

March 2009
Volume 124 Number 2

PMLA

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

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Volume 124 Number 2

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Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

Published six times a year by the association

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The office of publication and editorial offices are located at 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 (646 576-5000; pmlasubmissions@mla.org).

All communications concerning membership, including change-of-address notifications, should be sent to the Member and Customer Services Office, MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 (646 576-5151; membership@mla.org). If a change of address also involves a change of institutional affiliation or a new e-mail address, that office should be informed of this fact at the same time.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 12-32040. United States Postal Service Number 449-660. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PMLA, Member and Customer Services Office, MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789.

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Cover: Detail of the ex libris of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I for Gaston Phoebus's *Le livre de la chasse* (c. 1407). The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Bequest of Clara S. Peck, 1983. MS M.1044 (fol. 1v). Photograph by the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The library writes:

Hunting was an important part of medieval life; kings and noblemen were expected to excel and take pleasure in the pursuit. Some famous hunters wrote books on the subject, whereas others collected and commissioned them. Three of the most popular French treatises were written during the fourteenth century, but others were also written in Spanish, English, and German.

Gaston III, Count of Foix (1331–1391), called Phoebus on account of his golden hair or handsome features, wrote his hunting book late in life (1387–89), sharing his knowledge in a field in which he claimed supremacy, unlike in his two other pleasures in life, arms and love. The work, dedicated to his fellow hunter and warrior Philip the Bold (1342–1404), Duke of Burgundy, comprises four books: On Gentle and Wild Beasts, On the Nature and Care of Dogs, On Instructions for Hunting with Dogs, and On Hunting with Traps, Snares, and Crossbow. . . .

The Morgan Phoebus, a book fit for a king, was given to Ferdinand and Isabella a few years before 1492, when they retook Granada and added the pomegranate (its symbol) to their coat of arms. As a sign of their ownership, they commissioned a Castilian artist connected with Juan de Carrion to add this splendid ex libris to the manuscript. The emblems in the inner border reflect the monarchs' conjugal bond, for each used the one belonging to the initial of the other: Ferdinand, the yoke (iugo, the I) and Isabella, the arrow (flecha, the F). The animals in the outer border offer a prelude to the manuscript, as they are quoted from its miniatures. ("Illuminating the Medieval Hunt"; Morgan Library and Museum; Morgan Lib. and Museum, n.d.; Web; 30 Apr. 2009)