

THE COAT OF ARMS

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INTERPRETING THE CASTLE OF CASTILE

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Abstract

The castle of Castile will be shown in its parallel evolution with the lion of León.

Both began as emblems which evolved into heraldic devices. The initial reluctance to place these emblems on shields continued to manifest itself even in the era of heraldry. The lion was first used as a personal emblem by Alfonso VII (d.1157) of León who placed it on banners, coins, and likely also on his signa, the animals having earlier been used as a symbol of monarchy by his ancestors. The lion was first used in a clear heraldic context by his son Ferdinand II (d.1188) of León in the 1180s. Alfonso VIII (d.1214) of Castile adopted the castle as an emblem of his kingdom on his seal of 1170 and also on coins. The first use of the castle in an heraldic context on a shield is datable to his reign, but a precise chronology cannot be elucidated. His seals are unusual in that the castle is used to represent the kingdom instead of the customary figure of the enthroned monarch. The castle became widely disseminated in European heraldy, while in thirteenth century Iberia artistic motifs from the conquered territories enabled the prestige and prowess of Castile to be expressed visually with striking use of Castilian heraldic emblems, often presented in repetitive patterns. The lion of León later lost its imperial connotations and became a secondary family emblem which was borne among others by illegitimate descendants of the royal house as well as by royal concubines.

Introduction.

Heraldic emblems constitute an unjustly neglected source of historical knowledge. Such a copious and varied usage employed across much of Europe for so long a period of time constitutes an historical fact of remarkable importance. But their study has been left out of modern progress, probably because of inadequate training in this sphere, which rarely penetrates the superficial, formal aspects. The representations of emblems that have come down to us in documents and other original artworks in truth have a great deal to teach us, far more than issues of simple identity. We should not forget that in latin documentum means a lesson. The heraldic system is a mode of expression that has been used by each society according to its own cultural assumptions, leading to different graphic expressions. Its value as historical testimony is undermined unless the original representations can be understood in terms of the attitudes and customs that dictated their forms. It is the task of the historian to find out why such emblems were represented as they were, in the absence of written evidence. Our interpretations will always be

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partial due to the impossibility of knowing all the factors which came into play. We must consider the interplay of different ways of conceiving structures, with a desire to imitate, leading to the dissemination, formation and coherence of the heraldic system. Such pictorial traces as we have, traces left by the original designers, have a very high credibility, since they were almost always left without artifice. They are of great value as a historical source, because they are almost always unique: they stand in place of absent literary sources.

León

The existence of separate arms for the kingdoms of Castile and León is consequence of their separation for three quarters of a century –from 1157 to 1230 – in the very period when heraldry was first evolving. These distinct entities were quartered together in 1230 after the kingdoms were permanently reunited. Alfonso VII (d.1157), who was crowned as king of León and Castile in 1126, was a monarch of great significance, who adopted the style Emperor of All the Spains in 1134. He received tribute from of the Count of Barcelona, of the King of Pamplona, of Alfonso Enríquez of Portugal, of the count of Toulouse, of Guillén de Montpellier and of numerous barons of Gascony, as well as Moorish kings of Muslim Spain. His imperial authority extended from Compostela in the west to the Rhône in the east. Some of his coins depicted the body of a lion with a crowned human head, the inverse of the figures of the evangelists with human body and animal heads that a little later would be painted in the royal pantheon of San Isidoro.

The lion might be seen as canting emblem for the kingdom, but the coins (**Figure 1**) give the figure of the lion a new meaning. It was transformed into a symbolic representation of the person of the emperor king, probably without annulling the older meaning of the emblem at the popular level. Bishop of Tuy Don Lucas rationalised the significance of the lion in his *Chronicon Mundi*, written in the Leónese cultural field by order of Queen Berengaria and finished in 1236, only a century after the emblem had reached full consolidation in the time of Alfonso VII. He stated that ancient kings used to depict the lion because the lion is king, being is the strongest and most powerful of the animals; strength he considered to be an essential attribute of kings.

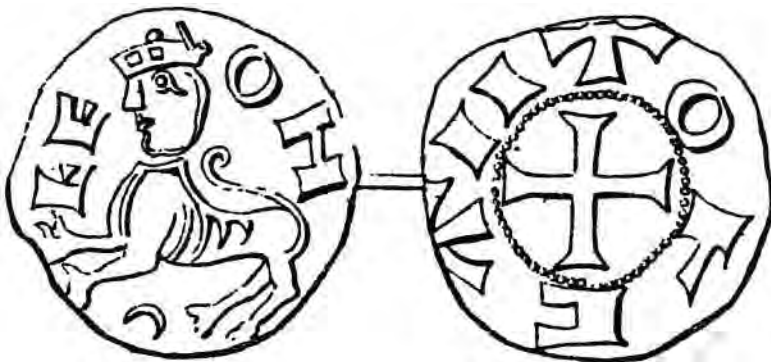


Figure 1: Coin of Alfonso VII

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An important source from the earlier part of the reign of Alfonso VII is the chartulary of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela known as Tumbo A, which includes vignettes for earlier kings of León that were painted c 1130.¹ Many of these kings from the tenth and eleventh centuries carry lion headed sceptres and occupy curule chairs finished in lion heads and claws. Alfonso V supports his feet on two lions, while before the throne of Vermudo III is a lion carpet with a red lion on a blue background that closely matches in form the signum used by Ferdinand II from his accession in 1157 (**Figures 2 and 3**). The use of the lion on the banners of Alfonso VII is confirmed by a poem called the *Praefatio de Almería* written shortly after the siege of this city in 1147. Unfortunately we have neither seals nor signa for him, excepting what might be inferred from Tumbo A.



Figure 2: Signum of Ferdinand II

Alfonso VII was succeeded in León by his son Ferdinand II (d.1188), and in Castile by his grandson Alfonso VIII (d.1214). The latter was initially without an heraldic

¹ M.Díaz y Díaz, F. López Alsina, S.Morelejo, *Los tumbos de Compostela* (Madrid, 1985).

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Figure 3: Vermudo III from Tumbo A of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella

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Figure 4: Ferdinand II from Tumbo A of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella.

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Figure 5: Reconstructed shield of Ferdinand II from Tumbo A drawn by the author.

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device, his father Sancho III of Castile having never borne arms. Ferdinand II from the outset of his reign in used the lion as his signum, but only later used it on his shield. In the round signa of Ferdinand II, the lion replaces the long cross used by his predecessors. Following this tradition a shield with a white cross on red field which used to hang in the Hermitage of Christ of the Light in Toledo was believed to have been carried by Alfonso VI when he conquered Toledo in 1085.² Alfonso VI was also the traditional owner of a sword with these same arms on the pomel, belonging to the Cathedral of Toledo.³

The oldest signum of Fernando II, which combined the lion with the legend *Rex Legionis*, relates to a diploma given the VI Ides of November of the year 1157, in the year in which the Emperor died.⁴ The earliest known seal impression of Ferdinand II dates 1170, and examples are in poor condition, but fortunately we have an equestrian representation of Fernando II in tumbo A painted c 1180, and one of the most notable testimonies of his reign (**Figure 4**).⁵ The figure of the king, whose style denotes a clear English influence, looks to the right, as in Anglo-French seals of the period. Beneath is a lion rampant suggesting that the drawing is based on the two faces of the royal seal. On the golden shield carried by the king (matching the background of the vignette) is the outline of a lion rampant facing in the direction of the knight's march. It is unlikely that the figure of the lion was ever painted in color (**Figure 5**): the interior details were drawn with thin strokes and there are no signs of applied paint. Between the legs of the horse and within the same golden field there are traces of another lion, also without coloring, like the one on the shield. It seems that this first plan was abandoned and at the bottom of the page a lion was painted corresponding in posture with the horse. The lower lion today has a dark blue colour. As is customary in the paintings of the time, next to this lion is an inscription in red letters: *leo fortis*. It seems that the artist did not yet imagine the lion on the shield as an heraldic emblem and with specific colors. This observation agrees with the design of the seals of Fernando II, which carry on the obverse an equestrian representation with a sword and without a shield, and on the reverse a lion oriented in the same way as in Tumbo A.

In another manuscript from the same cathedral, the *Tumbo Colorado*, was another miniature that represented Fernando II riding, known today only from a sixteenth century description.⁶ Moralejo judges that this painting of *Tumbo Colorado* would be later than that of Tumbo A, at a more advanced phase towards the fully heraldic representation of the lion. The drawing is believed to pre-date the king's death in 1188, in keeping with the testimony of the seals. An evolution in the form of the lion can be observed by comparing the matching plates dedicated to Ferdinand II with those of his son Alfonso IX (d.1230) in Tumbo A, dated by Moralejo to between 1208 and 1216 (**Figure 6**). In

² Ricardo del Arco, *Sepulcros de la casa de Castilla* (Madrid, 1954) p.198.

³ Barón de las Cuatro Torres, 'La espada llamada de Alfonso VI', *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones* vol 5 (1897).

⁴ *Boletín de la Real Academia Gallega* vol 2 919310 p.302ff.

⁵ Serafín Moralejo, 'La iconografía en el reino de León (1157–1230)', *II Curso de cultura medieval, seminario Alfonso VIII y su época*, (Aguilar de Campoo, 1990) pp.139–152. The drawing is on f 44 v.

⁶ José María Fernández Catón, *El llamado Tumbo Colorado y otros códices de la Iglesia Compostelana* (León, 1990) p. 245

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Figure 6: Alfonso IX from Tumbo A of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella.

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Figure 7: The shield of Alfonso IX as in Tumbo A, drawn by the author.

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the later example the shield held by the king is argent and charged with a lion of a blue or purple colour (**Figure 7**). Purple is the imperial color par excellence. The first literary reference to purple as being the colour of the lion of León comes from thirteenth century England, and the writings of the English monastic chronicler Matthew Paris.⁷

Castile.

We must now consider the origins of the arms of Castile. Alfonso VIII was a child on his accession in 1158, and from June 1165 his chancellery adopted circular wheel-like signum in form like that used by the Leónese from 1157. It incorporated a long cross following ancient usage. At that time the king was using a one-sided seal bearing an equestrian representation of Mediterranean type, in which his figure appears riding a horse without trappers and very stylized, with the legend + SIGILVM: REGIS: ALDEFONSI.⁸ The image does not correspond to a child under eight years of age, because the representation was intended to denote social category rather than the physical aspect of the owner. The rider embraces a long shield in the shape of an almond with metal trim on the edge and bearing an escarbuncle pattern, composed of eight radiating bars starting from a large umbo with an oval shape; in his right hand he carries a spear without a banner. Nowhere do emblems appear. The Mediterranean typology denotes that the rider is seen on his left side. This is contrary to the Leónese tradition of the Anglo-French type, very likely due to the influence of the king's tutor, Count Amalric.

Next, the chancellery of Alfonso VIII began to use a new matrix which is little known, there being only five known imprints. Four are dated between September of 1166 and March 1170, and one is without date.⁹ Of the three that are better preserved, only one retains the perimeter, although the legend is illegible. It is a wax seal of 85 mm, with two faces, both with equestrian representations, the model used by Ramón Berenguer IV (d.1162), count of Barcelona and prince of Aragon from 1141–1142, and by Sancho VI king of Navarre from 1157, which are of the Anglo-French type. The rider holds the shield on his right arm; on one side the helmet worn is cylindrical while on the other it is conical, but concave at the front; he is armed with a spear. The shields, the most protruding part of the reliefs, have suffered great wear, which prevents us from knowing how they were decorated, with the solitary exception of an impression where the shield seems to have a border, while a vertical line is clearly visible that does not reach the upper edge. There is a suggestion of a horizontal line, but not the diagonals that would form a block. It could be a shield with a long cross similar to the one carried by the esquire of Ordoño I in the *Liber Testamentorum*.¹⁰

After the coming of age of the king in 1169 at the age of fourteen, and his marriage to Eleanor Plantagenet in July or August of 1170, a castle appears on a new seal, which was used for the remainder of the reign (**Figure 8**). It is of wax, 105 mm, and follows the

⁷ Sir Anthony Wagner (Ed) *Aspilogia II Rolls of Arms Henry III* (London, 1967) p.51.

⁸ Only one imprint is known. Archive of the Cathedral of Palencia, document of 5th June 1163.

⁹ In the archives of the cathedrals of Palencia, Calahorra and Sigüenza. Another undated in a problematic privilege of Alfonso VI, Archivo Histórico Nacional.

¹⁰ Illustrated in Faustino Menéndez Pidal, *Los emblemas heráldicos, novecientos años de historia* (Seville, 2014) p.96.

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Figure 8: top obverse and bottom, reverse of the seal of Alfonso VIII appended to a charter dated 5th November 1170, cathedral of Calahorra.

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Hispanic model of having an emblem without shield on the obverse and an equestrian figure on the reverse, a model that was perhaps introduced earlier by Ferdinand II.¹¹ The same pattern was followed by Sancho VII of Navarre following his accession in 1194, and by various others, including the counts of Urgel, the Cabrera, and the lords of Vizcaya.¹² In the Anglo-French sphere the heraldic device of the reverse is always placed on a shield.¹³ The oldest example is found in the archives of the Cathedral of Calahorra, in a document dated 5th November 1170. On the obverse is a *castle of three towers*, with the legend + SIGILLVM REGIS ALDEFONSI. On the reverse, the equestrian figure is well-drawn and similar to the one we see on his father's seal, he wears chain mail, a conical helmet with attached streamers, and is armed with a sword. The shield is worn on the left arm, but there is no visible heraldry. The legend, in continuation of the previous one, starts on the right side, not on the top, and says + REX TOLETI ET CASTELLE (King of Toledo and Castile). The castle can also be found on the coins of Alfonso VIII, accompanied by stars, with a king's head or a cross on the central tower. The castle with the king's head reminds us of the lion with a crowned human head on some of the coins of Alfonso VII.

There are a hundred imprints of the various seals used subsequently by Alfonso VIII, scattered in different archives, a group that has never been published. In around 1185 the castle appears on the shield of the equestrian figure and on the trappers of the horse. It seems that Alfonso VIII was imitating the use of the heraldic lion by his Uncle Ferdinand II. In 1179 Ferdinand abandoned the title of Rex Hispaniarum that he had been using since the beginning of his reign. The *Najerense Chronicle* contains a clear affirmation of the Castilian attitudes towards Leon; written probably between 1160 and 1180, it is coeval of the birth of the emblem of Castile. By then, the fashion of the use of heraldry had already reached an unstoppable extent, but Sancho VI of Navarre (d. 1194) as well as the Count Pedro, Lord of Molina (1179), kept their double equestrian seals and their shields appear to be pre-heraldic. It is worth noting that the earliest illustration of the French royal arms is the single fleur de lis (not placed within a shield) of Philip Augustus dating 1180, with the coat of arms first presented in 1209 on the seal of the future Louis VIII. For the English kings the first seal evidence of the lion-leopards is the 1189 impression of Richard Coeur de Lion.

The castle was a canting emblem, in artistic form of an ancient type type which seems to come from southern Italy.¹⁴ It appears, for example, in the lead bullae of the princes of

¹¹ Although the oldest known imprint is of 1173, this king had a seal in 1158, as evidenced by a donation of this date to the monastery of Moreruela that carries plica and links, although the seal is missing.

¹² Seemingly related to this seal of Alfonso VIII and its successive versions are those of the later lords of Meneses, those of Castellvell and that of Gonzalo Pérez, Señor de Molina, kept by the National Archives of France, all with a castle on the reverse. The model of the figure surrounded by the legend has a long history in the forms of annular Visigothic sealing rings, naturally with different emblematic value.

¹³ In northern France, the first earliest known model of this type is that of the Earl of Soissons dating 1178. In England it is noted later, in the reign of King John. In Hungary the emblems continued to appear without shield into the second third of the thirteenth century.

¹⁴ Jaime Oliver Asín, *Around the origins of Castile ... speech read in the act of its public reception ... on March 24, 1974, En torno a los origenes de Castilla ... discurso leído en el acto de su recepción pública ... el día 24 de Marzo de 1974* (Madrid, 1974,) p 47 ff.

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Figure 9: dobla coin of John II of Castile (d.1454)

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Capua Richard I and Jordan (1062–1079) and their successors. According to Waldner it represented in its origin a walled city rather than an isolated fortress.¹⁵ It is different from what we see in Roman coins which have no towers, a form used by knightly families in Valencia and Catalonia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while those of central Europe typically had two towers. It was as a result of this latter influence that the fourteenth-century *Armorial of Zurich* represented the arms of Castile and León with two towered castles. There is no shortage of imitations of the Castilian model. In the English Collins Roll c 1296, William Doncaster was ascribed *gules, a castle of three towers or*.

It is again the bishop Don Lucas de Tuy in his *Chronicon Mundi* who gives us very clear testimony about the origin of the emblem of Castile in the time of Alfonso VIII¹⁶: *Iste Rex Adefonsus primo Castellum armis suis depinxit, quamvis antiqui Reges Patres ipsius Leonem depingere consueverant...* (King Alfonso was the first to use the castle as his arms, even though the ancient kings were accustomed to use the lion). The bishop was in a good position to know because the new shield originated little more than sixty years before he wrote his chronicle.

It is striking that the castle appeared on the obverse of the new seal of Alfonso VIII, rather than the figure of king himself. In the same year Alfonso II of Aragon adopted a seal with himself in majesty on the obverse as king of Aragón. He was mounted on a horse on the reverse as count of Barcelona. Contemporary French kings sat in majesty as king of France on the obverse and equestrian on the reverse as dux Aquitanorum. English kings followed exactly the same pattern, on the equestrian side being labelled as dux Normannorum. In the seal granted by Alfonso II of Aragon to the consuls of Milhau in 1187 one side represents the king with his shield and the other the consuls. Similarly, on the seals of the councils of Cifuentes (impression of 1299) and the Peñas de Viana (matrix of c.1315) one face bears the arms of his master and the other an allusion to the council. What all these seals have in common is in the two aspects of the seal representing different entities.

The same concept of a territory as a distinct symbolic entity to be differentiated from its lord which is found on the seals of Alfonso VIII is also present on the seal used by Ferdinand III of Castile, before he became king of León also in 1230. On the obverse of his seal his equestrian figure bears a shield of his own arms, the lion inherited from his father, while on the reverse appears the castle, emblem of his kingdom, to each side of which was added a small lion.

In the fifteenth century these interpretations were still alive. On the coinage of John II of Castile (d.1454) his equestrian figure carries the shield of the Band, which can be considered his personal arms, while the reverse side of the coin is charged with the arms of his kingdoms of Castile and León in circular form (**Figure 9**).¹⁷ In the monuments of

¹⁵ H. Waldner, *Die ältesten Wappenbilder, eine internationale Übersicht, Herald-Studien*, vol 2 (Berlin, 1992).

¹⁶ All this was ignored in the eighteenth century by those heraldists who did so much harm, cultivators of what they called heroic science, armories separated from historical reality. In 1759, the king of arms Don Juan Francisco de Zazo y Rosillo, in his official report on the new coat of arms of Carlos III, affirmed that the castle was first adopted by Brigo, fourth king of Spain after the Flood.

¹⁷ But in his Ordinance on the styling of the coin of 1442 the king designates them as “my royal arms”.

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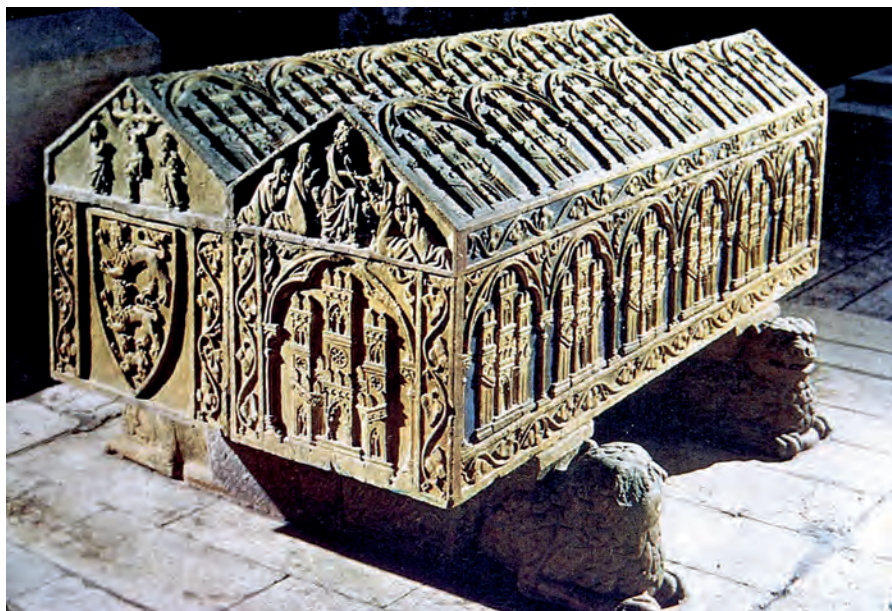


Figure 10: Joint tomb of Alfonso VIII and Eleanor Plantagenet at monastery of Las Huelgas, Burgos dating from the reign of Ferdinand III.

his time (including the Carthusian monastery of Miraflores, the Paular Monastery, and the church of Santa Clara at Tordesillas) we find paired shields of the royal arms, having the quarterings of Castile and León, and the badge of the Band, John's personal arms.

The idea of the kingdom differentiated from the king found its expression in thirteenth-century Aragon when Peter III (d.1285) devised new arms for his kingdom of a cross between four Moor's heads, which he placed on the back of his lead seal. He was here imitating the example of his maternal uncle Béla IV of Hungary who used the double cross as the symbol of his country while retaining his family arms of Arpad.¹⁸ This understanding still pertained in the nineteenth century, when Joseph I Bonaparte, *Hispaniarum et Indiarum rex*, adopted in 1808 the Castilian quarters and those of Aragon and Navarre, with Granada and the Indies. Superimposed was his personal emblem of lineage, the eagle. His brother the Emperor Napoleon I would never have adopted the fleurs de lis of the deposed French kings; the emblem that he chose, the eagle symbolised his imperial his power, without any territorial reference.

Returning to twelfth-century Castile, one of the oldest surviving examples of the coat of arms of the kingdom in its original colors adorns a swath of green brocade found in the tomb of Alfonso VIII in the monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos.¹⁹ The cloth is strewn with almond shaped shields *gules a castle or*. Two stoles embroidered by Queen Eleanor herself in 1197 and 1198 according to the embroidered legends that

¹⁸ Emma Bartoniek, 'Az Árpádok ércpecségei', *Turul* (1924–25) pp. 12–26.

¹⁹ Illustrated in Pidal, op cit, p.327.

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they carry, are preserved in the church of San Isidoro in León.²⁰ The queen continued the art of her own country, with English characteristics in the technique of embroidery, but using an absolutely Castilian design: a row of twenty-five castles – not encased in shields – embroidered in gold on the gray background of the cloth. It is hypothesized that the colours of red and gold which became ascribed to the arms of Castile at this time were influenced by Queen Eleanor's personal arms of the three lions of England. According to the troubadour Ramón Vidal de Besalú, the queen had a dress made of red cyclamen with a golden lion.

Despite the true heraldic nature of the new arms of Castile there was a Castilian reluctance to place the castle within the confines of a shield, as is well demonstrated by the joint tomb chest of Alfonso VIII and Queen Eleanor at Las Huelgas which was carved towards the end of the reign of Ferdinand III (d.1252) (**Figure 10**). Here the heraldic emblems of the kings were not arranged uniformly, as would have been done in more advanced times, but each according to the usual way of their country: the castle of Castile, located simply under an arch, next to the three lions of England on a shield. Following the theories of Galbreath concerning how heraldry in some instances evolved from earlier emblems, it is suggested that during the reign of Alfonso VIII, a process analogous to that followed by the emblem of León occurred, but much faster. In Spain, especially in Castile, the clear resistance to presenting the emblems enclosed in the field of a shield was perhaps because these emblems were born outside the shield and outside the military scope, in contrast to how heraldry developed in France, England and Germany.

In the Beatus of Liébana a soldier carries a painted castle on his round shield, probably suggested by the circular field of the royal seal, in a scene that represents the siege of Jerusalem (**Figure 11**).²¹ This example corresponds to the time of the appearance of the castle in the seal of Alfonso VIII. The Beatus dates c 1175 and belonged to the Marquis of Astorga. It was copied in 1190 into the Beatus of Cardeña that belongs to the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid.²² A little later (c.1210), the castle, in its later heraldic form (except for the custom of colouring the doors and windows blue, which did not become invariable until the time of Ferdinand III), was painted in a fresco on the first floor of the Treasury tower of the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza, today at the Art Museum of Catalonia (**Figure 12**). In the Romanesque church of Santa María de Argandoña can be found the castle decorating a rectilinear space above a capital (**Figure 13**). As Castile took over from León as the pre-eminent power on the Iberian peninsula, in 1172 Alfonso VIII began to be titled in his diplomas as King of the Spains. Meanwhile the castle emblem was exhibited with enthusiasm by the Castilians as a manifestation of national pride.

From this same time we have to interpret the singular crown found in 1948 in the sepulchre of Sancho IV (d.1295) in the cathedral of Toledo, formed by eight rectangular

²⁰ One of the legends reads: ALIENOR REGINA CASTELLE FILIA HENRICI REGIS ANGLIE ME FECIT SUB ERA M CC XXX V ANNOS. The other is very deteriorated but repeats the same with minor variations. Eleanor was born in 1162 as daughter of King Henry II and was age 35 in 1197. See Antonio C. Floriano Cumbreño, *El bordado* (Barcelona, 1942) p. 44

²¹ John Rylands Library, Manchester MS Lat 8.

²² Ángela Franco Mata, 'Las ilustraciones del beato de San Pedro de Cardeña', *Beato de Liébana. Códice de San Pedro de Cardeña* (Barcelona, 2001) pp. 115–274.

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Figure 11: Castle shield in the Beatus of Liébana or Manchester Beatus, John Rylands Library, Manchester MS Lat 8.

plates of gilded silver, articulated together by means of hinges (**Figure 14**). Attached to the the upper edges are cut-outs of a castle. Set onto the plates cameos alternate with large sapphires. The find was published by Gómez-Moreno.²³ In his brief mention, he points out that the crown may have belonged to Alfonso X of Castile & León (d.1284) or to St Ferdinand, otherwise known as Ferdinand III of Castile & León (d.1252). Three years later, Hüffer published more detailed studies.²⁴ We fully agree with the judgment of this author and of Percy Schramm that it is totally implausible that this crown was made after the union of the kingdoms of Castile and León in 1230, a union desired and manifested as being permanent and indissoluble.²⁵ It is not credible that either Ferdinand III or Alfonso X exhibited on his crown only the castle when in the case of both kings on an infinity of objects including seals coins and clothes the castle and the lion were always combined together. On the other hand, the crown must date after 1170, the approximate date of the creation or acceptance of the emblem. The circumstances of the last part of

²³ Manuel Gómez-Moreno, 'Preseas reales sevillanas', *Archivo Hispalense*, IX (1948) pp. 191–204.

²⁴ H. J. Hüffer, 'Los hallazgos de la catedral de Toledo y la corona real castellana', in *Clavileño* vol 7 (1951) ; 'Die Funde im Dom von Toledo und die kastilische Königskrone', in *Speculum*, II (1951) pp. 433–442. .

²⁵ Percy E. Schramm, *Las insignias de la realeza en la edad media española* trans. by Luis Vázquez de Parga, Institute of Political Studies, Madrid, 1960, p. 35 ff. For a contrary view see the exhibition catalogue *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Murcia, 2009) pp. 55–59.

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*Top, Figure 12: fresco from monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza c.1210.
Bottom, Figure 13: capital from church of Santa Maria de Argandoña.*

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Figure 14: Crown of Alfonso VIII found in the tomb of Sancho IV in the cathedral of Toledo.

the reign of Alfonso VIII make this the likely time for the manufacture of this crown, probably the oldest adorned with heraldic emblems to have survived.

Following the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 the Reconquista of the Islamic south advanced quickly, bringing very favorable economic and social conditions for a time of cultural and artistic splendor. Following the final reunion of Castile and León in 1230, when the arms of the two kingdoms were quartered, the castle was placed at the position of honour in the first quarter.²⁶ Ferdinand III took Cordoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248, and established hegemony over the Moorish kingdom of Granada. Inspired by the repeated themes of Mudejar decoration in the occupied territories there developed an intense graphic expression of heraldic emblems as their ornamental value was realised. There are remarkable examples of pseudo-heraldica in the cushions found in the tomb of the Infanta Ferdinand de la Cerda in Las Huelgas, in the pillow that belonged to Sancho IV in the cathedral of Toledo, in the mural decoration of the clock of the cathedral of

²⁶ From 1217 to 1229, Ferdinand being only King of Castile used as his personal arms those of his father, the lion. When he inherited the kingdom of León in 1230 he put the castle first.

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Figure 15: emblems of Castile and León used as a decorative border, cathedral of Burgos.
Photograph by Paul A Fox.

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Figure16: Cap of Ferdinand de la Cerda.



Figure17: Belt of Ferdinand de la Cerda.

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Toledo, etc. It had broad support in society with heraldic emblems being used abundantly to decorate trappings and hangings, architecture and textiles (**Figure 15**). In the Sevillian tomb of Ferdinand III every aspect of his apparel was replete with castles and lions, his tunics, his gloves, his belt, his cloak, and even his shoes.²⁷ Even more exuberant, if possible, is the presence of emblems on the attire of his firstborn, Ferdinand de la Cerda. Most notable is his richly heraldic bonnet of gold, seed pearls, beads and coral, and his golden belt on which can be found nineteen different English and French shields (**Figures 16 and 17**).

The male line of Alfonso VIII became extinct with the death of his young son in 1217, and yet almost paradoxically his castle emblem became disseminated throughout Europe. It was incorporated into the arms of the sons of his four daughters who were married to the kings of León, France, Portugal and Aragon. Each daughter named one of her sons Alfonso, and altogether nine of Alfonso VIII's eleven grandsons added castles to their personal arms. For two of these see **Figures 18 and 19**. Such an unprecedented occurrence was never again equalled. These facts speak for the esteem in which Alfonso VIII was held by his descendants. He had been a great crusader against the Moors. In later times there was a reluctance to accept the Castilian origin of the castles on the arms of the kingdom of Portugal, and a tradition arose that they represented the border strongholds of the Algarve kingdom, rather than the arms of Castile. Another misunderstanding made the incorporation of the castles into the border of the arms of Portugal a consequence of the second marriage which took place in 1254 between Alfonso III of Portugal (grandson of Alfonso VIII) and Beatrice, daughter of Alfonso X of Castile & León. The seals and other testimonies easily dismantle these false readings.

Although St Louis (King Louis IX) of France did not follow his three brothers in the addition of the castle to his arms, within the Sainte Chapelle in Paris that he constructed there is an almost obsessive repetition on the vaults, walls and floors of gold fleurs de lys on an azure field alternating with gold castles on a field gules (**Figure 20**). In the north choir of the cathedral of Chartres there is a stained-glass window of a knight carrying a triangular shield charged with a castle, also repeated on his gonfanon. This is surely another expression of the veneration felt by Louis IX and his brothers for their glorious grandfather. Some have misinterpreted the figure as Ferdinand III, but as we have seen this monarch never bore the unquartered castle of Castile.²⁸

The heraldic castle continued to influence the art and design in northern Europe over the following century. The castle was used in the borders of English stained glass windows from the reign of Edward I in celebration of his wife, Eleanor of Castile, daughter of Ferdinand III. Their son Edward II added to the matrix of his father's great seal as a mark of differentiation a small castle on each side of the throne (**Figure 21**). For this reason the Castle of Castile has been considered as a personal badge of this king.²⁹ Similarly in France in some cathedrals, like that of Bourges, we see bordering

²⁷ Manuel Gómez Moreno 'Preseas reales Sevillinas' *Archivo Hispalense* vol 9 (1948) pp.191–204,

²⁸ Bibliothèque nationale, dép. des estampes, collection Gaignières, fol. 89. Bernard de Montfaucon, *Monuments de la monarchie française* vol 2 (Paris, 1729–33) XXIX, no. 2.

²⁹ F. Edward Hulme, *The history, principles and practice of Heraldry* (London, 1892) p. 233. See also Siddons *Badges* vol 2.1 pp. 63–4.

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Top, Figure 18: seal of Alfonso count of Poitiers (1249) and bottom, Figure 19, seal of Charles count of Anjou (1248) both sons of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile.

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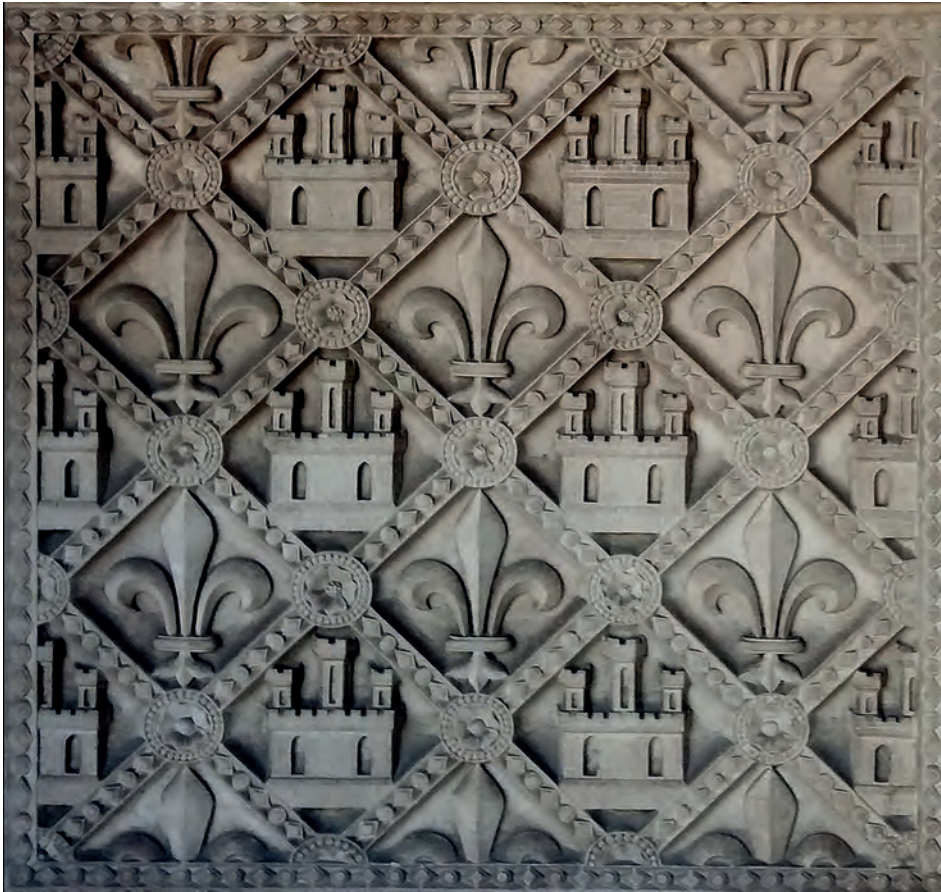


Figure 20: Castles alternating with fleurs de lis at the entrance to the Sainte Chapelle, Paris.
Photograph by Paul A Fox

stained glass windows red strips with yellow castles, imitation of the ‘borders of Castile’ of the shields. Thus did the prestige and the dynastic connections of Castile result in a widespread influence of Castilian heraldry and design in the art of medieval Europe

Castile has retained its heraldic position of honour in the first quarter throughout the history of Spain, following the union of the kingdoms in 1479 when Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabella of Castile; and again in 1516 when the house of Hapsburg took control of Spain as a result of the marriage of Joan ‘the mad’ of Castile to Philip ‘the handsome’ of Hapsburg. Its pre-eminence was once again respected in the reforms of King Charles III (d.1788).

The importance of the lion was not entirely lost following the eclipse of the kingdom of León, even though the concept that the lion was an imperial emblem became forgotten. The lion was passed down through the many illegitimate children of Alfonso IX of León as a simple family emblem. The knowledge of this descent has become obscured, but it was rigorously observed until the end of the fifteenth century. The lion was also bestowed on

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Figure 21: Great seal of Edward II with castles on either side of the throne.

concubines of kings of Castile. Two notable manifestations are firstly, the arms used by the Doña Leónor de Guzmán, the mistress of King Alfonso XI (d.1350). She bore a lion in border semy of cooking pots, representing her own Guzman lineage, as seen in the paintings of Santa Clara de Tordesillas.³⁰ Secondly, the arms of Doña María de Padilla (d.1361) are in the choir stalls (today in the National Archaeological Museum) and in a decorative frieze at the monastery of Santa Clara de Astudillo. The lion occupies the center of the shield, dressed in the four corners with a paddle [Padilla] (**Figure 22**).

The Trastámara dynasty also bestowed their royal lion on favoured individuals and places. Examples include the silver border charged with ten lions granted by Henry II of Trastámara, king of Castile (d.1379) to Mosén Pedro de Lando. The city of Úbeda has analogous arms which are explained by local historians as a notable feat performed by twelve Ubedans during the siege of Algeciras in time of the same king.³¹ Henry IV of Castile (d.1474), continuing with the predilection to use the arms of León, granted to the constable Miguel Lucas de Iranzo in 1455 a quartered shield of León and the Badge of the Order of the Band. According to Gonzalo de Ayora, the king also gave Gonzalo Dávila, the hero of Gibraltar, a crowned lion to add to his arms and an Arabian flag, as seen on the front of his house, in front of the Cathedral of Ávila.³²

³⁰ Illustrated in Faustino Menéndez Pidal, *Los emblemas heráldicos, novecientos años de historia* (Seville, 2014) p.337.

³¹ From the modern era the arms of the lordship of Vizcaya have a similar border whose origin nobody can explain satisfactorily.

³² This paper was translated from Spanish by the editor, who hopes that his deficiencies in this regard will not be too evident.

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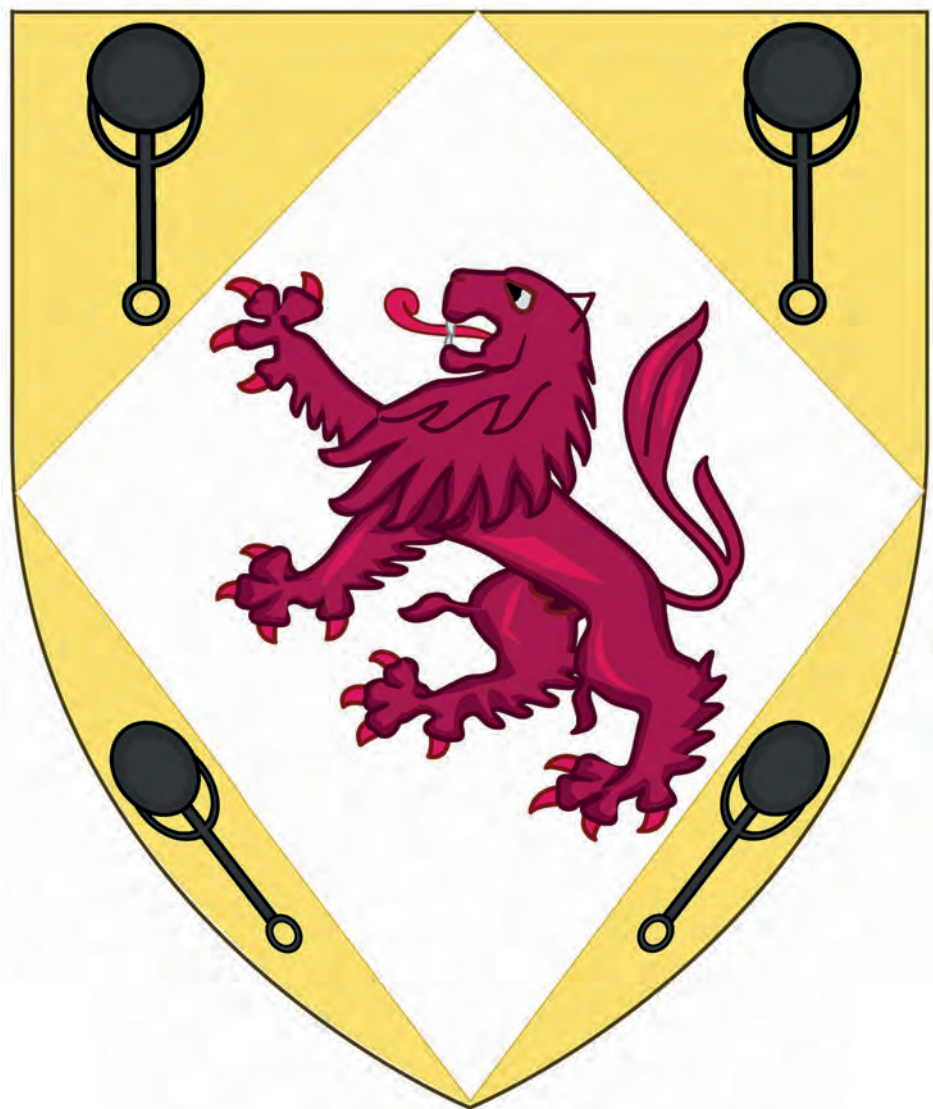


Figure 22: shield of Doña María de Padilla (d.1361)
Drawing by the Author