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CA Ms Arundel 64, fo 60r: Nicholas Upon, *De Studio Militari*, on the partridge.  
See page 29.







# PARTRIDGES: THE HISTORY OF A PROHIBITION

Clive Cheesman

In book 4 of his *De Studio Militari* Upton writes as follows (see **Plate 4**):

The partridge [*perdix* in both Greek and Latin] takes its name from its cry, as Isidore, Jacob and Ambrose say, because it is so malign and deceitful a bird that it steals other birds' eggs and incubates them. But its deceit does not have a good result, for the chicks, when they hear the cry of their own mother, are inspired by some natural instinct to leave her that incubates them and return to her that bore them. Now the partridge makes her nest in dense areas of thorns. When someone approaches a partridge's nest the mothers voluntarily come forth and offer themselves up to those who are coming, and feigning disability in foot or wing, as if they might be taken at once, they imitate a somewhat slow gait. By this sort of deception they lead on those who come and those they meet, so that they are drawn further away from the nests. Pliny, furthermore, says that when the male partridges fight over the females the losers are trampled on by the winners in unjust and unnatural intercourse, as their passionate frenzy forgets their sex. When partridges are captured by a fowler in his netted equipment one bird follows another, and the wretch does not realise, or retreat, pursuing the danger of the one that is already captured. At night partridges roost with their rear ends turned together. Hen partridges are so aroused by lust that they are said to conceive on scenting the male. For when they are in heat they stick their tongues out together, boiling with desire for coupling, and when they do have intercourse their coupling produces a stench. This is what Alexander says in his chapter on the partridge. Thus to bear partridges in one's arms indicates a liar or a sodomite. For that reason a certain esquire, whose name I do not specify, ennobled by my lord for his dedicated service, etc., bears three partridges in his arms, as here. For he bore *Gules three Partridges*; or, in French, *Il port de goullys trois perdrix*.

I translate from Bysshe's 1654 edition of Upton (pp. 199f.), although part of the passage will be well known from Rodney Dennys' *The Heraldic Imagination*, where the quoted version is John Blount's early sixteenth-century manuscript translation now held by the Bodleian Library.<sup>1</sup> Blount's translation of Upton has more recently been the subject of an Oxford D.Phil. thesis by Craig Walker, a copy of which I have been fortunate enough to consult.<sup>2</sup> Blount gives a considerably livelier and more readable version than the one I have just given. However it seemed to me important to establish what Upton actually wrote (or, at least, what one of the Ms traditions of his original work preserves) since here, as elsewhere, Blount's version is different in detail and possibly in substance from the original. In an appendix below I give the Latin or Greek texts of all the passages quoted in this article, so that those who wish

<sup>1</sup> Rodney Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London 1975), p. 50. Bod Ms Eng Misc d.227 fos. 175v-176r.

<sup>2</sup> Craig G. Walker, *An Edition with Introduction and Commentary of John Blount's English translation of Nicholas Upton's De Studio Militari*. 2 vols. Presented Michaelmas term, 1998. I am grateful to Patric Dickinson, Richmond Herald, for sight of this thesis.



may check my plodding translations, which – it will be immediately apparent – are intended to convey sense rather than style.

Dr Walker seems to have established that Upton's principal source for his section on birds was Thomas of Cantimpré, and it was only through the latter that he derived information from Isidore of Seville, Jacobus de Vitriaco (i.e. the Parisian doctor of theology Jacques de Vitry), St Ambrose and Pliny, the four main cited sources in the above passage.<sup>3</sup> The fifth, Alexander, would most naturally be Alexander Neckam; he is referred to by name frequently in Upton's ornithological section, and he did indeed write a work *De Naturis Rerum* in which birds are dealt with. However, the item which Upton ascribes to his work will not actually be found there. Dr Walker has suggested that Upton got confused between the works of Thomas of Cantimpré and Alexander Neckam, taking the former to be the latter, and this may be so.<sup>4</sup> There was another Alexander who wrote on birds, and specifically had something to say about partridges, namely the first-century AD miscellaneous writer Alexander of Myndus. But, tempting as it may be to wonder if he might be the source intended here, it is extremely unlikely. None of the ancient writers ascribes to this Alexander the point about female partridges sticking their tongues out when in heat; and in other ornithological passages Upton specifically uses the name Neckam.<sup>5</sup>

The lurid details of the passage quoted would certainly lead one to expect a wholesale heraldic embargo on the partridge. But the point needs to be made that what Upton recites does not record native English or even French bird lore. In this, as throughout the bestiary that largely constitutes his book 4, and in common with so many other mediaeval writers on a vast array of subjects, he was rehearsing, revising and reshaping material that derived directly or indirectly from ancient sources. As we shall see, the partridge's bad press goes back at least as far as Aristotle, and it received very few new elements since that period; what was new was frequently a misunderstanding of what had been said before, and much else was lost. Furthermore, the negative image of the partridge was originally both fuller in lurid detail and more darkly significant. Those of a classical bent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and able to consult the ancient sources for themselves, may well have been aware of this, but even they will not have understood fully the complex religious and superstitious background to the ancient account of the partridge. Most of those consulting Upton for purely heraldic reasons will not, in any case, have made the effort to look at the ancient sources.

The fact is that one of the incongruous fates undergone by classical zoological texts towards the end of the Middle Ages was to end up in synthesized and sometimes garbled form as chapters in heraldic manuals. A proper study of how this happened,

<sup>3</sup> Walker, vol. 1, pp. 80f.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, *ibid.* p. 82, referring to the similarity of Thomas's title (*De Natura Rerum*) to that of Alexander (*De Naturis Rerum*). This implies more rigidity and consistency in the titles of works circulated in ms than there was, and in many cases the two books may have had exactly the same title.

<sup>5</sup> For example, ed. Bysshe p. 192 (end of the section *De Falconibus*): 'Alexandri videlicet Neckam'.

the way that readers engaged with the process, and whether it had any real effect on the decidedly non-classical world of heraldry, would be of considerable interest; for the moment, the partridge represents an excellent opportunity for a case-study.

### Tracing back the tradition

Among the most frequently copied and disseminated texts in the English mediaeval world were bestiaries; anonymous, often illustrated compendia of data relating to beasts and birds, natural and fabulous. The manuscript tradition was studied in some detail by Montague Rhodes James in two publications for the Roxburghe Club in the 1920s;<sup>6</sup> the great palaeographer discerned four groups or families within the tradition, and sketched out the possible lines of descent from the apparent antique ancestor of the genre, an Alexandrine text referred to as the *Physiologus*, written in Greek in the imperial period (perhaps third century AD) and translated into Latin at some point by the fourth century. But the *Physiologus* was not itself of the genre that descended from it; the bestiary tradition was a thing in its own right, developing, shaping and to a certain extent adding to and subtracting from what it received from its remote ancestor.<sup>7</sup> Though it was on the one hand markedly different from the closely observed natural history of the Theophrastan tradition,<sup>8</sup> it still maintained close links with texts such as Aelian's *Historia Animalium*, a work that derived much of its content from Aristotle. The *Physiologus* therefore represents the bridge between the later bestiary tradition and ancient zoology.

Side-by-side with the bestiaries there were also texts by named authors, sharing much information with them, but copied in the conscious act of disseminating a single text rather than a body of authorless information. This strand of writing, from which derive the sources used by Nicholas Upton, naturally has its own fascinating history. But it too was to a large degree derivative: Isidore and Solinus, whom so many medieval writers used, themselves copied Pliny, who through one or more intermediaries relied heavily on Aristotle. Aristotle, therefore, stands near the head of the tradition or traditions from which much of medieval zoology derives, though it is important to understand that the purpose and role of his works (the *Historia*

<sup>6</sup> *A Peterborough Psalter and Bestiary of the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford 1921); *The Bestiary. Being a reproduction in full of the manuscript li. 4.26 in the University Library, Cambridge, with supplementary plates of other manuscripts of English origin and a preliminary study of the Latin bestiary as current in England* (Oxford 1928).

<sup>7</sup> As stoutly maintained, along with the logically separate thesis that this reworking constitutes a scientifically respectable variety of 'natural history', by Wilma George and Brunsdon Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts. Natural history in the medieval bestiary* (London 1991), esp. pp. 5-6. This is in many ways a frustrating book; e.g. p. 28: 'the question that one asks is not "Where did the author get his facts from?" (which is the literary approach of James and others) but the scientific "Are the facts accurate?".' Cf. C. Richmond, *TLS* 21 August 1992, p. 7. See now also the Aberdeen Bestiary Project website, with a useful introductory page at [www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/what.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/what.hti).

<sup>8</sup> George and Yapp, p. 1 and *passim*, treat the *Physiologus* as a work of close autopsy based on the animals of north Africa.



*Animalium*, the *De Partibus Animalium* and the *De Generatione Animalium*) were very different from those of the compendia that descended from them. Even in the Hellenistic period there was a market for simpler books of ‘facts’ about beasts that re-organized Aristotle’s systematic and thematic work into simpler-to-use animal-by-animal reference books.<sup>9</sup> This process was to continue apace in the imperial and late antique periods, a trend in which the *Physiologus* itself played a large part.<sup>10</sup>

Another point to bear in mind is that these venerable literary traditions found themselves propagated in climes quite unlike those where they had originated. While the information they contained was transmitted faithfully by clerks and copyists across Europe, the animal and bird life in the regions it was transmitted to might vary considerably. The partridge represents a case in point. The common northern European partridge, *Perdix perdix* in modern nomenclature (also called *Perdix c. cinerea* or ‘ash-grey’ – and indeed the common partridge is sometimes called the grey), was not the bird observed by Greek authors such as Aristotle. This was *Alectoris g. graeca* (otherwise called *Perdix graeca* or *saxatilis*, and today known as the rock partridge), a subspecies of which could also be found in Italy (*Alectoris r. rufa*, otherwise *Perdix* or *Caccabis rufa* or *rubra*; present in Britain as the red-legged partridge, though red legs are a feature it shares with the rock partridge).<sup>11</sup> In the main, however, ancient Italy knew a different species, possibly the same one recorded in the north of Greece – Theophrastus claimed to identify the spot on the road between Boeotia and Attica where one species gave way to the other, on the basis of their calls;<sup>12</sup> whether this was the common ‘grey’ is uncertain. Ancient writers – at least those working in certain traditions – could record different calls, and draw conclusions about different breeds. But the same does not generally hold for the descendant traditions; it is hopeless, and irrelevant for our purposes, to try and match the account that might have been given in the *Physiologus* with recorded data for the species that might have been seen in Egypt in Antiquity, or to wonder what variety Isidore might have observed in his walks around Seville.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See W. Kullmann, ‘Zoologische Sammelwerke in der Antike’ in W. Kullmann, J. Althoff and M. Asper edd., *Gattungen wissenschaftlicher Literatur in der Antike* (*Scripta Oralia* 95, Tübingen 1998), pp. 121–39; repr. in G. Wöhrle (ed.), *Biologie. Geschichte der Mathematik und der Naturwissenschaften in der Antike*, vol. I (Stuttgart 1999), pp. 181–98. On Aristotle’s zoological theory, see Kullmann, ‘Aristoteles’ wissenschaftliche Methode in seinen zoologischen Schriften’, in Wöhrle, op. cit., pp. 103–23.

<sup>10</sup> Sabine Föllinger, ‘Biologie in der Spätantike’, in Wöhrle, op. cit., pp. 253–78. On the use of these stories in ancient art, see now Harald Mielsch, *Griechische Tiergeschichten in der antiken Kunst* (*Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt* 111, Mainz 2005).

<sup>11</sup> D’Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford 1895), pp. 137f.; F. Capponi, *Ornithologia Latina*, p. 396.

<sup>12</sup> Athenaeus ix, 390a–b.

<sup>13</sup> Thus George and Yapp, p. 154. What type of partridge an Alexandrine copyist who raised his eyes from his scroll might have spotted seems moot; the barbary partridge is today found in Libya and to the west of the Sirtes, while the chukar partridge of Asia Minor could have strayed into Egypt. The latter’s ‘chukar’ call is sometimes said to be supplemented with a ‘caccaba caccaba’ that fits more closely the standard account given of the bird seen in ancient Greece.

Nonetheless, the post-antique tradition did evolve – and in part it evolved through observation and thought, though as we shall see literary form was at least as significant a factor, and the thought often ran along moralizing lines. I shall not examine all the parallel or divergent channels along which the traditions regarding the partridge ran, nor investigate all the stages of the one that led to Upton. I hope to give enough of the picture to allow it to be appreciated, and that the selectivity imposed by the compass of an article will not invalidate any conclusions ventured. To start with, let us look at Upton's main source, the thirteenth-century scholar Thomas of Cantimpré:<sup>14</sup>

The partridge takes its name from its cry. Wherefore Jacob, Ambrose and Isidore say that it is so malign and deceitful a bird that it steals other birds' eggs and hatches them. But the deceit does not have an outcome, for the chicks, when they hear the cry of their own mother, are inspired by some natural instinct to leave her that brooded over them and return to her that bore them. <But the partridge has a dry brain in comparison with other birds and consequently becomes forgetful, and indeed when she forgets her nest she loses (*perdit*) her eggs, and they are stolen from another bird and hatched.> The partridge makes her nest in dense areas of thorns. The bedding for the egg is dust. When someone approaches their nests the mothers voluntarily come forth and offer themselves up to those who are coming, and feigning disability in foot or wing, as if they might be taken at once, they imitate a somewhat slow gait. By this deception they lead on those they meet, so that they are drawn further away from the nests. When the chicks are scared of being taken, they grab up small lumps of earth with their feet and lie hidden beneath them. The mothers generally carry chicks around, so as to deceive the fathers who very often beset them in their importunate fawning. Pliny: when the males fight over the females the losers are trampled on by the winners in unjust intercourse and, as the Experimenter says, their passionate frenzy forgets their sex. The mother flies around the hunters, so that her chicks may flee and after the chicks' flight she herself flees; and then, when the fear has passed, she summons the chicks. The flesh of partridges by comparison with the other flesh of other woodland birds is very healthy. When they are captured by a fowler in his netted trap one follows another, and the wretch does not realise, or retreat, pursuing the danger of the one that is already captured, deluded by the shared fate of her colleagues. In this is clearly represented the madness of men perishing by sin, as one following the other's example they surrender to the fetters of the devil when he goes a-fowling for precious souls. Wherefore the prophet Habbakuk cries: 'He has gathered all,' he says, 'together in his snare; on this he will rejoice and be happy.' Not without reason did he say 'All', since in truth almost all is for him, because to God there remains a tiny part and, in respect of the rest, none at all. At night partridges roost with their rear ends turned together. Hen partridges are so aroused by lust that they are said to conceive by scent. For when they are in heat they stick their tongues out together, boiling with desire for coupling. When they do have intercourse their coupling produces a stench. Now the lifetime of partridges is said to extend sixteen years. What we said of partridges, about them conceiving by the wind, this we also assert for doves, ducks, peacocks and chickens. But these have sterile pregnancies, smaller and less pleasant to taste and with less fluid. Ground up with vinegar they are softened so much as to be able to pass through small rings. Pliny

<sup>14</sup> *De Natura Rerum* v, 101 (ed. H. Boese, Berlin 1973, pp. 221f.).



says that the gall bladder of partridges, with an equal quantity of honey, is good for the eyesight. The partridge does not fatten, according to Pliny.

The passage has clear and close similarities to that of Upton. Obviously it lacks the heraldic section at the end, and it has a hefty piece of sermonizing in the middle, based upon the net imagery of *Habbakuk* 1:15-17, which Upton clearly felt out of place in a heraldry book. Upton has also pruned occasional linking sentences here and there, and does not repeat the slightly doubtful comparison with the unfertilized egg-laying of other birds, or the closing remarks ascribed to Pliny. He excises, too, Thomas's explicit attribution of the comment about lustfulness making partridges 'forget their sex' to 'the Experimenter', i.e. the Persian scholar Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakarīya Rāzi (died 925), known in Latin as Rhazes.<sup>15</sup> None of these alterations has a major effect on the sense of the passage.

But one more significant difference is the presence of the sentence placed between crotchets above; this does not appear in all manuscripts of Thomas's work, and may not have been in the one used by Upton. This is unfortunate, for it completes and explains the anecdote about egg theft with which the passage leads: it turns out to be a partly aetiological tale explaining the name *perdix* on the basis of the verb *perdit* ('loses'). Etymology is often the opening gambit in ancient and medieval encyclopaedias, with alternative and inconsistent versions cheerfully reported side-by-side, as distinct from the bestiary post-*Physiologus* habit of starting with a scriptural quotation.<sup>16</sup> Here, however, the alternative accounts (*perdix* as an imitation of the bird's call, and *perdix* < *perdit*) have merged slightly, so as to create the odd impression of some sort of causal connection between the bird's malignity and its call: 'The partridge takes its name from its cry. Wherefore Jacob, Ambrose and Isidore say that it is so malign and deceitful a bird that...'. In reality, this moral assessment of the bird is the lead-in for the second etymology, from *perdit*; without this etymological pay-off, as in Upton's version, the impression of a gross *non sequitur* is only enhanced.<sup>17</sup> The effect – which may derive from someone's attempt to turn the supposedly scriptural evidence for egg theft into an encyclopaedic piece of etymology – is to leave the opening derivation of *perdix* from the bird's cry rather exposed and unsupported; and indeed, as we shall shortly see, it was a late accretion to the tradition.

As stated above, the most recent source whom Upton cites by name was not Thomas but Alexander Neckam. Dr Walker believed that Upton did not in fact use

<sup>15</sup> In fact Isidore already had *obliviscitur sexum libido praeceps* in the 7th century (see below). But as will be seen from Neckam, Solinus and Pliny, the losing bird's submission is often ascribed to unnamed informants (*aiunt* or *credunt*) and the insertion of 'as the Experimenter says' may be a late attempt to give the item some specific authority.

<sup>16</sup> George and Yapp, op. cit. p. 6: the typical pattern of an entry deriving from the *Physiologus* was a scriptural quotation, followed by (pseudo-)zoological data, followed by a moral.

<sup>17</sup> Even with the pay-off, however, the opening sentence or two seem terribly badly worded, and perhaps something is missing. It may be that *unde* ('wherefore') is to be taken in a prospective sense with the *quod* that follows: 'Jacob, Ambrose and Isidore say it [the bird's name] comes from this fact, that it is so malign and deceitful...'. If this is the case, *inde* (or *idcirco*) would perhaps have been a better word than *unde*.

Neckam's *De Naturis Rerum*; the passage in that work on partridges<sup>18</sup> nonetheless has some similarities to what Upton found in Thomas of Cantimpré. There are three consecutive sections:

(43) On the Partridge

The partridge loses her eggs, and her chicks recognize the calling of their father. Thus even a perverted custom occasionally desists from the usage of unfortunate behaviour; but when that is aroused which formerly lay dormant, the bird regains its illicit usages. It also has a raging lust. For the males mount one another, and start a fight, but the winner disgracefully corrupts the loser. Wherefore even if the breast and the upper parts make delicious eating, nature seems to avenge the insults she has received on the nether regions, which lack a delicious taste. Self-avenging nature has bereft the obscenely polluted parts of the grace of taste; though, generous with her delights, she bestows even on her enemy in his upper regions the delicious pleasure of taste.

(44) On the Partridge

It is the habit of partridges to make good the loss of their eggs at the expense of another mother, so as to put right the inconvenience of their own childlessness by the adoption of someone else's offspring. But soon, when the chicks begin to have confidence to walk, they go out into the fields with their nurse. When they have been summoned by their mother's voice they prefer to seek her that bore their eggs, although they are hatched by others in furtive incubation.

(45) On Partridges again

In general the females carry their new-born, so as to deceive the males, who very often beset them with importunate fawning. Intercourse is attended with a fight, and it is believed that the losers are subjected to sex in the stead of females. Females themselves are so aroused by lust that if a wind is scented by the males they become pregnant from the smell. Then if any man should approach where they are hatching, the mothers come forth and offer themselves up to those who are coming, and feigning disability in foot or wing, as if they might be taken at once, they imitate a somewhat slow gait. By this deception they lead on and tease those they meet, so that they are drawn further away from the nests. Nor is the chicks' desire for caution any less prompt. When they perceive that they have been spotted, they lie back down and grab up small lumps of earth with their feet, by obtaining which they are so cleverly protected as to be concealed from capture.

The ponderous style is markedly more rhetorical than that of Thomas of Cantimpré, and the entertaining account of offended nature avenging herself by making the bird's sinful parts less tasty is of course unparalleled in the later texts we have looked at. But much of the content is the same, even if organized rather differently; there are also many verbatim correspondences, especially in the third section. Neckam's sources on the partridge are clearly close relatives of those seen and used by Thomas.

If we follow the passage back to late Antiquity, however, there are interesting developments. A key source for many who write in the middle ages – it had to be name-checked even if not directly used – was the *Etymologiae* or *Origines* of Isidore, the learned seventh-century bishop of Seville. Its entry on the partridge (*Etym.* xii, 7. 3) is much briefer than those we have looked at so far, but it is still of great interest:

<sup>18</sup> *De Naturis Rerum* i 43-5 (ed. T. Wright, RS 34, London 1863, pp. 96f.).



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The partridge takes its name from its cry. It is a malign and unclean bird. For the male rises up upon the male, and its passionate frenzy makes it forget its sex. But it is so deceitful that it steals other birds' eggs and nurtures them. But the deceit does not bear fruit; when at length the chicks hear the voice of their own mother, through some natural instinct they leave her that nurtured them and return to her that bore them.

Here we have the same opening remark deriving the bird's name from its cry, but no link between it and what follows; indeed, the reference to egg theft (which might have brought in the theme of loss, and hence the etymology from *perdit*) is delayed and only appears after the description of buggery. Furthermore this appears to be the earliest source in which the bird-call etymology for *perdix* appears, and it would appear to be an idea of Isidore himself or some recent source, either as an independent observation or as a mistaken transference of a remark that originally referred to the alternative Greek name, *kakkábē*, which clearly is onomatopoeic.<sup>19</sup> When we turn to Isidore's predecessor Saint Ambrose, writing in the fourth century, there are no longer any explicit attempts at etymologizing the bird name. The passage in Ambrose is again brief and reads as follows:<sup>20</sup>

The partridge is cunning and seizes others' eggs, that is to say those of another partridge, and incubates them with her own body; but she can not achieve the fruits of her deception, for when she has brought forth her chicks she sends them away, since when they hear the voice of the one who begat them, they leave her and, out of some inborn gift and love, return to the one whom they have recognized as their true mother by the generation of eggs; meaning that the one performs the role of a nurse, the other of a parent. So she dispenses her own toil in vain, and is punished by her own deception. Whence Jeremiah has said: The partridge has called, and gathered together what she did not bear; that is, she has gathered eggs together, and has called as if laying, to effect her deception. But her work is fruitless, since in expending her labour she hatches for someone else those to whom she by the nurture of long care and attention gave life.

This passage is revealing; it has, as stated, none of the etymology of later writers, nor however any of the tales of sodomy and odorous impregnation. It concentrates on one theme only – that of egg theft – and it names its source: the prophet Jeremiah. In fact it is the most purely scriptural text of all that we will examine; after the quoted section it goes into an extended riff on the parallels between the ultimate futility of the partridge's egg theft and that of the Devil's attempt to ensnare souls. As such it stands outside the main tradition under examination; not surprisingly since the work it comes from was neither a bestiary nor an encyclopaedia but a commentary on the six days of Creation. It is rather the conduit by which an important element entered the tradition, there to remain to the very end.

However there is a problem. The quotation from Jeremiah (17:11) which forms the basis for the statement that partridges steal each other's eggs is a parable, using the partridge as an analogy for the man who gets rich unjustly. Theft certainly seems to fit this context. Hence, in the Vulgate text we have *perdix fovit quae non peperit*, 'the

<sup>19</sup> George and Yapp, pp. 153f., though they predictably record that the common grey partridge, whose call most resembles *perdix*, is not found in Spain.

<sup>20</sup> *Hexameron* vi 3, 117f-118a (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* xiv, col. 246).

partridge incubates what she did not lay'; while the New English Bible, following the Greek Septuagint, says 'The partridge gathered [*sunēgagen*] into its nest eggs which it did not lay'. But the original Hebrew makes no reference to egg theft. It states rather that the partridge incubates eggs that do not bring forth chicks, that do not 'hatch' in the perfective sense.<sup>21</sup> The point is that the partridge lays and broods in such a poorly defended spot, on the ground, that her eggs are at great risk of not hatching out; the analogy with the unjustly rich man is that riches not held as of right (*in iudicio*, in the Vulgate's words) are insecure – to trust in them is the act of a fool.

The error appears to be that of the translators of the Septuagint, confusing the Hebrew verb for brooding or incubating with the Aramaic verb for 'gathering together'. Their interpretation was influential, colouring even the Jewish commentaries on the Old Testament and the Arabic scientific tradition.<sup>22</sup> Later Bibles which went back to the Hebrew were not always misled; thus the Authorized Version commendably translates thus:

As the partridge sitteth on eggs, but hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end be a fool.

But Ambrose, Isidore and the bestiary tradition<sup>23</sup> were irredeemably sold on the idea that partridges stole each other's eggs. It had fitted, as we shall see, with the treacherous and deceptive character the bird was given in the ancient world; it fitted even more neatly the sermonizing theme of 'just desserts' found in the medieval texts.

In moving back in to the ancient world, we leave this aspect, at least, behind. But much else remains, down to the very words used, as will be seen from Solinus, whose *Res Memorabiles* was written in the early third century AD, and the great *Naturalis Historia* of the elder Pliny (who died in the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79). The Solinus passage<sup>24</sup> deals first with certain specific aspects of the partridges of Boeotia and northern Greece, and then continues:

This is particular to the Boeotian ones; now we shall run through what is common to them all, class by class. Nests are prepared by partridges with careful precaution. For they dress their refuges with thorny shrubbery, so that the beasts which plague them are warded off by harsh bits of branches. The bedding for the egg is dust and they return in secret, lest frequent toing-and-froing give an indication of the place. In general the females carry around their new born, so as to deceive the males who very often beset them in their impatient fawning. They fight over intercourse and it is believed that the losers are subjected to sex in the stead of females. The females themselves are so aroused by lust that if a wind is scented by the males they become pregnant from the smell. Then if any man should approach where they are hatching, the mothers come

<sup>21</sup> J. F. A. Sawyer, 'A note on the brooding partridge in *Jeremiah* xvii 11', *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978), pp. 324-9.

<sup>22</sup> Sawyer, p. 328.

<sup>23</sup> From early in M. R. James' Group II onwards; see George and Yapp, p. 154. It provided the standard illustration for the section; see, for instance, the pictures in Bod. Ms Bodley 764 (a group IIc ms for George and Yapp, p. 3) reproduced in R. Barber, *Bestiary* (Woodbridge 1999), p. 152, and in BL Ms Sloane 3544, in George and Yapp, p. 153.

<sup>24</sup> Solinus vii, 29-32 (ed. Mommsen 1895, pp. 60f.).



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forth and offer themselves up to those who are coming, and feigning disability in foot or wing, as if they might be taken at once, they imitate a somewhat slow gait. By this deception they lead on and tease those they meet, so that they are drawn further away from the nests. Nor is the chicks' desire for caution any less prompt. When they perceive that they have been spotted, they lie back down and grab up small lumps of earth with their feet, by obtaining which they are so cleverly protected as to be concealed from capture.

The passage is extremely close to third section in Neckam's treatment of the partridge<sup>25</sup> But it has one or two minor differences which serve to clarify things. One of these relates to the strange statement that females carry their 'new born' around – but this will become clearer still when we have looked at Pliny. The relevant passage (*Nat. Hist.* x, 100-103) is rather longer. It puts some of the behavioural data into the specific context of the reaction to the live domesticated partridge which the fowler would release as a decoy, to entice the wild birds into the open. It reads as follows:

Partridges furnish their nests with thorn and shrubbery so as to fortify them on all sides against wild beasts. They heap up a soft bedding for their eggs out of dust, and they do not brood where they lay, but lest their frequent coming and going raise suspicion they move elsewhere. The females even deceive their mates, since the latter, in their uncontrolled lust, smash their eggs so that they will not be occupied in brooding. Furthermore the males fight amongst themselves out of desire for the females; the defeated one, they say, submits to sex. Trogus says that quails and cockerels sometimes do this, but that wild and young or defeated partridges are mounted by tame ones. Their pugnacious lustfulness also leads to their capture, when the leader of the entire flock heads out to war against the fowler's decoy, and when he is taken along comes the next one, then the next and so on. Similarly, around the time of the female's conception, they are captured when they head out against the fowler's female bird to mob her and drive her away. In no other animal does lust have such an effect. If the females should stand opposite the males, they are impregnated by the air wafting from them; at such times when in heat they open their mouths wide and stick their tongues out. Even the downdraft of a male flying over will make them conceive, and often merely the sound of his cry. Their lust so outweighs their love for their offspring that when the female, brooding in secret and out of sight, becomes aware that the fowler's female bird is approaching a male, she cries out and calls him back, and otherwise makes herself available for his lust. They have such transports of rage that they will descend in a blind fury on fowlers' heads. If a fowler nears the nest, the pregnant female runs ahead of him at his feet, pretending to be clumsy or lame; then, while running or making a short flight, she falls down as if her wing or feet were broken, before setting off again, thus evading the fowler on the point of capture and frustrating his hopes, while also drawing him some distance away from the nest. When unmolested and left to her maternal duties, lying in a furrow, she will be moved by anxiety to take clods of earth with her feet and cover herself up. Partridges are thought to live up to sixteen years.

One point that Pliny resolves is the strange statement, which we encountered first in Thomas of Cantimpré, that 'mothers carry their chicks around' to avoid the importunities of the fathers, who would otherwise beset them (*eas*, i.e. the mothers). It reads as if by having the young on their backs they avoid this tiresome behaviour.

<sup>25</sup> Two mss of Neckam in fact entitle that section 'De perdicibus Solinus'; Wright, ad loc.

In Neckam, however, the hens are said, slightly obscurely, to carry not their *pullos* (chicks) but their *partus*, their ‘births’; in mammals this can refer to the foetus or embryo, but here, on the basis of Thomas’ version it would appear to mean ‘new born young’. However the object of the fathers’ importunities in Neckam is *eos*, a masculine pronoun which would seem to point not to the mothers but to the *partus*, the new born young themselves; a grotesque idea, at least if any sexual content to the fawning were intended. Anyway it is not clear why carrying young around would help the females ‘deceive’, rather than hinder, their importunate mates. Solinus, however, tellingly talks not of ‘fathers’ but of ‘males’ in general, and refers not to importunity but to impatience. With Pliny it becomes clear that Solinus was talking about the females’ habit of moving their nests around (partly) to prevent the males vandalizing them in their impatience to mate. Later writers visualized the scene differently and adjusted the wording slightly to try and give it some sense, eventually replacing *partus* (Solinus’ slightly grandiloquent choice to denote the eggs) with *pullos*, and making the mothers the subject of the male assault. In reality it was an assault on the eggs, to return the mothers to circulation as soon as possible. The females’ response was not to keep their eggs about them at all times, but to shift them and thereby keep the location of the nest a secret, from the males and from human huntsmen.

And yet this version was itself a misunderstanding on the part of Pliny or one of his sources, as we shall see when we look at the relevant Aristotelian passage. How, after all, could a mother partridge carry her eggs from one spot to another? As seen by Scaliger and Albertus Magnus in the sixteenth century, it was an impossibility and not really relevant to the stated purpose. All that was meant was that partridges did not have fixed nesting sites from year to year.<sup>26</sup>

Pliny’s one cited source was Pompeius Trogus, a historian and encyclopaedic writer of the reign of Augustus (27 BC to AD 14), and it was probably through Trogus’ works (now lost) that Pliny accessed Aristotle’s writings on natural history; it is practically certain that he was not working directly from Aristotle in this section, at any rate.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, however, it derives from a long passage in book 9 of Aristotle’s *Historia Animalium* on partridges (ix 8, 613b6 - 614a36). This passage touches on quails too, which are stated to engage in some of the partridge’s objectionable conduct.

The heavy birds, such as quails and partridges and other similar birds, do not make themselves nests (for it is of no benefit to them, not being fliers). Instead, when they have made themselves a bed of dust on level ground (for it lays eggs nowhere else) and screened it with the odd thorn branch and bits of wood as a defence against hawks and eagles, they lay and brood there. Then, when they have hatched, they immediately lead their chicks out since they cannot fly to find them food. Now both quails and partridges rest with their young brought in under their wings, as farmyard hens do. Nor do they lay and brood in the same place, lest the place be observed from their sitting there overlong. When someone chances upon the nest and goes to take it, the partridge limps along in front of him as though there for the taking, and leads him

<sup>26</sup> F. Capponi, *Le fonti del X libro della Naturalis Historia di Plinio* (Genoa 1985), p. 173.

<sup>27</sup> Capponi, *Fonti*, pp. 171-85.



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on towards herself as if he were about to catch her, until every one of her young has run off; whereupon she herself flies aloft and calls them in. Now the partridge lays no fewer than ten eggs, and often sixteen. As we have said, this bird has a malign and crafty disposition. In springtime, by calling and fighting, they pair off from the flock, each male with the female he would have. The males, on account of their lecherous nature, and to prevent the female from sitting, roll around the eggs if they find them, and smash them; but the female, to counteract this tactic, lays while running off, and often in her haste to lay she drops them wherever she chances to be, if the male is near; then, so that the broods may be preserved, she does not approach them. Also, if she is seen by a man then, just as she does in the case of the nestlings, she will lead him away from the eggs as well, appearing in front of his feet until she has drawn him off. When the female gets away and broods, the males congregate with screeches and fighting; they are known as 'widowers'. The one who is worsted in the fight attends upon the winner and is covered by him only. But if any should be overpowered by the second bird or any other, then the victor's act of covering takes place in secret. This does not happen all the time but at a certain time of the year; and likewise in the case of quails. It sometimes happens with domestic cocks too; for in the temples where they are given as offerings without females they all, quite reasonably, tread the one that has been newly given. Among partridges too the domesticated males tread the wild ones and subject them to abuse and offence. Against the partridge used as a live decoy the leader of the wild birds rushes out and opposes him as if in a fight. When he has been captured in the nets another one comes forth to meet the decoy in the same way. This, then, is what they do if it is a male; if it the calling decoy bird is female, and the lead bird goes out to oppose her, the others flock together and peck him and drive him away from the female because he is approaching her and not them. For this reason, lest any other hear his cry and assault him, he often makes his approach in silence. Sometimes when he approaches the female, according to those who have direct experience in the field, the male silences her, so as not to have to fight against the males should they hear. The partridge does not only call, but also emits a screech and other sounds. And indeed the brooding female often stands up on observing the male attending to the female decoy, and stays there in a challenge to him, so as to be trodden by him herself and distract him from the decoy. So strongly aroused are both partridges and quails in regard to mating that they descend upon the huntsmen and often settle on their heads. So much, then, for the mating and hunting of partridges and their general natural craftiness. Birds that nest on the ground, as stated above, are the quails and partridges, as well as certain other birds that fly. Also, among birds of this sort, the lark, the woodcock and the quail settle not in a tree but on the ground.

Another short passage in book 5 of the same work contains further elements of the tradition (v 5, 541a26-31):

As for partridges, if the females stand downwind of the males, they become pregnant; and often, furthermore, on hearing their calls, if they chance to be in heat, or from the downdraft of the male when they fly over them. And both the female and the male hold their mouth gaping open, and they stick their tongues out to facilitate impregnation.

Again there is much of interest here, and many of the snippets preserved in later writers, sometimes in tantalizing logical isolation, can now be seen at home and in something like their original role in a connected description. As we have seen, even parts of Pliny need correction in the light of the Aristotelian account. An interesting point, to be evaluated later, relates to the precise description of the bird's manner of

drawing away the fowler by limping around in front of him as if ‘about to be taken’ or ‘there for the taking’ (*quasi statim capi possit* in Neckam and similarly in other Latin texts). In Greek Aristotle uses the colourful verb *prokulindeîtai*, ‘she rolls around ahead’, and the adjective for ‘there for the taking’ is *epilēptos*, the verbal adjective from *epilambánō*, ‘to seize’; it has, however, been suggested that it should instead be taken as a participle, ‘seized’, with its specific sense ‘having an epileptic seizure’.<sup>28</sup> If the partridge was rolling around pretending to be in the grip of epilepsy, the falling sickness, it would make her play-acting even more dramatic; she and her brood might also seem rather less appetizing to the huntsman.

The details of Greek vocabulary prompt another interesting guess. As pointed out above, once the two derivations of the word *perdix* found in later sources (from the bird’s cry and from the Latin verb ‘to lose’) are discarded as medieval accretions, there appears to be no etymology in the original treatment of the partridge. This seems unlikely. One suggestion is that some lost etymologizing lurks in the anecdote relating to partridges becoming pregnant by their sense of smell. In later writers this is treated merely as a case of the females scenting the males; in Pliny and Aristotle ‘wind’ plays a part and the males are described as flying overhead when it happens. In my translation above the word ‘downdraft’ was used (*katapneûsai*) to make sense of this; but it has been suggested that in some early version the females were smelling the male birds’ farts, and this was what impregnated them. The Greek for ‘to fart’ is *pérdomai*, which would have been a sufficient etymological hook to hang the tale on.<sup>29</sup>

With Pliny and even more with Aristotle we are into the nitty-gritty of practical ornithology, fowling and breeding. The character detail of the partridge is no longer presented in a vacuum or solely on the basis of relationships with other partridges, but in the context of the practicalities of hunting, and particularly hunting with the domesticated decoy bird (itself called, slightly confusingly at times, the ‘hunter’: *thēreûtes*). Aristotle is also mindful at all times of the thematic, rather than species-by-species, structure of his work. The details of the bird’s frantic sexual activity, cunning protective or defensive behaviour, and aggressive tendencies read much more persuasively than in the inexpertly summarized and expertly sermonized texts of later ages.

But the matter-of-fact tone should not deceive the modern reader. One of the challenges of reading ancient literature is to get the balance right between underestimating ancient technical or intellectual sophistication and overestimating ancient participation in potentially anachronistic generic distinctions between experimental science and religiously, mythically or culturally charged beliefs. A lot of what Aristotle says, after all, does not bear much relation to what can really be observed in the partridge, whichever breed one chooses, and there is a revealing attribution of part of his report to ‘those who have direct experience’, the *émpeiroi*. There is also a lot of character assessment of the bird: we are expressly told of its

<sup>28</sup> Capponi, *Fonti*, p. 185. The verbal adjective admits of both senses.

<sup>29</sup> E. Schwentner, ‘Griechische *pérdis* “Rebhuhn”’, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschungen* 65 (1938), p. 118; Thompson, *Greek Birds*, p. 129.

‘malign and crafty disposition’ (*kakóēthes* and *panoûrgon*). We will see quite how much the account ties in with entirely non-ornithological patterns and models in the next section.

### The ancient cultural background

Whence came the malign, malodorous, deceitful set of characteristics that ancient writers ascribed to the partridge? In order to give an answer we need to take a few steps back and view the subject through a wide lens. In the process we shall stray quite far from heraldry – even further than we already have. The point is to show that the partridge was for the Greeks an avian analogue of human marginality.

Greek myth and myth-inspired literature had a rich range of imagery with which to characterize what is now known as the ‘marginal’, the elements at the dangerous or fascinating edges of society and civilization. This was a reflection of an integrative approach to living together, where differences were pointed out, stared or laughed at and attacked, or alternatively (though not necessarily inconsistently) honoured, portrayed, celebrated, and even worshipped. The marginal is a vast category stretching from kings and tyrants to beggars and cripples, political or religious outcasts and social oddities such as poets, inventors, and the excessively clever. Indeed, in Greek myth, kings and tyrants are often represented as having much in common with social outcasts and the physically deformed – and even where explicit reference to shared characteristics is lacking, structural elements in the tales told of kings and heroes assimilate them to the outcast schema.<sup>30</sup> There were others who self-marginalized: itinerant scroungers and parasites, among them those who managed to cloak their ambulatory scrounging under the guise of the offer of some occasionally required service, such as bards and heralds, were accordingly brought into the nexus.<sup>31</sup> And when a Greek society sought a figure to marginalize purposefully, in a ritual context – a ‘scapegoat’, (*pharmakos* or *katharma*), an individual chosen for expulsion in the hope that he or she will take away some *miasma* or pollution that is afflicting the community – it chose where possible a person fitting the schema; a low-born, deformed, disabled or simply ugly individual, who was driven from the city, often by stoning, or even executed in one of a number of ritually significant ways: burial alive, casting down from a great height, or (again) stoning.<sup>32</sup>

Since scapegoatings of this sort were resorted to in times of dire crisis, as when a plague or a drought or a dearth of food threatened social cohesion, an association

<sup>30</sup> See for instance D. Ogden, *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (London 1997); on poets, most recently, T. Compton, *Victim of the Muses: poet as scapegoat, warrior and hero* (Washington 2007). One does not need to accept all the instances of the pattern claimed by these scholars to see that it was very fruitful.

<sup>31</sup> The archaic Greek herald – the *keryx* – was, like his early medieval counterpart, a needy freelance figure in continual search of a household to attach himself to. With his *rhabdos* or staff (a wand of office when in employment) he was easily assimilated to the limping beggar and his walking stick. On these ‘ragged opportunists’ see E. Ivory Tylawsky, *Saturio’s Inheritance. The Greek ancestry of the Roman comic parasite* (New York 2002), chap. 1.

<sup>32</sup> R. Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and purification in early Greek religion* (Oxford 1983), pp. 24-6, 258-71; Ogden, pp. 15-23.



grew up between outcasts, hunger and disease. The archetypal scapegoat's deformities included some that were characteristic of malnourishment: one of these was kwashiorkor, also known as starvation oedema, a condition in which the feet swell painfully and cause lameness. Other disabilities such as club-feet and withered legs, even if not arising from the same causes, were drawn into the nexus of marginalizing afflictions, along with a more general class of bodily deformities; hunchbacks, twisted spines, pot bellies, baldness and anything else that could be classed as unusual, disgusting or off-putting.

Other marginal character traits developed. Though physically timid, outcasts were bolshy; good at abuse and ridicule (which of course they received as well as giving out); clever with words (though, true to their standard of physical deformity, they frequently stuttered or lisped while delivering them); cunning and deceitful. They brought their misfortunes, in other words, on themselves. They could also have great sexual appetites and abilities: to quote a Spartan proverb, 'a lame man screws the best'.<sup>33</sup>

Greek myth preserved many examples of figures who conformed to the above schema in various ways, though the literary sources in which we read of them refined, rationalized and made coherent narratives of what were presumably once roughly drawn types. Oedipus, whose name ('swollen-foot') preserves the same root found in the medical term oedema, is the best known case. In Homer, the physically disgusting, abusive and cunning Thersites is a prime example. There was even a divine outcast, Hephaestus, the smith of the gods who was flung down from the great height of Olympus and was ever afterwards laughed at for his limping, twisted frame, though – entirely in keeping – he displayed miraculous cunning and skill in his metal-work.

Animals were frequent analogues for human marginality. The wolf managed to represent both the external threat that a community wished to protect itself from, and the wild, hungry, marginal character of the archetypal scapegoat. The dog and the voracious, ultimately untameable goat (the animal used for kathartic purposes by the Hebrews and thus, by way of Tyndale's vivid translation of the Old Testament, giving us our word 'scapegoat') were both easily assimilated to the model. The analogy will have been reinforced every time a villager worked off frustration by throwing a stone at a stray mutt or a wandering feral goat.

Surprisingly, perhaps, birds too were frequently fitted into the schema. Their weak, underdeveloped legs doubtless contributed to the association. The martlet, the legless bird of heraldry, has ancient equivalents in this context: the Greek *kypselos* or sandpiper was, according to Aristotle and other writers on natural matters, footless (*ápous*), which of course necessitated lameness. Interestingly, the semi-historical figure Kypselos, who ruled the city of Corinth as tyrant from around 655 BC, is a classic example of a scapegoat ruler, first expelled as an inauspicious bastard newborn, then again in adulthood; almost certainly represented as deformed or disabled in early versions of the story, he was son of a lame woman (whose very

<sup>33</sup> *árista chōlos oîphei*: Mimnermus, frag. 21a West. As noted by Ogden, op. cit. p. 39, Aesop (a classic outcast poet – lame, ugly, repellent and abusive) was reputed to have displayed sexual prowess of heroic proportions.

name, Labda, meant 'lame').<sup>34</sup> The Greek word *kypselos* also meant a sort of beehive, perhaps because it resembled the domed, spittle-mortared mud nests that sandpipers build for themselves. This is a point of interest, for in Latin bestiaries of the medieval period it was bees that were said to be without feet (using a false etymology *apes* < privative *a* + *pes*). If the martlet of the bestiaries and then of heraldry could be shown to be in any way the descendant of the Greek sandpiper it would mean that one of the staple elements of modern heraldry really does preserve ancient superstitions and beliefs.<sup>35</sup>

But the bird that best fits the ancient schema of marginality – physically revolting, lame, cunning, malign, sexually voracious – is the partridge. As early as the time of the archaic poet Archilochus (eighth or seventh century BC) it was a byword for skulking or cowardly behaviour.<sup>36</sup> It was a bird of sufficiently ill omen for the Samians to abandon their attempted colonization of Sybaris in Southern Italy when a flock of partridges flew up noisily at their disembarkation.<sup>37</sup> Its harsh call, which gave it its alternative Greek name *kakkábē*,<sup>38</sup> resembled unfriendly laughter. In captivity they could be paired off and fought with each other (a popular sport throughout Greece);<sup>39</sup> but they needed to be goaded to pugnacity by the females and they were essentially cowardly birds – they would deliver themselves up for capture rather than fight and be slain. The Phocian variety of partridge, on the other hand, which could not fight (or indeed sing), would starve itself so as to be unfit for the table; the reference to undernourishment is a telling element in the picture.<sup>40</sup> And even in captivity they remained ridiculous – a dwarf might get a laugh by imitating them in their cages, one lowly outcast aping another.<sup>41</sup>

If it is right that the protective female partridge in Aristotle was feigning epilepsy, as discussed above, another telling association is uncovered. Epilepsy was a significant affliction for the Greeks, regarded as sacred but also highly characteristic of marginality. Goats themselves were believed to inflict it and cure it, and their bleating was said to resemble the voice of an epileptic who tries to speak during a

<sup>34</sup> Ogden, pp. 87-94.

<sup>35</sup> Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination*, p. 182, regards the martlet as 'a conventionalised compound of the swift, the swallow and the house martin'. George and Yapp, p. 177, treat the bestiaries' *merulus* and *merula* as debased and interacting versions of merlin and blackbird respectively. It is interesting that the *Tractatus de Armis* (c. 1394) says its footlessness makes the martlet (*merulus*) an appropriate charge for hangers-on of great lords – parasites in the Greek sense; see the passage quoted by Dennys loc. cit. and by Paul Fox in this journal, p. 23. In Upton, it is not footless and has no such connotation.

<sup>36</sup> Frag. 224 West (= Athenaeus ix, 388f.): *ptōssousan hōste pérdika*.

<sup>37</sup> Hegesias, quoted Athenaeus xiv, 656c.

<sup>38</sup> Athenaeus ix, 390a; also a related verb, *kakkabízein*, to cry like a partridge. The Latin equivalent (*cacabare*, eg. *Carmen de Philomela* 19: *cacabat hinc perdix*) had an unfortunate look.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson, *Glossary of Greek Birds*, p. 138, wrote that it was still practiced on Greek islands in his day.

<sup>40</sup> Aelian iv, 13; cf Athenaeus ix, 390.

<sup>41</sup> Philostorgius x, 11; an Egyptian prodigy, linked chronologically with a pigeon-toed giant from Syria.

fit.<sup>42</sup> Epileptics were called not just *epileptikoi* but *ptōmatikoi*, sufferers of the falling sickness, from *piptō* ‘to fall’; the root is, perhaps significantly, the same as that underlying *ptōssō*, the verb used for ‘to cower’ by Archilochus when describing the partridge, and *ptōchós*, a beggar (one who has fallen).

The image of the partridge fed back into mythology in a productive way. One of Hephaestus’s clearest human counterparts in myth was the craftsman Talos (also called Kalos or Kallos), nephew of another wily figure, Daedalus. Having invented the saw and the first pair of compasses, Talos threatened to outdo his uncle’s ingenuity and Daedalus, in envy, killed him by throwing him down from a roof, often specified as the roof of the temple of Athena on the Acropolis. Talos died as a result of this classic scapegoat death and his name was changed to Perdix – the Greek word for the partridge. Indeed in some accounts it had been his name all along.<sup>43</sup> In death he was honoured by a shrine on the Acropolis,<sup>44</sup> a form of heroization that in the Greek context is not at all inconsistent with his status as an exemplar of marginality and craftiness.

In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the change undergone was not a change of name but a physical one, Perdix being literally transformed into a partridge in mid-fall.<sup>45</sup> The tale follows on immediately from that of the flight made by Daedalus and his son Icarus; the latter’s fall to earth landing is observed with great *Schadenfreude* by the chatty, laughing partridge from a nearby tree. Ovid relates why. Perdix had made his inventions at the precocious age of twelve. In Arthur Golding’s 1567 translation, the result was as follows:

The finding of these things,  
The spitefull heart of Daedalus with such a malice stings  
That headlong from the holy towre of Pallas downe he thrue  
His nephew, feynning him to fall by chance, which was not true.  
But Pallas (who doth favour wits) did stay him in his fall  
And, changing him into a bird, did clad him over all  
With fethers soft amid the aire. The quicknesse of his wit  
(Which erst was swift) did shed it selfe among his wings and feete.  
And as he ‘Partrich’ hight before, so hights he partrich still;  
Yet mounteth not this bird aloft, ne seemes to have a will  
To build hir nest in tops of trees among the boughs on hie

<sup>42</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 111 (= *Moralia* 210a); Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii, 226; Callimachus frag. 75 Pfeiffer, 12-13; Ogden, *Crooked Kings* p. 128; Parker, *Miasma*, p. 234. Goats were of course the mammal counterparts to partridges in sexual voracity, a feature emphasized (as in the partridge) by tendency for domestic and undomesticated animals to couple in indiscriminating manner – a clear instance of their marginal status.

<sup>43</sup> There is a range of variant versions, among them Pausanias i, 21. 4 and 26. 4 (from Hellanicus); Apollodorus iii, 214f; Athenaeus ix, 388f (= Sophocles frag. 323 L-J, from the *Kamikioi*); Hyginus, *Fabulae* 39. In the Hellanicus account given by Pausanias, Perdix was the name of the young inventor’s mother, who killed herself on hearing of her son’s death at her brother’s hands.

<sup>44</sup> *Suda* s.v. *perdix*; *Paroemiographi Graeci* 2, 610.

<sup>45</sup> *Met.* viii, 236-59 (whence the summary by Lactantius, *Met.* viii, 3). See Franz Bömer, *Metamorphosen. Kommentar, Buch VIII-IX* (Heidelberg 1977), pp. 82-9.



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But flecketh nere the ground and layes hir eggess in hedges drie.  
And forbicause hir former fall she ay in mind doth beare,  
She ever since all lofty things doth warely shun for feare.

The quick-witted inventiveness (*ingenium velox*) shown by Perdix before his fall is the analogue of the craftiness (*panourgia*) ascribed to the partridge by Aristotle. Although Ovid has Perdix losing the *vigor* of his *ingenium* when he falls, the bird remains wary of its own safety; it has also become the chatterer, *garrula perdix* ('the cackling partrich' in Golding's version), laughing unkindly at Icarus' misfortune – typical behaviour for one who had undergone the same, significant fall from social acceptance and was now an outcast.

Perdix the nephew of Daedalus seems not to have been the only human with a partridge name and outcast characteristics to have been commemorated. A late antique poem tells the tale of a man called Perdiccas who wasted away for love of his mother; this fate was visited on him by Aphrodite, whose worship he had disdained;<sup>46</sup> Perdiccas, a name particularly common in Macedonia (whose royal dynasty's founder was so-called) was a derivation from *perdix* with the 'geminated' internal consonant characteristic of many Greek nicknames. A fascinating bronze statuette of Roman date, but probably copying a Hellenistic original, may actually show this Perdiccas. It portrays an emaciated young man, sitting on a stool, his ribs protruding in a clear image of extreme undernourishment. His right foot, however (unshod, unlike his left one), is swollen grotesquely. Two names are written on the statuette, one across the lap (*Eudamidas*) and one across the bottom of the figure's robe: *Perdik*, presumably an abbreviation for Perdix or Perdiccas.<sup>47</sup> Whether the swollen foot is meant to represent a club foot or the swollen foot of starvation oedema is not clear, but it is evident that the figure is meant to be both lame and wasting away through hunger.<sup>48</sup> The statuette is presumably a votive offering, perhaps given by someone suffering in some relevant way (the Eudamidas named on the lap?), but the occurrence of the abbreviated name *Perdik* on the robe, near the figure's feet, strongly suggests that we have an illustration of the Perdiccas who wasted away for filial love, or some other individual named for a partridge and smitten with lameness and starvation.

Further data come from Aristophanes' *Birds*, first performed in Athens in 414 BC, and from the scholia or commentaries written on it in antiquity. Two passages are relevant. At lines 766-9 the leader of the bird chorus is ironically praising the activities of an unnamed Athenian (we are only told the name of his father). A fairly literal translation of the highly allusive lines might read as follows:

If the son of Peisias wishes to betray the gates to the dishonourable, let him be a partridge, his father's chick; *chez nous* [i.e. in the kingdom of the birds] there's nothing shameful in playing the partridge.

<sup>46</sup> The so-called *Aegritudo Perdicae*, sometimes ascribed to Dracontius; Baehrens, *Poetae latini minores* (1883), vol. 5, pp. 112f.

<sup>47</sup> Gisela M. A. Richter, *Catalogue of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), no 17, pp. 32-5 with plate xiv. Found near Soissons in France and then in the collections of the Vicomte de Jessaint and Wyndham Francis Cook.

<sup>48</sup> Ogden, *Crooked Kings*, p. 37.

Whatever it was that the son of Peisias was meant to have done or planned to do (it may well have been a gross, tabloid-esque exaggeration on Aristophanes' part to call it betrayal of the city) it is fairly clear that this passage relies on some association between treachery and partridges. The general character ascribed to the bird in ancient texts could suffice to explain this, and that certainly forms the basis of the scholiast's comments on these lines. But the emphatic repetition of the metaphor with a newly minted verb for 'playing the partridge' (*ekperdikísai*) at the very end of the last line of this section of the chorus (immediately before the start of a radically different 'antode' or section of song and dance) suggests that there may be more to it than this. One would expect such positioning to mark a punch line or pay-off, some clever wordplay to hike the humour up a bit above the basic level of bird metaphors. One suggestion, first made by Jacques Le Paulmier de Grentesmesnil (Palmerius) in the seventeenth century, is that here we have an extra joke about Perdiccas, king of Macedonia, who had been Athens' ally in 421 BC but had gone over to Sparta in 417 and opposed an Athenian expeditionary force in northern Greece the following year.<sup>49</sup> As we saw above the name Perdiccas was, together with its partridge associations, traditional in the Macedonian dynasty. The 'treachery' of the contemporary King Perdiccas – whose chief export to Athens, another comic playwright of the day observed, was falsehood<sup>50</sup> – would certainly have given the partridge reference of Aristophanes some specific added bite; 'playing the partridge' may well have been understood as 'doing a Perdiccas'.<sup>51</sup>

But the partridge had other, more local resonances for Aristophanic audiences. Later on in the *Birds* a herald (*kéryx*) recites some avian nicknames used in Athens; the list starts with 'One inn-keeper, known as Partridge, who is lame' (line 1292). It is highly likely that this was, as so often in Aristophanes, an in-joke referring to a real, and doubtless much derided or hated, person in the city. According to the scholiast, this person was actually called Perdix, but all the other names in the list that follows are transparently nicknames and it is probable that this one is too. The scholiast does, however, valuably refer to a relevant proverb or cliché (*paroimía*) which chimes in perfectly with what we sketched out above as one of the partridge's leading characteristics: *tò pérdikos skélos*, the partridge's leg, said of those with weedy or delicate legs (*tōn leptopodōn*).<sup>52</sup> It seems likely that here we have an individual nicknamed 'partridge' because of his rolling limp, or perhaps – more neatly – because of his pretending to limp. It has even been proposed that he might be the Peisias of lines 766-9 whose son, in 'playing the partridge', was apparently being a 'chick off the old cock';<sup>53</sup> but this may be *too* neat.

<sup>49</sup> Thucydides v, 6. 2; 80. 2; 83. 4. The hypothesis of Palmerius was repropounded by A. Willems, *Aristophane* (Paris and Brussels 1919), vol. 2, p. 309.

<sup>50</sup> Hermippus, *Phormophoroi* (c. 425 BC) frag. 63. 8: *pseúde*.

<sup>51</sup> Doubted by N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Oxford 1995), pp. 474f., which see for much of the above.

<sup>52</sup> Scholiasts *c* & *d*; *d* also apparently preserves a fragment of Aristophanes' *Anagoras* (frag. 57) referring again to a lame partridge, identified by the scholiast with the one at *Birds* 1292.

<sup>53</sup> To adapt very slightly the Penguin translation of *toû patròs neottíon* (767). The identification is proposed by Dunbar, op. cit. p. 640.

Whatever the details of the references Aristophanes was making, all this is the sign of a living tradition of popular beliefs about the partridge, not a merely erudite, if faithfully maintained, strand of catalogue-making. That is, admittedly, to draw an extreme dichotomy; many traditions operate somewhere between the popular and the erudite, partaking of both. But it is hard to see the medieval tradition on the partridge as set out above – imperfect copying of zoological texts deriving from ancient Greek bird lore, with little new other than a mistranslated quotation from Jeremiah and a lot of sermonizing – as evidence of the partridge having any highly charged cultural significance in the Middle Ages similar to that which the bird clearly had in, say, fifth-century Athens. Even the etymological inventions seem rather weak: *perdix* from *perdit* ('she loses [*sc.* her eggs]') is nothing to what could have been done with a derivation from *perditio* or *perduellio*, perdition and treason.<sup>54</sup>

Nonetheless, some people read the bestiaries.<sup>55</sup> They did inform some people's views about the animals they described. They had *some* cultural impact, in other words; a tradition that lives in books still lives. Furthermore, for a learned and cultivated elite there was direct access to the ancient sources: Pliny's *Natural History* was available throughout the medieval period; Aristotle was read in the Greek, in England and France, from the fifteenth century onwards, and there had always been serviceable Latin translations; and by the seventeenth century Palmerius was able to offer learned, historicized interpretations of the detail of Aristophanes' partridge-based humour. The reported ability of the partridge to be impregnated by a voice or a sound seems to have impressed some renaissance artists but they took it as a positive characteristic, and used the bird as image for the Virgin in Renaissance art.<sup>56</sup> Poets, like painters, were learned men and might deploy imagery from their erudite reading: thus the Spanish poet Góngora seems picked up on the partridge's wanton proclivities, which he ascribed to the closely related francolin.<sup>57</sup> But how far and wide beyond erudite circles did such references circulate? Arthur Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* was widely read and, of course, famously used by Shakespeare. Though it is true that, on its own, the Ovid passage does not preserve much of the ugly detail about the partridge's character, here we seem to be a whisker away from the possible wider dissemination of the ancient bird lore; what, for instance, if Shakespeare had decided to incorporate, or even allude to, Ovid's tale of Perdix and his fall in one of his plays? But this did not happen. Shakespeare's one pregnant reference to the bird seems to have more to do with the appetite of one who will eat a partridge wing.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Similarly absent seem to be any connections between modern Italian *pernice* and *pernicies* or *perniciosus*.

<sup>55</sup> Though it was not perhaps a very diverse readership; George and Yapp, p. 8, could 'find no evidence that any bestiary was owned by a layman before the Reformation'.

<sup>56</sup> E. Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, mostly iconographic* (New York 1966), p. 30; Penny Howell Jolly, 'Antonello da Messina's *Saint Jerome in his study*: an iconographic analysis', *The Art Bulletin* 65. 2 (June 1983), pp. 238-53 at 250f.

<sup>57</sup> F. G. Very, 'Góngora and the partridge', *Modern Language Notes* 76 (1961), pp. 770-3.

<sup>58</sup> *Much Ado About Nothing* II, i. 151-5. See A. Thaler, 'Queen Elizabeth and Benedick's partridge wing', *Modern Language Notes* 41 (1926), pp. 527-9.



There is another problem. Evidence for early modern popular belief in certain unappealing aspects of the partridge's character and behaviour may well turn up; but unless it very specifically matches the details of the ancient accounts, it will be hard to be sure of its origins. Without going down the route of subjecting ancient and medieval ornithology to empirical assessment, one can note that not all that it has to say on the partridge is nonsense. Early modern beliefs in the partridge's lubricity, for instance, could have an independent origin.<sup>59</sup>

### Partridges in early modern English heraldry

The ancient tales about the partridge did at least make it into Upton's *De Studio Militari*. Upton himself was in no doubt that the character of the bird affected its use in heraldry; that, indeed, is the theme throughout book 4 of his work. He asserts that he saw one case where the arms certainly reflected the failings of the bearer – a man who 'for that reason', i.e., one presumes, for his inclination to sodomy, was granted *Gules three partridges* (tincture unspecified). The granting authority, he says, was 'my lord', i.e. Thomas Montagu, Earl of Salisbury, with whom Upton served at the battle of Verneuil in 1424.<sup>60</sup>

The statement is frank and straightforward enough to invite credence, but one has to wonder whether the grantee was delighted to receive such a design. The problem is that – as with textbook discussions of dishonourable abatements – one has the sense of a theme pursued without primary regard for the practicalities of enforcing usage. And the anecdotes seem a little too blithely recounted to convince. In another place Upton states that he himself granted another of Salisbury's followers the arms *Argent three ox heads sable*.<sup>61</sup> This is immediately after claiming that the meekness and mildness of the ox, and the fact that oxen are castrated, makes the bucranium a particularly good charge for a man who has been 'geldyd or maymed so in his privi partes that he was onable for generacion'; and indeed his 1424 grantee was apparently 'stryken w<sup>t</sup> A spere throughe the privi partes'. Again, one wonders whether the grantee was overjoyed at this. The 'no names, no pack-drill' policy begins to look a little convenient. Upton was fond of referring back to his service in France (it was unusual for a man of his clerical profession, and useful for the writer of a manual on chivalry), and it underlay his observations on many subjects, from the diplomatic dealings of Henry V to the appearance of the spider in Lombard heraldry;<sup>62</sup> but it may be that it was a too tempting context in which to locate unspecified supporting data.

Nonetheless even imagined evidence can persuade or influence. Heraldry possessed and consulted Upton and the manuals deriving from him. To this day the only printed edition of Upton is the one by a seventeenth-century herald, Edward

<sup>59</sup> Still less convincing is casual use of the word for a female, perhaps one of loose virtue: thus 'And for half Crown a Doxey get, But seek no more a Partridge here' (c. 1700), quoted by Very, op. cit. p. 771 from Farmer and Henley's *Slang and its Analogues* (London 1902). This could easily be an entirely free-standing woman-as-quarry metaphor.

<sup>60</sup> Ed. Bysshe, p. 200. See Walker, op. cit. (note 2 above), vol. 1, pp. 6, 11-13.

<sup>61</sup> Ed. Bysshe, pp. 132-46, 152; quotations in this paragraph from John Blount's translation, Bod Ms Eng Misc d.227, fos 142v-143r.

<sup>62</sup> Walker, vol. 1, pp. 6-8.

Bysshe. Did the partridge's unappealing character and Upton's explicit association between having the bird on your shield and being a sodomite have any impact in heraldic practice?

The short answer, to be set out in detail in Appendix C below, is that partridges do not seem to have been the subject of a particularly strong prohibition in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century heraldry. They are not of great frequency – like most of the smaller birds they are far outnumbered by eagles and other birds of prey – but they do occur, without apparent sign of embarrassment on the part of the bearer. If your name was Partridge, of course, there was a high chance you would have one in your arms; and the bird occurs even for those with other surnames.

Thus in 1549 a rising pair of brothers from Gloucestershire, Hugh and Sir Miles Partridge, were granted arms with no fewer than three partridges on the shield and one in the crest (see **Plate 5**).<sup>63</sup> The birds are described as *volant*, and nothing convincingly suggests awareness of, or at any rate reference to, the section in Upton or the other texts examined above. The only possible link is that the partridge in the crest is carrying an ear of wheat, possibly an allusion to the use of shrubbery and grass to screen their ground-level nesting sites, as reported in all the old texts. However birds are often given ears of wheat to hold, and we would scarcely be surprised to find any other bird holding one in a crest. We would, in fact, assume that the bird was carrying it to make a nest in the normal fashion; so perhaps its presence here, so far from suggesting awareness of Upton, Pliny *et al.*, may confirm the opposite. Within a year of the original grant, furthermore, Sir Miles Partridge was granted an augmentation to the arms, consisting of a gusset or pile with a sun burst on it.<sup>64</sup> An urbane figure who mixed with well-read courtiers, he seems not to have regarded it a better emendation to remove the partridges from his arms. When, a year or so later, he was implicated in a plot, attainted and sentenced to death, it would be interesting to know whether anyone drew on the treachery of the namesake bird for an unkind parallel.

Christopher Barker (Garter 1536-50), who granted these arms, also granted a very similar design to an alderman of London called Nicholas Partridge, apparently before or during 1547; again there are three partridges on the shield, though this time none in the crest.<sup>65</sup> Variations of this coat of arms and of the one granted to the brothers Hugh and Miles, recorded in the seventeenth-century 'EDN Alphabet', suggest that between them they spawned similar designs in the unofficial sphere; the imitators were evidently not put off by the associations of the partridge.<sup>66</sup>

Of course others of the same name did not receive the bird in their arms, but that is hard to regard as telling evidence. Tudor heralds did not always grant canting arms;

<sup>63</sup> CA record Mss Vincent OG 1/49; Vincent 163/15; Grants 1/334; Misc. Gts. 5/54. Below, Appendix C i.2.

<sup>64</sup> BL Ms Stowe 692 fo 78v. Below, Appendix C i.3.

<sup>65</sup> CA record Ms EDN 56/32v; Ms 'EDN Alphabet' s.v. Partridge, no 12. I number the entries in the EDN Alphabet, original hand, as 1-17; 1a and 17a are additional entries in a later hand which has also made additions to original entries throughout. Note that 1a is squeezed in *before* 1. Below, Appendix C i.1.

<sup>66</sup> CA Ms 'EDN Alphabet' s.v. Partridge nos 12 and 13 both relate to the grant to Nicholas Partridge, while nos 14 to 17a are all variants of the grants to Miles and Hugh.

and even if the client had an objection to such a design, they may have simply wished – as many grantees do today – to avoid even innocuous puns on their name. Clients can be difficult to please: William Partridge of Cirencester seems to have had two grants within six years (1561-7) from separate kings of arms, with slightly different arms and completely different crests, but not a partridge in sight.<sup>67</sup> In the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign her jeweller Assabel Partridge was granted not partridges, but popinjays, on a bend.<sup>68</sup> Seventy years later, James Partridge of Kent received no partridges in his grant from William Segar.<sup>69</sup>

Even in these cases, however, there were close variant forms in circulation that did include the supposedly prohibited bird. The 'EDN Alphabet', ancestor (direct or collateral) of so many later uncritical compendia, records versions of Assabel Partridge's arms where the birds on the bend are not popinjays but those his surname would imply.<sup>70</sup> The arms of William Partridge appear in both their granted forms, but also in a third version with partridges on the bend.<sup>71</sup>

As stated above, the heraldic partridge was not restricted to those who had the appropriate surname. Thomas Goodyer of New Windsor in Berkshire was, in 1579, granted the same crest as that of Hugh and Miles Partridge, save that the bird in his case was close, not volant.<sup>72</sup> There was some preceding history to families of this name using these arms, it seems. A much later Visitation entry from Herefordshire, showing the same crest in use by a family called Goodere, observes that they were unable to show evidence for their right to these arms, which were those of 'Goodere of Polesworth, a Knightly family in Warwickshire'.<sup>73</sup> Whether the preceding use included the crest is not clear, but the appearance of the ear of wheat can, here at least, be explained. It was a marked tendency of Tudor heralds to place ears of wheat in the mouths or feet of animals where the grantee's name terminated '-ear' or '-year'. A weak approach to design, perhaps, but in the case of the name Goodyear not without reason; the name seems generally to have been spelled without the internal y, which is, in many cases at least, the result of palatalization fostered by the preceding *d*.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> CA original grant collection; record Mss Vincent 169/186, 1 or 2.H6/61, D12/147v. Below, Appendix C i.5.

<sup>68</sup> CA record Mss Grants 1/333, F1/193, G10/55v, 2.G2/97. Below, Appendix C i.4.

<sup>69</sup> CA record Mss EDN57/329, I.24/117; Ms M2/2v. Below, Appendix C i.6.

<sup>70</sup> CA Ms 'EDN Alphabet' s.v. Partridge, nos 7-9: no 7 is annotated 'v. Mon. Westmr.', suggesting autopsy and possible assumption of the species on the basis of the man's name; but nos 8 and 9 give no such hint. The 1559 grant, complete with popinjays, is correctly noted in a later addition, no 1a.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. nos 3-5: *Chequy ar. and sa. a bend gu.* respectively plain (as in the Dalton grant), charged with three partridges, and with three escallops (as in the Harvey grant).

<sup>72</sup> CA record Ms Misc. Gts. 1/141. Below, Appendix C ii.1.

<sup>73</sup> CA record Ms K8/34v. Below, Appendix C ii.2.

<sup>74</sup> P. H. Reaney and R. M. Wilson, *Dictionary of English Surnames* (third edn., Oxford 1995), p. 199, is not entirely convincing in its attempts to ground 'Goodyear' as a separate form in an expletive, rather than a palatalized variant of Gooder(e) (derived on p. 198 from an Old English compound given name *gōd + here*, 'army'). Obviously both origins may coexist.



## THE COAT OF ARMS

But why Goodyears and Gooderes should bear a partridge is an unanswered, probably unanswerable question. In the case of almost any other charge in Tudor heraldry one would ask 'Why not?' It might have been held by some that Upton's chapter on the partridge gives a good reason why not; but this now looks very flimsy.

Until a proper study is done of Upton (and Dr Walker's work represents a very solid start on this project) it is difficult to assess how his book was likely to be received and used. It is not enough to class it as a widely disseminated heraldry manual, and assume thereby that it must have influenced the way heraldry developed in the years of its circulation. A critical edition of the Latin text, closer work on his sources and the way he used them, and some kind of comparison with heraldry in the period in which people used his book and its closest descendants, might well prompt an entirely different assessment. What we have seen of his section on the partridge, its distant origins and the way that inheritance reached him, implies one should be very cautious. If even in the case of one of the most notorious 'negative' entries in the *De Studio Militari*, the negativity can be shown to have derived from ancient sources, been less than reliably copied, and reinterpreted by erudite commentators in quite different, literary contexts, it begins to look extremely unwise to take Upton as evidence of any contemporary feeling on the charges he writes of. Evidence for that might exist, but it will have to come from quite other sources. And when it is seen that, in practice, people were no more squeamish or repelled by the idea of bearing a partridge in their arms than any other bird, the evidence will have to be very convincing if it is to relate to heraldry at all.

**Appendix A: Upton, *De studio militari* (ed. Bysshe), iv, pp. 199-200.**

This is not an edition of the text, but a critical revision of Bysshe in accordance with his principal source, CA Ms Arundel 64, fo. 60r (*A* in the apparatus). Where Bysshe's text differs from *A*, and makes sense, I have let it stand. Where it differs and makes no sense or *A* is greatly preferable I have printed *A*'s reading. Where the Baddesworth tradition (represented by CA Ms Vincent 444, pp. 47-48) has a very different reading I have included this in the apparatus too, with the siglum *B*. The somewhat unscientific aim of the exercise is to achieve a workable, translatable text on the basis of the most widely disseminated readings with as little fuss as possible.

**De Perdice**

Perdix a voce nomen habet, ut dicunt *Ysidorus, Jacobus & Ambrosius*, quod avis adeo dolosa est & fraudulenta, ut adhuc alterius ova diripiens foveat. Set ejus fraus bonum eventum non habet: Nam cum pulli proprie genetricis vocem audierint, 5 naturali quodam in[stinctu] hanc que foveat relinquunt, & ad eam que genuit (p. 200) revertuntur. Perdix enim nidum suum inter condensa spinarum loca constituit. Cum quis appropinquaverit nido perdicis, egressa sponte se matres offerunt venientibus, & simulata debilitate pedum vel alarum quasi statim capi possunt, gressus fingunt tardiores. Isto & tali mendacio sollicitant venientes aut obvios quousque a nidis 10 longius avocentur. § *Plinius* insuper dicit, quod masculis perdicibus dimicantibus pro feminis victi calcantur a victoribus injusto coitu & contra naturam, ubi obliviscitur sexum preceps libido. Perdices quando in instrumento retiali ab aucupe capiuntur una avis aliam sequitur, nec discernit misera vel retractat, sequens periculum jam captive. Perdices de nocte conversis posterioribus sedent. Feminas perdicum libido 15 sic agitat ut odore masculorum dicantur concipere; tempore enim libidinis linguis adinvicem extensis estuant pre desiderio coitus, & dum coeunt faciunt fetorem in coitu. Hec *Alexander* in ca. de perdice. Perdices ergo in Armis portare mendacem, aut sodomitam significat. Et pro eo quidam scutifer, cujus nomen non specifico, propter 20 suam strenuitatem nobilitatus per dominum meum, &c. perdices tres in Armis suis portavit, ut hic. Portavit namque TRES PERDICES IN CAMPO RUBIO & gallice sic *Il port de goullys trois perdris*.

2 dicunt *A*: dicit *B*: dicit *Bysshe* lapsu typographico pro dicit vel dixit. 3 dirupie(n)s *A*. 5 relinquunt *Bysshe*: relinquit *A*. 6 Perdix - constituit *Bysshe*, *B*: Pardix en(im) int(er) condensa spinar(um) loca co(n)stituit nidu(m) *A*. 7 egresso *A*. 8 vel p. vel a. *AB*. 9 obvias *AB*. 10 masculus *A*: masculo *B* ante corr. 13 nec dec[.]r[nit] misera vel ret'ctat *A*: nec discernit missa vel retractat *B*. 21 gewlys *A*.

**Appendix B: Other passages translated in the article.****1. Aristophanes**

a: *Birds*, 766-9.

εἰ δ' ὁ Πεισίου προδοῦναι τοῖς ἀτίμοις τὰς πύλας  
βούλεται, πέρδιξ γενέσθω, τοῦ πατρὸς νεοττίον·  
ὥς παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν ἐκπερδικίσαι.

b: *Birds*, 1292.

πέρδιξ μὲν εἷς κάπηλος ὠνομάζετο χωλός.

## 2. Aristotle

a: *Historia Animalium* v, 5 (541a26-31).

Αἱ δὲ πέρδικες ἂν κατ' ἄνεμον στῶσιν αἱ θήλειαι τῶν ἄρρένων, ἔγκυοι γίνονται · πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τῆς φωνῆς <ἀκούουσαι>, ἐὰν ὀργῶσαι τύχῳσι, καὶ ὑπερπετομένων ἐκ τοῦ καταπνεῦσαι τὸν ἄρρενα. χάσκει δὲ καὶ ἡ θήλεια καὶ ὁ ἄρρην, καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν ἔξω ἔχουσι περὶ τὴν τῆς ὀχείας ποίησιν.

b: *Historia Animalium* viii, 8 (613b6 - 614a36).

οἱ δὲ βαρεῖς τῶν ὀρνιθῶν οὐ ποιοῦνται νεοττείας (οὐ συμφέροι γὰρ μὴ πτητικοῖς οὕσιν), οἷον ὄρνυγες καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀρνέων · ἀλλ' ὅταν ποιήσωνται ἐν τῷ λείῳ κονίστραν (ἐν ἄλλῳ γὰρ τόπῳ οὐθενὶ τίκτει), ἐπηλυγασάμενοι ἄκανθάν τινα καὶ ὕλην τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἰέρακας ἔνεκα καὶ τοὺς ἀετοὺς ἀλεώρας, ἐνταῦθα τίκτουσι καὶ ἐπωάζουσιν. ἔπειτα ἐκλέψαντες εὐθὺς ἐξάγουσι τοὺς νεοττοὺς διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὴν πτήσει πορίζειν αὐτοῖς τροφήν. ἀναπαύονται δ' ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦς ἀγόμενοι τοὺς νεοττοὺς καὶ οἱ ὄρνυγες καὶ οἱ πέρδικες ὥσπερ αἱ ἀλεκτορίδες, καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τίκτουσι καὶ ἐπωάζουσιν, ἵνα μὴ τις κατανοήσῃ τὸν τόπον πλείῳ χρόνον προσεδρευόντων. ὅταν δὲ τις θηρεύῃ περιπεσὼν τῇ νεοττεῖᾳ, προκυλινδεῖται ἡ πέρδιξ τοῦ θηρεύοντος ὡς ἐπίληπτος οὖσα, καὶ ἐπισπᾶται ὡς ληψόμενον ἐφ' ἑαυτήν, ἕως ἂν διαδράσῃ τῶν νεοττῶν ἕκαστος · μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀναπτᾶσα αὐτὴ ἀνακαλεῖται πάλιν. τίκτει μὲν οὖν ὥα ὁ πέρδιξ οὐκ ἐλάττω ἢ δέκα, πολλάκις δ' ἑκκαίδεκα. ὥσπερ δ' εἴρηται, κακὴ θηρὶς τὸ ὄρνεν ἔστι καὶ πανοῦργον. τοῦ δ' ἔαρος ἐκ τῆς ἀγέλης ἐκκρίνονται δι' ὥδης καὶ μάχης κατὰ ζεύγη μετὰ θηλείας ἢν ἂν λάβῃ ἕκαστος. διὰ δὲ τὸ εἶναι ἀφροδισιαστικοί, ὅπως μὴ ἐπωάζῃ ἡ θήλεια, οἱ ἄρρενες τὰ ὥα διακυλινδοῦσι καὶ συντριβουσιν ἐὰν εὗρωσιν · ἡ δὲ θήλεια ἀντιμηχανωμένη ἀποδιδράσκουσα τίκτει, καὶ πολλάκις διὰ τὸ ὀργᾶν τεκεῖν ὅπου ἂν τύχῃ ἐκβάλλει, ἂν παρῇ ὁ ἄρρην, καὶ ὅπως σώζεται ἀθρόα οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτά. καὶ ἐὰν ὑπ' ἀνθρώπου ὀφθῇ, ὥσπερ περὶ τοὺς νεοττοὺς οὕτω καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ὦν ὑπάγει, πρὸ ποδῶν φαινομένη τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἕως ἂν ἀπαγάγῃ. ὅταν δ' ἀποδράσῃ ἐπωάζῃ, οἱ ἄρρενες κεκράγασιν καὶ μάχονται συνιόντες · καλοῦσι δὲ τούτους χήρους. ὁ δ' ἡττηθεὶς μαχόμενος ἀκολουθεῖ τῷ νικήσαντι, ὑπὸ τούτου ὀχευόμενος μόνου. ἐὰν δὲ κρατηθῇ τις ὑπὸ τοῦ δευτέρου ἢ ὁποιοῦσιν. οὗτος λάθρᾳ ὀχεύεται ὑπὸ τοῦ κρατιστεύοντος. γίνεται δὲ τοῦτο οὐκ αἰεὶ ἀλλὰ καθ' ὥραν τινὰ τοῦ ἔτους · καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρνύγων ὡσαύτως. ἐνίοτε δὲ συμπαίνει τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλεκτρονύων · ἐν μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἱεροῖς, ὅπου ἄνευ θηλειῶν ἀνάκεινται, τὸν ἀνατιθέμενον πάντες εὐλόγως ὀχεύουσιν. καὶ τῶν περδίκων δ' οἱ τιθασσοὶ τοὺς ἀγρίους πέρδικας ὀχεύουσι καὶ ἐπικορίζουσι καὶ ὑβρίζουσιν. ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν θηρευτὴν πέρδικα ὠθεῖται τῶν ἀγριῶν ὁ ἡγεμὼν ἀντιάσας ὡς μαχόμενος. τούτου δ' ἀλόντος ἐν ταῖς πηκταῖς πάλιν προσέρχεται ἄλλος ἀντιάσας τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον. ἐὰν μὲν οὖν ἄρρην ἢ ὁ θηρεύων, τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν · ἐὰν δὲ θήλεια ἢ ἡ θηρεύουσα καὶ ἄδουσα, ἀντίασῃ δ' ὁ ἡγεμὼν αὐτῇ, οἱ ἄλλοι ἀθροισθέντες τύπτουσι καὶ ἀποδιώκουσιν τοῦτον ἀπὸ τῆς θηλείας, ὅτι ἐκείνη ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτοῖς προσέρχεται. ὁ δὲ πολλάκις διὰ ταῦτα σιωπῇ προσέρχεται, ὅπως μὴ ἄλλος ἀκούσας τῆς φωνῆς ἔλθῃ μαχόμενος αὐτῷ. ἐνίοτε δὲ φασιν οἱ ἔμπειροι τὸν ἄρρην ἀποσιόντα τὴν θήλειαν κατασιγάειν,

ὅπως μὴ ἀκουσάντων τῶν ἀρρένων ἀναγκασθῇ διαμάχεσθαι πρὸς αὐτούς. οὐ μόνον δ' ἄδει ὁ πέρδιξ ἀλλὰ καὶ τριγμὸν ἀφήσι καὶ ἄλλας φωνάς. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἡ θήλεια ἐπωάζουσα ἀνίσταται ὅταν τῇ θηρευούσῃ θηλείᾳ αἰσθηται προσέχοντα τὸν ἄρρενα, καὶ ἀντιάσασα ὑπομένει, ἵν' ὀχευθῇ καὶ ἀποσπάσῃ ἀπὸ τῆς θηρευούσης. οὕτω δὲ σφόδρα καὶ οἱ πέρδικες καὶ οἱ ὄρτυγες ἐπτόνῃται περὶ τὴν ὀχείαν ὥστ' εἰς τοὺς θηρεύοντας ἐμπίπτουσι καὶ πολλάκις καθιζάνουσιν ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς. περὶ μὲν οὖν τὴν ὀχείαν καὶ θήραν τῶν περδίκων τοιαῦτα συμβαίνει καὶ περὶ τὴν ἄλλην τοῦ ἡθους πανουργίαν. νεοττεύουσι δ' ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, οἳ τε ὄρτυγες καὶ οἱ πέρδικες καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἔνιοι τῶν πτητικῶν. ἔτι δὲ τῶν τοιούτων ὁ μὲν κόρυδος καὶ ὁ σκολόπαξ καὶ ὄρτυξ ἐπὶ δένδρου οὐ καθίζουσιν ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

3. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* viii, 236-59.

Hunc miseri tumulo ponentem corpora nati  
garrula limoso prospexit ab elice perdix  
et plausit pennis testataque gaudia cantu est:  
factaque nuper avis, longum tibi, Daedale, crimen.  
namque huic tradiderat, fatorum ignara, docendam  
progeniem germana suam, natalibus actis  
bis puerum senis animi ad praecepta capacis.  
ille etiam medio spinas in pisce notatas  
traxit in exemplum ferroque incidit acuto  
perpetuos dentes et serrae repperit usum.  
primus et ex uno duo ferrea bracchia nodo  
vinxit, ut aequali spatio distantibus illis  
altera pars staret, pars altera duceret orbem.  
Daedalus invidit sacraque ex arce Minervae  
praecipitem misit, lapsum mentitus; at illum  
quae favet ingeniis excepit Pallas avemque  
reddidit et medio velavit in aere pennis.  
sed vigor ingenii quondam velocis in alas  
inque pedes abiit; nomen, quod et ante, remansit.  
non tamen haec alte volucris sua corpora tollit  
nec facit in ramis altoque cacumine nidos:  
propter humum volitat ponitque in saepibus ova  
antiquique memor metuit sublimia casus.

4. Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* x, 100-3.

Perdices spina et frutice sic muniunt recaptaculum ut contra feras abunde vallentur; ovis stragulum molle pulvere contumulant, nec in quo loco peperere incubant; ne cui frequentior conversatio suspecta sit, transferunt alio. Illae quidem et maritos suos fallunt, quoniam intemperantia libidinis frangunt earum ova ne incubando detineantur. Tunc inter se dimicant mares desiderio feminarum; victum aiunt venerem pati. [101] Id quidem et coturnices Trogus et gallinaceas aliquando, perdices vero a domitis feros et novos aut victos iniri promiscue. Capiuntur quoque pugnacitate eiusdem libidinis, contra aucupis inlicem exeunte in proelium duce totius



gregis, capto eo procedit alter ac subinde singuli. Rursus circa conceptum feminae capiuntur contra aucupum feminam exeuntes ut rixando abigant eam. [102] Nec in alio animali par opus libidinis. Si contra mares steterint feminae, aura ab his flante praegnantibus fiunt, hiantes autem exerta lingua per id tempus aestuant. Concipiunt et supervolantium adflatu, saepe voce tantum audita masculi. Adeoque vincit libido etiam fetus caritatem, ut illa furtim et in occulto incubans, cum sensit feminam aucupis accedentem ad marem, recanat revocetque et ultro praebeat se libidini. Rabie quidem tanta feruntur ut in capite aucupantium saepe caecae impetu sedeant. [103] Si ad nidum is coepit accedere, procurrit ad pedes eius feta, praegravem aut delumbem sese simulans, subitoque in procursu aut brevi aliquo volatu cadit fracta ut ala aut pedibus, procurrit iterum iam iam prensurum effugiens spemque frustrans, donec in diversum abducat a nidis. Eadem in pavore libera ac materna vacans cura in sulco resupina glaeba se terrae pedibus adprehensa operit. Perdicum vita et ad sedecim annos durare existimatur.

102. impetu: *mss* metu.

5. Solinus vii, 29-32 (ed. Mommsen, 1895, pp. 60-61).

Hoc Boeotis proprium: nam quae communia sunt omnibus, generatim persequemur. Concinnantur a perdicibus nidi munitione sollerti: spineis enim fruticibus receptus suos vestiunt, ut animalia quae infestant arceantur asperis surculorum. Ovis stragulum pulvis est atque clanculo revertuntur, ne indicium loci conversatio frequens faciat. [30] Plerumque feminae transvehunt partus, ut mares fallant, qui eos saepissime adfligunt inpatientius adulantes. Dimicantur circa conubium victosque credunt feminarum vice venerem sustinere: ipsas libido sic agitat, ut si ventus a masculis flaverit fiunt praegnantibus odore. [31] Tunc si quis hominum ubi incubant propinquavit, egressae matres venientibus sese sponte offerunt et simulata debilitate vel pedum vel alarum, quasi statim capi possint, gressus fingunt tardiores. Hoc mendacio illicitant obvios et eludunt, quoad propecti longius a nidis avocentur. [32] Nec in pullis studium segnius ad cavendum: cum visos se persentiscunt, resupinati glebularum pedibus attollunt, quarum obtentu tam calide proteguntur, ut lateant deprehensi.

6. Ambrosius, *Hexaemeron* vi 3, 117f-118a (Migne, *PL* xiv, col. 246c-d).

Perdicem astutam quae aliena ova diripiat, hoc est, perdicis alterius, et corpore foveat suo: sed fraudis suae fructum habere non posse; quia cum eduxerit pullos suos, amittit eos; quia ubi vocem ejus audierint quae ova generavit, relicta ea ad illam se naturali quodam munere et amore conferunt, quam veram sibi matrem ovorum generatione cognoverint; significantes hanc nutricis fungi officio, illam parentis. Itaque incassum proprios fundit labores, ac fraudis suae mulctatur. Unde et Hieremias ait: Clamavit perdix, et congregavit quae non peperit; id est, ova congregavit, et clamavit quasi ovans suae fraudis effectum. Sed ludit operam; quia impenso labore alii educit, quos ipsa diuturnae fotu sedulitatis animaverit.

7. Isidore, *Etymologiae* xii, 7. 63.

Perdix de voce nomen habet, avis dolosa atque immunda; nam masculus in masculum

insurgit, et obliviscitur sexum libido praeceps. Adeo autem fraudulenta, ut alteri ova diripiens foveat; sed fraus fructum non habet; denique dum pulli propriae vocem geneticis audierint, naturali quodam instinctu hanc quae fovit relinquunt, et ad eandem quae genuit revertuntur.

8. Alexander Neckam, *De Naturis Rerum* i 43-5 (ed. T. Wright, RS 34, 1863, pp. 96f.).

#### De Perdice

Perdix ova perdit, et clamorem patris pulli ejus agnoscunt. Sic et perversa consuetudo nonnunquam ab usu infelicitum operum desistit, sed cum excitatur quae prius erat sopita, usus illiciti ad ipsam revertuntur. In hac etiam libido flagitiosa reperitur. Insurgunt enim in se masculi, et certamen ineunt, sed victum victor ignominiose commaculat. Unde etsi pectus cum superiori regione esui delicias ministret, natura injurias suas ulcisci videtur in partes inferiores, quae sapore destituuntur delicioso. Partes indecenter pollutas saporis gratia destituit sui ultrix natura, quae deliciarum suarum prodiga, etiam hosti suo in superioribus partibus deliciosam saporis jocunditatem.

#### De Perdice

Perdicibus mos est ova perdita per alterius matris damna sarcire, ut adoptione alienae sobolis incommoda suae orbitatis reparent. Sed mox ut nati ceperint fiduciam habere ambulandi, ad campos exeunt cum nutrice. Qui ut materna voce commoniti, ovorum suorum potius geneticem petunt, quamvis ab aliis furtivis fotibus educuntur.

#### Item de perdicibus

Plerumque foeminae trasvehunt partus, ut mares fallant, qui eos saepissime affligunt impatientius adulantes. Dimicatur circa connubium, victos credunt foeminarum vice venere sustinere. Ipsas libido sic agitat, ut si ventus a masculis flaverit, fiant praegnantem odore. Tunc si quis hominum ubi incubant propinquabit, egressae matres venientibus sese sponte offerunt, et simulata debilitate vel pedum vel alarum, quasi statim capi possint, gressus fingunt tardiores. Hoc mendacio sollicitant obvios et eludunt, quoad propecti longius a nidis avocentur. Nec in pullis studium segnius ad cavendum. Cum visos se persentiscunt, resupinati glebulas pedibus attollunt, quarum obtentu tam callide proteguntur ut lateant deprehensi.

9. Thomas Cantimpratensis, *Liber de Natura Rerum* v 101 (ed. Boese, 1973, pp. 221f.).

#### De perdicibus.

Perdix de voce nomen habet. Unde dicunt Iacobus, Ambrosius, Ysidorus, quod avis adeo dolosa et fraudulenta est, ut alterius ova diripiens foveat. Sed fraus eventum non habet. Nam cum pulli proprie geneticis vocem audierint, naturali quodam instinctu hanc quae fovit relinquunt et ad eam quae genuit revertuntur. Habet autem perdix siccum cerebrum pre aliis avibus et per consequens fit obliosa, et idem oblita nidi sui perdit ova sua, et praeipiuntur ab alia atque foventur. Perdix nidum suum inter condensa spinarum loca constituit. Ovis stragulum pulvis est. Cum quis appropinquaverit

earum nidis, egresse matres se sponte offerunt venientibus et simulata debilitate vel pedum vel alarum quasi statim capi possint gressus fingunt tardiores. Hoc mendatio sollicitant obvios, quoadusque a nidis longius avocentur. Pulli cum se deprehendi metuerint, glebulas pedibus attollentes sub eis latentes absconduntur. Plerumque matres pullos transvehunt, ut patres fallant, qui eas sepiissime affligunt importunias adulantes. Plinius: Masculis dimicantibus pro feminis victi calcantur a victoribus iniusto coitu et, ut dicit Experimentator, obliviscitur sexum libido preceps. Mater volat in circuitu venatorum, quousue fugiant pulli sui et post fugam pullorum fugit et ipsa; et tunc sublato timore vocat pullos. Carnes perdicum pre aliis aliarum avium silvestrium carnibus sanissime sunt. Quando in gurgustio retiali ab aucupe capiuntur, una sequitur aliam nec discernit misera vel retractat sequens periculum iam captive sociarum delusa consortio. In quo evidenter ostenditur insania pereuntium hominum per peccata, dum unus exemplo alterius in vinculum cedunt dyaboli pretiosas animas aucupantis. Unde Abacuc propheta clamat: Totum, inquit, congregavit in reti suo; super hoc letabitur et exultabit. Non sine ratione 'totum' dixit, quia re vera fere totum in eo, quod minima et respectu relique fere nulla pars deo manet. Perdices de nocte conversis posterioribus sedent. Feminas perdicum libido sic agitat, ut odore dicantur concipere. Tempore enim libidinis linguis ad invicem extentis estuant pre desiderio coitus. Dum coeunt, faciunt fetorem in coitu. Perdicum autem etas ad sedecim annos durare dicitur. Quod diximus de perdicibus, scilicet quod a vento concipiunt, hoc et de columbis, anseribus, pavonibus et gallinis asserimus. Sed harum fetus steriles sunt, minores et minus iocundi saporis et magis humidi. Aceto macerati in tantum emolliuntur, ut per anulos transire possint. Fel perdicum cum melle Plinius equo pondere prodesse dixit ad oculorum claritatem. Perdix non pinguescit testante Plinio.

### Appendix C. Heraldic partridges in the Visitation and Old Grants period.

**I.** The following grantees of arms called Partridge are recorded from the period known as that of 'old grants', i.e. prior to the Earl Marshal's warrant of 1673.

**1.** Nicholas Partridge, of London. Granted by Barker: notes of the grant at CA record Ms EDN 56/32v ('Nicolas Pertryche of London') and, and BL Mss Stowe 692, fo 77, and Harl 5846, fo 82. In Stowe 92 the text is as follows:

Nicollas partryche de Loundres gentilhome port de goulz a une fece dor et asur verre, entre trois besans Sur ch'un besant une perdrix /p'tryches/ de champ a ung bordeure dor billete de sable. Son tymber ung demy leopard en pall dor torte pellete entour de son coll ung collier de gueullez Sur le collier ung martlet enter deux billets dargent assis sur une torse dor et dasur mantelle de goulz double dargent.

*Arms: Gules a fess vairy or and azure between three bezants on each a partridge gules all within a bordure or billey sable.*

*Crest (on a wreath or and azure): A demi lion rampant guardant or collared semy of roundls sable and gorged with a collar gules charged with a martlet between two billets argent.*

At CA Ms EDN Alphabet, s.v. 'Partridge' no 12, the grantee is named as 'Nich: P. Alderman of Lond.' with the addition 'temp. H8'. For an illustration of the arms see T. Woodcock and J. M. Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford 1988), plate 13: detail of a ms described as a roll of grants of arms and crests of c. 1528 by Sir Thomas Wriothesley, (first coat of arms in the bottom row, labelled 'Pertriche'). Whether this indicates a previous grant to the one by Barker is uncertain.

2. Hugh Partridge, 'borne in ye north(ern) p(ar)tes gentelman ys descended of a house undefamed & hath of long tyme used hym selff in feates of armes & workes vertuous'. By Gilbert Dethick, Norroy, 5 February 1548-9. Draft of full text with trick of arms: CA record Ms Vincent OG 1/49. Full text with colour painting (showing a crescent for difference) at Vincent 163/15 (see **Plate 5**); with trick (showing crescent) at Grants 1/334; note of grant only at Misc. Gts 5/54.

Arms: *Gules on a fess engrailed plain cotised between three partridges volant or three roundels gules.*

Crest: *A partridge volant or holding in its beak an ear of wheat vert.*

This is evidently (given the similarity of their arms) the Hugh Partridge who was joint grantee with his brother Sir Miles of extensive former monastic property in and around Bristol on 3 October 1548: *CPR 1548-9*, pp. 102-12. In 1550, together with the Gloucestershire knight Sir John Butler, he purchased still greater quantities of ex-monastic property in that county: *CPR 1549-51*, pp. 279-82. However the suggestion in *Oxford DNB* that the brothers were of a Gloucestershire family (A. F. Pollard, rev. Barrett L. Beer, on Sir Miles Partridge) would appear to be undermined by the statement in the grant of arms that Hugh was a native of the north.

3. Sir Miles Partridge. Recorded only in a BL volume of grants by Christopher Barker as Garter, BL Ms Stowe 692, fo 78v:

Myles partryche of london goulds a Fesse iij cottesses, betweene iij p(er)tryches vollant, upon the Fesse iij turteaux, a chefe gussett of the Fesse, thereon, a demy rose wth the Base of the son, goulds, seded gold – his creste, a partryche golde vollant holding in his beke a Whete ere of the same. Wr(eath) or & b(lue), Mantelle goulds, lyned ar(gent) & or.

This looks very much like an augmentation, perhaps combined with a confirmation of the arms and crest. Miles Partridge was a gaming and sporting companion of Henry VIII who, together with his brother Hugh (no 1 above) received liberal grants of former monastic property. In the following reign he was under the patronage of the Lord Protector Somerset, and held the office of chief master of the king's games, pastimes and sports and the reversion of that of groom porter: *CPR 1549-51*, p. 327. He also possessed a house at Kew (granted by John Machell, cit. and clothworker, 29 May 1549: *CPR 1548-9*). After Somerset's fall in 1549 he was arrested on charges of embezzlement, and attainted and executed on 5 February 1552. The house at Kew was granted to Sir Henry Gate along with all its contents, which are listed in full in the relevant grant (*CPR 1550-3*, pp. 323f.); unfortunately, although the document gives a detailed picture of the house's rich adornment and furniture, there is no mention of armorial decoration.





*Figure 1: Partridges or popinjays? 18th-century bookplate showing arms similar or identical to those granted in 1559 to Assabell Partridge. College of Arms colln.; cf. E. Gambier Howe, *Franks Bequest. Catalogue of British and American Bookplates* (3 vols., London 1904), vol. 2 p. 336, no 22836.*

If it is correct to treat this as an augmentation, its *terminus post quem* is obviously 5 February 1549, when the unaugmented arms were granted; it will almost certainly have happened before Somerset's downfall later the same year and necessarily before Barker's death on 2 January 1550.

4. Assabell Partridge of London, esquire, 'at this present one of the cheife and principall Goldsmyth unto the moste excellent princes Elizabeth Queene of England'. By Hervey, Clarenceux, 31 April 1559. Fair copy full text and trick of arms: CA record Ms Grants 1/333. Also recorded, with the grantee's pedigree, in the 1568 Visitation of London: G10/55v (draft at F1/193). As a simple trick, at 2.G2/97.

Arms: *Gules on a bend argent between two lions rampant or three popinjays vert.*  
Crest: *Issuant from a double rose gules barbed vert a lion's head or.*

The rose in the crest is sometimes shown slipped and leaved. In CA Ms EDN Alphabet, s.v. 'Partridge' nos 7 and 8 (versions of these arms differing only in that 7 gives the bend as *or*), the birds are unequivocally called partridges; likewise no 9, where the design is the same but the field *or*, the bend and lions *sable* and the birds *argent*. See **Figure 1** above for similar arms in later use.

5. William Partridge, of Cirencester in Gloucestershire. The College of Arms holds the original letters patent of his grant from Lawrence Dalton, Norroy, dated 20 April 1561, in which he is identified as son of John, son of William, son of Roger Partryche sometime of Kendall in Yorkshire and states that his 'Auncestors have long continued in nobleness bearing armes tokens of honour'. Full text of the grant also at CA record Ms Vincent 169/186, with briefer notes at 1 or 2.H6/61 (giving the motto PLUSTOST LA MORTE Q'OFFENCE DE FOY) and Old Grants + 1.

## PARTRIDGES: HISTORY OF A PROHIBITION

Arms: *Chequy argent and sable a bend vair.*

Crest (on a wreath argent and sable): 'a Castor sylver pelleted langyd (gules)'.

It is not clear what type of animal the *castor* is meant to be; it bears no resemblance to a beaver, looking more like a fierce Scotch terrier.

There was a later grant from Harvey as Clarenceux (i.e. after 20 April 1561 but before 27 Feb. 1567 when Harvey died); CA record Ms D12/147v (Visitation of Gloucestershire 1569), showing the descent of this grantee, with his children and grandchildren, from his great-grandfather, gives as arms *Chequy argent and sable on a bend gules three escallops or* and as crest (on a wreath argent and sable) *Issuant from a crest coronet or a horse's head sable*; a note refers to 'A Patent of confirmat'on of the Creaste firste by Lorance Dalton after by Clarenc' Harvey'.

The preamble of Dalton's grant to William Partridge contains a disquisition on the function of arms as monuments or memorials that is unusually long and rich even for the period.

6. James Partridge, 'son and heir of Hen: Partridge second son of Robert Partridge younger brother of Henry Partridge of Allestree in Kent'. Confirmation of arms and (?grant of) crest by Sir William Segar, 4 March 1630-1. Note of grant with blazon in three languages and trick of arms and crest at CA record Ms EDN 57/329. Drawn in trick at M2/2v.

Arms: *Vairy argent and sable on a chief sable three roses argent (a crescent or charged with another sable for difference).*

Crest: *An arm in armour embowed proper and garnished with a scarf (tincture not recorded) throwing a fire ball proper.*

James Partridge died without issue on 3 September 1638 and was buried at St Bride's Fleet Street; his funeral certificate (CA record Ms I.24/117), which shows these arms though not the crest, was certified by his brother John.

7. Gabriell Partridge, of London, haberdasher. Recorded as living 1633 when he signed a simple three-generation pedigree in the Heralds' Visitation of London (ward of Bridge Within) showing him and his brothers as sons of Bartholomew Partridge of Navestock in Essex; the pedigree also records his children. Arms and crest in trick.

Arms: *Vert a chevron ermine between three partridges rising (a mullet on the chevron for difference).*

Crest: *A partridge rising holding in the beak an ear of wheat or.*

These arms and crest listed in CA Ms EDN Alphabet s.v. Partridge no 11, without further information.

## II. Partridges on official record in the same period for others not called Partridge.

1. Grant of arms to Thomas Goodyer of New Windsor in Berkshire, 19 October 1579. Recorded in a note, with arms and crest in trick, at CA record Ms Misc Gts 1/141.

Arms: *Gules a fess between two chevrons vair.*

Crest: *A partridge close holding in its beak an ear of wheat or.*

## THE COAT OF ARMS

2. John Goodere of Burghope in Herefordshire, sometime Governor of Bombay in the East Indies, recorded in the 1683 Visitation of Herefordshire at CA record Ms K8/34v with the following arms and crest in trick:

Arms: *Gules a fess between two chevrons vair.*

Crest: *A partridge close holding in its beak an ear of wheat* (untinctured, but perhaps intended to be taken as *proper*).

Next to the trick is written: 'For justification of these Arms, Mr Goodere produced only a modern Seal, so that they are respited for further proof; being indeed the Arms of Goodere of Polesworth, a Knightly family in Warwickshire.'