

Forms and Functions of Emblematics in Illuminated Charters

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Introduction

- When did charters start to feature heraldic and emblematic signs and symbols? How is this kind of decoration organised?
- Which signs and symbols are we talking about?
- In what kind of acts can they be found?
- What is their function? In which way do they contribute to the concept and layout of the act?
- Who realises them? Who is responsible for their conception?

Chronology and localisation of emblematic decoration

- First occurrences of heraldry starting from the end of the 13th century
- Development of heraldic motives tied to the decoration of initials around 1350
- General diffusion of heraldic topics and introduction of portraits around 1360
- Appearance of mottoes around 1370 and development of emblematically enriched initials until c. 1450
- Decoration focussed on (but not exclusively featured by) initials. May be extended to the margins or the bottom of the act. May also decorate the first letters of formulaic phrases (Nos, Univerus, A tous, etc.) and other letters of the first line.
- Emblematic decoration apparently restricted to a certain category of charters (the most solemn ones), destined for the royal archives

The mise en signe of acts

- Initials and monograms
- Coats of arms and heraldic motives
- Supporters and mottoes
- Portraits and mise en scènes

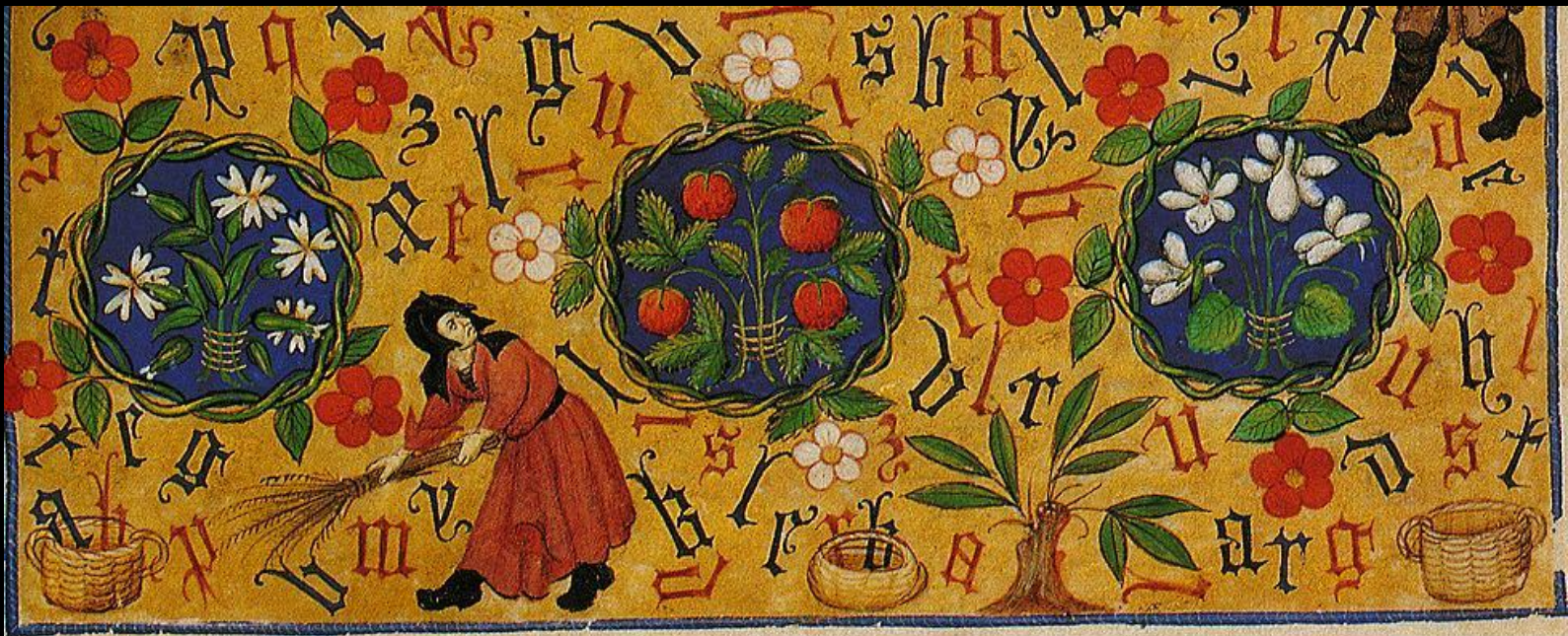
Initial and monogram

New interest in lettering from the 14th century after the decline of the monogram

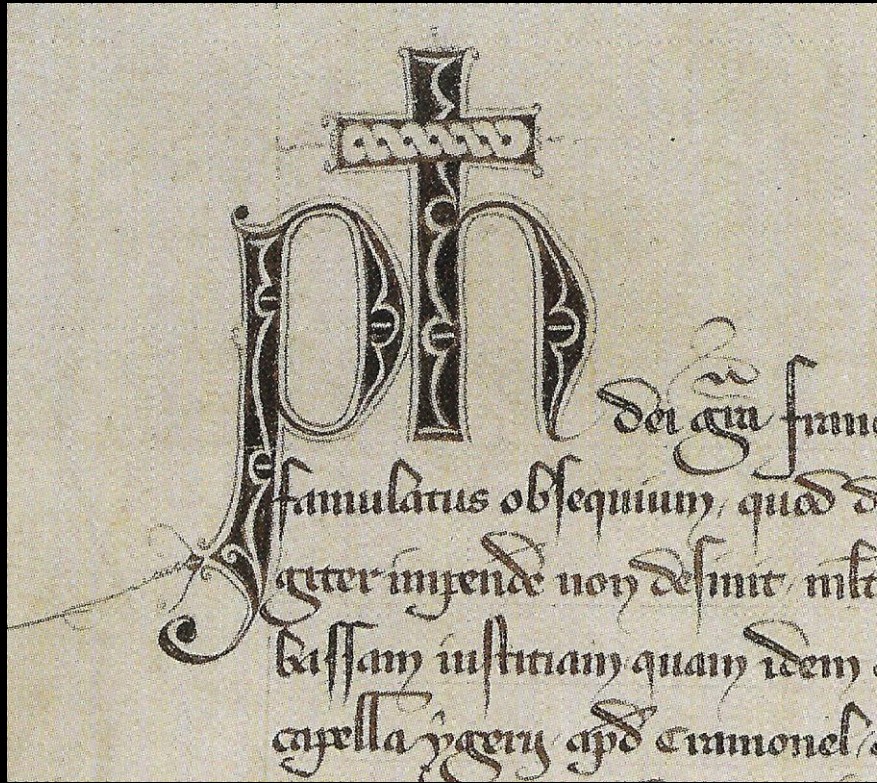
- Emblematic interest
- Symbolic interest
- Graphic and esthetic interest



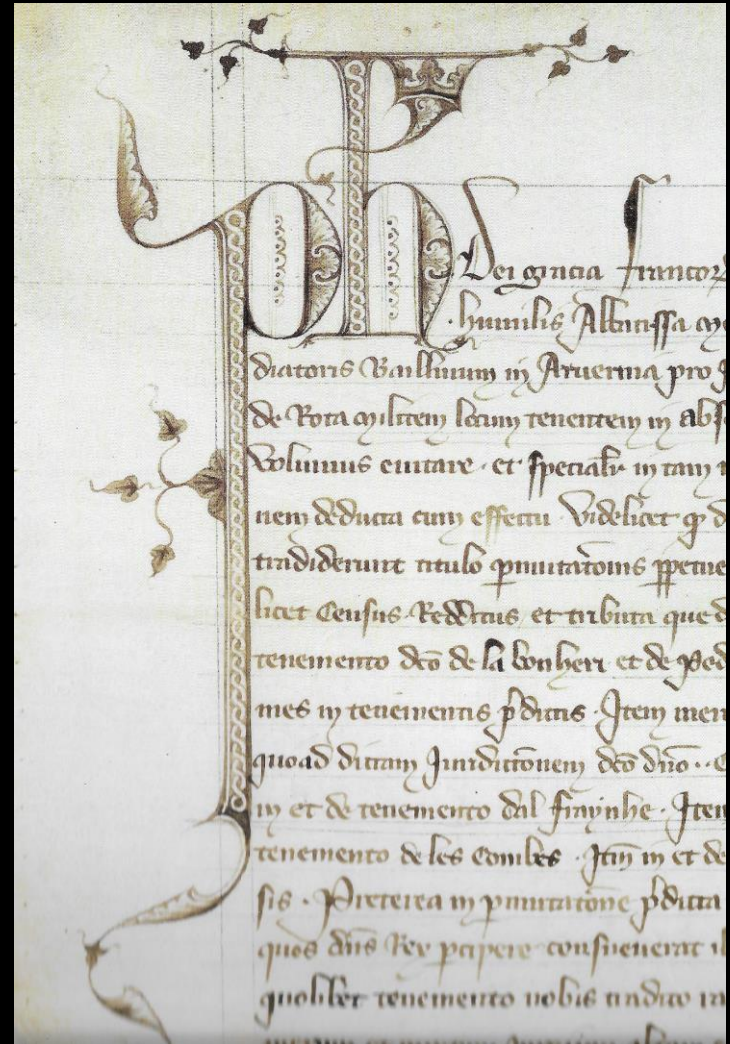
Figured and historiated letters and anthropomorphic alphabets by Giovanni De' Grassi (c. 1350) and Robinet Testard (c. 1470)



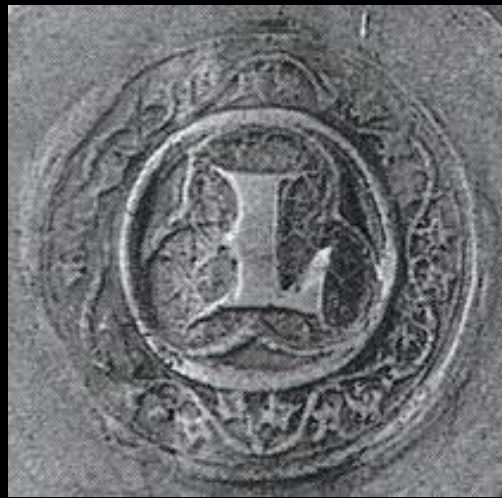
Harvesting letters; allegoric visualisation of learning and knowledge of the word of God
Book of hours of Marguerite d'Orléans



The name of the prince written in a chrismon-like style, act issued by Philipp V (the Long), 1317.

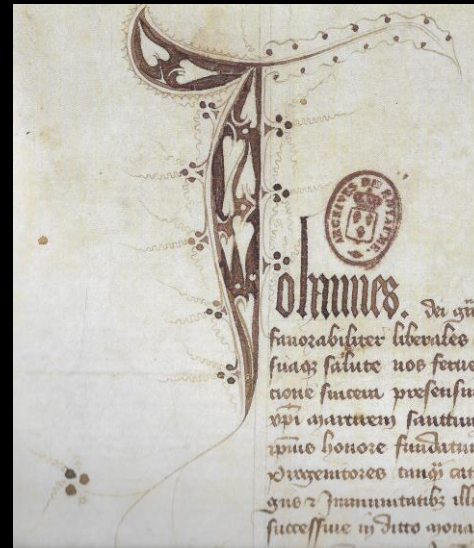
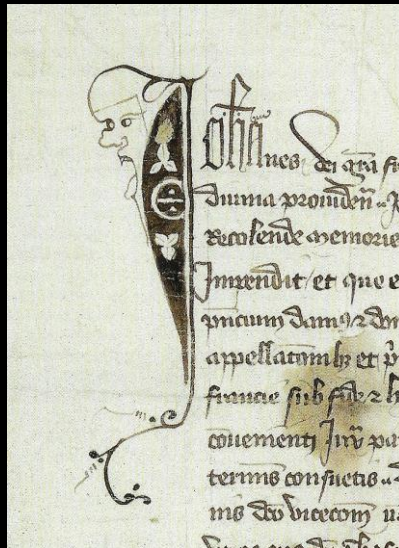


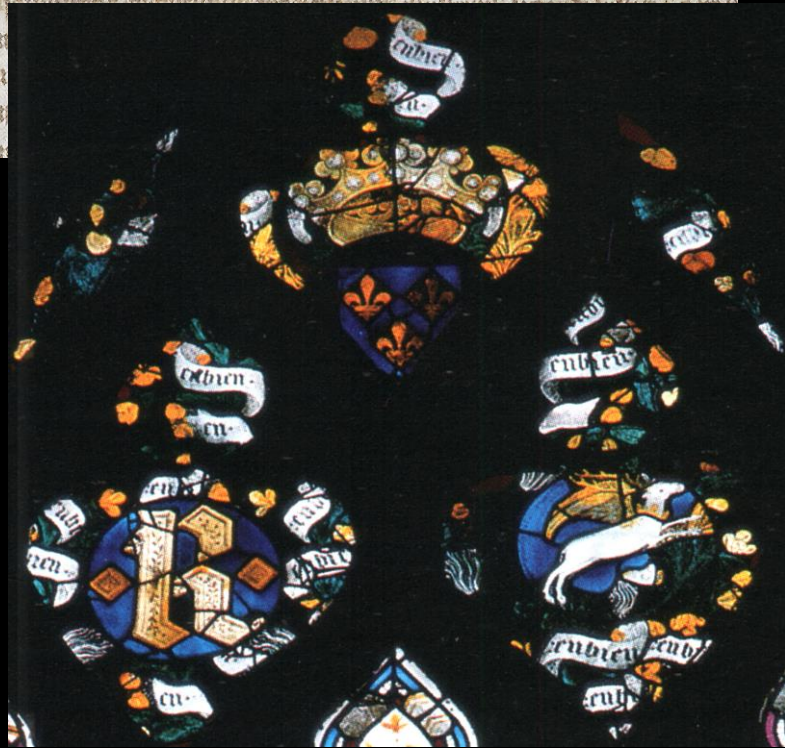
The princely initials surmounted by a crown, act from the same issuer, 1321.



Louis X the Stubborn, initial from 1317 and signet featuring the initial from 1304

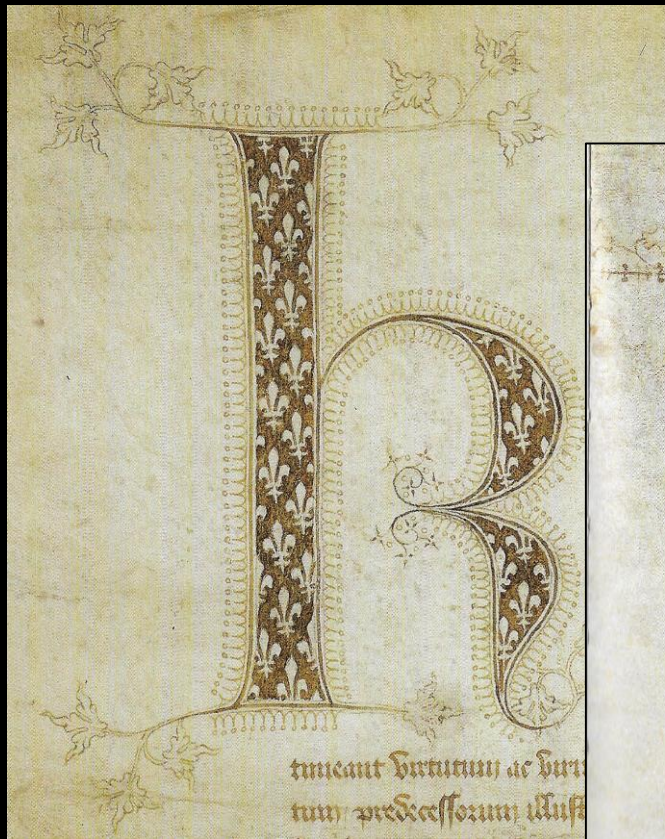
John the Good, initials from 1350 and 1362, signet from 1358 and portrait around 1350



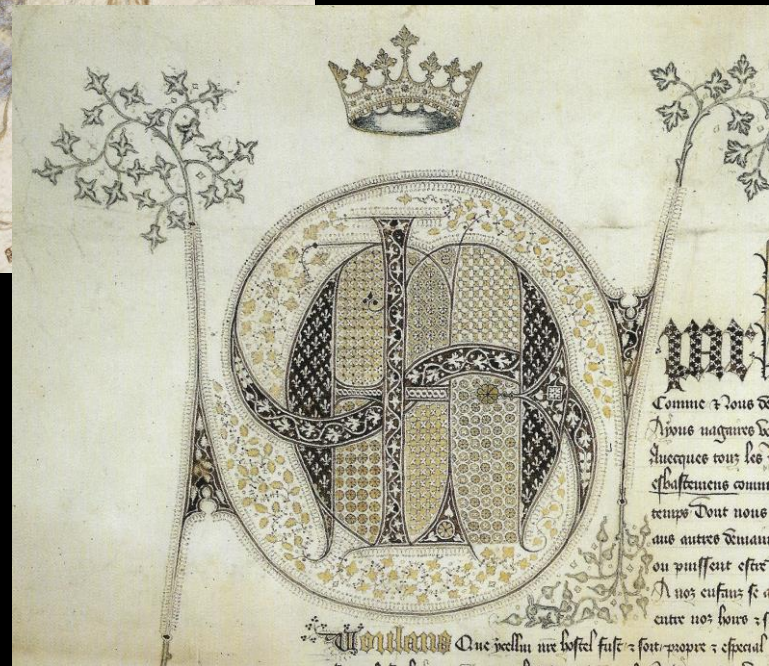
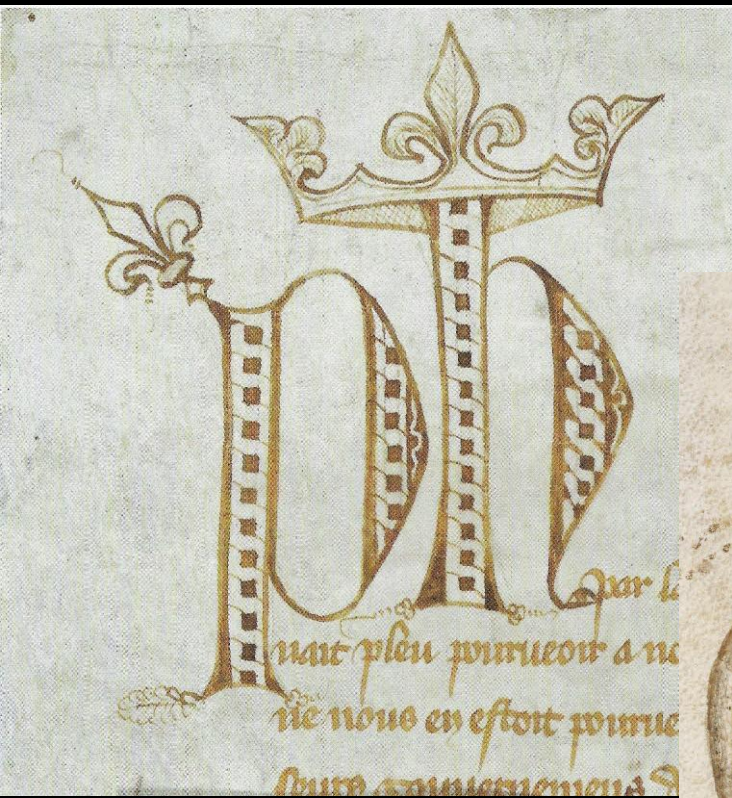


Highlighting the K in Karolus, initials from Charles V (1374) and Charles VI (1384), coronation sceptre of Charles V (1360) and glass paintings in the cathedral of Evreux (c. 1390)

Arms in initials: letter K with fleur de lis, charters from Charles V and Charles VI



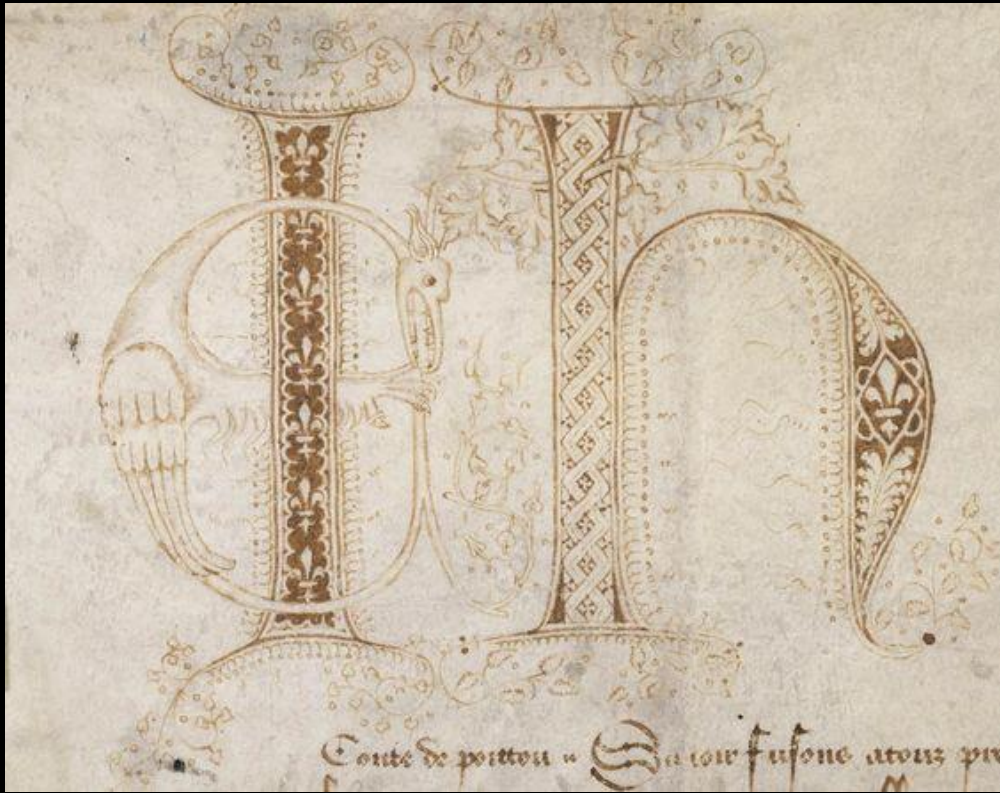
Monogram initials surmounted by crowns, a second face of the ruler, incarnation of the crown, charters from Philipp V (1343) and Charles V (1346 and 1366)



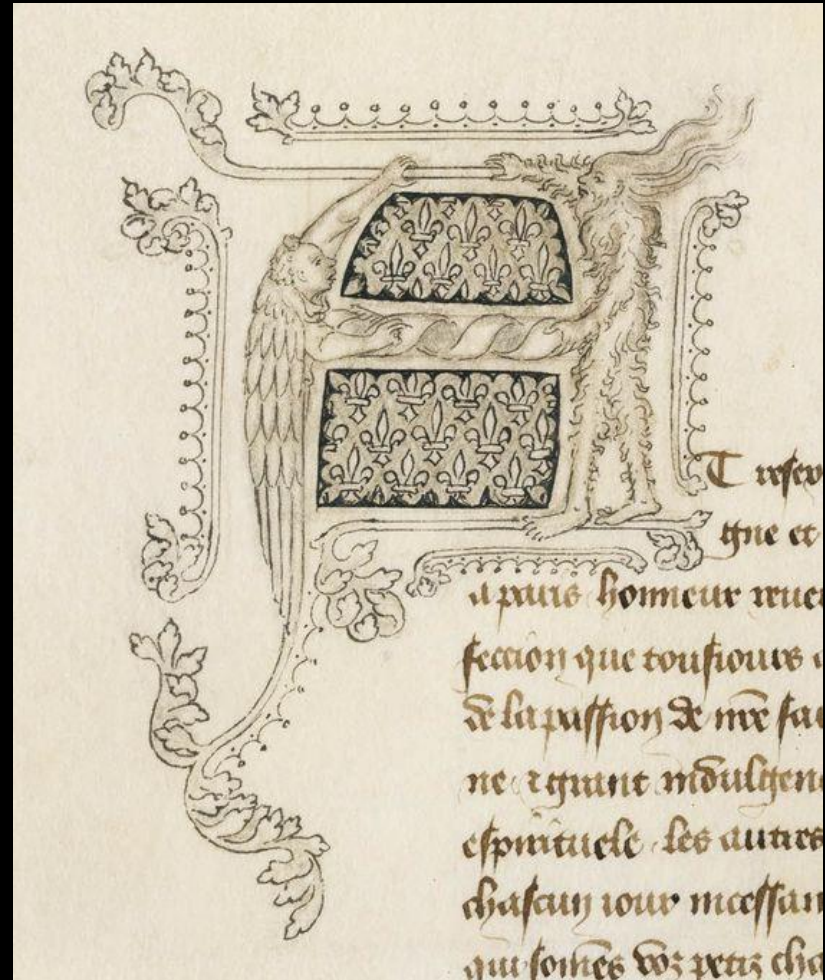
Coats of arms and heraldic motives



Initials displaying heraldic elements by adding an escutcheon, heraldic motives or coats of arms. Actes issued by Robert count of Auvergne (1295), Louis X (1314) and Charles V (1367)



Heraldic display in charters from John duke of Berry: the monogram JEHAN with I incorporating fleur de lis (differenced) and the letter A framing the ducal arms. Acts from 1386 .





tate oranspecone ⁊ diligencia dilector ⁊
toris ad plenum confidentes dicos fideles nros
morum gestores ac indu



Sanctus

et prelatibus, sacrum de re ex ...
rei tueto de Hore gemina opulencia ...
tinuos plucibus. ...



curialis
...
...
...

Promoting the initial of the sovereign, a European practice: heraldic initials from Louis the Bavarian, Henry of Castile and Henry V of England



The arms of France and d'Evreux-Navarre party per pale and second part per fess, featuring the linked chains (carbuncle) of Navarre in the first quarter of the fessy part. Charter from Blanche of Navarre from 1372



Treaty between the bishop and the chapter of Cambrai (Lille, ADN, Musée 1 4, 4G 148/2269A). Calligraphy by Barthélémy Poignare. Arms of the bishop John of Burgundy, the chapter and the city.

Mises en scènes and heraldic hierarchies. Marriage act between John of Berry and Jeanne of Boulogne (1389) and donation by Charles VI in favour of Louis of Orléans (1400)



Mastering combinations, compositions, hierarchies and heraldic borders.

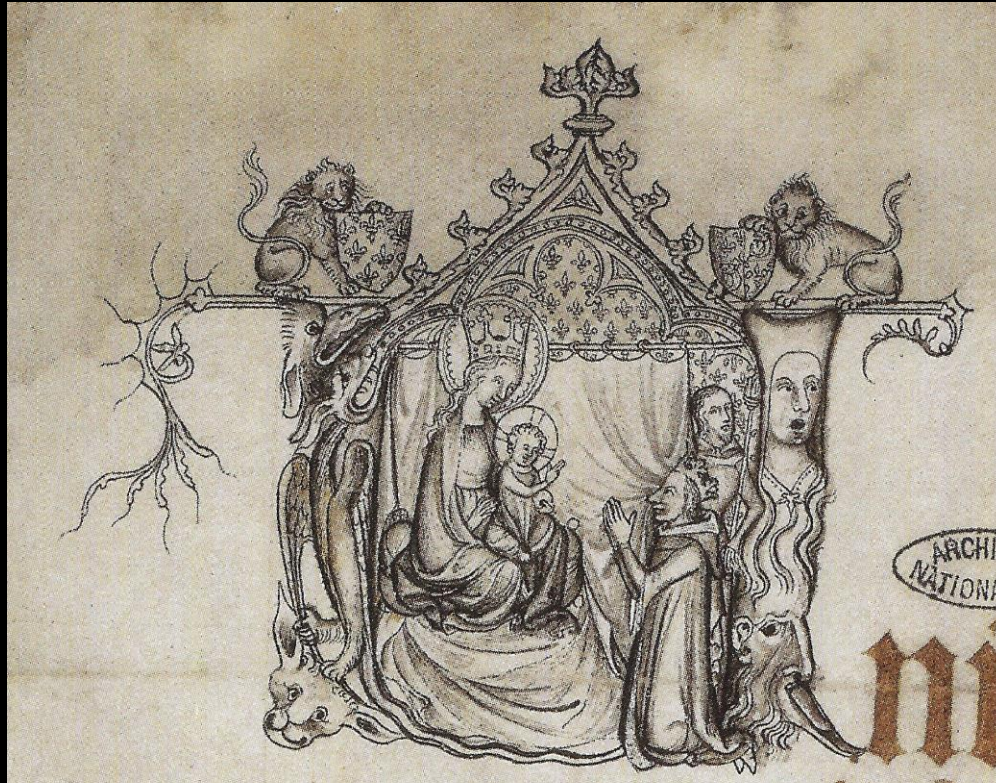
Aveu from John of Montespedon for the estate of Beaupréau (1466)



2338
913

12. xliij

Supporters



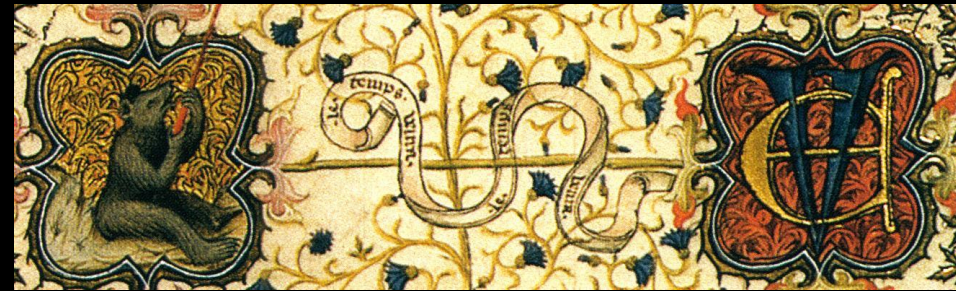
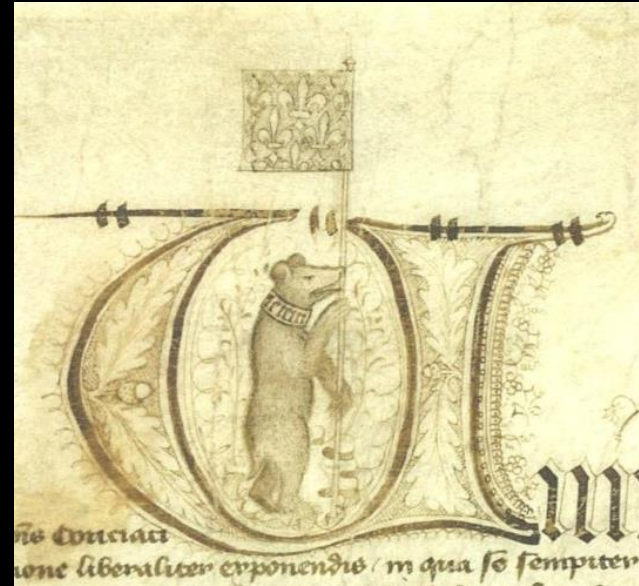
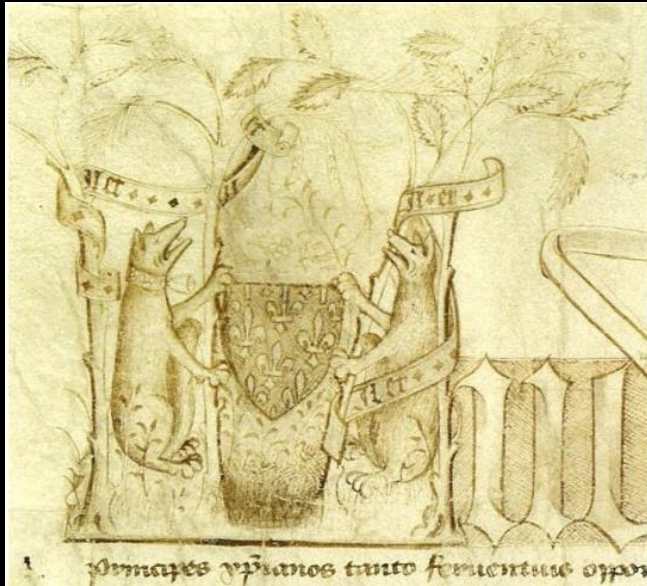
The lion, supporter and emblem of Charles V.
Charter from 1366 and manuscripts painted for the King.

The dolphin, heraldic charge and royal emblem.

Initials of Charles V from 1368 and 1374

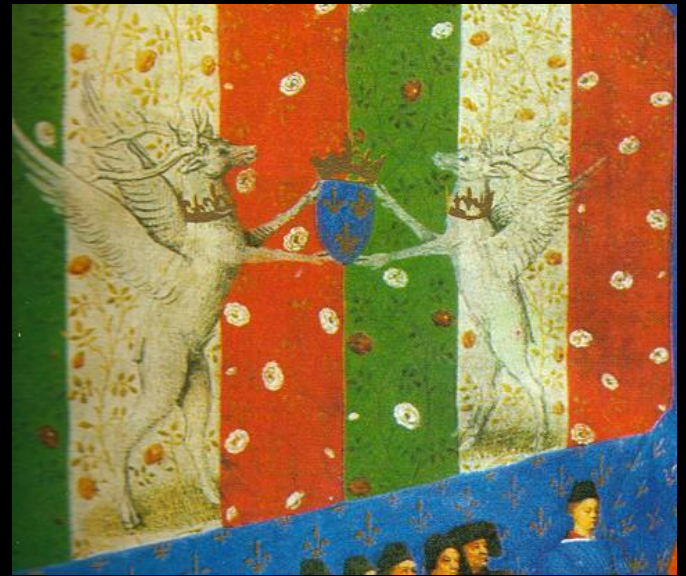


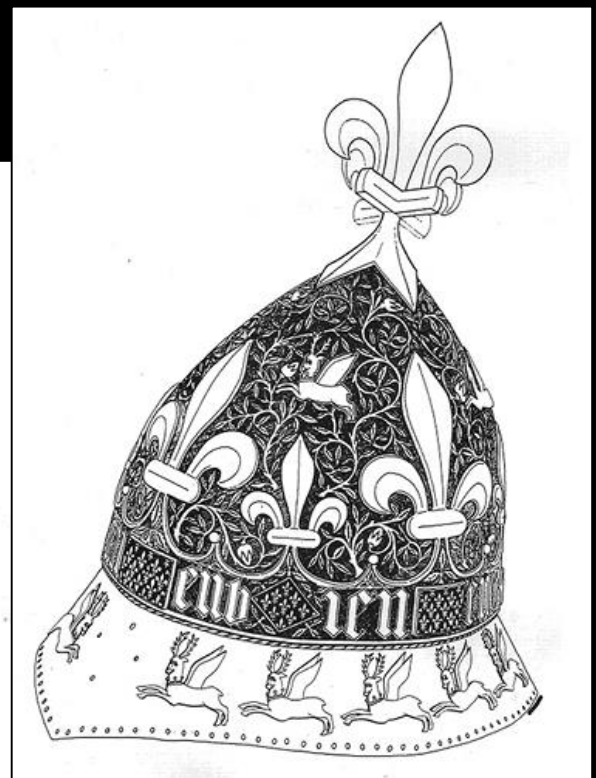
Mottoes and devices



Emblematic features relating to Louis of Orléans and John of Berry in a grant made to the sainte Chapelle of Bourges (1406).

Animal and floral devices complete the heraldic discourse according to models developed for other supports, monuments or manuscrits.





humane conditioms status motu multitudine duxerit



par La cyte
de Sarceloine de prouinc
hermeurs & penmence
Les princes sont esleues &

ROYAUME DE FRANCE
IMPRIMERIE ROYALE

PROFANE

SEPTIEME

LETTRE

DE

LA

RE

PROFANE

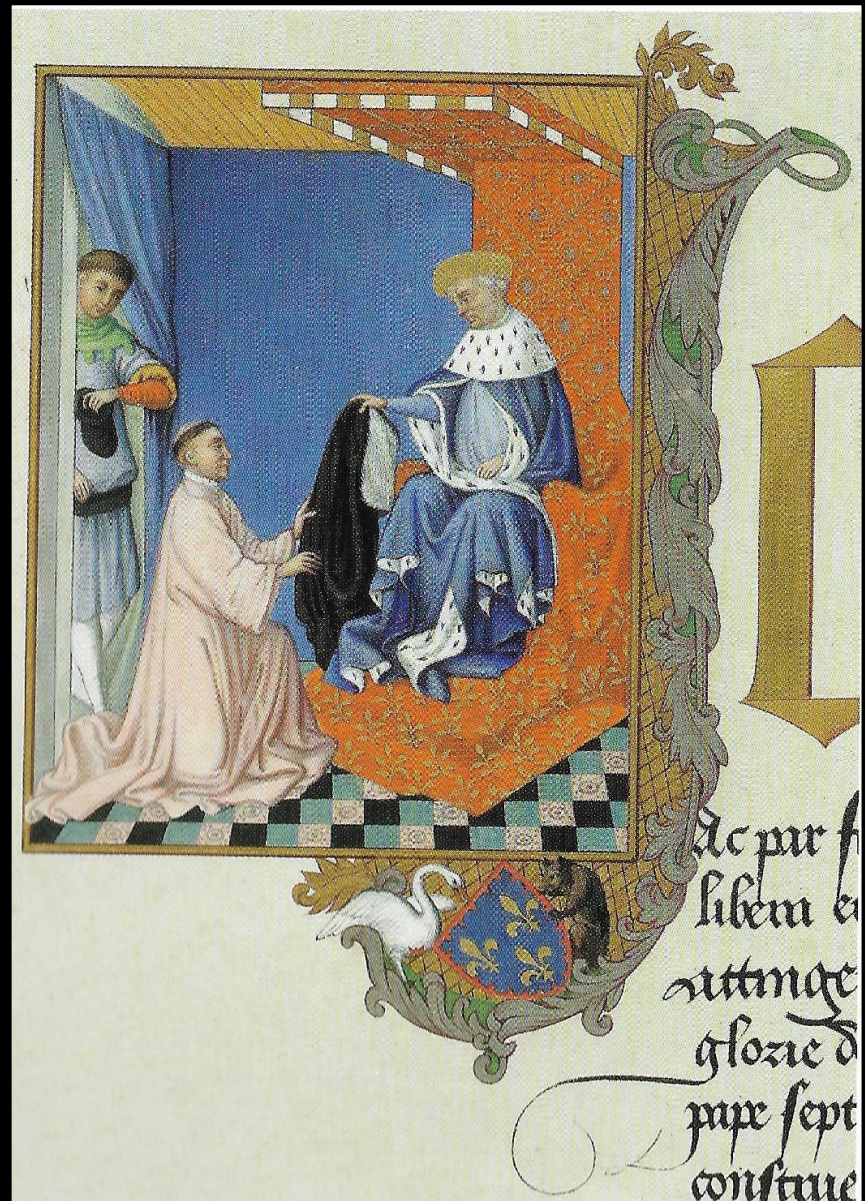
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Portrait and mises en scènes

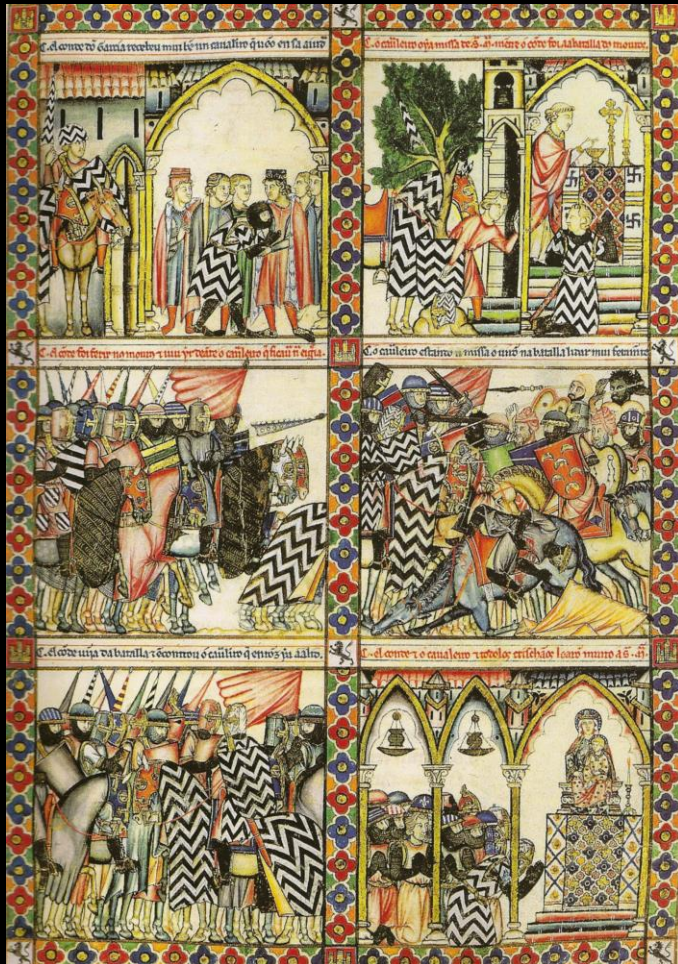


Charter and new seal of Charles V (1364).
The same depiction of royal power and religion.





Emblematic display in manuscripts



Inconspicuous and hesitant appearance: *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, c. 1260-1270 and *Psalter of Alphonse*, c. 1281-1284.



From margins and borders to historiated initials.

Bréviaire de Renaud de Bar, around 1300, Pontifical de Renaud de Bar,

Functions of emblematics in manuscripts:

- Indication of ownership
- Approbation and appropriation of the content
- Representation *in absentia*
- Commemorative or votive function
- Arms alluding to the sacred or profane text of the book



Calligraphers, illuminators or heraldic painters?



The arms of the city of Paris as executed by two artists in 1416
– the work of an illuminator or of a scribe?

- A great variety of quality
- Some renowned major artists (the brothers Limbourg, Barthélémy Poignare, Barthélémy d'Eyck) but a great number of anonymous yet sometimes highly skilled scribes
- Excellent knowledge of emblematics in all of its aspects but considerable inventiveness in its use and application
- Scenes of great complexity in terms of symbolic connotations
- An immediate link to other representations of power and of emblems (seals, monumental decoration, royal entries, sacrifices etc.)
- The potential role of notary-clerks and chancery secretaries in the conception of initials and emblematic decoration

Conclusions

Why emblematic representation in charters?

To what end emblematic initials?

- Replacing other practices of identification or of appropriation of acts
- Making the issuer speak, in absentia, through the first letter of the text
- Creating a counterpart or echo to the seal, just attached to the act and stereotypic, by a unique ontological symbol immediately present in the charter
- Remains a decoration without juridical nature but maybe adds to the publicity of the deed. Permits to establish direct ties between issuer and beneficiary
- Influencing contemporary emblematic production? Clearly heralds the advent of medals, the perfect reflection of the emblematic image of the prince