

Heraldry for Self-Isolators

Week 3—Topic 3: ANIMALS

There are so many different beasts used in heraldry that we can safely divide them into two types: the REAL and the MYTHICAL (although some of us know better), each category then capable of further subdivision into animals, snakes, birds, fish, snakes, insects etc. Normally, whatever the beast, unless there is an instruction to the contrary, beasts face to the DEXTER (left).

Today we will look at “real” ANIMALS. This topic is not for the squeamish as we do terrible things to animals in heraldry—either making them pose in unlikely and uncomfortable postures or removing their heads with varying degrees of cruelty.

Just to get the upsetting bit over first, we will begin with decapitation.

Have a look at these two crests:



At first sight, the two boars' heads look the same, but on closer inspection you will discern that the first version has been untimely ripped straight off the poor beast's body while the one on the right has at least the merit of being cleanly, possibly surgically, removed.

The left (rough) one is described as ERASED while the cleanly-cut one is called COUPED, from *coupé*—the French for cut.

Before we leave this gory topic, there is a third cruelty to expose: often animal heads with no neck at all are placed to peer out at us sadly from a coat of arms, like one of those displays of hunting trophies in lodges all over the Highlands.



Heads so displayed are described as CABOSSED.

This young boar looks a little reproachful.

Here are some more animals who have sadly lost their heads in a crisis:

A stag's head *erased*



a stag's head *coupé*



a stag's head *cabossed*



Have a go at describing each of these mutilated animals—even dogs are not spared the treatment:



A Talbot's head a bull's head A boar's head Three cows' heads

Before we leave the veterinary surgery, we had better fess up to another surgical horror in the heraldic menagerie. Sometimes animals are cut in half at the waist and become only *demi* :

Here is a demi-lion rampant

and now a demi-otter

and a demi-fox



Some animals carry their own special terms:

This lion Azure is
RAMPANT
And LANGUED and
CLAWED Gules
i.e. its tongue and
claws are red.
(Crichton)



However, this stag
Gules is described as
SALIENT (not rampant),
ATTIRED and UNGULED
OR (meaning that its
horns and hooves are
gold).
(McCorquodale)

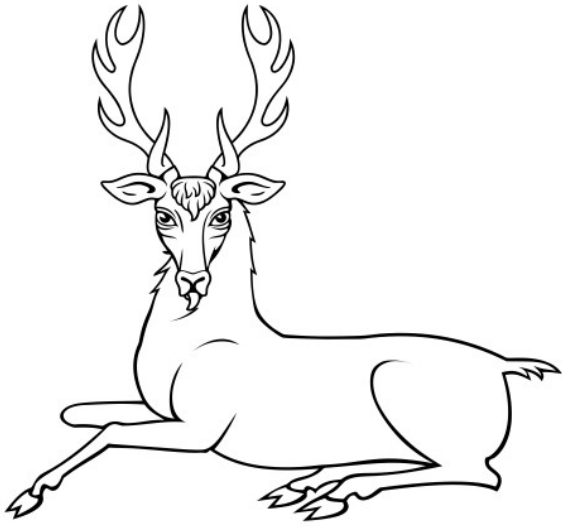


This stag is the badge of Falkland Pursuivant and is *REGUARDANT* as a lion would be as it is looking backwards. If it were looking at us, however, where a lion would be *guardant*, a stag is *AT GAZE*.
Even odder, where a lion would be *sejant*—sitting down, a stag is always *LODGED*,

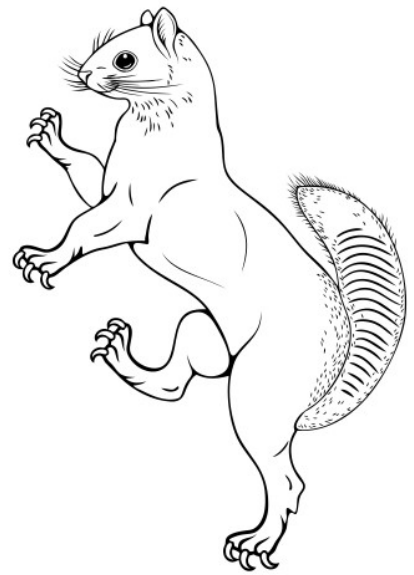
That is probably enough to make the point that some animals require a specialist vocabulary in their description.

Of course what we need now after all this butchery is some colouring-in and a Quiz.

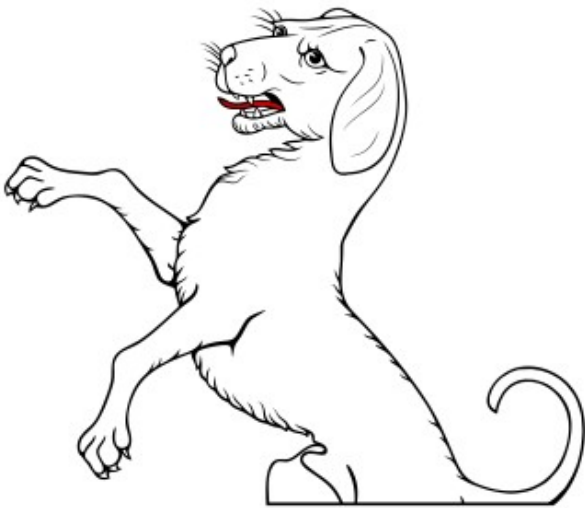
An Heraldic Menagerie for you to finish.



A stag lodged at gaze



a squirrel rampant



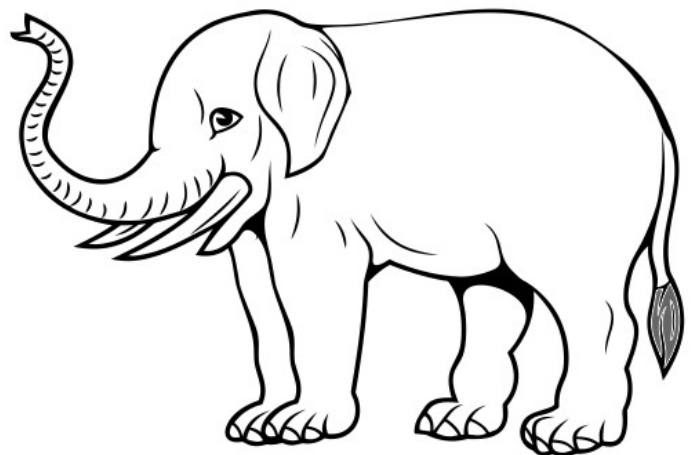
A demi-talbot rampant



a bear sejant guardant



An antelope couchant



an elephant statant

The Quiz

Add the ATTITUDE of each of these animals



T.W. Borland

1. A boar



D. Robinson

2. Three wolves' heads



B.Ivory

3. An elephant



S. Chisholm

4. a boar's head



Savings Bank Institute

5. A squirrel



Dumfries Technical College

6. An owl's head



Pitlochry Festival Theatre

7. A..... Crowned



W. McNaught

8. lions' heads



Crichton

9 & 10 a lion

The Quiz – Answers



T.W. Borland

A boar rampant Azure tusked and unguled Or



D. Robinson

Three wolves' heads erased Argent langued Azure



B.Ivory

An elephant passant Or tusked Argent



S. Chisholm

Boar's head ERASED



Savings Bank Institute

A squirrel SEJANT



Dumfries Technical College

An owl's head CABOSSED



Pitlochry Festival Theatre

7. a demi-lion Crowned



W. McNaught

8. lions' heads erased



Crichton

9 & 10 a lion sejant guardant (affronty)



Left: arms granted in 1900 to the former Royal Burgh of Inverness.

There would be no need to specify rampant for the supporting camel and elephant but you could be forgiven for wondering what these animals were doing in Inverness

The right hand arms are the canting arms of SWINTON of SWINTON. It has boars in three attitudes—rampant, heads erased and passant chained to a tree.

