honour.¹² For this reason, allusions to battles and sieges were such a frequent motif of chronicles, rituals, and monuments; they served as ‘signs of commemoration’ (*Erinnerungszeichen*) within the ‘commemoration community’ (*Erinnerungsgemeinschaft*) of the late medieval city.¹³ Just as townspeople indulged in elaborate genealogies of their families and insisted on the antiquity of their guilds, so they liked to imagine—by means of texts, images, monuments, and rituals—that their city looked back on a long, honourable history.¹⁴

All of these aspects contributed to the identity or ‘personality’ of the late medieval city, as Norman Pounds calls it, which the townspeople also saw ‘presented by the heraldic display which decorated its entrance and sealed the documents drawn up on its behalf’.¹⁵ While Pounds regrettably does not explore this relationship between city and municipal heraldry further, this chapter will analyse the perceptions and functions of heraldry in relation to the collective identity of the city in more detail, arguing that municipal arms were seen as closely connected to the honour of the city. The first section thus discusses how this link was expressed and reinforced by means of grants of arms and the signs they conferred, simultaneously serving as outward representations of urban political allegiance. The second section focuses on narrative constructions in urban historiography, which consciously intertwined heraldry and history as key components of communal identity and sources of the city’s collective honour. Subsequently, the chapter turns towards the places in the late medieval city in which these signs of collective honour and communal identity were put on display. The third section approaches the role of heraldic communication in town halls as a stage for communal self-representation, while the fourth section takes a broader look at the

¹² Isenmann, ‘Common Good’, p. 112. In terms of urban experiences in England, see also Anthony Goodman, *The Wars of the Roses: Military Activity and English Society, 1452–97* (London, 1981), p. 202.

¹³ Klaus Graf, ‘Erinnerungsfeste in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt’, in Hanno Brand, Pierre Monnet, and Martial Staub (eds), *Memoria, communitas, civitas: Mémoire et conscience urbaines en occident à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Ostfildern, 2003).

¹⁴ Mark Mersiowsky, ‘Medien der Erinnerung in der spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadt’, in Joachim J. Halbekann, Ellen Widder, and Sabine von Heusinger (eds), *Stadt zwischen Erinnerungsbewahrung und Gedächtnisverlust* (Ostfildern, 2015); Peter Johaneck, ‘Geschichtsüberlieferung und ihre Medien in der Gesellschaft des späten Mittelalter’, in Christel Meier et al. (eds), *Pragmatische Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur* (Munich, 2002).

¹⁵ Norman Pounds, *The Medieval City* (Westport, 2005), p. xxviii.

relationship of heraldic signs and urban space in the context of walls, gates, and other architectural monuments. In the same spirit, the fifth section explores the place of municipal arms inside urban rituals and revolts, before the last section analyses the role municipal heraldry played as means of authorisation for civic officials, poor beggars, and urban products.

4.1 Honour and Politics: Granting and Imposing Municipal Arms

While grants of arms to guilds were an almost exclusively English phenomenon unknown in late medieval Germany, the opposite is true with regard to grants issued to cities. German emperors, kings, princes, and other territorial lords granted, confirmed, and augmented a considerable number of municipal arms,¹⁶ while in England it was only in 1538 that Gloucester received a grant of arms.¹⁷ This does not mean that English towns and cities did not possess municipal arms. As was the case for most townsmen and guilds in the later Middle Ages, towns and cities in both England and Germany assumed heraldic signs without a heraldic authority.¹⁸ Still, 'it goes without saying that a coat of arms conferred by the emperor was more highly regarded than a self-assumed one'.¹⁹ Even cities already in possession of municipal arms sometimes sought to receive a confirmation or augmentation of their heraldic sign.

The reason for this heraldic desire, this section will argue, lies in the emphasis such documents placed on the honour and identity of the city, and how the granted, confirmed, or augmented sign was fashioned to be perceived as a visual expression of this honour and identity. At the same time, the process of granting heraldic signs was not just a strategy of cities keen to increase their collective symbolic capital, but a tool for rulers to reflect and impose political allegiances as well.

¹⁶ Günter Mattern, 'Das Stadtwappen im Wandel der Zeit', in Jeane-Claude Muller (ed.), *La ville et ses habitants: Aspects généalogiques, héraldiques et emblématiques* (Luxembourg, 1999), p. 194; Erich Kittel, 'Die städtischen Siegel und Wappen und der Landesherr im Mittelalter', in Kurt Winckelsesser (ed.), *Festschrift zum hundertjährigen Bestehen des Herold zu Berlin 1869–1969* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 96–107.

¹⁷ J. D. T. Niblett, 'Arms of the City of Gloucester', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 2 (1877).

¹⁸ Louda, *European Civic Coats of Arms*, p. 13; Hauptmann, *Wappenrecht*, pp. 126–127.

¹⁹ Louda, *European Civic Coats of Arms*, p. 13.

4.1.1 *Underlining the Honour of the City*

Although the term ‘honour’ itself is surprisingly scarce in extant German grants of arms to cities, norms and values associated with this late medieval concept are as prominent as they were in grants to individual townspeople and London’s livery companies. The act of granting, confirming, or augmenting municipal arms was presented as the result of honourable inheritance and impeccable behaviour, evidenced by acts of subservience and support, good moral conduct and government, and chivalric deeds on the battlefield. At the same time, the heraldic signs in question were suggested to be perceived as visual representations of this symbolic capital of honour.

Thus, grants and confirmations of municipal arms underlined the (alleged) antiquity of the city and its heraldry, reflecting, and reinforcing attitudes that saw heraldic signs, first and foremost, as commemorative signs testifying to the past. In 1438, King Albert II’s grant to Brunswick emphasised that the townspeople’s ‘honourable petition’ for a confirmation of their heraldic sign was accepted because ‘they and their ancestors’ had borne their arms ‘for a long time and indeed longer than any man’s memory’.²⁰ Frederick III’s grant to the imperial city of Weissenburg in 1481 likewise stressed the city’s armorial inheritance, although in this case the arms ‘their ancestors have hitherto borne and used’ were replaced with new arms containing an inescutcheon of the imperial eagle.²¹ Territorial lords chose similar approaches: Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg augmented the arms of Bayreuth claiming that the city had been equipped ‘of old with inadequate arms’ that did not do justice to its position as ‘one of the oldest and most important cities’ in the burgraviate of Nuremberg.²² To underline this significance heraldically, the existing municipal arms were quartered with the arms of the burgraviate.²³

Grants of arms given to German cities also referred to other core values of medieval urban identity by presenting the signs they conferred as the result of decent, ‘honourable’ behaviour, and as reminders of the collective obligation towards this ideal

²⁰ UBB, pp. 222–223.

²¹ Printed in Johann Jakob Moser and Johann Christian Lünig (eds), *Des Reichs-Stättischen Hand-Buchs zweyter Theil* (Tübingen, 1733), pp. 828–829.

²² Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 831.

²³ *Ibid.*

conduct upon which the honour of the city depended. In 1494, Albrecht of Bavaria rewarded the people of Donaustauf because ‘they are conversant with virtues and good deeds’, and allowed them to use arms in all manners ‘to which pious and honest people are entitled’.²⁴ Louis V, count palatine of the Rhine, noted the ‘honesty and good character’ of the inhabitants of Weiden when granting arms in 1510,²⁵ while Frederick the Wise, duke of Saxony, in 1514 gave arms to the people of Torgau hoping that ‘they may hold our city in honest character and order for the betterment of the common weal’.²⁶

References to specific purposes of granted, confirmed, or augmented arms are indicative in this context, too, as these practices were likewise closely connected to the city’s and identity. First and foremost was the use of the municipal arms on seals, which as means of authorisation signified the city’s integrity as a signatory for legal transactions and diplomatic correspondence.²⁷ In the case of Eibelstadt, Emperor Sigismund’s grant of arms in 1434 was part of a more extensive town charter, which conceded the use of seals engraved with a shield of arms blazoned in the document.²⁸ A year later, Duke Henry of Bavaria gave arms to the town of Ried, ‘so that they may seal with it as other towns and cities that have arms do’.²⁹ Because the people of Burgebrach still lacked the privilege to seal in 1480, they appealed to their lord, Bishop Philip of Bamberg, who likewise granted them arms to be used on a municipal seal.³⁰ The town was also permitted ‘to use said shield on a banner in all deeds and necessities’,³¹ just as

²⁴ Anonymous (ed.), ‘Wappenbrief [des Marktes Donaustauf]’, *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für den Regenkreis*, 2.4 (1833).

²⁵ Printed in Wilhelm Brenner-Schäfer, ‘Historisch-topische Beschreibung der Stadt Weiden in der Oberpfalz’, *Verhandlungen des historischen Vereines der Oberpfalz und Regensburg*, 19 (1860), pp. 284–285.

²⁶ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 355.

²⁷ Arlinghaus, ‘Konstruktionen von Identität’; Harald Drös and Hermann Jakobs, ‘Die Zeichen einer neuen Klasse: Zur Typologie der frühen Stadtsiegel’, in Konrad Krimm and Herwig John (eds), *Bild und Geschichte: Studien zur politischen Ikonographie: Festschrift für Hansmartin Schwarzmaier zum fünfundsiebzehnten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1997); Toni Diederich, ‘Zum Quellenwert und Bedeutungsgehalt mittelalterlicher Städtesiegel’, *Archiv für Diplomatik, Schriftgeschichte, Siegel- und Wappenkunde*, 23 (1977).

²⁸ Johann Baptist Kestler, ‘Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Eibelstadt’, *Archiv des Historischen Vereins für Unterfranken und Aschaffenburg*, 5 (1838), pp. 2–3.

²⁹ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 828.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 835.

³¹ *Ibid.*

the earliest extant grant to Heroldsberg in 1417 encouraged the townspeople to use their new arms ‘on their banner in all matters and businesses’.³²

Such matters included, as the 1514 grant to Torgau mentioned, ‘funerals’ and ‘warfare’.³³ The military use of heraldry was frequently mentioned in German grants of municipal arms. A confirmation given to Emden in 1495 by King Maximilian stressed their use ‘on the battlefield in conflicts and combat’ and for the purpose of ‘encampments’,³⁴ as did a grant issued to Blaubeuren by Frederick III in 1472.³⁵ In some instances, cities received grants, confirmations, and augmentations in specific recognition of military support and knightly conduct: Neuss gained the right to add the imperial eagle to their arms ‘for their enjoyment and in eternal remembrance of their chivalric deeds’ after Charles the Bold had unsuccessfully besieged the city in 1474 and 1475.³⁶ Duke Ulrich of Württemberg augmented the arms of Tübingen as a reward for their help against the ‘Poor Conrad’ revolt of 1514,³⁷ and when two decades later the Peasants’ War had broken out in full, the cities of Überlingen and Villingen received imperial grants of arms in recognition of their efforts against the rebels, too.³⁸

In Villingen, the significance of a grant of municipal arms for its recipients is exemplified by a stained glass panel commissioned to remember this imperial benefaction. Showing the moment the newly granted arms, depicted on a banner, arrived in Villingen and were welcomed by a crowd of Villingen townsmen (fig. 4.1),³⁹ the grant of arms emerges as a celebrated moment in the life of the town.

However, contrary opinions regarding the ‘tangible’ benefits of grants of arms existed. In 1433, when the town scribe of Görlitz was sent to petition for an imperial grant of arms as a reward for the town’s military support against the Hussites, alderman

³² Printed in Georg Andreas Will, *Kleine Beiträge zu der Diplomatie und deren Literatur* (Altdorf, 1789), p. 71.

³³ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 355.

³⁴ Ernst Friedländer, *Ostfriesisches Urkundenbuch* (Emden, 1881), II, p. 460.

³⁵ Anonymous (ed.), ‘Fortgesetzte Bruchstücke von Blaubeuren’, *Schwäbisches Magazin*, 1779, p. 329.

³⁶ Theodor Joseph Lacomblet (ed.), *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins oder des Erzstifts Cöln* (Düsseldorf, 1858), IV, pp. 474–475. See also CDS 20, p. 610.

³⁷ Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 384.

³⁸ Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, pp. 96, 136.

³⁹ Badisches Landesmuseum [Karlsruhe] (ed.), *Die Renaissance im deutschen Südwesten: Zwischen Reformation und Dreissigjährigem Krieg: Eine Ausstellung des Landes Baden-Württemberg, Heidelberger Schloss, 21. Juni bis 19. Oktober 1986* (Karlsruhe, 1986), I, p. 278; Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, p. 146.

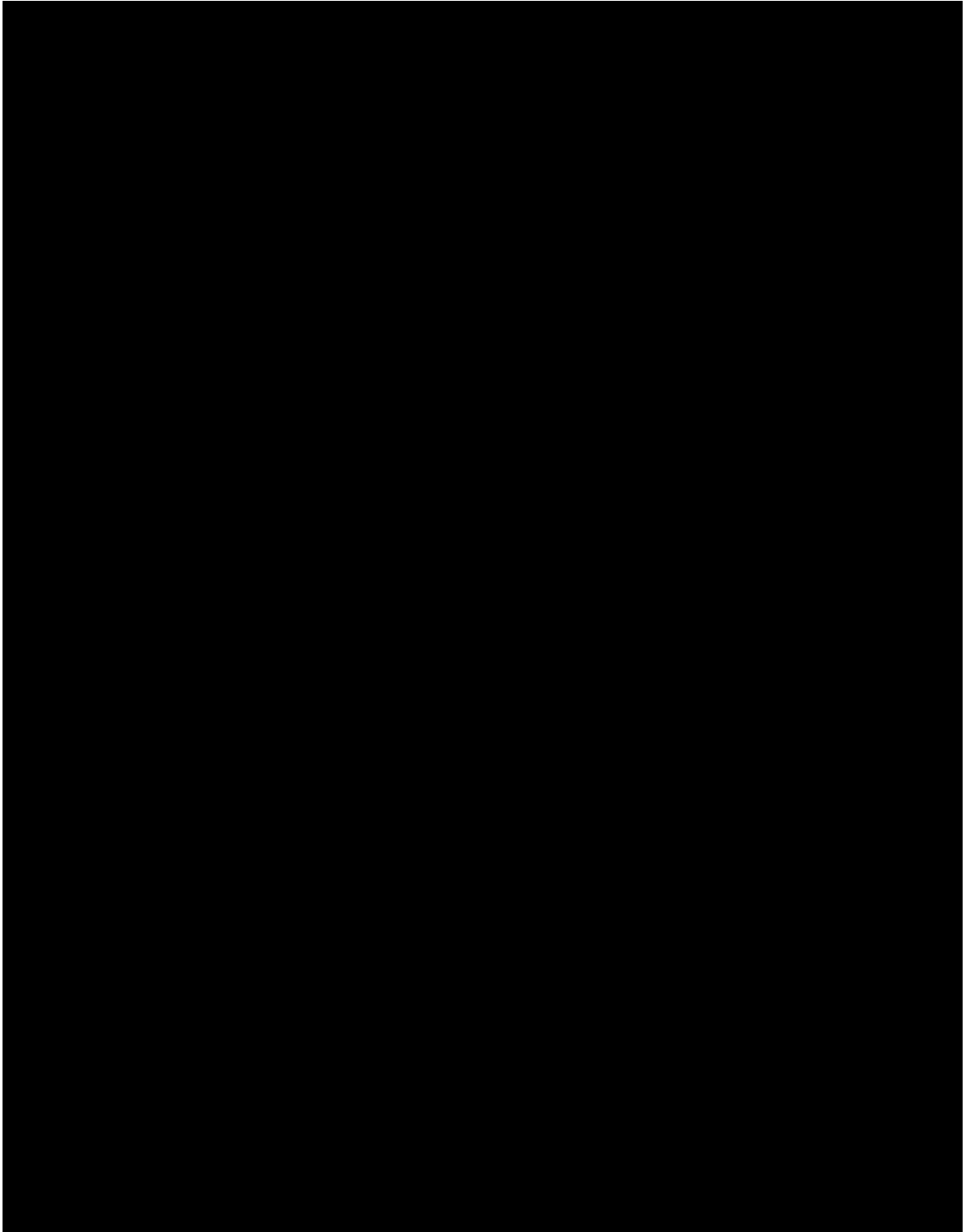


Fig. 4.1: Stained glass panel from Villingen (1538), showing the arms granted to the town by King Ferdinand and their reception by the townspeople in 1530. Städtisches Museum, Villingen-Schwenningen.

Nicholas Arnold remained sceptical. Upon the scribe's successful return to Görlitz the alderman supposedly jeered: 'Well, dear scribe, if you had brought back an ass with

golden testicles the size of an oven, that would have been much better than a shield of arms!⁴⁰ Arnold's remark mainly targeted the fact that the scribe's travel expenses had cost the treasury of Görlitz dearly.⁴¹ A comment on the story added by mayor Johannes Hesse (d. 1544) suggests that expenses for a grant of arms might have been a contentious issue: 'quite a few men consider the city's profit but not its honour', he lamented, stressing that, in his opinion, 'it is neither honourable nor good to place profit above honour'.⁴² To the mayor, the increase in the city's honour implied by the grant was of more value than the pecuniary cost of the document.

While there are no late medieval grants of arms to English towns and cities, the grant eventually given to Gloucester in 1538 (fig. 4.2) shows that comparable perceptions of grants of arms as elevations of communal honour and heraldic signs as its visible



Fig. 4.2: Grant of arms to the City of Gloucester by Christoph Barker, Garter King of Arms (1538). CA, Original Patents, Impersonal, no. 37.

⁴⁰ Printed in Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, *Sammlung ober- und niederlausitzischer Geschichtschreiber* (Görlitz, 1839), pp. 231–232.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁴² *Ibid.*

expressions certainly existed in sixteenth-century England. Like other English grants—and more explicitly than their German counterparts—the charter presents the granted arms as a mark of distinction awarded for virtuous conduct in the past. It begins with the familiar ‘invocation of equity and reason as the twin sponsors of social distinction’,⁴³ followed by the retrospective reference to ‘merites and good renowne’, namely the ‘honest demeanour and good gouernaunce’ that ‘haue been of olde tyme’ particular to the people of Gloucester, for which they ought to be ‘remunerated and rewarded’.⁴⁴ The means of choice was heraldry, ‘the right noble and auncyent ensignes and tokens of honore and nobles’, given with the expectation of ‘perpetuall memorye for their good name and vertuose fame and their successours after them foreuer more’ in mind.⁴⁵ And although the Gloucester grant did not mention specific practices, there is no doubt, as this chapter will further demonstrate, that late medieval English cities used their municipal arms for the same purposes set out in German grants of arms, including the use on seals,⁴⁶ on banners and standards in warfare, and as part of funeral processions, as seen in the case of Thomas Bradbury, for example.⁴⁷

4.1.2 *Reflecting the Politics of Urban Allegiance*

Besides flattering the recipient’s sense of honour, grants of arms also reflected and reinforced ties of political dependence, although, of course, it was this dependence that simultaneously guaranteed the liberties of late medieval cities. While this relationship between cities and their lords was reflected in the process of issuing the document and transferring the heraldic sign from the superior authority to a subservient grantee, it was also expressed in the rhetoric of the document and the design of the heraldic signs conferred.

German grants, confirmations, and augmentations of arms often referred to

⁴³ Cheesman, ‘Grants and Confirmations’, p. 80.

⁴⁴ CA, Original Patents, Impersonal, no. 37.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ John Cherry, ‘Seals of Cities and Towns: Concepts of Choice?’, in Susan Solway (ed.), *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power* (Turnhout, 2015); J. Harvey Bloom, *English Seals* (London, 1936), pp. 219–228; Gale Pedrick, *Borough Seals of the Gothic Period: A Series of Examples, Illustrating the Nature of Their Design and Artistic Value* (London, 1904).

⁴⁷ See above, p. 87.

‘services willingly and conveniently rendered’ by the grantees, as in the case of Ried’s grant by the duke of Bavaria in 1435.⁴⁸ Bishop Anton of Bamberg likewise noted ‘the continual love, loyalty and compliant obedience’ that the town of Neunkirchen had shown ‘every day conducting themselves in a subservient way’,⁴⁹ and when Frederick III gave arms to Blaubeuren in 1472, the emperor, too, emphasised the ‘dutiful and diligent services rendered by him and his predecessors to us and our ancestors’, which were expected ‘to continue in the future’.⁵⁰

This relationship between citizen and sovereign was, as scholarship is well aware,⁵¹ also expressed through the heraldic symbolism chosen for municipal arms. Many cities’ quest for imperial immediacy was underlined by means of augmentations with elements of imperial heraldry, as in the cases of Constance, Neuss, and Weissenburg, for example.⁵² Territorial lords likewise incorporated allusions to their arms into grants to their cities: Duke Henry of Bavaria placed the Wittelsbach arms in the chief of the arms granted to Pfeffenhausen in 1402,⁵³ whereas in the case of Donaustauf only the Wittelsbach tinctures, azure and argent, were incorporated into the newly granted municipal arms in 1494.⁵⁴

While England did not see grants of arms to cities until 1538, municipal arms nonetheless reflected political dependencies.⁵⁵ The heraldry of royal boroughs, as settlements only subject to the king, comparable to German imperial cities, often included allusions to the monarchy, in the case of London the arms of St George, for

⁴⁸ Printed in Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 828.

⁴⁹ Franz Wenceslaus Goldwitzer, *Geschichte des Marktes Neunkirchen am Brand und des ehemaligen Klosters* (Erlangen, 1814), pp. 134–135.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, ‘Blaubeuren’, p. 328.

⁵¹ Franz-Heinz Hye, ‘Haupt- und Stadtherr und Stadtwappen’, in Jeane-Claude Muller (ed.), *La ville et ses habitants: Aspects généalogiques, héraldiques et emblématiques* (Luxembourg, 1999), pp. 185–186; Karlheinz Blaschke, ‘Die Symbolik der Stadtwappen’, *Problemy nauk pomocniczych historii*, 3 (1974); Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, esp. p. 61.

⁵² J. Marmor, ‘Ueber die Wappen und Sigille der Stadt Constanz’, *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, 5 (1858); Seyler, *Heraldik*, p. 382 (Neuss); Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, p. 50 (Weissenburg). See also Günter Mattern, ‘Der Schwenkel als Schildhaupt’, *Archivum Heraldicum*, 105 (1991).

⁵³ Karl Heinrich von Lang and Maximilian von Freyberg (eds), *Regesta sive rerum boicarum* (Munich, 1847), XI, p. 244.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, ‘Donaustauer Wappenbrief’.

⁵⁵ Scott-Giles, *Civic Heraldry of England and Wales*, pp. 3–4, 19; William H. St John Hope, ‘English Municipal Heraldry’, *The Archaeological Journal*, 52 (1895), p. 174.

example.⁵⁶ York, too, bore St George's cross, but the city also placed five golden lions reminiscent of the English royal arms on their shield.⁵⁷ The arms of Norwich featured only one (royal) lion below a castle.⁵⁸ Seigneurial boroughs, analogous to German towns subject to territorial lords, likewise tended to incorporate heraldic elements taken from their ruler's arms. In the case of Chester, for instance, the city's dependence was thus expressed by the three golden garbs of the earls of Chester impaling the three lions of England.⁵⁹ Similarly, towns such as Dover or Faversham reflected their affiliation with the Cinque Ports in their municipal arms through heraldic references to the arms of this confederation.⁶⁰

Yet only in Germany did the custom of granting arms provide an opportunity for cities—and even more so for their lords—to visually stress changes in their political allegiance. It is no coincidence, for example, that it was King Albrecht II who confirmed the arms of Brunswick in 1438 rather than the city's territorial lord, the duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Only a few years earlier, in 1432, the latter had removed his residence from Brunswick after the relationship with the more and more confident townspeople had turned sour.⁶¹ The citizens' petition for an imperial confirmation of their arms can thus be read as an attempt to fashion Brunswick as a quasi-independent imperial city. Admittedly, they did not receive any augmentation that alluded too openly to such a status, but instead kept 'their' lion, the heraldic beast of House Brunswick-Lüneburg.⁶²

However, often cities were denied any say when it came to changes to their arms. After conquest, inheritance, or sale, new rulers often replaced heraldic traces of their predecessors, including any symbolism of the municipal arms that still alluded to the old lord. Meßkirch is a prime example, as it had to endure multiple changes in allegiance

⁵⁶ London Metropolitan Archives, *The City Arms*, 2nd edn (London, 2010).

⁵⁷ Hugh Murry, 'The City's Shield of Arms', *York Historian*, 5 (1984).

⁵⁸ John T. Hotblack, 'The Armorial Bearings of the City of Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 17 (1910).

⁵⁹ Hope, 'English Municipal Heraldry', p. 174.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Williams, *The Heraldry of the Cinque Ports* (London, 1971); Arthur William Brian Messenger, 'The Cinque Ports and Their Arms', *Annual Report: Friends of Canterbury Cathedral*, 1947.

⁶¹ Richard Moderhack, *Braunschweiger Stadtgeschichte: Mit Zeittafel und Bibliographie* (Braunschweig, 1997), pp. 60–69; Hermann Dürre, *Geschichte der Stadt Braunschweig im Mittelalter* (Braunschweig, 1861), pp. 213–214.

⁶² UBB, pp. 222–223.

and, as a consequence, its municipal arms. When Meßkirch was acquired by the Swabian noble family von Zimmern in the early fourteenth century, the municipal arms were changed to display the heraldic sign of the Zimmern family. Other arms existed before, showing a cauldron's handle, and as a chronicler remarked in the sixteenth century, this sign 'is still in use for all sorts of things save sealing'.⁶³ But when Werner von Zimmern had been placed under imperial ban, the chronicler recorded with great dismay, the town was given to Count Hugo von Werdenberg, who then petitioned for an imperial grant of new municipal arms for Meßkirch. The count was successful, and from 1489 onward the town bore the gonfalon of the counts of Montfort and Werdenberg, although again not for long: the von Zimmern recaptured the city in 1502, and the old arms were restored.⁶⁴ The duke of Württemberg showed the same concern when conquering the imperial city of Reutlingen in 1519. Here, too, the new lord established the change in power by means of granting—or indeed imposing—new municipal arms:⁶⁵ 'Since we conquered them', the duke decreed, the city was 'to use a seal in the shape and for all matters as other of our cities use it',⁶⁶ namely a shield with the antlers characteristic of the Württemberg arms.

Not all new lords were anxious about heraldic reminders of their predecessors. When imperial forces took the town of Vaihingen from the Duchy of Württemberg in 1530, for instance, Emperor Charles V granted new arms and forbade to use the old ones.⁶⁷ But instead of removing the Württemberg antlers completely, as had happened in Reutlingen, they were incorporated into a revised shield (fig. 4.3).⁶⁸ As Wilfried Schöntag concludes, changing the municipal arms was an opportunity to communicate

⁶³ Froben Christof Zimmern, *Zimmerische Chronik*, ed. by Karl August Barack (Freiburg [Breisgau], 1881), I, p. 545.

⁶⁴ See below, p. 287.

⁶⁵ See also Roland Deigendesch, 'Adler versus Hirschhorn: Zur Geschichte von Siegel und Wappen der Reichsstadt Reutlingen', in Helge Wittmann (ed.), *Reichszeichen: Darstellungen und Symbole des Reichs in Reichsstädten* (Petersberg, 2015), p. 126.

⁶⁶ Printed in Friedrich Karl Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, *Sphragistische Aphorismen* (Heilbronn, 1882), p. 115.

⁶⁷ Karl Friedrich von Frank, *Standeserhebungen und Gnadenakte für das Deutsche Reich und die Österreichischen Erblande bis 1806* (Schloss Senftenegg, 1970), II, p. 8.

⁶⁸ Ernst Eberhard Schmidt, 'Das Wappen der Stadt Vaihingen', in Ernst Eberhard Schmidt (ed.), *750 Jahre Stadt Vaihingen: Aufsätze* (Vaihingen, 1989), pp. 96–97.

a change in a city's political allegiance, but by no means a necessity.⁶⁹

Still, heraldry as a means of showing a city's allegiance must have had considerable perceptive and persuasive force, as the case of Erfurt suggests. Here, the city's bishop, whose predecessors had acted as Erfurt's territorial lords, in the second half of the fifteenth century opposed the citizens' ambitions to become a free city. Twice an episcopal declaration insisted that the town belonged to the diocese. This status was not only evidenced by ancient charters and the town seal's legend, which stated that 'Erfurt is a faithful daughter of the see at Mainz', but also by the heraldic symbolism found in the municipal arms:⁷⁰ 'The arms of Erfurt show a white wheel on a red shield, just as the Archbishop of Mainz and other towns of the diocese use in their arms and banners.'⁷¹

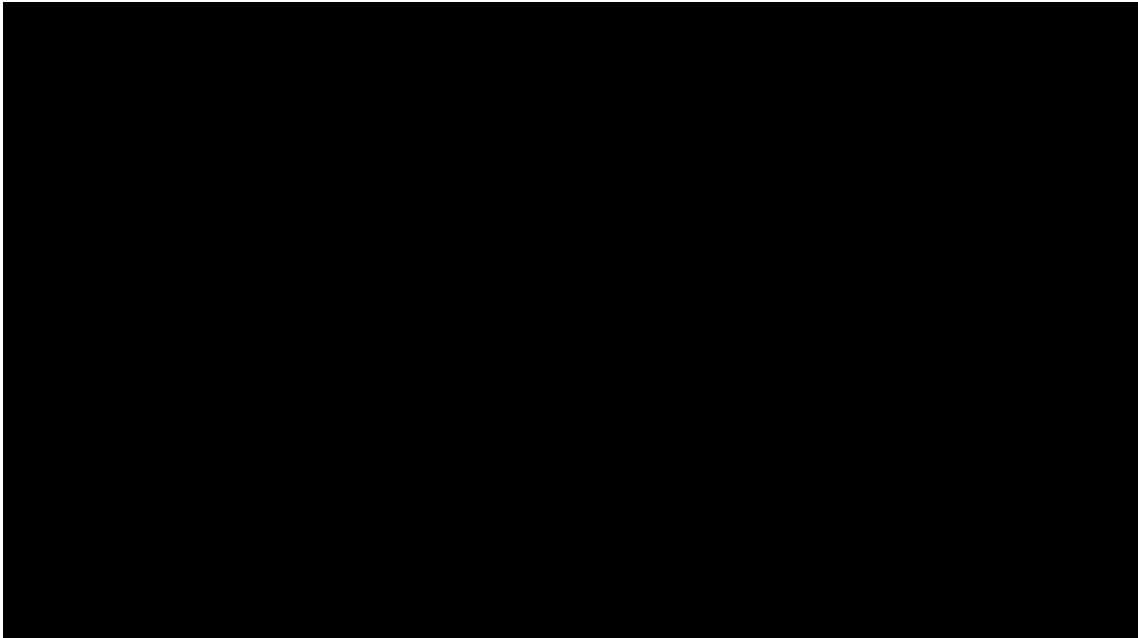


Fig. 4.3: Seventeenth-century depictions of Vaihingen's municipal arms before (left) and after (right) their 'redesign' by Emperor Charles V in 1530. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, A 4 Bü 41 a Nr. 10.

4.2 Heraldry and History: Locating Arms in the Urban Past

As the humanities and social sciences have come to regard formative narratives as vital to any community's identity, medievalists, too, have become increasingly interested in

⁶⁹ Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, p. 149.

⁷⁰ Johann Heinrich von Falckenstein, *Civitatis Erffurtensis historia critica et diplomatia* (Erfurt, 1739), I, pp. 361–362.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* See also *ibid.*, p. 353.

such ‘stories’ in the widest sense, from written chronicles to historical monuments as visual and tangible reminders of the past.⁷² Urban historians have paid particular attention to the texts and images of town chronicles, searching for the historical identity of the late medieval city as a collective body, or at least, as Regula Schmid cautions, the historical identity of ‘communal leaders’ and the ‘learned inhabitants’ who commissioned and consumed such documents.⁷³ In these texts, ancient founders, miracles of sympathetic patron saints, communal successes on the battlefield, royal visits, and the acquisition of privileges and liberties were given pride of place, and presented as historical proof of the city’s claims to honour and pre-eminence in the present.

In the same effort, this section will demonstrate, municipal arms were accorded a privileged position. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century chroniclers placed a heavy emphasis on municipal arms not just as visual allusions to the urban past, but as witnesses and results of urban history. The heraldic signs of cities were fashioned as commemorative symbols in the sense of Camille’s ‘signs of memory’ or Graf’s ‘narrative markers’ (*Erzähl-Male*),⁷⁴ calling to mind formative moments of the urban past. However, it will also become apparent that the historical connotations of municipal arms were far from fixed; their historical meaning was potentially ambiguous and in fact occasionally contested.

⁷² Patrick J. Geary, ‘History as Memory’, in Patrick J. Geary, Florin Curta, and Cristina Spinei (eds), *Writing History: Identity, Conflict, and Memory in the Middle Ages* (Bucharest, 2012); Bernd Schneidmüller, ‘Constructing the Past by Means of the Present: Historiographical Foundations of Medieval Institutions, Dynasties, Peoples, and Communities’, in Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick Geary (eds), *Medieval Concepts of the Past* (Washington [D.C.], 2002); Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York, 1992), esp. pp. 68–73.

⁷³ Regula Schmid, ‘Town Chronicles’, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (Leiden, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_02443>. See also Augusto Vasina, ‘Medieval Urban Historiography in Western Europe (1100–1500)’, in Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (ed.), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003); Peter Johanek (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2000); Urs Martin Zahnd, ‘Stadtchroniken und autobiographische Mitteilungen’, in Klaus Arnold, Sabine Schmolinsky, and Urs Martin Zahnd (eds), *Das dargestellte Ich: Studien zu Selbstzeugnissen des späteren Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Bochum, 1999).

⁷⁴ Michael Camille, ‘Signs on Medieval Street Corners’, in Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Die Strasse: Zur Funktion und Perzeption öffentlichen Raums im späten Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2001), p. 94; Klaus Graf, ‘Stadt-Phantasien: Erzähl-Male und Sprichwörter’, in Jörg Oberste and Sabine Reichert (eds), *Stadtgeschichte(n): Erinnerungskulturen der vormodernen Stadt* (Regensburg, 2017).

4.2.1 Augsburg: Commemorating Ancient Ancestors

Analogous to German townsmen keen to find the origins of their arms in a remote past, the arms of cities in late medieval Germany were dated back as far as possible. According to chronicler Veit Arnpeck, writing in 1493, people in the Bavarian town of Landshut believed to have received their municipal arms from Louis IV, duke of Bavaria, for their bravery in battle in 1313 already,⁷⁵ while Felix Fabri even held that the arms of Ulm had been granted by Charlemagne himself.⁷⁶

Fabri's account also highlights that such historical interpretations of municipal arms were potentially ambiguous, and in the case of the Ulm apparently also numerous. Some townsmen, Fabri explained, believed that the city's simple shield of silver and black, *party per fess*, had been granted by the emperor who—apparently annoyed with the petition for a grant of arms—'cast a tissue in the air and kicked it in the mud', proclaiming: 'What else do filthy peasants deserve if not filthy ensigns?'⁷⁷ Yet another narrative held that Ulm had received its arms from the local lords of Klingenberg, or, in a modified version, from the abbot of Reichenau, who happened to be of Klingenberg heritage.⁷⁸ Others still maintained that the people of Ulm had received their arms for their support of the Italian city of Siena, which bore the same shield but with the colours reversed.⁷⁹

In Augsburg, too, conflicting interpretations of the municipal arms' historical origin coexisted, although all agreed that their origin was to be found in a much more distant (and thus eminent) point in the past. In reality, when the people of Augsburg first assumed municipal arms in the fifteenth century, they simply copied the bipartite shield of red and silver already used by their bishop.⁸⁰ To differentiate their heraldic sign, they added a symbol not only well-established as part of the iconography of

⁷⁵ Veit Arnpeck, *Sämtliche Chroniken*, ed. by Georg Leidinger (Munich, 1915), p. 246.

⁷⁶ Fabri, *Tractatus*, p. 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Ulrich Stoll, 'Pinienzapfen und Zirbelnuß: Ein Beitrag zur Deutung der römischen Pinienzapfen und zur Geschichte des Augsburger Stadtwappens', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben*, 79 (1985); Josef von Hefner, 'Über das Augsburger Stadtwappen', *Jahrbücher des Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden im Rheinlande*, 25.1 (1857).

communal seals, but also believed to be particularly representative of the urban community and its history. This peculiar pine cone, berry, or grape shaped symbol called 'pyr' (fig. 4.4) was what fascinated chroniclers throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth century.



Fig. 4.4: Dedication scene depicted in the *Cronographia Augustensium* (c. 1480), showing Sigismund Meisterlin offering his chronicle to the aldermen of Augsburg. ASSB, 2 Cod. H. 1, fol. 4v.

Firm in the belief that the city was founded as a Roman colony, chronicler Hector Müllich (d. 1490) thus began his history of Augsburg:⁸¹ 'Drusus, a Roman, was the

⁸¹ Peter Johanek, 'Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsüberlieferung in Augsburg am Ausgang des Mittelalters', in Johannes Janota and Werner Williams-Krapp (eds), *Literarisches Leben in Augsburg*

stepson of Emperor Octavian. He built a wall for the city of Augsburg, and he gave it its shield of arms.⁸² Next to walls, which gave a visual expression to Augsburg's identity as a community distinct from the rural countryside,⁸³ the municipal arms were introduced as the second foundational element of Augsburg's history. This relation between the heraldic sign of Augsburg and the city's famous founder, Müllich believed, was also evidenced by the burial place of Drusus in Mainz, where 'on his tomb is displayed an Augsburgian berry or grape'.⁸⁴ Another town chronicler, Sigismund Meisterlin (d. c. 1497), likewise remarked with regard to Drusus' tomb that 'the Augsburgians, desirous of having a reminder of their founder, incorporated the cone-like form found in Mainz into their heraldic sign'.⁸⁵

As Humanist scholars of Augsburg in the late fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century became increasingly interested in tracing back the origin of their city even further,⁸⁶ so the origin of the municipal arms was predated. When chronicler Marx Walther in 1511 argued that Augsburg preceded the Roman presence in Swabia, again the city's heraldic sign was incorporated into the historical narrative. Its appearance was explained as the result of more than one constitutive 'milestone' of urban history: before Augsburg had become part of the Roman Empire, the chronicler claimed, 'Augsburg had had a shield of just red and white'—only once Drusus had conquered the city, the municipal arms were augmented with the pyr.⁸⁷

These beliefs in a Roman origin of the city and its heraldic charge were not at all without justification, as Augsburg had in fact developed from a Roman military camp,

während des 15. Jahrhunderts (Tübingen, 1995); Karl Schnith, 'Mittelalterliche Augsburger Gründungslegenden', in Detlev Jasper (ed.), *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16.–19. September 1986* (Hanover, 1988), I; Dieter Weber, *Geschichtsschreibung in Augsburg: Hektor Müllich und die reichsstädtische Chronistik des Spätmittelalters* (Augsburg, 1984).

⁸² CDS 3, p. 1.

⁸³ On the symbolic significance of walls, see below, p. 207.

⁸⁴ CDS 22, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Johannes Pistorius (ed.), *Rerum Germanicarum scriptores aliquot insignes* (Regensburg, 1731), III, p. 663. See also CDS 3, p. 38.

⁸⁶ Gernot Michael Müller, "Quod non sit honor Augustensibus si decantur a Teucris ducere originem": Humanistische Aspekte in der "Cronographia Augustensium" des Sigismund Meisterlin', in Gernot Michael Müller (ed.), *Humanismus und Renaissance in Augsburg* (Berlin, 2010).

⁸⁷ CDS 22, p. 331.

while the pyr, too, had been a popular decorative element in ancient Rome.⁸⁸ When Augsburg's aldermen explained their belief in the antiquity of the pyr in 1451, they argued that 'it was made by the heathens [Romans] and was repeatedly found in the city's moat and other hidden places underground.'⁸⁹ This happened again in 1466/1467, during excavation work for the reconstruction of St Ulrich's church, when 'one found a stone coffin, inside a body, and the city's pyr made from stone, which was attached to the walls of the church' (fig. 4.5).⁹⁰ In this case, however, the iconography of this particular pyr was noticeably different from other relics, as the pedestal on which the pyr was placed now also displayed a female face. In subsequent decades, this circumstance changed the townspeople's view on what their heraldic sign ought to look

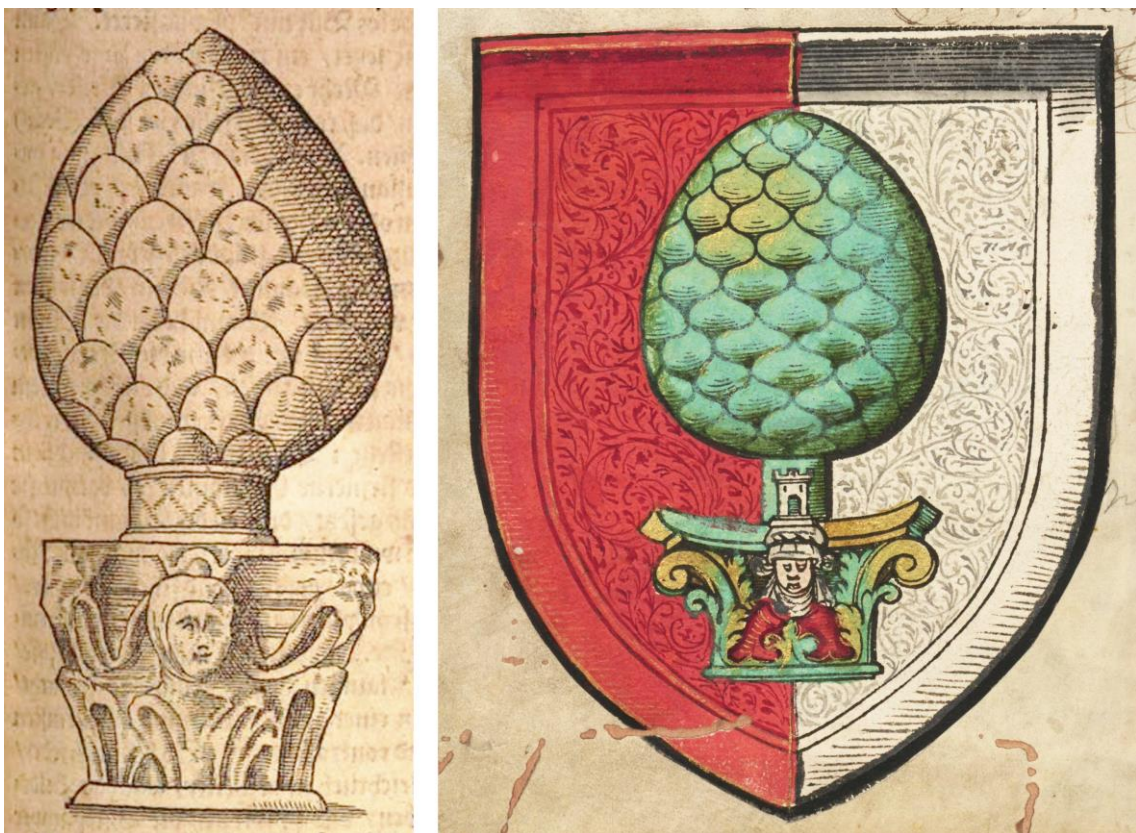


Fig. 4.5: Left: woodcut of an Augsburgian pyr displayed outside the church of St Ulrich in the sixteenth century. Printed in Marcus Welser and Achilles Pirmin Gasser, *Chronica der Weitberuempten Keyserlichen Freyen vnd deß H. Reichs Statt Augspurg in Schwaben* (Frankfurt [Main], 1595), I, fol. 25r. Right: depiction of Augsburg's municipal arms (c. 1594), added to a fifteenth-century copy of Meisterlin's chronicle of Augsburg. ASSB, 2 Cod. Aug. 60 (Cim. 90).

⁸⁸ Wolfgang Zorn, *Augsburg: Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt* (Augsburg, 1994), p. 21; Stoll, 'Zirbelnuß'.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Zimmermann, *Augsburger Zeichen*, p. x.

⁹⁰ CDS 4, p. 331. Likewise CDS 5, p. 327; CDS 22, p. 214.

like, as a late sixteenth-century chronicle noted: ‘Whereas people used to display a single grape on the shield of arms, now they display a fair pine cone on a pedestal with a female likeness.’⁹¹

Conveniently, the chronicles of the city had for several centuries told the story of the Pagan goddess Cisa, whom the ancient Swabians—yet to be ‘civilised’ by the Romans—had supposedly worshipped before the foundation of the city, ‘and whose likeness is attached to St Ulrich’, as Clemens Sender (d. 1537) was now able to claim, for instance.⁹² Sixteenth-century humanists then sought to equate the cult of Cisa with the actual Roman cult of Cybele, whose frequent iconographic attribute was, as it happened, a pine cone.⁹³ With some interpretative generosity, the Augsburg humanists brought the materiality of a pyr augmented by a female face in line with their cherished narratives of Augsburg’s history and heraldry, supplemented by their knowledge of Roman antiquity and mythology. Thus, sixteenth-century chroniclers such as Johann Priniciani proudly proclaimed:

For the honour and praise of the City of Augsburg, I will tell you where their shield of arms comes from, which was more than a thousand years ago. [...] From Cybele they took the pine cone as the charge of their arms, which can nowadays still be seen at St Ulrich, where there is a fair pine cone with the portrait of Cybele made from stone.⁹⁴

4.2.2 *England: Remembering Heroes of the Urban Past*

In late medieval England, similar narrative confluences of urban history and municipal heraldry are absent in written historiography, although this changed in the sixteenth century. Since Coventry took pride in its special relationship with the princes of Wales as the self-proclaimed *camera principis*,⁹⁵ for example, a city chronicler confidently

⁹¹ Quoted in Friedrich Roth, ‘Das Aufkommen der neuen Augsburger Statpir mit dem Capitäl und dem Cisa- oder Cybelekopf um 1540’, *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg*, 35 (1909), p. 123.

⁹² CDS 23, p. 5. See also Zita Agota Pataki, ‘Antike Form und humanistischer Sinn – Die Illustrationen der Göttin Cisa in den Augsburger Abschriften der Stadtchronik Sigismund Meisterlins 1457–1530’, in Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch and Tobias Frese (eds), *Zwischen Mimesis und Vision: Zur städtischen Ikonographie am Beispiel Augsburgs* (Berlin, 2010).

⁹³ Roth, ‘Statpir’, pp. 116–117.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Marcus Welser and Achilles Pirmin Gasser, *Chronica der weitberuempten keyserlichen freyen vnd deß H. Reichs Statt Augspurg in Schwaben* (Frankfurt [Main], 1596), III, fols 2r–3r.

⁹⁵ Christian D. Liddy, ‘The Rhetoric of the Royal Chamber in Late Medieval London, York and Coventry’, *Urban History*, 29.3 (2002), esp. pp. 339–345.

claimed that Edward of Woodstock (1330–1376) had given ‘the ostridge feathers’ to the city.⁹⁶ Certainly, in one of the earliest seals of the city, the ostrich feathers appeared on a banner that later became part of Coventry’s arms—an elephant with a triple-towered castle.⁹⁷ In Sandwich, there appears to have existed a belief that held the municipal arms to be a royal reward for loyalty, as the heralds’ visitation of 1592 recorded that ‘the auncient armes of the Towne and Porte of Sandwiche [...] were graunted by kyng Edwarde the first for theure especiall and faythfull servyce’.⁹⁸

London, too, became the subject of opinions on the ‘true’ historical place and iconographic nature of its municipal heraldry, and here, crucially, the discussions of sixteenth-century writers suggest that perceptions of a close, causal relation between municipal heraldry and urban history, perhaps as an element of oral tradition, might have existed in late medieval London already.⁹⁹

The *Chronicle of England* (1559), written by printer and historian Richard Grafton, for instance, suggested that the ‘dagger’ characteristic of London’s municipal arms was linked to a formative moment in London’s history: during the Peasants’ Revolt in 1381, London mayor William Walworth demonstrated the city’s loyalty to the king by stabbing rebel leader Wat Tyler, for which deed the city supposedly received, by royal grant, ‘a sworde in their armes’.¹⁰⁰ A detailed explanation of the link between the death of Wat Tyler and the arms of London was also included in Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1585):

Moreover, the king granted, that there should be a dagger added to the armes of the citie of London, in the right quarter of the shield, for an augmentation of the same armes, and for a remembrance of this maior his valiant act, as dooth appeare vnto this daie; for till that time, the citie bare onelie the crosse, without the dagger.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Anonymous, ‘The City Annals or Mayors’ List of the City of Coventry’, in Frederick Bliss Burbidge (ed.), *Old Coventry and Lady Godiva* (Birmingham, 1952), p. 216.

⁹⁷ William George Fretton, *Municipal Regalia, Seals and Coinage of the City of Coventry* (Coventry, 1880), p. 11.

⁹⁸ CA, G 12, fol. 214v. See also Williams, *Cinque Ports Heraldry*, pp. 113–114.

⁹⁹ On London’s historiography in the fifteenth century, see Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century: A Revolution in English Writing* (Woodbridge; Rochester [New York], 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Richard Grafton, *A Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of Englande and Kinges of the Same* (London, 1569), p. 340.

¹⁰¹ Raphael Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, from William the Conquerour (Who Began His Reigne Ouer This Land, in the Yeare after Christes Natiuitie 1066) Vntill the Yeare 1577* (London, 1585), p. 436.

The London chronicler John Stow struck a similar note only a few years later, in an earlier edition of the famous *Survey of London* (1598). Here, a marginal note likewise explained that it had become ‘the common opinion of men of late times’ that ‘in memory and reward of which seruice the Cittie had a Daggar added to their shielde of Armes, and the Maiors haue beene most commonly sithens knighted’.¹⁰² Like in Augsburg, sixteenth-century chroniclers with an interest in London history presented the city’s municipal arms as the result of a formative moment. Here, it was not the foundation or conquest of the city, but a royal distinction for faithful service to the realm that was suggested to be reflected in the heraldic sign.

However, new evidence forced Stow to reconsider. In a later edition of his *Survey* (1603), he tacitly removed and revoked earlier statements about the origin of the London arms: ‘I haue read no such recorde, but to the contrarie.’¹⁰³ Stow’s historical enquiries may have forced him to realise that the London arms charged with a dagger predated the deed of Mayor Walworth on 15 June 1381. The first reference to these municipal arms comes from the fourteenth-century *Letter Books*. On 25 April 1381 it was recorded that aldermen and mayor had decided to replace the old mayoral seal of the city, since it was considered ‘too small, crude and old, inept and inappropriate for the honour of the city’.¹⁰⁴ In its place, a new seal was to be made, on which ‘under the figures of St Peter and St Paul, which in the past had been made in an unrefined manner, the shield of arms of the said city is perfectly carved, supported by two lions’ (fig. 4.6).¹⁰⁵ ‘This new seale’, Stow acknowledged, ‘seemeth to bee made before William



Fig. 4.6: Second mayoral seal of London (1381), showing the municipal arms at the bottom.

¹⁰² Stow, *A Survey of London*, II, p. 267.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Llewellyn Jewitt and John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales* (London, 1895), II, p. 122.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Walworth was knighted, for he is not here intituled Sir, as afterwards he was'.¹⁰⁶

Now Stow instead confidently claimed that the dagger in the London arms was, in fact, the sword of St Paul, 'and no dagger of W. Walworth as is fabuled'.¹⁰⁷ There was good reason to believe that the weapon in the shield of arms was meant to be an allusion to the patron saint Paul, who was a firmly established element of London iconography. When the *Liber Custumarum* described the thirteenth-century banner of the urban militia, for example, it bore 'a figure of St Paul of gold, the hands and the head of silver, and a sword in the hand of said figure'.¹⁰⁸ St Paul also appeared on the obverse of London's earliest communal seal from 1219 (fig. 4.7) and on a mayoral seal, in use before 1278.¹⁰⁹ Two seal bags from the early fourteenth century even suggest that the figure of St Paul, placed on a shield, might have functioned as London's municipal arms before the present-day arms were adopted.¹¹⁰



Fig. 4.7: First communal seal of London (1219), showing St Paul with a banner of the royal arms on the obverse and Thomas Becket on the reverse, above a depiction of London's skyline.

¹⁰⁶ Stow, *Survey*, I, p. 221.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Henry T. Riley (ed.), *Liber Custumarum* (London, 1860), I, p. 148.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Alexander Heslop, 'Seal of the Barons of London', in Jonathan J. G. Alexander and Paul Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987); Thomas Alexander Heslop, 'First Seal of the Mayors of London', in Jonathan J. G. Alexander and Paul Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987). See also Elizabeth A. New, 'The Common Seal and Communal Identity in Medieval London', in Susan Solway (ed.), *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power* (Turnhout, 2015).

¹¹⁰ Michael J. Chandler and Donald B. King, 'Two Charters and Seal-Bags of 12 Edward II', *The Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 (1960). See also Liddy, *Politics of Citizenship*, pp. 189–190.

But whatever the motivations and intentions that guided the iconographic choices of London aldermen in the fourteenth century, the narratives of later centuries should not be dismissed as negligible ‘fables’, as Stow and more recent scholars of London’s arms have done.¹¹¹ On the contrary, such narratives are highly relevant to the question whether heraldic signs in late medieval and early modern London were perceived as deeply historical symbols seen to be closely linked to the history of the city. Admittedly, whether the sixteenth-century discussions of Grafton, Holinshed, and Stow reflected genuinely late medieval attitudes is impossible to determine, since earlier traces of this narrative are absent. But maybe there is something to Stow’s claim, repeated in the later edition of the *Survey of London*, that ‘it has also beene, and is now growne to a common opinion, that in reward of this seruice done, by the said William Walworth against the rebell, King Rickard added to the armes of this Citie [...] a sword or dagger’.¹¹² It seems perfectly possible that early modern chroniclers perpetuated an already existing (oral) tradition that had formed in the wake of the Peasants’ Revolt in 1381 among Londoners, who, like their contemporaries in Augsburg, wished to see a formative moment in urban and indeed ‘national’ history remembered by their city’s heraldic sign.

4.3 Town Halls: Distinguishing the Centre of Municipal Government

Besides its administrative functions, the late medieval town hall also served as a symbol of communal self-government with important representative purposes: townspeople gathered in front of it to hear official proclamations or to demand a change of political leadership, while the inside provided a space for festivities and celebrations, not least when welcoming visitors such as kings and princes to discuss the confirmation and ideally extension of urban liberties and privileges.¹¹³

¹¹¹ London Metropolitan Archives, *The City Arms*; John Tavenor-Perry, ‘The Arms of the City and See of London’, in Peter H. Ditchfield (ed.), *Memorials of Old London* (London, 1908), I.

¹¹² Stow, *Survey*, I, pp. 221–222.

¹¹³ Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community, c. 1500–1640* (Oxford; New York, 1991), esp. pp. 33–42; Gerd Schwerhoff, ‘Verortete Macht: Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Rathäuser als institutionelle Eigenräume städtischer Politik’, in Franz J. Felten, Annette Kehnel, and Stefan Weinfurter (eds), *Institution und Charisma: Festschrift für Gert Melville zum 65. Geburtstag* (Cologne, 2009); Stephan Albrecht, *Mittelalterliche Rathäuser in Deutschland: Architektur und Funktion* (Darmstadt, 2004), esp. pp. 13–24.

As a space central to communal life, the late medieval town hall was framed by extensive visual programmes. Historians like Liddy have thus come to think of it as ‘a medium of communication’ that constituted—to quote Robert Tittler—an ‘edifice irreplacably symbolic of civic authority, power, and legitimacy.’¹¹⁴ Along the same lines, Colin Cunningham argues that its architecture and decorations were ‘designed for the honour and glory of its city’, rendering town halls, as Bernd Roeck concludes, ‘first-rate sources’ (*Quellen ersten Ranges*) for the collective identity of the late medieval city.¹¹⁵ This included norms and values communicated by distichs and statues of prophets, philosophers, poets, and other medieval ‘heroes’ as well as biblical motifs, for example, reminding aldermen and mayors of their Christian responsibility towards the common weal.¹¹⁶ In the same effort, town halls also served ‘as a reminder of the long history that gave the burghers that sense of communal identity’.¹¹⁷ Historical depictions and material monuments—derived from biblical narratives, Greek and Roman mythology, princely and royal genealogies, or the history of the city itself—turned late medieval town halls into a ‘display area’ of ‘civic heritage’, a ‘museum’ of urban history even, as Tittler and Graf argue.¹¹⁸ At the same time, town halls acknowledged political dependencies: iconography associated with imperial, royal, or territorial lords was ubiquitous, conveying the pride townspeople took in the liberties and privileges that

¹¹⁴ Christian D. Liddy, ‘Urban Politics and Material Culture at the End of the Middle Ages: The Coventry Tapestry in St Mary’s Hall’, *Urban History*, 39.2 (2012), p. 204; Tittler, *Architecture and Power*, p. 96. See also Christopher R. Friedrichs, ‘Das städtische Rathaus als kommunikativer Raum in europäischer Perspektive’, in Johannes Burkhardt and Christine Werkstetter (eds), *Kommunikation und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 2005).

¹¹⁵ Colin Cunningham, ‘For the Honour and Beauty of the City: The Design of Town Halls’, in Diana Norman (ed.), *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society, and Religion 1280–1400* (New Haven [Conn.], 1995), II, p. 29; Bernd Roeck, ‘Rathaus und Reichsstadt’, in Bernhard Kirchgässner (ed.), *Stadt und Repräsentation* (Sigmaringen, 1995), p. 102.

¹¹⁶ Ulrich Meier, ‘The Iconography of Justice and Power in the Sculptures and Paintings of Town Halls in Medieval Germany’, *The Medieval History Journal*, 3.1 (2000); Ulrich Meier, ‘Vom Mythos der Republik: Formen und Funktionen spätmittelalterlicher Rathausikonographie in Deutschland und Italien’, in Andrea Löther et al. (eds), *Mundus in imagine: Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter: Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner* (Munich, 1996).

¹¹⁷ Keyvan Claude Rafii, ‘Public Buildings and Civic Pride: Town Halls in Northern Germany, 1200–1618’ (unpublished PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2003), p. 239.

¹¹⁸ Tittler, *Architecture and Power*, p. 158; Graf, ‘Erinnerungsfeste’, pp. 269, 271.

separated them from yet simultaneously linked them to society as a whole.¹¹⁹

With the notable exception of Schöntag, the prominent place of heraldry on this architectural stage of self-representation has been largely neglected so far, even by Tittler, who is otherwise convinced of the importance of heraldic signs as ‘statements of self-affirmation and personal legitimation’.¹²⁰ This section argues that heraldic display played an important part in the visual communication of honour, civic pride, urban history, and collective identity facilitated by late medieval town halls. In a range of material media, the display of municipal heraldry marked town halls as distinct communal spaces dedicated to the ideals of urban self-government. However, municipal arms were not the only heraldic signs on display in these spaces: other arms visualised the political and social networks within which the city—represented by its town hall and its heraldic sign—was located. Finally, heraldic signs in town halls also contributed to the communication of historical narratives of extraordinary events and exemplary heroes of biblical, ancient, ‘national’, and urban history that were seen to evidence and embody late medieval communal identity.

4.3.1 *Demarcating the Centre of Urban Government*

Like burgess houses and guild halls, so the outside of town halls of English and German cities was clearly marked within the urban space. Municipal arms underlined the character of the hall as a space dedicated to the ideals of the urban community represented by the heraldic sign, reminding those who entered this communal space of the city’s dignity and autonomy, and the collective responsibility towards the *bonum commune*.

On the tower of Cologne’s town hall, for example, heraldic signs could be seen from far and wide: built between 1407 and 1414, the spandrels to each side of each window on each of the five floors showed stone-carved shields of Cologne’s municipal

¹¹⁹ Hans-Rudolf Meier, ‘Funktion und Fiktion von Raumdekorationen – Zur Raumsymbolik im mittelalterlichen Profanbau’, in Nikolaus Staubach and Vera Johanterwage (eds), *Aussen und Innen: Räume und ihre Symbolik im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt [Main]; New York, 2007). See also Sascha Köhl, ‘Princely Architecture: Town Halls in the Burgundian Netherlands’, in Wim Blockmans et al. (eds), *Staging the Court of Burgundy* (London; Turnhout, 2011).

¹²⁰ Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, esp. pp. 43–53, 80–87; Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007), p. 6.

arms, just like the main facade of the hall's core, the *Saalbau*, was embellished with the city's arms placed between the battlements.¹²¹ In Lüneburg, the market-side facade of the town hall received similar heraldic decorations when it was refurbished in 1467.¹²²

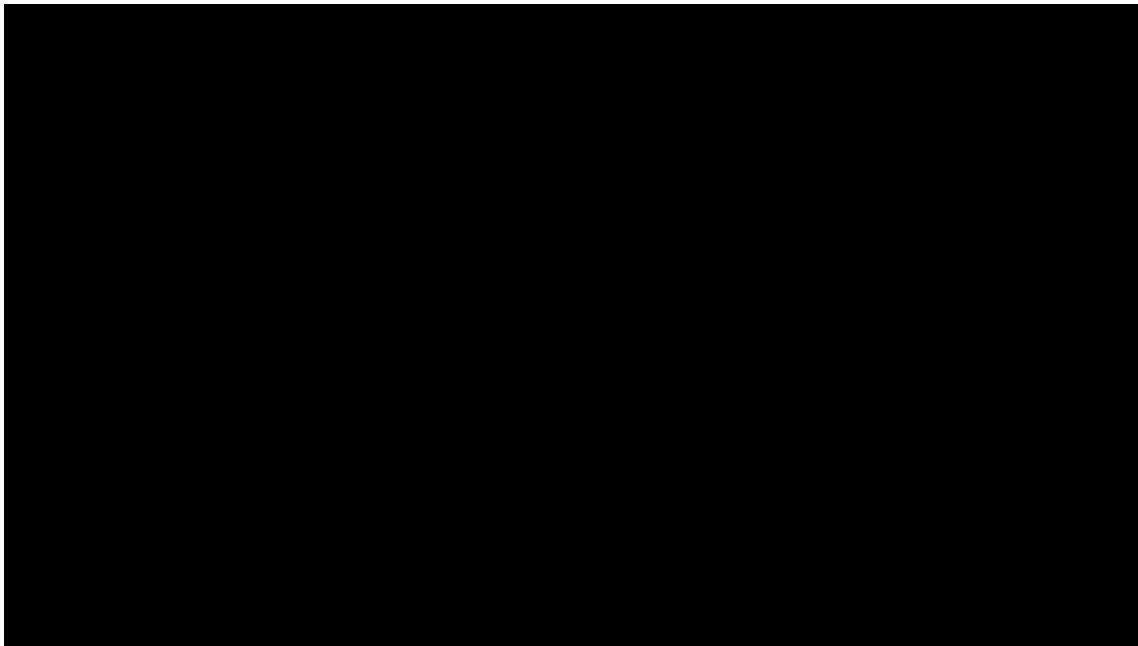


Fig. 4.8: Market-side portal of Lüneburg's town hall, built c. 1467, with three shields of the municipal arms above the gate's archway.

Here, the entrance was guarded by three shields of Lüneburg's arms displayed above the gateway (fig. 4.8). In this case, the control of the city's territorial lord was heraldically represented as well, since the arms of House Brunswick-Lüneburg featured in Lüneburg's municipal arms in the form of an inescutcheon. Although little is known about the appearance of Augsburg's late medieval town hall,¹²³ the similarly prominent presence of the city's arms is suggested by the winter scene of the *Monatsbilder* of Augsburg, painted in c. 1531 (fig. 4.9), where the arms are shown on a panel displayed above the entrance of the town hall. Unlike the rest of the building, this panel survived into the present, showing the municipal arms framed by other elements indicative of

¹²¹ Walter Geis, 'Skulpturen am Ratsturm und im Gürzenich als Dokumente des kölnischen Karnevals im 15. Jahrhundert', in Walter Geis and Ulrich Krings (eds), *Köln: Das gotische Rathaus und seine historische Umgebung* (Cologne, 2000); Fried Mühlberg, 'Der Hansasaal des Kölner Rathauses', *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, 36 (1974), p. 69.

¹²² Wilhelm Reinecke, *Das Rathaus zu Lüneburg* (Lüneburg, 1925), p. 44.

¹²³ Ingrid Krüger, 'Das Rathaus von Augsburg – ein grenzüberschreitendes Kunstwerk: Anmerkungen zu Geschichte, Struktur und Stellenwert', in Stefan Amt (ed.), *Festschrift für Günther Kokkelink* (Hanover, 1999).

Augsburg's communal identity as an ancient but ultimately Christian community: the shield is supported by two 'wild men', whose presence echoes the emphasis of Augsburg chroniclers on the townsmen's descent from pre-Roman, yet-to-be-civilised Swabians, while an inscription held by two angels simultaneously prayed for Christ's favour. Heinrich Dormeier argues that two lions below the shield ought to be understood as allusions to Henry VI and Rudolf I,¹²⁴ although a more obvious visual reference to Augsburg's imperial status must have been the imperial arms on the *Perlachturm*, a tower not far from the town hall, as depicted in the winter scene (fig. 4.9).



Fig. 4.9: Winter scene of the *Monatsbilder* of Augsburg (1531), showing the municipal arms above the town hall's gate on the right, and the *Perlachturm* with the imperial arms on the left.

¹²⁴ Heinrich Dormeier, 'Kurzweil und Selbstdarstellung: Die "Wirklichkeit" der Augsburger Monatsbilder', in Pia Maria Grüber (ed.), *'Kurzweil viel ohn' Mass und Ziel': Augsburger Patrizier und ihre Feste zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Ausstellungskatalog* (Munich, 1994), p. 190.

That municipal arms marked town halls in England as distinct communal spaces also is suggested by an entry in the accounts of the city of Exeter, for example: in 1458/1459, ‘oil and red lead were purchased for painting the city’s arms at the front of the “Gilhalda”’, although nothing now remains of this late medieval porch.¹²⁵ While the facade of London’s town hall, erected in 1425, was likewise altered in the early modern period,¹²⁶ its Gothic porch originally showed ‘the City Arms emblazoned in shields [...] in the spandrels of the square head of the doorway’.¹²⁷ In Norwich, a total of three shields above the west entrance of the town hall represented key components of the city’s political structure: rebuilt after the early fifteenth-century roof had collapsed in 1511, the central position was awarded to the royal arms, framed by two slightly smaller shields with the arms of the city and those of the guild of St George, a corporate body almost synonymous with the governing elite.¹²⁸

The inside of late medieval town halls, too, confronted citizens and visitors with heraldic representations of the city and its identity. Also from Norwich survive fragments of mid-fifteenth-century stained glass with the municipal arms, although their original location is now unclear.¹²⁹ In Coventry, the city’s arms were placed in the tracery of the impressive north window, in this instance in close proximity to another lavish display of royal heraldry (fig. 4.10).¹³⁰ A similar picture presents itself in the town halls of Cologne and Lüneburg,¹³¹ and as Schöntag shows for numerous other German cities, here the political ties of the urban community were visualised through the inclusion of their lords’ arms next to the municipal arms as well.¹³²

¹²⁵ Printed and translated in S. R. Blaylock, ‘Exeter Guildhall’, *Devon Archaeological Society Proceedings*, 48 (1990), p. 125.

¹²⁶ John Nichols, *A Brief Account of the Guildhall of the City of London* (London, 1819), pp. 3–4.

¹²⁷ John Edward Price, *A Descriptive Account of the Guildhall of the City of London: Its History and Associations* (London, 1886), p. 73.

¹²⁸ Dunn and Sutermeister, *Norwich Guildhall*, p. 12. On the role of the guild of St Guild in Norwich’s government, see Benjamin R. McRee, ‘Religious Gilds and Civil Order: The Case of Norwich in the Late Middle Ages’, *Speculum*, 67.1 (1992).

¹²⁹ Ernest Alfred Kent, ‘The Stained and Painted Glass in the Guildhall, Norwich’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 23 (1927), pp. 13–20.

¹³⁰ Bernard Rackham, ‘The Glass-Paintings of Coventry and Its Neighbourhood’, *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, 19 (1930), pp. 103–104.

¹³¹ Mühlberg, ‘Hansasaal’, p. 220; Rüdiger Becksmann and Ulf-Dietrich Korn, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien in Lüneburg und den Heideklöstern* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 99–108.

¹³² Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, pp. 80–87.

The walls and ceilings that framed the daily and extraordinary performances staged in town halls were likewise embellished with heraldic signs. Some time before 1521, the archive of the town hall of Lüneburg was decorated with the city's arms, carved from stone in the four corners of the room and set as a roof boss in its centre.¹³³ In Erfurt, the bosses of the great hall were painted with the municipal arms, albeit alternating with the heraldic signs of the emperor and the archbishop of Mainz, the latter of whom was *de iure* lord of the city,¹³⁴ while in the imperial city of Nuremberg the workshop of Albrecht Dürer painted the ceiling of the town hall with the arms of the city, the Empire, and the prince-electors in 1521.¹³⁵

The same picture presents itself in England: in London, stone statues of angels holding shields of the municipal arms embellished the Mayor's Court of the fifteenth-century town hall,¹³⁶ just as the elephant and castle from Coventry's municipal arms featured in the roof bosses of the great hall, added in about 1400. Here, too, the municipal arms were accompanied by references to the monarchy, in this case Richard II's white hart badge.¹³⁷ In York, roof bosses in the Inner or Justice Room of the fifteenth-century town hall incorporated the arms of York next to the royal arms of Henry VII and the arms of St George.¹³⁸ That this was perhaps an ideal-type of English town hall heraldry is further suggested by an illumination in the late fifteenth-century *Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar* (fig. 4.11), depicting a mayor's oath-taking ceremony in the town hall of Bristol in front of aldermen and citizens gathered under an arrangement of three

¹³³ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, p. 75; Franz Krüger and Wilhelm Reinecke, *Stadt Lüneburg* (1906), p. 204.

¹³⁴ Uwe Heckert, 'Die Ausstattung des Großen Saales im alten Erfurter Rathaus: Ein Beitrag zum politischen Selbstverständnis eines Stadtrats im späten Mittelalter', in Andrea Löther et al. (eds), *Mundus in imagine: Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter: Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner* (Munich, 1996), p. 308.

¹³⁵ Michael Diefenbacher, 'Das allgegenwärtige Reich – Reichsikonografie in Nürnberg und ihre Träger', in Helge Wittmann (ed.), *Reichszeichen: Darstellungen und Symbole des Reichs in Reichsstädten* (Petersberg, 2015), p. 20.

¹³⁶ Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London, 1974), p. 31.

¹³⁷ Joan C. Lancaster, *St Mary's Hall, Coventry: A Guide to the Building Its History and Contents* (Coventry, 1981), p. 36.

¹³⁸ Royal Commission of Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of York: The Central Area* (London, 1981), p. 79.

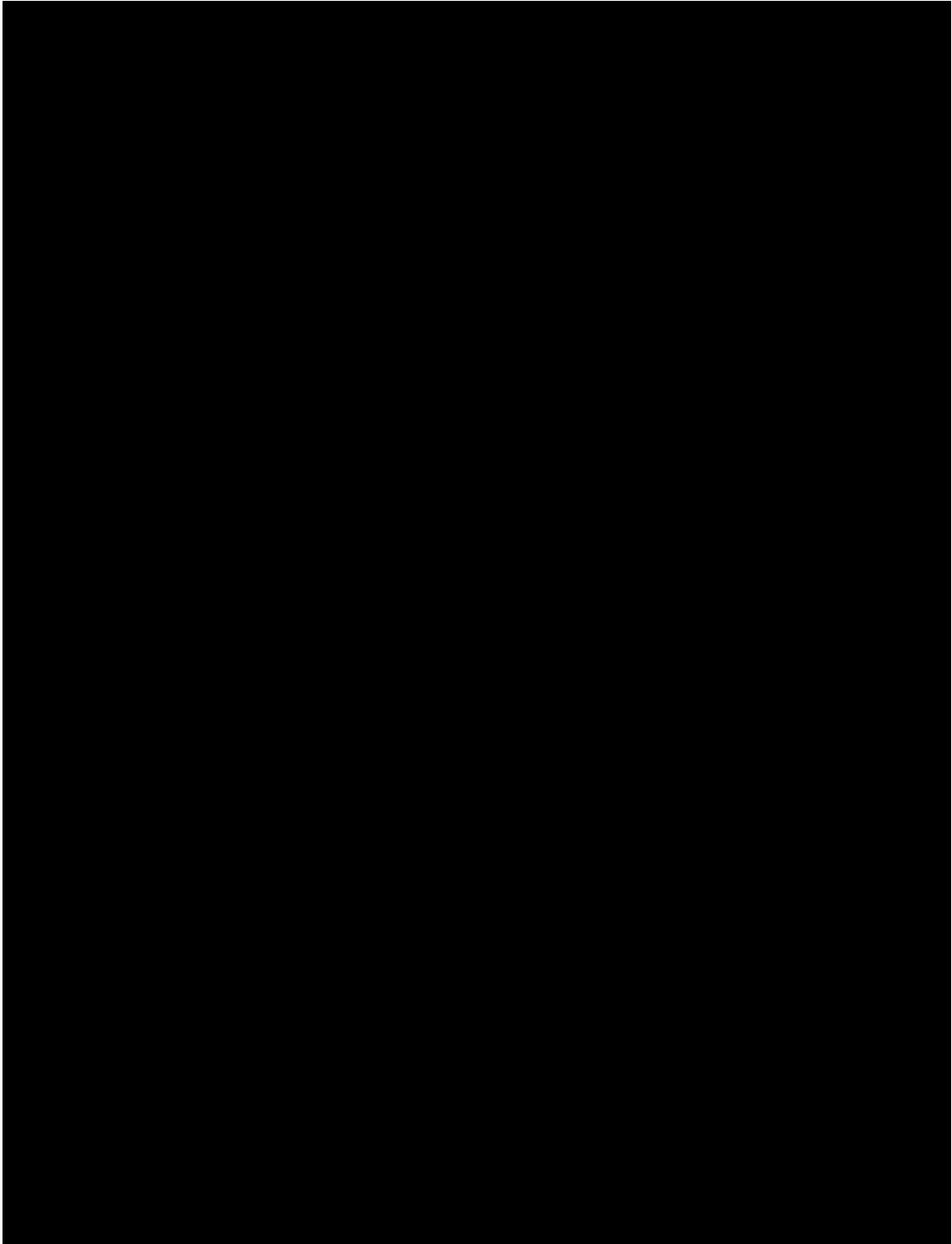


Fig. 4.10: Frontispiece of the late fifteenth-century *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar*, showing the inauguration of Bristol's mayor with shields of the arms of St George, the English king, and the city of Bristol above.

shields. The royal arms, the heraldic representation of the king as the ultimate source of the mayor's authority, were accorded the central and thus most important position,

while the arms of St George were shown in the privileged *dexter* position, with the municipal arms of Bristol to the *sinister*.¹³⁹



Fig. 4.11: Fifteenth-century oak chair in the town hall of Coventry, the pinnacles of which show carved lions reminiscent of the royal arms, and the elephant and castle found in Coventry's municipal arms.

In German town halls, heraldically decorated chests exhibit a similar co-presence of municipal and royal/imperial heraldry. An early case comes from Dortmund, c. 1300, embellished with a total of twenty-five shields of arms, which combine heraldic references to the city itself with allusions to its political affiliations and religious devotion: the municipal arms—an eagle reminiscent of Dortmund's status as an imperial city—alternate with the arms attributed to the city's patron saint Reinold and a plain red shield, which Horst Appuhn believes to be another allusion to the Empire.¹⁴⁰ Similarly decorated chests also survive from mid-fifteenth-century Cologne and Lüneburg, for instance,¹⁴¹ with the latter city owning a range of heraldically decorated furniture: two Gothic cupboards in the 'Court Hall' (*Gerichtslaube*) were embellished with Lüneburg's municipal arms, now juxtaposed with stand-alone shields of House

¹³⁹ See also Liddy, *Politics of Citizenship*, p. 177; Peter Fleming, 'Time, Space and Power in Later Medieval Bristol' (online publication, 2013), <<http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/22171/>>, p. 234.

¹⁴⁰ Appuhn, *Briefladen*, no. 4.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, nos 14–16.

Brunswick-Lüneburg,¹⁴² and so were the benches of the aldermen.¹⁴³

A comparable English piece of furniture can still be found in Coventry in the form of an oak chair: originally made in the fifteenth century to seat the masters of Coventry's three major guilds, two seats were removed by the mid-sixteenth century when it came to serve as the mayor's seat.¹⁴⁴ In this case, too, visual references to the heraldry of the city and its sovereign were part of the design. Three-dimensional, heraldic figures were carved into the chair's pinnacles, on the *sinister* side an elephant and castle, the charge of Coventry's arms, and on the *dexter*, privileged side two lions reminiscent of the royal arms (fig. 4.11). As Tittler observes regarding town halls in the early modern period, when such material artefacts and heraldic decorations survive more frequently, 'the royal coat of arms, especially when mounted above and behind the mayor's chair, become a frequent reminder of the source of mayoral authority, conveyed through the charter of incorporation'.¹⁴⁵

4.3.2 *Locating the City in Social Networks*

As these examples indicate, late medieval town halls in England and Germany featured a considerable number of heraldic signs other than the municipal arms. The arms of emperors, kings, and territorial lords were among the most common, since they visually acknowledged the cities' political dependence on feudal rulers as the source of urban self-government. But heraldic signs also showed the cities' links to other entities inside and outside the walls.

The town hall of London, at least according to antiquarian John Price, in the nineteenth century supposedly still featured a late medieval floor rich in heraldry, alluding to the city's political status and its prominent place as a major trade hub: 'There are Shields of Arms of England, the City of London, Edward the Confessor, of foreign

¹⁴² Krüger and Reinecke, *Stadt Lüneburg*, pp. 230–231.

¹⁴³ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Tittler, 'Seats of Honor, Seats of Power: The Symbolism of Public Seating in the English Urban Community, c. 1560–1620', *Albion*, 24.2 (1992); Herbert Cescinsky, 'An Oak Chair in S. Mary's Hall, Coventry', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 39 (1921).

¹⁴⁵ Robert Tittler, "'...And No Loose People to Trouble the Hall": Oligarchy and the Division of Space in the English Civic Hall to 1640', *History Compass*, 10.9 (2012), p. 626.

nations and monarchs, and of different towns and cities, &c., all filled in with lead.’¹⁴⁶ Certainly, the importance of London as a trading partner in late medieval England was reflected in the town hall of Coventry, where the mid-fifteenth-century stained glass of the north window contained the arms of London, again displayed in the context of royal and municipal arms (fig. 4.10). Similar arrangements of municipal arms and heraldic signs belonging to local lords and reflecting economic and political ties were also incorporated into town halls in Germany, as Schöntag demonstrates.¹⁴⁷ The conscious effort to depict entire networks by means of heraldry is best illustrated by the case of Pfullendorf, where in 1524/1525 the council petitioned amicable ecclesiastic and secular lords to send the city ‘stained glass and their arms of honour’ for the augmentation of the town hall.¹⁴⁸

Next to such heraldic references to the wider landscape, heraldic display in town halls also extended to the heraldic signs of prominent local figures of civic life in past and present. In this context, they not only underlined the crucial role of the urban elite but also doubled as means of individual heraldic commemoration.¹⁴⁹ An excellent example is the town hall of Lüneburg: in its ‘Court Hall’, leather and linen shields painted with the arms of local families who had held the office of mayor were put on display.¹⁵⁰ Ordered so as to begin with the oldest mayoral families, the shields visualised a chronological outline of Lüneburg’s past that celebrated the role of its mayors and elite circle of patrician families from which they were recruited throughout the city’s history. The ‘Princes’ Hall’ (*Fürstensaal*), added in 1482, featured a similar heraldic display of Lüneburg’s patricians,¹⁵¹ just as the city’s council commissioned stained glass for the newly built chancery in 1484 that contained arms of eminent citizens.¹⁵² Individual donations of commemorative artefacts further added to the heraldic presence

¹⁴⁶ Price, *London Guildhall*, p. 72. Other writers on London’s town hall do not mention the floor. John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven; London, 2003), pp. 111–113, for example, mentions ‘mounted knights, lions, fleurs-de-lys, griffins and dragons’ as part of medieval tile floor motifs, but makes no reference to the heraldry described by Price.

¹⁴⁷ Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, pp. 80–87.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁹ See also above, p. 98.

¹⁵⁰ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, pp. 148–149, figs 36–39.

¹⁵¹ Krüger and Reinecke, *Stadt Lüneburg*, p. 257.

¹⁵² Becksmann and Korn, *Glasmalereien in Lüneburg*, p. 129.

of the urban elite, as becomes apparent in the aforementioned case of a 'silver dish' with the arms of the apothecary Matthias Must gifted to the town hall in 1476,¹⁵³ or a late fifteenth-century chest bench carved with the arms of Lüneburg's elite families.¹⁵⁴

In England, Stow noted with regard to the town hall of London, 'divers Aldermen glazed the great Hall, and other courtes, as appeareth by their arms in each window'.¹⁵⁵ To name but one famous figure: Richard Whittington (d. 1423) was Lord Mayor of London, MP, and 'prime mover' behind the reconstruction of the Guildhall in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁵⁶ As such, he was commemorated by stained glass windows in the Great Hall and the Mayor's Court, 'on euery which Windowe the armes of Richard Wittington are placed'.¹⁵⁷ The aldermen of Norwich, too, left behind heraldic signs in the stained glass of their town hall.¹⁵⁸ The arms of the mercer John Fuller (d. c. 1526) were placed in the east window, next to those of the mercers' guild, while in the north window Thomas Nectun, alderman and mayoral candidate in 1541, was represented by two shields, the first impaling the arms of the mercers' guild with Nectun's mark, the other bearing the letters 'TUN', with 'NEC' written above the shield.¹⁵⁹ Robert Ferrour, draper and mayor in 1526 and 1536, went for the heraldic hat trick by displaying his arms, his mark, and the letters 'RF' on a single shield, accompanied by the arms of Norwich, the arms of the drapers' company, the cross of St George, and the date 1534. The same double-function of heraldic signs as representations of the city's elite and as a means of commemoration becomes apparent in the roof bosses of York's town hall, where among the arms of other citizens were shown the arms of Richard Wartere (d. 1458), who had given money towards the construction of the hall.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ See above, p. 98.

¹⁵⁴ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁵ Stow, *Survey*, I, p. 272.

¹⁵⁶ David Bowsher et al., *The London Guildhall: An Archaeological History of a Neighbourhood from Early Medieval to Modern Times* (London, 2007), I, p. 182.

¹⁵⁷ Stow, *Survey*, I, p. 272.

¹⁵⁸ 'Norfolk: Norwich, Guildhall, Mayoral Council Chamber: History', *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi: Medieval Stained Glass in Britain*, 2010, <<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/norwichguildhall/catalogue.html>>

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Royal Commission of Historical Monuments, *Central Area*, p. 77.

4.3.3 Commemorating the Urban Past

Over time, townspeople's efforts to ensure their heraldic presence also added to the role of town halls as 'museums' of urban history, preserving the memory of distinguished citizens who had contributed to the city's honour and prosperity. But wider and more remote aspects of the past that related to the identity of the late medieval city were communicated by means of heraldry in town halls as well, not least in the form of the municipal arms. Themselves seen in a close relation with history, as was argued in the previous section, their historical connotations were further reinforced in the context of heraldic arrangements that commemorated individuals and events—actual and fictitious—of the past.

In Germany, the Nine Worthies—a popular medieval 'team' of three Jewish, three Roman/Greek, and three Christian 'heroes' of biblical and ancient times—were a reoccurring iconographic element in town halls, supposed to remind mayors, aldermen, and judges not only of their obligation towards the same exemplary virtue, but also of the 'three ages of the world'.¹⁶¹ In visual form, they embodied a convenient shorthand of 'universal history' (*Universalgeschichte*), as Karl Höltgen argues.¹⁶² Statues of the Nine Worthies were displayed in the town hall of Cologne, for instance, where they



Fig. 4.12: Statues of the Nine Worthies displayed in the *Hansasaal* of Cologne's town hall (c. 1360), each identified by a shield with an imaginary, retroactively attributed heraldic sign.

¹⁶¹ Horst Schroeder, *Der Topos der Nine Worthies in Literatur und bildender Kunst* (Göttingen, 1971), esp. pp. 261–298; Robert L. Wyss, 'Die neun Helden: Eine ikonographische Studie', *Journal of Swiss Archeology and Art History*, 17.2 (1957), esp. p. 85.

¹⁶² Karl Josef Höltgen, 'Die "Nine Worthies"', *Anglia*, 77 (1959), p. 280.

decorated the northern wall of the ‘Hanseatic Hall’ (*Hansasaal*) built in 1360.¹⁶³ Each ‘hero’ was accompanied by a distich that called to mind his respective ‘historical’ achievements, and identified by a fictitious, retroactively attributed heraldic sign depicted on a shield (fig. 4.12). The worthies were also added to the ‘Court Hall’ of Lüneburg’s town hall in 1410,¹⁶⁴ where they were set in the south window’s stained glass. Again, distichs reminded of the heroes’ historical significance, and again they were identified by imaginary arms. Yet ‘historical’ heraldry played a role beyond mere identification, as the presence of the municipal arms in the immediate visual context of these heraldic signs also allowed for the people of Cologne and Lüneburg to locate their cities within the ‘universal history’ embodied by the Nine Worthies. In Cologne, the municipal arms were displayed in close proximity: next to the aforementioned stained glass, the eastern side of the hall likewise featured two shields of the municipal arms that guarded the door to the ‘Golden Chamber’ (*Goldene Kammer*).¹⁶⁵ In Lüneburg, the city arms were shown in the context of the Nine Worthies as part of a painted ceiling commissioned for the Court Hall in 1529, which added further depictions of biblical narratives, ancient Greek and Roman mythology, and finally also the (local) history of Lüneburg itself to this historical and heraldic display.¹⁶⁶

The same juxtaposition of municipal and ‘historical’ heraldry can also be observed in England, although not in the form of the Nine Worthies, who despite their existence in the English tradition did not feature (or at least survive) in town halls.¹⁶⁷ An exception is King Arthur, whose imaginary shield of arms, executed in stained glass, appeared in the tracery of Coventry’s fifteenth-century town hall alongside the municipal arms (fig. 4.13). Here, Arthur, revered as a mythical precursor to the medieval English monarchy,¹⁶⁸ was accompanied by other shields of arms attributed to Anglo-Saxon

¹⁶³ Mühlberg, ‘Hansasaal’, p. 74.

¹⁶⁴ Becksmann and Korn, *Glasmalereien in Lüneburg*, pp. 99–108.

¹⁶⁵ Mühlberg, ‘Hansasaal’, p. 78.

¹⁶⁶ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, p. 63.

¹⁶⁷ Hölting, ‘Die “Nine Worthies”’, p. 280; Jutta Göller and Karl Heinz Göller, ‘Neun Gute Helden: V. Englische Literatur’, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich; Zurich, 1993). See also below, p. 267.

¹⁶⁸ N. J. Higham, *King Arthur: Myth-Making and History* (London, 2002), pp. 226–35; Martin B. Shichtman and Laurie A. Finke, ‘Profiting from the Past: History as Symbolic Capital in the *Historia Regum Britannie*’, *Arthurian Literature*, 12 (1993); Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England: English Attitudes to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Toronto; Buffalo, 1987), pp. 26–27.

kings Ethelred and Alfred, but also the actual arms of more recent English kings such as Edward I and Edward III.¹⁶⁹ As a matter of fact, the stained glass of Coventry's town hall illustrated an entire history, if not genealogy, of the English monarchy by means of heraldry. Arthur appears again in the main window panels below the heraldically rich tracery as one of nine figures of English kings, each clad in a surcoat with their respective heraldic sign and further identified by an inscription:¹⁷⁰ King Arthur, William the Conqueror, Richard I, Henry III, Henry VI, Edward III, Henry IV, Henry V, and finally Constantine the Great, who was another exemplary figure of medieval English historiography styled forefather of the English monarchy because of his presence in Roman Britain.¹⁷¹ Although less extensive in scope and heraldic detail, visual links between the kings of the fifteenth-century present and the more remote past were incorporated into the stained glass of Norwich's town hall as well. The royal arms, quartered in the garter, again close to a depiction of the municipal arms, were displayed next to the arms of Edward the Confessor,¹⁷² who by this time had come to serve not only as a patron and archetype of the English monarchy, but also as an example for the pursuit of peace fundamental to urban ideals of good government.¹⁷³

A curious entry in the expense accounts of Coventry furthermore suggests that townsmen were quite aware of the potential implications such a heraldically augmented narrative had in relation to English power politics. Since the Coventry window placed a heavy emphasis on the Lancastrian dynasty, representing the three Lancastrian kings Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI, the window was apparently deemed problematic once Edward IV of House York had assumed power. The council in 1471 paid for the

¹⁶⁹ Rackham, 'Glass-Paintings of Coventry', pp. 103–104.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew Rudebeck, 'John Thornton and the Stained Glass of St Mary's Guildhall, Coventry', *The Journal of Stained Glass*, 31 (2007); Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, 2006).

¹⁷¹ Winifred J. Mulligan, 'The British Constantine: An English Historical Myth', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 8.2 (1978); Richard Koebner, '"The Imperial Crown of This Realm": Henry VIII, Constantine the Great and Polydore Vergil', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 26 (1963), pp. 31–32.

¹⁷² 'Norwich Mayoral Council Chamber'.

¹⁷³ Jonathan Good, 'Richard II and the Cults of Saints George and Edward the Confessor', in Laura Holden Hollengreen (ed.), *Translatio or the Transmission of Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 175–178.

arms of Henry VI to be replaced with the arms of Edward IV,¹⁷⁴ although this decision must have been reversed as the political tide turned once more. Given that Edward of House York had wrestled the crown from the Lancastrian Henry, the presence of the current rather than the former king's arms was an opportune but sensible decision. Admittedly, it remains unclear why the royal arms would have to be changed in the first place, as Edward IV and Henry VI appear to have used the same heraldic sign.¹⁷⁵

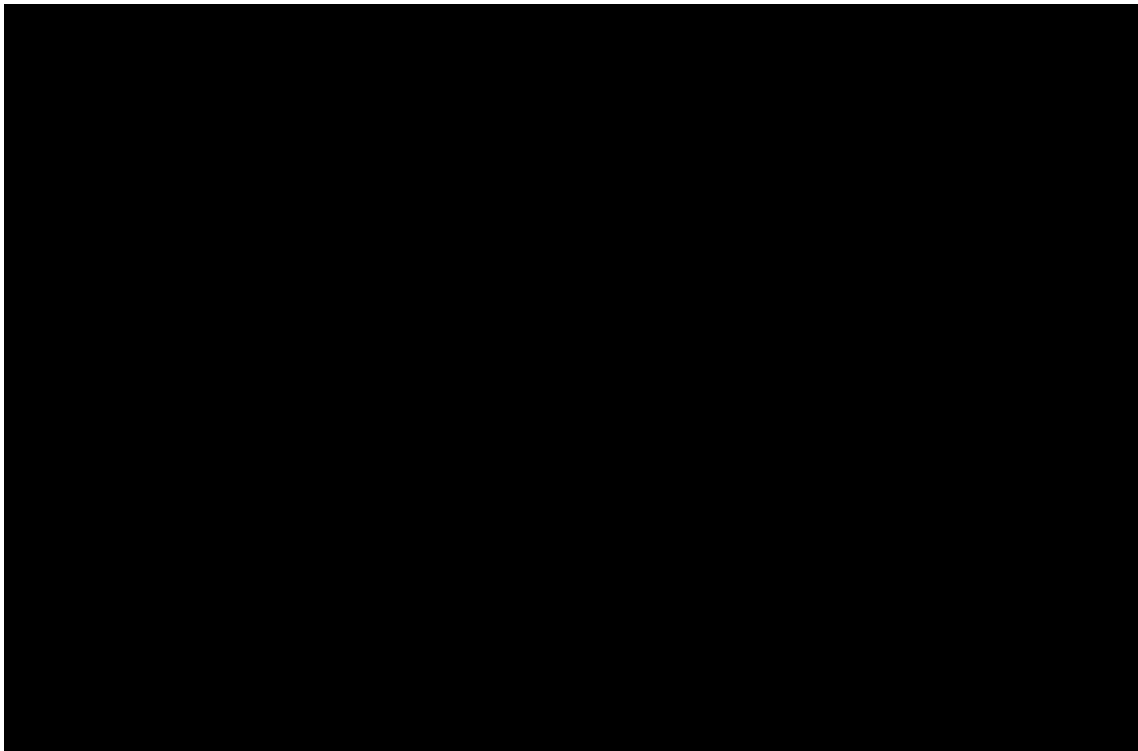


Fig. 4.13: Fifteenth-century stained glass panels in the north window of Coventry's town hall.

In Germany, heraldic iconography commemorated past kings and emperors in a similar way. The early fifteenth-century town hall of Bremen, for example, was not only augmented with 'magnificent arms set into the windows, the first those of the Roman emperor, king, and the seven prince-electors', as a sixteenth-century chronicler noted with regard to 1405.¹⁷⁶ It also featured a ceiling that was embellished with a heraldic chronicle comprised of shields with the arms of German emperors up to Sigismund.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Sharp, *Illustrative Papers on the History and Antiquities of the City of Coventry*, ed. by William George Fretton (Birmingham, 1871), p. 218.

¹⁷⁵ J. H. Pinches and Rosemary Pinches, *The Royal Heraldry of England* (London, 1974), pp. 98, 114.

¹⁷⁶ Johann Renner, *Chronica der Stadt Bremen*, ed. by Lieselotte Klink (Bremen, 1995), I, p. 338.

¹⁷⁷ Hermann Entholt, *Das Rathaus zu Bremen und seine Halle* (Bremen, 1930), p. 8.

A visual narrative comparable to the English royal genealogy in Coventry's town hall still exists in the town hall of Lüneburg.¹⁷⁸ Here, the walls of the 'Princes' Hall' were decorated with figures of House Brunswick-Lüneburg, the town's territorial lords, accompanied by inscriptions giving their date of death and their burial place. Crucially, each figure is identified by a shield of arms, whose composition, especially in relation to each other, reflected the historical development of House Brunswick-Lüneburg's territorial influence: while rulers from Otto I (1204–1252) to Magnus II (1324–1373) had borne arms quartering the leopards of Brunswick and the lions of Lüneburg, the purchase of Homburg is represented in the arms next to the figures of Bernard I (1400–1428) and his co-regent Henry by means of an inescutcheon, while the arms on the western side of the hall further testified to the incorporation of Everstein, quartering Lüneburg, Brunswick, Homburg, and Everstein.¹⁷⁹

Finally, late medieval town halls also featured heraldic references to the local, urban past, not least in the form of the commemorative arms of eminent citizens on display. There was a visible desire to commemorate important benefactors of the city, frequently represented or identified by means of heraldry. Such considerations surface in the iconographic choices for the stained glass of Coventry's town hall, for instance, notably multiple ostrich feathers associated with the Prince of Wales depicted in the north window. Alluding to the city's claimed status as *camera principis* derived from their alleged 'special relationship' with the Black Prince,¹⁸⁰ the latter was also commemorated as part of an entire ensemble of princely stained glass figures in the east and west windows of the hall, each identified by their respective arms.¹⁸¹ But the historical relevance of such heraldically represented and identified individuals becomes most apparent in relation to the central nine kings: Edward III had formally incorporated the town and permitted the burgesses of Coventry to elect their mayor,¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, pp. 77–83.

¹⁷⁹ Hansjörg Rümelin and Gisela Jaacks, 'Bild und Raum: Die Bilder der Herzöge, Könige und Kaiser im Fürstensaal des Lüneburger Rathauses', in Joachim Ganzert (ed.), *Das Lüneburger Rathaus: Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen 2008 bis 2011* (Petersberg, 2014), I, pp. 324–327.

¹⁸⁰ See above, p. 183.

¹⁸¹ Rudebeck, 'Stained Glass of St Mary's Guildhall', p. 14; William Reader, *A Guide to St. Mary's Hall, Coventry*, 2nd edn (Coventry, 1827), p. 17.

¹⁸² Richard Goddard, *Lordship and Medieval Urbanisation: Coventry, 1043–1355* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 288.

while Richard II had confirmed privileges granted by Henry II, Henry III, and Edward III.¹⁸³ Henry VI had contributed to the townspeople's self-esteem when he issued a charter that transformed the town into a county in 1451,¹⁸⁴ and the city proudly remembered this change to its constitutional status in the windows of its town hall. This previously observed predilection for Lancastrian kings suggests that it was the favour of this dynasty in particular the city sought to commemorate, likely because it was in the times of the Lancastrian kings Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI 'that Coventry assumed a political significance –both local and national–which was unrivalled before or since', as Liddy states.¹⁸⁵

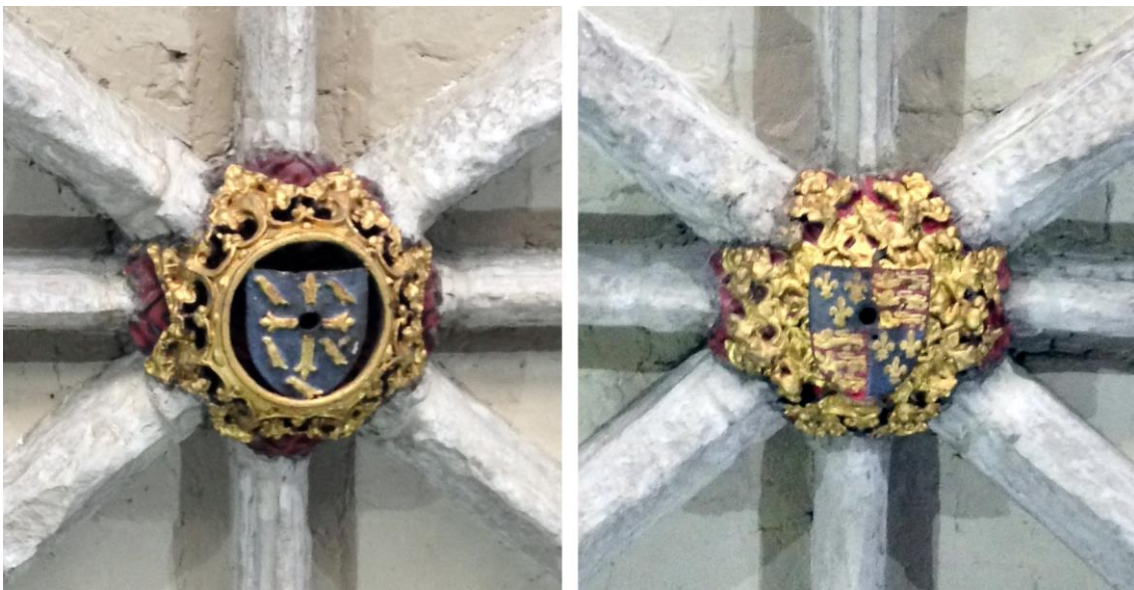


Fig. 4.14: Fifteenth-century ceiling bosses in the porch of London's town hall, bearing the arms of Edward the Confessor (left) and Henry VI (right).

Comparable considerations must have inspired the choice of heraldic decorations for the front porch of London's guild hall, erected in 1425, where in the centre of the vaulted ceiling two painted and gilt heraldic bosses referred to Henry VI and again Edward the Confessor (fig. 4.14).¹⁸⁶ Since the latter's arms also appeared in other parts of the hall, Barron argues that there must have been a contemporary belief that saw the first town hall's construction to fall into Edward's reign: 'otherwise the shield would

¹⁸³ Martin Weinbaum, *The Incorporation of Boroughs* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 47–48.

¹⁸⁴ Benjamin Poole, *The History of Coventry* (Coventry, 1852), pp. 29–30.

¹⁸⁵ Liddy, 'Urban Politics and Material Culture', p. 218.

¹⁸⁶ Bowsher et al., *The London Guildhall*, I, pp. 186–195.

hardly have been selected as a companion to the only other boss of importance in the Porch which has for its ornamentation the Arms of Henry VI, with whose reign so much in connection with the Hall, Porch and Chapel is associated'.¹⁸⁷

Similarly instructive examples for the involvement of heraldry in the commemoration of historical events constitutive of communal identity can be found in Germany, although it often remains ultimately unclear whether these cases represent genuinely medieval appearances of town halls or early modern changes to their architectural and decorative programmes. In the town hall of Reutlingen, for instance, seventeenth century observers noted heraldic reminders of a decisive battle, which saw the citizens triumph over Count Ulrich of Württemberg in 1377. The count's claims to Reutlingen had threatened a fundamental element of municipal identity, namely the freedom and continued existence of the urban community. The successful defence of the city received a 'place of honour' in its history, not least because the people of Reutlingen believed that only through their unity had they been able to obtain victory.¹⁸⁸ Proudly the townsmen remembered a considerable number of noblemen who had perished at the hands of the urban warriors, and whose 'names and coats of arms are displayed in the town hall of our city', as the chronicler Johann Fitzion (d. 1653) observed.¹⁸⁹ This heraldic commemoration was accompanied by other material reminders of the urban past, as an account by Jakob Frischlin (d. c. 1621) suggests. He noted the presence of 'quite rusty antiques, old targes, crossbows and many arrows, old helmets, shields and the like, which one in the olden times had needed for this town's defence'.¹⁹⁰

Material mementos or 'spoils of war'—in the form of flags and banners—existed in Nuremberg,¹⁹¹ while a table with numerous heraldic signs of European kings and

¹⁸⁷ Barron, *Guildhall of London*, p. 34.

¹⁸⁸ Klaus Graf, 'Urschel, Nachtfräulein und andere Gespenster: Überlieferungen und Sagen in Reutlingen und Pfullingen', *Reutlinger Geschichtsblätter: Neue Folge*, 50 (2011), pp. 214–215.

¹⁸⁹ Johann Fitzion, *Cronica unnd grindtliche beschreibung des Heiligen Römischen Reichs Statt Reütlingen*, ed. by Adolf Bacmeister (Stuttgart, 1862), p. 161.

¹⁹⁰ Werner Krauß, *Die Reutlinger Frischlin-Chronik: Bearbeitung, Vergleich mit der Fitzion-Chronik, Forschungen über M. Jakob Frischlin* (Strasbourg, 1971), p. 156.

¹⁹¹ Joseph Baader, *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Nürnbergs* (Nördlingen, 1862), II, p. 1; Ernst Mummenhoff, *Das Rathaus in Nürnberg* (Nuremberg, 1891), p. 38.

princes in the town hall of Lüneburg is perhaps a trophy carried away from the city's successful conquest of a castle during the War of the Lüneburg Succession in 1371.¹⁹² In Erfurt, heraldic 'antiques' decorated the walls of the 'Great Hall' in the shape of twenty fifteenth-century targes.¹⁹³ As in the case of a similar targe of the town of Deggendorf (fig. 4.15), the different targes were embellished with the municipal arms of Erfurt, combined with heraldic signs of territorial possessions acquired by the city of Erfurt throughout the later Middle Ages (fig. 4.16).¹⁹⁴ Heraldry thus visualised the history of the city's increasing regional influence in the same way as it did above the entrance of the late medieval town hall.¹⁹⁵



Fig. 4.15: Targe from Deggendorf with the town's municipal arms (c. 1450). Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich, W 284.

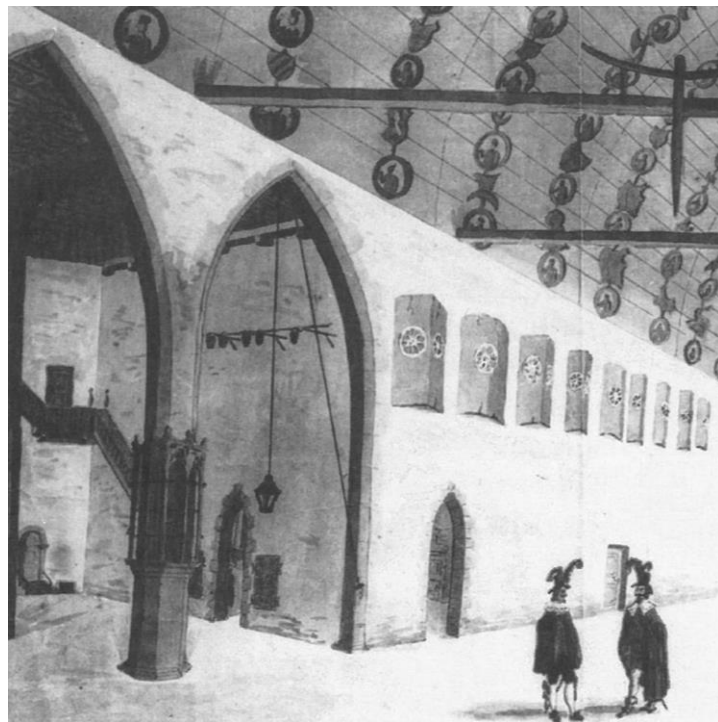


Fig. 4.16: Sketch of the interior of Erfurt's town hall (1830), showing targes painted with the arms of Erfurt and the archbishop of Mainz on the walls, and the arms of neighbours and allies of the city in the roof.

¹⁹² Jens Kremb, *Bemalte Tischplatten des Spätmittelalters* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2016), pp. 26–32; Otfried Neubecker, 'Die Wappen auf dem Falttisch im Fürstensaal des Rathauses Lüneburg', *Lüneburger Blätter*, 2 (1951).

¹⁹³ Heckert, 'Ausstattung des Großen Saales', pp. 304–307; Karl Hermann, 'Das Wappen und die Siegel der Stadt Erfurt', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde von Erfurt*, 1 (1865), pp. 59–63.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Steffen Raßloff, 'Historisches Stadtwappen am Rathaus: Symbol des „Landes Erfurt“', *Erfurt-Web*, 2012, <http://www.erfurt-web.de/Stadtwappen_Rathaus_Erfurt>.

4.4 Towers, Gates, and Monuments: Constructing Urban Space(s)

‘The city of late medieval northern Europe was a spatial being—not just a creation in space but a creation of space’.¹⁹⁶ Visual communication played an important part in this creation, for example in the shape of the urban fortifications. Since their walls separated an ‘inside’ from an ‘outside’, Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham attribute them with ‘a crucial role in bounding medieval urban space’, just as Keith Lilley interprets gates as a liminal threshold which ‘marked the symbolic boundary of the civic space of the city’.¹⁹⁷ At the same time, elaborate visual programmes displayed on the urban fortifications rendered them, to quote James Tracy, ‘a town’s badge of honour’, which ‘signalled to the passer-by the wealth and the prestige of the corporation’, and thus ‘had a symbolic significance as emblems of urban identity’, as John Goodall and Kathryn Reyerson hold, respectively.¹⁹⁸

Yet the space enclosed by walls and accessed via gates was far from homogeneous. Instead, a multiplicity of socially constructed spaces—from noble residences to legally distinct church immunities—coexisted, just like the marketplace, for instance, localised the trade of goods and regulated mercantile conduct. In England in particular, Terry Slater argues, market-crosses played an important part as ‘symbolic representation[s] of the market charter and the physical manifestation that market transactions were

¹⁹⁶ Howell, ‘Urban Spaces’, p. 3. For examples, see the contributions in Classen, *Urban Space*; Goodson, Lester and Symes, *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks*; Michel Pauly and Martin Scheutz (eds), *Cities and Their Spaces: Concepts and Their Use in Europe* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2014); Katrien Lichtert, Jan Dumolyn and Maximiliaan P. J. Martens (eds), *Portraits of the City: Representing Urban Space in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout, 2014); Ehrich and Oberste, *Städtische Räume im Mittelalter*.

¹⁹⁷ Oliver Hamilton Creighton and Robert A. Higham, *Medieval Town Walls: An Archaeology and Social History of Urban Defence* (Stroud, 2005), p. 32; Keith D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages 1000–1450* (Basingstoke; New York, 2002), p. 214. See also Ferdinand Opll, ‘Trennen und Verbinden: Zur praktischen und symbolischen Bedeutung des Stadtttores’, in Lukas Morscher, Martin Scheutz, and Walter Schuster (eds), *Orte der Stadt im Wandel vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart: Treffpunkte, Verkehr und Fürsorge* (Innsbruck, 2013), esp. p. 76; Ulrich Schütte, ‘Stadttor und Hausschwelle: Zur rituellen Bedeutung architektonischer Grenzen in der Frühen Neuzeit’, in Werner Paravicini (ed.), *Zeremoniell und Raum: 4. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Sigmaringen, 1997).

¹⁹⁸ James D. Tracy, ‘Introduction’, in James D. Tracy (ed.), *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 17; John Goodall, ‘The English Gatehouse’, *Architectural History*, 55 (2012), p. 1; Kathryn L. Reyerson, ‘Medieval Walled Space: Urban Development vs. Defense’, in James D. Tracy (ed.), *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 88.

undertaken before God', which is why townspeople, James Davis further notes, saw market-crosses as investments 'in their own civic honour', and 'expressions of civic prestige and piety'.¹⁹⁹ Public fountains are interpreted in a similar way: for Peter Stabel, they were 'lavishly decorated objects of prestige', or 'symbol and landmark of a commonality' (*Symbol und Wahrzeichen einer Kommunität*) in the like-minded words of Wolfgang Schmid.²⁰⁰

In these contexts, this section will demonstrate, municipal arms as heraldic representations of communal identity and markers of communal space were omnipresent. But next to municipal arms as reminders of the legal jurisdiction of the urban community, imperial, royal, and seigneurial signs again added to the visual communication of political power by alluding to the ultimate source of communal authority. Although heraldically marked as a distinctive urban space, the late medieval city always remained but one part of the larger, political space of the realm/empire. The same is true for the inside of the heraldically demarcated urban space, which was internally divided in the same way. As an analysis of disputes associated with the display of heraldic signs inside the urban space will suggest, heraldic communication was perceived to indicate and indeed constitute at times competing territorial possession within the late medieval city.

¹⁹⁹ Terry R. Slater, 'Lordship, Economy and Society in English Medieval Marketplaces', in Anngret Stimms and Howard B. Clarke (eds), *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe: The European Historic Towns Atlas Project* (London, 2015), p. 230; James Davis, 'The Cross and the Pillory: Symbolic Structures of Commercial Space in Medieval English Towns', in Susanne Ehrlich and Jörg Oberste (eds), *Städtische Räume im Mittelalter* (Regensburg, 2009), p. 248. See also Tony Scrase, 'Crosses, Conduits and Other Street Furniture in the South West of England', in Marc Boone and Peter Stabel (eds), *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe* (Leuven, 2000), p. 216; Werner Freitag, 'Städtischer Markt und symbolische Kommunikation', in Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Tim Neu, and Christina Brauner (eds), *Alles nur symbolisch? Bilanz und Perspektiven der Erforschung symbolischer Kommunikation* (Cologne, 2013), p. 49.

²⁰⁰ Peter Stabel, 'The Market-Place and Civic Identity in Late Medieval Flanders', in Marc Boone and Peter Stabel (eds), *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe* (Leuven, 2000), p. 57; Wolfgang Schmid, 'Brunnen und Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 267 (1998), p. 584. See also Katharina Simon-Muscheid, 'Städtische Zierde, gemeiner Nutzen, Ort der Begegnung: Öffentliche Brunnen in mittelalterlichen Städten', in Helmut Bräuer and Elke Schlenkrich (eds), *Die Stadt als Kommunikationsraum: Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Karl Czok zum 75. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 2001), pp. 707–708; Susanne Kress, "'Der Mann uff dem Brunnen": Die Wappnerbrunnen in Südwestdeutschland als städtische Identitäts- und Erinnerungssymbole im 16. Jahrhundert', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 136 (2000), pp. 58–59.

4.4.1 *Demarcating the Space of the City*

The significance of urban fortifications for communal identity is not least underlined by the fact that the contemporaries themselves used walls and gates as a symbolic ‘shorthand’ for the late medieval city. Descriptions and definitions of ‘the city’ proudly spoke of mighty fortifications,²⁰¹ and the iconography of municipal seals often incorporated their architectural characteristics. In London, ‘Londoners singled out the patron saints, the citizens and the walled city as the threefold representations of the commonalty’, as Caroline Barron observes, just as York and Bristol as well as Cologne and Mainz among other English and German cities did.²⁰²

Given the frequent iconographic interaction of seals and arms, it is unsurprising that walls, gates, and towers became a popular element of municipal heraldry, too. In England, the arms of Bristol featured a castle from whose gate-house a ship issued, Norwich had a triple-towered castle above a royal lion, and the heraldic beast of Coventry, an elephant, bore a castle on its back.²⁰³ German cities such as Lüneburg, Magdeburg, and Hamburg likewise showed walls, gates and towers in their arms (fig. 4.17),²⁰⁴ not least because the fortified character of the settlement was alluded to in these cities’ names, which was also the case for Newcastle, for example.²⁰⁵

In turn, heraldic signs often became part of the urban fortifications, especially on the facades of gates and gate-houses, as historians of German cities observe.²⁰⁶ That the

²⁰¹ With regard to London, see William FitzStephen, *Description of the City of London: Newly Translated from the Latin Original*, ed. by Thompson Gale (London, 1772), p. 24. For Nuremberg, see likewise Hans Rosenplüt, *Reimpaarsprüche und Lieder*, ed. by Jörn Reichel (Tübingen, 1990), p. 223.

²⁰² Caroline M. Barron, ‘The Political Culture of Medieval London’, in Linda S. Clark (ed.), *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain* (Woodbridge; Rochester [New York], 2004), p. 113; Pedrick, *Borough Seals*, esp. pp. 46–49, 135–137; Andrea Stieldorf, ‘Zur Funktion von Stadtbefestigungen auf Siegeln und Münzen’, in Olaf Wagener (ed.), *Vmbringt mit starcken turnen, murn’: Ortsbefestigungen im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt [Main], 2010), pp. 77–78. See also Bedos-Rezak, ‘Towns and Seals’, p. 44.

²⁰³ F. Were, ‘Bristol City Coat of Arms’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 24 (1901); Hotblack, ‘The Armorial Bearings of the City of Norwich’; Benjamin Poole, *Coventry: Its History and Antiquities* (London, 1870), p. 97.

²⁰⁴ See also Peter Johaneck, ‘Die Mauer und die Heiligen: Stadtvorstellungen im Mittelalter’, in Wolfgang Behringer and Bernd Roeck (eds), *Das Bild der Stadt in der Neuzeit: 1400–1800* (Munich, 1999), p. 30.

²⁰⁵ John Brand, *The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne* (London, 1789), II, plate 1, fig. 15.

²⁰⁶ Thomas Kühtreiber, ‘The Town Wall: Sign of Communication and Demarcation (the Example of Hainburg, Lower Austria)’, *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*, 47 (2003), p. 56; Opll, ‘Bedeutung des



Fig. 4.17: Municipal arms of Lüneburg, Magdeburg, and Hamburg depicted in Herman Bote's *Schichtbuch* (1514). HAB, 120 Extravag., fols 169r, 171v.

gates of Augsburg, for example, were marked with the municipal arms not only follows from expenses recorded by the *Baumeisterbücher* in 1396,²⁰⁷ but also from an illumination in a late fifteenth-century chronicle (fig. 4.18). The same arms also appeared above the city gates in a depiction of Augsburg in Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum* (1493), which features a considerable number of woodcuts of late medieval cities identified by a prominent display of municipal heraldry on the urban fortifications.²⁰⁸ As a matter of fact, in late medieval art generally 'the town wall became the symbol of great cities [...] as their most distinctive feature',²⁰⁹ and municipal arms were an almost stereotypical component (fig. 4.19 and 4.20).

Whereas Schedel's depiction of Ulm does not contain the city's arms, it does incorporate conspicuous heraldic display alluding to an important aspect of communal identity, namely Ulm's place in wider society as an imperial city.²¹⁰ The facade of St George's gate exhibits a total of fourteen figures, who can be identified thanks to a description in Fabri's *Tractatus*: 'Said gate [...] bears a large carved cross at the front

Stadttores', p. 72; Thomas Biller, *Die mittelalterliche Stadtbefestigung im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Darmstadt, 2016), I, p. 344.

²⁰⁷ Daniela Kah, *Die wahrhaft königliche Stadt: Das Reich in den Reichsstädten Augsburg, Nürnberg und Lübeck im Späten Mittelalter* (Leiden, 2018), p. 227.

²⁰⁸ BSB, Rar. 287, fol. 92r. See also Werner Kreuer, *Imago civitatis: Stadtbildsprache des Spätmittelalters: Essener Bearbeitung der authentischen Stadtansichten aus der Schedelschen Weltchronik von 1493* (Essen, 1993), p. 7.

²⁰⁹ Hilary L. Turner, *Town Defences in England and Wales: An Architectural and Documentary Study, AD 900–1500* (Hamden, 1971), p. 92.

²¹⁰ BSB, Rar. 287, fol. 191r.

with the depicted likenesses of the imperial prince-electors and their armorial bearings.’²¹¹ The most iconic illustration of the *Liber chronicarum*, depicting the skyline of Nuremberg, likewise included heraldic references to the city’s imperial status, and so do the city’s written sources (fig. 4.21): in 1455, a chronicler recorded that ‘in this year they placed the black eagle on the facade above the archway of the Tiergarten and New Gate’,²¹² while in 1523 a council decree ordained that ‘the carved arms on the gate towers



Fig. 4.18: Municipal arms of Augsburg displayed above a gateway, depicted in a copy of the *Cronographia Augustensium* (c. 1480). ASSB, 4 Cod. Aug. 1 (Cim. 70), fol. 20v.

²¹¹ Fabri, *Tractatus*, p. 43.

²¹² CDS 10, p. 211.

are to be inspected, and it is to be considered whether it is necessary to have them repainted with oil paint'.²¹³ The power of territorial lords was acknowledged in the same way, as the example of Lüneburg shows. During the reconstruction of the *Altenbrücker Tor* from 1414 onward, expenses for several *schilde* were recorded.²¹⁴ Here, as on the outside of Lüneburg's town hall, the municipal arms were juxtaposed with the arms of

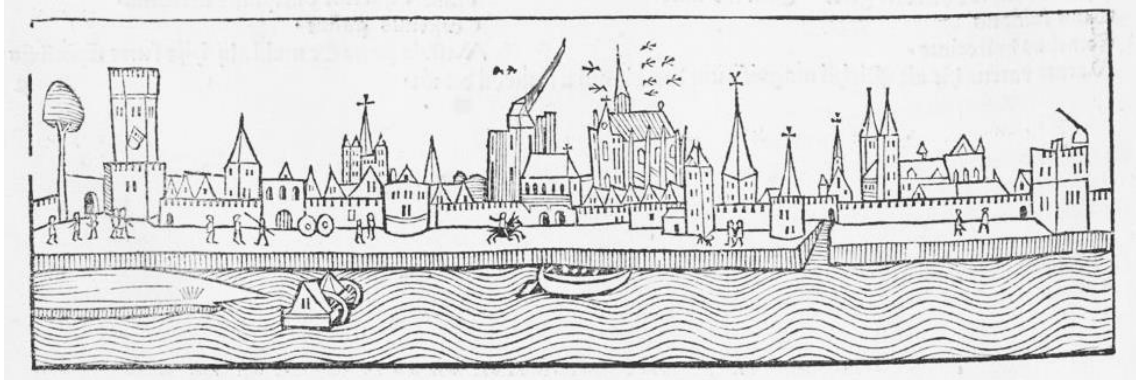


Fig. 4.19: Skyline of Cologne in a woodcut from Werner Rolevinck's *Fasciculus temporum* (1479), which has the *Bayenturm* bearing a shield resembling the municipal arms of Cologne at the far left. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf, GW M38685.

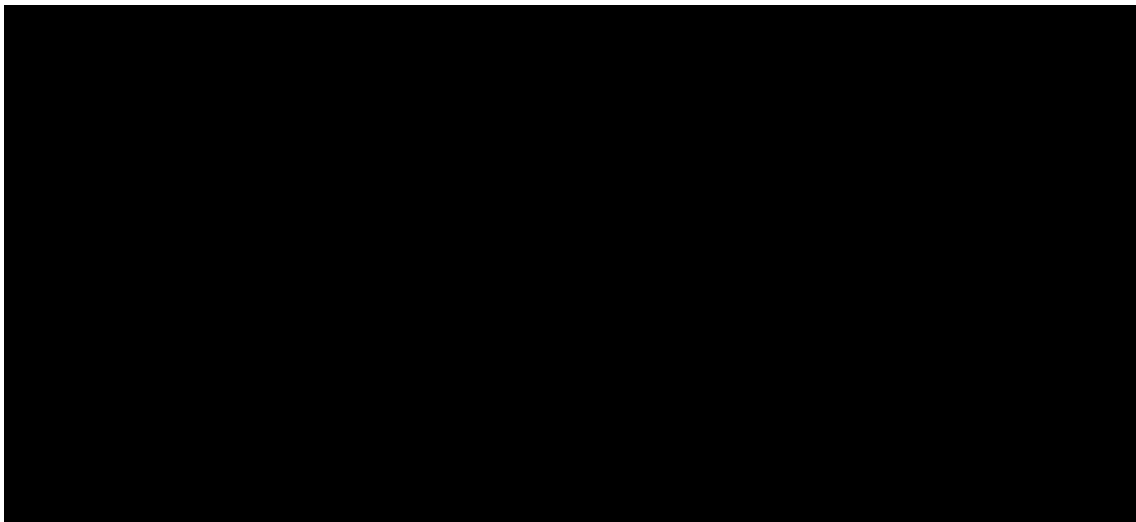


Fig. 4.20: Painting of St Ursula arriving in Cologne, showing gate-house and towers with Cologne's municipal arms on shields and a banner. Cologne, Wallraff-Richartz-Museum, 0715.

²¹³ Theodor Hampe (ed.), *Nürnberger Ratsverlässe über Kunst und Künstler im Zeitalter der Spätgotik und Renaissance* (Vienna; Leipzig, 1904), p. 212.

²¹⁴ Printed in Antje Sander-Berke, 'Stadtmauer und Stadtrechnung: Schriftliche Quellen des Spätmittelalters zu den technischen Voraussetzungen des städtischen Befestigungsbaus', in Gabriele Isenberg and Barbara Scholkmann (eds), *Die Befestigung der mittelalterlichen Stadt* (Cologne, 1997), p. 41, n. 54. See also Otto Volk, 'Die Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Ein Zugang aus spätmittelalterlichen Stadtrechnungen', in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen – Abzeichen – Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993), pp. 43–44.

House Brunswick-Lüneburg (fig. 4.22).

In England, heraldic signs were a frequent addition to urban fortifications as well, notwithstanding the fact that far fewer depictions of late medieval English cities survive.²¹⁵ The first English panorama to feature municipal arms did not appear until the depiction of London's skyline by Anton van den Wyngarde from 1543/1544. Here, the outer gate-house of London Bridge—'the entrance into the city's jurisdiction' in the



Fig. 4.21: The skyline of Nuremberg, featuring many shields of the municipal and imperial arms, depicted in the *Liber chronicarum* (1493). BSB, Rar. 287, fol. 99v.

²¹⁵ Peter Barber, 'A Glimpse of the Earliest Map-View of London?', *London Topographical Record*, 27 (1995); Paul D. A. Harvey, John B. Harley and David Woodward, 'Local and Regional Cartography in Medieval Europe', *The History of Cartography* (Chivago; London, 1987), 1; J. G. Links, *Townscape Painting and Drawing* (London, 1972).



Fig. 4.22: Fortifications of Lüneburg in a painting by Hans Bornemann (1447), showing the *Altenbrücker Tor* on the far right and the *Rotes Tor* in the centre, each with two adjacent shields.

words of a contemporary chronicler²¹⁶—was marked with a shield of the municipal arms above the archway (fig. 4.23).²¹⁷ A much earlier case comes in the form of a fifteenth-century seal from Shrewsbury, which supposedly tried to provide ‘a contemporary picture of that town’.²¹⁸ It shows a skyline encompassed by a wall with three gates, the central one of which has the royal arms placed above the archway, flanked on either side by the municipal arms of Shrewsbury and the arms of St George. Analogous to imperial cities such as Ulm and Nuremberg, this arrangement thus heraldically located Shrewsbury within the English kingdom.

Fortunately, material evidence survived in several English cities, albeit often not into the present, since ‘the old English boroughs have subsequently taken until lately an Enlightened pride in demolishing those walls, and gates especially’.²¹⁹ In Norwich,

²¹⁶ Taylor and Roskell, *Gesta*, p. 102.

²¹⁷ Derek Keene, ‘London Bridge and the Identity of the Medieval City’, *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 51 (2000), p. 152; Howard Colvin and Susan Foister, *The Panorama of London circa 1544* (London, 1996), p. 12.

²¹⁸ Pedrick, *Borough Seals*, p. 19.

²¹⁹ Charles L. H. Coulson, ‘Battlements and the Bourgeoisie: Municipal Status and the Apparatus of Urban Defence in Later-Medieval England’, in Stephen D. Church and Ruth E. Harvey (eds), *Medieval Knighthood: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 120.

for instance, the notes and sketches of antiquarian John Kirkpatrick (d. 1728) conserved the late medieval appearance of the city's fortifications: on Bear Street gate, similarly to St Martin's and St Stephen's gate, Kirkpatrick saw 'above the arch on y^e outside within a compartment the arms of the city in plaister work'.²²⁰ St Bennet's gate furthermore incorporated royal heraldry in the form of 'y^e kings arms in y^e midst y^e City and St Geo. Cross on y^e 2 sides'.²²¹ The same co-presence of municipal and royal arms existed in Exeter, where 'above each of the main gates at Exeter, royal coats of arms were prominently displayed alongside those of the city itself'.²²² The same is still the case in Winchester and York (figs 4.24 and 4.25), for example.



Fig. 4.23: Detail of Anton van den Wyngaerde's panorama of London (1543–1544), showing London Bridge and its outer gate-house with the municipal arms above the archway.

This juxtaposition of municipal and royal arms on the fortifications allowed for walls and gates to become 'the physical embodiment of both civic and royal authority', meant to 'hammer home the message that the two were inextricably conjoined' whilst

²²⁰ John Kirkpatrick, 'A Walk Round Norwich Walls', in John L'Estrange (ed.), *The Eastern Counties Collectanea* (Norwich, 1872), p. 7.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9. See also Arthur E. Collins, *The Walls of Norwich* (Norwich; London, 1910); Robert Fitch, *Views of the Gates of Norwich Made in the Years 1792–3 by the Late John Ninham* (Norwich, 1861).

²²² Mark Stoye, *Circled with Stone: Exeter's City Walls, 1485–1660* (Exeter, 2003), p. 39.



Fig. 4.24: Fourteenth-century facade of the Westgate in Winchester (2010), showing shields of the royal and municipal arms.



Fig. 4.25: Fifteenth-century facade of Micklegate Bar, York, with the royal arms of England quartering France flanked by two shields of the municipal arms.

simultaneously paying homage to their ruler.²²³ The display of the arms of the city, combined with the arms of the seigneurial or imperial lord, reflected the supreme authority over the gate and the urban space it demarcated.²²⁴

In the same role, heraldic signs on urban fortifications not just addressed the outside, but the inside, too. In Bristol, for example, the city-facing facade of St John's gate, dating from the end of the fourteenth century, featured the municipal arms on the dexter with the royal arms in the elevated centre above the archway. They were complemented with another allusion to Bristol's proximity to the English monarchy and the historical identity of the city as such, namely statues of legendary fourth-century British kings Belenus and Brennius. The latter in particular was revered as the alleged founder of Bristol (fig. 4.26).²²⁵ Likewise, in Germany, the *Jakobertor* in Augsburg was embellished with the city's heraldic sign,²²⁶ just as the aforementioned *Altenbrücker Tor* in Lüneburg showed the arms of the city (and those of its lord) on all

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ See also Gerrit Deutschländer, 'Der Adler über dem Tor – reichsstädtische Tore und ihre Symbolik', in Helge Wittmann (ed.), *Reichszeichen: Darstellungen und Symbole des Reichs in Reichsstädten* (Petersberg, 2015), p. 174.

²²⁵ Fleming, 'Bristol', p. 29; John Evans, *A Chronological Outline of the History of Bristol* (Bristol, 1824), pp. 3–4.

²²⁶ Zimmermann, *Augsburger Zeichen*, pp. xi, viii, fig. u.

four sides of the gate.²²⁷

Similar considerations must have been at play when it came to the display of heraldry in marketplaces, which ‘were imbued with considerations of power, authority, community, openness, regulation, public witness and morality, and these must have been influential in how the marketplace and its trappings were perceived’.²²⁸ In England, market-crosses served not only as ‘prominent reminder[s] of Christian morality’ but also as ‘visible expression[s] of royal and civic authority’,²²⁹ and it is this latter function that must once have been greatly supported by heraldic signs. The appearance of market-crosses and their combination of municipal and royal heraldry in Bristol, York, and Norwich may today reflect early modern tastes rather than late medieval designs.²³⁰ The octagonal cross in Chichester was built with eight carved-stone shields placed on the facade of its buttresses in 1501, and although it has been much

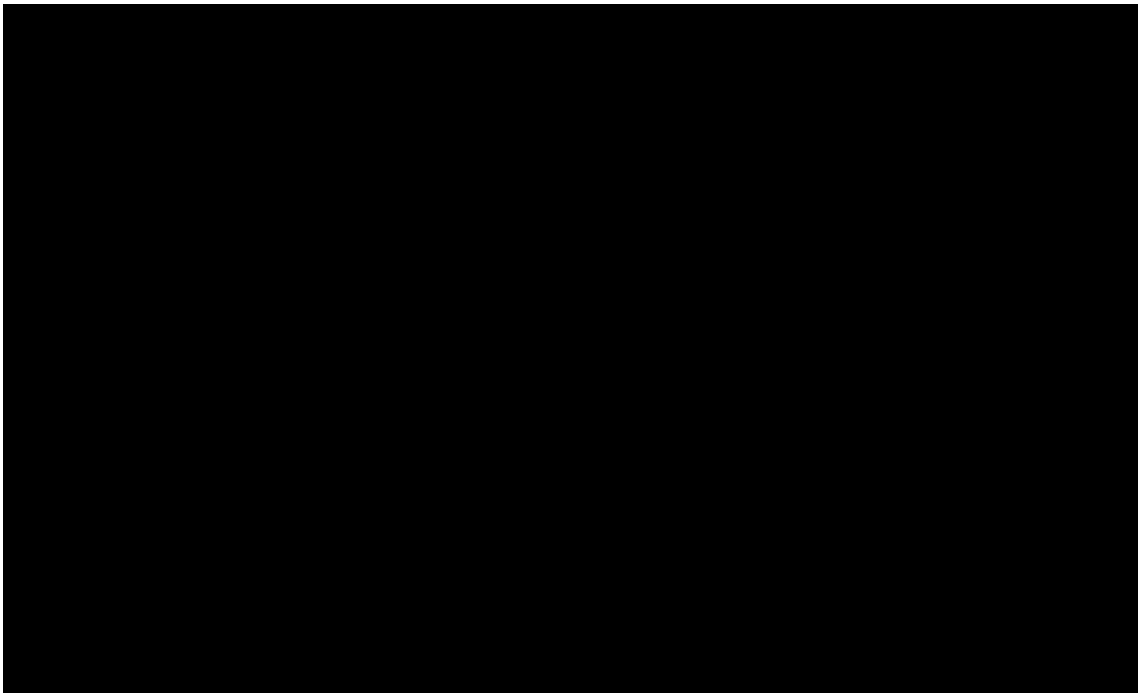


Fig. 4.26: City-facing facade of St John’s gate in Bristol, showing statues of Belenus and Brennus framing a shield of the municipal arms on the left, and a shield of the arms of the Merchant Adventurers’ Company on the right, with the royal arms in the centre above the archway.

²²⁷ See above, p. 212.

²²⁸ Davis, ‘Cross and the Pillory’, p. 242.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6; Carole Rawcliffe, Richard Wilson and Christine Clark (eds), *Norwich since 1550* (London; New York, 2004), plate 1; Thomas Allen, *A New and Completed History of the County of York* (London, 1831), III, p. 306.

altered since, it seems likely that the municipal and royal arms displayed there were already part of the late medieval design.²³¹ Where there was a different superior authority, the heraldic display on the market-cross changed accordingly: the Old Cross in the seigneurial borough of Glastonbury thus showed the arms of Abbott Richard Beere (d. 1524), who on account of his office was lord of the town.²³²

Scholars interpret the fountains frequently found on marketplaces in Germany in a similar way, regarding them as key landmarks for the visual communication of communal identity and the visible expression of communal autonomy and dependency on external lords through heraldry.²³³ Fifteenth-century fountains on the marketplaces of Brunswick's districts thus duly acknowledged the city's territorial lord, the dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, in a heraldic manner, although the imperial arms were incorporated as well. The fountain on the marketplace of the Altstadt—the foremost district of Brunswick—combined carved statues of the Nine Worthies with twenty shields charged with the municipal arms (identical to those of the Altstadt district), the imperial arms, the arms of the prince-electors, and the arms of Brunswick Lüneburg.²³⁴ Likewise, the fountain in the Hagen district juxtaposed the arms of the city's territorial lords with those of the Empire in addition to the municipal arms and a vane of the Hagen arms, thus representing the federal structure of the pentapolis of Brunswick.²³⁵ Similar to Brunswick's grant of arms,²³⁶ these iconographic choices might not just be an allusion to the emperor's supreme sovereignty within the Empire, but an attempt to fashion themselves visually in the manner of other imperial cities free from the

²³¹ Barry Fletcher, 'The History of the Cross', in Paul G. M. Foster (ed.), *A Jewel in Stone: Chichester Market Cross (1501–2001)* (Chichester, 2001), p. 10.

²³² Alfred Rimmer, *Ancient Stone Crosses of England* (London, 1875), p. 118.

²³³ Dorothee Rippmann, "'...zum allgemeinen statt nutzen': Brunnen in der europäischen Stadtgeschichte', in Dorothee Rippmann, Wolfgang Schmid, and Katharina Simon-Muscheid (eds), *'...zum allgemeinen statt nutzen': Brunnen in der europäischen Stadtgeschichte* (Trier, 2008), p. 13; Berent Schweineköper, 'Der Marktbrunnen in Rottenburg am Neckar: Spätmittelalterliche Brunnen südwestdeutscher Städte als staatliche und städtische Hoheitszeichen', in Kaspar Elm, Eberhard Gönner, and Eugen Hillenbrand (eds), *Landesgeschichte und Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift für Otto Herding zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1977), p. 142; Anneliese Rautenberg, *Mittelalterliche Brunnen in Deutschland* (Bamberg, 1965), pp. 159–164.

²³⁴ Carl Wilhelm Sack, *Alterthümer der Stadt und des Landes Braunschweig* (Brunswick, 1852), pp. 49–52.

²³⁵ Arnold Rabbow, 'Der alte Wappenbrunnen auf dem Hagenmarkt zu Braunschweig', *Der Herald*, 52 (2009), esp. p. 424; Arnold Rabbow, *Braunschweigs Weichbildwappen* (Braunschweig, 1985), pp. 6–7.

²³⁶ See above, p. 168.

interference of intermediate lordship.

Market-places in the north and east of late medieval Germany frequently possessed comparable visual representations of communal authority ultimately derived from the emperor. Here, statues of the warrior Roland, who supposedly fought alongside Charlemagne, were displayed, often with a shield conspicuously charged with the imperial eagle.²³⁷ At times, these visual allusions to the Empire contradicted the reality of territorial lordship. In Quedlinburg, the Roland statue was explicitly understood *pro signo libertatis*, which the city was deemed to have enjoyed *ab antiquo*—a claim bound to clash with the actual ruler of the city, in this instance the abbess of Quedlinburg Abbey.²³⁸ In a move meant to reassert her authority over an increasingly defiant townspeople, Abbess Hedwig in 1477 conquered the city, and in visible rejection of the citizens' demand for independence from the abbey's authority her soldiers 'tore down their Roland', defacing in particular the imperial arms on his shield.²³⁹ Similar re-establishments of seigneurial rule to the detriment of Roland statues as expressions of imperial/seditious aspirations of towns under episcopal rule also occurred in Bremen in 1366 and in Halberstadt in 1486.²⁴⁰ It is in such moments of conflict and crisis that the constitutive significance of such monuments and their heraldic signs in relation to the urban space becomes most visible.

4.4.2 *Negotiating Communal Jurisdiction*

In Augsburg, the affiliation of properties of the bishopric, which were exempt from the communal jurisdiction and thus existed as an enclave under ecclesiastical control within

²³⁷ Gudrun Wittek, 'Rolande als Sinnbilder für mittelalterlichen Stadtfrieden?', in Dieter Pötschke (ed.), *Rolande, Kaiser und Recht: Zur Rechtsgeschichte des Harzraums und seiner Umgebung* (Berlin, 1999); Dietlinde Munzel-Everling, 'Kaiserrecht und Rolandfiguren – ein weiterer Beitrag zur Rolandforschung', *Forum Historiae Iuris*, 1 (1997); Bernd Ulrich Hucker, 'Der hansestädtische Roland', in Matthias Puhle (ed.), *Hanse – Städte – Bünde: Die sächsischen Städte zwischen Elbe und Weser um 1500* (Magdeburg, 1996), I.

²³⁸ Albert Krantz, *Saxonia* (Cologne, 1520), lib. xii, cap. xvi. See also Bernd Feicke, 'Der Roland von Quedlinburg: Symbol königlicher Privilegien für die Kaufleute der Stadt – Antipode zur Stadtherrschaft der Äbtissin des Reichsstiftes', *Harz-Zeitschrift*, 63 (2011).

²³⁹ CDS 27, p. 103. See also Renate Neumüllers-Klauser, 'Zum Phänomen der *Erasio nominis* im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 147 (1999), p. 270.

²⁴⁰ Georg Sello, 'Der Roland zu Bremen', *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, 20 (1902), p. 7; Günter Maseberg, 'Der Halberstädter Roland und seine Geschichte', in Dieter Pötschke (ed.), *Vryheit do ik ju openbar...: Rolande und Stadtgeschichte* (Berlin, 2007), p. 280.

the walled space of the city,²⁴¹ repeatedly caused conflicts in which heraldic communication was used to construct and challenge the episcopal space as distinct from the communal space of the citizens. At the beginning stood an accident in 1438, when a monument of Augsburg's heraldic charge, the so-called 'pyr', located in the courtyard of the cathedral was knocked down. As citizens rushed towards the monument to restore it, they were hindered by several canons of the cathedral chapter: 'Thus, people were sent to do it by force, and if the clerics had tried to stop them, they would have punched them.'²⁴² At the heart of this sudden hostility was a conflict about the function of the sign in relation to the space of the cathedral courtyard. Bishop Peter von Schaumberg in 1451 lamented that the people of Augsburg had attempted to restore the pyr without regard for the fact that this was a prerogative of the bishop's office, because this sign 'signifies the immunity that pertains to our bishopric'.²⁴³ After all, he argued, the bishop had been appointed to act as the city's territorial lord, and so his predecessors had placed 'pyrs' in many places, even those which 'do not have nor ever have had anything to do with those of Augsburg, where they had stood many hundreds of years'.²⁴⁴ However, it was precisely this emphasis on the sign as an expression of episcopal lordship that made the status of the cathedral courtyard vulnerable to reinterpretation. The council outright rejected the bishop's claim to the sign, which they saw so firmly associated with their city.²⁴⁵ In their rebuttal, they argued that the pyr had belonged to the city of Augsburg since 'before there was any priest in Augsburg'; it had been made by the 'heathens', which is why it 'could not signify the priests' jurisdiction'.²⁴⁶ To the contrary, the citizens held, the sign of the pyr 'with its liberties

²⁴¹ Sean F. Dunwoody, 'Civic Peace as a Spatial Practice: Calming Confessional Tensions in Augsburg, 1547–1600', in Markus Stock and Nicola Vöhringer (eds), *Spatial Practices: Medieval/Modern* (Göttingen, 2014), pp. 211–212; Rolf Kießling, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Kirche in Augsburg im Spätmittelalter: Ein Beitrag zur Strukturanalyse der oberdeutschen Reichsstadt* (Augsburg, 1971), pp. 353–354.

²⁴² CDS 22, p. 78. Likewise CDS 4, p. 323. See also Martin Kaufhold, 'Prügeleien am Stadtpyr: Ein zerrissener Mantel und die politischen Kämpfe der Reichsstadt (um 1450)', in Martin Kaufhold (ed.), *Augsburg im Mittelalter* (Augsburg, 2009), pp. 62–63.

²⁴³ Printed in Joseph Baader, 'Cardinal und Bischof Peter von Augsburg im Streite mit der Stadt Augsburg', *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bisthums Augsburg*, 2 (1852), pp. 385–386.

²⁴⁴ Printed in Baader, 'Streite mit der Stadt Augsburg', p. 386.

²⁴⁵ See above, p. 180.

²⁴⁶ Printed in Zimmermann, *Augsburger Zeichen*, p. x.

and demarcations pertains to the city and the council'.²⁴⁷

A second incident in 1473 demonstrates that arguments about the interpretation of the pyr and its spatial implications were eventually won by the people of Augsburg. On the occasion of Emperor Frederick III's joyous entry, the council built an 'open-air walkway' meant to take their visitor over the contested courtyard into Augsburg's cathedral.²⁴⁸ As part of the refurbishment, the council attached the municipal arms to a stone column, a move that was met with the immediate protest of the bishop, now Johann II of Werdenberg, who 'did not want to allow this lest it disadvantage and diminish his power'.²⁴⁹ He appealed to the emperor who ruled that the municipal arms were to be removed from the courtyard.²⁵⁰ Unlike in 1438, in 1473 the bishop no longer interpreted the pyr to signify the immunity of the bishopric. Its communal affiliation was now uncontested, and its presence on the cathedral courtyard was perceived as a threat to the bishop's territorial control.

The late medieval perceptions at play in these conflicts over urban space and heraldry in Augsburg were most clearly expressed in a third incident in 1515. Again the city was expecting the emperor, which is why they rebuilt the 'open-air walkway' that had since fallen into decay.²⁵¹ This time, as if to anticipate any actions of the city, it was the bishop who painted 'his and the chapter's arms' on a column.²⁵² Now the council took offence, whereas the bishop maintained that the pillar 'stood on his grounds', which is why he deemed the display of his heraldic signs proper.²⁵³ The townsmen disagreed and answered the visual claim communicated by the bishop's arms with a heraldic intrusion into the heart of the episcopal space:

Conrad Herwart and Egloff Bissinger put a new container for the chalice and the altar furnishings in the cathedral, and they displayed the city's pyr and arms on it. They also draped the altar with silk curtains of the [heraldic] colours of the city—red, green and white. This drove the canons and vicars mad! They thought the people of Augsburg wanted to establish too much [of their] jurisdiction in the church.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Welser and Gasser, *Chronica der Stadt Augspurg*, II, p. 227. See also CDS 22, p. 238.

²⁴⁹ Welser and Gasser, *Chronica der Stadt Augspurg*, II, p. 227.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ CDS 23, p. 132, n. 4.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Given the emotional investment in heraldic signs and their spatial location that becomes apparent in these accounts, it seems unsurprising that the clerics were keen to avenge the visual assault on their space. More than seven decades after the initial incident, it was still the sign of the pyr that, as the chronicler described, ‘hurt their eyes’ just as much as the presence of the city’s heraldic signs in the cathedral.²⁵⁵ The canons were no longer willing to see the pyr as a sign signifying the bishopric. In the decades between the incident in 1438 and 1515, it had become a hostile sign, especially when displayed in the courtyard’s and cathedral’s space, which is why it had to be destroyed. Eventually, three canons were chosen to knock over the pyr on the courtyard with iron poles, and for two years, the chronicler lamented, it was then left lying on the courtyard.²⁵⁶

In the light of these events, it seems somewhat less surprising that townsmen in Worms were concerned about unsolicited heraldic signs attached to the walls of the city in 1487. In this year, the provost of the cathedral, Petrus Anthoni de Clapis, petitioned the council of Worms for permission to build on a part of the city wall next to his residence. The council agreed, though under the condition that any new structure did not protrude any further than the existing one.²⁵⁷ Records of the council described that ‘he built a new oriel on the city wall’, but ‘beneath the oriel he cut a hole in the wall and placed his arms therein, carved from a great stone with a lion’s head’.²⁵⁸ This move was opposed by the aldermen, who must have perceived the presence of the provost’s arms as a presumptuous and in their eyes incorrect heraldic communication of legal affiliation and territorial control. The council complained that the provost ‘had placed his arms in the wall of the council, which the council cannot accept and therefore demands he remove them’.²⁵⁹ The bishop, to the contrary, held that ‘he had the right to the property on behalf of the bishop and the cathedral chapter’s custodians’.²⁶⁰ A complaint about the bishop’s actions was subsequently also sent to the cathedral

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ CDS 23, pp. 132–133; CDS 34, p. 360. See also Welser and Gasser, *Chronica der Stadt Augspurg*, II, p. 166.

²⁵⁷ Heinrich Boos (ed.), *Monumenta Wormatiensia: Annalen und Chroniken* (Berlin, 1893), p. 549.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

chapter, expressing the council's fear that 'in the future it [the shield of arms] might cause them trouble and be used as evidence to the detriment of the council'.²⁶¹ Maybe they feared that, if left in its place for too long, the provost's arms would eventually come to be used as heraldic evidence for the ecclesiastic affiliation of this part of the wall, to which the provost already appears to have tried lay claim. In the light of heraldry's use as a marker of possession and territorial control—as exhibited in Augsburg—this assumption was perhaps not too far-fetched. Certainly, the council's tone became more adamant: 'The council sent to the provost and told him that unless he removed the stone before vespers, the council would dispose of it themselves.'²⁶² When this threat did not change the provost's mind either, the council took to removing the heraldic sign in question by force:

After vespers, allies of the council and the master builders with the city's craftsmen went down to the wall, removed the stone, fixed the hole, and then dragged it outside the bailey onto the street beneath St Andrew's gate. Here, children got hold of the stone and hacked off the lion's head, and thus the stone remained there for a long time.²⁶³

This drastic reaction might be understood not just as a return to the *status quo ante*, but also as a retaliation for the fact that the provost had infringed upon the wall, a sign of the city's sovereignty and a symbol of its honour as a political body.

While England was no stranger to such attacks on heraldry,²⁶⁴ conflicts between cities and ecclesiastic immunities situated inside the urban space do not appear to have left any heraldic traces. A prime suspect would have been Norwich, where territories affiliated with the priory but not enclosed by the precinct's wall and its gates remained a point of contention between clerics and townsmen.²⁶⁵ One violent incursion into the cathedral precinct's space in 1275, when riotous townsmen caused considerable damage to the church of St Ethelbert, was recalled in the iconography of Ethelbert Gate. Built afterwards, c. 1300, it shows St George and the Dragon alongside the heads of king and

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ See below, pp. 292–300.

²⁶⁵ Derek M. Crosby, 'Gladman's Procession and Communal Identity in Norwich, 1425–1452', in Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel (eds), *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe* (London, 2017); Roberta Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape* (Woodbridge, 2005), ch. 3; Norman Tanner, 'The Cathedral and the City', in Ian Atherton (ed.), *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096–1996* (London, 1996), esp. pp. 255–280.

bishop.²⁶⁶ Yet the gate's facade does not feature any heraldry that would have visually reinforced the special distinction of the cathedral precinct. Erpingham Gate, to the contrary, does show several shields borne in the spandrels around the archway, featuring the arms of the building's patron—Sir Thomas Erpingham (d. 1428) and two wives—and the heraldic signs attributed to the Trinity, the Crucifixion, and the Passion.²⁶⁷ But unless these religiously charged arms are to be understood as a reference to the cathedral rather than a monument to Erpingham's personal piety, there are no heraldic references to the priory, the diocese, or its bishops in this case either. The facade of Bishop's Gate, built c. 1435 by Bishop Alnwick,²⁶⁸ might have contained such references in the past, as it still exhibits a number of carved stone shields in the spandrels above the gate and on the front of the battlements. Certainly, Alnwick did leave behind his heraldic sign on the facade of the cathedral's porch, next to the arms of the see.²⁶⁹

However, heraldic signs attached to walls did become a matter of negotiating power over the urban space in London, although in this final case they were the solution to a conflict about sovereignty in the city rather than its cause. In 1392, the relationship between Richard II and the City of London had taken a turn for the worse, money being at the heart of the issue.²⁷⁰ Since the city as well as private London lenders had become reluctant to fund the financial needs of the crown, Richard II attempted to pressure the citizens into compliance by removing valuable administration from the city, deposing and imprisoning the London mayor and sheriffs, and appointing royal representatives in their stead. Other officials of the urban government were charged with misconduct, and in July the liberties of the city were formally withdrawn. Deprived of their legal authority, the townsmen had to surrender to the king's demands, and a slow process of

²⁶⁶ J. T. MacNaughton-Jones, 'St. Ethelbert's Gate, Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 34 (1966), p. 78.

²⁶⁷ Tony Sims, 'The Erpingham Gate', in Anne Elizabeth Curry (ed.), *Agincourt, 1415: Henry V, Sir Thomas Erpingham and the Triumph of the English Archers* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 96–96.

²⁶⁸ Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close*, p. 54.

²⁶⁹ Tony Sims, 'Aspects of Heraldry and Patronage', in Ian Atherton (ed.), *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese 1096–1996* (London, 1996), p. 456.

²⁷⁰ Caroline M. Barron, 'The Quarrel of Richard II with London 1392–97', in Caroline M. Barron and Francis R. H. Du Boulay (eds), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of Mary McKinsack* (London, 1971).

reconciliation saw the return to normal.²⁷¹ Part of this process was a procession that included the display of the royal arms on the gate-house of London Bridge.²⁷² But the Bridge House accounts moreover reveal that the king also insisted on a more permanent, heraldic ‘reminder’ of ultimate royal power inside London: Richard II demanded ‘likenesses of the king and queen to be set above the stone-gate on the bridge’, which were to be complemented by heraldic homage in the form of ‘three shields of the arms of the king and queen and St Edward [the Confessor]’.²⁷³ Whereas the gate marked the border of London jurisdiction, which had in the meantime been handed back to the communal government, the display of the royal arms left no doubt as to the supreme sovereign of the city. This impression becomes even more pronounced if one is to assume that the decoration of London Bridge at the end of the fourteenth century resembled its sixteenth-century appearance and thus exhibited the municipal arms in some form (fig. 4.23). In this scenario, the imposed addition of the royal arms—maybe next to or above the arms of London—must have much mitigated the claims to municipal authority over the urban space communicated by the arms of London alone.

4.5 Processions, Politics, and Conflict:

Staging the Unity of the City

The discussion of guilds and their heraldic practices in the context of urban rituals has shown that such performances provided a stage on which different urban groups sought to distinguish themselves and mark their place within the hierarchy of the city. Yet concerns of aldermen in York and Constance over the use of corporate arms suggests that this pursuit of social distinction was at times opposed by urban officials keen to bridge the gaps between the numerous and often divided parts of urban society,²⁷⁴ if only to preserve the social *status quo*, which was potentially threatened by an all too

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² See below, p. 266.

²⁷³ LMA, CLA/007/FN/01/012, membr. 8.

²⁷⁴ Löther, *Prozessionen*, esp. pp. 333–335; Sheila Lindenbaum, ‘Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch’, in Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (eds), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis; London, 1994), esp. p. 172; Arlinghaus, ‘Urban Unity’, esp. pp. 224–228; Sabine von Heusinger, ‘“Cruzgang” und “umblauf”’: Symbolische Kommunikation im Stadtraum am Beispiel von Prozessionen’, in Jörg Oberste (ed.), *Kommunikation in mittelalterlichen Städten* (Regensburg, 2007), esp. p. 147.

divisive impact of visual identifiers.

If urban rituals are seen as ‘commentaries on the city, its internal dynamics, and its relationship with the outside world’ in the sense of Edward Muir’s analysis of late medieval Venice,²⁷⁵ this commentary emphasised the need for collaboration between the different social groups part of the communal body of the city, and promoted a sense of unity and solidarity that was held to be fundamental to economic welfare and social peace—the *bonum commune*—of the city.²⁷⁶ Since urban rituals thus addressed core values of communal identity, it comes with little surprise that historians have repeatedly noted the emphasis placed on the collective honour of the city by the rhetoric of late medieval processions, plays, and entries. Just as Sheila Lindenbaum stresses the ‘symbolic capital’ of honour that was put on display in civic rituals such as mayoral processions, so religious celebrations meant to honour God and important local patron saints were seen as services to the honour of the city, as Andrea Löther remarks with regard to processions in Germany.²⁷⁷ In the same way, Mervyn James argues that any staging of religious plays in English cities ‘promoted the prestige of the city with which it was associated, and so enhanced the latter’s “honour”’.²⁷⁸ Because royal and princely entries had to convince powerful external visitors of the city’s orderly state of affairs on which the continuation and, ideally, expansion of its urban liberties depended, here, the townsmen ‘had to convey an image of that honor and dignity’, as Lorraine Attreed likewise holds.²⁷⁹ The same is true for military activities of the city against external and internal enemies, which required similarly ritualised collective action in which honour,

²⁷⁵ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton [New Jersey], 1986), p. 5.

²⁷⁶ Phythian-Adams, ‘Ceremony and the Citizen’, esp. p. 262; James, ‘Ritual’, esp. p. 9.

²⁷⁷ Lindenbaum, ‘Ceremony and Oligarchy’, p. 177; Löther, *Prozessionen*, p. 146.

²⁷⁸ James, ‘Ritual’, p. 13. See also Clifford Davidson, ‘Civic Drama for Corpus Christi at Coventry: Some Lost Plays’, in Alan E. Knight (ed.), *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe* (Suffolk; Rochester, 1997), p. 149.

²⁷⁹ Lorraine Christine Attreed, ‘The Politics of Welcome: Ceremonies and Constitutional Development in Later Medieval English Towns’, in Barbara Hanawalt (ed.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis; London, 1994), p. 224. See also Andrea Löther, ‘Die Inszenierung der stadtbürgerlichen Ordnung: Herrschereintritte in Nürnberg im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert’, in Klaus Tenfelde and Hans Ulrich Wehler (eds), *Wege zur Geschichte des Bürgertums* (Göttingen, 1994), p. 120.

in the martial, chivalric sense, was to be defended and increased.²⁸⁰

Although some historians have noted the prominent presence of heraldic signs as part of such urban rituals,²⁸¹ in comparison with the extensive research on the speeches of pageants, for instance, ‘less attention has been paid to such visual objects’, as Kathleen Ashley criticises, too.²⁸² In contrast, this section will explicitly explore the role of municipal arms in the performance of urban rituals and communal warfare. As part of civic and religious processions, joyous entries, and military campaigns, heraldic signs marked the community of citizens as a distinct and united social group. Here, as the insistence of the York and Constance governments on the sole presence of municipal signifiers at the expense of the guilds’ arms suggested,²⁸³ municipal arms—perceived as representations and reminders of urban identity—contributed to the collective honour and the sense of togetherness that historians understand as having been reflected and reinforced by the rituals of the late medieval city.

4.5.1 Warfare: Defending the Honour of the City

When late medieval townspeople in England and Germany took up arms for the defence of their city or the realm as a whole, visual identifiers such as pennons, flags, and banners—carried or maybe even mounted on a mobile *carroccio*—provided an important point of reference. It marked the urban host as a social group distinct from its enemies and its allies, which were themselves likewise identified by their respective signifiers. In this effort, to paraphrase Ernst Voltmer, urban banners—just like banners in the Middle Ages in general—acted as symbols for the determination and cohesion of those fighting under them, rendering their successful defence (or shameful loss) a matter

²⁸⁰ Günter Scholz and Bernhard Kirchgässner (eds), *Stadt und Krieg: 25. Arbeitstagung des Südwestdeutschen Arbeitskreises für Stadtgeschichtsforschung in Böblingen 1986* (Sigmaringen, 1989). See also above, p. 165.

²⁸¹ Sabine von Heusinger, ‘Zur Durchdringung von Stadtraum mit Herrschaft: Prozessionen in Köln und Straßburg’, *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 79 (2015), p. 136; Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300–1660*, 2nd edn (London; New York, 1980), I, p. 52.

²⁸² Kathleen Ashley, ‘Introduction: The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance’, in Kathleen Ashley (ed.), *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam; Atlanta, 2011), p. 20.

²⁸³ See above, pp. 153, 159.

indicative of the honour of the city.²⁸⁴

In this vexillologic context of martial honour and shame, municipal arms appeared time and time again. In England, the militia of Norwich—twenty armed men recruited from the ‘chief citizens’ and forty archers—rallied under a banner embellished with the arms of the city to join an English campaign against Scotland in 1481.²⁸⁵ In the same manner, the militia of York assembled for an expedition to Carlisle in 1462, when their captain was invested with ‘a banner of the arms of the city’.²⁸⁶ Another example from York shows that individual soldiers were identified by the arms of the city as well: when ordered to march to Pontefract Castle alongside the duke of Gloucester in 1482, the council decreed that ‘every sogher of thys Cite shall were the conusunce of the Cite’.²⁸⁷ The York case furthermore underlines that the urban militia was not normally an independent fighting force, but instead placed under the command of a noble superior, whose authority was visually acknowledged in a similar way. York’s urban warriors were thus expected to wear ‘the cunisaunce of my lord of Gloucestre’ as well.²⁸⁸ A similar picture can be found in London, as accounts of a ‘Great Muster’ held in 1539 demonstrate. When the citizens turned soldiers prepared to be inspected by the king, mayor, aldermen, recorders, and sheriffs appeared in ‘cotes of black velvett, w^t the armes of the cytye rychely pyrled & embroderyd upon the same’, while the ‘meaner sorte of people’ bore white jackets ‘w^t armes of the cytye before & behynde’.²⁸⁹ Here, too, the urban host was visually related to the monarch as the supreme commander, again in the form of banners. Five banner-bearers were part of the deployment, with ‘a

²⁸⁴ Ernst Voltmer, ‘Standart, Carroccio, Fahnenwagen: Zur Funktion der Feld- und Herrschaftszeichen mittelalterlicher Städte am Beispiel der Schlacht von Worringen, 1288’, *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 124 (1988), esp. pp. 189–190. See also Malte Prietzel, ‘Kostbare Seide als Zeichen rechtmäßiger Gewalt: Das Kölner Stadtbanner’, in Jan Keupp and Romedio Schmitz-Esser (eds), *Neue alte Sachlichkeit: Studienbuch Materialität des Mittelalters* (Ostfildern, 2015), esp. p. 134. On the perceptions and functions of banners in the Middle Ages in general, see also Robert Jones, “‘What Banner Thine?’ The Banner as a Symbol of Identification, Status and Authority on the Battlefield”, *The Haskins Society Journal*, 15 (2004).

²⁸⁵ Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, *The History of the City and County of Norwich* (London, 1806), I, p. 120.

²⁸⁶ Robert Davies (ed.), *Extracts from the Municipal Records of the City of York* (London, 1843), p. 18.

²⁸⁷ YCR 1, p. 75.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ Thomas Lott, ‘Account of the Muster of the Citizens of London in the 31st Year of the Reign of Henry VIII’, *Archaeologia*, 32 (1847), p. 32.

large banner of the kyng's armes' in the centre. In the privileged, right-hand position was displayed 'a large banner with the lord prynces armes', and to the left of the king's banner was borne a banner with 'the armes of the Cytye', which was supplemented by a smaller 'flagge of the cytyes armes' to the far left end of the arrangement and juxtaposed with 'a flagge of the kyngs devyses' on the far right end.²⁹⁰

Warriors from German cities likewise gathered under banners bearing the municipal arms, as Otto Volk's analysis of urban expense accounts shows.²⁹¹ The same was true for military equipment and weaponry. Between 1459 and 1461, the town of Marburg purchased heraldic banners for a war tent and shields painted with the municipal arms, which were also found on cannons moulded there in 1509.²⁹² Cannons in Lüneburg were likewise branded with the city's arms, supported by two figures of men in armour.²⁹³ When the people of Lübeck were summoned to support the fight against the duke of Burgundy in 1475, a chronicle remembered, several waggons were painted with the arms of the city on one side, and the arms of the emperor on the other side, thus again heraldically recognising the supreme commander of the campaign.²⁹⁴

The function of heraldic signs as visual expressions of allegiance and authority becomes equally evident during urban revolts, where 'defenders' of the *status quo* as well as rebels claimed to act on behalf and for the benefit of the city by means of municipal heraldry. Bremen saw a revolt of 'many common people' against figureheads of the urban government in 1365, and in this instance it was the rebels who 'had a banner, taken from a ship, with the arms of the city'.²⁹⁵ To the contrary, in Cologne it was the urban elite who gathered under 'the city's banner' to defend their rule against an insurgence of rebellious craftsmen in 1371 (fig. 3.12).²⁹⁶ Still, in Cologne, too, discontented townsmen must have hoped to add legitimacy to their cause by displaying the municipal arms: after the council of Cologne believed to have thwarted another

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁹¹ Volk, 'Semiotik', p. 46. See also Schöntag, *Kommunale Wappen*, pp. 155–156; Erich Kittel, *Siegel* (Braunschweig, 1970), p. 309.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 45.

²⁹³ Reinecke, *Rathaus zu Lüneburg*, p. 144.

²⁹⁴ CDS 31, pp. 141–142.

²⁹⁵ CDS 37, p. 155. See also Schwarzwälder, 'Bannerlauf'.

²⁹⁶ CDS 14, p. 710. See also above, p. 158.

revolt in 1397, it convicted the presumed ringleader on grounds of ‘a banner and a pennon with the city’s arms found in his backyard’, believed to have been destined for the rebels’ cause as in Bremen.²⁹⁷

4.5.2 *Rituals: Fostering Communal Unity*

Municipal heraldry also provided a point of reference for members of the communal body on more peaceful occasions. Although urban society was highly fragmented, ephemeral decorations of municipal arms served as an idealised expression of a united collective of citizens, not least on the occasion of joyous entries, in which the *civitas* related itself to the outside world. In this context, municipal arms, again frequently in the form of banners, were placed in opposition to the visual identifiers of emperors, kings, and other magnates keen to assert or claim their control over the urban space



Fig. 4.27: Illumination in Diebold Schilling’s *Spiezer Chronik* (1484/1485), depicting Emperor Sigismund’s host being welcomed by citizens of the Swiss town of Bern, displaying heraldic banners and badges of the imperial and municipal arms. Burgerbibliothek, Bern, Mss.h.h.I.16, 601.

²⁹⁷ KHV 4, p. 591.

and its citizens (fig. 4.27).²⁹⁸

Contemporary sources do not always explicitly mention the presence of municipal arms. Upon the first entry of the city's newly appointed bishop John II into Trier in 1460, for example, he was greeted by a guard of 'thirty or forty most well-equipped men' rallied around the master of the weavers' guild carrying 'the city's banner', as a chronicler recorded without further description of its appearance.²⁹⁹ Fortunately, examples from Worms and Cologne are more explicit. When the people of Worms welcomed their new bishop Johann von Dalberg in 1483, he was met outside the walls by a delegation of citizens, again rallied under the city's banner.³⁰⁰ Only after charters

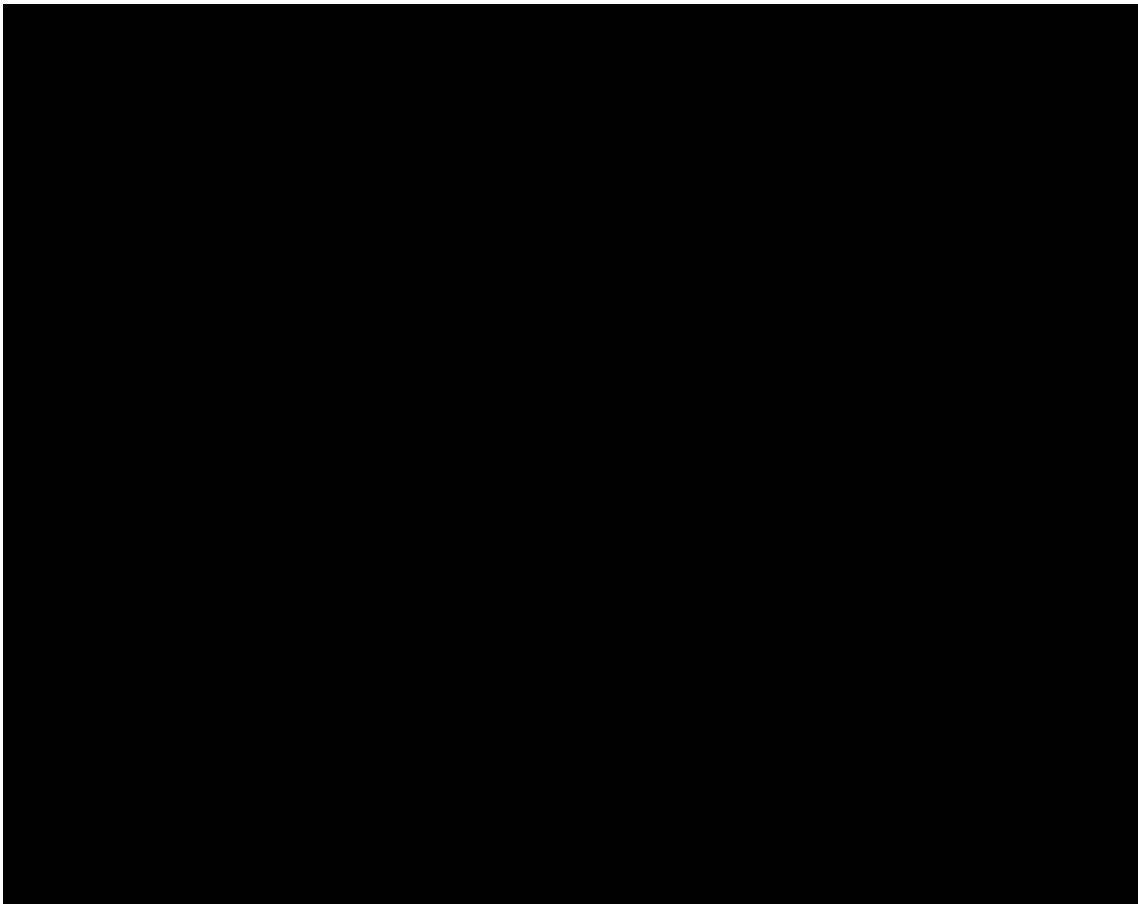


Fig. 4.28: First surviving banner of Cologne (c. 1420–1440), embellished with the three crowns of the municipal arms and various imaginary arms of local patron saints below. Shield and crest of the municipal arms alternate in the tail. Stadtmuseum, Cologne, 1888/10b.

²⁹⁸ See also below, pp. 282–286.

²⁹⁹ Printed in Carl Schoemann (ed.), 'Huldigungseinzug des Kurfürsten Johann II. in Trier den 12. Mai 1460', *Jahresbericht der Gesellschaft für nützliche Forschungen zu Trier*, 1857, pp. 5–6.

³⁰⁰ Boos, *Monumenta Wormatiensia*, pp. 593–606.

and oaths confirming the accustomed liberties and obligations of city and bishop had been exchanged, a procession of select townsmen, local nobles, and episcopal liegemen led the bishop into the city, with the urban delegation marching behind ‘a reputable young alderman’ who carried ‘the city’s banner’, which was, in this instance, explicitly described as ‘painted with the arms of the city’.³⁰¹ The case of Cologne is unique, since here two fifteenth-century banners embellished with a variety of heraldic signs survive.³⁰² Both prominently display the three crowns characteristic of Cologne’s municipal arms in the centre of a gold-interwoven silk cloth, with the city’s proper shields of arms appears on the tail (figs 4.28 and 4.29). The slightly older banner situated the municipal arms in relation to other heraldic signs associated with constitutive elements of social cohesion in the medieval city as a ‘sacred community’: below the three crowns in the centre of the banner were depicted several imaginary arms attributed to important Cologne patron saints, notably Ursula, Gereon, Etherius, Quirinus, Anthony, and the Three Magi,³⁰³ whose favour and intercession was not only requested during religious processions, but even more so when the city carried the banner into battle. The significance of these banners as symbols for the city, its honour and military might, to paraphrase Malte Prietzel,³⁰⁴ also becomes visible in tight regulations issued for its use in both peace and war by a society of safe-keepers in the early fifteenth century. In addition to the aforementioned use during revolt, when ‘all guilds and commune ought to follow the banner and pennon without hesitation’,³⁰⁵ the ordinances also regulated the use of the banner on the occasion of tournaments held in the city, when it was to be unfurled on the Old Market,³⁰⁶ the ‘neighbourhood’ of Cologne’s most affluent citizens and frequent venue for inner-urban tournaments.³⁰⁷

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 606.

³⁰² Prietzel, ‘Kölner Stadtbanner’; Reiner Dieckhoff, ‘*Vexillum civitatis*: Vom städtischen Dreikronenbanner’, in Werner Schäfke (ed.), *Der Name der Freiheit 1288–1988: Aspekte Kölner Geschichte von Worringen bis heute* (Cologne, 1988); Johannes Krudewig, ‘Die alten Fahnen und Banner der Stadt Köln’, *Kölnischer Geschichtsverein*, 1 (1909).

³⁰³ Dieckhoff, ‘Dreikronenbanner’, p. 407.

³⁰⁴ Prietzel, ‘Kölner Stadtbanner’.

³⁰⁵ Walther Stein (ed.), *Akten zur Geschichte der Verfassung und Verwaltung der Stadt Köln im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1893), I, p. 194.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., II, p. 219.

³⁰⁷ Yvonne Leiverkus, *Köln: Bilder einer spätmittelalterlichen Stadt* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2005), pp. 316–318.



Fig. 4.29: Detail from the tail of the second surviving banner of Cologne (c. 1450–1475), showing a shield of the municipal arms. Stadtmuseum, Cologne, 1888/11b.

Onlookers of urban rituals in England were presented with similarly elaborate displays of municipal heraldry on the occasion of royal entries and religious and civic festivities, although as in Germany contemporary descriptions did not always explicitly mention heraldic signs. For a procession of the Blackfriars of Coventry in 1498, for instance, ‘the Maire & his Brethern’, ‘with all the Craftes in their best araye’, gathered in the churchyard of St Michael’s under banners which the *Leet Book* simply described as ‘þe pensels of þe Cite’.³⁰⁸ In York, prior to the previously discussed example from 1432,³⁰⁹ ordinances from 1399 governed the use of ‘banners with the arms of the city for the plays staged on Corpus Christi’.³¹⁰ Again confirmed in 1417, the heraldic banners were ‘to be displayed in the places where there is a pageant play the following day, and afterwards the banners are to be returned to the city’s chamberlain without delay’.³¹¹ An equally heraldic banner greeted Edward IV on the occasion of his entry into York in

³⁰⁸ CLB, p. 588.

³⁰⁹ See above, p. 153.

³¹⁰ REED 1, p. 12.

³¹¹ Sellers, *Memorandum*, II, p. 64.

1463, as the city's account books recorded,³¹² and when Queen Margaret came to York in 1503, the mayor's footmen were described as dressed in 'grene saten with the armez of the Citie and his awn armez'.³¹³ In London, the first mention of heraldic banners occurred in Smith's description of the Lord Mayor's Show of 1575,³¹⁴ but the municipal arms must have been part of urban rituals at the end of the medieval period already. In the 1520s, 'Archers in coats of white fustian signed on the breast and backe with the armes of the Cittie'³¹⁵ attended the Midsummer Watch, while the mercers had been asked to provide 'vij honest parsones' dressed 'in Jakettes of white with the Armes of the Citie'.³¹⁶ For the making of these coats, the accounts of the brewers in 1515/1516 noted expenses for 'Redde Clothe for the Armys of the Citie',³¹⁷ just as the drapers in the same year recorded a payment for 'brood reed for the crosses & the swerde for the Baage of the Citie'.³¹⁸

English municipal arms were also included into the elaborate decorations and pageants that sought to honour and impress royal visitors on the occasion of joyous entries. Henry V's entry into London in 1415, for instance, saw the conspicuous display of municipal heraldry at the Conduit in Cheapside, which 'had spread over it a green cover strewn and inwoven with escutcheons of the city's arms'.³¹⁹ When Catherine of Aragon arrived in London in 1501, she was similarly welcomed with a series of elaborate pageants rich in heraldic display, although most of it consisted of royal banners and badges.³²⁰ But in Cheapside, again, the municipal arms of London appeared, described by a contemporary witness as 'a scocheon of whight, w^t Seint George's crosse, and a red sword', displayed between the spokes of the lower part of a curious mechanical 'whele'.³²¹ As part of this arrangement, the London arms were framed by the figures of

³¹² R. B. Dobson (ed.), *York City Chamberlains' Accounts Rolls, 1396–1500* (Gateshead, 1980), p. 113.

³¹³ YCR 2, pp. 186–187.

³¹⁴ See above, p. 149.

³¹⁵ Stow, *Survey*, I, p. 101.

³¹⁶ Lyell and Watney, *Mercers' Court Acts*, pp. 570–571.

³¹⁷ REED 1, p. 327.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 330. See also *ibid.*, pp. 339–340, 448.

³¹⁹ Taylor and Roskell, *Gesta*, p. 107.

³²⁰ See below, p. 267.

³²¹ Printed in Edward Jeffery, *The Antiquarian Repertory: A Miscellaneous Assemblage of Topography, History, Biography, Customs, and Manners* (1808), II, p. 273.

two astronomers, 'havyng their speculation to the bodies above', namely two angels and, in the highest position of the wheel, 'the Father of Heven'.³²² In this 'astral apotheosis of the most fundamental order' of heaven and earth, as Sydney Anglo characterises this pageant,³²³ the City of London, by proxy of its heraldic sign, was thus presented in close juxtaposition to God as the centre of the Christian faith and the *raison d'être* of the city as a fundamentally Christian community.

Similarly complex heraldic decorations embellished Nuremberg in 1521, when Ferdinand, imperial heir apparent, was welcomed to the city. On this occasion, the townsmen arranged for a 'black flying eagle' to be suspended between two houses of the procession's route, which had in its claws 'a circular panel with the Nuremberg arms', and arranged around it the arms of the eight current aldermen.³²⁴ In this way, the shields of the arms of Nuremberg and its elite related the city to the Empire as the larger social unit, represented by the eagle as its heraldic beast. The same visual subsumption was staged in Augsburg when the citizens received Charles V in 1530. Here, a canopy, made from cloth of the heraldic colours of the city—red, green, and white—likewise united imperial and municipal heraldry: it was supported by three staffs on either side, with those on the right decorated with the imperial arms, and those on the left embellished with the arms of Augsburg.³²⁵

Finally, English and German cities marked the reception and accommodation of their sovereigns by means of lavish gifts decorated with municipal arms. As identifiers of the urban commune they must have been hoped to remind the noble recipients of the townspeople's hospitality and generosity, thus ensuring their favour and the continuity of the urban liberties. Thus, when Sigismund came to Worms in 1414, the council left a complimentary gilt cup decorated with heraldic signs in the king's chamber, 'the arms of the Empire on the top and the arms of Hungary and Bohemia on the bottom, and on

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Sydney Anglo, 'The London Pageants for the Reception of Katharine of Aragon: November 1501', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26.1–2 (1963), p. 73.

³²⁴ Joseph Baader, 'Des Erzherzogs Ferdinand Einreiten zu Nürnberg im Jahre 1521', *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, 16 (1869), col. 100.

³²⁵ CDS 23, p. 273.

the inside of both parts the arms of the city'.³²⁶ The council of Cologne splashed out on heraldically decorated presents for royal visitors as well, as accounts of Charles V's stay in the city in 1531 reveal: the emperor received ten barrels of wine, 'each stamped with the city's arms', ten waggons loaded with grain and decorated 'with pennons of the municipal arms', and ten oxen 'each with the arms of the city on its forehead'.³²⁷ In addition, the Cologne council gifted three gilt drinking vessels, 'having on their lids a pennon with the Empire's arms of an eagle on the one side, and the arms of Cologne—three crowns—on the other side'.³²⁸ Similar gifts were given in England, as the civic records of York recorded in 1503: Queen Margret was presented with 'a goodly standyng silver pece' that was likewise 'gilt with a fane of the armez of this Citie', thus remembering the queen's splendid reception.³²⁹

4.6 Arms Enacted: Governing Authority, Charity, and Quality

Similar to the uniforms, gear, and banners used by urban warriors, so municipal heraldry was part of the appearance of other persons who served the city in one way or another. Scholars have approached medieval dress as a means of visual communication and identity expression in its own right, especially regarding the outward affiliation with groups identified by a common sartorial appearance, but also in terms of status derived from the exercise of office indicated by specific vestments.³³⁰ In an urban context, these points are perhaps best illustrated by the robes of aldermen and mayors, which left onlookers with no doubt as to their privileged and powerful position in the city (fig. 4.4 and 4.11). In wider late medieval society, the importance of dress as a means of identity formation and personal distinction is evidenced by the widespread use of

³²⁶ Friedrich Zorn and Franz Berthold von Flersheim, *Wormser Chronik*, ed. by Wilhelm Arnold (Stuttgart, 1857), p. 181.

³²⁷ Printed in Friedrich Everhard von Mering, *Geschichte der Burgen, Rittergüter, Abteien und Klöster in den Rheinlanden und den Provinzen Jülich, Cleve, Berg und Westphalen* (Cologne, 1855), X, p. 128.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³²⁹ YCR 2, p. 188.

³³⁰ Peter von Moos, 'Das mittelalterliche Kleid als Identitätssymbol und Identifikationsmittel', in Peter von Moos (ed.), *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2004); Jan Keupp, 'Macht und Mode: Politische Interaktion im Zeichen der Kleidung', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 86 (2004), esp. pp. 255–256; Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages* (New Haven, 1997), ch. 8.

livery distributed by kings, princes, and countless ‘lesser’ entities—including the guilds of London—in the form of robes, hoods, hats, collars, and badges.³³¹ On the one hand, in the manner of a uniform, these visual markers identified members of a group with a shared allegiance to the authority distributing the livery. On the other hand, as Matthew Ward points out with regard to livery collars, such signs also marked office holders, who were thereby authorised and invested with part of that authority; they testified to ‘the official’s function as a bearer of office and an embodiment of state power’, as Valentin Groebner likewise asserts for badges more widely.³³² Regarding heraldry, Bartolus’ *De insigniis et armis* already held that such ‘insignia proper to a rank or office’ were different in function from the arms of ‘private persons’.³³³ More recently, this distinction was echoed by Susan Crane, who argues that unlike badges given to retainers, servants, and officials, ‘coats of arms are inalienable’.³³⁴ In reality, however, the lines between insignia of office conferring authority and arms identifying individuals and institutions were more fluid. This is not least demonstrated by the heralds’ tabards, which sported their masters’ heraldic signs and identified them as officials acting on their behalf.³³⁵

As this section will show, the use of municipal heraldry likewise suggests that this strict distinction is not tenable. On the contrary, the heraldic signs of cities were incorporated into the dress of minstrels, messengers, and other municipal officials in order to communicate the authority of their bearers. In a similar form but to a different end, badges with the municipal arms were also distributed to municipally licensed beggars deemed to be deserving of communal charity. The same holds true for another form of signs treated by Bartolus, namely commercial ‘marks’ placed on products:³³⁶ in

³³¹ Matthew Ward, *The Livery Collar in Late Medieval England and Wales: Politics, Identity and Affinity* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 20–47, 77–95; Michael Powell Siddons, *Heraldic Badges in England and Wales* (Woodbridge, 2009), I, pp. 29–61; Brian W. Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 278–279.

³³² Ward, *Livery Collar*, pp. 44–46; Valentin Groebner, *Who Are You?: Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (Brooklyn [New York], 2007), p. 49.

³³³ Saxoferrato, ‘De Insigniis’, p. 145.

³³⁴ Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War* (Ann Arbor, 2012), p. 20.

³³⁵ Hablot, ‘Tabard’; Adrian Ailes, ‘“You Know Me by My Habit”: Herald’s Tabards in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries’, *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003).

³³⁶ Saxoferrato, ‘De Insigniis’, p. 145.

this context, municipal arms attached to measures and goods served as marks of approval and authenticity.

4.6.1 *Authorising Municipal Officials*

A prime example for the identification and authorisation of officials by means of municipal heraldry—and another element of heraldic display as part of urban festivities—are municipal musicians. In both English and German cities, minstrels and waits not only added to the audible atmosphere of such occasions but also contributed to their visual impact. Their appearance stood out because of their often colourful livery and the conspicuous display of heraldry in the shape of collars and badges embellished with municipal arms.³³⁷ In this context, heraldry testified to the official authorisation and status of its bearers, just as it reminded them of their responsibilities towards the city.

One of the earlier English references comes from Norwich, where goldsmith Richard Bere in 1432/1433 was paid to produce ‘a skochon of the arms of the city for a minstrel’.³³⁸ ‘A Coler of Syluer with tharmes of this Citie’ was given to London wait John Fryth in 1517,³³⁹ while York waits sported a depiction of the municipal arms embroidered on their official attire: Thomas Baker, ‘vestmentmaker’, was paid for ‘the brodering of the waytes sleyves wt the armes of the City’ in 1520, for instance.³⁴⁰ Still, some York waits must have had chains and shield-shaped badges as well (see also fig. 4.30),³⁴¹ since minstrel Roger Smallwood, for example, purchased ‘to his gret charge’ a

³³⁷ See also Joseph C. Bridge, ‘Town Waits and Their Tunes’, *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 54 (1928), p. 76; Carole A. Janssen, ‘The Waytes of Norwich in Medieval and Renaissance Civic Pageantry’ (unpublished PhD, University of New Brunswick, 1978), p. 9; Cheryl Glenn Seitz, ‘Sounds and Sweet Airs: City Waits of Medieval and Renaissance England’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 4 (1987), p. 130; Robert Nissen, ‘Silberne Boten- und Spielmannsabzeichen und ihre Träger: II. Die Spielmannsabzeichen’, *Westfalen*, 47 (1969); Helen Green, ‘Defining the City “Trumpeter”: German Civic Identity and the Employment of Brass Instrumentalists, c. 1500’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 136.1 (2011), p. 24; Heinrich Wilhelm Schwab, ‘Der Stadtmusicus als Amtsträger’, in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993), pp. 100–101.

³³⁸ William Hudson and John Cottingham Tingey (eds), *The Records of the City of Norwich* (Norwich; London, 1910), II, pp. 66–67.

³³⁹ REED 24, I, p. 349.

³⁴⁰ Quoted in James Merryweather, ‘The York Waits’ Chains’, *York Historian*, 20.3 (2003), p. 5.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

new collar meant to be used ‘for þe wurship of þis Citie’ in 1505.³⁴²

This concern with the ‘worship’ or ‘honour’ of the city points to the obligations that were meant to be implied by these signs, namely expectations regarding the behaviour of the musician wearing the municipal arms. They were only awarded after the minstrel had formally entered the service of the city by swearing to exercise his office dutifully and for the benefit of the commonalty. Thus, the *Year Book* (1465–1481) of Sandwich noted that when ‘William Watson and William Scarlett ben admtyted to þe maire and luratez ffor waytes of þe town’, they first had to take ‘theire oth’, which included the promise ‘at their departyng to delyuer to the tresoreres of þe town / the townes scoiens’.³⁴³ Since the conferral of the ‘townes scoiens’ made visible their henceforth changed status, the heraldic badges as the ‘outward manifestations of the Waytes’ service to the Commonalty’, as Carole Janssen likewise puts it, had to be



Fig. 4.30: Minstrels’ Pillar in the church of St Mary, Beverley (1520–1524), showing five minstrels with pendant (blank) shields indicative of their office. See also James Merryweather, ‘The Minstrels’ Pillar in St Mary’s Church, Beverley’, *York Historian*, 16 (1999), p. 14.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ REED 16, p. 828.

returned once the waits left their position.³⁴⁴

The same observations can be made for municipal musicians in Germany, where ‘the livery and coat-of-arms of the city were essential to the appearance of the *Stadtppfeifer*, as they were the foremost civic musicians’.³⁴⁵ As in English cities, shields of the municipal arms were awarded upon appointment of a minstrel and the swearing of an oath of office, which in Aachen, as in Sandwich, included the promise ‘to serve dutifully at all times’ and ‘to deliver back their silver brooch and arms without delay’ when leaving office.³⁴⁶ Sources from Leipzig further underline the connection between the city’s honour, the minstrel’s service, and its outward (heraldic) sign. In 1488, municipal musicians were ordered ‘to wear the council’s arms for the honour of the council and for as long as they are in its service’.³⁴⁷ Arms borne by minstrels thus emerge as more than a means of distinguishing a communal servant; the latter was also seen as an agent putting the honour of the city—embodied by the municipal arms—on display, not least during the ‘quintessential opportunities for the display of civic pride and pomp’ provided by urban rituals.³⁴⁸

Heraldic signs also had a part to play in the fashioning of urban messengers as official representatives, at least in Germany. Here, they were equipped with several insignia which indicated their status as officials acting on behalf of the urban commune and testified to the authenticity of their message.³⁴⁹ Besides a characteristic staff and city-specific livery, these insignia included a little pendant or ‘box’ (*büchse* or

³⁴⁴ Janssen, ‘Norwich Waytes’, p. 9. See also Seitz, ‘Waits’, p. 130.

³⁴⁵ Green, ‘City “Trumpeter”’, p. 24. See also Schwab, ‘Stadtmusicus’, esp. p. 106; Nissen, ‘Spielmannsabzeichen’, esp. p. 8.

³⁴⁶ R. Pick (ed.), ‘Aus dem Aachener Stadtarchive’, *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins*, 8 (1886), p. 239.

³⁴⁷ Henning Steinführer (ed.), *Die Leipziger Ratsbücher 1466–1500* (Leipzig, 2003), I, no. 848.

³⁴⁸ Green, ‘City “Trumpeter”’, p. 25.

³⁴⁹ Klara Hübner, *Im Dienste ihrer Stadt: Boten- und Nachrichtenorganisationen in den schweizerisch-oberdeutschen Städten des späten Mittelalters* (Ostfildern, 2012), pp. 139–149; Heinz-Dieter Heimann, ‘Zur Visualisierung städtischer Dienstleistungskultur: Das Beispiel der kommunalen Briefboten’, in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993), p. 34; Otto Lauffer, ‘Der laufende Bote im Nachrichtenwesen der früheren Jahrhunderte: Sein Amt, seine Ausstattung und seine Dienstleistungen’, *Beiträge zur deutschen Volks- und Altertumskunde*, 1 (1954), pp. 39–45.

schildbuxe) painted or engraved with the municipal arms.³⁵⁰ While these heraldic devices can be seen in contemporary depictions (figs 4.31 and 4.32), textual sources, too, point to their widespread use: accounts of Hamburg's treasury recorded a payment for 'twenty-one boxes depicted with the arms of the city for the use of messengers' in 1477, for instance.³⁵¹ Augsburg likewise recorded expenses for messengers' boxes painted



Fig. 4.31: A messenger from Constance depicted in Diebold Schilling's chronicle (1513), with the typical messenger's staff, the city's livery, and a shield of the municipal arms. *Korporation Luzern*, S 23, 125.



Fig. 4.32: Frankfurt messenger depicted in the *Botenbuch* of 1439, with the city's arms on his chest. *Stadtarchiv Frankfurt*, *Botenbücher* 23, fol. 1r.

with the arms of the city,³⁵² as did Lüneburg and Aachen.³⁵³

Other documents explicitly addressed the function of (heraldic) messengers' badges as a visual expression of their bearers' origin and authorisation: 'Why',

³⁵⁰ F. R. Weber, 'The Messenger-Box as a Distinctive of the Foot-Messenger', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 46 (1966); Robert Nissen, 'Silberne Boten- und Spielmannsabzeichen und ihre Träger: I. Die Botenabzeichen', *Westfalen*, 36 (1958).

³⁵¹ Karl Koppmann (ed.), *Kämmereirechnungen der Stadt Hamburg, 1471–1500* (Hamburg, 1878), p. 288.

³⁵² Wilhelm, *Augsburger Wandmalerei*, p. 437.

³⁵³ Wilhelm Reinecke, *Geschichte der Stadt Lüneburg* (Lüneburg, 1933), p. 251; Lauffer, 'Bote', p. 43.

Paracelsus asked, ‘does a messenger carry a box or shield if not for everyone to see that he is, in fact, a messenger, whom he belongs to and whence he comes?’³⁵⁴ The same sentiment was expressed by Frankfurt’s council in 1507, which upon the inauguration of a municipal messenger stressed that ‘in signification of this we have equipped the same with our city’s arms and messenger’s box’.³⁵⁵ The significance of the heraldic sign as a means of establishing the messenger’s authorisation and the message’s authenticity becomes particularly tangible when the presence of the municipal arms risked causing confusion about the message’s sender. After the council of Frankfurt agreed to lend a municipal messenger to a local nobleman in 1452, it was feared that brandishing the city’s arms might suggest the council as the origin: ‘A messenger has been granted to the Count of Isenburg, but it has been stressed that the same messenger must not bear the city’s box but that of Isenburg.’³⁵⁶

English cities likewise employed messengers, sometimes on a casual, but often on a more permanent basis:³⁵⁷ ‘[t]here seems to be little doubt that several English towns already possessed a rudimentary postal service in the fourteenth century’.³⁵⁸ In general, messengers in England did resemble their German counterparts closely: ‘All Crown messengers were bound by oath and wore livery with a badge or escutcheon bearing the royal coat of arms. They carried their letters, writs, proclamations, warrants, and subpoenas in special boxes.’³⁵⁹ As in Germany, these boxes often sported heraldic signs: the Black Prince is supposed to have gifted a ‘silver gilt box enamelled with the Prince’s arms’ to his favourite messenger,³⁶⁰ while Nicholas Upton stated that messengers in

³⁵⁴ Paracelsus, *Sechster Theil der Bücher und Schrifften*, ed. by Johannes Huser (Basel, 1590), p. 330.

³⁵⁵ Printed in Georg Augustus von Lersner, *Chronica der weitberühmten freyen Reichs-Wahl- und Handels-Stadt Franckfurth am Mayn* (Frankfurt [Main], 1734), II, p. 818.

³⁵⁶ Quoted in Karl Bücher, *Die Berufe der Stadt Frankfurt a. M. im Mittelalter* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 33. See also Lauffer, ‘Bote’, p. 47.

³⁵⁷ Mary C. Hill, *The King’s Messengers, 1199–1377: A Contribution to the History of the Royal Household* (London, 1988), pp. 151–153; P. O. Beale, *England’s Mail: Two Millennia of Letter Writing* (Stroud, 2011), p. 100.

³⁵⁸ Hill, *King’s Messengers*, p. 153.

³⁵⁹ Mark Brayshay, ‘Conveying Correspondence: Early Modern Letter Bearers, Carriers, and Posts’, in James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (eds), *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia, 2016), p. 54.

³⁶⁰ Hill, *King’s Messengers*, p. 41.

general 'carry the arms of their lord depicted on their boxes hanging from their belt'.³⁶¹ Still, it remains unclear whether this custom also extended to cities as employers of messengers; Llewellyn Jewitt and John Hope certainly do not mention any heraldic devices of messengers in their work on the insignia of English cities.³⁶²

In other contexts, English townspeople certainly used heraldic signs to communicate the authority of communal representatives. Because of a conflict between London and the prior of St Bartholomew's regarding the proceeds of a fair held on Smithfield market, it was agreed in 1447 that the profits were to be divided equally, and that 'tollerers' from both the city and the priory were to oversee the market.³⁶³ It was decreed that officials of the city and officials of the priory were to be distinguished by means of heraldry: 'The tokyns assigned to the Tollerres on that on[e] syde was smeten þarnes of London for the partie of the Citee & in that other syde a Crowne for the partie of the priour'.³⁶⁴ Like the silver escutcheons of waits and minstrels, the 'tollerers' of London received metal badges with the municipal arms to show their status as municipal agents, just as similar 'tokens' given to the London 'beer-searcher' were used to visualise the joint authority of city and monarch by means of heraldry: Henry VI had appointed William Veysey and Richard Lounde to this lucrative position in 1441, but the decision was initially contested by the brewers of London. Eventually, a compromise was reached: the king nominated William Veysey, but he was sworn to the office by the aldermen, and in signification of his twofold responsibility towards king and commune he was to bear 'a fleur de lys of the House of Lancaster surmounted by the arms of the City'.³⁶⁵

This function of heraldry as a means of transferring authority and thus authorising municipal officials by means of heraldry is finally perhaps best illustrated by the ceremonial maces of English mayors. While mayors in England (and Germany) carried wooden staffs as symbols of their position in some places, late medieval

³⁶¹ Upton, *De Studio*, p. 18.

³⁶² See Jewitt and Hope, *Insignia*, II.

³⁶³ Caroline M. Barron, 'The Government of London and Its Relations with the Crown 1400–1450' (unpublished PhD, University of London, 1970), p. 228.

³⁶⁴ LMA, COL/CC/01/01/008, fol. 188v.

³⁶⁵ Barron, 'Relations with the Crown', p. 392.

examples do not seem to have exhibited heraldic signs.³⁶⁶ Although English mayors later acquired chains of office that tended to be decorated with the municipal arms, the first extant mayor's chain only dates from 1545, and they did not become common until the eighteenth century.³⁶⁷ But the maces of English mayors were already found in the late medieval period, borne by dedicated mace-bearers on the occasion of public processions, for example.³⁶⁸

That such maces were in fact a widespread sight in English cities and perceived as outward signs of delegated authority is suggested by an act of parliament from 1344, which prohibited the use of maces made of silver and, more importantly, with the royal arms.³⁶⁹ When London and York appealed against this decision, they were soon reassured in their right to have silver maces, but 'the King and his Council in the present Parliament' insisted that maces were to have 'the signs of their respective cities, boroughs, &c., sculptured on the top, and not the arms of the King'.³⁷⁰ Even 'the four exceptional serjeants', namely the mace-bearers of London and York, were to have maces with the municipal arms only, 'not the royal arms'.³⁷¹ Again, Londoners must have challenged the king's decision: in 1354 the king conceded and confirmed that 'the serjeants appointed to bear the maces in our city [of London] may lawfully carry them of gold or silver, or silvered or garnished with the sign of our arms'.³⁷² York obtained the same privilege in 1396,³⁷³ just as Norwich was allowed to have maces adorned with

³⁶⁶ For England, see Llewellyn Jewitt and John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales* (London, 1895), I, pp. lxxxi–lxxxii. Here, in Lincoln, an extant mayor's staff has engraved the arms of the city, but 'nothing seems to be known of its history or date' (Jewitt and Hope, *Insignia*, II, p. 74). For Germany, see Karl von Amira, *Der Stab in der germanischen Rechtssymbolik* (Munich, 1909), p. 131. Here, a staff in the town of Lippe was decorated with a rose, the heraldic sign of the town's founders, House Lippe, see Karl Bernd Heppe, 'Gotische Goldschmiedekunst in Westfalen vom zweiten Drittel des 13. bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts' (unpublished Dr. phil., Münster University, 1977), p. 339.

³⁶⁷ Jewitt and Hope, *Insignia*, I, p. lxxix.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xix–lxii. See also Liddy, *Politics of Citizenship*, p. 37.

³⁶⁹ Chris Given-Wilson, Seymour Philips and Mark Ormrod (eds), *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504* (Woodbridge: London, 2005), IV, p. 377.

³⁷⁰ Reginald R. Sharpe (ed.), *Letter-Book G* (London, 1905), pp. 21–22.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁷² Walter de Gray Birch, *The Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London* (London, 1887), p. 63.

³⁷³ Jewitt and Hope, *Insignia*, I, p. xxxi.

the royal arms in 1404/1405.³⁷⁴

The insistence of the citizens of London and other cities on maces embellished with the heraldic sign of the king points to two key concerns, namely the honour and authority of their city. The eventual royal concession charter in 1354 allowed the display of the king's arms on the London maces in explicit consideration of 'the conservation and increase of the name and honour of our city of London'.³⁷⁵ As Anne Sutton argues, 'the dignity of the city was seen to be reinforced by the trappings of the office, and its officers were not willing to forego one scrap of status'.³⁷⁶ Again, the role of heraldic signs as embodiments of honour becomes apparent: the presence of the royal arms on the mace was held to allow for the city to partake in and borrow from the king's honour.

But the issue of royal heraldic signs on maces in England also reflected concerns over the authority of the city: when maces with the royal arms were again conceded to London in 1354, their use was restricted to 'everywhere in the said city, and in the suburbs of the same, and in the county of Middlesex, and other places to the liberties of the said city appertaining'³⁷⁷—nowhere else. The heraldically marked maces were to be understood as visible, material expressions of the privileges of self-government given and restricted to the city. While other officials might derive their powers from the city represented by municipal heraldry, the mayor's authority was itself ultimately derived from the king, represented by the royal arms on the mace (or similarly decorated swords for that matter).³⁷⁸

This function of heraldic signs as indications of the source of municipal authority is further underlined by English seigneurial cities, which instead of the royal arms tended to display the arms of their lords on their maces. Roger de Mortimer, lord of

³⁷⁴ William Hudson and John Cottingham Tingey (eds), *The Records of the City of Norwich* (Norwich; London, 1906), I, pp. lxi, 31.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ Anne F. Sutton, 'Civic Livery in Medieval London: The Serjeants', *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society*, 29 (1995), p. 14.

³⁷⁷ Birch, *London Charters*, p. 63.

³⁷⁸ For an overview of English civic swords, see Jewitt and Hope, *Insignia*, I, pp. lxvi–lxxvii. See also Edward Francis Twining, *European Regalia* (London, 1967), esp. pp. 242–244. The sword, as a symbol of justice, was known in German cities as well, as an illumination in the *Rechtsbuch* of Herford (c. 1390) shows, which depicts a sitting of the urban court and a sword ostentatiously placed in front of the judge. See Dietrich W. Poeck, *Rituale der Ratswahl: Zeichen und Zeremoniell der Ratssetzung in Europa (12.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 82–83.

Sudbury, for example, in 1397 granted that the town may have ‘two sergeants to carry before [the mayor] maces with our arms within the jurisdiction of our city’.³⁷⁹ Similarly, Chipping Sodbury received a mace with the arms of the Beauchamp family in 1439,³⁸⁰ who had acquired the town as part of Isabel de Spencer’s inheritance upon her marriage to Richard de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick.³⁸¹

The same perhaps used to be the case in Salisbury, where the question of the wielder of supreme royal authority in the city was debated in terms of the presence of the royal arms on the mayor’s maces. Tensions between the citizens and their lord, the bishop of Salisbury, had existed since the early fourteenth century, escalating after the sale of a piece of land claimed by both the bishop and the city.³⁸² When the matter was brought before the king, the citizens sought to obtain far-reaching liberties and privileges from their episcopal lord in exchange for a fee farm rent, but in 1472 a royal charter meant to regulate the relations between the city and the bishop shows that they were unsuccessful. However, the citizens did gain an important concession: while the bishop was to appoint ‘no more than four mace-bearers with maces of silver or gilt’, these were to be ‘adorned with the sign of our arms’.³⁸³ This heraldic nod to ultimate royal authority might have eventually encouraged the townspeople to petition for the right to appoint the mace-bearers themselves, so that ‘the mayor might have power to choose iiij serviants at his vill which shall have silver maces and gilte with the King’s armys thereon to be born [...] w^tyn the cite subur[b]s and precint’.³⁸⁴ Although nothing became of this petition, the citizens’ request appears as a conscious attempt to undermine their lord by assuming control of the heraldic expression of the king’s

³⁷⁹ Arthur Skrimshire (ed.), ‘Original Documents Relating to Sudbury’, *Proceedings of the Bury and West Suffolk Achaological Institute*, 1 (1853), p. 199.

³⁸⁰ See Francis Frederick Fox, *The History of the Parishes of Old Sodbury and of Little Sodbury* (Bristol, 1907), pp. 26–27.

³⁸¹ Charles Derek Ross, *Estates and Finances of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 20–21.

³⁸² Andrew Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: The Diocese of Salisbury 1250–1550* (Oxford; New York, 2002), pp. 171–173; Fanny Street, ‘The Relations of the Bishops and Citizens of Salisbury (New Sarum) between 1225 and 1612’, *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 39 (1917), pp. 233–257.

³⁸³ Printed in Richard Colt Hoare, Robert Benson and Henry Hatcher, *The History of Modern Wiltshire: Old and New Sarum, or Salisbury* (London, 1843), II, p. 770.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 764.

authority depicted on the maces. Whoever was to appoint the bearers of these signs of authority, it seems, was to show their claim to rightful rule in the city.

4.6.2 Marking the 'Deserving' Poor

As signs of official authorisation, urban governments in England and Germany also distributed badges of the municipal arms to persons serving the city in a very different capacity, namely beggars and other impoverished people who were thus marked as deserving of public support in the form of alms.³⁸⁵ In Germany, heraldic beggars' badges first appeared in Nuremberg. Here, an ordinance from 1370 stipulated that 'no-one may beg in front of or inside the churches nor within the city unless they carry the city's sign', which was to be awarded by a representative of the council upon proof of genuine need.³⁸⁶ A sixteenth-century description of these 'signs' as 'shield alms' and surviving badges (fig. 4.33) suggest that these badges in Nuremberg showed the municipal arms.³⁸⁷ The same assumption may be made



Fig. 4.33: Beggar's badge from Nuremberg (first half of the sixteenth century), showing the 'lesser' municipal arms of the city. Nuremberg, GNM, ZJ1220. See also ZJ325 and ZJC700.

³⁸⁵ Helmut Bräuer, 'Bettel- und Almosenzeichen zwischen Norm und Praxis', in Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Norm und Praxis im Alltag des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Vienna, 1997); Hermann Maué, 'Bettlerzeichen', in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993); Robert Jütte, 'Stigma-Symbole: Kleidung als identitätsstiftendes Merkmal bei spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Randgruppen (Juden, Dirnen, Aussätzig, Bettler)', *Saeculum*, 44 (1993), pp. 77–79; Phillis Emily Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Charity Costumes of Children, Scholars, Almsfolk, Pensioners* (London, 1978), p. 282; William J. Courtenay, 'Token Coinage and the Administration of Poor Relief during the Late Middle Ages', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3.2 (1972); James Balfour Paul, 'Of Beggars' Badges, with Notes on Licensed Mendicants of Scotland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 21 (1886).

³⁸⁶ Willi Rüger, *Mittelalterliches Almosenwesen: Die Almosenordnungen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg* (Nuremberg, 1932), p. 68. See also *ibid.*, p. 71 (1518); Christoph Sachsse and Florian Tennstedt, *Bettler, Gauner und Proleten: Armut und Armenfürsorge in der deutschen Geschichte: Ein Bild-Lesebuch* (Frankfurt [Main], 1998), pp. 64–66 (1478).

³⁸⁷ Johannes Müllner, *Die Annalen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg von 1623*, ed. by Michael Diefenbacher (Nuremberg, 2003), III, p. 530.

for Dresden, where the city's *Privilegienbuch* in 1487 mentioned 'signs of the city' which identified beggars approved by the community,³⁸⁸ and certainly for Frankfurt, where in 1486 shield-shaped badges were distributed to students who had to beg to sustain their livelihood.³⁸⁹ Similarly, in Augsburg as in Nuremberg, elements of the municipal arms were depicted on bread tokens given to poor men and women: 'No-one was given any bread but those who had been registered and carried their signs charged with the city's pyr; as many signs someone had, as many loafs they were given.'³⁹⁰ In Coventry, too, the *Leet Book* in 1521 distinguished between beggars identified by the municipal arms—'a Token of ther bagge of the signe of the Olyfaunt'—and those without such visual authorisation.³⁹¹ The visual appearance of the beggar's badge is best preserved in a similar ordinance from Norwich, decreeing in 1531 that 'one seale shalbe made for the whole cite containing the armes of the cite', with an inscription specifying that it was to be borne by any 'impotent' persons allowed to 'beg after the olde custome'.³⁹²

Only at first sight does this use of the heraldic embodiment of the city's honour seem to be at odds with 'dishonourable' connotations of poverty in late medieval society.³⁹³ In fact, it can be seen as further proof for the close relation of identity and municipal heraldry. Miri Rubin argues, for example, that late medieval cities saw the development of 'an ethos of duty and cooperation in which the common weal became a cherished value', and 'the ability to contribute to the general welfare became a test of status and prosperity as well as a reflection of moral health and virtue'.³⁹⁴ Richard

³⁸⁸ Quoted in Otto Richter, *Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte der Stadt Dresden* (Dresden, 1891), III, p. 165, n. 2.

³⁸⁹ Rudolf Endres, 'Bettler und fahrende Schüler', in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993), pp. 226–227.

³⁹⁰ CDS 23, p. 247 (Augsburg, 1529); GNM, ZJ312 (Nuremberg, 1486).

³⁹¹ CLB, p. 677.

³⁹² Hudson and Tingey, *Norwich Records*, II, p. 161.

³⁹³ Miri Rubin, 'The Poor', in Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994); Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Armut, Armutsbegriff und Armenfürsorge im Mittelalter', in Christoph Sachße (ed.), *Soziale Sicherheit und soziale Disziplinierung: Beiträge zu einer historischen Theorie der Sozialpolitik* (Frankfurt [Main], 1986).

³⁹⁴ Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 289–290. See also Rita Voltmer, 'Zwischen polit-theologischen Konzepten, obrigkeitlichen Normsetzungen und städtischem Alltag: Die Vorschläge des Straßburger Münsterpredigers Johannes Geiler von Kaysersberg zur Reform des städtischen Armenwesens', in Sebastian Schmidt and Jens Aspelmeier (eds), *Norm und Praxis der Armenfürsorge in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2006), p. 100.

Trexler draws similar conclusions from his study of charity in Florence, stressing that ‘a fundamental test of the cohesion and effectiveness of a social order is the ability of the dominant group to protect its own’.³⁹⁵ With a particular focus on the attitudes of the urban elites towards the poor, Trexler claims that ‘destitution of members of this community brought dishonour to the city itself’, being ‘a civic and social as well as familial tragedy’.³⁹⁶ Urban communities thus wished to ensure that at the very least the ‘deserving’ poor—those who have been cast into poverty against their will—obtained charitable donations.³⁹⁷ For this purpose, the beggar’s badge provided a suitable means to communicate actual and, more importantly, authorised need.

From the point of view of the urban community, beggars’ badges were therefore not necessarily meant as a stigma.³⁹⁸ Instead, they were employed as visual markers that identified the ‘deserving poor’ in order to direct the pursuit of communal ideals of charity. In this sense, beggars did serve the city through their mere presence, clearly marked by means of heraldry. From this perspective, the use of the municipal arms for this particular purpose appears as a sensible and deliberate move: as a visual representation of collective honour and communal identity, their display by beggars perhaps hoped to remind passersby of yet another vital aspect of this honour and identity, and provided them with an opportunity to contribute to its maintenance and increase through generous donations to the poor person marked by the sign. Of course, intentions and perceptions were again not necessarily congruent, as interpretations of onlookers might differ, thus turning a well-meant sign into a stigma after all, as deacon Alexander Berner observed in Strasbourg in 1531:

Although the beggar’s badge is supposed to be a sign of love, showing that we do not leave our

³⁹⁵ Richard C. Trexler, ‘Charity and the Defense of Urban Elites in the Italian Communes’, in Richard C. Trexler (ed.), *Dependence in Context in Renaissance Florence* (Binghamton [New York], 1994), p. 64.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History* (New Haven; Yale, 1986), p. 290; Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, ‘Local Responses to the Poor in Late Medieval and Tudor England’, *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1988), p. 210; Ernst Schubert, “Hausarme Leute”, “starke Bettler”: Einschränkungen und Umformungen des Almosengedankens um 1400 und um 1500’, in Otto Gerhard Oexle (ed.), *Armut im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2004), p. 295.

³⁹⁸ See also Katharina Simon-Muscheid, “Und ob sie schon einen dienst finden, so sind sie nie bekleidet dernoeh”: Die Kleidung städtischer Unterschichten zwischen Projektionen und Realität im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit’, *Saeculum*, 44 (1993), p. 50; Jütte, ‘Stigma-Symbole’, p. 78; Mollat, *The Poor*, p. 291.

brothers in need and that whoever wishes to give them something may know by the sign that they have been deemed worthy to receive alms, it has become a sign of shame, making people trust [its bearer] less and reluctant to give them employment.³⁹⁹

4.6.3 *Protecting the 'Brand' of the Medieval City*

Municipal arms as visual indicators of official authorisation also mattered in the context of the urban market. Here, merchants and craftsmen had long used their personal marks to stamp their goods, indicate a particular origin, and promise quality tied to the owners' reputation.⁴⁰⁰ This reputation was an intangible asset that was jealously guarded, which is why the relation between the medieval mark and the maker or seller of products corresponds closely to modern notions of 'trade marks' and the 'image' of a brand.⁴⁰¹

Urban governments were certainly aware of this nexus. Inferior products threatened to damage the reputation of the city and thus, eventually, endangered the welfare of the urban community dependent on the continuous export of goods. As a countermeasure, councils ordained the display of specific signs meant to testify to the strict adherence to established quality standards, and repeatedly inspiration was drawn from the municipal arms. In Coventry, for example, the presence of the city's arms guaranteed the proper adjustment of fabric scales, as it was ordained in 1518 that 'euery mannes weight that vseth cloth-making [...] be sealed with an Olyvaunt'.⁴⁰² A fourteenth-century ordinance from Bristol prescribed that there be 'no measure in the town except that agreeing with the King's measure and stamped with the mark of the Commonalty of the town'.⁴⁰³ While Bristol's seal at the time was not yet heraldic in a strict sense, its iconography already resembled the city's heraldic sign closely.⁴⁰⁴ In Germany, similar ordinances governed the appearance of measures for grains in

³⁹⁹ Otto Winckelmann, *Das Fürsorgwesen der Stadt Straßburg vor und nach der Reformation bis zum Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1922), II, p. 271.

⁴⁰⁰ Engel, 'Zeichen und Marke'; Stromer, 'Zeichen'; Sidney A. Diamond, 'The Historical Development of Trademarks', *The Trademark Reporter*, 65.4 (1975); Benjamin G. Paster, 'Trademarks: Their Early History', *The Trademark Reporter*, 59.8 (1969).

⁴⁰¹ Gary Richardson, 'Brand Names before the Industrial Revolution' (online publication, 2008), <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w13930>>; Karl Moore and Susan Reid, 'The Birth of Brand: 4000 Years of Branding History', *Business History*, 50.4 (2008).

⁴⁰² CLB, p. 658. The same ordinance was repeated in 1535, see *ibid.*, pp. 721–722, 724. For similar ordinances with regards to the brewers, tanners, and couriers, see *ibid.*, pp. 677, 712, 864.

⁴⁰³ Bickley, *Little Red Book*, II, pp. 218–219.

⁴⁰⁴ See above, p. 257.

Nuremberg. Irons were to be made ‘with the city’s shield’ to mark measures for ‘inferior grain’, while the iron for other grains had to have ‘a coronet above the city’s shield’.⁴⁰⁵ A cast-iron measure for herring from 1469, used by the cities of Rostock and Lübeck, was likewise marked with the municipal arms of the two cities.⁴⁰⁶

A much more prolific use of municipal arms as signifiers of compliance with communal requirements must have been their display on cloth seals.⁴⁰⁷ Already in 1261 cloth produced in Trier was to be marked with the *signum civitatis*, although it is not yet clear whether this implied the city’s arms or some other ‘sign of the city’, a simple letter also often used on cloth seals, for example.⁴⁰⁸ Certainly, archaeological finds from later medieval Trier show heraldic motifs corresponding to its municipal arms on cloth seals.⁴⁰⁹ A regulation from Cologne in 1407 even laid out a complex system of rating their products’ quality with elements taken from the city’s arms:

When the masters inspect it [the cloth], and it is as good as it is supposed to be according to the law, they may award three crowns. And if it is not quite good enough to be worthy of three crowns, they shall award two crowns. And if it is not as good as the ordinances demand, they shall award one crown. But if it is not worthy of even one crown, they shall rip the cloth from one end to the other.⁴¹⁰

Frankfurt applied a similar system, so that cloth was to be rated by the number of eagles, their municipal heraldic beast: two eagles were to indicate superior cloth, a single eagle less perfect produce, while fabrics that did not meet the requirements, as in Cologne, were to be cut into pieces.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁵ Werner Schultheiß (ed.), *Satzungsbücher und Satzungen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg aus dem 14. Jahrhundert* (Nuremberg, 1965), p. 286.

⁴⁰⁶ K. E. H. Krause, ‘Die Rostocker metallenen Normalscheffel und das Eichverfahren des Mittelalters’, *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 5 (1888), pp. 93–94. See also Harald Witthöft, ‘Städtisches Gewicht – Ordnung, Amt, Zeichen’, in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993).

⁴⁰⁷ On cloth seals, see also Geoffrey Egan, ‘Provenanced Lead Cloth Seals’ (unpublished PhD, University of London, 1987); Dieter Bischof, ‘Tuchplomben – Zeugnisse des hansischen Tuchhandels’, in Joachim Mähner and Stephan Selzer (eds), *Vertraute Ferne: Kommunikation und Mobilität im Hanseraum* (Husum, 2012); Sven Schütte, ‘Tuchplomben als städtische Zeichen: Das Fallbeispiel Göttingen’, in Hermann Maué (ed.), *Visualisierung städtischer Ordnung: Zeichen, Abzeichen, Hoheitszeichen* (Nuremberg, 1993).

⁴⁰⁸ Lukas Clemens, ‘Tuchsiegel’, in Gabriela Signori (ed.), *Das Siegel: Gebrauch und Bedeutung* (Darmstadt, 2007), pp. 167–168.

⁴⁰⁹ Hans-Joachim Kann, ‘Neues zu den Trierer Tuchplomben des 14.–17. Jahrhunderts’, *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch*, 25 (1985), pp. 176–178; Josef Minn, ‘Das Trierer Stadtwappen’, *Kur-Trier*, 5 (1921).

⁴¹⁰ Loesch, *Kölner Zunfturkunden*, II, p. 361.

⁴¹¹ Fromm, ‘Textilgewerbe’, pp. 141–144.

In England, the use of municipal arms on urban cloth was made mandatory by royal statute in 1483/1484, requiring all cities to mark their cloth with seals ‘in lede havynge Armes of Englonde on the oon side and on the other syde the Armes signe or tokyn of every Citee’, as an ‘evident tokyn and knowledge of the Cloth made within every suche Citee Burgh and Town of this Realme’.⁴¹² Material evidence of this practice in England survives from Bristol and London (fig. 4.34), while in Coventry an ordinance from 1518 mandated that only cloth ‘as it owght to be’ was to be awarded with ‘the Olyvaunt’, ‘by the which men schall perceyve & see it is true Couentre Cloth’.⁴¹³ That Coventry’s heraldic beast was meant to signify a concrete claim to quality by appealing to the city’s reputation as a producer of superior cloth was also expressed in a subsequent ordinance. It decreed the sign to be withheld and, if necessary, removed from any cloths whose appearance might mislead customers: ‘the owners of all such Clothes as be now within this Citie & died with the seid disceavable Coloures & sealed



Fig. 4.34: Cloth seals with municipal heraldry. Top left: London (1500–1600). PAS, HAMP833. Top right: Bristol (1300–1500). PAS, KENT-9A9391. Bottom centre: Ulm (1500–1600), found in Deopham, Norfolk. PAS, NMS-A19BF3.

⁴¹² John Raithby (ed.), *The Statutes of the Realm* (London, 1865), p. 486.

⁴¹³ CLB, p. 657.

with the towne seall shall within two dayes [...] take of the seid seall frome the seid Clothes'.⁴¹⁴ Since the heraldic sign was supposed to communicate the product's origin and quality through its association with the city as a reputable producer, the visual relation between the sign and the product in turn reflected on the sign and the city it represented. This concern was made explicit in a warning against the 'gret sclander that mygth happen to this Citie' if inferior cloth pretended to be proper Coventry cloth by means of heraldry.⁴¹⁵ Only if textiles met the expectations associated with Coventry cloth 'the Cite may haue a preise by hit & no sklauder'.⁴¹⁶ The fear of 'slander', as opposed to 'honour',⁴¹⁷ links this mercantile practice and the involvement of the heraldic signs therein back to the concept of the city's honour: in this context, it was tied up with the reputation of the communal 'brand', which ultimately guaranteed the city's continued mercantile success and financial welfare.

Officials in late medieval cities thus emerge as well aware of the intangible value their municipal arms as a mark of quality possessed and added to the wares branded with them. While Gary Richardson only counts appellations such as 'Coventry cloth' among the 'brand names before the Industrial Revolution',⁴¹⁸ the examples discussed here suggest that the heraldic signs of cities were in fact an important part of the late medieval 'brand'.

4.7 Conclusion: Representing the *civitas* in Past and Present

When Count John of Wied accused the council of Cologne of delaying the trial of a business acquaintance, who had been imprisoned in the city in 1441, he threatened to 'publicly and continuously shame' the city unless they expedited the procedure.⁴¹⁹ Since

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p. 698.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ On the medieval juxtaposition of 'slander' and 'honour', see Martine Veldhuizen, 'Guard Your Tongue: Slander and Its Punishment in a Late Medieval Courtroom', in Jan Dumolyn et al. (eds), *The Voices of the People in Late Medieval Europe: Communication and Popular Politics* (Turnhout, 2014); R. H. Helmholz, *Select Cases of Defamation to 1600* (London, 1985). See also Martin Ingram, 'Law, Litigants and the Construction of "Honour": Slander Suits in Early Modern England', in Peter R. Coss (ed.), *The Moral World of the Law* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁴¹⁸ Richardson, 'Brand Names', p. 27.

⁴¹⁹ KHV 4, pp. 81–83.

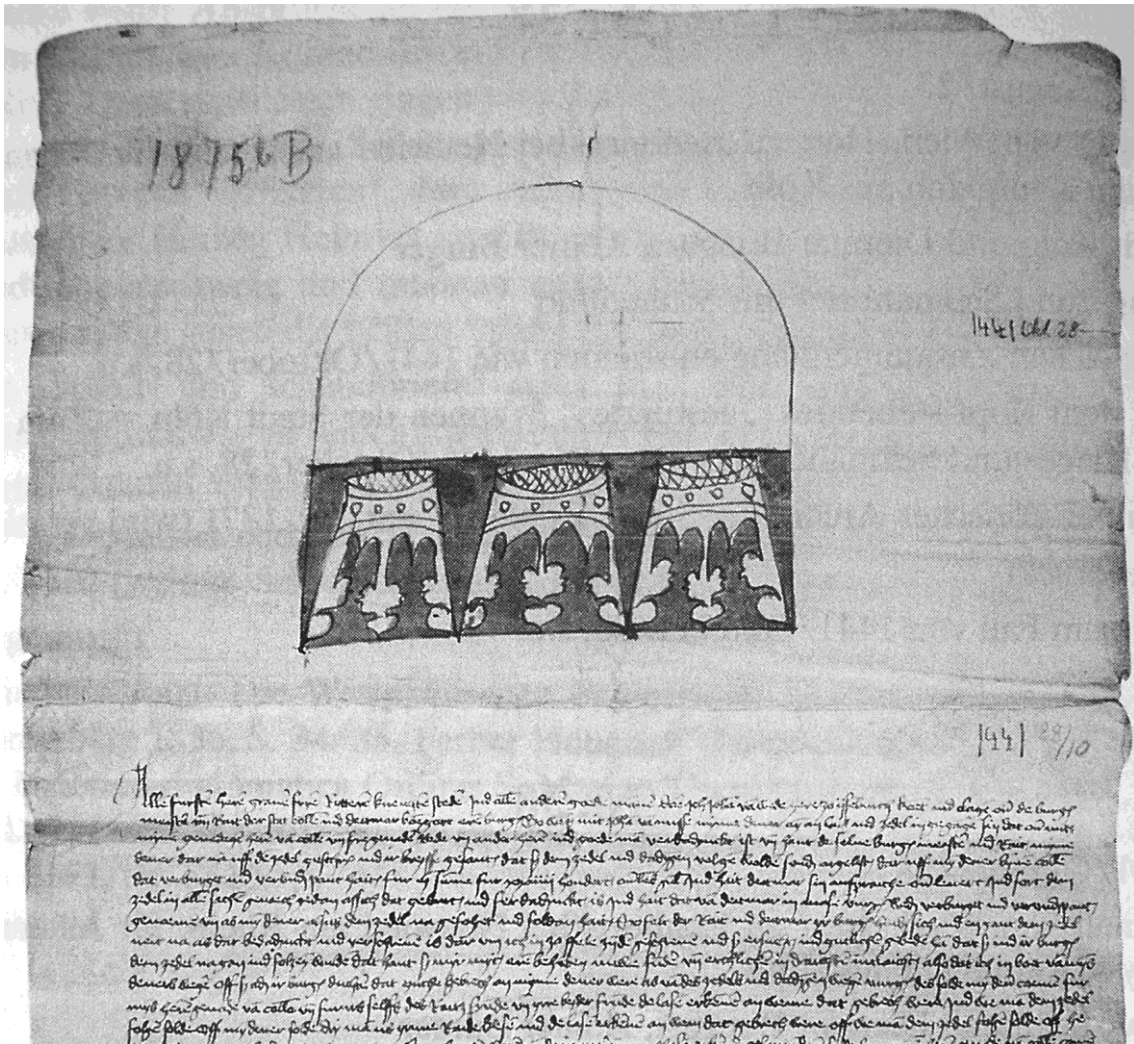


Fig. 4.35: Letter of defamation issued by John of Wied against the City of Cologne (1441), showing the municipal arms of Cologne reversed. Cologne, Historisches Archiv, Briefeingang, 1875 b B.

the townspeople did not comply, John of Wied eventually issued a letter which depicted the municipal arms of Cologne upside-down (fig. 4.35)⁴²⁰—a mode of display late medieval contemporaries perceived to indicate accusations of dishonour in general and of treason in particular.⁴²¹ Now, the city was forced to react, issuing a reply denying all allegations, followed by a statement that condemned this shameful display of their arms not only as an attack on their collective honour but also on the honour of God.⁴²² After

⁴²⁰ Historisches Archiv, Cologne, Briefeingang, 1875 b B.

⁴²¹ Matthias Lentz, 'Defamatory Pictures and Letters in Late Medieval Germany: The Visualisation of Disorder and Infamy', *The Medieval History Journal*, 3 (2000), pp. 148–150. See also below, p. 293.

⁴²² KHV 4, p. 72.

all, they claimed, their arms contained the three crowns of the three Biblical Magi.⁴²³

This brief final episode echoes a recurring theme of this chapter, namely the sense of honour that late medieval townsmen shared and saw represented in the heraldic sign of their city. Just like the arms of citizens and their guilds, so the municipal arms of late medieval cities in England and Germany were seen as representations of collective honour and identity. In Germany in particular, grants, confirmations, and augmentations of municipal arms were perceived as acknowledgements of collective honour to be celebrated and commemorated, presenting the heraldic signs they conferred as the natural result and reward for exemplary moral, loyal, and martial conduct. In this effort, these documents also often underlined the alleged antiquity of the city and its municipal heraldry, a sentiment that was echoed by urban historiography in both England and Germany. Here, reinforced by heraldic 'heirlooms' displayed in town halls as late medieval urban museums, municipal heraldry was presented as the historical result of famous founders, brave deeds in battle, and royal and princely benefactions, thus reflecting or indeed constructing a perception that saw municipal arms as reminders of essential qualities deemed to be fundamental to urban identity.

These connotations of municipal arms were further shaped through their display in contexts dedicated to the representation of municipal honour and the communication of collective identity. Town halls as important sites of urban self-government and communal justice displayed many municipal arms on the inside and outside, executed in stone, wood, or stained glass, painted on walls and ceilings, and added to furniture and silverware. The architectural demarcations of urban space(s)—gates, towers, and monuments on the marketplace—were decorated with municipal arms, just as urban rituals that promoted the unity of the city as another constitutive value of the *bonum commune* relied on heraldry as part of their visual repertoire.

At the same time, municipal arms fulfilled more specific communicative functions. As a ubiquitous element of town hall iconography, for example, municipal arms located this communal space within the urban landscape, and reminded urban officials as well as visitors of the hall of the norms, values, and claims to honour

⁴²³ Ibid.

associated with the city. On a larger scale, attached to the urban fortifications or architectural monuments on the marketplace, municipal arms contributed to the demarcation and the construction of the urban space as a distinct legal space. As decorations of civic processions and royal entries, municipal arms provided a visual point of reference for the citizen community, and the same was true during military expeditions. However, just as the arms of the city were displayed when the city was fighting outside enemies, so rebels might express their unity—and seek to legitimise their actions—by marching under a banner of the municipal arms, as revolts in German cities have shown. When borne as a part of dress, the arms of the city indicated the authorisation of municipal officials as well as the need of the ‘deserving poor’, whilst reminding them of their respective role with regard to the *bonum commune*. Stamped on local goods, municipal arms finally also served as ‘logos’ that testified to the quality of products and the standards enforced by the urban government, thus becoming part of the public communication of the late medieval city’s ‘brand image’.

As was observed in the previous chapters, heraldic signs rarely appeared in isolation, and municipal arms were no exception. In the context of other arms, they visualised the city’s relations with society at large. While distinguished members of the urban community, local lords, and trading partners were commemorated and represented in town halls, considerable space was dedicated to the heraldry of superior powers as the ultimate source of late medieval urban self-government. Such displays were not necessarily permanent but adaptable when the political climate rendered the display of a different heraldic sign opportune, as the curious case of Coventry’s reaction to the dynastic struggles of the Wars of the Roses has shown. The same holds true for urban fortifications and marketplace monuments which incorporated heraldic signs of emperors, kings, princes, and territorial lords. Here, heraldry acknowledged the dependence of urban liberties and privileges on the favour of external rulers. These displays were not fixed either, but equally able to react to political developments. Thus, when control over German cities changed after purchase or conquest, new lords might distribute their heraldry at the expense of their predecessors’ arms. Likewise, when control over an obstinate city needed to be reinforced, as in the case of Richard II’s insistence on the presence of the royal arms on London Bridge or the attacks on *Rolande*

in German towns, heraldic communication—through display *and* destruction—was a possible tool. After all, as incidents in Worms and Augsburg have suggested, the presence (and absence) of heraldic signs in the urban space was seen to represent and in fact constitute the political affiliations of territories inside the city. Power relations were also communicated in grants of arms to German cities: from the perspective of the sovereign or a territorial lord, the formal act of granting arms and the choice of heraldic symbolism was an opportunity—though by no means a necessity—to underline the political allegiance of a city. Similarly, a grant of arms might be an opportunity for cities to fashion themselves in the manner of an imperial city independent of an unwanted territorial lord, as in the case of Brunswick’s desire for an imperial grant of arms. In the same way, Salisbury’s desire to gain control of maces with the royal arms underlines the role that heraldic communication assumed when visual association with the monarch might assert relative independence from a more disagreeable local lord.

This prominent place of royal and imperial heraldry, especially when encountered in territorial/seigneurial cities, lends credibility to Weber’s hypothesis that (communal) heraldry in the cities of northern Europe was orientated more towards the monarchy.⁴²⁴ At the same time, it contradicts common assumptions of urban historians such as Reynolds about differences between English and German cities, with the latter often held to have enjoyed comparatively higher degrees of freedom.⁴²⁵ Just as the royal arms permeated the urban space in England, in German cities imperial sovereignty was permanently communicated by means of heraldry. The absence of imperial arms in a popular fifteenth-century depiction of Augsburg’s council (fig. 4.4), for example, which was otherwise rich in heraldry, should not be over-interpreted. In this instance, the artistic emphasis may have been placed on the families constitutive of the council (identified by their arms) upholding the municipal arms—and the city they represent—in a joint effort, but the arms of the Empire were as omnipresent in Augsburg as in other imperial cities.⁴²⁶ Indeed, overall the relation of municipal heraldry to the heraldic signs of superior powers in late medieval German cities is strikingly similar to the English

⁴²⁴ Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung*, p. 546.

⁴²⁵ E.g. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, esp. pp. xxii, 179–180.

⁴²⁶ See also Kah, *Die wahrhaft königliche Stadt*, esp. ch. 4.

case illustrated by *The maire of Bristowe is Kalendar* (fig. 4.10) and analysed by Peter Fleming, for example:

[T]he juxtaposition of the cross of St George with the royal arms and those of Bristol constitutes a powerful visual representation of how the Bristol elite idealised their relationship with the Crown, a relationship to which the phrase formulated by [Albert] White in the 1930s is entirely applicable: 'self-government at the king's command'.⁴²⁷

Still, in Germany similar displays might have acquired additional functions. In the face of cases of conquered and reconquered towns, clearly visible heraldic references to a city's imperial or territorial lord might well have been meant to serve as a 'safeguard' against the ambitions of predatory lords, as will be seen in the struggle of Cologne and Neuss against Charles the Bold, too, which will be discussed in the next chapter.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Fleming, 'Bristol', p. 234; See also Keith D. Lilley, *City and Cosmos: The Medieval World in Urban Form* (London, 2011), p. 134; Poeck, *Rituale der Ratswahl*, pp. 52–55.

⁴²⁸ See below, p. 287.

5 Outsiders: Negotiating Power on the Urban Stage

As the previous chapters have shown, the arms of emperors, kings, princes, and lesser lords and bishops were a prominent feature of the late medieval city. In the context of burgess houses, guild halls, town halls and towers, gates, and monuments they acknowledged political dependencies of the urban community, represented the affiliation of powerful magnates with urban corporate bodies, and documented—or insinuated—personal ties of influential citizens to the nobility.

At the same time, noble ‘outsiders’ themselves used the urban space as an opportunity for visual self-representation when permanently or temporarily present in the city. Analogous to Derek Keene’s remarks on the visual communication of lordship in English cities,¹ Mark Mersiowsky observes that German cities in the later Middle Ages served as ‘a semiotic stage for princely rule’ (*semiotische Bühne fürstlicher Herrschaft*), composed of residences and castles in the built landscape and ephemeral occasions such as entries and funerals.² For these noble efforts of self-representation, heraldic communication was an important tool, as Ailes and Paravicini show in their studies on the ubiquity of heraldry in late medieval England and Germany.³

Importantly, Marc von der Höh further stresses that this use of heraldic communication was not unidirectional, but part of a dialoguous interaction between courts, lords, and citizens.⁴ These moments of heraldic interaction will be at the core of this last chapter, focusing on the perceptions and functions of noble arms displayed in the urban space in relation to its inhabitants. The first section thus explores heraldic

¹ Keene, ‘Communication in Medieval Towns’, p. 12.

² Stephan Albrecht (ed.), *Stadtgestalt und Öffentlichkeit: Die Entstehung politischer Räume in der Stadt der Vormoderne* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2010), p. 16. See also Peter Johanek, ‘Adel und Stadt im Mittelalter’, in Gunnar Teske (ed.), *Adel und Stadt: Vorträge auf dem Kolloquium der Vereinigten Westfälischen Adelsarchive e.V. vom 28.–29. Oktober 1993 in Münster* (Münster, 1998), esp. p. 32; Zotz, ‘Adel’, esp. p. 40; Andreas Ranft, ‘Adel und Stadt im späten Mittelalter: Ihr Verhältnis am Beispiel der Adelsgesellschaften’, in Stefan Rhein (ed.), *Die Kraichgauer Ritterschaft in der frühen Neuzeit* (Sigmaringen, 1993), esp. pp. 55–57.

³ Ailes, ‘Propaganda’, esp. p. 102; Paravicini, ‘Wappen’.

⁴ Höh, ‘Interaktion’, p. 25. See also Paravicini, ‘Zeichen’, p. 22.

displays staged by urban governments on the occasion of joyous entries, demonstrating that townspeople were skilled in using an elaborate arsenal of heraldic communication to elicit their rulers' favour. The second section turns to urban crowds as observers of heraldry displayed by noble visitors: on the occasion of coronations, tournaments, funerals, and entries, they were confronted with these visual expressions of chivalric honour, dynastic legitimacy, and political ambition. Most importantly and problematically from the perspective of the citizen community, this heraldic communication sometimes also involved unwelcome claims to control over the city. Princes, kings, and emperors used heraldic communication to appropriate the urban space, whereas townspeople in turn sought to use the arms of powerful magnates as a safeguard of their municipal freedom. The third section will finally show that such displays of heraldry—and the claims they were meant to convey—were not always passively and willingly accepted by urban onlookers. On the contrary, heraldic signs displayed in the late medieval city also allowed for the expression of public discontent and protest by becoming the target of destructive practices of destroying, defacing, and replacing heraldic display.

5.1 Joyous Entries: Eliciting the Ruler's Favour

For urban historians, late medieval entries are not least of interest due to the active role the municipal government played in their organisation: while the ruler's court was sometimes consulted, in both England and Germany the visual decorations and pageant performances typical on such occasions were normally the responsibility of the city.⁵ The elaborate and expensive programmes prepared to welcome secular and ecclesiastic magnates into the city are therefore analysed as an act of praise and submission ultimately hoped to negotiate a confirmation, if not extension, of the privileges and

⁵ Gerrit Jasper Schenk, '(Reichsstädtische) Einzugsordnungen und Einzugsberichte', in Jan Hirschbiegel, Jörg Wettlaufer, and Werner Paravicini (eds), *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (Ostfildern, 2007), III, pp. 162, 164; Michail Bocjov, 'Ephemerität und Permanenz bei Herrschereinzügen im spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 24 (1997), p. 90; Neil Murphy, 'Receiving Royals in Later Medieval York: Civic Ceremony and the Municipal Elite, 1478–1503', *Northern History*, 43.2 (2006), esp. p. 242; Attreed, 'Welcome', p. 223.

liberties the city enjoyed as a result of the ruler's favour.⁶ Simultaneously, entries also enabled the citizens to formulate their ideal of 'good' and above all 'city-friendly' government, which is why their displays more or less subtly admonished the monarch to bear the peace and prosperity of the realm in mind.⁷

Both interpretations show 'how rapidly civic officials caught on to the more flattering elements of royal propaganda' over the course of the later Middle Ages.⁸ This was no less the case for heraldic communication, although even scholars dedicated to late medieval entries often omit or discount such visual matters as purely decorative: 'As usual much of the decoration was heraldic', Sydney Anglo remarks when glossing over the ubiquitous presence of heraldic signs at Katharine of Aragon's entry into London in 1501, for instance.⁹ This section will demonstrate that joyous entries, too, testified to the impressive heraldic capabilities of late medieval townspeople. They not only employed their cities' and guilds' arms to relate themselves to external forces entering what they perceived as 'their' space: townspeople also prepared heraldic displays associated with their visitors, aiming to pay homage to their honour, as Schenk suggests,¹⁰ and acknowledging their supreme sovereignty upon which the municipal freedom ultimately depended. In this effort, townspeople effortlessly created and staged heraldic allusions to their rulers' territorial, dynastic, and political ambitions, whilst at the same time incorporating heraldic communication into visual and theatrical programmes which cautioned them to stay true to the ideals of just rule.

⁶ Marion Philipp, 'Politische Kommunikation in Herrschereinzügen: Tugendprogramme an Ehrenpforten der Renaissance', in Tobias Frese (ed.), *Habitus: Norm und Transgression in Bild und Text* (Berlin, 2011), p. 197; Gerrit Jasper Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik: Herrschereinzüge im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 509–510; Attreed, 'Welcome', p. 209.

⁷ Philipp, 'Herrschereinzüge', p. 198; Richard H. Osberg, 'The Jesse Tree in the 1432 London Entry of Henry VI: Messianic Kingship and the Rule of Justice', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 16 (1986), p. 214.

⁸ Attreed, 'Welcome', p. 223.

⁹ Anglo, 'London Pageants', p. 72. In other cases, Anglo is more aware of the symbolic significance that heraldic signs might assume as part of urban pageantry, see below, p. 285, n. 137.

¹⁰ Gerrit Jasper Schenk, 'Heiltümer und geraubte Himmel: Virtuelle Räume bei spätmittelalterlichen Herrschereinzügen im Reich', in Elisabeth Vavra (ed.), *Virtuelle Räume: Raumwahrnehmung und Raumvorstellung im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 2005), p. 224.

5.1.1 Welcoming Emperors and Kings in Germany

Although the urban fortifications in many cities often already featured permanent displays of imperial heraldry, as the previous chapter has shown, late medieval townspeople saw the entry of German kings and emperors as an opportunity to further increase the visual presence of the Empire. Additional shields and banners charged with the imperial arms were sometimes attached to these important landmarks,¹¹ but also featured as part of other ephemeral decorations displayed throughout the city.

In Nuremberg, students of local schools were gathered to greet the ruler with small pennons painted with the imperial arms upon Frederick III's arrival in 1442, for example (see also fig. 4.27).¹² When he returned to Nuremberg in 1471, a more detailed display of the emperor's power was realised, namely the Empire's geographical and political extent: each pupil was given 'a pennon painted with the emperor's territories in their hands'.¹³ The same happened at Maximilian's quite similar reception in 1489, when students lined the streets, 'each holding a pennon depicting, on the one side, an eagle with one head and Austria [Habsburg] in the centre, and on the other side a shield of his territories, of which he has twenty-four'.¹⁴ In addition to this elaborate marshalling of imperial territories, the inclusion of an escutcheon of pretence underlined House Habsburg's role as the ruling dynasty. When Maximilian returned to Nuremberg in 1500, now crowned emperor, the city's heraldic arrangements attentively acknowledged this elevated status, too: on one side of the pennons carried by the pupils was painted 'a black eagle with two heads' instead of a single head, as had been the case in 1489.¹⁵ The city also managed to incorporate other dynastic details into the display: on their other side, the pennons bore 'a blue basilisk',¹⁶ the heraldic beast associated

¹¹ Angelika Lampen, 'Das Stadttor als Bühne: Architektur und Zeremoniell', in Peter Johanek and Angelika Lampen (eds), *Adventus: Studien zum herrscherlichen Einzug in die Stadt* (Cologne, 2009), p. 8; Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, pp. 209–210, 262; Marion Philipp, *Ehrenpforten für Kaiser Karl V.: Festdekorationen als Medien politischer Kommunikation* (2011), pp. 55–57.

¹² Joseph Baader, 'Friedrich III. Einritt in Nürnberg 1442', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, 2 (1857), p. 684.

¹³ CDS 11, p. 458. Another chronicler suggests that there was a total of 800 pennons, see CDS 10, p. 360.

¹⁴ CDS 11, p. 499.

¹⁵ CDS 11, p. 624. On the double-headed eagle's (heraldic) symbolism, see Franz-Heinz Hye, 'Der Doppeladler als Symbol für Kaiser und Reich', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 81 (1973), esp. pp. 73–74.

¹⁶ CDS 11, p. 624.

with the Sforza family of Milan. Maximilian had married Bianca Maria Sforza in 1493, and the townspeople were apparently keen—and able—to allude to this marriage by means of heraldry.



Fig. 5.1: Entry of Pope Martin V into Constance, showing the staffs of the canopy embellished with small shields. Ulrich Richental, *Concilium zu Constencz* (Augsburg, 1483), fol. 78r.

It also embellished the canopies under which the cherished guest further progressed through the streets of the city, usually borne by the most influential urban representatives (fig. 5.1).¹⁷ When King Sigismund entered Speyer in 1414, a canopy was made ‘of a yellow colour and with a black eagle’, augmented with ‘the arms of the

¹⁷ Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, pp. 459–461. See also Schenk, ‘Geraubte Himmel’.

Empire, Hungary, and the prince-electors' displayed on the canopy's fringes.¹⁸ Reminiscent of the heraldic visualisation of the Holy Roman Empire's 'constitutional' elements expressed in the *Reichsquaternionen*,¹⁹ this display closely resembled the heraldic ensemble of Habsburg territories painted on pennons in Nuremberg. A similar appearance might have been presented upon the arrival of Sigismund in Augsburg in 1417, when the city's account books recorded expenses for the painting of 'the canopy, the poles, and the shields of arms one carries above the king'.²⁰ An observer of Frederick III's entry into Augsburg in 1473 likewise noted 'a fair and large canopy made with the Empire in it'.²¹ In Nördlingen, certainly, the townspeople in 1474 prepared a canopy 'embellished with the Empire' that was described as featuring 'a golden eagle with two heads and golden stars.'²²

Heraldic allusions to imperial identity and office likewise featured in pageants prepared by German townspeople. On the occasion of Maximilian's coronation in Aachen in 1484, a fountain was erected dispensing wine 'for anyone to drink', and at the top of the column the figures of two lions—maybe in reference to the lion in the traditional, non-Austrian Habsburg arms—framed 'an eagle with the wings spread in signification of the Empire'.²³ The people of Aachen recycled the same theme for Charles V's coronation in 1520, when 'a fountain with two lions and an eagle in the centre, either of the beasts embracing a pipe which dispensed white wine, caused crowding and bickering among the poor people'.²⁴ The same occasion also saw the performance of a 'giant', 'a large man with a person inside in the image of Emperor Charlemagne', which

¹⁸ Johannes Janssen (ed.), *Frankfurts Reichsrespondenz nebst andern verwandten Aktenstücken* (Freiburg [Breisgau], 1863), I, no. 465.

¹⁹ On the *Reichsquaternionen*, see Ernst Schubert, 'Die Quaternionen: Entstehung, Sinngehalt und Folgen einer spätmittelalterlichen Deutung der Reichsverfassung', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 20 (1993). On heraldic canopies depicting the 'political family' of the Holy Roman Empire, see also Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, p. 461.

²⁰ Jörg Rogge (ed.), *Die Augsburger Baumeisterbücher: Digitale Edition der mittelalterlichen Stadtrechnungen von 1320 bis 1466*, 2019, <<http://www.augsburger-baumeisterbuecher.de>>, XXVI, fol. 118r.

²¹ CDS 22, p. 237.

²² Printed in Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, p. 602.

²³ Joseph Baader (ed.), 'Bericht des Ritters Ludwig von Eyb über des Römischen Königs Maximilian Krönung zu Aachen im Jahre 1486', *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, 15 (1864), p. 12.

²⁴ Emil Fromm (ed.), 'Zeitgenössische Berichte über Einzug und Krönung Karls V. in Aachen am 22. und 23. Oktober 1520', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins*, 17 (1895), p. 249.

greeted Charles upon his arrival, wearing an imperial crown and ‘an eagle on his chest and back’.²⁵ This gigantic figure was perhaps not just a flattering expression of Aachen’s confidence in the prospects of Charles V as an emperor worthy of comparison to his namesake, but also a reminder of the ideals of just rule so firmly associated with Charlemagne as the ideal-type emperor.²⁶

5.1.2 *Adulating and Admonishing English Kings*

Entries of English rulers paint an even more elaborate picture. As in Germany, the urban fortifications often provided the first opportunity for the display of ephemeral heraldry. This was the case in Exeter, for instance,²⁷ but also in Norwich, where wooden shields with the arms of St George and the English king were attached to the city’s gates upon Henry VI’s arrival in 1448.²⁸ Here, the *Chamberlain’s Accounts* speak to the diversity of heraldic signs prepared for the king’s and queen’s welcome in 1469: next to two escutcheons embellished with roses and fleurs-de-lys, the city purchased fourteen painted linen shields, a ‘long banner’ placed in front of a stage at Westwyck Gate, and two more banners ‘with the arms of the lord king and queen depicted in one banner’.²⁹ The royal guests must have been accompanied by shields of arms on their way through the city, as two pence were paid ‘for carrying two shields to the town hall upon the arrival of the king, and [back] to Coslany [St Martin’s] Gate upon his departure’.³⁰ Like their German counterparts, townsmen in England welcoming kings and queens might also dress for the occasion: for the coronation of Edward II and Isabella of France, for instance, ‘mayor, aldermen and citizens’ of London appeared ‘in garments with the arms of England and France’.³¹ Notably, when not long after, in 1312, rumours spread that an heir to the throne had been born, a spontaneous procession formed, which the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 233, n. 3.

²⁶ On Charlemagne as an ideal-type ruler, see Werner Röcke, ‘Literatur und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte Karls des Großen im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit’, *Das Mittelalter*, 4 (1999), esp. pp. 6–7.

²⁷ Stoye, *Exeter Walls*, pp. 38–42.

²⁸ Blomefield and Parkin, *Norwich*, I, p. 156.

²⁹ Lucienne Cummings (ed.), ‘Preparations for the Visit of Queen Elizabeth Woodville to Norwich, 1469’ (Norwich, 2002).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ William Stubbs (ed.), *Annales Londonienses and Annales Paulini* (London, 1882), p. 152.

fishmongers likewise embellished with English and French royal arms.³²

Similar to Aachen, the people of London welcomed back Henry V from Agincourt by means of a 'giant' equipped with a shield of the English royal arms, exhibited on London Bridge.³³ The ramparts of the outer gate-house were decorated with 'staffs bearing the royal arms', a chronicler recorded,³⁴ while the turrets of the inner gate-house, too, were 'embellished by spears bearing the royal arms unfurled, standing above the canopies and the ramparts'.³⁵ The drawbridge itself was guarded by heraldic beasts associated with royal arms and badges, namely 'an antelope [...] with a shield of the royal arms resplendent hanging from its neck' and 'the figure of a lion [...] which [...] held aloft a staff with a royal standard unfurled'.³⁶ As the king moved into London, pageants lined the way, continuing the display of royal heraldry: at Cheapside Cross a timber castle had been erected 'to which towers and bulwarks and the coats of arms of the kingdom and its princes were attached',³⁷ thus heraldically representing the wider political and territorial landscape. The conduit in Cornhill was augmented with shields of the arms attributed to Sts George, Edward, and Edmund, with smaller escutcheons (*scutulis*) placed between them and on the ramparts.³⁸ With this heraldic representation of figures so vital to claims to English royal legitimacy and genealogy,³⁹ the townspeople perhaps wished to express their acceptance of the king's historical and sacred right to rule. However, it may also have been an attempt to subtly communicate the expectation of 'good rule' embodied by the exemplary figures associated with these heraldic signs. Such intentions might also have been involved when Henry VI came to

³² Ibid., p. 22.

³³ Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. by Given Wilson (Oxford, 1997), p. 260.

³⁴ Taylor and Roskell, *Gesta*, p. 102.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 105.

³⁶ Ibid. On Henry V's heraldry and badges, see Pinches and Pinches, *Royal Heraldry*, p. 94.

³⁷ Usk, *Chronicle*, p. 260.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 107. Curiously, the *Gesta* also mentions *arma Anglie* alongside those of Sts Edward, Edmund, and George. It is unclear whether this was meant to indicate the royal arms, which appear afterwards as *arma regalia*, or the arms of St George also associated with 'England', although these are also explicitly mentioned in the same description as *arma Georgii*.

³⁹ Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 289–297; Anthony Paul Bale, 'Introduction: St Edmund's Medieval Lives', in Anthony Paul Bale (ed.), *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint* (Suffolk, 2009), esp. pp. 15–16; Tamar Drukker, 'Historicising Sainthood: The Case of Edward the Confessor in Vernacular Literature', in Erik Kooper (ed.), *The Medieval Chronicle IV* (Amsterdam; New York, 2006).

Coventry in 1455, where a total of nine pageants ‘shewed a speche of the ix Conqueroures’.⁴⁰ While the source does not explicitly refer to heraldry, figures of the Nine Worthies were often identified by attributed arms.⁴¹ One year later, at least one of the worthies certainly featured with his heraldic sign in Coventry, since the smiths’ accounts noted ‘a cote armyr for arture’ with regard to an entry of the queen.⁴²

In London, the numerous pageants prepared for Catherine of Aragon’s arrival in 1501 are held to have been ‘the supreme masterpiece’ of the city’s pageantry,⁴³ and they also stand out in terms of their heraldic communication. London Bridge, as the first point of contact between the city and the royal visitor, was again richly furnished with arms and badges of the English monarch.⁴⁴ Another castle construction in Gracious Street bore ‘great fanys w^t the King’s armyr’ and ‘certeyn bagg[e]s’ such as red and white roses, white harts, and ostrich feathers and portcullises favoured by Henry VII, while above the castle’s gate were attached ‘the King’s armyr of Englonde [...] uppehold and susteyned w^t goodly bests’, namely a dragon and a greyhound, the heraldic supporters of Henry VII.⁴⁵ At Cornhill another pageant stage was decorated with heraldic badges and royal arms, and on it stood a figure of the angel Raphael—‘on ev^ry side of the Aungell this shilde of the King’s armyr uphelde, w^t a rede dragon and grehounde’—addressing Catherine of Aragon. This message was explicitly heraldic as well, playing on her and her husband’s zodiacal sign, ‘the badge of the Sagittare / Soom tyme the ancient armyr of this land’, as chronicler Robert Fabyan noted.⁴⁶ In later medieval England the idea that King Stephen had once chosen the sign of Sagittarius for the royal arms was propounded by Nicholas Upton,⁴⁷ for instance, and the same heraldic sign was included in the fifteenth-century *Kings of Britain* roll of arms.⁴⁸ Its

⁴⁰ Sharp, *Coventry Antiquities*, p. 229.

⁴¹ See above, p. 199.

⁴² REED 3, p. 35.

⁴³ Anglo, ‘London Pageants’, p. 88.

⁴⁴ Printed in Jeffery, *Repertory*, II, p. 260.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 263–264. On the badges of Lancastrian and Tudor kings, see Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *Heraldic Badges* (London, 1907), esp. pp. 41–55. On Henry VII’s supporters, see John P. Brooke-Little, *Royal Heraldry: Beasts and Badges of Britain* (Derby, 1981), p. 9.

⁴⁶ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 303.

⁴⁷ Upton, *De Studio*, pp. 129–130.

⁴⁸ CA, Vincent 170.

appearance in a London pageant suggests that this kind of heraldic knowledge was sufficiently widespread to be recycled by the urban organisers of this event, and it might even have been expected to resonate not only with the future queen, but with the wider urban audience. *En route* to St Paul's, across Cheapside, the city had prepared three more pageants which likewise included many heraldic references to English kings of past and present,⁴⁹ and it was in fact Fabyan who underlined the city's responsibility in the realisation of these displays. When describing the equally heraldic pageant staged for the royal couple upon their exit from St Paul's, he stressed that unlike the previous pageants, this pageant 'was ordeyned & dyvysid by the kyngis Commaundment the Cityzynes thereof noo thyng made'.⁵⁰

Similar to the pennons combining the arms of Maximilian and Bianca Maria Sforza in Nuremberg, people in London were also keen to heraldically stress important dynastic links in urban pageantry. When they welcomed Edward II and his newlywed wife, Isabella of France, in 1308, they dressed 'in garments made from velvet and silk depicting the arms of England and France'.⁵¹ On the occasion of Richard II's wedding to Anne of Bohemia in 1392, London Bridge was embellished with 'three shields of the king's and queen's arms'—the latter being the imperial arms of her father, Charles IV, perhaps augmented with the lion of Bohemia.⁵² When much later, in 1533, Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn, it was the Standard in Cheapside that was prepared 'with grete posttes and vanes of the kynges armes and hares [hers], with their consyanttes payntyed and gylte',⁵³ while the future queen was brought to London on a barge with decorations likewise combining the arms of Anne's future husband and those of her father: on the outside, 'thre dosen Scochyons in metal of armes of the kyng and the quene whiche were beaten vpon square bocrame deuided so that the right side had the kinges colors, and the left syde the queues', while on deck were flown 'two great banners riche beaten with the armes of the kyng and the quene, and [...] also was a long stremer newly beaten

⁴⁹ Jeffery, *Repertory*, II, pp. 264–280.

⁵⁰ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 310.

⁵¹ Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 152.

⁵² REED 24, p. 31. See also Caroline M. Barron, 'Pageantry on London Bridge in the Early Fifteenth Century', in David Klausner and Karen Sawyer Marsalek (eds), *Bring Furth the Pagants': Essays in Early English Drama Presented to Alexandra F. Johnston* (Toronto, 2007), p. 91.

⁵³ John G. Nichols (ed.), *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London* (London, 1852), p. 36.

with the sayd armes'.⁵⁴

Territorial and dynastic ambitions were expressed by means of heraldic communication in a similar way, especially when it came to English claims to the French throne. When Henry VI returned from Paris in 1432, now crowned King of France, the *Bridge House Accounts* recorded expenses for 'a giant dressed in a blue vestment with the arms of England and France', while in front of each of the bridge's towers the figure of 'an antelope with the badges of England and France was placed'.⁵⁵ These two heraldic beasts also featured in John Lydgate's lyric description of the pageant,⁵⁶ echoing that of John Carpenter in London's *Letter Books*.⁵⁷ Since Lydgate had been commissioned to write his poem in commemoration of the pageant,⁵⁸ his account provides a rare glimpse at the perceptions meant to be evoked through such displays, at least in the eyes of the poet:

Twoo antelopes stondying on eytheyr syde / With the armes of Englund and of Fraunce, / In to-kenyng that God shal for hym provyde, / As he hath tittle by juste enheritaunce / To regne in pees, plenté and plesaunce; / Sesyng of werre, that men mow ryde or goon, As trewe lieges, theyre hertes made both oon.⁵⁹

Again heraldic signs were involved in a theatrical display that acknowledged the legitimacy of the king's rule, but at the same time they were also expected to remind him of his obligation to strive towards peace and prosperity—royal qualities that greatly affected the welfare of the city. The heraldic claim to France, which was expressed ever since Edward III quartered the English with the French royal arms,⁶⁰ was further underlined by a pedigree pageant erected in Cheapside. Here, yet another castle demonstrated Henry VI's genealogical claim to both the English and the French throne by tracing the king's lineage from St Edward and St Louis. In the manner of a Jesse tree, as Gordon Kipling stresses, this pedigree 'provided a chance to present the sovereign's

⁵⁴ Edward Hall, *History of England during the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth*, ed. by Henry Ellis (London, 1809), p. 799.

⁵⁵ REED 23, p. 126.

⁵⁶ John Lydgate, 'Henry VI's Triumphal Entry into London', in Claire Sponsler (ed.), *Mummings and Entertainments* (Kalamazoo, 2010).

⁵⁷ REED 23, p. 120.

⁵⁸ Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 234–235.

⁵⁹ Lydgate, 'Henry VI's Entry', vv. 92–98.

⁶⁰ Pinches and Pinches, *Royal Heraldry*, pp. 50–51.

royal genealogy as an image of Christ's sacred genealogy'.⁶¹ In this effort, Lydgate alongside other London chroniclers described, heraldic signs had their part to play: the alleged ancestors on either side of Henry's pedigree were distinguished by means of heraldry, as 'Some bare leopardes, and some bare floure-de-lys, / In nouthar armes founde was there no lak, / Which the sixte Herry may now bere on his bak'.⁶² Now that the two crowns were combined, the poet ended with yet another admonition, the Hundred Years' War may finally end 'To brynge inne pees bitwene England and France'.⁶³

On the occasion of Henry VII's reception in York in 1486, too, the townspeople staged a pageant that performed the same delicate double function.⁶⁴ On the one hand, it acknowledged the authority of the king, whom York had not necessarily favoured over Richard III as monarch: 'to fynd the King more gracious soveraince lord unto the foresaide Citie'.⁶⁵ On the other hand, it expressed their hope for an end to the dynastic struggles of the Wars of the Roses promised by the union of the Lancastrian and Yorkist rivals in the new Tudor dynasty. The *House Books* recorded a *tableux vivant*, 'craftelye conceyvid a place in maner of grete Ioy and Anglicall Armony', which enacted the 'merger' of 'A rioall rich rede rose' and 'an other Rich white rose'⁶⁶—indeed one of the first public occasions that the established white rose of York was juxtaposed with a red rose associated with Lancaster, together becoming the (heraldic) badge of the Tudors.⁶⁷

English townspeople also combined heraldry and pageantry for diplomatic purposes. When English kings tried to curate a political alliance with the Empire,

⁶¹ Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford; New York, 1998), pp. 63–64. See also Osberg, 'Jesse Tree'.

⁶² Lydgate, 'Henry VI's Entry', vv. 402–403. See also Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 166; Gairdner, *Historical Collections*, p. 175.

⁶³ Lydgate, 'Henry VI's Entry', v. 411.

⁶⁴ Lloyd Edward Kermode, "'This Citie of Insufficiency": Heraldic Text and the Representation of Authority in York's 1486 Entertainment for Henry VII', *Early Theatre*, 18.1 (2015); Emma Cavell, 'Henry VII, the North of England, and the First Provincial Progress of 1486', *Northern History*, 39.2 (2002), esp. pp. 196–198; A. H. Smith, 'A York Pageant, 1486', *London Medieval Studies*, 1 (1937).

⁶⁵ YCR 1, p. 155.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁷ For this interpretation of the pageant, see also Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London, 1992), pp. 75–85; Kermode, 'Henry VII's Entertainment', p. 59. On the rose badges, see James H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York: A Century of English History, 1399–1485* (Oxford, 1892), II, p. 48, n. 4; *ibid.*, p. 133, n. 2.

Londoners supported these efforts by incorporating imperial heraldry into the pageants staged for their German visitors. At least, this is suggested by circumstantial evidence from the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* concerning the reception of King Sigismund in 1416. Regarding Henry V's earlier entry in 1415, a timber-frame castle in Cheapside was mentioned, curiously decorated with 'the arms of St. George, with, on one side, the king's arms and, on the other, those of the emperor, borne aloft on spears'.⁶⁸ Since the entries of Henry and Sigismund took place within the space of a few months, it seems possible that the chronicler of the *Gesta* conflated accounts of Henry's entry and the visit of the German king, or that the decorations prepared for Sigismund had their first rehearsal upon Henry's arrival. Unfortunately, little is known about the visual appearance of Sigismund's visit in particular, as Len Scales laments: 'No doubt both the English and imperial armorials were prominently displayed in the city—yet the chroniclers are silent on this.'⁶⁹ Londoners certainly presented an abundance of imperial heraldry to Emperor Charles V upon another visit in 1522. Again, London Bridge was furnished with 'Targettes, of the Armes of the Emperour and his Dominions'.⁷⁰ At the conduit in Gracious Street, the two rulers came by 'a Bastyle' with figures of Charles and Henry receiving the 'sworde of Iustice' and the 'worde of triumphant victory' from Charlemagne, while above this display 'were sette all the armes of the electors of thempyre'.⁷¹ Towards the conduit in Cornhill the street was furnished with two gates 'with towers embattailed set with vanes and scutchions of the armes of the Emperour & the kyng', just as Cheapside had been augmented with another 'mightie buildyng of tymber w^t towers' that showed 'a ba[n]ner of the armes of Spayne & England & al the pagiant ful of scutchions of armes of the ii. princes'.⁷² Here, finally, was prepared another pedigree that—perhaps unsurprisingly given heraldry's close association with genealogy—showed 'Alphons kyng of Spayne [Alfonso VIII of Castile] richely appareled, & out of his brest a brauche of whiche sprang many kynges, quenes and

⁶⁸ Taylor and Roskell, *Gesta*, p. 107.

⁶⁹ Len Scales, 'Court and Control: Sigismund in England, 1416', in Stanislav Bárta and Petr Elbel (eds), *Hof und Kanzlei Kaiser Sigismunds als politisches Zentrum und soziales System* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, forthcoming).

⁷⁰ Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 638.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 638–639.

princes [...] euery one with a scutchion of armes shewyng their mariages'.⁷³ At the topmost branch of this heraldically augmented arrangement, reminiscent of Henry VI's Jesse tree of 1432, were placed representations of the English king and the Germany emperor, thus visualising (alleged) genealogical links between Henry and his nephew Charles, which were to support the negotiations for an alliance of the two realms against France.

5.2 Behold the King's Arms: Establishing Noble Presence and Prerogative

Noble 'outsiders' themselves displayed their arms on the 'semiotic stage for princely rule' that was the late medieval city as well.⁷⁴ In a variety of forms, as this section will explore, their heraldic signs marked their presence whenever they moved through the urban space: from temporary residences and visual pageantry associated with tournaments, coronations, funerals, and other large-scale events to banners, tabards, and caparisons exhibited on the occasion of joyous entries. Just like the heraldic displays staged by the municipal government, noblemen must have hoped to communicate claims to political power, dynastic legitimacy, and possibly—most importantly from the perspective of the townspeople—even claims to sovereignty over the city itself by means of heraldry. However, although townspeople often provided an eager audience on such occasions of noble self-representation, it often remains an open question whether they actually understood or simply overlooked such 'messages' of visual communication. Still, a number of examples shows that if powerful magnates dared to openly question the authority of the urban community by means of heraldry, late medieval townspeople were well aware of such attempts, and in fact quite able to counter them if necessary.

5.2.1 *Staging the Noble Self*

It was a widespread custom of the European nobility to announce their presence in the late medieval city by marking their temporary accommodation with heraldry.⁷⁵ In this

⁷³ Ibid., p. 639.

⁷⁴ Albrecht, *Öffentlichkeit*, p. 16. See also above, p. 259, n. 3.

⁷⁵ See also Detlev Kraack, *Monumentale Zeugnisse der spätmittelalterlichen Adelsreise: Inschriften und Graffiti des 14.–16. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 62–66; Seyler, *Heraldik*, pp. 103–104; Thomas Wright

process, they endowed a small part of the urban space with an extra-territorial character, if only ephemerally, as Brigitte Streich suggests.⁷⁶ In German cities, this practice is documented from as early as the thirteenth century, when Heinrich von dem Türlîn's Arthurian poem *Diu Crône* (c. 1230) spoke of knights who 'displayed shields facing the street'.⁷⁷ In this position, heraldic signs were meant to function as identifiers, as the Trier scribe Peter von Besslich explained regarding the arrival of the city's bishop in 1460: 'Arms were attached to every hostel, so that every prince, count, knight, and esquire knew where to ride and stay.'⁷⁸

But of course such displays also made the presence of noblemen known to others. Precisely for this reason it is unlikely that heraldry on temporary accommodation always provided 'additional security' (*zusätzliche Sicherheit*), as Streich further proposes.⁷⁹ On the contrary, the public presence of these heraldic identifiers repeatedly prompted conflicts. When nobleman Hermann Kreß in 1489 lodged in Nuremberg, for instance, the local burgess family Kreß complained that their own arms were identical to the arms outside Hermann's hostel.⁸⁰ Concerns of the Frankfurt council over the implications of such public displays of heraldry demonstrate that their functions ultimately went beyond mere identification. In June 1411, Sigismund had petitioned the city to display the imperial arms outside his residence in Frankfurt, but the council refused: 'The aldermen replied that they were inclined to deny the display of the Empire's arms for the time being [...]. If they were to allow the display of the arms in the city, those of Frankfurt worried, this might cause them great misfortune and suspicion.'⁸¹ The reason for this decision might be the fact that Sigismund was not yet actually king. If a different candidate had been elected, the council's permission to grant

and F. W. Fairholt, *A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1862), pp. 333–334.

⁷⁶ Brigitte Streich, "Uf dem zcoge zcu unserm Herrn dem Romischen Kunige.": Die Aachenfahrt des sächsischen Hofes im Sommer 1442', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 55 (1991), p. 54.

⁷⁷ Heinrich von dem Türlîn, *Diu Crône*, ed. by Gottlob Heinrich Friedrich Scholl (Stuttgart, 1852), vv. 659–663.

⁷⁸ Printed in Schoemann, 'Huldigungseinzug', p. 5.

⁷⁹ Streich, 'Aachenfahrt', p. 54.

⁸⁰ Müllner, *Annalen*, II, pp. 227–228.

⁸¹ Janssen, *Reichsrespondenz*, I, p. 204. See also XI, 1 no. 36a, RIO, <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1411-00-00_1_0_11_1_0_45_36a>.

the display of the imperial arms might have been construed as an expression of favouritism and allegiance which risked harming relations between the city and any elected king other than Sigismund. Certainly, when Frederick III and Maximilian came to Frankfurt in 1474 and there was no question as to their imperial authority, the council ensured that ‘the emperor’s and his son’s arms were displayed outside their residences’.⁸²

The earliest English evidence for this practice stems from a sermon by the Dominican preacher John Bromyard (d. c. 1352), who told the story of a serf distinguishing the residences of kings and other noblemen in a city ‘by banners hanging from the window or by arms painted above the door’.⁸³ The most famous English example comes from the testimony of Geoffrey Chaucer in the *Scrope v Grosvenor* case brought before the Court of Chivalry in 1389.⁸⁴ At the core of the issue were, as in the case of the Krefß families, two claims to a single heraldic sign: Chaucer recalled ‘that he was once in Friday Street, London, and walking through the street, he observed a new sign hanging out with these arms thereon’.⁸⁵ When Chaucer asked a passerby about the arms he associated with Scrope, he was told that ‘they are not hung out, Sir, for the arms of Scrope, nor painted there for those arms, but they are painted and put there by a Knight of the county of Chester, called Sir Robert Grosvenor’.⁸⁶ Other Englishmen must have followed the same custom at the Council of Constance as well, where the heraldic signs of countless attendees embellished the streets of the city. After all, the famous witness of the council, Ulrich Richental, claimed to have compiled his armorial chronicle from ‘the arms of those lords who attached them to their residences in Constance’ between 1414 and 1418 (fig. 5.2).⁸⁷ Among them appear the arms of several

⁸² Johannes Janssen (ed.), *Frankfurts Reichsrespondenz nebst andern verwandten Aktenstücken* (Freiburg [Breisgau], 1872), p. 305.

⁸³ Quoted in Gerald R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters & of the English People*. (Oxford, 1966), p. 27, n. 11.

⁸⁴ Ronald Stewart-Brown, ‘The Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy, 1385–1391’, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 89 (1937).

⁸⁵ Nicholas Harris Nicolas (ed. and trans.), *De controversia in curia militari inter Ricardum Le Scrope et Robertum Grosvenor milites: Rege Ricardo Secundo, MCCCLXXXV–MCCCXC e recordis in turre Londinensi asservatis* (London, 1832), II, pp. 411–412.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Ulrich von Richental, *Ulrichs von Richental Chronik des Constanzer Concils 1414 bis 1418*, ed. by Michael Richard Buck (Tübingen, 1882), p. 13. See also *ibid.*, pp. 24, 155, 159.

English delegates such as Richard Beauchamp, the main English ambassador, or the bishops of Salisbury, London, and Norwich, for example.⁸⁸



Fig. 5.2: Buildings depicted in Ulrich Richental's chronicle on the Council of Constance (c. 1464), with the arms of council attendees displayed above doors. Rosgartenmuseum, Constance, Hs. 1, fol. 34v. See also fols 34v, 62v, 74v, 97r, 106r.



Fig. 5.3: Depiction of a herald in Anton Tyrol's armorial (c. 1490–1500), wearing tabard and staff embellished with various arms associated with House Habsburg and the Empire. BSB, Cod. Icon. 310, fol. 1r.

Ulrich Richental also remembered servants and retainers of magnates who, like municipal officers, conveyed their official authorisation and authority by means of heraldry in Constance. Liegemen of the English king celebrated the feast day of St Thomas by staging a procession that saw 'trumpeters riding around the city continuously trumpeting with their trumpets bearing the royal arms'.⁸⁹ The same was true for other officials such as the beadles of the papal court, who according to Richental 'each carried a little staff beaten with silver that bore his master's arms',⁹⁰ and the 'heralds from all kingdoms wearing their king's cote-armor' embroidered on their

⁸⁸ Steen Clemmensen, *Arms and People in Ulrich Richental's Chronik des Konzils zu Konstanz 1414–1418* (Farum, 2011), nos 6138, 51, 41.

⁸⁹ Richental, *Chronik*, p. 87. See also André de Mandach, 'English "Dramatic" Performances at the Council of Constance, 1417', *Records of Early English Drama Newsletter*, 2 (1982), who surprisingly does not mention this particular 'performance'.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

tabard (fig. 5.3).⁹¹

The sight of heraldic tabards must have been fairly common in the late medieval city, since heralds often ventured into the urban space when they accompanied princes, kings, and emperors on their travels, delivered their messages, and dealt with rituals such as tournaments, coronations, funerals, and entries.⁹² References to this heraldic display exhibited by heralds again point to the function that heraldry had as proof of their official authorisation.⁹³ The herald who accompanied Maximilian to Aachen in 1484 was explicitly described as equipped with ‘the emperor’s arms, tabard and staff’.⁹⁴ Likewise, in 1485, records from York noted that a herald who had come to the city to deliver a royal proclamation bore ‘a cote armour of the armes of England and Fraunce’.⁹⁵ English noblemen flocking into cities for large-scale events, too, were accompanied by servants distinguished by arms and badges, as the chroniclers of the later Henry VIII’s wedding to Catherine of Aragon recorded in 1509, for example. Next to the ‘goodly & costlewe apparaylid Gentill & noble men of this Realm [...] wyth many armorous countenauncys’ that Robert Fabyan recalled,⁹⁶ the appearance of their servants added to the visual splendour of the event as well, as another observer described: ‘ich [each] gentill his lyvereys, baggs, and consyants, opynly worne, that every man might apparently perceyve and know every gentelman his servaunt, the oon of them from the other’.⁹⁷

Such visual expressions of allegiance and authorisation were particularly noticeable on the occasion of tournaments, which often took part in or near cities and thus attracted urban crowds.⁹⁸ The tournament, Helmut Nickel notes, ‘was *the* spectator

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 183. On tabards, see Ailes, ‘Habit’; John G. Nicholas, ‘What Was a Cote Armure? A Surcoat? And a Tabard?’, *The Herald and Genealogist*, 1 (1863); Hablot, ‘Tabard’.

⁹² Nils Bock, *Die Herolde im römisch-deutschen Reich des späten Mittelalters: Studie zur adligen Kommunikation im späten Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2015), esp. pp. 145–157; Katie Stevenson (ed.), *The Herald in Late Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2009); Wagner, *Heralds*.

⁹³ See also Hablot, ‘Tabard’, pp. 788–789; Bock, *Herolde*, pp. 176–179; Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1999), p. 80.

⁹⁴ Baader, ‘Maximilians Krönung’, p. 5.

⁹⁵ YCR 1, p. 120.

⁹⁶ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 309.

⁹⁷ Printed in Jeffery, *Repertory*, II, pp. 257–258.

⁹⁸ E.g. Josef Fleckenstein (ed.), *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter* (Göttingen, 1985); Richard W. Barber and Juliet R. V. Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry, and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge

sport, and it was—at least in its later stages—inextricably interwoven with visual pageantry'.⁹⁹ Since 'it was the major function of the tournament to show the "honour" of the nobility', it is unsurprising that heraldic signs were an important element of this pageantry—not only as a convenient means of identification, but again also as 'tokens of noblesse' that 'proclaimed the aristocratic heritage of the participants', as William Jackson writes, and 'served to stress both the lineage and evident power of the combatants', as Victor Scherb likewise argues.¹⁰⁰

In Germany, in 1263 already, a tournament was held outside Lüneburg 'where knights gathered under their shields to practice [their] chivalry'.¹⁰¹ Armorial bearings soon received special significance as part of the 'assessment of the helmets' (*Helmschau*), which was described by the Portuguese traveller Pero Tafur, for example, who witnessed this custom in the Swiss town of Schaffhausen some time between 1435 and 1439:

Certain knights gathered together and made a list of all the noblemen in the district, and they had a painter paint the coats of arms of each one, which a herald carried from house to house, presenting the shield and giving notice that on a certain day every nobleman should present himself in that place [...] to take part in the tournament.¹⁰²

[Suffolk]; Rochester [New York], 2000), esp. chs 2–3; David Crouch, *Tournament* (London, 2005), p. 52. See also Sheila Lindenbaum, 'The Smithfield Tournament of 1390', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 20 (1990), p. 11; Damen, 'Stage'. Late medieval townsmen did not normally participate in tournaments themselves. While German patricians in the earlier days of the tournament were allowed to participate in 'noble' tournaments, this became less common as admission to tournaments became more restrictive in the later Middle Ages, although Nuremberg, for instance, sometimes held its own 'urban' tournaments, see Zotz, 'Turniere'; Endres, 'Gesellenstechen'. In England, the exclusion of townspeople from tournaments appears to have been even stricter, see Barron, 'Merchant Culture', pp. 219–222; Lindenbaum, 'Smithfield Tournament'. However, William FitzStephen's late twelfth-century account of London mentions certain *simulacra belli* exercised by young Londoners that resemble later tournaments, see his *Description*, pp. 47–48.

⁹⁹ Helmut Nickel, 'The Tournament: An Historical Sketch', in Howell D. Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler (eds), *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches* (Kalamazoo, 1988), p. 213.

¹⁰⁰ William Henry Jackson, 'The Tournament and Chivalry in German Tournament Books of the Sixteenth Century and in the Literary Works of Emperor Maximilian I.', in Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth E. Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood: Papers from the First and Second Strawberry Hill Conferences* (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 57; Victor I. Scherb, 'The Tournament of Power: Public Combat and Social Inferiority in Late Medieval England', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 22 (1991), p. 110.

¹⁰¹ Wilhelm Friedrich Volger (ed.), *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lüneburg* (Hanover; Lüneburg, 1872), I, pp. 61–62.

¹⁰² Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, ed. & trans. by Malcolm Letts (London, 1926), p. 208.

This was part of an effort to establish ‘whether any nobleman had done aught amiss’ and violated the chivalric code of honour.¹⁰³ If such a violation was found to be the case, the armorial bearings of the culprit—in token of their bearer’s honour—might be subjected to a derogatory treatment, made publicly visible in the late medieval city. This happened at a tournament in Bamberg in 1486, where ‘the helmet and crest’ of a nobleman were ‘destroyed with a cleaver and tossed onto the marketplace before the town hall in front of many knights and squires’.¹⁰⁴ Of course, heraldic signs also served an important function as identifiers during the performance of jousts and melees, displayed on the shields, surcoats, and caparisons of the combatants, their retainers, and their horses.¹⁰⁵ Thus, a German town chronicler who described a tournament in Augsburg in 1530 noted that ‘everyone had on their shield their arms’,¹⁰⁶ while the mayor of Worms, describing King Maximilian’s challenge to Claude de Vauldrey in 1495, noticed that the combatants’ tents were likewise distinguished by means of heraldry—‘the Empire’s shield’ as opposed to ‘shield and helmet’ of the Burgundian chamberlain.¹⁰⁷

In England, tournaments that attracted urban spectators looked the same. For the wedding of Katherine of Aragon to Prince Arthur in 1501 a joust was staged in front of Westminster Hall. Two tribunes were erected, one ‘for the Mayor of London, the Shrevys, Aldremen, and W^rshipfull of the crafts’, and the other for the king, ‘w^t hangyngs & cushons of golde’.¹⁰⁸ On one side of the track, a ‘tree of honour’ advertised the shields of arms of all participants:

There was a goodly tre enpayntid w^t plesaunt levys, flours, & frute, and sett upp, encompassed, and closid, w^t pale rownde about, undre the which tre uppon railys were hangyd the skochons and shildes w^t th’ armys of the Lords and knights chalengers, and they that entendid to take uppon

¹⁰³ Ibid. On the *Helmschau* in Germany, see also Bock, *Herolde*, pp. 82–92; Seyler, *Heraldik*, pp. 48–49.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, ‘Das Turnier zur Bamberg im Jahr 1486’, *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, 1.6 (1853).

¹⁰⁵ Natalie Margaret Anderson, ‘The Tournament and Its Role in the Court Culture of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519)’ (unpublished PhD, University of Leeds, 2017), esp. ch. 5; Ralph Moffat, ‘The Medieval Tournament: Chivalry, Heraldry and Reality: An Edition and Analysis of Three Fifteenth-Century Tournament Manuscripts’ (unpublished PhD, University of Leeds, 2010). On other visual means of identification, see also Alan R. Young, ‘The Emblem in Tournaments’, in Peter M. Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies* (New York, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ CDS 23, p. 317.

¹⁰⁷ Boos, *Monumenta Wormatiensia*, p. 397.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffery, *Repertory*, II, pp. 297–298.

them the nobill and valianct acts, justis, and turneaments ryall [...].¹⁰⁹

The visual display of such an occasion is further described by Robert Fabyan, who noted a ‘tryumphant Justys w’yn the paleys of Westmynstr’ on the occasion of the birth of Prince Henry in 1510.¹¹⁰ Here, as in Germany, each contestant had ‘in theyr hands eythyr of theym a small scochon’, whereas the king was identified with ‘a K brawderid upon his coot ffor a sygn or tokyn of a kyng’ when he came from Westminster Hall to the jousting track, accompanied by three horsemen, ‘the ffyrst Coursour was trapped wyth the armys Engeland, The secund w^t the armys of Fraunce, The Thyrd wyth the armys Engeland’.¹¹¹

As was the case for burgess funerals, on the occasion of royal and princely funerals, too, ‘heraldic imagery was both prominent and meaningful’.¹¹² Again, urban residents seemed keen to witness these events staged in their hometowns. When the body of Richard Plantagenet was accompanied by a knight ‘holding a banner of the whole arms’, drawn by horses ‘fully trapped in black and charged with scutcheons of the arms of England and France’, covered with a hearse cloth ‘of sundry armes and pencelles of dyvers bagges and scochins of armes’, on the way from Pontefract to Fotheringhay for his reburial in 1476, the procession passed through several English towns and attracted a considerable number of urban observers.¹¹³ This was also the case for Henry V’s similarly heraldic funeral procession in 1422, when the streets of London were lined with ‘a great multitude of burgesses and other commons’ (see also fig. 5.4).¹¹⁴ The procession staged for Princess Mary in 1482, which saw her placed on ‘a chaire

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 297.

¹¹⁰ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, p. 372.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Joel Francis Burden, ‘Rituals of Royalty: Prescription, Politics and Practice in English Coronation and Royal Funeral Rituals c. 1327 to c. 1485’ (unpublished PhD, University of York, 1999), esp. p. 111. See also Anna Maria Duch, ‘The Royal Funerary and Burial Ceremonies of Medieval English Kings, 1216–1509’ (unpublished PhD, University of York, 2016), esp. pp. 104–127; Boytsov, ‘Funerals’, esp. pp. 152–154; Rudolf J. Meyer, *Königs- und Kaiserbegräbnisse im Spätmittelalter: Von Rudolf von Habsburg bis zu Friedrich III.* (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna, 2000), esp. pp. 232–233; Cornell Babendererde, *Sterben, Tod, Begräbnis und liturgisches Gedächtnis bei weltlichen Reichsfürsten des Spätmittelalters* (Ostfildern, 2006), esp. pp. 150–161; Seyler, *Heraldik*, pp. 511–513.

¹¹³ Printed and translated in Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Reburial of Richard, Duke of York, 21–30 July 1476’, *The Ricardian*, 10 (1994), pp. 149–150.

¹¹⁴ Printed and translated in W. H. St John Hope, ‘The Funeral, Monument, and Chantry Chapel of King Henry the Fifth’, *Archaeologia*, 65 (1914), p. 130.

appareled with black clothe' and embellished 'with lozenges of the arms', likewise moved through and past several towns and cities, whose inhabitants 'mette the corps



Fig. 5.4: Funeral procession of Richard II depicted in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques* (c. 1470–1472), showing the hearse leaving the Tower of London accompanied by six persons with staffs bearing shields of the royal arms. BL, Harley 4380, fol. 197v.

with processions more than a mile out of the towne'.¹¹⁵ Henry VII's funeral, which also included horsemen and horses clothed 'with the Arms of England', various banners, 'a Target of the Armes of England', and a hearse 'garnished with banners and Pecelles of tharmes of his dominions, titles and genealogies', was attended by townsfolk in the same way, as 'the Maior and his brethren, with many commoners, all clothed in blacke, met with the corps at London Bridge'.¹¹⁶

Funeral ceremonies of German emperors, kings, and other lords were often witnessed by urban crowds, too. When Gunther of Schwarzburg had died just months after being elected German king in 1349, his funeral in Frankfurt was attended not only by 'almost all prince-electors, countless princes, counts, and barons', but also by 'the burgesses'.¹¹⁷ They likely witnessed a ceremony that placed a similarly heavy emphasis on heraldic display as part of its performance. This is suggested by an Augsburg account of Charles IV's funeral procession staged in Prague in 1378, for instance,¹¹⁸ and when Prince-Elector Frederick II of Brandenburg died in 1471, his funeral procession was staged in Heilbronn 'with all of his insignia and arms'.¹¹⁹ A long succession of banner-bearers, each representative of one of the many territorial possessions of the margraviate of Brandenburg, was most certainly heraldic, since afterwards followed 'ten horses clothed in black with all the arms mentioned in the above-mentioned order painted into their trappers'.¹²⁰ The steed drawing the hearse of Count Leonhard of Gorizia through Augsburg in 1500 was similarly embellished with the arms of the deceased displayed on its chanfron, while before the hearse were carried 'banner, shield, and helmet' of the count.¹²¹

The heraldic display of royal and princely funerals thus rivalled the visual

¹¹⁵ Printed in Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'The Royal Burials of the House of York at Windsor: II. Princess Mary, May 1482, and Queen Elizabeth Woodville, June 1492', *The Ricardian*, 11 (1999), p. 451.

¹¹⁶ Printed in Leland, *Collectanea*, IV, p. 304.

¹¹⁷ Froning, *Frankfurter Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 90–91.

¹¹⁸ CDS 4, pp. 59–62; CDS 5, pp. 22–24. For an account of the similarly heraldic funeral of Frederick III in Vienna (1429), see Peter Michael Lipburger, "De prodigiis et ostentis que mortem Friderici imperatoris precesserunt.": Zum Tod Kaiser Friedrichs III.', in Lothar Kolmer (ed.), *Der Tod des Mächtigen* (Paderborn; Munich; Vienna; Zurich, 1997).

¹¹⁹ Printed in Carl F. Jungens, *Miscellaneorum* (Frankfurt [Oder]; Leipzig, 1739), I, p. 315.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

¹²¹ CDS 23, p. 80.

splendour of joyous entries. Of course, while urban decorations and pageants were the responsibility of the townspeople, it was at the liberty of entering lords to appropriately represent themselves when they ‘took’ the city: ‘every royal entry was a negotiation, a contest, between the state and the city, a negotiation that was necessarily enacted in public—on the streets—because the contest was, quite literally, about these spaces.’¹²² In this effort, in front of ‘an unlimited audience drawn from all social strata’,¹²³ late medieval lords heavily relied on heraldic communication, which not only identified them and their privileged status but also communicated quite specific claims to genealogy, legitimacy, and authority to the urban crowds.

In Germany, banners were a frequent decorative element, although explicit references to heraldic motifs are rare. An account of King Rupert’s entry at Frankfurt in 1400, for example, mentioned ‘the king’s banner and pennon’, but did not refer to the imperial arms in particular.¹²⁴ Still, since ‘the heralds and their company’ who followed the king’s banner were described as ‘embellished with their arms most beautifully’,¹²⁵ there is little reason to doubt that Rupert’s banner would have borne the imperial eagle. A depiction in Diebold Schilling’s *Spiezer Chronik* (1484/1485) points in this direction, showing King Sigismund accompanied by banners with the imperial arms on his arrival in Bern (fig. 4.27). Similarly, when Frederick III departed Frankfurt for his coronation in Aachen in 1442 with a large retinue of other German magnates, ‘several large ships were summoned, each with the arms and pennons’, as the chronicler stressed.¹²⁶ Archduke Albert of Austria is supposed to have arrived in Augsburg accompanied by fourteen banners of the arms of Austria in 1458, while Margrave Frederick of Brandenburg came to the city in 1500 with many banners charged with ‘a black rooster’ of the Brandenburg arms.¹²⁷ When the two dukes of Pomerania came to Augsburg thirty years later to be invested with their fiefdom, riding on horses with the Pomeranian arms on their chanfrons, ‘ten pennons were carried before them, each made with the arms of the

¹²² Howell, ‘Urban Spaces’, p. 18.

¹²³ Kipling, *Enter the King*, p. 38.

¹²⁴ Janssen, *Reichsrespondenz*, I, p. 80.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Johannes Janssen (ed.), *Frankfurts Reichsrespondenz nebst andern verwandten Aktenstücken* (Freiburg [Breisgau], 1866), p. 48.

¹²⁷ CDS 23, pp. 90–1.

territory they expected to receive from the Emperor'.¹²⁸ Ecclesiastic lords chose the same forms of heraldic self-representation: when Bishop John II entered Speyer in 1461, an observer noted that the banner borne before John combined episcopal and family heraldry, as it 'had been renewed' to show the bishop's descent from the Nix von Hoheneck family. In the manner of an inescutcheon, the banner bore 'my lord's small shield quartering Nix von Hoheneck's arms in the centre of the cross', that is the heraldic sign of the bishopric.¹²⁹ Similar combinations of arms of office with heraldic references to dynastic identity also occurred in the context of imperial entries. When Charles V came to Aachen on the occasion of his coronation in 1520, his herald held 'a gilt staff with an eagle' (see also fig. 5.3), but the banners were described as 'red and white as the arms of Austria are'.¹³⁰ When Louis V, count palatinate of the Rhine, entered Frankfurt in 1522, he, too, was preceded by 'four pennons of his arms' and—in his capacity as a prince elector, perhaps—also by 'a pennon with the arms of the Empire, an eagle, on them'.¹³¹

The communication of dynastic links likewise featured in the display of kings and princes entering cities in England. A depiction of Richard II in Froissart's *Chroniques* (fig. 5.5) is perhaps quite representative of an English monarch's appearance on such an occasion. This is suggested by Richard III's entry into York in 1483, when the king's wardrobe accounts give an impression of the appearance and heraldic display the king chose for this occasion. He had ordered a total of 'iij Cotes of Arms betyne with fyne gold' for himself, in addition to 'fyve Cote Armors for heraultes'.¹³² Additionally, a number of banners was requested, one of which was to bear the royal arms—'oure awne

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 301.

¹²⁹ Franz Joseph Mone (ed.), *Quellensammlung der badischen Landesgeschichte* (Karlsruhe, 1848), I, p. 521.

¹³⁰ Fromm, 'Einzug Karls V.', p. 234.

¹³¹ Froning, *Frankfurter Aufzeichnungen*, p. 62.

¹³² Rosemary Horrox and Peter Hammond (eds), *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433* (Upminster, 1979), II, p. 42.



Fig. 5.5: Richard II setting out for an expedition to Ireland from France, depicted in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques* (c. 1470–1472), showing Richard with a cote-armour of the royal arms, preceded by a banner of the same. BL, Harley 4380, fol. 166v.

Armes'.¹³³ Others might have been charged with (attributed) arms as well: banners of 'oure lady' and 'of the Trinite' were a testimony to the king's piety and, perhaps, heavenly legitimacy, which was reinforced by banners of Sts George and Cuthbert, next

¹³³ Ibid.

to another banner of the saint-king Edward.¹³⁴ Similar visual claims to royal legitimacy were made at Henry VII's entry into London in 1485. Besides the royal arms, there were numerous other heraldic signs on banners which accompanied Henry's progress from Shoreditch to St Paul's: 'Oon was of the Armys of Seynt George, The Secund a Red ffyry dragon peyntid upon whyte & Grene Sarcenet, and the third was a Banner of Tarteron bett wyth a dun Cowe.'¹³⁵ As has been seen earlier, St George's status as a late medieval 'national saint' ensured a secure place in royal representative programmes,¹³⁶ but the inclusion of the red dragon—the arms attributed to legendary Welsh king Cadwallader—communicated, at least potentially, a more specific claim to the English throne, namely 'a symbolic assertion of the notion of Henry Tudor's ancient British ancestry'.¹³⁷ The same end, Colin Cole proposes, must lie behind the banner of a Dun Cow. This beast was associated—in the form of a badge¹³⁸—with the Beaufort family, 'and it was through the Beauforts that Henry maintained his rights other than those deriving from conquest'.¹³⁹

Instead of the past, Richard Plantagenet's heraldic display when entering London in 1460 was directed towards the future. His ambitions to the English throne were hardly veiled and instead openly communicated by means of heraldry. The duke was accompanied by 'trompeters and claryners' that bore banners charged with 'the hole armys of Inglonde with owte any dyversyte'.¹⁴⁰ Richard was entitled to bear the arms of the dukedom of York, which were the royal arms differentiated by a label argent of three points, each bearing three torteaux.¹⁴¹ His decision to remove these marks of difference and thereby appropriate the arms reserved for the king did not go unnoticed, as the London chronicler's reference to the lack of 'any dyversyte' indicates. Richard's

¹³⁴ Ibid. Also of interest are four para-heraldic banners charged with Richard's white boar badge that were ordered. An impressive thirteenth thousand such badges were commissioned, likely meant to be distributed to onlookers.

¹³⁵ Fabyan, *Chronicle*, pp. 238–239.

¹³⁶ Ruddick, *English Identity*, pp. 289–296; Good, 'Cults of Saints George and Edward'.

¹³⁷ Anglo, *Tudor Kingship*, p. 110. See also Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stewart Realms, 1485–1603* (Harlow; New York, 2009), p. 49.

¹³⁸ Fox-Davies, *Heraldic Badges*, pp. 112, 138.

¹³⁹ Colin Cole, 'The Foundation of the Tudor Dynasty', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 (1961). See also Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ Gairdner, *Historical Collections*, p. 208.

¹⁴¹ Pinches and Pinches, *Royal Heraldry*, pp. 106–107.

claim to kingship manifesting itself in the use of the royal arms was further underlined by a sword 'borne uppe ryghte be-fore hym' in the manner of a king;¹⁴² by means of visual communication, he claimed the throne as well as the city.

5.2.2 *Occupying and Safeguarding the Urban Space*

Next to practices of establishing noble presence and communicating political claims by means of heraldry in the medieval city, a number of German examples suggests that princes, kings, and emperors also employed heraldic communication to claim sovereignty in and over the late medieval city. Since townspeople were used to relating heraldic signs towards possession of the urban space, the presence of noble arms, in specific contexts, was sometimes seen as a threat to their freedom. In turn, as a remedy against such heraldic claims, they sought to display the arms of powerful magnates as a safeguard in order to protect 'their' city.

When Louis IX of Bavaria conquered the imperial city of Donauwörth in 1458, for example, the duke not only replaced the town council with men more faithful to the new lord, but also chose to replace the symbols of imperial sovereignty with those of ducal rule: 'The arms of the Empire were struck down from all gates and from the town hall, and [instead] the arms of Bavaria were painted there.'¹⁴³ In the light of earlier examples,¹⁴⁴ the act of erasing and replacing the imperial arms from central places of urban governance and jurisdiction may not only be seen as an expression or reflection of a change in rule. The performance of 'striking down' the Empire's heraldic sign and replacing it with the Bavarian arms publicly announced the transfer of possession and power, and may in fact have been essential to the duke's claim to the urban space. The emperor certainly declared Donauwörth to remain an imperial city and vowed to fight against Louis IX. In fear of an imperial siege, the duke vacated the city and handed it over to the Bishop of Eichstätt, who eventually returned Donauwörth to the Empire.¹⁴⁵ As soon as a representative of the emperor took possession of the city, the duke's

¹⁴² Gairdner, *Historical Collections*, p. 208. See also Ailes, 'Propaganda', p. 100.

¹⁴³ CDS 22, p. 140. See also CDS 22, p. 506.

¹⁴⁴ See above, pp. 175, 218–219.

¹⁴⁵ Theodor Weiß, 'Die Beziehungen der Stadt Donauwörth zu Bayern von 1266–1459 und ihre Eroberung durch Herzog Ludwig den Reichen 1458', *Jahrbuch des Historischen Vereins Dillingen an der Donau*, 13 (1900), pp. 159–162.

heraldic changes were reversed, rejecting the claims of Louis IX and restoring imperial sovereignty over Donauwörth:

Item on Monday after St Michael's Day, Marshal Henry Bappenheim seized the town of Donauwörth, and the people pledged allegiance to him in the emperor's place. Hence they removed the arms of Bavaria from all gates and the town square, and once again painted the arms of the Empire there.¹⁴⁶

The same communicative strategies were employed after the capture (and eventual recapture) of Reutlingen and Meßkirch. While grants of arms ordained by the conqueror purged any symbolism alluding to the towns' previous sovereign from the municipal arms,¹⁴⁷ they were also keen to establish the visual presence of the new heraldic sign within the urban space. *Vice versa*, they were also determined to remove all arms that still testified to the former sovereign. When Duke Ulrich von Württemberg conquered Reutlingen and changed the municipal arms so to include the Württembergian deer antlers, he also had 'such arms painted and placed on the market of Reutlingen and elsewhere time and time again'.¹⁴⁸ Likewise, after Hugo von Werdenberg had obtained Meßkirch in 1489 and revised the municipal arms, once the von Zimmern family regained Meßkirch in 1502, the revised arms alluding to Werdenberg were 'withdrawn, pierced and taken down', and replaced with the original arms of the town, notably in the context of the fountain in the marketplace.¹⁴⁹

The placing and removing of heraldic signs was also used to express political allegiance and claims to the urban space in the context of a conflict between the archbishop of Cologne and the cities of Cologne and Neuss in 1474. After the death of Archbishop Dietrich of Moers in 1463, the diocese faced serious financial difficulties, which is why the chapter sold or pawned many of the diocese's assets—much to the dismay of Archbishop Rupert, the successor of Dietrich. Left with little income, the new archbishop sought to reclaim the lost territories and associated privileges, and in this effort gained the support of the duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ CDS 22, p. 151.

¹⁴⁷ See also above, p. 176.

¹⁴⁸ Zimmern, *Zimmerische Chronik*, I, p. 546.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 545. See also Volker Trugenberg, 'Meßkirch als Stadt der Herren und Grafen von Zimmern', in Casimir Bumiller (ed.), *Mäzene, Sammler, Chronisten: Die Grafen von Zimmern und die Kultur des schwäbischen Adels* (Stuttgart, 2012), pp. 77–78.

¹⁵⁰ Brigitte Maria Wübbecke, 'Die Stadt Köln und der Neusser Krieg 1474/75', *Geschichte in Köln*, 24.1 (1988).

In support of the archbishop's claims, Charles sent a herald to 'demand the entire diocese—towns and villages—hand themselves back to the archbishopric and subject themselves to Archbishop Rupert'.¹⁵¹ When the herald reached Cologne, the people of this city, too, were asked to 'accept the archbishop as their supreme lord'.¹⁵² Moreover, they were ordered 'to acknowledge the Duke of Burgundy as advocate of the church and diocese of Cologne', and 'to prove their obedience and show their good will by witnessing and supporting that the duke's arms are set up in the city as a safeguard'.¹⁵³ This notion of heraldry as a 'safeguard' (*salvigardien*) that expressed allegiance and thus implied protection—in the form of heraldic tokens attached to houses or in the shape of the sovereign's arms on the urban fortifications—was not uncommon. In 1426, Emperor Sigismund had similarly granted the people of Frankfurt 'that they may place ours and the Holy Empire's banners on their castles, villages and districts' due to enemies converging upon the city.¹⁵⁴ The city of Neuss sought similar privileges in 1472, notably in anticipation of the feud with the archbishop of Cologne and Charles the Bold that fully developed two years later, and in the summer of 1474 led to the famous siege of Neuss. After gaining the support of both pope and emperor against the archbishop and the duke, the city 'made sure to affix the insignia of the lord pope and the emperor on every gate of the city'.¹⁵⁵

But in the light of the examples from Donauwörth, Meßkirch, and Reutlingen, it seems unsurprising that the aldermen of Cologne perceived the prospect of Charles the Bold's arms as a 'safeguard' in their city differently, namely as a potential visual submission to Burgundian rule. As a matter of fact, elsewhere heraldic communication was Charles' means of choice to announce Burgundian influence and sovereignty:¹⁵⁶ already in 1460, he had his arms set up at the court of his new protegee William of

¹⁵¹ CDS 14, p. 830.

¹⁵² Adolf Ulrich (ed.), *Acten zum Neusser Kriege, 1472–1475* (Cologne, 1889), p. 178.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous (ed.), *Privilegia et Pacta des Heiligen Römischen Reichs-Stadt Franckfurt am Mayn* (Frankfurt [Main], 1728), p. 266.

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous, *Chronicon magnum belgicum* (Frankfurt [Main], 1607), p. 410.

¹⁵⁶ See also Claudius Sieber-Lehmann, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus: Die Burgunderkriege am Oberrhein und in der Eidgenossenschaft* (Göttingen, 1995), pp. 49–54.

Egmond in Arnhem.¹⁵⁷ In April of 1474—likely with their experience of the duke’s herald in mind—the council of Cologne complained to Frederick I, Count Palatine of Simmern, about the ‘current difficulties in these lands’ caused by the duke’s claim to the position of reeve and protector of the diocese, and again the ‘putting up of arms’ went hand in hand with this claim.¹⁵⁸ Shortly afterwards, in June, Pope Sixtus IV himself admonished the duke to stop his support for the archbishop of Cologne, and to refrain from ‘affixing your arms to the castles and places of the said diocese or hanging your banner therefrom’.¹⁵⁹ However, in 1478 the emperor still lamented that Charles the Bold ‘had our and the Holy Roman Empire’s arms removed and replaced with his own arms instead’ upon conquering ‘the lands, castles, towns and hamlets of the bishop of Verdun and the Empire’.¹⁶⁰

While Cologne had not been conquered by Burgundian troops, the townspeople did perceive the presence of the duke’s arms as a threat. Since the city took pride in its status as a free, imperial city, any submission to the duke of Burgundy, they argued, would establish a ‘twofold obligation’ that clashed with its loyalty to the German emperor, and would therefore lead to ‘disgrace and punishment’.¹⁶¹ Thus, they categorically rejected the duke’s demands. But Charles the Bold’s herald did not take ‘no’ for an answer: ‘The herald and his henchmen put up the [duke’s] arms’,¹⁶² especially in places close to the cathedral and the bishop’s residence.¹⁶³ After all, this is precisely what Charles had commissioned his herald Stephan von Carin to do: he had been sent to demand the return of castles, towns, and places that had previously belonged to Bishop Rupert, and—‘in signification of this’—place the duke’s arms in all such places.¹⁶⁴ The aldermen of Cologne were not at all ‘amused’;¹⁶⁵ while the

¹⁵⁷ Henny Grüneisen, ‘Die westlichen Reichsstände in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Reich, Burgund und Frankreich bis 1473’, *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 26 (1961), p. 52.

¹⁵⁸ Historisches Archiv, Cologne, B. 20, no. 30, fol. 110v.

¹⁵⁹ Ulrich, *Acten*, p. 9.

¹⁶⁰ Jean Dumont and Jean Rousset de Missy (eds), *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens* (Amsterdam, 1726), p. 19. See also Janssen, *Reichsrespondenz*, no. 541; Johann Burchard Mencke (ed.), *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum praecipue Saxonicarum* (Leipzig, 1728), I, p. 526–527.

¹⁶¹ Dumont and Rousset de Missy, *Corps*, p. 19.

¹⁶² Ulrich, *Acten*, p. 178.

¹⁶³ CDS 14, p. 830.

¹⁶⁴ Ulrich, *Acten*, pp. 7–8.

¹⁶⁵ Stein, *Akten*, II, p. 519.

performance of placing the arms might not have expressed the city's submission, as the council had refused to participate in this process, the unsolicited presence of the sign in the city still seemed to communicate a threatening claim of Charles the Bold to the territories and privileges Bishop Rupert sought to retrieve from the city. The herald's actions meant that—in the words of a chronicler—'afterwards the city of Cologne was the duke's enemy and also that of Bishop Rupert'.¹⁶⁶

Finally, and already in anticipation of the next and final section, the townspeople's reluctance expressed itself visibly through an attack on the presumptuously displayed arms, for 'in the night the duke's arms were covered in filth and ripped off'.¹⁶⁷ Sixteenth-century Augsburg chronicler Clemens Jäger further points to the identity of the culprits (fig. 5.6): 'The common men gathered in all places where the duke's letters and arms had been put on display, and hurled faeces and other muck at them, ripped them off and

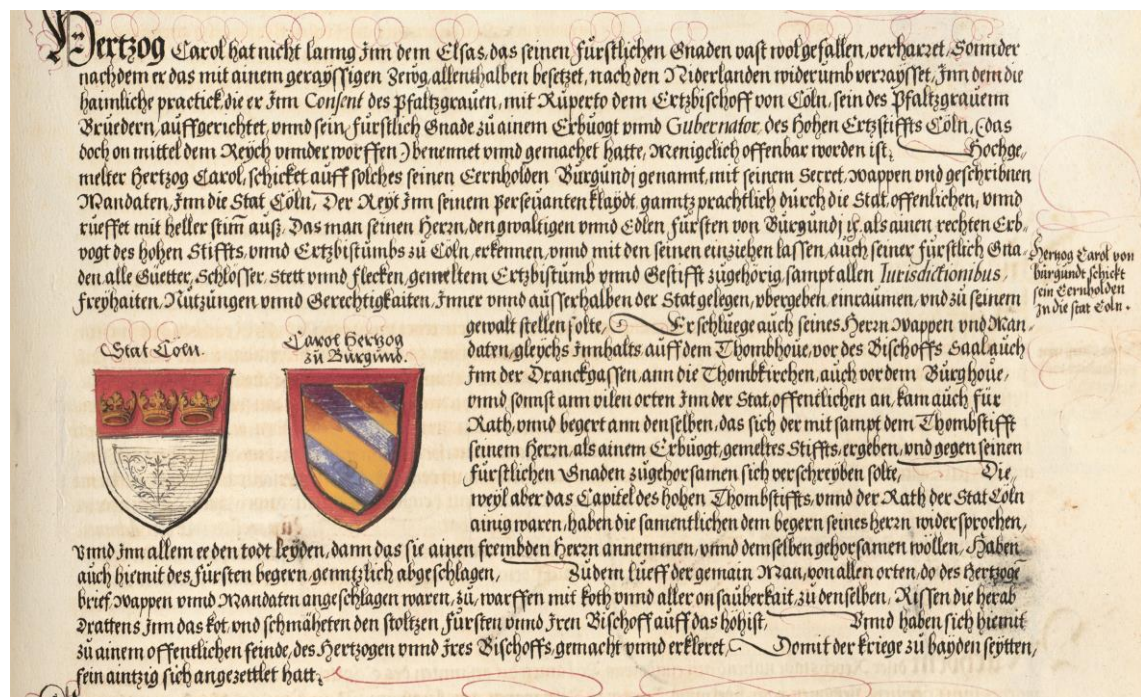


Fig. 5.6: Account of Charles the Bold's heraldic claims to Cologne in the *Ehrenspegel des Hauses Österreich* (1548/1549), illustrated with the arms of Cologne (left) and Charles the Bold (right). BSB, Cgm. 895, fol. 329r.

¹⁶⁶ CDS 14, p. 830. See also CDS 20, p. 338. On this incident, with references to previous scholarship, see Heribert Müller, "Von welschem Zwang und welschen Ketten des Reiches Westmark zu erretten": Burgund und der Neusser Krieg 1474/75 im Spiegel der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung von der Weimarer Zeit bis in die der frühen Bundesrepublik', in Heribert Müller et al. (eds), *Frankreich, Burgund und das Reich im späten Mittelalter: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Tübingen, 2011), p. 76.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

dragged them through the dirt, shaming the proud prince and the bishop as much as was possible.¹⁶⁸ Charles the Bold was not impressed with this visible rebuttal of his heraldically communicated claim to Cologne: ‘those who had ripped off the arms ought to be made to explain themselves’,¹⁶⁹ the duke demanded, and with increased determination he vowed to claim back all the archbishop’s territories and privileges in the diocese—the city prepared for a siege.¹⁷⁰

5.3 Reversed, Defaced, Replaced:

Expressing Discontent and Protest

Scholars of urban revolt and protest in the late Middle Ages show that public rallies, provocative chants, and violent outbursts against people and property heavily relied on visual communication to express discontent about economic hardship, lack of political participation, and alleged misconduct of municipal, princely, or royal representatives.¹⁷¹ The use of banners was a common element of protest movements across late medieval Europe, for instance:¹⁷² as was discussed in the context of revolts against the established government, German guildsmen proudly displayed and marched under their banners,¹⁷³ and in England, too, banners featured prominently during urban revolts, for example in Liverpool, where banners were ‘feloniously and seditiously unfurled’ in 1345.¹⁷⁴

In addition to such forms of visual protest and revolt, this final section of the thesis will demonstrate, heraldic signs of princes, kings, and emperors displayed in the urban space also provided an opportunity for the expression of dissent with the persons and

¹⁶⁸ BSB, Cgm. 895, fol. 329r.

¹⁶⁹ Stein, *Akten*, II, p. 519.

¹⁷⁰ See also Peter Hesse, ‘Nachrichten aus Köln: Studien zu den Briefen des städtischen Rats in der Zeit des Neusser Krieges’ (unpublished Dr. phil., Cologne University, 2010), p. 23.

¹⁷¹ E.g. Samuel Kline Cohn, *Popular Protest in Late Medieval English Towns* (Cambridge, 2013). Eliza Hartrich, ‘Rebellion and the Law in Fifteenth-Century English Towns’, in Justine Firnhaber-Baker and Dirk Schoenars (eds), *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt* (Basingstoke, 2017); Christian D. Liddy, ‘Urban Enclosure Riots: Risings of the Commons in English Towns, 1480–1525’, *Past & Present*, 226.1 (2015); Johanek, ‘Bürgerkämpfe’; Peter Moraw, ‘Aufbruch in der Stadt: Bürgerkämpfe im Spätmittelalter’, in Sarkowicz Hans (ed.), *Aufstände, Unruhen, Revolutionen: Zur Geschichte der Demokratie in Deutschland* (Frankfurt [Main], 1998); Ehbrecht, ‘Zwietracht’.

¹⁷² Samuel Kline Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200–1425: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Cambridge [Mass.], 2006), ch. 8. See also above, p. 8.

¹⁷³ See above, p. 154–160.

¹⁷⁴ Cohn, *Popular Protest*, p. 115.

politics of their bearers. Precisely because arms were perceived in a close if not synonymous relationship with their bearers' honour, suggestive manipulations of their conventional display and attacks on their visual integrity were able to challenge an individual's sense of honour. Such 'heraldoclasms', to borrow a term from Thiry's analysis of royal heraldry as a means of political communication in the early modern era, were perceived as 'a political abjuration and assassination by other means'.¹⁷⁵ The emotional and sometimes violent reactions of late medieval contemporaries towards heraldic signs will finally once again show that people in cities were perfectly aware of heraldry displayed in the urban space and certainly able to engage in significant, albeit destructive, practices of heraldic communication

5.3.1 *Reversing the Arms of John of Gaunt*

A long-standing antagonism between the people of London and John of Gaunt, fuelled by his stance against John Wycliffe, his strife with the bishop of London, and his role in the Bad Parliament, reached its peak on 20 February 1377. Rumours spread claiming the duke of Lancaster sought to restrict the city's liberties, which prompted the aldermen to meet and discuss this threat to their freedom at Guildhall. When news broke that Henry Percy, an ally of John of Gaunt, had arrested a man contrary to London law, the townspeople's latent animosity became manifest: 'A mob promptly rushed to Percy's house, broke in and released the prisoner.'¹⁷⁶

But their aggravation about the duke's disregard for London's liberties also found a visual expression: 'The commoners of London reversed the arms of the duke of Lancaster, the base of the shield at the top and the chief at the bottom, placing one shield on the doors of St Paul's Cathedral, and another on the doors of Westminster Hall.'¹⁷⁷ Next to the reversed arms, the Londoners displayed leaflets propagating the infamous narrative of John of Gaunt's illegitimate birth and dishonourable descent, according to which 'the said duke of Lancaster was not English but Flemish, and not the son of the

¹⁷⁵ Thiry, *Matter(s)*, p. 262; Steven Thiry, 'The Emblazoned Kingdom Ablaze: Heraldic Iconoclasm and Armorial Recovery during the French Wars of Religion, 1588–95', *French History*, 27.3 (2013), p. 349. For the late medieval period, see Hablot, 'L'iconoclasme h raldique'.

¹⁷⁶ Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Harlow, 1992), p. 61.

¹⁷⁷ Vivian H. Galbraith (ed.), *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333–1381* (Manchester, 1927), p. 104.

king and the queen, but the son of a Ghent butcher'.¹⁷⁸ The extent to which the reversal of the arms in particular was perceived to be a negative and hostile act directed against the person of John of Gaunt is underlined by the chroniclers' stark choice of words: Thomas Walsingham interpreted the upturned shield to be understood 'in signification of treason',¹⁷⁹ while Jean Froissart held that the reversed arms were meant to look 'as though he was a traitor'.¹⁸⁰

Of course, these chroniclers were not urban spectators. Yet there is reason to believe that the not otherwise specified 'commoners of London' responsible for this reversal shared their interpretation of reversed arms (fig. 5.7).¹⁸¹ After all, late medieval townspeople were able to witness the *subversio armorum* as the spectacular climax of treason trials staged in the urban space.¹⁸² When Hugh Despenser was sentenced to death in 1326, Hertford was the stage for the punishment: as Despenser was led to his execution, he was forced to wear a tabard of his arms, depicted upside-down, while the king's marshal bore the Despenser arms 'uppon a spere' likewise reversed, 'in token þat þei shulde bene undone for evermore'.¹⁸³ The judgement passed over Sir Ralph Grey in 1464 in the town of Doncaster combined capital punishment and heraldic degradation in a similar manner,¹⁸⁴ and so did that of James Tuchet, Lord Audley, in 1497, who was 'to be drawe[n] from Newgate to the Towre hil in a cote of his awne armes peinted vpon paper, reuersed and al to torne, & there to be behedded' under the curious eyes of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. See also Liddy, 'Bill Casting', p. 459.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliae: Ab anno Domini 1328 usque ad annum 1388*, ed. by Edward M. Thompson (London et al., 1847), p. 125.

¹⁸⁰ Jean Froissart, *Les Chroniques de Sire Jean Froissart*, ed. by J. A. C. Buchon (Paris, 1836), II, p. 165.

¹⁸¹ On the *subversio armorum* as a late medieval practice, see Laurent Hablot, "'Sens dessoubz dessus": Le blason de la trahison', in Maïté Billoré and Myriam Soria (eds), *La trahison au Moyen Âge: De la monstruosité au crime politique* (Rennes, 2009); Wolfgang Brückner, *Bildnis und Brauch: Studien zur Bildfunktion der Effigies* (Berlin, 1966), p. 221. See also the lemma 'arma reversata' in Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Graz, 1954), I.

¹⁸² Roger Nicholson, "'Cursed Ymagynacion": Late Medieval London, Urban Chronicles and the Topologies of Treason', in Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn (eds), *Medieval Urban Culture* (Turnhout, 2017); James Davis, 'Spectacular Death: Capital Punishment in Medieval English Towns', in Joëlle Rollo-Koster (ed.), *Death in Medieval Europe: Death Scripted and Death Choreographed* (London, 2017).

¹⁸³ Geoffrey Baker, *Chronicon Galfridi Le Baker de Swynebroke*, ed. by Edward Maunde Thompson (Oxford, 1889), p. 201.

¹⁸⁴ John Warkworth, *A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth*, ed. by James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1839), p. 39.

a London audience.¹⁸⁵ The Londoners who reversed the duke's arms in 1377 might also have been familiar with the shameful connotations of the reversal motif from less severe but similarly dishonourable punishment rituals: the 'riding backwards' or the 'hanging upside-down', imposed for shameful offences, openly declared the culprit's dishonour, for example.¹⁸⁶

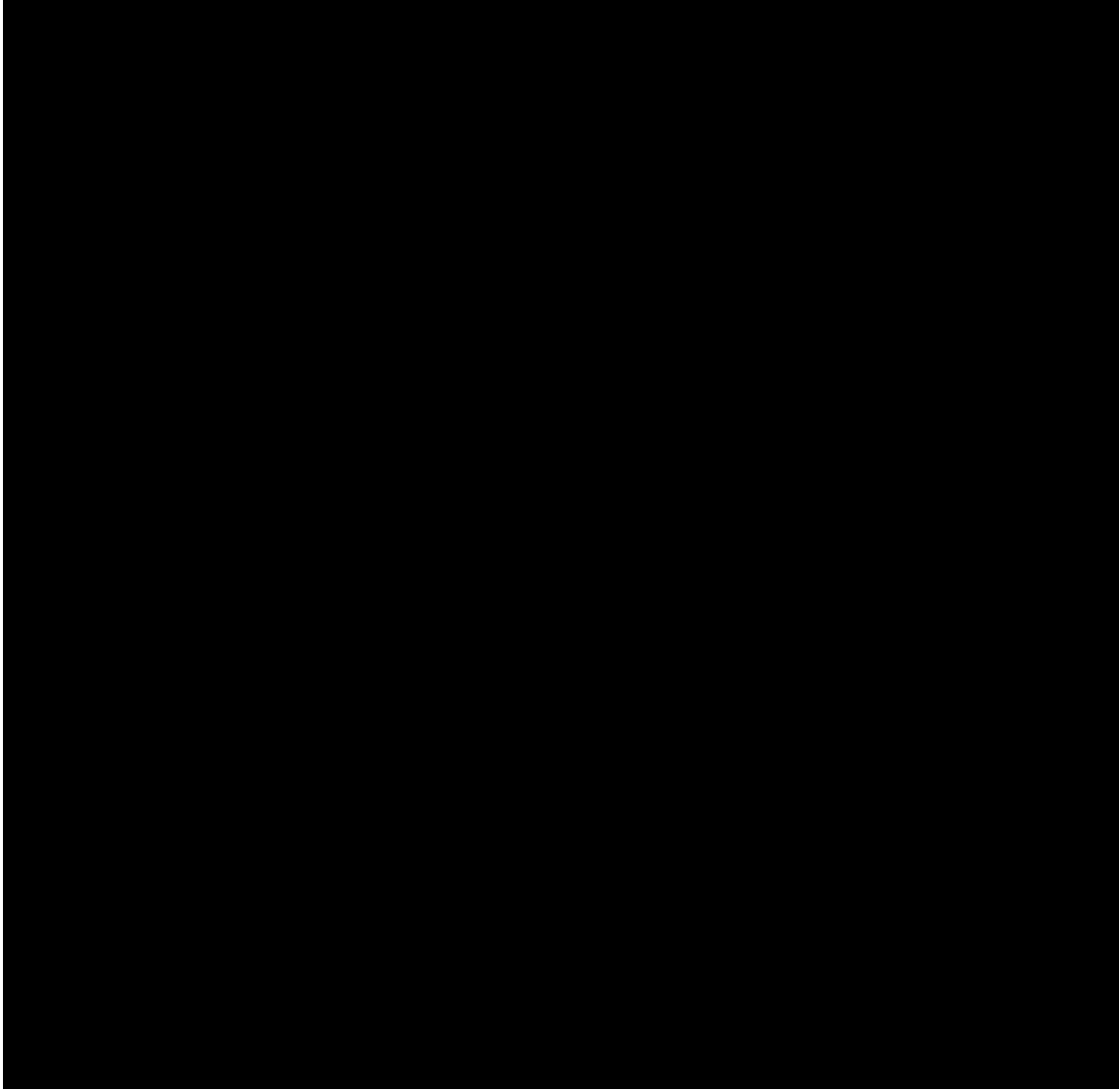


Fig. 5.7: Reversed shield as part of Johannes de Bado Aureo's discussion of the practice of *subversio armorum* as a sign of treason and dishonour. Bod., Lat. Misc. E. 86, fol. 31r.

¹⁸⁵ Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 480. For similar combinations of heraldic and capital punishment, see Hablot, 'Emblèmes outragés'; Strickland, 'Disinvestiture'.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. Ruth Mellinkoff, 'Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil', *Viator*, 4 (1973); Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London, 2001), esp. pp. 174–189; Robert Mills, *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure and Punishment in Medieval Culture* (London, 2006), esp. pp. 39–52.

Regardless of the townspeople's intentions, to John of Gaunt the case was clear. He certainly perceived the reversal of his arms as an attack on his honour, reacting with 'great anger' and a desire to retaliate against those who had insulted him in this heraldic form:¹⁸⁷ 'thirsting for revenge against the Londoners', he demanded that the mayor and aldermen be replaced, and that the lives of those who had reversed his arms and spread defamatory rumours be put at his mercy.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, he insisted on a publicly visible reconciliation in the form of 'a candle to be offered at St Paul's Cathedral before the figure of Our Lady', but also in the form of heraldic communication, for the duke demanded the Londoners 'place his arms on a marble pillar in Cheapside, fairly and properly made, and nicely gilded forevermore'.¹⁸⁹ The townsmen met at Guildhall to discuss the duke's demands, but after tedious debates the only issue they were able to agree on was to replace mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen.¹⁹⁰ When it came to displaying the duke's arms, the Londoners were less accommodating; perhaps they believed the public presence of John of Gaunt's heraldic sign in the urban space to be an inappropriate concession to the duke, with whom the townspeople were already at odds over their liberties.¹⁹¹

Eventually, the monarch's intervention was sought, and a compromise was found. A procession was to be staged, notably with a heraldic sign at its centre: the king ordered the Londoners 'to make a candle, place on it the arms of his son, the duke, and bring it to St Paul's in a solemn procession, where it might burn forevermore next to the glorious likeness of the Virgin and at the continued expense of the city'.¹⁹² It seems that this act of compensation was meant to restore the integrity of the arms that had been violated in the previous events: the duke's arms were to be displayed publicly and 'properly'—that is not reversed *in signum proditionis*—and worshipped in a ritual of public penance to make amends for the heraldic assault on the duke's honour earlier. The townspeople were certainly aware of the conciliatory tone this ritual was meant to

¹⁸⁷ Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 125.

¹⁸⁸ Galbraith, *Anonimale Chronicle*, pp. 104–106.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Galbraith, *Anonimale Chronicle*, pp. 105–106.

¹⁹² Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliae*, pp. 133–134.

convey, as many appear to have disagreed with it completely. Although this particular display of John of Gaunt's heraldic sign was already much mitigated in comparison with his demand to present his arms 'forevermore' on a marble pillar, the 'common people' outright refused to participate in the procession. In the end, it was only the 'city's magnates'—the mayor, the aldermen, and the sheriffs—who took part.¹⁹³

Curiously, while the account of the *Anonimale Chronicle* ends with the performance of the procession, Thomas Walsingham indicates that there was still more to this episode. As a matter of fact, John of Gaunt did not appear at all appeased. On the contrary, the duke not only accused the citizens of ignoring his demands, but claimed that this act of ritual and heraldic communication had even increased the original insult, 'because his arms, although he was healthy, unscathed, and very much alive, were presented attached to a candle in this way'.¹⁹⁴ In the eyes of the duke, the compensation ordained by the king and *nolens volens* performed by the city's elite was just another assault on his person by proxy of his heraldic sign. What interpretation of the display exactly prompted the duke's anger remains unclear. Samuel Cohn takes the description of the arms attached to the candle 'in this way' (*tali modo*) to mimic funerary customs, and thus to insinuate the duke's death.¹⁹⁵ Of course, as has been shown in previous discussions of (heraldic) funerals, and as Keen stresses, 'there is a great deal of space taken up in heraldic treatises with descriptions of ceremony appropriate to noble funerals: with hatchments to be displayed, candles stamped with the arms of all the dead man's lines of nobility to be burned, and with the rules that govern the display of his arms and his effigy on his tomb'.¹⁹⁶ A solemn procession with candles and shields of arms might therefore indeed have been interpreted as a funeral by a late medieval spectator, and it seems perfectly possible that the urban elite deliberately designed their reconciliation attempt to be mistaken for a funeral. The townspeople, maybe genuinely, claimed to be clueless as to the duke's furious reaction to their olive branch. After all, they maintained, they had followed the king's orders. Soon, Walsingham concluded, people were overheard muttering: 'If [...] he does not want to accept as satisfactory

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁹⁵ Cohn, *Popular Protest*, p. 103.

¹⁹⁶ Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 155. See also above, pp. 86–92.

what the king has decreed [to be done] in his honour, what is it that we have to do? Does he want us to acclaim him king? Surely that can't be what he intended when he said we knew his will? That will never happen!'¹⁹⁷

Perhaps John of Gaunt was also reluctant to forgive the Londoners since the reversal of his arms was not the first heraldically communicated attack on his person in the city. In fact, only one day earlier, the day of John Wycliffe's examination on 19 February 1377, Londoners were on the verge of ransacking the Savoy, even killing the duke of Lancaster 'because of the long-standing grudge' they held against him.¹⁹⁸ While an intervention of London's bishop managed to calm tensions, again the townspeople's anger was again channelled into an act of heraldic communication, much more destructive in this instance: 'In contempt of the duke they pulled down and broke apart a shield—hanging outside a shop in Cheapside for a sign—in which his arms were depicted, namely England and Spain [impaled].'¹⁹⁹

5.3.2 *Defacing the Arms of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia*

In 1382, the Mayor's Court of London had to address the similarly unfortunate fate of heraldic decorations commissioned for Richard II's wedding to Anne of Bohemia, daughter of Emperor Charles IV, and placed 'around the Conduit' (fig. 5.8) to celebrate 'their entry through the city to Westminster', on 21 January.²⁰⁰ A number of shields had been painted with 'the arms of the king alone', while others showed 'the arms of the king and the emperor at the same time',²⁰¹ impaling the arms of husband and bride—that is those of her father Charles IV—and thus heraldically representing the marriage and the political alliance it implied. Importantly, the account of the Mayor's Court also stressed that the act of placing and displaying certain of arms itself was meant *in honore* of the king and the queen-consort, as a visible expression of the London government's appreciation of their bearers. However, apparently not everyone in London unanimously shared this sentiment. On the contrary, the display of the English and

¹⁹⁷ Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 134.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ LMA, CLA/024/01/02/026, membr. 2b. See also Arthur H. Thomas, *Calendar of Select Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London* (Cambridge, 1932), III, pp. 3–4.

²⁰¹ LMA, CLA/024/01/02/026, membr. 2b.



Fig. 5.8: Extract from the London copperplate map (1555), showing the location of the Conduit in Cheapside.

imperial arms in the public space of the city *in honore* of the two monarchs allowed for entirely different perceptions and, more importantly, reactions. As a matter of fact, the existence of these ephemeral decorations is only known because of a ‘scandal’ that followed an unsolicited reaction towards their display, prompting the court to enquire ‘what evildoer has or what evildoers have ripped off and torn down the affixed arms’.²⁰² According to the record, ‘at about midnight three escutcheons depicting the arms of the king and the emperor, [...] and one escutcheon with the arms of the king have been annihilated and abated by the use of force and weapons’.²⁰³ Initially, no culprit could be identified, but to undo the damage the mayor had similar shields set up afterwards. Ironically, this restoration only encouraged the ‘evildoer(s)’ to strike again, although this time the culprit was apprehended:

And they [the witnesses] said that after similar escutcheons had been set up by the precept of the mayor, a certain Gottschalk of Westphalia, in Germany, approached the Conduit around midnight, and began to erase the restored shields with a knife, a so-called *baselard*, meaning to destroy them. But before he could succeed he was caught in the act, with the knife [still] drawn.²⁰⁴

It was conjectured that Gottschalk must have been to blame for the four escutcheons that had been ripped off the night before. In this context, the perceptions of his attack

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

on the royal and imperial arms in the eyes of the other townsmen expressed in their testimony are most revealing: the act of damaging and destroying these signs, which were said to have been displayed ‘in honour’ of the royals, was held to have brought ‘grave dishonour and scandal to the king and queen’, as well as ‘danger and damage to the city’—maybe because the city had been unable to prevent this dishonour, or, possibly, because it allowed for the accusation that the city had condoned or even encouraged the attack.²⁰⁵ The court had no doubt that it was the intention of the ‘evildoer’ to dishonour and damage the reputation of the king, as it was stated that Gottschalk had executed his scandalous deed not only ‘violently’, but also ‘maliciously’.²⁰⁶

Unfortunately, it is unknown what became of Gottschalk as a result of this inquest, and whether he ever had to explain the motives for his heraldoclasm. Regardless of Gottschalk’s intentions, what surfaces in their discussion is the close attention late medieval Londoners paid to the presence (and absence) of heraldic signs in the urban space. In this instance, an act of violence against the royal and imperial arms was feared to bring grave dishonour to the king, and potential detriment to the city. As the punishments of Hugh Despenser, Ralph Grey, and Lord Audley have shown, the destruction of heraldic signs was a practice meant to damage and indeed ‘revoke’ honour, and this incident shows that even where there was neither a culprit present nor capital punishment involved, townsmen still perceived attacks on heraldic signs as attacks against the honour of their bearers.

5.3.3 *Replacing the Royal Arms and Proclaiming Yorkist Ambition*

A final incident from London leaves no doubt as to the close attention townspeople paid to heraldic display in the city, and their awareness of the emotional impact and violent consequences it might provoke. In 1450, London witnessed a ‘vigorous propaganda campaign’, which to some extent already anticipated the antagonism between the Lancastrian kings and the house of York that later manifested itself in the Wars of the Roses.²⁰⁷ When Richard of York returned from his exile in Ireland to meet with the king

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ P. A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York 1411–1460* (Oxford, 1991), p. 86.

in London, his presence in the city must have been widely announced by means of heraldry, as another account of aggressive reactions suggests: ‘Item the ffriday the xxx day of Octobr wer drawe down in divers places of the citie and aboute in þe subarbes þe armes of the seid duk of york a bage of the ffetherlok and the kings armes set up.’²⁰⁸

It is uncertain who was responsible for this anti-Yorkist heraldoclasm and the subsequent heraldic declaration of allegiance to the (Lancastrian) king. It might have been townsmen who, as in the case of John of Gaunt, were outraged by a recent interference with their local politics: when Nicholas Wyfold had been elected Lord Mayor the day before, the duke’s soldiers had challenged the election result by force and attacked Wyfold in the streets.²⁰⁹ Of course, it might also have been liegemen of the king who removed and replaced the York arms displayed throughout the city. Given the tensions between the two magnates, it seems perfectly possible that the king—or the king’s men—perceived the presence of the duke’s arms to be an inappropriate claim to authority, and a treasonous challenge to the supreme sovereignty of the king.

Either way, the same late medieval perception that viewed a violation of a heraldic sign as an attack on its bearer’s honour must have caused the removal of the duke’s arms to look like a provocation bound to cause trouble. Unsurprisingly, the duke or his followers were unwilling to ignore this attack. Not long after their removal and replacement with the king’s arms, ‘the seid armes of the duk of york wer set up agein’.²¹⁰ This time, however, ‘the mair for keping of the citee and the peas yede dayly wt men harneised defensable for the werr’.²¹¹ That London’s government—whose right to select its leader had so recently been challenged by the duke’s men—now sought to guarantee the protection of the York arms underlines once more the risk associated with the strong feelings towards heraldic display: when not kept at bay, it had the potential to turn into a dangerous disturbance of the urban peace. After all, as this section has demonstrated, late medieval Londoners did have some experience with violent episodes caused by

²⁰⁸ John Bale, ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, in Ralph Flenley (ed.), *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 136. See also Ralph Alan Griffiths, ‘Duke Richard of York’s Intentions in 1450 and the Origins of the Wars of the Roses’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 1.2 (1975), esp. p. 189.

²⁰⁹ Ralph Alan Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461* (Berkeley, 1981), p. 646.

²¹⁰ Bale, ‘Chronicle’, p. 136.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

‘offensive’ arms.

5.3.4 ‘Heraldoclasms’ in Germany

German cities were no stranger to such heraldoclasms either, as attacks on the duke of Burgundy’s arms in Cologne and similar actions against heraldic signs of clerics in Augsburg and Worms have shown.²¹² In 1462, after the Augsburg burgesses Jacob and Sigismund von Argon had sided with Duke Louis of Bavaria in a conflict with the emperor, an imperial representative was sent to the city to punish the brothers for their lack of loyalty.²¹³ The family’s properties and possessions were seized, first and foremost the family’s house, and importantly this process also entailed heraldic communication:

The Emperor sent a doctor to Augsburg, who confiscated the Argon’s house and all that belonged to them; he sold everything he could find, placed the arms of the Emperor above that of the Argon, and then left again.²¹⁴

In the light of the significance late medieval townsmen attributed to their heraldic signs, especially in the context of their town houses, this imperial punishment was bound to prompt a harsh reaction. After all, it damaged two core elements of the Argon identity—and embodiments of their honour—at the same time. Thus, upon their return to Augsburg, they retaliated like for like: ‘the Argon recaptured the house and tore down the arms of the Emperor’.²¹⁵

In 1348 already, when Charles IV had come to stay in Passau and displayed the imperial eagle outside his residence, the empire’s sign became an opportunity for the expression of animosity, when it was ‘erased with filth’ by liege-man of the Wittelsbach faction.²¹⁶ Maybe similar rivalries fought on the battlefield of visual display prompted the council of Nuremberg to declare in 1471—without providing more detail—that ‘all those who had ripped off arms are to be imprisoned’.²¹⁷

²¹² See above, pp. 219–223.

²¹³ Paul von Stetten, *Geschichte der adelichen Geschlechter in der freyen Reichs-Stadt Augsburg* (Augsburg, 1762), p. 59.

²¹⁴ CDS 22, p. 513.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* See also Welser and Gasser, *Chronica der Statt Augspurg*, II, p. 207.

²¹⁶ Matthias von Neuenburg, *Die Chronik des Matthias von Neuenburg: Nach der Berner- und Strassburgerhandschrift mit den Lesarten der Ausgaben von Cuspinian und Urstisius*, ed. by G. Studer (Bern, 1866), p. 155.

²¹⁷ Martin Schieber (ed.), *Die Nürnberger Ratsverlässe, 1452–1471* (Neustadt [Aisch], 1995), p. 195. See also Schenk, *Zeremoniell*, p. 255, n. 83.

The case of John IV, duke of Saxe-Lauenburg, is clearer, as in this case the emperor himself had ordered the duke's arms to be destroyed on sight. John had contrary to the emperor's wishes maintained his family's claim to provide the prince-electors of Saxony,²¹⁸ which prompted Frederick III to issue a decree ordering his subjects 'to have those arms and titles removed wherever you find them displayed'.²¹⁹ This order was put into action in Berlin, where Duke John attended a wedding in 1476: like other noblemen, the self-proclaimed prince-electors 'attached his arms to his residence, with "John of Saxony" written beneath them'.²²⁰ The addition of text was likely necessary to underline his claim in opposition to the established bearer of the sign. But the duke's heraldic ambitions were soon challenged by other attendees, who in line with the emperor's command 'ripped off' the arms that John of Saxe-Lauenburg had put on display.²²¹

5.4 Conclusion: Negotiating Power on the Urban Stage

When late medieval noblemen—from emperors, kings, and princes to knights and esquires—came to cities in both England and Germany, heraldry was ubiquitously employed as a means of visual communication to underline their presence in the urban space. The streets were furnished with an abundance of arms displayed in a variety of media, on shields, banners, tabards, and caparisons as well as on canopies, often alongside other visual elements such as badges and livery. Shields of arms were used to mark the hostels and gander residences of noblemen, just as heraldic and para-heraldic signs identified and authorised their servants and retainers. Armorial bearings were flaunted during tournaments meant to showcase their owners' martial skills, and eventually they also decorated festive funeral processions which often moved through the urban space.

In these contexts, heraldry served a variety of different purposes relating to the display of noble identity, from representing chivalric prowess, conveying claims to

²¹⁸ Wolf-Dieter Mohrmann, *Lauenburg oder Wittenberg?: Zum Problem des sächsischen Kurstreites bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim, 1975), ch. 4.

²¹⁹ Johann Joachim Müller (ed.), *Des Reichs-Tags-Theatri Zweyter und Dritter Theil* (Jena, 1713), pp. 524–525. This letter was received by the council of Lübeck, for instance, see CDS 31, p. 182, n. 3.

²²⁰ CDS 31, p. 182.

²²¹ *Ibid.* See also Felix Priebatsch (ed.), *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles* (Leipzig, 1894), II, p. 258.

political power and underlining dynastic legitimacy, to claiming sovereignty over the city or, in the case of kings and emperors, the realm as a whole. But the discussion of noble heraldry in the city can also provide important insights into late medieval townspeople's abilities in reacting to and communicating by means of heraldry. Of course, the presence of noble arms in the urban space did not necessarily mean that townspeople paid attention to their display, and even less so that they 'correctly' interpreted any 'messages' their owners might have had in mind. As Mario Damen argues with regard to tournaments in Brussels, historians ought to 'avoid interpreting these events as courtly ceremonies in which the prince was able to display his splendour and dazzle the towns into submission'.²²² It cannot be taken for granted that 'the lavish displays of royal, national, civic, even celestial heraldry at official entries into towns, royal progresses, civic pageants, coronations and possibly royal funeral processions must have made a powerful appeal to a growing sense of national and civic pride, of monarchical authority, and of God's approval', as Ailes suggests.²²³

Still, this chapter has demonstrated that there is in fact considerable evidence in favour of townspeople's awareness of heraldry in 'their' cities, although it presents itself differently for the urban elite active in local government and the 'common' townsfolk lining the streets on the occasion of such spectacles. Joyous entries show that urban governments had an active role in staging noble heraldry; their decisions to compose or at least commission such displays point to the importance the urban elite attributed to heraldry as a means of communication when welcoming and worshipping their rulers, winning their favour, and thereby ensuring the urban liberties and privileges.

The efficacy attributed to heraldic display also emerges in the context of noblemen using heraldic communication to express claims to the urban space. Townspeople were well aware of the potentially problematic implications of such displays. On the one hand, such concerns are expressed in complaints of city councils about the presence of noble arms in the city, and in their attempts to challenge such visual claims by means of other heraldic signs, intended to serve as a safeguard against unwanted territorial ambitions of noble lords. On the other hand, there are emotional and violent reactions

²²² Damen, 'Stage', p. 13.

²²³ Ailes, 'Propaganda', p. 102. However, Ailes is well aware of 'heraldoclasms' such as those in London.

towards the arms of noble magnates. By defacing and destroying the integrity of their heraldry, they rejected claims to the urban space and expressed their protest dissent.

In the light of these events, late medieval townspeople in England and Germany were certainly not necessarily in awe of royal or princely claims to status communicated by means of heraldry. Lorraine Attreed warns with regard to joyous entries and similar ritual occasions that such events were ‘perceived in different ways by different societies’ and ‘awakened negative feelings as well as cordial and admiring anticipation’.²²⁴ The same holds true for the display of heraldry in the late medieval city: it is ‘sharp response from the man in the street’ towards heraldic display, as Ailes likewise acknowledges, which reveal that ‘ordinary folk, particularly those in the towns, were far from blind to the significance of these high and mighty signs and symbols’.²²⁵ Whereas the chapter on burgess arms, due to the nature of the source material, tended to be biased towards the heraldic practices of the urban elite, ‘heraldoclastic’ assaults on arms point towards a more widespread knowledge of the heraldic ‘language’ of treason and dishonour, and a prevalent ability to forcefully express public protest and dissent by means of heraldry. This includes individual city dwellers such as London immigrant Gottschalk of Westphalia as well as more amorphous groups described as the *commune vulgus* in the case of John of Gaunt, or the ‘common people’ in Cologne. All chose to express their aversion towards the ambitions of powerful figures by reversing or destroying their arms. Indeed, this chapter indicates that in late medieval urban society all social strata shared a certain awareness of these signs and a specific knowledge of ‘handling’ them—even if this knowledge might have been confined to practices of defacement and destruction.

²²⁴ Attreed, ‘Welcome’, p. 208.

²²⁵ Ailes, ‘Propaganda’, pp. 102–104.

6 Conclusions: Heraldic Communication and Urban Visual Culture

Whereas historians and heraldists tend to focus on the heraldry of the nobility, this thesis has shown that heraldic communication was a ubiquitous and versatile part of urban visual culture in the cities of late medieval England and Germany. Of course, there were countless arms of noble ‘outsiders’ passing through or residing in the city, from knights and esquires to princes, kings, and emperors. But these arms were by no means the only heraldic signs on display in the urban space. There were the municipal arms of the collective body of citizens that constituted the late medieval *civitas*, for instance, and the corporate arms representative of trade and craft guilds. Individual burgesses, too, used heraldic signs, and although some pursued grants of arms for themselves (or for their guilds and cities), most urban arms were adopted independently without permission from a heraldic authority, or simply inherited from previous generations and ‘time out of memory’. While the source record tends to favour the heraldic traces of the urban elite, at times violent reactions towards the presence of heraldic signs add to ‘the extraordinarily abundant evidence for the ways in which people of all classes and cultures have responded to images’.¹ Even urban residents described as ‘commoners’ or ‘plebs’ appear as acutely aware of heraldry displayed in ‘their’ urban space.

Here, the arms of citizens, guilds, cities, and noble ‘outsiders’ were to be seen in a plethora of material forms and in a range of different places, often not in isolation but alongside other arms. In the more permanent, built landscape of the late medieval city, the walls and gates of the urban fortifications just like crosses, fountains, and other monuments in the marketplace were decorated with arms carved from stone, for example. In the same manner, or executed in wood, heraldic signs featured on the facades of town halls, guild halls, and town houses, just as they were set in the stained glass that illuminated the inside of these buildings. On this inside, too, walls and ceilings were embellished with heraldic motifs, statues were used as supporters for shields, and

¹ Freedberg, *Power of Images*, p. xix.

pieces of furniture such as wardrobes or chests were designed to exhibit arms. The same is true for silverware—plates, jugs, and spoons—engraved or stamped with arms, and textiles such as cushions, curtains, and tapestries painted or embroidered with arms. Heraldically decorated garments were donated to urban churches, where brasses, tombs, altarpieces, windows or dedicated funeral hatchments further added to the heraldic splendour of the urban space. Less permanent displays of heraldry were part of this colourful picture as well. Hostels and inns were marked with shields of their guests' arms, for example. Heraldic banners, standards, and pennons, which were also exhibited in halls and flown on the towers of the fortifications, were a prominent sight when warfare and revolt shook the city, but also when peaceful urban rituals such as processions were celebrated. Shields painted on paper or linen of deceased towns- and noblemen embellished the streets during funeral processions, and often the hearse cloth was likewise decorated with arms. On the occasion of joyous entries, urban governments prepared decorations and pageants that brandished shields and figures of heraldic beasts, while the ruler in turn arrived in a surcoat of his arms and on a horse covered with his heraldic sign, perhaps led under a canopy similarly augmented with heraldry. Heralds sported tabards with the arms of their masters, and this heraldic dress was echoed by the stamped, painted, or embroidered badges distributed to onlookers of entries, comparable to the heraldic badges worn by municipal officials and poor beggars. In the marketplace, commercial goods were stamped with arms, just as gifts offered to family, friends, and esteemed guests or pious donations to churches were marked with heraldic signs. Finally, in contrast to these various forms of display, the urban repertoire of heraldic communication also included the defacement and destruction of arms exhibited in the late medieval city.

As such emotional outbursts suggest, to return to Porter's unease about 'seeing' visual signs of the past 'as primarily ornamental, merely duplicating, at most reinforcing, the information and sentiments which people derive from other sources',² late medieval townsmen 'saw' heraldic signs as much more than just a colourful piece of decoration or a convenient means of identification. Arms were perceived and fashioned as visual expressions of identity, individual and collective, framed in terms of

² Porter, 'Seeing the Past', p. 187.

the symbolic capital of 'honour' as the recognition of qualities and behaviours in line with established social norms and values.

On the one hand, these connotations of heraldic signs were forged through their display in spaces dedicated to the visual representation of urban identity, from houses and halls to processions, funerals, and entries. On the other hand, besides this purely visual association, grants, confirmations, and augmentations of arms—just like contemporary chivalric literature owned by London citizens—curated heraldic signs as the result and expression of 'honourable' qualities, notably loyal service to emperors, kings, and princes, martial accomplishments on the battlefield, moral conduct regarding Christian piety and corporate unity, and the ancient heritage of citizens, guilds, and cities alike. That such documents were themselves understood to increase the honour of their recipients by means of the signs they conferred or augmented was not only stressed by their own rhetoric; it was also suggested by their deliberate pursuit through individuals such as Brunswick mayor Ludeke Holland and corporate bodies like London's guilds, all of whom were keen to obtain visual expressions of their social distinction to advance or defend their rank in the urban hierarchy. To the contrary, as concerns of Nuremberg's council and reservations of York's aldermen indicate, a surplus of heraldically communicated honour might also be perceived as a threat to social order.

Similar connections between honourable behaviour and heraldic signs were forged in chronicles of families, guilds, and cities, which related heraldry to history. Here, arms were fashioned as commemorative symbols which called to mind formative moments constitutive of corporate and municipal identity, just as they claimed to testify to the antiquity of burgess genealogy. Smith's eloquent characterisation of arms being endowed with an 'aura of a certain kind of social distinction', echoing Johan Huizinga, thus holds true for the urban sphere as well: 'Arms do anything but simply mark out an armigerous person [or institution]; they are themselves a metonymy of a highly complex social scene, themselves an example of the kind of writing that Clifford Geertz has called [...] thick description.'³ In this sense, clearly, urban perceptions of heraldry

³ Smith, *Arts of Possession*, p. 89. See also Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. by F. Hopman (London, 1922), p. 234.

in both England and Germany did not differ from noble contexts, where heraldic signs, as Keen writes, were likewise seen ‘to convey messages of pride in loyal service, martial achievement and [...] special virtues’, acting as ‘a language of honour’ that ‘could also be made into a story’.⁴

Eventually, this mental association of heraldry with identity contributed to its numerous functions as a means of visual communication in the late medieval city. Since heraldic signs identified individuals and groups alike, they provided a shared point of reference that promoted social cohesion. Townsmen were reassured of the continuity of their families’ genealogical body in past, present, and future, just as members of guilds and cities were reassured of their place in the larger corporate and communal bodies that structured urban society.

Attached to architecture and exhibited in public places, heraldic signs demarcated and differentiated urban spaces, although their role again exceeded mere representation of spatial possession. As emotional reactions to the presence of arms in Augsburg and Worms have shown, heraldic signs were able to express legitimate and illegitimate claims to control over space, which often related to larger questions of sovereignty over the late medieval city communicated by means of heraldry.

Such questions might also involve claims to legitimacy, as was the case with rebels in Bremen, who appropriated the city’s arms, or when Richard of York entered London with a conspicuous display of the royal arms. As visual expressions of claims to possession and power, heraldic signs rendered delegated authority visible as well. For this reason, town halls, gatehouses, and other landmarks indicative of urban self-government were marked with the arms of the city’s lord, for instance, thus dutifully (albeit at times reluctantly) acknowledging the ultimate source of the city’s liberties and privileges. In turn, analogous to heralds’ tabards, urban governments used badges of the municipal arms to mark officials as invested with a portion of the city’s authority, whilst reminding their bearers of their responsibility towards the wellbeing of the city. A similar double function was performed by heraldic badges given to beggars, which indicated their authorisation just as they encouraged others to pursue Christian charity. Likewise, municipal arms displayed on products sold in the marketplace testified to the

⁴ Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 130, 132.

'brand' of the city and the quality associated with it.

Heraldic signs also served as commemorative symbols part of the multi-medial culture of commemoration diagnosed by Mersiowsky.⁵ Understood as a remembrance or *gedechtnus*, burgess arms were expected to encourage prayers for the deceased, indicated patronage in the form of donations to churches or contributions towards public buildings, and commemorated service in the urban government, while the arms of citizens, guilds, and cities alike called to mind formative narratives of the urban past.

This repertoire of communicative functions is further extended due to the fact that arms seldom appeared in isolation, but instead in arrangements of multiple different heraldic signs. In this way, in line with their role as commemorative symbols, they represented history in the form of genealogies, for example, allowing burgess families to showcase their connections to urban society, the gentry, and the nobility in their town houses. Likewise, heraldic depictions visualised princely, royal, or imperial dynasties in town halls and pageants, hoping to entice the ruler's favour, upon which the urban liberties and privileges depended. Arms attributed to the Nine Worthies, for example, added to the communicative role of such arrangements. In town halls, they admonished urban governments and reminded them of the values of good rule, just as a gigantic Charlemagne in Aachen and shields of legendary King Arthur in Coventry built for joyous entries might have been meant to encourage rulers to bear the welfare of city and country in mind.

As the confrontation of cities and rulers on the occasion of *adventus* ceremonies shows, all identified by their heraldic signs, of course, arrangements of multiple arms also expressed social and political relationships and thus spoke of the dynamics of part and whole, not only with regard to the collective body of the city in relation to wider society, but also with regard to various social entities inside the city. Thus, displays of burgess arms created a collective of distinguished citizens in the family books of German patricians, defending established status in a changing urban hierarchy. Similarly, in the context of funerals in London, the arms of livery companies and city displayed on banners communicated the intersecting corporate and communal affiliations of the deceased as important aspects of burgess identity. When it comes to

⁵ Mersiowsky, 'Medien der Erinnerung', esp. pp. 223, 253. See also above, p. 166.

rituals involving the entire city, guilds might even fight about their relative position within the body of the city indicated by means of their banners and arms displayed in civic processions, as in Shrewsbury and York, for example.

Deliberate changes to heraldic display, too, functioned as a means of communication. Although heraldry was so deeply associated with ideas of antiquity and tradition, it responded to the forces of contemporary events and spoke loudly to the late medieval present. Heraldically rich decorations and performances staged on the occasion of joyous entries ostentatiously turned the city into an imperial, royal, or princely space for the duration of the ceremony, for instance. Conquered towns such as Reutlingen or Meßkirch in Germany saw their established heraldic signs removed from key landmarks of communal authority and replaced with the arms of the new lord to underline the change in sovereignty over the city, just as the people of Coventry in England expressed their newly found support for the victorious Edward IV by removing the arms of the usurped Henry VI from their town hall. Similarly, whereas the display of heraldry might be meant to 'honour' or flatter rulers and other important magnates, its manipulation in the form of 'heraldoclastic' practices seen in London and Cologne, for example, allowed for the expression of discontent and public protest, showing that 'ensigns armorial had a specific materiality whose handling conferred meaning'.⁶

These derogatory forms of 'handling' heraldry ultimately link back to the late medieval 'practices of looking' at heraldry as an expression of identity. As Peter Berger observes with reference to Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, 'in a world of honor the individual is the social symbols emblazoned on his escutcheon'.⁷ The same was true in the late medieval city: precisely because arms were seen to represent lineage, achievements, and overall status of their owners, 'heraldoclastic' defacement and destruction proved to be an efficacious tool of visual communication which prompted emotional and often aggressive reactions.

However, like visual culture in general,⁸ heraldry was highly ambiguous and at

⁶ Thiry, *Matter(s)*, p. 262.

⁷ Peter Berger, 'On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor', *European Journal of Sociology*, 11.2 (1970), p. 343. William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV*, ed. by John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1946), I, p. 88: 'Honor is a mere scutcheon.'

⁸ See above, p. 2.

times openly contested, as was shown in discussions about the ‘proper’ relationship between municipal arms and the urban past in London, Augsburg, or Ulm. On a more existential level, just as Shakespeare’s Falstaff questioned the point of ‘honour’, some late medieval contemporaries, notably friars in Nuremberg, disregarded the use of heraldry altogether as a vain and pointless exercise. London mayor Hugh Brice apparently agreed with this sentiment and rejected heraldic displays at his funeral as ‘pomp’, and perhaps the Görlitz alderman who complained about the cost for a municipal grant of arms would have agreed. In practical terms, the promotion of unity by means of heraldry might be a benefit for individual guilds, but sometimes it was seen to threaten the integrity of the citizen community as a whole, as was feared in York or in the aftermath of guilds revolts in Germany, for example. Similarly, while arms might have been meant to convey a sense of their bearers’ honour, the opposite might be the case in the eyes of their enemies, who communicated their disagreement by means of manipulating heraldic displays and thus turning the purpose of a heraldic sign as a sign of honour, sometimes literally, on its head. Even the ‘handling’ of signs allowed for different perceptions and prompted different reactions in different contexts: a shield displayed upside-down was fundamentally honourable in the context of funerals in Frankfurt, but a grave insult in the context of a letter of defamation against Cologne, or John of Gaunt’s strife with the people of London. In late medieval cities, heraldry thus ultimately remained ‘contingent, culturally and historically specific, and open to interpretation’.⁹

Still, perceptions of heraldry as a visual expression of identity were sufficiently uniform to enable arms to perform a wide range of functions, from representing and reinforcing social status in the urban hierarchy to visualising and perpetuating social relations and political structures, or communicating, contesting, and reasserting claims to possession and power in the urban space. This uniformity of perceptions and functions is particularly remarkable from the comparative perspective of the thesis, since heraldic practices in English and German cities appear as strikingly similar overall.

Individual expressions of the shared fascination with heraldic signs differed at times, so that grants of arms to guilds were a regular occurrence in England but

⁹ Robertson and Lindfield, ‘Speaking of Arms’, p. 2.

unknown in Germany, where in turn numerous grants of municipal arms were produced that were not pursued by cities in England. Other nuances might point to larger differences between the social and political structures of English and German cities. The noticeable presence of corporate heraldry alongside burgess arms in England might be regarded as an indicator of the larger relevance of collective bodies in an environment where—despite a considerable interest in notions of nobility, chivalry, and lineage and their representation by means of heraldry—even the *probi homines* failed to create ‘dynasties’ comparable to the patriciates found in German cities. Similarly, while guilds in England and Germany were equally fond of their heraldic signs, specific contexts of their display point to the more active influence German guilds sought to exercise on urban politics: while guilds in Germany assembled under their arms to challenge the urban government and the socio-political *status quo*, by force if necessary, guilds in England were content with more symbolic battles of precedence fought by means of heraldic signs, as in London and York, for instance. Likewise, the need of Cologne and Neuss to use imperial arms as a ‘safeguard’ against a predatory lord points to the comparatively higher degree of independence enjoyed by German cities, with all the dangers that went with it. Whereas comparable displays in English cities acknowledged the ultimate source of urban authority, heraldic references to imperial or territorial lordship in German cities might also have had to pre-empt claims of other ambitious magnates, who were unchecked by a strong monarchy.

Often additional material would have been available to expand and further nuance the examples selected for discussion in the restricted space of this thesis, and there are doubtless countless further sources waiting to be discovered to confirm or refine its arguments. For example, the spread of heraldic practices down the social scale—a social history of heraldry in the city—needed to be considered by future research in more detail, analogous to scholarship on more or less affluent but nonetheless armigerous peasants.¹⁰ The same is true for the use of municipal arms in provincial towns and the role of corporate heraldry in lesser guilds, which might not be able to afford a dedicated

¹⁰ Pastoureau, *Traité*, pp. 51–52; Olivier Clottu, ‘L’héraldique paysanne en Suisse’, *Archives héraldiques suisses*, 85 (1971); Josef Klemens Stadler, ‘Bauernwappen? Ein vorläufiger Forschungsbericht’, *Blätter des bayerischen Landesvereins für Familienkunde*, 1936.

hall, for instance. Heraldic interactions between cities, their lords, and other magnates are another promising field, particularly in terms of the heraldic display of castles, residences, and ecclesiastic immunities also part of the urban space (figs 6.1 and 6.2).



Fig. 6.1: Tower of London in Charles of Orléans' *Poetry* (c. 1483), depicting banners of the English royal arms on top of the turrets. BL, Royal 16 F II, fol. 73r.



Fig. 6.2: Johannes Capistranus preaching in front of Bamberg Cathedral (c. 1470), showing arms on the battlements of the bishop's residence in the background. Historisches Museum Bamberg.

Non-heraldic signs, which have been alluded to occasionally, would have to be part of a more comprehensive history of visual culture in the late medieval city as well. The perceptions and functions of merchant marks, in relation to and independent of heraldic communication, have yet to be explored, for instance. Other examples are the para-heraldic badges and liveries worn by servants and retainers of kings, princes, and other magnates, which were a frequent cause for conflict in fourteenth- and fifteenth-

century England, especially in the urban sphere.¹¹ Likewise, the relevance of inn signs, shop signs, and street signs that embellished and structured the urban landscape (fig. 1.2) are yet to be brought back to life.¹²

The wider, European picture of heraldry in the late medieval city is still far from complete, although there is reason to believe that the perceptions and functions of heraldic signs observed in England and Germany were but one part of an urban visual culture shared across all of late medieval Europe. To name but a few counterparts to the phenomena discussed in this thesis:¹³ Weber, of course, characterises arms of Italian cities ‘as symbols of communal honour’, from banners in peace and war to town halls and bread tokens for the poor, just as Miguel Metelo de Seixas observes processes of appropriating urban space by means of municipal heraldry in Portugal.¹⁴ With regard to burgess arms, Groebner finds that townsmen in Florence conceived of their arms as *segnio della nostra antichità*,¹⁵ and evidence for similar attitudes survives from Ghent, where a woodcut series by Pieter de Kaysere proudly showed the arms of the ‘noble burghers of Ghent’, the *poorterij* (fig. 6.3).¹⁶ The same woodcut series also prominently featured the arms of Ghent’s guilds, whose heraldic banners had been seized in 1453 (fig. 1.1) due to their provocative role in urban revolts.¹⁷ Like their counterparts in England and Germany, the people of Paris, prepared elaborate heraldic displays in honour of

¹¹ CLB, pp. 319–320; Veale, *Great Red Book*, IV, pp. 88–89; Sellers, *Memorandum*, II, pp. 200–202. See also Nigel Saul, ‘The Commons and the Abolition of Badges’, *Parliamentary History*, 9.2 (1990).

¹² Martha Carlin, ‘The Senses in the Marketplace: Markets, Shops, and Shopping in Medieval Towns’, in Richard Gordon Newhauser and Constance Classen (eds), *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages* (London et al., 2014); Michael Camille, ‘At the Sign of the “Spinning Sow”: The “Other” Chartres and Images of Everyday Life of the Medieval Street’, in Axel Bolvig and Phillip G. Lindley (eds), *History and Images: Towards a New Iconology* (Turnhout, 2003); Gerhard Jaritz, ‘“Straßenbilder” des Spätmittelalters’, in Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Die Strasse: Zur Funktion und Perzeption öffentlichen Raums im späten Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2001). See also above, p. 9.

¹³ See also the works cited in the introduction, p. 16, nn. 66–74.

¹⁴ Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung*, esp. pp. 540–545; Seixas, ‘Apropriação simbólica’.

¹⁵ Groebner, *Who Are You?*, p. 47. See also Cavinato, ‘Heraldry and Self-Portrayal’.

¹⁶ See also Frederik Buylaert, Jelle De Rock and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, ‘City Portrait, Civic Body, and Commercial Printing in Sixteenth-Century Ghent’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 68.3 (2015), pp. 812–814.

¹⁷ Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca [New York]; London, 2018), p. 27; Jelle Haemers, ‘A Moody Community? Emotion and Ritual in Late Medieval Urban Revolts’, in Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (eds), *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th–16th Century)* (Turnhout, 2005), p. 73.

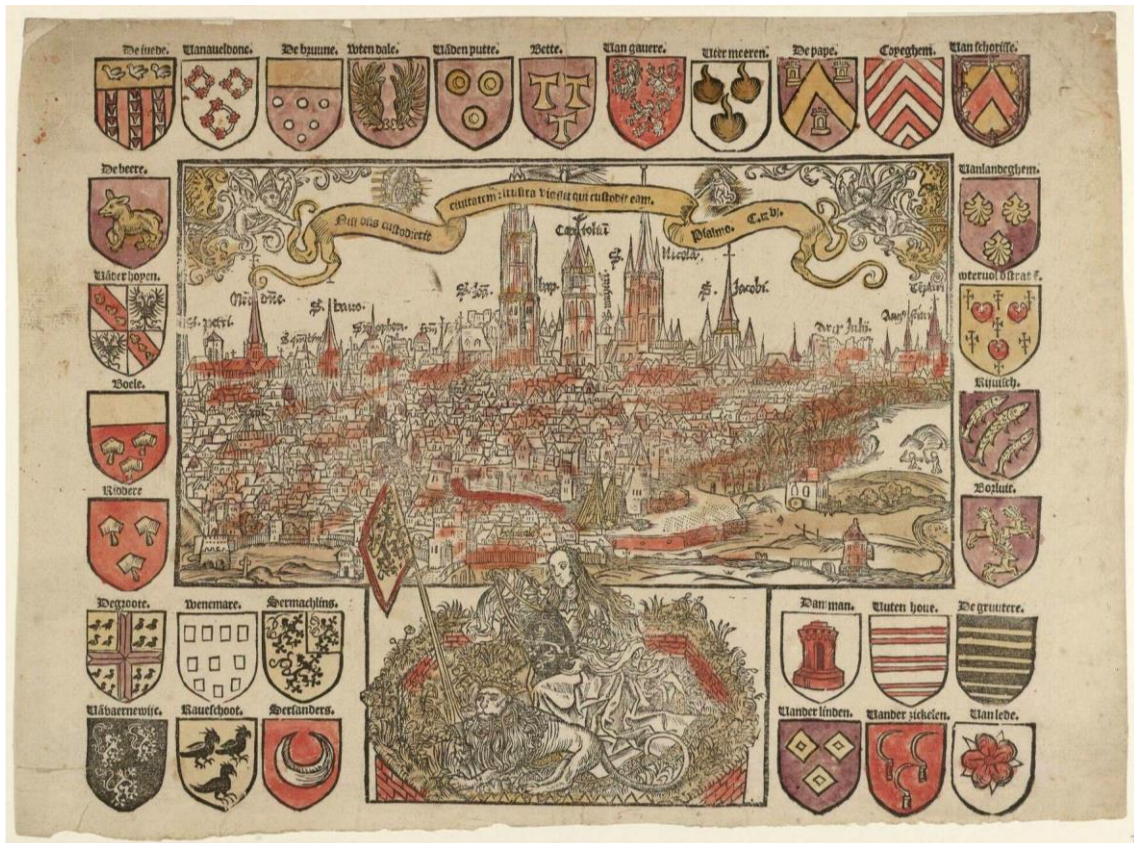


Fig. 6.3: View of Ghent by Peter de Keyser (1524), framed by the arms of families of the *poorterij*. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Prentenkabinet, BdH no. 1429.

their king on the occasion of royal entries.¹⁸ At another time, in 1408, Paris became the stage for the heraldoclastic punishment of followers of anti-pope Benedict XIII, who ‘were dressed in a tabard that bore depictions of the reversed coat of arms of Pope Luna, and shamefully and dishonourably put on a carriage’, mocked by the urban crowds.¹⁹ The same happened in Italy, where the arms of the Medici were purged from Florence after the family had been driven out of the city in 1527.²⁰ In the Low Countries, when the pretender to the English throne Perkin Warbeck travelled through Amsterdam in 1494 and presumptuously displayed the royal arms of England outside his hostel, two Englishmen loyal to Henry VII decided to ‘defile, abolish, and defame the arms, the title,

¹⁸ Lawrence McBride Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony* (Geneva, 1986), pp. 25, 34–38, 247–249.

¹⁹ Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *La chronique d’Enguerrand de Monstrelet en deux livres avec pièces justificatives 1400–1444*, ed. by L. Douët-d’Arcq (Paris, 1857), I, pp. 264–265.

²⁰ Richard C. Trexler, *Church and Community, 1200–1600: Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain* (Rome, 1987), pp. 184–186.

and the one who displayed them’, by hurling ‘dirt and other unspeakable things’ at the arms.²¹

Detailed studies of the place of heraldic communication in other European towns and cities in the later Middle Ages are poised to reveal many more such cases, proving true Weber’s claim that heraldry constituted ‘a common symbolic culture of the medieval city’.²² Future studies might even want to explore the development of these late medieval practices after the Reformation, thus enabling a diachronic perspective on the relationship between heraldic communication and the socio-political structures of the urban sphere they represented throughout the early modern period.

But perhaps perceptions and functions of heraldic signs in (urban) visual culture have changed less significantly than might expected. As a matter of fact, even in the city of the twenty-first century, heraldic signs seem to have lost little of their appeal as visual expressions of identity. Conservative MP Charles Tannock in 2010 urged the Greater London Authority to apply for a grant of municipal arms with reference to ‘our common European ancient heraldic traditions [...] which form part of our own glorious British traditions’, arguing that ‘all over western Europe (and much of the rest of the world) a coat of arms [...] is recognized [sic] as the standard mode of formal visual identity for a city’.²³ As in the later Middle Ages, this heraldic identity continues to comprise a wider and potentially ambiguous set of connotations beyond mere identification. The medieval decision to incorporate the head of St Maurice into the arms of Coburg might have been meant as an allusion to the city’s patron saint and Christian piety at the time,²⁴ and some people today still see the arms as an artifact proudly testifying to this medieval heritage of the city. Others argue that the heraldic depiction of St Maurice as a ‘moor’ perpetuates colonial attitudes and racist stereotypes, which

²¹ Jean Molinet, *Chroniques de Jean Molinet*, ed. by J.-A. Buchon (Paris, 1828), V, p. 116.

²² Weber, *Zeichen der Ordnung*, p. 456.

²³ Charles Tannock, ‘Why London Should Not Say a Farewell to Arms’, *ConservativeHome*, 2010, <<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/centreright/2010/01/why-london-should-not-say-a-farewell-to-arms.html>>.

²⁴ Rudolf Brückner, ‘Das Coburger “Mohrenkopf”-Wappen – eine lange Geschichte’, *Die Parole*, 12 (1962); Walther Heins, ‘Das Coburger Stadtwappen in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung’, *Nordfränkische Monatsblätter*, 1954.

are seen to contradict a secular, inclusive, and modern identity of the city.²⁵ At the same time, heraldry itself remains a constant reminder of European colonialism, as it has since been adopted and adapted by many now sovereign former colonial territories.²⁶ Practices and places of heraldic communication are surprisingly familiar, however: in 2012, a Nigerian newspaper reported that protesters ‘carried the Nigerian Coat of Arms turned [...] upside down to spite the government’.²⁷ As in the late medieval period, it was crucially an urban space that provided the public stage for this powerful form of visual communication.

²⁵ Ulrike Nauer, ‘Ein Zeichen der Hochachtung’, in *Franken.de*, 2018, <<https://www.infranken.de/regional/coburg/ein-zeichen-der-hochachtung;art214,3359684>>; Thomas Wagner and Lorenz Schmoll, ‘Rassismus oder Vergangenheit? Die Wörter Mohr und Neger’, *SZ Magazin*, 2015, <<https://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/gesellschaft-leben/in-der-grauzone-81487>>.

²⁶ E.g. Clive Cheesman (ed.), *The Armorial of Haiti: Symbols of Nobility in the Reign of Henry Christophe* (London, 2007); Harry Joseph Morris, ‘Heraldry in the United States of America’, *The Coat of Arms*, 11 (1970).

²⁷ Printed in Luke Onyekakeyah, *The Crawling Giant* (Bloomington [Ind.], 2013), p. 107.

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