Rampant Lion

The lion is a common charge in heraldry. It traditionally symbolizes bravery, valor, strength, and royalty, because historically it has been regarded as the king of beasts.

The animal designs in the heraldry of the high medieval period are a continuation of the animal style of the Viking Age, ultimately derived from the style of Scythian art as it developed from c. the 7th century BC. Adopted in Germanic tradition around the 5th century, they were re-interpreted in a Christian context in the western kingdoms of Gaul and Italy in the 6th and 7th centuries. The characteristic of the lion as royal animal in particular is due the influence of the Physiologus, an early Christian book about animal symbolism, originally written in Greek in the 2nd century and translated into Latin in about AD 400.

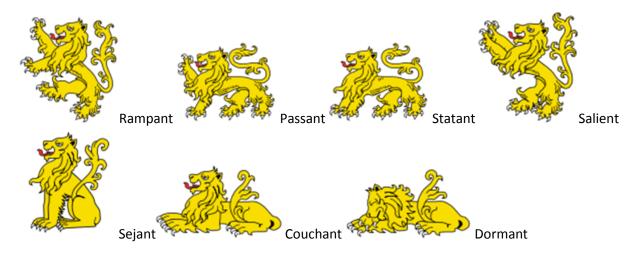


The lion as a heraldic charge is present from the very earliest development of heraldry in the 12th century. One of the earliest known examples of armory as it subsequently came to be practiced can be seen on the tomb of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, who died in 1151. An enamel, probably commissioned by Geoffrey's widow between 1155 and 1160, depicts him carrying a blue shield decorated six golden lions rampant and wearing a blue helmet adorned with another lion. A chronicle dated to c. 1175 states that Geoffrey was given a shield of this description when he was knighted by his father-in-law, Henry I, in 1128. Earlier heraldic writers attributed the lions of England to William the Conqueror, but the earliest evidence of the association of lions with the English crown is a seal bearing two lions passant, used by the future King John during the lifetime of his father, Henry II, who died in 1189. Since Henry was the son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, it seems reasonable to suppose that the adoption of lions as an heraldic emblem by Henry or his sons might have been inspired by Geoffrey's shield. John's elder brother, Richard the Lionheart, who succeeded his father on the throne, is believed to have been the first to have borne the arms of three lions passant-guardant, still the arms of England, having earlier used two lions rampant combatant, which arms may also have belonged to his father. Richard is also credited with having originated the English crest of a lion statant (now statant-guardant).

A "lion rampant" is depicted in profile standing erect with forepaws raised. The position of the hind legs varies according to local custom: the lion may stand on both hind legs, braced wide apart, or on only one, with the other also raised to strike; the word *rampant* is often omitted, especially in early blazon, as this is the most usual position of a carnivorous quadruped. the term *segreant* denotes the same position, but is only used in reference to winged four-legged beasts like griffins and dragons.

As many *attitudes* (positions) now exist in heraldry as the heraldist's imagination can conjure, as a result of the ever-increasing need for differentiation, but very few of these were apparently known to medieval heralds.

The commonly used attitudes are:



The Band uses a lion passant sinister (left facing) gules (red) in our logo: and a rampant lion in our cap badge





The lion's head is normally seen in agreement with the overall position. When the head faces the viewer, it is referred to as "guardant":

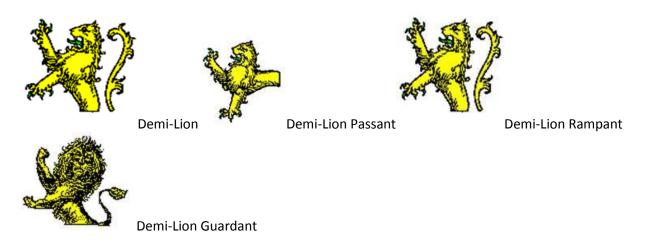


Rampant Lion Guardant

When it is turned to the opposite direction, it is referred to as "regardant." For example:



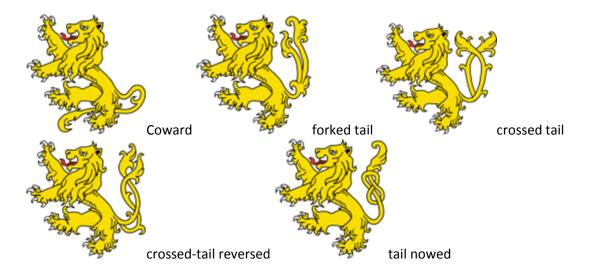
When just the torso of the lion is used (above the hind quarters), it is referred to as a Demi-Lion:



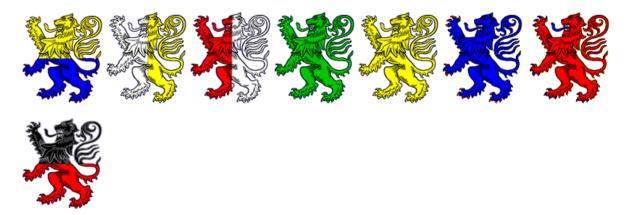
Sometimes, just the head is used:



A lion (or other beast) may carry the tail between its hind legs (coward). The tail also may be knotted (nowed), forked (queue fourchée) or doubled (double-queued):



The Lion can also be "crowned", "gorged" (devise around the neck), and in a variety of colors and color combinations:



In addition to the Kingdom of Scotland, the Rampant Lion is used in the arms of the Czech Republic, Finland, Norway, the Philippines, Jerusalem, Kingdom of Leon, Lyon France, German State of Hesse, Flanders, Nova Scotia and many others. The Rampant Lion is also used as "supports" and in personal and family crests.

You can read more about lions in heraldry here.