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KINGS AND BEASTS. KINGS' MIRACULOUS AND MYSTERIOUS ENCOUNTERS WITH ANIMALS*

Hunting has always been a royal recreation. Even antique rulers hunted lion, elephant, leopard and deer and had the walls of their palaces decorated with hunting scenes. Some rulers were blamed for their excessive fondness for hunting. It is asserted in *Scriptores historiae Augustae* that the emperor Trajan criticised his successor, Hadrian, for spending too much time on hunting¹. In Byzantium some observers regarded hunting as a commendable substitute for war victories, for by hunting the emperor manifested his prowess and corroborated his status as ruler². In the West, too, hunting was regarded as a recreation which added to the monarch's glory, and the forest was viewed as royal territory. However, Western Christian moralists, in line with the *Bible* and the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, tended to regard excessive fondness for hunting as an unworthy, even a sinful, occupation. The *Book of Baruch* speaks of princes who "had the birds of heaven at their beck and call" (that is, hunted with birds) and by God's will were put to death and sent to hell³. St. Jerome

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¹ *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, II, 1.ed. J.-P. Callu, Paris 1992, p. 19.

² Cf. E. Patlagean, *De la chasse et du souverain*, in: *Homo Byzantinus. Papers in Honor of Alexander Kazhdan*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" vol. XLVI, 1992, pp. 257–263.

³ *Baruch* 3: 16, *Jerusalem Bible*.

was reported to have said that he had never seen a hunter become a saint⁴. Ionas, bishop of Orléans, author of a Carolingian royal mirror, devoted a whole chapter to rebuking those who neglected religion and the duty of looking after the little ones in favour of hunting and love of dogs⁵. The great 12th century canonist, Bishop Ivo of Chartres, collected statements by Fathers of the Church who condemned hunting: St. Augustine compared hunters to histrions and prostitutes; in St. Jerome's view, Esau's hunting was closely connected with his sinful life; St. Ambrose condemned people who used to jump out of bed early in the morning not to go to church and pray but to dash around with a pack of hounds in a forest⁶. This motif can be found in the legend of St. Hubertus, a Merovingian *comes palati*, who before his conversion used to spend most of his sinful life hunting. During a hunt on a holy day, Good Friday, Hubertus saw a miraculous stag with a cross between its horns. The animal threatened the sinful potentate in human voice that he would soon be punished by hell fire if he did not change his lifestyle and converted⁷.

This negative attitude to the forest and to human activity connected with it stemmed from the Biblical contrast between two environments of human life: cultivated fields representing agricultural civilisation and the desert which, according to Jacques Le Goff, was in medieval Europe replaced by the forest, a symbol of wildness like the desert⁸. Medieval folklore, small

⁴ Quoted after Ph. Buc, *L'Ambiguïté du Livre, Prince, pouvoir et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Âge*, Collection Théologie historique vol. XCV, Paris 1994, p. 113.

⁵ Ionas Aurelianus, *De institutione laicali*, book 2, 23, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (henceforth referred to as PL) vol. CVI, col. 215–223. Wincenty Kadłubek, *Chronica Polonorum*, book II, 20, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, nova series, vol. XI, Kraków 1994, ed. M. Plezia, p. 56, and after him Wincenty of Kielcza, *Vita minor sancti Stanislai*, 31, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, p. 279, and *Vita maior sancti Stanislai*, II, 17, *ibidem*, pp. 385–386 (both texts edited by W. Kętrzyński), writes that Boleslaus the Bold ordered nursing women to breast-feed puppies. Cf. also fn. 8.

⁶ *Ivo Carnutensis episcopus, Decretum*, PL, vol. CLVI, col. 808–810.

⁷ Cf. *Conversio Sancti Huberti Comitis, postea episcopi Tongrensis*, Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, Paris 1768–1904 (henceforth referred to as RHF) vol. III, p. 609.

⁸ Cf. J. Le Goff, *Le désert-forêt dans l'Occident médiéval*, in: *idem, L'imaginaire médiéval. Essais*, Paris 1982, pp. 59–75, esp. pp. 66–73, also M. Cetwiński, *Las w polskiej legendzie heraldycznej (The Forest in Polish Heraldic Legends)*, "Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego", new series, vol. II (XIII), 1995. It is worth drawing attention to the words of the author of the *Polish-Hungarian*

fragments of which were referred to as a warning by such educated Christian moralists as William of Malmesbury, Walter Map, Orderic Vitalis and others, contained an ambivalent picture of hunting, presenting it as a diabolical chase with the participation of Satan, phantoms, the goddamned and frequently also pagan gods who all chased after sinners (*chasse infernale*)⁹. But the clergymen's efforts met with no response. The forest was an area closely connected with royal power, as is testified to by the origin of some nouns: *silva foresta* (*forêt* in French, forest in English), a tract of woods under the monarch's direct jurisdiction (*forum*)¹⁰, or the Polish "*knieja*", a prince's territory¹¹.

Chronicle who said that Poland was not given the royal crown in 1000 because the Poles loved dogs more than they loved people, were more fond of forests than of vineyards, preferred game to sheep and oxen, that is, preferred wildness to civilisation (*plus delectabitur in silvis crescendis quam in vineis, plus in tribulis crescendis et herbis superfluis quam frugibus et frumentis speciosis, plus feris silvarum quam oves et boves camporum, plus canes quam homines*). *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (henceforth referred to as *MPH*), vol. I, Lwów 1861, p. 502. I would like to thank Professor Jacek Banaszkiwicz for drawing my attention to this statement in the *Polish-Hungarian Chronicle*.

⁹ Cf. C. Leconteux, *Chasses fantastiques et cohortes de la nuit au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1999, in particular pp. 55–78, 195–200.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 66; H. A. Cronne, *The Royal Forest in the Reign of Henry I*, in: *Miscellanea J. E. Todd*, London 1949, pp. 1–23; the 12th century West European view of the status of the forest and its laws can be seen in *De necessariis observantiis scaccarii dialogus*, ed. C. G. Crump, A. Hughes, C. Johnson, Oxford 1902, p. 105; G. de Ghislain, *L'Évolution du droit de garenne au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque de Nice (22–24 juin 1979)*, s.l. 1980 (henceforth referred to as *La Chasse au Moyen Âge*), pp. 37–58; F. H. M. Parker, *The Forest Law and the Death of William Rufus*, "English Historical Review", vol. XXVII, 1912, pp. 26–39; C. Petit-Dutaillis, *La Forêt*, in: *Études additionnelles à l'édition française de William Stubbs. Histoire institutionnelle de l'Angleterne*, vol. II, Paris 1913, pp. 759–849; idem, *De la signification du mot "Forêt" à l'époque franque*, "Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes" (henceforth referred to as *BEC*) vol. LXXVI, 1915, pp. 97–152; idem, *La Monarchie féodale*, Paris 1971, pp. 140–142; M. Pacaut, *Esquisse de l'évolution du droit de chasse au haut Moyen Âge*, in: *La Chasse au Moyen Âge*, pp. 59–68; H. Thieme, *Forestis. Königsgut und Königsrecht nach dem Forsturkunden von 6. bis 12. Jahrhundert*, "Archiv für Urkundenforschung" part 2, 1909, pp. 101–154.

¹¹ Cf. A. Samsonowicz, *Terminologia leśna średniowiecznej Polski (Forest Terminology in Medieval Poland)*, in: *Szkice z dziejów materialnego bytowania społeczeństwa polskiego*, Studia i Materiały z Historii Kultury Materialnej, vol. LXI, 1992, pp. 71–79; eadem, *Uwagi o regale w Polsce piastowskiej, na przykładzie regale łowieckiego i rybackiego (Remarks on Ducal Privilege in Piast Poland, with the hunting and fishing privileges as examples)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" vol. CI, N° 4, 1994, p. 6; eadem, *Łowy władców — łowy poddanych (Rulers' Hunting — Subjects' Hunting)*, in: *Łowiectwo w tradycji i kulturze. Międzynarodowe Sympozjum*, Pułtusk 1994, Warszawa 1995–1996; R. Jaworski, *Łowy Władysława Jagiełły (Ladislaus Jagiełło's Hunting)*, "Fasciculi Historici Novi" vol. IV, pp. 7–86.

Hunting, which was frequently organised before a war expedition in order to secure the necessary food provisions, was regarded by knights as one of the noblest recreations and, being a deep-rooted custom, it played an important role also in kings' lives¹². Some rulers not only took delight in hunting but wanted to be considered experts in this field. The emperor Frederick II (1215–1250), oblivious of the fate of Biblical princes, wrote a textbook *De arte venandi cum avibus*¹³ and Gaston III Phébus (1331–1391), Count of Foix, wrote *Le livre de la chasse*¹⁴ which discussed all kinds of hunting. Wild animals, in particular exotic ones, were precious gifts, to mention the elephant which Charlemagne received from Abd-er-Rahman or the camel offered to Otto III by Mieszko I. Some rulers kept their own menagerie. But it was during hunting that kings most often encountered wild animals. In chroniclers' accounts some of these encounters are wrapped in a shroud of mystery and wonder. During a hunt the animal should fall prey to the royal hunter, but sometimes we get the impression that the reverse is the case, that the animal chases the king; an encounter with an animal may end with the monarch's death, sometimes in very mysterious circumstances. The wolf and the wild boar are often the heroes of these extraordinary encounters.

The wolf is a Satanic animal in Biblical symbolism and consequently, also in the predominant part of medieval symbolism¹⁵. In his sermons commenting on *St. John's Gospel*, St. Augustine identified the wolf from the story about the good

¹² Cf. A. Samsonowicz, *Łowy władców — łowy poddanych*, pp. 61–63; eadem, *Łowiectwo w Polsce Piastów i Jagiellonów* (hunting in the Poland of the Piasts and Jagiellons), *Studia i Materiały z Historii Kultury Materialnej*, vol. LXII, 1993; P. Dobrowolski, *Połowanie w Anglii XIV wieku* (Hunting in 14th Century England), "Kwartalnik Historyczny" vol. LXXXIX, N° 4, 1982, pp. 581–600.

¹³ *De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus of Frederic II Hohenstaufen*, ed. C. A. Wood, M. Fyfe, Oxford 1956.

¹⁴ Gaston Phébus, *Livre de la Chasse*, ed. G. Tillander, Karlsham 1971.

¹⁵ The wolf is a negative symbol in: *Ezekiel* 22:27, *Jeremiah* 6:7, *Ecclesiasticus* 13:21, *Zephaniah* 3:3, *Acts* 20–29, *John* 10:12, *Luke* 10:3, *Matthew* 7:14; for more details on the wolf in medieval imagination and symbolism see G. Ortalli, *Lupo, genti, cultura. Uomo e ambiente nel medioevo*, Torino 1997; as regards the symbolism of animals in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, Biblical commentaries and ancient hagiography cf. R. Wiśniewski's important article "Bestiae Christum loquuntur" czyli o mieszkańcach pustyni i miasta w "Vita Pauli" Świętego Hieronima ("Bestiae Christum loquuntur" or on the Inhabitants of Deserts and Towns in St. Jerome's "Vita Pauli"), in: *Chrześcijaństwo u schyłku starożytności*, vol. II, Kraków 1999, pp. 263–302, in particular p. 281.

shepherd with the devil¹⁶; hence *Admonitio generalis* (789) includes a warning against the crafty wolf which lies in wait for people who have departed from the road of Church teachings¹⁷. But we also know a “converted wolf”¹⁸ from Isaiah’s prophecy about the Messianic kingdom in which “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb” and “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together”¹⁹. This “converted wolf” can be found in hagiographic stories about holy hermits who subjugate the hostile forces of Nature and resist the devil’s temptations²⁰. In early medieval Germanic mythology the wolf plays an important role as Woden’s sacred animal; it is sometimes his manifestation. In *Edda* we find two of Woden’s wolves that lived in Valhalla: Geri and Freki; Valhalla itself could be distinguished from the halls of other gods by a wolf which hung on the western side of the gate²¹. We also know the demonic wolf Fenrir which on the world’s last day was to kill Woden and swallow the sun²². These two beliefs seem to be combined in a story in the passion of St. Edmund, king of East Anglia, slain by the Danes in 870, whose body was guarded by a wolf, God’s messenger²³. This story may be interpreted both as a hagio-

¹⁶ John 10:12; Augustine of Hippo, *Tractatus in Iohannem* 46:7, ed. R. Williams, *Corpus Christianorum*, Series latina vol. XXVI, Turnholti 1994; also ed. P. Agaësse, *Sources chrétiennes* vol. LXXV, Paris 1961.

¹⁷ *Admonitio generalis*, MGH, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol. I, *Legum* vol. II, p. 53.

¹⁸ Cf. D. Forstner OSB, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej* (*The World of Christian Symbolism*), ed. W. Zakrzewska, P. Pachciarek, R. Turzyński, Warszawa 1990, p. 308.

¹⁹ Isaiah 11:6, 65:25.

²⁰ Cf. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, Chapter 9 (demons in the shape of animals), ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series graeca vol. XXVI, col. 793 ff., and also *Evagrius’ Latin translation*, PL vol. LXXIII, col. 127 ff.; cf. also *Vita Hilarionis*, Chapter 3, ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, in: *Vite dei Santi* vol. IV, s.l. 1975.

²¹ For a man going to war the roar of a wolf signified the goodwill of Woden and was an omen of victory, cf. *Reginismál*, 22, ed. A. Oðinnsen, <http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic/021.html>; as regards Valhalla cf. *Grimnismál*, 10 and 19, ed. A. Oðinnsen, <http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic/005.html>, R. Boyer, *Les Religions de l’Europe du Nord*, Paris 1974, p. 275, A. V. Ström, *Germanische Religion*, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 123 ff., R. Simek, *Odin*, in: *Lexicon der germanischen Mythologie*, 1984.

²² *Voluspá*, 39–44, 58, ed. A. Oðinnsen, http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic/001_01.html; *Vafthrúdnismál*, 46, ed. A. Oðinnsen, <http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic/004c.html>; *Lokasenna*, 39, ed. A. Oðinnsen, <http://www.northvegr.org/lore/poetic/007a.html> (all Net addresses are from February, the 6, 2003).

²³ Abbon de Fleury, *Passio sancti Edmundi*, PL vol. CXXXIX, col. 507–520.

graphic symbol of the “converted wolf” and as an entangled motif of old pagan beliefs. Long after the adoption of Christianity the kings of East Anglia, like all Anglo-Saxon royal dynasties, claimed they were descended from Woden. Edmund’s dynasty was said to have been founded by Woden’s son, Wuffin, that is Wolf, and Edmund was a sacrifice offered by the Danish invaders to Woden²⁴.

Louis IV d’Outremer, king of the Western Franks in 936–954, fell victim to a wolf. Late in the summer of 954 the king, riding from Laon to Reims through the Vois forest, saw an enormous wolf and spurred by his passion for hunting, began to chase it. However, he had bad luck and fell off his horse during the chase. Brought to Reims, he died soon. The chroniclers nearly unanimously connect the monarch’s death with his fall from the horse during the pursuit of the wolf²⁵. Flodoard of Reims (c. 894–966) gives more details²⁶. In his account, the wolf was not an ordinary animal. He calls it a quasi-wolf (*quasi lupus*), but does not explain what he means. Nor does he say precisely what role the creature was supposed to play. Was it by chance that the monarch met a phantom or a demonic beast which was the cause of his death? According to the chronicler, the monarch’s death was not caused by his fall from the horse. In Reims Louis was taken ill with what the chronicler calls *elephantiasis pestis*, which at that time meant swelling and ulceration of the face and neck caused by a kind of tuberculosis of the lymph glands under the jaw (*scrofula*). In the tenth century this disease was also called king’s evil (*morbus regius*), probably because of the golden-yellow colour of the swelling; tuberculosis of the skin was also called “wolf” (*lupus*)²⁷. Flodoard’s account leaves no room for doubt that

²⁴ Cf. J.-P. Poly, *La gloire des rois et la parole cachée ou l’avenir d’une illusion*, in: *Religion et culture autour de l’An Mil. Royaume capétien et Lotharingie. Colloque Hugues Capet* (2e partie), Paris 1990, pp. 175–177; cf. R. Folz, *Les saints rois du Moyen Âge en Occident (VI^e–XIII siècles)*, “Subsidia Hagiographica” vol. LXVIII, 1984, pp. 49–51, 57–60.

²⁵ Cf. Richer, *Histoire de France (888–987)*, 2, 130, ed. R. Latouche, Paris 1964, vol. I, p. 292.

²⁶ *Les annales de Flodoard*, ed. P. Lauer, Paris 1906, p. 138; for more details on Flodoard cf. the latest work by M. Sot, *Un historien et son église. Flodoard de Reims*, Paris 1993.

²⁷ This was the view of Isidore of Seville (*morbus regius, elephanticus, ictericus, arctuatus*), *Etymologiae*, IV, 13, *PL*, vol. LXXXII, col. 192 and the author of a 10th century gloss from Orléans or Auxerre, now MS 394 Bürgerbibliothek Bern, fol. 70 ro, cf. M. G. Grmek, *Les maladies à l’aube de la civilisation occidentale*, Paris 1983, pp. 248–255; J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

this ailment, too, was caused by the encounter with the demonic wolf in the forest. It is worth adding that the fatal encounter in the Vois forest took place not far from the monastery at Corbeny, named after St. Markulf, whose relics were later credited with the power to cure scrofula²⁸.

In 938 Louis d'Outremer invaded the lands of the monastery, took back the land the monastery had received from his father, Charles the Simple (898–922), and incorporated it in his demesne; in 944–946 he again waged a devastating war in the neighbourhood²⁹. Was the phantom wolf the monarch saw in the forest a portent of the punishment St. Markulf was soon to inflict on him? The etymology of the name Markulf (Marchulfus, Mearcwulf, Marchealf) is not clear, but it is beyond doubt that it comes from the Germanic word for “wolf” and that it was thought to mean “wolf in forest” or “wayside wolf”³⁰. In the North of Western Franks' state which was not yet fully Romanised the meaning of the name must have still been understandable to many people. The Anglo-Saxon pagan poem *Widsith*, known from a 10th century record, mentions Marchealf or Mearcwulf, king of the Hundings, that is dog people³¹. In Anglo-Saxon mythology wolves were the dogs of gods³². St. Markulf himself was said to have cured a child bitten by a mad wolf³³. Let us remember that the wolf could represent the devil in medieval symbolism (in line with Christ's story about the good shepherd); consequently, the death that resulted from a wolf's appearance may have been interpreted as an outward sign of the punishment inflicted on the sinful

²⁸ M. Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges*, Strasbourg 1924, 2nd edition Paris 1961, pp. 222, 263–308, 490–493 says that until the 13th century there was no connection between the French kings' power to cure scrofula and the cult of St. Markulf. J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–170, 181, 182, asserts that there is evidence that as early as the reign of Louis VI (1108–1137) there were links between the cult of St. Markulf and the French kings' success in curing scrofula; Poly dates the genesis of this belief at the second half of the 10th century.

²⁹ Cf. Ph. Lauer, *Le règne de Louis d'Outre-Mer*, Paris 1900, pp. 30, 115, 127, 153, 174; J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, p. 174; Y. Sasser, *Hugues Capet, la naissance d'une dynastie*, Paris 1987, pp. 109–118.

³⁰ J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

³¹ Cf. R. W. Chambers, *Widsith, A Study in Old English Heroic Legend*, New York 1965, pp. 214–215.

³² R. Boyer, *op. cit.*, p. 275; R. W. Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 195, N° 23, pp. 214–215, N° 85; J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

³³ *Vita Il Sancti Marculfi*, cap. 17, *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii tomus I, p. 77; J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

monarch. It is worth pointing out that one of the first acts issued by Louis IV's successor, king Lothaire (954–986), speaks of the return of the confiscated property to St. Markulf's monastery, in keeping with the will expressed by Louis d'Outremer himself in the presence of Queen Gerberga and Lothaire³⁴. This may indicate that the court was aware of the surprising concurrence of events: the king of the Franks sees a phantom wolf near the abbey he has robbed, he falls off his horse and soon dies, stricken by a disease called "wolf". We know from later sources that the power to cure this disease was attributed to St. Markulf, whose relics lay in the monastery wronged by the king. Flodoard chooses another name for the king's illness, but there is not a shadow of a doubt that educated readers of his chronicle knew that "wolf" was the same illness as elephantiasis. We can therefore regard the appearance of this quasi-wolf in the forest as a symbol of the punishment to be inflicted on the ruler and as a portent of the kind of death he would meet. If Jean-Pierre Poly is right, this may be the oldest trace of the belief crediting St. Markulf with the power to cure the disease which, at least from the 12th century, was cured by kings of the next dynasty, the Capetians³⁵.

Like the wolf, the wild boar or hog (*porcus*, rarely *aper*) — the distinction between the wild and the domesticated animal is not always clear in the Middle Ages — was regarded as a diabolical beast, a symbol of darkness. *Psalm* 80:13 presents Satan as a boar wasting God's vineyard³⁶. The devil was sometimes presented as a monstrous hog's snout³⁷. In the 12th century the boar or hog was for Rupert of Deutz and Petrus Comestor, commentators of the *Bible*, a symbol of sin, harlotry and profligacy³⁸. As we shall see, medieval authors were inclined to believe that a boar (or hog) can be the devil incarnate.

³⁴ Act of 1 January 955, *Recueil des actes de Lothaire et de Louis V*, ed. L. Halphen, F. Lot, Paris 1908, N° 3, p. 6.

³⁵ M. Bloch, *op. cit.*, *passim*; J.-P. Poly, *op. cit.*.

³⁶ "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it" (Authorized version).

³⁷ On the triptych of St. Hedwig of Silesia in the Bernardines' church in Wrocław, Tartars killed at the battle of Legnica fall into hell where Satan, represented as a monstrous boar's snout devours them (c. 1430, National Museum in Warsaw).

³⁸ Petrus Comestor, *Verbum abbreviatum*, PL vol. CCV, col. 265; Rupert von Deutz, *Commentarii supra Matthaeum*, PL vol. CLXVIII, col. 1472.

A late 13th century story about a boar and Charlemagne is included in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*. The legend about St. Cyr, son of St. Juliette, together with whom he was martyred in Diocletian's time, says that Charlemagne dreamt that a boar attacked him when he was hunting. Charlemagne then saw a naked child who promised to help in return for a piece of material (a coat) to cover itself with. When the emperor fulfilled the child's request, the child mounted the boar and turned it towards Charlemagne, who could kill then the beast. Asked to explain the dream, the Bishop of Nevers told Charlemagne that the child was in fact St. Cyr, Patron of the cathedral at Nevers, and the boar that attacked Charlemagne represented Charlemagne's sins; the coat which the child demanded in return for defence symbolised the roof of St. Cyr cathedral, which was in urgent need of repair. The emperor assigned funds for the repair, and the bishop and the chapter of Nevers included the image of a child mounting a boar in their coat of arms³⁹.

It was Philip, *rex associatus*, the 14-year old son of the king of France Louis VI the Fat (1108–1137) that fell prey to a boar, not during hunting but near the boundaries of Paris⁴⁰. According to *Chronique de Morigny*, contemporary with the event⁴¹, the accident happened when the young king was riding into Paris with a few companions. The chronicler says that the promising young man, worthy to reign over the whole world⁴², died a death which terrified his contemporaries and plunged their minds into darkness⁴³. Since some people asserted that the beast that caused the fatal accident was never seen again, it was assumed that it must have been an evil spirit⁴⁴. The author adds that the young king — a chaste, innocent boy — gave his life for the sins

³⁹ Quoted after L. Réa u, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, vol. III, part 2, Paris 1962, p. 361.

⁴⁰ For more details on *associatio in regem* in Capetian France cf. A. W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France. Studies on Familial Order and the State*, "Harvard Historical Studies" vol. C, Cambridge, Mass. — London 1981, pp. 17, 19, 20, 24–25, 37, 39–41, 44, 46, 51, 55–57, 59, 70, 74–77, 92, 103, 111, 194.

⁴¹ *Chronicon Mauriniacense*, RHF vol. XII, p. 81.

⁴² *Philippus namque Rex et Regis filius, amoenissimus puerorum flos — — dum veluti puer regius et totius Orbis dignus imperio, ibidem.*

⁴³ — — *inter huius lucidissimam prosperitatis serenitatem, subiti fulguris inopinatus casus oboritur; qui corda omnium suae nimietatis horrore concuteret, et non minus stuporis quam doloris mentis obtutibus densissimus tenebras offunderet, ibidem.*

⁴⁴ — — *de potestatibus adversariis fuisse a plurimis aestimatum est, ibidem.*

of others⁴⁵, which makes one think of Jesus' sacrifice. As if to confirm these suppositions, the chronicler quotes a speech by Pope Innocent II who, consoling the heart-broken King Louis VI, told him that God *flagellat omnem filium quem diligit*⁴⁶. An account of this tragic accident can also be found in Louis VI's biography written by his friend, abbot of Saint Denis, Suger. Suger says point-blank that the young man's horse was attacked by a diabolic hog (*porcus diabolicus/diabolus*) which threw Philip off; the prince, who was the hope of good people and struck fear into the hearts of bad men, was then trampled to death by the horse. The abbot emphasises that such misfortune has never been heard of in France⁴⁷.

Philip's death found repercussions not only in contemporary French chronicles but also in the chronicles of the next two centuries. The diabolical theme is repeated in the 13th century *Grandes Chroniques de France*⁴⁸. In the 12th and 13th centuries Philip's death, without the diabolical plot, is mentioned by Rigord of Saint Denis and Guillaume le Breton, biographers of Philip Augustus, by the anonymous authors of *Abbreviatio gestorum regum Francorum*⁴⁹, in *Chronicon Turo-nense*⁵⁰ and by the continuator of the chronicle of Odorannus of Sens⁵¹; at the beginning of the 14th century it was referred to by Bernard Guido (Gui), author of *De origine regum Francorum*⁵² and in the second half of that century it is mentioned in the *Chronicle of the Kings of France up to 1368*⁵³. New information on Philip's death is supplied by another royal author of the turn of the 13th century, Guillaume de Nangis, a monk from Saint-

⁴⁵ *Talis huius Philippi simplicis et innocentis pueri, peccatis aliorum exigentibus, a presenti vita, sicut reor, inauditus exitus fuit, ibidem.*

⁴⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁷ *Interea contigit singulare et ulterius inauditum Francie regni infortunium. Regis enim Ludovici filius, floridus et amenus puer, Philippus, bonorum spes timorque malorum — obvio porco diabolico offensus equus gravissime cecidit, sessoremque suum nobilissimum puerum silice consternatum, mole ponderis sui conculcatum, contrivit, Suger, Vie de Louis VI le Gros et histoire du roi Louis VII, ed. A. Molinier, Paris 1887, pp. 121–122.*

⁴⁸ RHF vol. XII, pp. 191–192.

⁴⁹ *Abbreviatio gestorum regum Francorum*, RHF vol. XXII, p. 67.

⁵⁰ *Chronicon Turo-nense*, RHF vol. XII, pp. 470–471.

⁵¹ It covers the years 1032–1180, RHF vol. XII, p. 285.

⁵² Bernard Guido (Gui), *De origine regum Francorum*, RHF vol. XII, p. 230.

⁵³ RHF vol. XII, p. 231.

Denis. He does not speak about the role the devil was supposed to have played in the event but, referring to the life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, he says that the tragic event occurred when Philip's father, Louis VI, was quarrelling with many French bishops and was even forcibly removing them from their dioceses. St. Bernard tried to ease the conflict; the bishops, anxious to make peace with the king, dropped on their kness before the angry sovereign in Bernard's presence, but were not pardoned; the saint then told the monarch that it had been revealed to him the previous night that Louis would be punished for his obstinacy by the death of his first-born son⁵⁴. It is worth noting that this is an isolated picture of Louis VI whom contemporary and later-day historians rightly present as an ardent friend and protector of the French Church. This shows that the event must have deeply shocked the contemporaries and their descendants. Philip's tragic accident was compared to the sacrifice of Jesus, who also died innocently for mankind's sins; it was presented as a wrong done to the Franks by the devil and also as a punishment for the sins of the king, who lifted his hand against the Church. However, irrespective of the interpretation, a death caused by a hog, an animal which had a decidedly negative meaning in the epoch's symbolism, was a death unworthy of a king, of a knight; it was a death which did not do credit to anybody.

We remember that the chroniclers of Philip Augustus, Rigord and Guillaume le Breton, did not ascribe diabolical features to that hog which killed Louis VI's son, however, in their view the animal had devilish traits. Philip Augustus nearly fell victim to a hog, to a diabolical boar (*porcus*, not *aper*) on the eve of his crowning in Reims. Philip Augustus was the last French king to be raised to the dignity of a monarch and crowned during his father's life. The anointing was to take place on the Feast of the Assumption in 1179. The chronicler of Saint-Denis, Rigord⁵⁵, writes that on the eve of the planned event the heir to the throne

⁵⁴ *Haec, inquit, obstinatio primogeniti tui Philippi morte mulctabitur*, Guillaume de Nançis, *Chronicon (1113–1300)*, RHF vol. XX, p. 729.

⁵⁵ Rigord was born in Languedoc. A physician by profession, he joined the Benedictines' order when he was an adult man. At first he stayed at the priory in Argenteuil, later at the Saint-Denis Abbey, where the abbot made him king's chronicler (*chronographus regis*); he wrote *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (henceforth referred to as *Gesta*) and *Courte chronique des rois de France* (fragments of which have survived) and probably also a guide to the abbey (extinct). He opposed the annulment of Philip Augustus' marriage with Ingeborg. He died c. 1208.

went hunting in the Compiègne forest. When chasing a boar he strayed from his escort and got lost in the forest. Seeing that he had lost his way, he prayed to the Virgin Mary and St. Denis, who was regarded as the patron of the kingdom and kings of France⁵⁶. The prayer helped; the prince soon met a peasant, who recognised his lord, took him out of the forest and brought to town. Though saved, the prince was so terrified that he fell seriously ill and the crowning had to be put off till All Saints' Day. According to the chronicler, the kingdom owed Philip Augustus' recovery to the prayers of the whole Church and to the religious merits and prayers of Louis VII, who begged Christ day and night to save his son⁵⁷. In the poem *Philippidos* completed in c. 1224 Guillaume le Breton⁵⁸ presents the circumstances of the event slightly differently, but no less dramatically⁵⁹. He writes that a few days before the planned coronation the young prince, hunting in the Compiègne forest, lost his way when chasing a boar. The boar had devilish features; it was seen only by the prince and having led him into the depth of the dark forest, where neither the hounds nor the hunters' horns could be heard, disappeared; it dissipated like haze or smoke. Guillaume does not hesitate to say that evil forces were responsible for the event: "like smoke or mist this delusive boar suddenly disappeared from his eyes, if it was indeed a boar that wanted to inflict such distress on us and suddenly deprive the Franks of Philip, who was the only heir to his father and to the kingdom"⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ C. Beaune, *La naissance de la nation France*, Paris 1985, pp. 83–126; G. M. Spiegel, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, "Journal of Medieval History" vol. I, 1975, pp. 43–69; L. Theis, *Dagobert, Saint Denis et la royauté française*, in: *Le métier historien*, ed. B. Guenée, Paris 1977, pp. 19–30.

⁵⁷ Cf. Rigord, *Gesta*, 3, *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton historiens de Philippe-Auguste publiées pour la Société de l'histoire de France par H.-François Delaborde* (henceforth referred to as *Oeuvres de Rigord*) vol. I, Paris 1882, pp. 10–12.

⁵⁸ Guillaume le Breton (Guillelmus Armoricus) b. c. 1150 in the Saint-Pol-de-Léon diocese in Brittany, d. after 1224. He was Philip Augustus' confidential secretary, tutor of his illegitimate son Pierre, diplomat; he was sent as an envoy to Rome to secure the annulment of Philip's marriage with Ingeborg. He accompanied the king at the battle of Bouvines (1214). He wrote two biographies of Philip Augustus: a prose one *Gesta Philippi* and the poem *Philippidos libri XII* (henceforth referred to as *Philippidos*).

⁵⁹ *Philippidos*, book I, 219–274, *Oeuvres de Rigord* vol. II, Paris 1885, pp. 16–18.

⁶⁰ — *quasi fumus et umbra / Protinus ex eius oculis evanuit ille / Deceptivus aper, aprum si dicere fas est, / Qui tantam voluit nobis infligere plagam, / Tam subitoque suum Francis auferre Philippum, / Patri erat et regno qui solus et unicus*

The deceptive boar was therefore the devil who had designs against the kingdom of the Franks. The devil took the form of an animal which was seen only by the victim and which disappeared when the pernicious plan seemed to have been implemented. Even when he was already among his own people the prince was still horrified and exhausted by his dreadful experience and his life was endangered. The coronation had to be adjourned, but thanks to the protection of St. Thomas Becket, for which Louis VII had implored the martyr several years earlier⁶¹, the young prince recovered. He was crowned on All Saints' Day 1179, several months after the accident in the Compiègne forest. Thus, Philip Augustus was before his crowning attacked by the devil whose intention was to deprive the kingdom and all its people of the only heir to the throne, to deprive them of their hope for the future. A dozen lines further on Guillaume le Breton writes that the event in the forest was a test devised by God to enhance the position of the prince who, having won a victory over the tempter, would be even more solicitous for the good of his kingdom⁶². Before receiving God's anointment Philip had to win the battle with Satan who wanted to ruin him. He would however have been defenceless without God's help which was secured by his patron saints. The prince had to triumph not only over Satan; his experience was a kind of warning against frivolity; the prince achieved victory over himself, over his own weakness. Philip Augustus was to be a better king thanks to such a test. The small differences in the stories of the two chroniclers do not change the sense of the message. According to Rigord, the prince got out of the forest thanks to his prayer to St. Denis and the Virgin Mary and was restored to health by Christ, who "never leaves those whose hope is in the Lord"⁶³. Rigord writes about a real animal, not a phantom which dissipated like smoke, as Guillaume le Breton says, and according to him Philip Augustus found his way out of the forest and recovered thanks to other saints than those mentioned Guillaume le Breton. However, both chroniclers agree in their

heres /, *Philippidos*, book I, 234–239, p. 16.

⁶¹ *Philippidos*, book I, 275–335.

⁶² *Haec tamen, haud dubium, tentatio contigit illi / Ut Deus hoc casu meliorem redderet illum./ Attentumque magis curare negotia regni./* *Philippidos*, book I, 255–257, p. 17.

⁶³ *Gesta*, 3, p. 11.

interpretation of the facts: the future king was rescued from his dramatic experience with a boar by God's intervention. As Guillaume le Breton assures us, Philip Augustus overcame evil and fortified his virtue thanks to God's help; he passed the test successfully, showing that he was worthy to be anointed and entrusted with royal power.

In the autumn of 1314, Philip IV the Fair (1285–1314) was hunting in a forest north-east of Paris when he fell off his horse near Pont-Sainte-Maxence; he died less than a month afterwards⁶⁴. Official royal historiography does not say much about the circumstances of the monarch's death. *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* and Yves of Saint-Denis's contemporary chronicle, offered to Philip the Fair's second son, Philip V the Tall (1316–1332), confine themselves to stating that the king died in consequence of an unhappy fall from a horse⁶⁵. The authors pay more attention to an edifying description of the monarch's last moments than to the details of the accident. More details can be found in gossipy chronicles not connected with the court, written some time after Philip the Fair's death, in the 1330s, 1340s and even in the second half of the 14th century. The event resounded not only through France but through the whole of Europe. Parisian chroniclers emphasise the dying king's regret for having made many mistakes during his reign, for not having gone on a crusade, as he had pledged⁶⁶, for having falsified coinage and imposed excessive taxes⁶⁷. According to Jean d'Outremeuse, a chronicler from Flanders, the monarch's life ended in a humiliating way; after he fell from the horse in the forest, the horse dragged the body of Christendom's greatest king along the ground, just as criminals are dragged by horses until they die⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Cf. C. Beaune, *Les rois maudits*, "Razo" vol. XII, 1991, pp. 9–10. For more details on Philip the Fair's death and its allegedly real circumstances see L. Lacabane, *La mort de Philippe IV*, BEC vol. III, 1840, pp. 1–13, C. Baudon de Mauny, *La mort et les funeraillles de Philippe le Bel*, BEC vol. LVIII, 1897, pp. 1–14.

⁶⁵ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. J. Viard, vol. VIII, Paris 1934, p. 258, Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et Passio sancti Dionysii*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (henceforth referred to as BN), MS lat. 5286, fo 212–215.

⁶⁶ *Memoriale historiarum*, RHF vol. XXI, p. 659.

⁶⁷ *Continuation de la Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, RHF vol. XX, pp. 611–612.

⁶⁸ Jean d'Outremeuse, *Miroir des histoires*, ed. S. Bormans, Bruxelles 1880, vol. VI, p. 199.

Dante, too, draws attention to what he regards as Philip the Fair's ignoble death, saying in the *Divine Comedy* that the king was slain "by the tusk of wild boar"⁶⁹. Soon, in the 1330s and 1340s, a story began to circulate that it was an encounter with a huge boar that caused the king's fall from the horse and his death, though some authors ascribe the accident to a stag⁷⁰. The story can be found in Parisian, Norman and even Italian chronicles⁷¹. The Italian Guglielmo Ventura who, together with Dante was expelled from Florence in 1301 by Philip's brother, Charles of Valois, when the count was imposing his rule on Florence, writes that the king's bad life could not have ended in a good death⁷². Gilles le Muisit, a Fleming, regards Philip the Fair's accident as a sign of God's wrath. In his opinion, the king died without extreme unction because his confessor had died a month before, also after a fall from a horse⁷³.

Of course the dying monarch could have been given extreme unction by any clergyman, but his version allowed the chronicler to present the king's death not as an unhappy accident but as God's verdict on the sinful sovereign. The confessor, responsible for the king's soul, and the ruler die a similar death. Gilles le Muisit adds that Philip the Fair died when he was amusing himself instead of working for the good of his kingdom. The boar was believed to feed on mud, and the monarch's body was after his fall dragged or a long time through mud by the frightened horse. Mud and boar were understandable symbols of impurity and sin⁷⁴. The accounts which we know of the death of Philip, son of Louis VI, and of Philip Augustus' accident were known in the 14th century to people interested in the history of France and

⁶⁹ Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. Paolo Milano, translated by Laurence Binyon, *Paradiso, Canto XIX*, v. 120, New York 1947, p. 468.

⁷⁰ *Anciennes chroniques de Flandre*, RHF vol. XXII, p. 40.

⁷¹ *Chronographia regum Francorum*, ed. H. Moranvillé, vol. I, Paris 1891, p. 218, *Chronique normande du XIVe siècle*, ed. A. Molinier, Paris 1882, p. 30, Giovanni Boccaccio, *De casibus*, 9; Jean Desnouelles (or de Noyal), abbot of the St. Vincent Monastery at Laon writes (second half of the 14th century) that the boar which caused the accident was "huge and miraculous" but he does not explain what he means by "miraculous", RHF vol. XXI, p. 196.

⁷² Guglielmo Ventura, *Chronicon Astense, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (henceforth referred to as *RIS*), vol. XI, p. 19.

⁷³ Gilles le Muisit, *Chronique*, ed. H. Lemaître, Paris 1906, p. 84.

⁷⁴ Cf. C Beaune, *Les rois maudits*, Rupert von Deutz, *op. cit.*, Petrus Comestor, *op. cit.*

its kings. It was quite universally acknowledged that a hog (or boar), also the one that caused Philip the Fair's death, could be an embodiment of Satan. Giovanni Villani says explicitly in his chronicle that a death caused by a boar or a hog is a punishment for sins. Villani points out that such was the death of the heretical, schismatic, false emperor, Louis the Bavarian (1314–1347)⁷⁵. But there can also be other interpretations. Twelfth and thirteenth century texts regarded the boar as a symbol of a Jew (inborn impurity was attributed to both)⁷⁶. In some 14th century texts the boar is regarded as a symbol of the Flemings who, like that animal, live in a muddy, swampy country⁷⁷.

Colette Beaune, author of two articles concerning the unusual attention paid to Philip the Fair's death⁷⁸, expresses the view that the stories about a boar lying in wait for Philip could symbolise revenge on the part of the Jews, who were robbed and expelled from France in 1306, or the Flemings⁷⁹, whom Philip IV tried to force into obedience. The French won one great battle with the Flemings (Furnes 1298), were defeated in another great battle (Courtrai 1302) and were victorious in the subsequent battle (Mons-en-Pévèle 1304). Finally Philip succeeded in incorporating the French-speaking part of Flanders and left the remaining part under the rule of a count with whom he concluded a peace treaty, which was broken by the Flemings twice (in 1313 and 1314), shortly before the king's death. The story about Philip

⁷⁵ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, RIS vol. XIII, p. 983. Louis IV Wittelsbach was called a heretic for he supported the Spiritual Franciscans condemned by the curia, against the Avignonese popes, in particular John XXII. The Avignonese popes (John XXII, Benedict XII and Clement VI) did not recognise Louis as emperor for he was crowned by the anti-pope Nicholas V (Pietro Rainalucci) created by Louis Wittelsbach. This is why Louis was declared a schismatic by Avignon.

⁷⁶ Cf. C. Beaune, *Les rois maudits*, Rupert von Deutz, *op. cit.*, Petrus Comestor, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Cf. *The Chronicle of Bridlington*, ed. W. Stubbs, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, (henceforth referred to as Rolls Series) vol. LXXVI, London 1883, pp. 204–205.

⁷⁸ C. Beaune, *Perceforêt et Merlin. Prophétie, littérature et rumeurs au début de la guerre de Cent Ans*, "Cahiers de Fanjeaux. Collection d'Histoire religieuse du Languedoc aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles" (henceforth referred to as Cahiers de Fanjeaux) vol. XXVII, *Fin du monde et signes du temps. Visionnaires et prophètes en France méridionale (fin XIII^e–début XV^e siècle)*, 1992; eadem, *Les rois maudits*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ C. Beaune, *Perceforêt et Merlin*, p. 24.

the Fair's death in an encounter with a huge boar may have been influenced by his troubles with Flanders. There is also a third possibility. Stories attributing a monarch's death to an encounter with an enormous boar were popular in particular in the 1330s and 1340s, that is, in the first years of the Hundred Years' War, when the French suffered heavy defeats (Sluys 1340, Crécy 1346). Since the end of the 12th century the English had known *Merlin's prophecy* in which the future kings of England were shown in the shape of animals. Among them was "a boar with a lion's heart", the conqueror of many kingdoms⁸⁰. During Edward III's successful invasion of France many English chroniclers thought that the prophecy referred to him. The story about a boar which was the cause of the French king's fatal accident may have been inspired by the prophecy of Edward's conquests and spread by English propaganda⁸¹.

The heroes of all these events were not only kings whose experiences in hunting were regarded as mysterious by the contemporaries. The four stories related here do not exhaust the subject but they have some common characteristics and similar plots. Louis d'Outremer, Philip the son of Louis the Fat, and Philip Augustus were not victims of ordinary accidents with game but, as follows from the accounts of contemporary chroniclers, they came into contact with the supernatural world. Less obvious is the case of Philip the Fair, whose encounter with a boar was not described explicitly as the appearance of the devil in animal's clothing, but everything seems to indicate that this was how it could be interpreted. All these encounters far from being accidental, were a kind of God's judgment on each of the four rulers. The easiest to explain is the accident of Philip Augustus, for in his case we have the interpretation of the event by Guillaume le Breton who, being closely connected with the king, could present the attitude of the monarch himself or his court. But let us not forget that this is exactly while the account cannot be regarded as fully impartial. Louis d'Outremer's experience with the wolf is also related by a chronicler who sympathised with the ruling

⁸⁰ Cf. R. Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England*, New York 1911, pp. 152-162; C. Beaune, *Perceforêt et Merlin*, pp. 239-242.

⁸¹ This was the opinion of, for instance, Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. Baron Kervyn de Lettenhoven, Bruxelles 1869, vol. XVII, p. 216; cf. C. Beaune, *Perceforêt et Merlin*.

Carolingian dynasty. This is why he speaks about the supernatural circumstances of the event in an allusive way, for he did not want his account to be used to condemn the monarch as a sinner punished by a vindictive saint or the devil himself. The story about Philip the Fair's encounter with a boar was told by authors ill-disposed towards the monarch, while royal historians remained silent about the event. The diversity of accounts led to a diversity of interpretations but none was favourable to the dead king. All of them indicate that the fatal accident caused by a beast was a punishment for Philip the Fair's sins or symbolised the future defeats of his state for which the monarch was indirectly responsible from the grave, for he misgoverned his state and was not a good ruler of his people. There was a close connection in medieval mentality between a ruler's life and the fate of his state; it was believed that a king's sins inevitably brought misfortune on his kingdom⁸², that a king's death could also be caused, "brought about", by the miserable lot of his oppressed people, and in the opinion of some chroniclers, Philip IV knew this⁸³.

⁸² The oldest trace of this belief is the 7th century Irish text *De XII abusivis saeculi*, widely circulated and well known in the Middle Ages; in the chapter *Rex iniquus* its author says that the reign of an "ignoble king" can plunge the world in chaos and even lead to its ruin (cf. PL vol. IV, col. 869 — a text of Pseudo-Cyprian, or vol. XI, col. 1077). A direct reflection of this belief can be in the royal mirror written by Ionas, bishop of Orléans under the emperor Louis the Pious (cf. Ionas Aurelianensis, *De institutione regia ad Pippinum regem*, PL vol. CVI, col. 279–306; J. Reviron, *Les idées politico-religieuses d'un évêque du IX^e siècle*. Ionas d'Orléans et son *De institutione regia* (étude et édition critique), Paris 1930, p. 141. In the 12th century a similar view was expressed by the political moralists who observed England under Henry II Plantagenet (cf. E. Türk, *Nugae curialium. Le règne d'Henri II Plantagenet et l'éthique politique*, Genève 1977, pp. 119–120, 165). The most representative of late 13th and early 14th century France is the treatise by Aegidius Romanus, archbishop of Bourges, author of the royal mirror *De regimine principum*, Roma 1556 (cap. 3). It was presented to Philip the Fair, who asked Henri de Gauchi to translate it into French, cf. D. M. Bell, *Ideal éthique de la royauté en France au Moyen Âge. D'après quelques textes moralistes de ce temps*, Paris–Genève 1962, p. 55, D. Quagliioni, "Regimen ad populum" et "regimen regis" in *Egidio Romano e Bartolo de Sassoferato*, "Bulletino dell' Instituto Storico per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratorio" vol. LXXXVII, pp. 201–228. For a trace of a similar belief in Polish sources cf. R. Michałowski, *Ideologia monarchiczna Piastów wczesniejszego okresu (The Monarchic Ideology of the Early Piasts)*, in: *Imagines potestatis. Rytuaty, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierzchniej. Polska X–XV wiek (z przykładem czeskim i ruskim)*, ed. J. Banasz-kiewicz, Colloquia Mediaevalia Varosviensia vol. I, Warszawa 1994, pp. 191–194.

⁸³ Such opinions were expressed by John of St. Victor about Philip IV the Fair and about Philip V the Tall, *op. cit.*, p. 674, by Geoffroy de Paris about Philip the Fair, *Chronique métrique*, ed. A. Diverrès, Paris 1955, p. 217, and by Jean d'Outremeuse about Philip the Tall, *op. cit.*, p. 265; cf. also C.

Philip Augustus is the only one of the four kings who thanks to his virtues gained victory in his confrontation with supernatural forces, though his health was impaired. Two others, Louis d'Outremer and Philip the Fair died after their encounter with the miraculous beast, their death being a punishment for their sins and misrule. Louis VI's son died as an innocent victim of the sins committed by his father or, in general, by God's people. We see that the chroniclers' accounts of the kings' encounters with beasts have a clearly moralising aspect, not excluding the story about Philip Augustus' pre-coronation hunting, for should not the young prince have devoted his time to pious reflections and prayer on the eve of that special day? The death of the other monarchs illustrates the punishment meted out to bad rulers. This is a well known motif in medieval moralising: such rulers as Theodore the Great, Charles Martel, the emperor Charlemagne and his descendants were placed in hell or, as Jacques Le Goff thinks, in the nascent purgatory, by their vindictive ecclesiastic opponents⁸⁴. It is also worth paying attention to the place in which God passes judgment on the kings. Forest plays an important role in Germanic and Celtic mythologies as a place in which gods and heroes have various adventures; it is also a mythical area of magic and miracles depicted in chivalrous romances. The forest, the medieval successor to the Biblical desert, was, as Jacques Le Goff says, "an area of difficult experiences, above all an area where one lost one's way", "a place where one could meet Satan and demons", "a retreat for pagan cult", "a borderland" (between two spatial and cultural categories), also a treacherous place, "for feudal morality turns it into a place of illusions, temptations and traps"⁸⁵. Claude Lecouteux, author of studies on medieval folklore, describes the medieval beliefs connected with forest and with the supernatural spectres which appear to punish inveterate sinners or teach a lesson to those who still have a chance to be redeemed⁸⁶. Finally, the forest is a place where a hero can be tested and where his social re-integration can start, as was the case with King Arthur who,

Beaune, *Les rois maudits*, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁴ Cf. L. Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire*, Paris 1981, pp. 130-131, 161, 162-165.

⁸⁵ J. Le Goff, *Le désert-forêt*, *op. cit.* pp. 61, 64, 66, 73.

⁸⁶ C. Lecouteux, *op. cit.*

having unwittingly committed adultery with the False Guinevere, fell ill when hunting in a forest. His confession in *articulo mortis* in the course of which he learns from the hermit that, though unknowingly, he committed a mortal sin, saves him from death and allows him, after absolution, to return to society and make amends for his wrongdoing⁸⁷. There is a similarity between Arthur and Iven, the Knight with the Lion, who after becoming insane, takes refuge in a forest where, with the help of a hermit, he begins his return to the world of humans. The successive stages of this return are: defence of ladies, widows and orphans against knight-robbers, a fight with a giant, the killing of a fire-belching serpent, a fight with devils and finally the taming of a lion which becomes his inseparable companion, symbolising the taming of the forces of Nature by Iven⁸⁸. In the 12th century epos *Garin le Loherain* the knight Begon kills a boar, an embodiment of the dragon, of Satan⁸⁹. In an Icelandic saga about Harald the Fairhair by Snorri Sturlusson (beginning of the 13th century) the forest is a test ground: the young Harald, before he becomes Norway's ruler, roams in a forest, led by a peasant who lives there; Harald himself regards this experience as a test and an augury of his future fame⁹⁰. What is noteworthy is the similarity between this motif and the story about Philip Augustus, who goes through a virtue test in the forest before being anointed king. The young prince defeats the evil that lies in wait in Nature with the help of Christian *sacrum*, like Arthur and Iven. The religious element, culture, overcomes savage and Satanic forces. The forest can be a miraculous, sacred place not only in the world of the Arthurian legend and Icelandic sagas. It can also be a place in which God tests and passes judgment on the rulers of this world. Young Philip, son of Louis VI, did not die in the forest but on the confines of a town, that is, in a place where the two worlds, civilisation and savagery, border on each other⁹¹.

⁸⁷ *Lancelot en prose*, ed. A. Micha, vol. I, Genève 1980, p. 153; D. Boutet, *Charlemagne et Artur ou roi imaginaire*, Paris 1992, p. 52.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. Le Goff, *Le désert-forêt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64; idem, *Lévi-Strauss en Brocéliande. Esquisse pour une analyse d'un roman courtois*, in: idem, *L'imaginaire médiéval*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-188.

⁸⁹ Cf. A. Planché, *La Bête singulière*, in: *La Chasse au Moyen Âge*, p. 495.

⁹⁰ Snorri Sturlusson, *Le Saga de Harald l'Impitoyable*, ed. in French R. Boyer, Paris 1979, pp. 35-36; J. Le Goff, *Le désert-forêt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

⁹¹ Cf. the old French poem *Parténopeus de Blois*, ed. and trans. by G. A.

All these stories about kings' dramatic experiences with beasts mysteriously intertwine diverse manifestations of medieval mentality: Christian political and religious moralising with the closely connected subject of God's punishment awaiting bad rulers, with folkloristic themes present in literary culture, such as fear of the forest and of the evil forces of nature present in it, and finally with the omnipresent motif of a heroic test. The experiences which Louis IV d'Outremer, Philip the son of Louis VI, Philip II Augustus, Philip the Fair and the emperor Louis IV the Bavarian went through were thought by the contemporaries to be supernatural manifestations connected with these rulers' actions. Only Philip Augustus passed the test and reigned happily for 43 years. An atmosphere of mystery and scandal surrounded the young virtuous Philip Capetian who, even though he was anointed, crowned and became *associatus in regem*, was not included in the list of kings because of the circumstances of his death⁹², for he suffered death for the sins of his people or of his father. The sinful kings were punished by an ignoble death for their wicked life.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)

Crapelet, Paris 1835, pp. 13–14; cf. M. Kawczyński, *Amor i Psyche w poezji starofrancuskiej*, 1. "Parténopeus de Blois" (*Amor and Psyche in Old French Poetry*, 1. "Parténopeus de Blois"). *Rozprawy Wydziału Filologicznego Akademii Umiejętności*, Kraków 1902, vol. XXXIV, pp. 5, 73–83. We read in *Parténopeus* that on coming to Gaul, the Trojans brought civilisation to Gaul's simple people by building castles and towns in its wild areas; as regards the town as a symbol of civilisation's victory over primitiveness cf. J. Banaszkie wicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne Mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka* (*Master Wincenty Kadłubek's Legendary History of Poland*), Wrocław 1998, pp. 7–28.

⁹² According to C. Beaune, *Perceforêt et Merlin*, p. 249.