

# **The Elephant in Medieval Legend and Art**

by

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## Introduction to the Digital Edition

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**Author:** George Claridge Druce was born in Surrey, England and lived there and at Wimbledon until 1923, when he retired from managing a distillery company and moved to Cranbrook, Kent. He was a member of the Kent Archaeological Society from 1909, as Secretary from 1925 to 1935 and then Vice-President until his death. He was a member of the Royal Archaeological Institute (1903-48, Council member 1921-28) and of the British Archaeological Association, joining in 1920, serving on its Council 38 and then as Vice President (1938-48). He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (F.S.A.) of London in 1912 and served on its Council 1923-6. Druce travelled extensively (by bicycle) with his camera, and built up a unique collection of photographs and glass lantern slides, which in 1947 he presented to the Courtauld Institute in London. Although interested in almost all branches of antiquarian study, he specialized in the study of the bestiary genre, and was widely recognized as an authority on the influence of bestiaries on ecclesiastical sculpture and wood carving. He also studied manuscripts both in England and elsewhere. He contributed articles to various scholarly journals, presented many lectures, and in 1936 produced a translation of *The Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc*, a Norman-French manuscript which dates from 1210-11. Druce died in 1948.

— *Adapted from an obituary written by Canon Sydney William Wheatley, F.S.A. in The Journal of the British Archaeological Association, 3rd series, 11 (1948), 80.*

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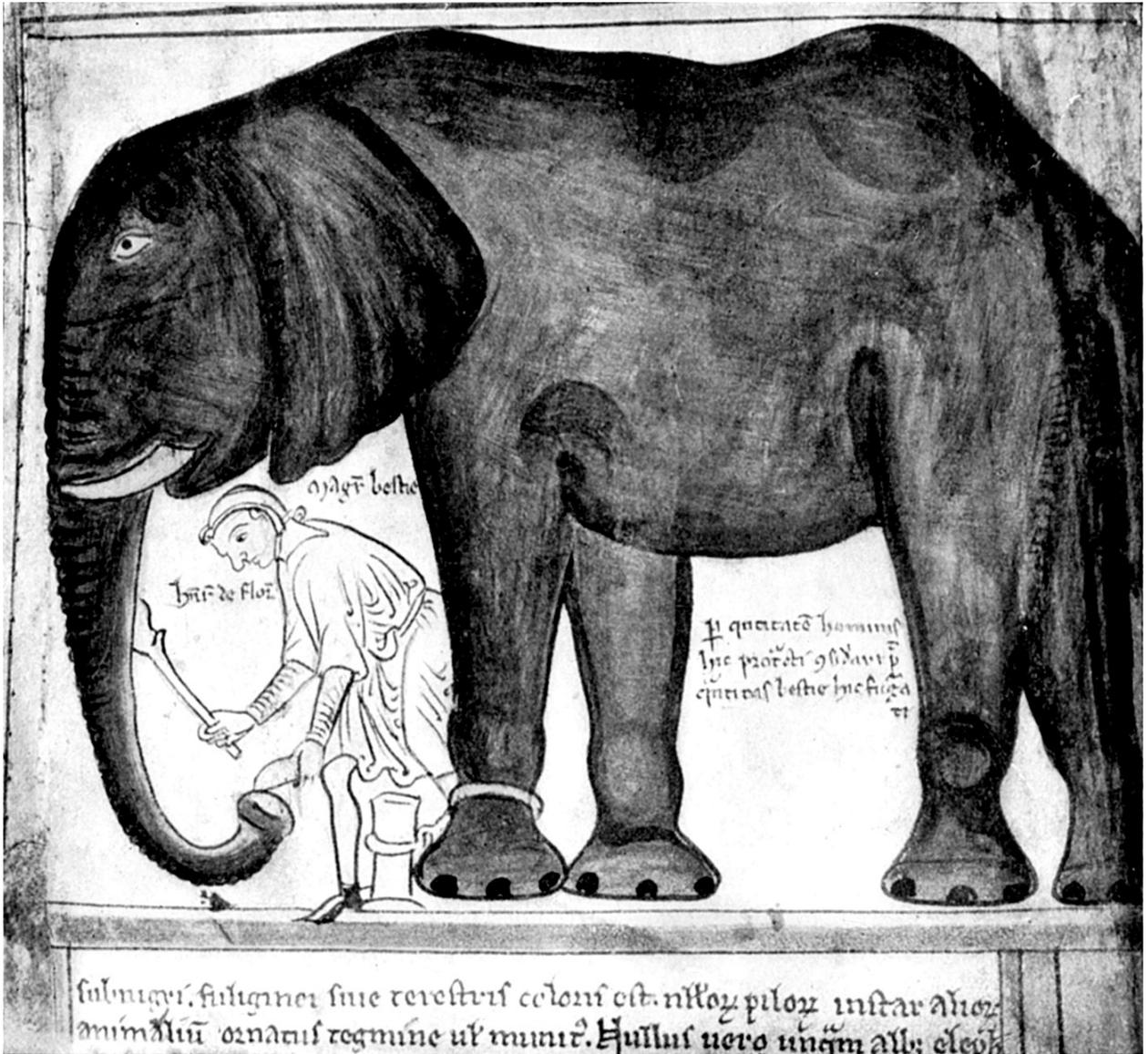
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PLATE I



ELEPHANT : MS. PARKER 16, CORPUS CRISTI COLL. CAMBRIDGE.

## THE ELEPHANT IN MEDIEVAL LEGEND AND ART

By G. C. DRUCE, F.S.A.

Among the larger wild animals the elephant has always held a leading place. As the lion has aroused admiration and fear in man, so has the elephant aroused curiosity and wonderment; and this is not surprising when we consider its great size and striking appearance. Visits of elephants to this country in the middle ages are but rarely recorded. The most interesting is that of the elephant presented by Louis of France to King Henry III in 1255, as related by Matthew Paris. It was kept at the Tower and lived four years, and we are told that many people flocked to see the strange sight.<sup>1</sup> It has been preserved to us pictorially, for there is an excellent illustration of it in MS. Parker 16 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and others not so good in MS. Nero D i. and MS. Julius D vii. at the British Museum. The miniature in the MS. at Corpus (plate I) shows us an elephant of the African species standing fastened to a stake by the ankle, together with its keeper who holds a knotted club and is feeding it. It is very fairly drawn, being well proportioned, the ears large and tusks projecting from the upper jaw as in nature. Its trunk also is natural, but its feet hardly so satisfactory. On the ground of the miniature is written the name of its keeper, Henry of Florence, and a statement that the size of the beast may be measured by the height of the man. The texts of these manuscripts give a lengthy description of elephants, including many details taken from Aristotle and Pliny, and quotations from Bernardus Silvester and Horace. Illustrations of elephants are fairly numerous in medieval manuscripts, especially the bestiaries and manuscripts of Alexander's Romance; and they occur freely in ecclesiastical carving and heraldry. The preference is given to the elephant with the castle on its back, which is perhaps [2] natural in view of the frequent references in early writers to the use of elephants in war, and the general popularity of this form. The elephant and castle as such, however, plays no part in the legend as told in the bestiary, although it figures largely in the illustrations.

It is intended in this paper to give an account of the legend and its sources. It offers some attractive features, and an important Sermo or religious interpretation is founded upon it. The legend of the elephant also brings us into direct connexion with the legends of the serpent called Draco and the mandrake. Further, it is our object to show how the elephant was treated in illuminated manuscripts and ecclesiastical and heraldic art in the middle ages.

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE HEXAMERON.

The early history of the *Liber Physiologus*, the name by which the first bestiary was known, is involved in obscurity, and we get no definite news of it before the decree of 496, associated with the name of Pope Gelasius, by which it was adjudged to be a heretical book. The original compiler was probably a Greek monk of Alexandria, who was influenced by the popularity of the symbolic method of teaching employed by the Christian Fathers. He had before him the references in the

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<sup>1</sup> For particulars as to the career of this elephant see H. Sands: Extracts from the documentary History of the Tower of London (*A. J. Ixis*, 166).

Bible and Epistle of Barnabas to the unclean beasts, stories of animals with moralisations as found in the Homilies of Origen (186-253), and especially the treatises on the Hexameron of Ambrose (340-397), Basil (329-379), and Eustathius (fl. c. 450). They have much to say about the elephant. Ambrose (lib. vi, ch. 5) discusses the reasons why the Creator fashioned some animals with long, some with short necks. 'It is,' he says, 'because those animals which feed by grazing, such as the horse, ox, or camel, need long necks to enable them to reach the ground, whereas lions and tigers, which are flesh-eaters, have no need of long necks, as they seize their prey. The elephant has a projecting trunk, because since it is taller than every other animal, it cannot bend down to feed. Therefore it makes use of its trunk both to gather its food and to pour copious draughts of water down its throat; for that reason its trunk is hollow, enabling [3] it to suck up whole ponds of water necessary to quench the thirst of so huge a beast. Its neck, it is true, is smaller than so bulky a body would lead us to expect, but if it were otherwise it would be more burdensome than useful.' Ambrose then repeats the popular tale that the elephant does not bend its knees, his view being that it has need of rigid legs like pillars in order to support so great a fabric of limbs. The result is that it cannot lie down, and he describes how tame elephants 'are propped up with great beams, so that when asleep they can to some extent recline without danger of falling. But wild elephants, which lean against trees when rubbing their sides or sleeping, not infrequently fall down by the tree giving way, and there they lie and perish, or betray themselves by trumpeting, so that the hunter comes up and kills them. And the hunters take advantage of this habit to cut a slit partly through the tree, so that it gives way under the elephant's weight, and so they are captured.'

He then proceeds to draw a comparison between the elephant and an excessively high building which is likely to fall, and says that if we build them so because of their beauty or height, so ought we to approve these qualities in elephants, because they serve a great purpose in war. And then follows a vivid description of a battle in which elephants are employed. He styles them walking towers and explains how everything goes down before their onset. Like the high buildings mentioned, elephants are supported on very firm foundations, and it is owing to their legs being in proportion to their size that they are able to prolong their life to 300 years or more. 'So their joints are close-set, but in the case of men, if they stood long or ran very fast, or continually walked about, how soon would their knees and the soles of their feet ache! 'He compares their tusks to natural spear-points, and says that whatever they roll up in their trunk they break and whatever they trample under-foot they crush the life out of as if it were crushed by the fall of a building. After further observations about their habits, he concludes by pointing to elephants as an object lesson to us that nothing superfluous has been created; 'and yet this beast of so great size is subject to us, and obeys the commands of man.'

Eustathius (lib. ix, ch. 5) directs attention to the fact [4] that the weaker animals, such as hares, fallow deer and wild sheep are more prolific in order that they may not be ex-terminated at the hands of the fiercer carnivora; but the latter are less productive. He teaches that 'if you study the limbs of animals you will find that the Maker has given them nothing redundant, has denied them nothing needful. Lions have sharp teeth for tearing flesh; camels have long necks for reaching their food, but bears, lions and tigers have short necks, and ruminating animals special stomachs.' Then he turns to the elephant and gives many details of its anatomy, especially its trunk and legs, maintaining with Ambrose that its legs could not support its weight if they had joints. He alludes

to the use of elephants in war, calling them ‘towers of flesh placed in the front of the battle-line, or like living mountains opposed to the enemy.’ Further, that ‘God ordained the elephant, so vast in size, to be subject to man, so that it might understand whatever it is taught, and submit when it is struck, showing clearly by this that all things have been subjected to us, because we have been made in the likeness of God and may not only observe his incalculable wisdom in the biggest of animals, but also in the smallest reflect on his wonders.’ And after reciting various instances of natural phenomena in evidence, he concludes: ‘one is not so greatly amazed at the vast size of the elephant as at the mouse which is such an object of fear to the elephant, or at the extremely slender sting of the scorpion which the wisdom of the Maker has made hollow as it were like a pipe, so that through it the scorpion may inject poison into those stung by it. But let no one blame the Creator for bringing these poisonous creatures into our life, for that would be like blaming the teacher of children who in forcing them to adhere to the duty of discipline punishes their inattention and rudeness with threats and blows.’

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE BESTIARY. LATIN VERSIONS.

Such was the kind of foundation, both material and moral, that the author had to build upon. It may perhaps explain the reason why the elephant had such a prominent place in the bestiary in view of the fact that it is not directly mentioned in the Bible, apart from the Book of Maccabees. [5]

The original Physiologus probably did not contain many details that are recorded in the manuscripts of the twelfth and following centuries, and which were introduced from Isidore’s Etymology and the ‘De Universo’ of Rabanus. Unfortunately there are no manuscripts of the original work known to exist. The earliest with which we are acquainted is MS. 10074 at the Bibl. Roy., Brussels, dating from the latter part of the tenth century. It is in Latin. Two other Latin manuscripts at Berne are also said to be of the tenth century.<sup>2</sup> The existing Greek manuscripts are not earlier than the twelfth century, and do not offer any better indication of the nature of the original Liber Physiologus than the existing Latin manuscripts.

The bestiary was popular and widespread, and is found in other languages than Greek and Latin, viz., French, Italian, Icelandic, Syrian, Arabic, Armenian, and Ethiopian. The legend of the elephant is recorded in most, but is not in the Armenian manuscripts of which translations have been given by Pitra and Cahier. Latin manuscripts predominate, and for our purpose it will be convenient to give a translation of the text of MS. Harl. 3244, at the British Museum, of the thirteenth century, with such adjustments as the texts of other Latin manuscripts may suggest. In this manuscript the account is in two parts, the first of which has the heading: ‘De elephante jumentorum rege.’

‘There is an animal, which is called “elephant,” which possesses no desire for sexual intercourse. The Greeks imagine that it is called “elephant” from the great size of its body, because it resembles a mountain. For in Greek a mountain is called “Eliphio.”<sup>3</sup> But among the Indians it is called

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2 Nos. 233 and 318. Transcriptions of these three MSS. are given by Cahier in *Mélanges d’Archéologie*, vol. iv, p. 57.

3 Royal MS. 12 F. xiii. (B.M.) ‘Elephon.’ A corruption of the Greek λόφος, as given in Isidore’s Etymology, = Lat. jugum, the ridge or brow of a hill.

“barrus”<sup>4</sup> from its trumpeting. So also its trumpeting (is called) “barritus” and its teeth “ebur.” Its snout is called “promuscis,” because it puts food into its mouth with it; and it is like a snake and is guarded by a rampart of ivory.<sup>5</sup> No bigger animal is to be seen. [They [6] say that these creatures were called Lucanian oxen by the ancient Romans; oxen because they knew no bigger animal, Lucanian because Pyrrhus used them first in Lucania in battle against the Romans; for this kind of animal is suitable for war.]<sup>6</sup> For the Indians and Persians, stationed in wooden towers placed upon them, fight with darts, as if from a wall. They are possessed of a vigorous intelligence and memory. They move about in herds [they salute with such movements as they are capable of], are afraid of a mouse, and are disinclined to breed. They bring forth after two years (gestation), and they do not produce young more than once, and then not several but only one. They live 300 years.

Now if the elephant wishes to beget children it goes to the East to paradise;<sup>7</sup> and there is a tree there which is called Mandragora, and it goes with its female, who first takes of the fruit of the tree and gives it to her male. And she beguiles him until he eats, and immediately she conceives; and when the time for bringing forth has come, she goes into a pool so deep that the water comes up to the udders of the mother. But the (male) elephant guards her while giving birth because of the dragon which is the enemy of the elephant. Now if it should find a serpent it kills it, trampling it underfoot until it is dead. The elephant is a source of terror to bulls but fears the mouse. It has such a nature that if it has fallen down it cannot get up. Now it falls down when it leans against a tree to sleep, for it has no joints in its knees. Then the hunter makes a cut partly through the tree, so that the elephant when it has leant against it may fall down together with it. But as it falls, it cries out loudly, and at once a great elephant appears, but is not able to lift it up. Then both cry out, and there come twelve elephants, but they are not able to raise that which was fallen. Thereupon they all cry out, and immediately there comes a little elephant which places its mouth with its trunk under the big elephant and lifts it up. Now the little elephant has this nature that, where a fire is made of its hair and bones, no evil thing will come nor dragon.<sup>8</sup> [7]

The great elephant and his wife represent Adam and Eve. For when they were in the flesh and pleased God before their lapse, they were ignorant of sexual intercourse, nor had they any knowledge of sin; but when the woman ate of the tree, that is the mandragora, the tree of knowledge, and gave to her husband, then she became pregnant, and because of this they went out from paradise. For while they were in paradise Adam knew her not. For it is written: Adam knew his wife, and she, conceiving, brought forth Cain above the waters of shame; about which the prophet says: “Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul” (Ps. lxi, 1), and immediately the dragon deceived them and made them to become strangers from their mountain home. This is not the way to please God. Then came the great elephant, that is the law, and did not raise him up, in the same way that the priest did not raise that man up who fell among thieves. Nor did the twelve elephants,

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4 An Indian word used by Horace, *Epod.* 121.

5 *Et est angui similis vallo munitur eburno.* This is a mutilated passage from Lucretius ii, 537: ‘. . . anguimano elephantos, India quorum Milibus e multis valle munitur eburno.’ ‘The snake-handed elephants, with many thousands of which India is defended as with an ivory rampart.’ —(Bohn’s ed. 1872).

6 The text is given correctly by Isidore (*Etym.* lib. xii, ch. 2) and Rabanus (*De Universo* lib. viii, ch. 1), in the version in the appendix to the works of Hugo de Sancto Victore, ‘*De Bestiis et aliis rebus*’ (lib. ii, ch. 26), and in many MSS.

7 i.e. the garden of Eden.

8 i.e. serpent.

that is the multitude of prophets, raise him up, as neither did the Levite him that was wounded whom we have mentioned; but it was the wise elephant, that is our Lord Jesus Christ. Since he is greater than all, he is made the smallest of all, because he humbled himself, being made obedient unto death, that he might raise mankind. He is the wise Samaritan who placed him on his beast. For (Christ) himself being wounded bore our infirmities and carried our sins. Now we understand by the Samaritan a preserver, about which David says: “The Lord preserveth the simple” (Ps. cxvi, 6). And where the Lord is present, the devil will not be able to come near.<sup>9</sup>

‘Now elephants break whatever they roll up in their trunks, and whatever they tread upon is crushed as it were by the fall of a vast building. They never fight about the females, for none of them have promiscuous intercourse. They have the good quality of gentleness. Indeed should they chance to see a man wandering in the desert, they offer themselves as an escort to the high road; or if they should fall in with a flock of sheep, they make the way clear for themselves gently and quietly with their trunks,<sup>10</sup> lest they should kill with their tusk any animal that comes in the way. And when they happen to be engaged in battle [8] with a band of enemies, they take no small care of the wounded, for they place the tired and wounded in the middle.’

This may be regarded as the normal text.<sup>11</sup> The Westminster bestiary has in addition at the end: ‘Alexander frightened these beasts away from his camp by the grunting of swine. The dragon drinks the blood of the elephant for the purpose of cooling his burning intestines.’ MS. 318 at Berne is curtailed in parts. In the paragraph relating to the burning of the bones it states that ‘neither dragon nor demon ‘shall prevail there. The Latin bestiary at Monza, said to be of the twelfth century, shows no special feature.<sup>12</sup> The Latin MS. of the twelfth century at Leyden of which the text is given by Land<sup>13</sup> says that the young elephant when born ‘washes itself and then hastens to its mother’s breast ‘; and in the burning of the hair and bones that no demon or serpent will stay, which is rendered in the Sermo, ‘nec draco rebellis nec daemon.’

The second part corresponds in the main with the version of Hugo de Folieto (d. after 1173), whose aviary, with a bestiary following, is given in the appendix to the ‘De bestiis et aliis rebus’ of Hugo de Sancto Victore (d. 1141) lib. ii, ch. 25, and in several manuscripts of the thirteenth century in the British Museum and elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> While the events recorded are the same, the symbolism is varied.

The heading runs: Item de partu elephantum. Elephans in aquis parit propter insidias draconis.

‘Now when the time has come for it to give birth, it goes where there is a pool and enters the water so deep that it comes up to its udders; and there it brings forth above the water because of the dragon which lays wait for it. And if it brings forth elsewhere than in the water, the dragon seizes its offspring and devours it. For that reason it enters deep water to bring forth its young. And the

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9 Alluding to the burning of the little elephant’s hair and bones to drive away serpents.

10 Latin: manu.

11 Other MSS. with similar text are: MS. 10074 at Brussels; MSS. Add. 11283, Sloane 3544, Harl. 4751, 12 F. xiii, Vesp. E. x, Roy. 2 C. xii, Stowe 1067, and Roy. 12 C. xix, all at British Museum, and MS. 22, Westminster Chapter Library. In MS. Roy. 12 C. xix, a folio is missing with the illustration and first part of the text.

12 Text in *Revue de l’art Chrétien* 3rd. series, vol. v, p. 172.

13 *Anecdota Syriaca*, vol. iv, p. 43.

14 MS. Sloane 278; MS. L40.2/L.28 at Sion College, and MS. 26 in the collection of Dyson Perrins, Esq.

male (elephant) does not leave it, but guards it while giving birth [9] because of the serpent which is such an enemy of elephants.

‘Now these two elephants, the male and the female, represent Adam and his wife Eve, who were in the paradise of God before their fault, surrounded with glory, knowing no evil, no natural desire, no sexual relationship. But when the woman partook of the forbidden tree, she corrupted her husband and he ate of it also. Thereupon, being expelled from the gates of paradise, they were cast out into this world as if into a pool of many waters, of which this world bears a likeness, because of its constant agitations and disturbances and countless turnings and twistings,<sup>15</sup> about which David says: “Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul” (Ps. lxxix, 1) and elsewhere: “I waited patiently for the Lord; and he looked upon me,<sup>16</sup> and heard my prayers, and brought me up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay” (Ps. xl, 1). Then Adam knew his wife, and she brought forth Cain in miry clay.<sup>17</sup> Therefore as if in tender pity, coming down from the bosom of the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, assuming our flesh, brought us forth from the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. And he set our feet on a rock and put a new song in our mouth, a hymn unto our God (Ps. xl, 2-3). Thus when he taught us to pray, then he put into our mouth a new song, saying: “After this manner ye shall pray: Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matt. vi, 9). This hymn our Master himself taught us to repeat to God, who set our feet upon a rock and put in our mouth a new song, a hymn to our God. And so too the apostle himself prays for us and says: “May the God of peace sanctify you wholly and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. v, 23). For in what-ever place or house the bones and skin of the elephant may be burnt, immediately the smell of them drives out and puts to flight serpents, or if there have been any harmful and poisonous reptiles there, they do not approach. So too the works and commands of God purify the heart of [10] any one who has them within himself, and no thought of a contrary nature is able to enter there; but whatever is harmful and foul, immediately every such thought leaves him and vanishes away, so that no evil spirit nor contrary thought nor any mischief thence arising is any longer in evidence.’

The portion of text next following consists of the description of the elephant’s appearance and habits given in the first part; and it concludes with an account of the mandrake. This will be dealt with later.

The legend is also given in the Latin version of Thetbaldus in 36 rhyming hexameters and pentameters. It follows the Latin prose MSS. closely.<sup>18</sup>

The miniatures in the Latin manuscripts, as has been pointed out, usually display the elephant with the castle, but there are a few which illustrate the legend. Perhaps the most complete is that in MS. Sloane 278 (plate II, no. 1), for the elephant, the dragon, and the mandrake are all included. Four elephants appear in the scene, three of which are adults and the other the calf. It is likely that the big elephant on the left is the male keeping off the dragon just below, which looks up at its enemy. The elephant on the right would then be the female, with her calf just below. These two

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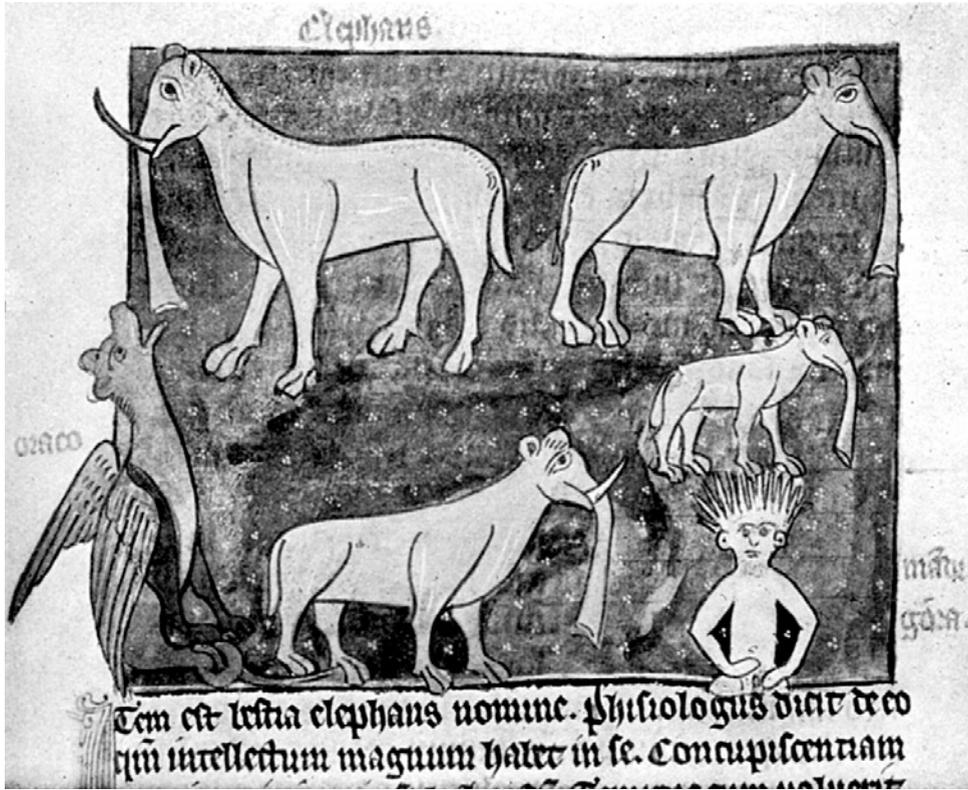
15 ‘propter multas ejus fluctuationes et commotiones et innumerabiles ejus volubilitates’; but in Hugo: propter diversas perturbationes et voluptates.’

16 respexit mihi; but Vulg. intendit.

17 i.e. in the impurity of sin.

18 See MS. Harl. 3093 B.M., of the thirteenth century. The text is given in *An old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 1872).

PLATE II



NO. 1. LEGEND OF THE ELEPHANT: MS. SLOANE 278 (B.M.)



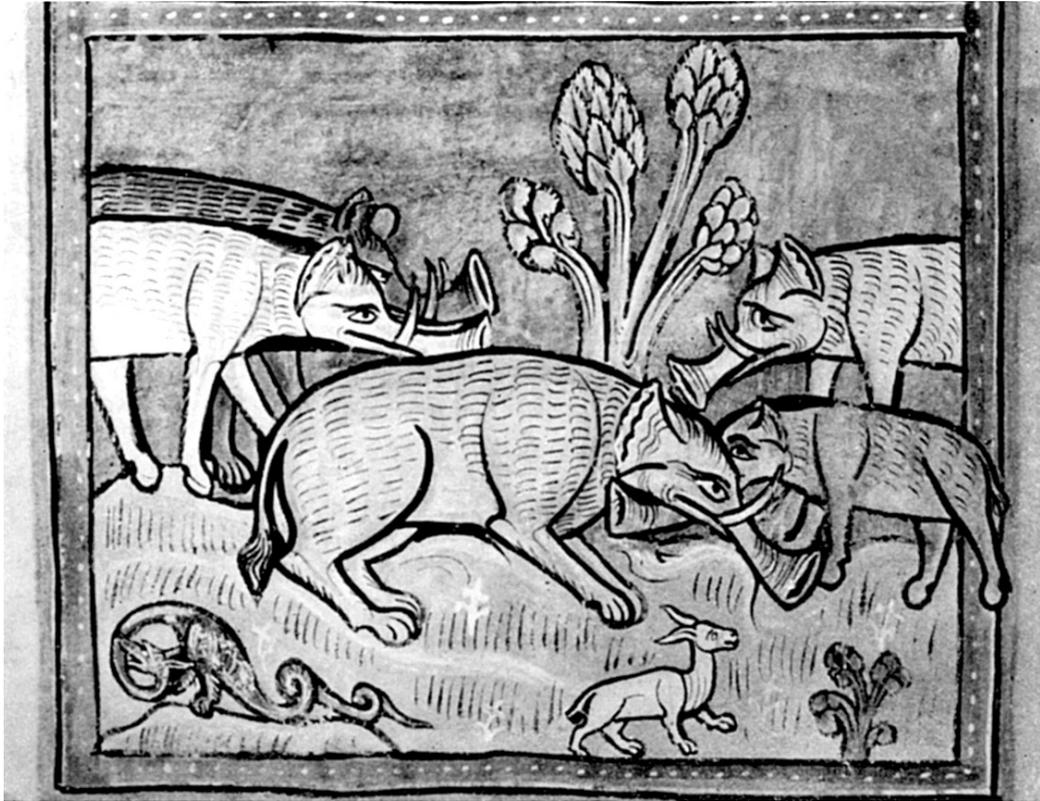
NO. 2. BIRTH OF THE YOUNG ELEPHANT: MS. 12 F XIII (B.M.)

have no tusks. The elephant facing the man-drake would illustrate that part of the legend. The plant is in human form. The elephants here resemble cattle in shape, their trunks being like pipes and their tusks rising from the lower jaw. They have small dogs' ears and cloven feet. The dragon is of the usual type, with wings and knotted tail.

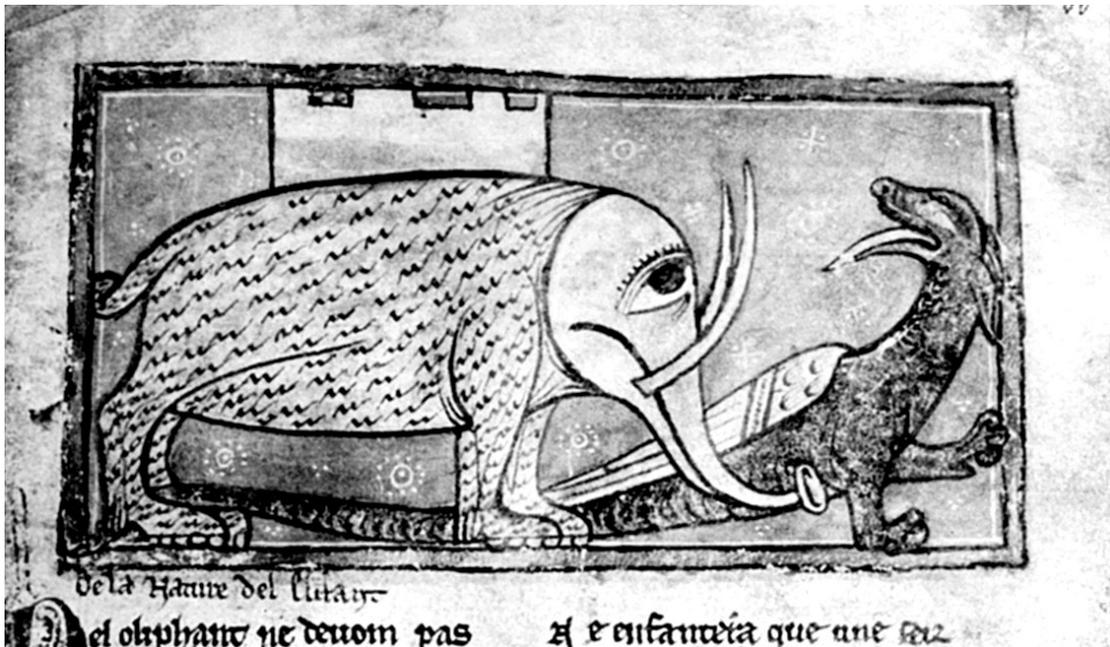
In Royal MS. 12, F. xiii, there are two miniatures. That which follows the text illustrates the birth of the young elephant, which stands facing its mother in a conventional pool (plate II, no. 2). Two trees, four fishes and an eel complete the picture. The other, a beautiful full-page miniature, is divided into two, the upper portion showing the elephant and castle, the lower the scene of the big elephant fallen down and the small elephant in the act of raising it with its trunk (plate III, no. 1). The tree behind it may perhaps represent that which is partly cut through; if so it would [11] betray some license on the part of the artist. Three other big elephants, representing those which had failed to raise their comrade, stand in the background; and a bush, a small dragon, and another animal are introduced in the foreground. The elephants in these miniatures are coloured pink, blue, or yellow, indifferently, and are unnaturally drawn. In shape they approximate to pigs, and have short trumpet-mouthed trunks, boars' tusks, and ears like axe-heads lying back. Their legs and feet are those of clawed animals, except one in the second miniature which has hooved feet.

In MS. Harl. 3244 there are two miniatures. One shows the elephant and castle, the other the head of an elephant, with water below. Facing it is a large green dragon, with red and yellow flames issuing from its mouth. In MS. Stowe 1067 two elephants appear, with two mandrakes, presumably illustrating the scene in paradise. The former are very badly drawn and resemble pigs. They have small erect ears, fair trunks, tusks sticking up, and horse-tails. There are indications of saddle-cloths, but no castles. On the right the two mandrakes, intended as male and female, stand side by side. In MS. Douce 167 (Bodl.) a red and a green elephant face each other with their heads bent down and trunks and tusks crossed. Below the green elephant is a smaller red one, the calf, in water. They have long bushy tails and three-toed feet. Below them again is a red and green dragon with protruding tongue. An ornamental border runs between as if to indicate that the dragon is watching them from a distance. This scene illustrates the birth of the young elephant. In the next miniature two mandrakes appear, in form as man and woman. In MS. Bodl. 602 there are also two illustrations, the first being the elephant and castle, and the other apparently the elephant leaning against a tree. Here it is a clumsy creature, with small erect ears, rising tusks, and cloven feet. The tree stands mid-way across its body. In MS. Douce 88 (first bestiary) the miniature does not apparently illustrate anything in the story, for it shows a tame elephant standing with its head and trunk raised and mouth open, being fed by a man in front of it from a bucket or trough. There is another unusual miniature in MS. 26, Dyson Perrins collection, which shows a pair of elephants, one on either side of a tree bearing round red fruit like oranges—one [12] elephant is pulling fruit from the top of the tree with its trunk and the other is putting fruit into its mouth. They are fairly drawn and are slate-coloured. The illustrated Latin bestiaries in the University Library and Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge contain no miniature of the legend.

PLATE III



NO. 1. RAISING THE FALLEN ELEPHANT : MS. 12, F XIII (B.M.)



NO. 2. ELEPHANT TRAMPLING ON DRAGON : MS. O.2.14, TRINITY COLL. CAMBRIDGE

## THE FRENCH VERSIONS.

Following the Latin manuscripts, the French bestiaries are the most numerous and interesting. There are four versions, omitting the *Bestiaire d'Amour* which stands by itself. They comprise the bestiary of Philippe de Thaon or Thaun of the twelfth century; of Guillaume le Clerc, and of Gervaise, both of the thirteenth century; and of Pierre of Picardy, also of the thirteenth century, but of which the best-known MS. is of early fourteenth century date. The first three are in verse. For Thaun's version MS. Nero A v. at the British Museum and MS. 249 at Merton College have been used. The story of the elephant is contained in seventy-seven lines of rhyming verse, with headings in Latin, but the division of the lines has not been adhered to in the Merton manuscript. It is followed by twenty-three lines about the mandrake. The texts correspond closely; in the following translation no attempt has been made to give other than a literal rendering.<sup>19</sup>

We find a beast—which we call elephant,  
About it the naturalist—says in his writing:  
It is a wise beast—and does not often breed;  
When the time comes—that it will beget young,  
Then it goes to the East—it takes its female with it  
To paradise—where man was first placed.  
There there is a tree—it is the mandrake;  
Of the fruit first—the female takes  
To seduce her male—and then makes him eat.  
When they have eaten the fruit—then they will mate;  
They will do their will—by which they will get young;  
The female conceives—just as a female ought.  
For fear of the dragon—she brings forth her calf [13]  
In a deep pool—the water up to her belly.  
If it were out of the water—the dragon would seize it,  
All alive he would eat it—or at once would kill it.  
The male will be there—he will guard his young;  
For fear of the dragon—he guards his young.  
Keep (it) in remembrance—it has a great meaning.  
A beast of this kind—means Eve and Adam,  
Who in the holy paradise—on earth were put,  
Where the serpent entered—who tempted them first  
With the fruit of the apple tree—which he made them eat  
Against God's command—and against his will.  
Eve ate of it first—and then gave to Adam;  
Just the same do—these beasts in this world,  
Who remember the deed—of the ancient crime  
Which Eve and Adam did—who then fell in the sea,

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<sup>19</sup> MS. Nero A v. has been transcribed and translated by Thos. Wright in his *Popular Treatises on Science*, 1841.

And then begot children—and wept for their sin.  
 The sea means this world—according to allegory,  
 And we are the young ones—and the devil the dragon.  
 In the sea are tempests—rains and bad storms,  
 Just the same in the world—anger and tears confound folk;  
 Therefore prayed David—in his psalm thus:  
 “Save me, Lord God—from the sea, from the tempest.”  
 When the devil had made—Adam to be driven  
 From his holy paradise—where he was formed and put,  
 Great hurt he felt—that man should have  
 The place whence he fell—thro’ the pride that he had.  
 Therefore would he exile—Adam and his wife.  
 He made great war on Adam—slew his son on earth;  
 Therefore the Son of God—came from his majesty  
 And for man took flesh—in great pain entered,  
 Then gave his people—a quite firm foundation,  
 On a rock set us—to pray taught us,  
 And on a rock wrote—Jesus Christ his prayer;  
 A rock means—I will not tell you wrong,  
 The firm foundation—where God has put us.  
 When we say his prayer—we say “Our Father,”  
 And thus ought we to pray—to hear Jesus Christ,  
 Since thro’ his passion—we have redemption.  
 And the naturalist—about the elephant says more,  
 There where its bone shall burn—where its skin shall blaze, [14]  
 The smell which issues—will drive off serpents,  
 And poison and filth—such is its nature.  
 Thus completely—are driven off serpents,  
 And poison and vermin—so says divine writing,  
 By the works of God—and by his power.

Heading: De factura elephantum et virtute et quomodo capiuntur.

And Isidore tells us—who describes the elephant,  
 They are beyond measure great—and have the form of oxen,<sup>20</sup>  
 And the teeth which they have—are all of ivory.  
 A castle it will carry—if it were on its back,  
 It has understanding—and good memory.<sup>21</sup>  
 In its legs by nature—it has but one joint;

20 MS. Nero A v. ‘bucs,’ which Wright has translated ‘goats.’ It is obviously a scribe’s error for ‘bues.’ Merton MS. reads ‘bos.’  
 The allusion is clearly to the Lucanian oxen.

21 These two lines are omitted in the Merton MS.

It cannot lie down—when it wants to sleep,  
 For if it were laid down—it cannot get up;  
 Therefore it must lean—instead of lying down,  
 Against a tree or wall—then it sleeps safely.  
 And the people of the land—who will overcome it,  
 Will undermine the wall—or cut a slit in the tree;  
 When the elephant will come—who will lean against it,  
 The tree or wall will fall—and it will tumble down,  
 And thus indeed—do these folk take it.  
 Know about the elephant—when it has mated,  
 The female truly—before her calf is born,  
 Will carry it two years—in spring she will conceive;  
 And they live three hundred years—they are in India Major.<sup>7</sup>

It will be seen that the events recorded here correspond closely with the Latin manuscripts, from which the French versions were taken. The illustrations in MS. Nero A v. have not been filled in, although spaces are left. In the Merton manuscript it was intended that there should be three, for there are headings: ‘Hic elephantes pinguntur in aqua parientes, et draco,’ and ‘Hic ostendit quod os elephantis serpentes et venenum fugat,’ without any illustrations. The third heading runs: Hic Adam et Eva et serpens et arbor pinguntur,’ and a pen and ink drawing is [15] attached representing Adam and Eve standing one on either side of the Tree of Knowledge. The serpent is coiled round the tree and has an apple in its mouth. Adam on the right holds an apple; Eve on the left holds her left hand to the apple in the serpent’s mouth.

The version of Guillaume was very popular, and a fair number of manuscripts remains. Many of them are illustrated. The story of the elephant is comprised in 122 lines of verse rhyming in pairs, and is followed by a description of the mandrake in thirty-six lines. This version is attractive by reason of its simplicity of expression and the obvious sincerity of the author. For our purpose four texts have been used, viz.: MS. Egerton 613 (B.M.)<sup>22</sup>; MS. Vesp. A vii (B.M.); a transcription of MS. 25545 Français at the Bibl. Nat. by Hippeau<sup>23</sup>; and a transcription of another manuscript at the Bibl. Nat. by Cahier.<sup>24</sup>

In the subjoined translation the simple language of the French has been followed as far as possible:

We ought not to hold the story  
 Of the elephant up to mockery;  
 It is the biggest beast there is,  
 And will carry the greatest burdens.  
 It is full wise and understanding,  
 And in battle very useful.

<sup>22</sup> Transcribed by R. Reinsch in *Le Bestiaire*, Leipzig, 1890.

<sup>23</sup> *Le Bestiaire Divin*, by M. C. Hippeau, Caen, 1852.

<sup>24</sup> *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, vol. iv, p. 60.

There it plays a great part,  
And the Indians and the Persians  
When they go to war  
Are wont to load great towers on it,  
Of worked wood, well embattled.  
When they come into the great fight,  
There mount up the archers,  
The men-at-arms and the knights,  
For to shoot at their enemies.  
The female, I am told,  
Carries two years when she is pregnant,  
Then gives birth and not before.  
Nor will she ever, know this,  
Give birth more than once; [16]  
And then she will have but one calf.  
She fears the dragon so much  
That in a pond she goes to give birth,  
To keep her young from death;  
And the male waits outside  
To guard and defend them both.  
The writing says of the elephants  
That they live quite two hundred years;  
In India and Africa is their home,<sup>25</sup>  
In both those lands they had their birth,  
In Africa they are born no more,  
But in India they remain still.  
When the male will beget young  
With his companion and mate  
To the East together they go  
To paradise, in a mountain,  
There where the mandrake grows,  
Of which we shall remind you after.  
The female of the elephant  
Now goes to the plant;  
She eats of the plant first,  
And the male without more ado<sup>26</sup>  
Eats also, when he sees that,  
And the female beguiles him.  
When both have eaten of it  
And have played and frolicked,

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25 But in Cahier's MS. 'vont pestre'—they go to feed.

26 Cahier's and other MSS. 'Sanz nul gabois'; but in Hippeau's MS. 'bien le sachez,' as an interjection.

And come together to their business  
 As beasts should do,<sup>27</sup>  
 The female at once conceives,  
 And the young one which she gets  
 She carries two years, as I told you.  
 Near her time she has great fear  
 Of the dragon which watches them;  
 In very deep water she goes  
 To give birth, that the dragon  
 May not seize her calf;  
 For should he see it out of the water,  
 The dragon would devour it. [17]  
 In these two beasts truly  
 Are Eve and Adam figured.  
 When they were in paradise  
 Set in plenty and in joy,  
 They did not know what evil was,  
 Nor did carnal pleasure come.  
 But when Eve tasted the fruit  
 And advised her lord  
 To eat of it, against command,  
 They were exiled at once  
 And cast in the deep pool  
 And great waters of this world,  
 In great dangers and torments  
 Which make many people drown;<sup>28</sup>  
 Of which the prophet David says  
 In a psalm which he wrote:  
 ‘Save me, O God, by thy mercy  
 ‘From the great perils in which I am,  
 ‘For down within my soul are entered  
 ‘Many great waters and floods.’  
 And in a verse again he says  
 How the Lord God succoured him:  
 ‘I waited for my Lord,’ he says,  
 ‘And he heard me by his goodness  
 ‘Brought me out of the lake of misery,  
 ‘From the mire and dirt where I was.’  
 When Adam was disinherited,  
 And cast out of paradise,

27 But Vesp. A. vii ‘Si sont pers sans contraire.’

28 MS. Egerton 613, Vesp. A vii, and Cahier: ‘neier,’ but Hippeau: ‘perillier.’

In pain and perdition  
 He begat his race.  
 But our Father pitied him,  
 For a ransom for his sin  
 He inspired a new Adam  
 Who for us bore pain and woe,  
 And put us all to ransom.  
 This is always my song  
 Which I ever sing and repeat to you.  
 By him were we saved from death,  
 He came from the bosom of the Father,  
 Took human flesh and became man. [18]  
 On a firm rock he set our feet,  
 In our mouth, know that,  
 He put a new song, and taught us  
 The holy prayer which he said,  
 Which we call 'Our Father';  
 Always ought we to say it.  
 Of the elephant, I may tell you,  
 Good is the skin and good the bones;  
 Who would burn them in fire,  
 Know that the smell will drive away  
 All serpents which may be near,  
 And have poison in them.  
 No poison can remain there  
 Where one burns the bones.  
 Of the bones they make precious ivory,  
 Which they fashion in many a way.  
 The elephant's body is so big,  
 That when it comes to the pasture  
 Out of its mouth issues a pipe  
 With which it feeds in the pasture,  
 Else it would not reach its food  
 Without kneeling low down.  
 And if it were on its knees,  
 It could not get up by itself.<sup>29</sup>

The miniatures are as a rule inferior to those in the Latin manuscripts, but are not without interest. In some cases the Sermo is illustrated as well. In MS. 14969 Français in the Bibl. Nat., of

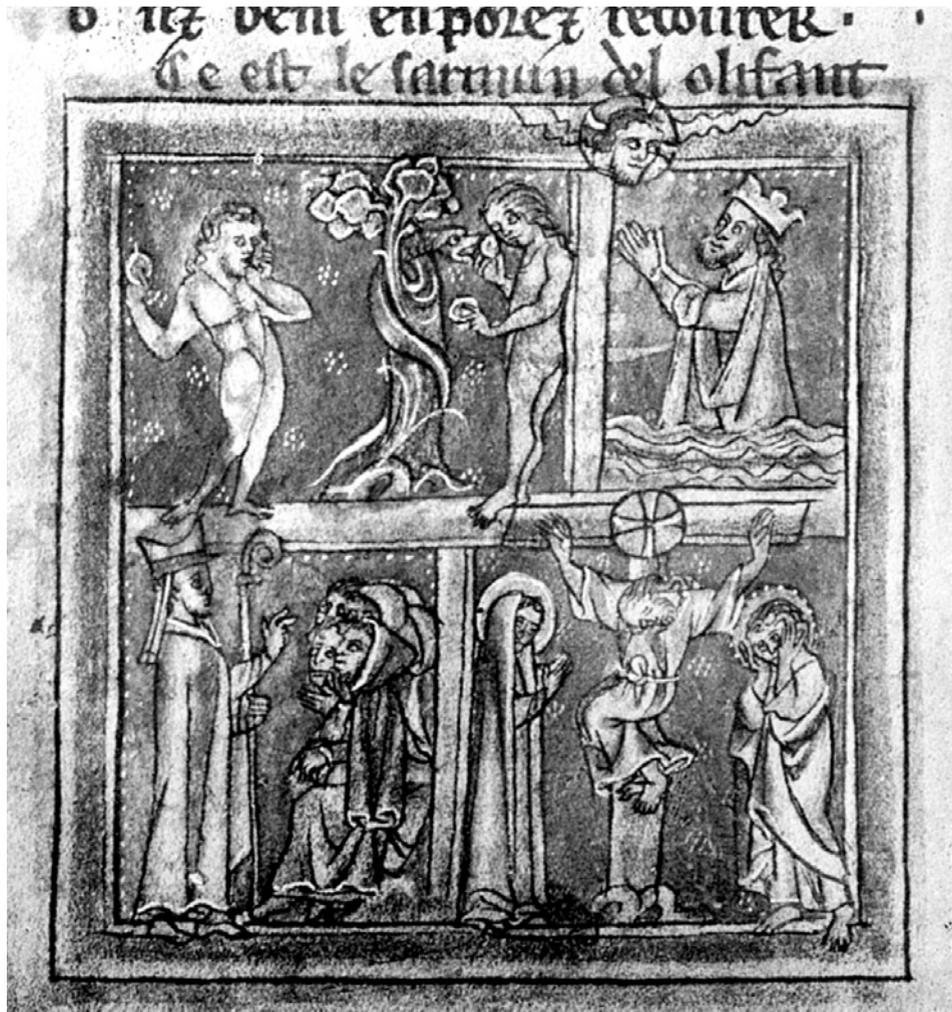
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29 Besides the manuscripts of Guillaume at the British Museum, there are the following in other libraries in this country: MS. O 2, 14 (2) at Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS. 20 and McClean 123 at the Fitzwilliam Museum, and MS. Douce 132 in the Bodleian; and there are many more in the Bibl. Nat., Paris.

PLATE IV



NO. 1. LEGEND OF THE ELEPHANT : MS. 14969 (Fr.), BIBL. NAT. PARIS.



NO. 2. SYMBOLISM OF THE ELEPHANT : MS. 14969 (Fr.), BIBL. NAT. PARIS.

the thirteenth century, there are four relating to the legend, and a fifth of the mandrakes. The first shows a pair of drab-coloured elephants standing in a rectangular panel (plate IV, no. 1). One of them is feeding on a plant, the mandrake. To the right of the panel, on what resembles a fringed carpet, is a figure of Christ holding Adam and Eve by the wrist and pointing to a tree, the Tree of Knowledge. Whether he is forbidding them to eat of it, or is upbraiding them for having done so, is not quite clear. The elephants are rather like pigs, with curious flap ears and horses' legs, but their trunks and tusks are fairly drawn. [19] Following this is a miniature illustrating the birth of the young elephant. Parent and calf are put in an oval panel which represents a pool of water, and outside it is the dragon looking on. The third miniature shows the elephant and castle. The fourth, of the symbolism, has the heading: 'Ce est le sarmun del olifant' (plate IV, no. 2). It is divided into four compartments, the two at the top relating to the Fall, and the other two to the Redemption. On the left Adam and Eve with fruit in their hands stand on either side of the tree, round which the serpent is coiled. On the right David crowned is partly submerged in 'deep waters,' and raises his hands in appeal to God, whose nimbed face appears in the clouds above. Below, on the left, a robed bishop with staff is teaching a group of persons in hooded mantles, and points to the scene of the crucifixion on right. The other manuscripts at the Bibl. Nat. mostly show the elephant and castle.

In the Trinity College manuscript the details differ, for we have the scene of the male elephant trampling on or driving away the dragon while the young elephant is being born (plate III, no. 2). The great elephant here is a hairy beast, with very large eyes and mouth, and fine upstanding tusks. Its ears are indefinite, but not so the feet, which are much spread, and furnished with fetlocks and many toes resembling boot-nails. The dragon is of normal form.

In MS. 20 at the Fitzwilliam two elephants face each other standing in water, with a winged dragon above them. In the McClean manuscript the elephant and castle is illustrated. In MS. Roy. 2 B vii, in which are marginal illustrations probably from Guillaume, an adult and a young elephant are in water, and above them flies a dragon, its head directed to them in a menacing way. The elephant and castle is also illustrated.

The bestiary of Gervaise is of less importance. It is in verse, the lines rhyming in pairs, and resembles that of Guillaume closely. MS. Add. 28260 (B.M.) is the only text available.<sup>30</sup> The story of the elephant occupies seventy-one lines. Its great size and intelligence is described, but its use in war omitted. The mandrake is said to have [20] 'samblance de feme et dome.' In the symbolic interpretation the pool is described thus:

'With a pool may be compared  
 This world for the diversity of things  
 That in a pool are gathered:  
 Waters from different sources.  
 This world is like a fish-pond,  
 About which David says in the psalter:  
 Save me, O God, . . . '

and in the part relating to the redemption we get a graphic touch regarding man's fallen state.

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<sup>30</sup> Transcribed by Paul Meyer in *Romania*, 1872, f. 420.

‘Because of this sin he took our flesh  
And from the mire he drew us out;  
More dirty were we than swine.’

In the episode about the burning of the elephants’ skin and bones we get:

‘In the place where one shall burn them  
Nor serpent nor toad will stay.’<sup>31</sup>

The illustrations in this manuscript are small and unimportant. Upon the margin an elephant is drawn, which has a fair trunk, tusks rising from the lower jaw, long flap-ears, and lumpy feet.

The version of Pierre, of which there are a good illustrated manuscript of the beginning of the fourteenth century in the *Bibl. de l’Arsenal, Paris*<sup>32</sup> and two not illustrated in the *Bibl. Nat.*, is in prose, and is interesting owing to the original features found in the text, though this is not so apparent in the story of the elephant. It commences with the usual reference to the vast size and strength of the elephant, and its use in war, and then says: ‘This beast carries a pipe in front of it, with which it eats . . . And the tooth (tusk) of this beast has such virtue, that if one puts it under a linen cloth and over live coals it cannot be burnt.’ Then after mentioning that the elephant cannot rise when fallen we get the legend. Amos is introduced as [21] testifying to the elephants’ intelligence,<sup>33</sup> and in the account of the birth of the young elephant we are told that ‘its nature is such that it must be born in water, because if it should fall on the ground, it could not get up, as its bones are straight and stiff and without any joint from the belly to the feet . . . and the mother hides her young one where there is neither toad nor serpent, as they would kill it if they could get near.’

The *Sermo* follows, the description of the pool corresponding with that of Guillaume, being ‘*plains de moult de diversites et de mals et de tormens.*’

The miniature of the elephant shows at the foot water in which the small elephant is standing. Above it a big elephant stands on dry ground. On the right a large two-legged winged dragon is reared up. The elephants are shaped like pigs, with pipe-like trunks, flat foliated ears, toed feet, and long horse-tails. They have no tusks.

### THE ITALIAN VERSIONS.

The account given in the Italian bestiaries, which are generally later in date than the French, differs in some respects, especially in the symbolism.<sup>34</sup> The elephant is described as very big, and having a fine natural disposition. It is so strong that no man can overcome it except by a trick. Then follows the story of its having no joints in its legs, of its sleeping against a tree, and its capture. The interpretation of this is given as follows:

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31 Boz. The toad was always regarded as a loathsome creature.

32 MS. 3516. Transcribed by Cahier, *Mélanges d’Archéologie*, vol. iv, p. 55 with plates.

33 Amos is frequently introduced as an authority in the Latin bestiaries, and is even portrayed.

34 See ‘Ein Tosco-Venezianischer Bestiarius,’ von Max Goldstaub und R. Wendreiner, p. 60.

‘This elephant signifies men of a certain kind in this world, the tree signifies the world, and the hunter signifies the devil; and as the elephant has no joints in its legs by which it can bend down, so there are men so very proud that they have no humility in them, but always remain filled with pride; and all their hope is set on earthly things and their attention on their riches. And the devil stays on the watch, and when he sees that man believes himself secure and trusts in these false hopes, he comes to him and contrives his fall; it is when man puts his faith in the things of this world, that he [22] withdraws himself from God and from his love.<sup>35</sup> The manuscript quoted then proceeds with the story of the birth of the young elephant, which takes place ‘in a river which is called Euphrates.’ And when the male elephant knows that the young ones are born, he hastens to the spot for the fear that he has of a dragon which dwells in that country and which is very poisonous.

In the interpretation of this we are taught that we ought to imitate the elephant; that we ‘should practise every good work, and be careful not to fall into such sins as we cannot extricate ourselves from.’ For it is dangerous to fall into sins from which without God’s mercy we can never extricate ourselves. We ought also to perform all our acts with care so that the devil may not poison us with any vice; that if we were to give up all our possessions for God’s sake to the poor, and if we were to fast every day on bread and water, and to suffer martyrdom in our bodies, as did St. Lawrence who was roasted, so could the devil have poisoned these actions so that we were scarcely aware of it, and we should have lost all that good which we might have done, really only through pride.

### OTHER WESTERN VERSIONS.

Bestiaries in the English language are confined to the Saxon fragment in the Codex Exoniensis, in which the story of the elephant does not occur; and to the English version of the bestiary of Thetbaldus.<sup>36</sup> No special feature is to be noticed, except that Moses is mentioned by name as representing the law in the story of the fallen elephant.

Among the Western versions are two fragments of a thirteenth century Icelandic bestiary, MS. 673 A. in the University Library, Copenhagen, which have been transcribed by Theodor Moëbius,<sup>37</sup> and by Verner Dahlerup, with facsimiles.<sup>38</sup> A brief account of the elephant is given. It [23] is named ‘fil.’ Its great size and strength are mentioned, and its use in war. It can carry a castle, which is made of wood and shaped as a fort, and can be used in fighting ‘as is written in the Book of Maccabees.’

There is an illustration of the elephant and castle (fig. 1).

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35 Another MS.: ‘And so the devil has power over him to work his destruction in both soul and body, which is found in many examples.’

36 MS. Arundel 292 (B.M.). The English text, as well as the Latin original, is printed in *An old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S., 1872).

37 *Analecta Norroena*, Leipzig, 1877, p.249.

38 *Physiologus i to Islandske bearbejdelser*, Særtryk af Aarb. for Nord Oldk. og Hist. 1889, p. 288.

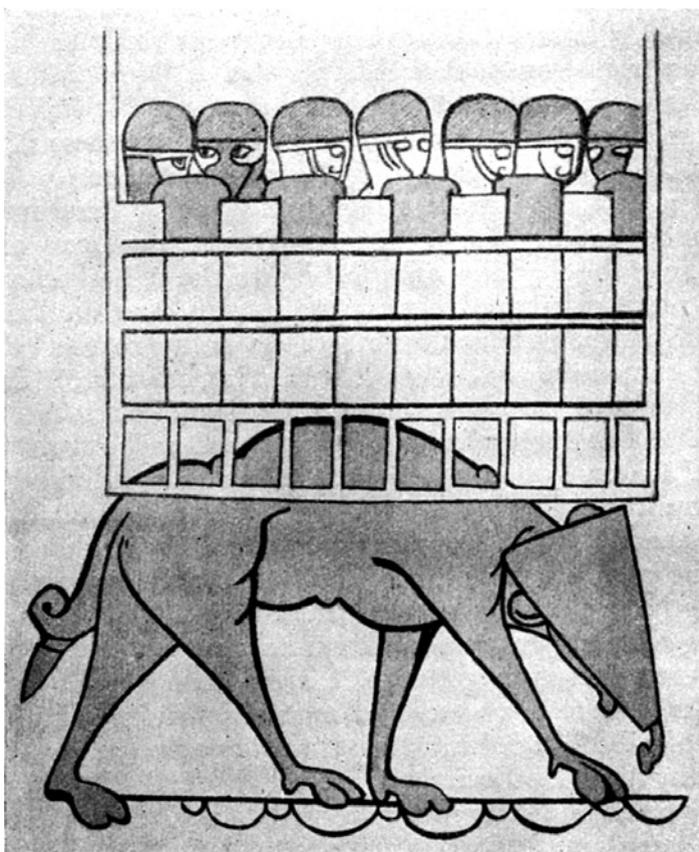


FIG. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE: MS. 673A, UNIV. LIB. COPENHAGEN  
(from V. Dahlerup's plate).

### THE EASTERN VERSIONS.

The texts of the Greek manuscripts which are available do not offer much that is new respecting the legend. In that given by Pitra<sup>39</sup> the elephant which comes to assist its comrade [24] is followed by two more; but this is presumably an error, as twelve are mentioned in the Sermo. In the interesting Greek bestiary at Smyrna, of which Strzygowski gives the text and many plates,<sup>40</sup> the interest lies mainly in the illustrations. There are three miniatures relating to the elephant: (1) a family of elephants in water; (2) in the upper part Indians sawing a tree, and in the lower two elephants; (3) a scene akin to the Harrowing of Hell; Christ appears with a cross, then Adam and Eve, David and Solomon in sarcophagi, and in a hole below the devil chained. It is to be regretted that there are no plates of these miniatures. There is no account of Draco or the mandrake.

The text of an Arabian version is given by Land from a manuscript at Leyden.<sup>41</sup> It begins with the usual story of the mating of the elephants and the birth of the calf, which must take place in water, 'because if it were born on land it would perish, as it could not get up owing to the lack of

39 *Spicilegium Solesmense*, vol. iii, p. 364.

40 *Der Bilderkreis des Griechischen Physiologus*, p. 120.

41 *Anecdota Syriaca*, vol. iv, p. 143.

joints in its legs. But when it is born in the water, it shakes itself and the water buoys it up, and it stands on its feet and sucks.’ The male elephant keeps guard as before. The moral follows: ‘So thou, O man, when thou wishest to be born again in the water of baptism by a new birth, free from every stain and untainted by carnal lusts, and maintaining a spiritual desire in order that thou mayest have strength to resist evil thoughts, do thou come to that health-giving mandragora tree, the holy church, the house of God, and turn thyself to paradise, I mean turn thyself to the east (as it were in prayer) and take of its fruit, I mean the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is the most holy of sacrifices. And thy heavenly Father will protect thee and will keep thee from the dragon, that is our enemy Satan; he slays him for thee and thou shalt trample him underfoot if only thou call upon his name, the most holy Trinity, and upon the cross of his son Jesus Christ, at once Lord and God; to whom be glory and honour and worship from this time forth for evermore, world without end.’

The legend is then resumed with the story of the elephant leaning against a tree to sleep and its capture; and the burning of its hair. The symbolism of this part agrees with that which we have seen of the fall and the [25] redemption in the Latin manuscripts, but the single elephant and the twelve elephants are directly named as Moses and the twelve prophets of the children of Israel. It closes with a general appeal to Christ ‘to raise and deliver us from death at the last day, and to give us a place with his blessed ones.’<sup>42</sup>

The Ethiopian version is given by Hommel<sup>43</sup> with the heading: ‘About an animal which has the name of Elbâs.’ It states that the elephant lives in the desert . . . and that the tree (the mandrake) is in the land of the syrens. The rest of the story is normal.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

The items which combine to make up the narrative in the bestiary were gathered from many sources and are trace-able for the most part to classical writers on natural history. The author selected the episodes which lent themselves most readily to the construction of a story on which he could base a religious or moral lesson.

The opening statement that the elephant is reluctant to breed is based on information in Aristotle, Pliny, and Aelian. The two former say that elephants never couple but in secret and attribute it to their modesty, but Aelian (bk. viii, ch. 17) says plainly that their mating is due solely to a desire to perpetuate their family, and this is reflected in the bestiary. The etymology and descriptive items which follow are from Isidore, and their sources have been given. The piece about elephants being called Lucanian oxen was probably taken from Lucretius (bk. v, 1302). It is also mentioned by Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 6), who says that elephants were first seen in Italy in the war with King Pyrrhus in the year of the City 472, and this is repeated by Solinus.

References to the use of elephants in war are numerous. Lucretius tells how the Carthaginians taught them, with towers on their backs, to endure the wounds of war, and to throw vast battalions into confusion. Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 9) says that elephants when tamed are employed in [26] war and carry into the ranks of the enemy towers filled with armed men. They tread underfoot whole companies and crush the men in their armour. On them, in great measure, depends the ultimate

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42 The story of the elephants is not included in the Syrian text given by Tychsen in his *Physiologus Syrus*.

43 *Die Aethiopische Uebersetzung des Physiologus*, p. 87.

result of the battles that are fought in the East.

Aelian gives very full descriptions of elephants. In bk. xvii, ch. 29, he relates that the king of the Indians, when waging war, is preceded by one hundred thousand war elephants; then there follow three thousand others of the largest and most powerful kind, which have been set apart to charge and overturn the enemy's walls, when the king gives the command; for they overturn them by the tremendous pressure of their bodies. Elsewhere (bk. xiii, ch. 9) he says that the military elephant carries three fighting men on a cuirass, or even on its bare back, one fighting on the right, another on the left, while the third faces to the rear; and at the same time a fourth holds an axe with which he guides the beast just as the master of a ship, skilled in navigation, steers a ship with the helm.

The popularity of the elephant with the castle may have been enhanced in the ecclesiastical mind by the account of the battle recorded in the first book of Maccabees (ch. vi, 34-37 and 43-46), in which the Jewish patriot Eleazar lost his life. On the margin of MS. Add. 11283, a bestiary of the thirteenth century, there is a reference to it, written in another hand of almost even date. 'According to the testimony of the Book of Maccabees, they showed the elephants the "blood "of grapes (and mulberries) to the end they might provoke them to fight. The elephant has this nature, that when it is engaged in war, its keepers, in order to make it more fierce, put before its eyes cloths stained with blood, and owing to this it is rendered more courageous. So also thou, O Christian man, when thou art about to enter into the battle with the devil, in order that thou mayest be strengthened for bearing the adversities of this world, cast thine eyes on that cloth stained with the blood which flowed from the side of him that was crucified.'<sup>44</sup> The items in the bestiary relating [27]to the nature and habits of the elephant are more or less common to the four classical authors mentioned. Aristotle (*Hist. Anim.* bk. ix, 33) says: 'Of all wild animals the elephant is the most tame and gentle, for many of them are capable of being instructed. They have been taught to worship the king. It is a very sensitive creature and abounding in intellect.' Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 1) adds that in intelligence it approaches the nearest to man. It under-stands the language of its country; it obeys commands, and it remembers all the duties it has been taught. Among other things it has a religious respect for the stars and a veneration for the sun and moon.' Aelian (bk. vii, ch. 44) relates how elephants 'worship the rising sun by lifting up their trunks like hands towards the sun's rays, and for this reason they are beloved of the god.' The information about the elephant being a terror to bulls but afraid of a mouse is mentioned by Pliny and Solinus. The details about the power of its trunk to break objects and the pressure of its foot resembling the crash of a falling building are clearly due to Ambrose. The evidence as to its clemency towards man and smaller animals has an

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44 In MS. Harl. 1526, a large Flemish Book of Maccabees of the fourteenth century, there are miniatures of the battle in circular panels, with explanatory texts at sides. In the first the elephants of Antiochus Eupator are seen, six in a row, with variously coloured castles fashioned like rectangular boxes. They are full of men in mail and there are others on foot. The elephants are coloured blue and purple alternately, and have horses' legs and feet, small upstanding ears, blue or purple tusks rising from the lower jaw, and trunks like long hunting horns attached to the tip of the nose. In the second panel, which illustrates verse 46, a similar purple elephant is apparently reared up on its hind legs, but is meant to be falling over, having been pierced by Eleazar, who, dressed in a blue robe, is beneath it. Men are falling out of the castle. This elephant has white tusks, red trunk, and horse-tail.

In MS. Harl. 3240, a German *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* of the fourteenth century, there are some crude drawings, one of which shows Eleazar stabbing an elephant with a javelin. It has a castle of two stories, in which are three men. This elephant has upstanding tusks, straight thick legs with hocks, horse-tail, and divided feet like camels'. Eleazar lies upon the ground and stabs the elephant in the breast, from which blood flows. An explanatory legend above runs: 'Eleazar elephantem necavit qui occisorem oppressit.'

attractive ring about it. It came from Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 7) and Solinus, and the same applies to the elephant's kindness to its weaker brethren when fighting. The reference to the use of swine for frightening elephants in war in the Westminster bestiary is due to Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 9) and Aelian (bk. i, ch. 38); and the item about the dragon drinking the elephant's blood to cool itself comes in the story of Draco as given by Pliny in bk. viii., ch. 12.

The details of the elephant's generation, its limited offspring, and great age were passed from hand to hand from Aristotle downwards. Isidore, however, amplified them, for he says: They are reluctant to breed, but when they bring forth young, they drop them in the water or on [28] some island because of the dragons, which are their enemies, and they are killed if they become entangled in their coils.<sup>45</sup> Of Africa and India were they natives, but now India alone produces them.' All this provided the necessary material for the legend as required by the author. The causes of the enmity between the elephant and the dragon will be discussed when the legend of Draco is dealt with.

Then as to the second part on which the story of the redemption is based. This is founded on the popular idea that the elephant's legs were without joints, and upon its consequent inability to get up when fallen. How this idea arose is not very clear. Aristotle (H.A. bk. ii, 1) says 'the elephant is not constructed as some have said, but is able to sit down and bend his legs, but from his great weight is unable to bend them on both sides at once, and leans either to the right side or the left, and sleeps in this position; but its hind legs are bent like a man's. Pliny does not refer to the elephant's knee-joints, but in bk. viii, ch. 1, says that when paying homage to the king, they fall upon their knees, which implies that they have knee-joints. Aelian (bk. iv, ch. 21) says: 'It is in the habit of sleeping in an erect position, because it might be troublesome for it to lie down as well as difficult to get up from a recumbent position.' Ambrose, as we have seen, explains the necessity for elephants to have rigid legs like pillars. Cassiodorus (468-c. 568) in his *Variarum* (lib. x, ep. 30) and Alexander Neckam following him, say that it is a misfortune for live elephants to fall down. For if they have done so through leaning against a tree to sleep, the tree having been partly cut through by the trick of the hunter, there they lie and cannot get up, and this because their feet have no joints to bend, but are rigid like pillars and remain perpetually stiff. There they lie prostrate, so great a mass that you might think they were cast in metal, since you see no sign of life or movement. They lie still like corpses and you think them dead, although you know them to be alive.<sup>46</sup> [29]

Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) in his work *De Animalibus* (lib. xxii, tract. 2) gives an interesting description and explanation of the jointless legs. He says that elephants' legs are large and almost the same size from top to bottom. like pillars; and although their foot is really divided, yet nature has joined their toes together in order that the foot may be made stronger thereby; and from this cause too they are said not to have joints in their legs below the knees. But they really have joints, though they are not supple but stiff, and therefore they are thought not to have them by the ignorant;

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45 Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 10) in speaking of the birth of the elephant, says that they are very fond of water and wander much in streams, and this although they are unable to swim in consequence of their bulk!

46 Neither Pliny nor Solinus mention this method of capturing elephants, though they do others. But Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 16) relates that it is practised for capturing the 'achlis' (probably the elk) in 'the island of Scandinavia.' This creature, he says, has no joints in the hind leg; hence it never lies down, but reclines against a tree while it sleeps. He may have derived this information from Caesar's story of the 'Alces' of the Hercynian forest (B.G. vi, 27). The anatomical correspondence and method of capture of the elk would be quite sufficient for the author of the bestiary to apply the latter to the elephant, failing any other evidence.

for if they had not got joints in their legs, they could not walk in the ordinary way.<sup>47</sup>

There is probably some foundation in nature for these ideas. Elephants' knee-joints are much lower down than in other animals, being not far above the foot, and the toes are joined up. Another factor is that the African elephant is in the habit of sleeping standing. This alone would be enough to form a basis for the popular idea that it could not lie down or get up if fallen; but it seems to have been connected rather with the structure of its legs or feet.

The source of the account of the burning of the elephant's skin and bones is unknown to us, but sounds very like Pliny. It is purposely attached to the little elephant to suit the symbolism.

There are many other items about elephants in classical writers which have not come through to the bestiary, but the author no doubt confined himself to those most suitable for his *Sermo*. When considering the symbolism we cannot but admire the ingenuity which he has shown in adapting his materials. As theologian first and naturalist afterwards it was more important for him to mould his story to suit his lesson than the reverse. The scene is laid in the East, in paradise or the garden of Eden. The supposed reluctance of elephants to breed due to the coldness of their blood is used to express the chastity of Adam and Eve. The difficulty is overcome by the elephants [30] eating mandrake, the Tree of Knowledge, chosen for its reputed virtues in promoting conception, of which evidence is provided in Genesis xxx, 14. The dragon is there in place of the serpent. The birth of the young elephant in water typifies the birth of Cain 'above the waters of shame.' The pool with its many movements is the troublous world, into which Adam and Eve are cast. Such is the first part relating to the fall. In the story of the redemption, founded on the old idea that the elephant has no joints in its legs, the theologian comes in boldly. The big elephant, Adam, has fallen through a tree. Neither the single elephant, Moses, nor the twelve, the lesser prophets, can raise him; but the little elephant achieves it, that is Christ who came to redeem mankind. The story of the Good Samaritan is skillfully interwoven.<sup>48</sup>

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE BESTIAIRE D'AMOUR.

The consideration of the symbolism would be incomplete without a reference to the *Bestiaire d'Amour*, the work of Richard de Fournival, an ecclesiastic of Rouen in the thirteenth century. It is of an erotic character as its name implies, and consists of a love address by a gentleman to a lady and her reply. Their sentiments are formulated upon the episodes of the regular bestiary. The text used here is that of MS. 7019 Fonds Lancelot (Bibl. Nat.),<sup>49</sup> but the lover's address is also given in MS. Harl. 273 (B.M.). There are several illustrated manuscripts of this kind in the Bibl. Nat.

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47 Albertus also describes the elephant's trumpeting in vigorous terms: 'it has a trunk ten cubits in length and uses it instead of a hand, not only for fighting and feeding itself, but in other ways; and when trumpeting, sometimes it trumpets through its mouth and then the sound is terrifying; at others it trumpets through its trunk, and then a sound is emitted as melodious as if from the depths of a great pipe.'

48 It may be mentioned that Rabanus, who follows Isidore faithfully in his description of the elephant, gives it an entirely different symbolic meaning. He says (*De Universo*, lib. viii, ch. 1): Now the elephant is a type of the sinner big with crimes and besmirched with the foulness of his misdeeds. Yet such are often converted unto Christ; as it is written in a book of the Kings how apes and elephants were brought to Solomon (3 Kings x, 22), and For he is our peace who hath made both one (Eph. ii, 14), and by his blood hath cleansed our conscience from the works of the dead' (Heb. ix, 14): 'Rabanus has here rendered "dentes elephantorum" "of the Vulgate as "elephanti."'

49 As transcribed by C. Hippeau, Paris, 1860.

In the lover's address the story of the elephant is led up to from that of the crocodile, which in accordance with the current idea is said to move its upper jaw instead of the lower when eating.<sup>50</sup> 'In the same way, in speaking of love, [31] a woman holds her "beak" as it were reversed who speaks of her love to some other than her friend, and to her friend says nothing; for how few people there are who know how to choose their hearers! Some who pretend to be most loyal bite treacherously and are the worst enemies. Such an one will not think of hiding from another what you do not hide from him. He is like the dragon, for the dragon does not bite any one, but it eats by licking with its tongue. Who from this dragon would guard himself must do like the elephant.'

The antipathy between the dragon and elephant is then described, with the birth of the young elephant in the waters of Euphrates; for 'the dragon is so burning hot by nature that it cannot abide water. And if it were able to get near the calves it would lick and poison them all. And the male elephant keeps guard near the water's edge.'

'I say that whoever would do the same need not fear the dragon, for to bring forth well means the keeping of love. And whoever accomplishes childbirth in the water need not mind the dragon. For water means foresight, as it is so much of the nature of a mirror.'<sup>51</sup>

The lady in her reply disclaims having more pride than is needful for her own protection, and expresses the opinion that there must be some natural reason for the crocodile's mode of eating. In the same way, if she fell in love in such a manner as that, she would tell it willingly to the next man who came along; but she recognises that it might be good to have a love affair which she could keep to herself. That would not be speaking the reverse way. 'But it would be speaking the reverse way if I were to say to any one things by which he could get me into trouble and get power over me. For love manifests itself where it exists. I don't say that a woman is not right to say to her lover: "I am very glad that all the honours and all the good you can do should be because of me," and that he should say on his part: "Lady, or damosel, I follow all your wishes without question," but to say "Sweet friend, I am heart-broken and dying for love of you; if you do not help me, I am betrayed and shall kill myself." Yes, by God! Since he will express his feelings in that way, I should have no faith in [32] him at all. Such a thing seems to me to be eating the reverse way; nor could I put faith in such a lover. But in the case of one who, like the ape with the shoes on,<sup>52</sup> had not the power to express what he felt, in him should I have much more confidence. For it seems to me that they who make use of words so painful are those whom one would rightly call "dragon." For they know how to lash with their tongue and to deceive silly wenches and bring them to ruin.

'Ha! True God! What a world of wickedness there is still! And how careful one must be with these dragons! And how I wish that no one should trust them before they be proved to be what they say. In God's name! I would that women were all as wise as I hear the female of the elephant is. For I have heard indeed how much afraid she is of this dragon, so that when it is time to give birth she betakes herself to a pool where there is an island and there gives birth, because of the fear that she has of that devil of a dragon. For I have heard that it is so hot by nature that no more than fire can endure a great quantity of water, no more can this dragon endure it. Just the same do I truly wish that all should guard themselves as does this elephant.' And then after further observations

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50 The illustrations show the crocodile with head reversed.

51 The story of the pigeons follows, in which water serves as a mirror.

52 i.e., the ape which cannot escape when it has put on the leaded shoes: this is illustrated in MS. Roy. 2 B. vii.

as to the harm that would ensue if a man came with bad intentions, and a woman encouraged him, she concludes that such are only to be found among those people who believe what they hear and keep silent about what they see.

There are illustrations in the *Bestiaire d'Amour*. In Hippeau's manuscript the miniature shows two elephants facing right and left and the head of a dragon in the margin. In MS. 1444 (Fr.) following a picture of the dragon is another of a large and a small elephant, each with a castle. They stand in water which is heaped up behind them and have trumpet-shaped trunks issuing from their mouths and apparently no tusks. Above them a dragon is flying towards the smaller elephant. It has a long straight tail with a head at the end. In MS. Harl. 273, following an illustration of the dragon, there is another of a dragon with outspread wings facing an elephant shaped like a pig [33] and with a short blunt trunk. In this manuscript the illustrations consist of small pen and ink drawings.

### THE LEGEND OF DRACO.

The story of the hostility between the dragon and elephant, which forms such an important feature in the legend, is separately told in the bestiary, under the heading of Draco. The name is applied to a large serpent, the identity of which is uncertain, but which from its description may be assumed to be of the 'boa' class. It has to be borne in mind that the majority of the serpents illustrated in the bestiaries are drawn as dragons, and the multiplicity of dragons in ecclesiastical carving is probably due to this. They are really serpents.

For the legend of Draco many manuscripts have been consulted. The following is a translation of the Latin text of MS. Harl. 4751, slightly amended, and may be regarded as the normal account:

'The dragon is the greatest of all serpents, or of all living things upon the earth. The Greeks call it "Dracon," whence the Latin name is derived, so that it is called Draco. And this creature often stealing forth from its caverns mounts into the air, and the air is violently set in motion and glows around it. It is also crested and has a small mouth and narrow passages through which it draws its breath and thrusts out its tongue. Moreover its strength lies not in its teeth but in its tail, and it injures by a blow rather than by a bite. It is harmless as to poisons, but they say poisons are not needful to this creature for dealing death, because if it has caught any one in its coils, it kills him. From which not even the elephant is safe by the greatness of its body. For lurking about the paths by which the elephants are accustomed to go, it binds their legs in its coils and kills them by suffocation. Now they are bred in Ethiopia and in India, where it is so hot that there is heat upon the very mountain tops.

'To this dragon the devil is likened, who is a most enormous serpent. As it often rushes forth from its cavern into the air and the air glows around it, so does the devil, raising himself from the depths (of hell), transform himself [34] into an angel of light and delude stupid people with the false hope of glory and human joy. As it is said to be crested, so is he himself the king of pride. It has its power not in its teeth but in its tail, and so his power being lost, he deceives with a lie those whom he attracts to himself. It lies hid about the paths by which the elephants go, and so the devil always pursues men who are fond of display. It binds their legs with coils and if it is able entangles them, and so he entangles their road to heaven with the knots of sins; and it kills them by

suffocation, and so if any one dies entangled in the chain of sins, without doubt he is condemned to hell.<sup>53</sup>

The text of MS. Sloane 278 (version of Hugo de Folieto) varies somewhat and the symbolism differs. It runs thus:

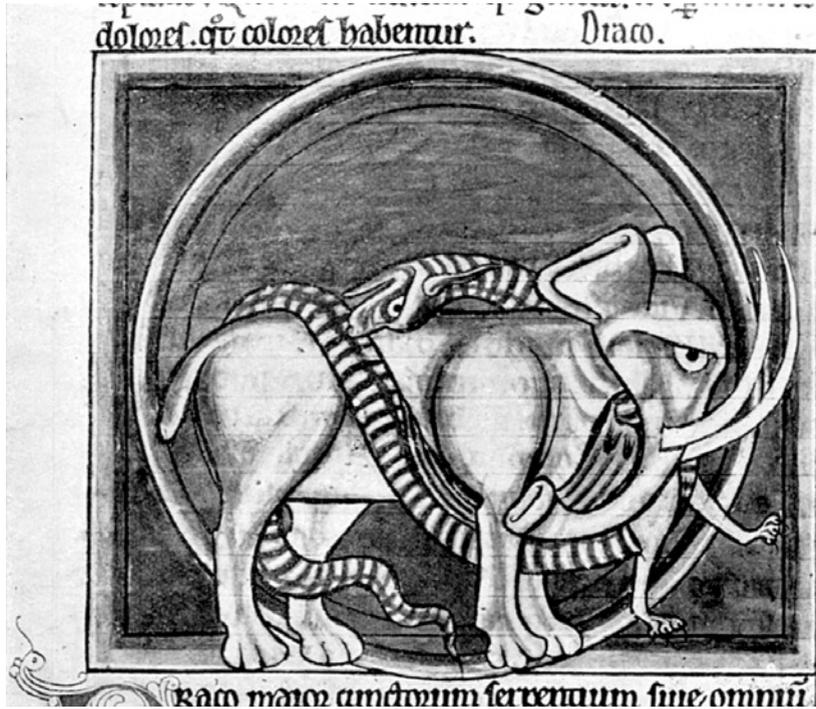
‘The scripture teaches us that the greatest of the serpents is the dragon and that it deals death by its poisonous breath and by the blow of its tail. This creature is lifted by the strength of its venom into the air as if it were flying, and the air is set in motion by it. It lies in wait for the elephant, the most chaste of animals, and encircling its feet with its tail it tries to suffocate it with its breath, but is crushed by the elephant as it falls dead. But a valuable pigment is obtained from earth which has been soaked with its blood. The reason of their hostility is this. The poison of the dragon boils with exceeding great heat, but the blood of the elephant is exceedingly cold. The dragon therefore wishes to cool its own heat with the blood of the elephant. The Jews say that God made the great dragon which is called Leviathan, which is in the sea; and when folk say that the sea is ebbing it is the dragon going back. Some say that it is the first fish created by God and that it still lives. And this beast, at one time called a dragon and at another Leviathan, is used in the Scripture symbolically. The dragon, the greatest of all serpents, is the devil, the king of all evil. As it deals death with its poisonous breath and blow of its tail, so the devil destroys men’s souls by thought, word and deed. He kills their thoughts by the breath of pride; he poisons their words with malice; he [35] strangles them by the performance of evil deeds, as it were with his tail. By the dragon the air is set in motion, and so is the peace of spiritually minded people often disturbed in that way. It lays wait for a chaste animal; so he persecuted to the death Christ the guardian of chastity, being born of a chaste virgin; but he was overcome, having been crushed by him in his death. As for the precious colour which is got from the ground, that is the Church of Christ adorned by his precious blood. The dragon is the enemy of a pure animal; likewise is the devil the enemy of the Virgin’s Son.’

The miniature of Draco in MS. Harl. 4751 (plate V, no. 1) shows an elephant standing placidly with a large winged dragon coiled about it which is biting it in the back. The elephant is fairly drawn except its legs, and has fine upstanding tusks and cocked ears. It is coloured green. The dragon is red with white stripes and green wings. In MS. Roy. 12 C. xix. there is a realistic picture, for the dragon is perched upon the elephant’s back. It has a very long tail, which is twisted round three of the elephant’s legs. In this miniature the latter is of a pale yellow colour and is fairly drawn, and the dragon pink with bright blue wings. In MS. Sloane 3544 the elephant is like a pig. A winged dragon below it is biting the elephant’s mouth and striking it in the belly with its tail. Blood appears in both places. In MS. Sloane 278 the dragon is well drawn and of a chocolate-brown colour. It has a long tail, the end of which is twisted round the right fore-leg of a diminutive elephant. The latter resembles a calf with a long pipe projecting from its nose. It has cloven feet and is drab in colour. In MS. Ashmole 1511 (Bodl.) the elephant is large and is coloured red. It is being strangled by a blue-winged dragon, which bites its back. In MS. Bodl. 764 a yellowish elephant is being strangled by a brown-striped dragon entwined round its body, and which bites its back. The elephant’s ears

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53 Isidore, Rabanus, and the MS. at Sion College give the description only; MSS. Vesp. E x, Add. 11283, Sloane 3544, 12 f, Roy. 12 F. xiii, Harl. 3244, Roy. 12 C. xix, 22 Westminster Chapter Library, and Hugo correspond more or less closely with the above.

PLATE V



NO. 1. DRACO AND ELEPHANT : MS. HARL. 4751 (B.M.)



No. 2. DRACO AND ELEPHANT : MS. 61, ST. JOHN'S COLL. OXFORD.

are cocked as in MS. Harl. 4751, and it has three toes and long tufted tail. In MS. Douce 151 a pink elephant without tusks has a large blue and pink dragon coiled about its body, its tail being knotted round the elephant's right hind leg. In MS. 61, St. John's College, Oxford, a very curious blue elephant is enfolded by a pink dragon with red and green wings (plate V, no. 2). It bites the elephant's back, [36] and its tail is twisted round its left hind leg. This elephant has cloven feet and a remarkable trunk which resembles a large curved bird's beak, and no tusks. Another miniature on somewhat similar lines may be seen in MS. Ii-4-26 in the University Library, Cambridge. It shows a very curious elephant of the calibre of a horse, with slender legs, cloven feet, small erect ears, and a trunk like an extended lip. It has no tusks. A large winged dragon is coiled round its body and left hind leg, and bites its back. The elephant's forelegs are off the ground, with the dragon's body between. The miniature is uncoloured.

Many artists were content to illustrate Draco alone, omitting all reference to the elephant. In MS. Harl. 3244 there is a very fine four-legged dragon flying into the air. It has a red body, two pairs of red, green and yellow wings, and fire issuing from its mouth. The heading to this picture runs thus: 'De dracone ignivomo: Qui se in aerem

jaculatur et ipsum facit choruscare.' In the Sion College MS. a large slate-blue dragon stands with raised wings and much curled tail lifted into the air. It terminates in a small animal head. In MS. 254, Fitzwilliam Museum, there is a large dragon with fine upstanding crest. It is chiefly of a rich purple-pink colour. In MS. Kk-4-25 in the University Library, Cambridge, the dragon is also crested, the crest being of the cockscomb kind. It has a brilliant red body with green wings raised, and much curled tail. Draco is also shown alone in MS. Add. 11283, where it has a long curved swan-neck and tail branching into several sprays of foliage; and in the Westminster bestiary, where it has a crest like the peacock's. In MS. Douce 88 its breath is indicated; in MS. Douce 167 flames issue from its mouth. In MS. Bodl. 602 it has curious spots and hair. In the fifteenth century bestiary in the University Library, Cambridge, (MS. Gg-6-5) there is a quite striking dragon with horse-mane, green bat's-wings, pink and red body, and curled parti-coloured tail. These illustrations display the great pains the artists lavished on Draco, and in fact on all the serpents.

Draco is also described and sometimes illustrated in the French versions. In Thaum's bestiary there are six lines about it, following the legend of the panther, in which the dragon also figures: [37]

'And know that the dragon—has the form of a serpent.  
He is crested and winged—has two feet and is toothed.  
With his tail he defends himself—and hurts people;  
Tail means end—as the divines say,  
This is the meaning—that in the end truly  
The devil will destroy—him who will end in sin.'<sup>54</sup>

In MS. Nero A v. of this version the illustrations are not filled in. In MS. 249 at Merton College there is no separate miniature of the dragon in this legend.

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<sup>54</sup> Compare Wright's translation in *Popular Treatises on Science*, p. 84. For observations on the symbolism of the tail, see *A. J. lxvii*, 314.

In Guillaume's version the description of Draco occupies eighteen lines; in the following translation the text of MS. Vesp A vii. has been chiefly used:

'But it is right that we tell you  
About the shape of the dragon.  
Of all the beasts that creep  
The dragon is far the biggest.  
The real dragon, it is found  
In the kingdom of Ethiopia.<sup>55</sup>  
It has a small mouth and a big body;  
In the air it glows like fine gold.  
It has a long tail and a big head;<sup>56</sup>  
It makes great trouble for the elephant,  
For with its tail it strikes it  
In the legs, so as to make it fall.  
It carries no deadly poison,  
But is vastly big and strong.  
And with its tail it strikes  
All that are in its reach.  
Nor does it do great harm  
Save with its tail only.'

Such symbolism as there is attached to the dragon is given in the stories of the panther and dragon, and doves and dragon.

In this group of MSS. there are not many illustrations of Draco, as it is usually included in the scene of the birth of the young elephant; but in MS. 1444 Français there is a [38] separate miniature which shows a blue dragon with another head on the end of its tail.

In the MSS. of Gervaise and Pierre and in the Italian and Eastern versions there does not seem to be any account of the legend of Draco.

Although the enmity between the dragon and elephant is mentioned by many writers, it is to Pliny that we must turn for the account of the great fight and the causes that led up to it. In bk. viii, ch. 11, he tells us that India produces the largest elephants as well as the largest dragons, which are perpetually at war with the elephants. The dragon is of so enormous a size that it is easily able to envelop the elephant in its coils. He describes the tricks of the dragon, which watches from a neighbouring tree the road which the elephants take when going to feed, and then darts down upon them. The elephant when attacked, being unable to disengage itself from the serpent's coils, seeks a tree or rock to rub itself against in order to kill the dragon, but the latter, to prevent this, binds the elephant's legs, and flies at its nostrils and other tender parts, especially its eyes; and this is the reason, Pliny asserts, why elephants are often found blind and worn to a skeleton with hunger and misery. He mentions the dragon as being destitute of venom in bk. xxix, ch. 20.

55 In the MS. used by Hippeau, the fifth and sixth lines run: 'And in great heat is engendered, / In Ethiopia it is born.'

56 In Hippeau's MS.: 'big claws' in Cahier's and MS. Egerton 613: 'big crest.'

As to the cause of their enmity Pliny says that the blood of the elephant is remarkably cold,<sup>57</sup> for which reason in the parching heats of summer it is sought by the dragon with extraordinary avidity. The dragon lies coiled in the rivers, and when the elephant comes to drink, fastens itself round its trunk and fixes its teeth behind its ear, that being the only place which the elephant cannot protect with its trunk. ‘The dragons, it is said, are of such vast size that they can swallow the whole of the elephant’s blood; consequently the latter, being thus drained, falls to the earth exhausted, while the dragon, intoxicated with the draught, is crushed beneath it and so shares its fate.’

Solinus in the *Polyhistor* follows Pliny generally and explains that the dragon attacks the rearmost elephant, so that when its legs are entangled, its pace is reduced and it lags behind, and the other elephants do not stop to help it. [39] He adds that on account of the dragon’s great thirst in the torrid heat, it attacks the elephants when filled with drink, for their veins being more fully charged, they get all the more. He also tells how, on the termination of the combat, the blood of both is spilt and soaks into the ground, forming the pigment ‘cinnabar.’<sup>58</sup>

Aelian (bk. vi, ch. 21) speaks of the bitter enmity between the two, and says that the dragon, concealed in the trees, covers up the tail half of its body with foliage and lets the forepart hang down like a rope; and when the elephant comes along it darts at its eyes and tears them out, and then, encircling its neck, lashes it with its tail, and suffocates it in this uncommon and novel kind of noose.

These descriptions accord with the habits of the boa and python in attacking other animals, but it is evident that for the operation to succeed with the elephant the dragon must be phenomenally large. Tradition, however, was not likely to fail in that respect, for Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 14.) tells the story of a serpent 120 feet long which was taken during the Punic War by the Roman army after a siege with balistae and other engines. Aelian (bk. xv, ch. 21) describes how Alexander, when in India, found in a cavern a dragon that was held as sacred by the Indians. They implored him not to touch it, to which he agreed, but the dragon when it heard the noise of the passing army set up a violent hissing and gave the soldiers such a dose of its hot breath that they were very much frightened. It was said to be seventy cubits in length, but the whole of it was not seen, only the head projecting from the cavern. Its eyes approached in size to a large Macedonian shield. Elsewhere (bk. ii, ch. 21) he speaks of dragons in Ethiopia ‘thirty paces in length, which have no proper name but are simply called elephant killers ‘; and (bk. xvi, ch. 39) of two in India reported to be forty-six and eighty cubits in length respectively. [40]

The ecclesiastical commentators also made use of the story of the dragon and elephant. Ambrose (*Hexam. lib. iii, ch. 9*) in discussing hurtful agencies says that no blame is to be laid on the Creator, ‘for what you thought was created as a danger really operates for the benefit of your health. Have not the roe-deer learnt to avoid things that are harmful to them, and by the smell alone? They have the faculty of distinguishing equally what is hurtful and what is beneficial; so that when they

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57 The pretext for its alleged disinclination to breed in the bestiary.

58 Pliny makes several references to cinnabar, or ‘dragon’s blood,’ more particularly in bk. xxxiii, ch. 38. He speaks of it as being held in the highest esteem and says that it is properly the name given to the thick matter which issues from the dragon when crushed by the dying elephant, mixed with the blood of either of them; and that it is the only colour that in painting gives a proper representation of blood. He deprecates the practice of physicians who use mineral vermilion, i.e., minium or *cinnabaris nativa*, which is a rank poison, in medicine in mistake for the Indian cinnabar, owing to their similarity of name (bk. xxix, ch. 8). The symbolic meaning attached to cinnabar was given in MS. Sloane 278.

feel themselves struck by poisoned darts, they look for and eat dittany. Their food then so acts like a medicine that you may see the arrows spring from the wound and the poison disappear.<sup>59</sup> In fine, poison is actually a food for stags. The serpent flees from the stag, but destroys the lion; the dragon binds the elephant fast, but in its moment of victory is crushed to death by the latter's fall.' Full details of the fight follow, as told by Pliny. Isidore and Rabanus give the description of Draco that we have seen in MS. Harl. 4751. The former omits the symbolism, but the latter adds a laboured interpretation, based on passages in the Psalms, Job, and Revelations, and in which he has apparently followed Gregory.

Albertus Magnus (*De Animalibus*, lib. xxii, tract. ii.) speaks briefly of the fight, and regards the report of the dragon drinking the elephant's blood in order to cool itself as a fable.

Alex. Neckam (*De Naturis Rerum*, cap cxlv.) says the elephant and dragon pursue one another with a natural hatred and gives the story of the elephant's birth in the water, naively adding: 'and so the waters ensure the safety of a land animal which earth with all its solidity renders afraid.' Then he gives the moral: 'Just so does the ancient dragon pursue man, but man may betake himself to the waters of grace and so avoid his snares. Then comes the time of delivery, when man desires to bring into the light the honorable purpose he has conceived, for then its fulfillment may be forwarded. Then comes the time that our enemy attacks us, when he perceives that we are off our guard in our works of virtue. Moreover observe how chaste an animal the elephant is and how cold by nature, and how infrequently the period recurs for it to [41] bear young. Even ivory, which is elephant's bone, is in holy writ a symbol of chastity.'

In his poem 'De laudibus divinae sapientiae' there are forty-four lines about the elephant, in which the usual items appear, with the addition of its being shown gore to make it more fierce in battle. Among its enemies he mentions the dragon and rhinoceros as being in league against it.<sup>60</sup> Neckam had no doubt in mind the contest between the rhinoceros and elephant recorded in classical writers. It is illustrated in MS. Roy. 2 B. vii, and is thus described in the bestiary: 'The unicorn often has a fight with the elephant, and wounds it in the belly and lays it low.'

Pliny (bk. viii, ch. 29 (20)) thus describes the fight. He says that the rhinoceros is another natural-born enemy of the elephant. It prepares for the combat by sharpening its horn against the rocks, and in fighting directs it chiefly against the belly of its adversary, which it knows to be the softest part. Aelian (bk. xvii, ch. 44) says that the rhinoceros and elephant quarrel about pasturage and that many elephants have been killed in consequence. The rhinoceros sharpens its horn upon the rocks and when fighting gets under the legs of the elephant and tears its belly open; but if it is not first in getting in its blow, it is seized by the elephant's trunk and held tight, and is then cut to pieces by its tusks as if by axes. For although its hide is of such toughness that it can scarcely be penetrated by a dart, yet the onslaught of the elephant is so violent that it cuts it through.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See Pliny, bk. xxv, ch. 53.

<sup>60</sup> *Acriter infestant hostes, hinc stant elephantes, Inde sibi sociat rinoceronta draco.*'

<sup>61</sup> Bestiary subjects sometimes found their way into other works. In MS. Add. 27695, an Italian *Tractatus de Septem Vitiis* of the fourteenth century, the legend of the elephant is illustrated in two small medallions. In the first a single elephant stands in a pasture; in the second a large and a small elephant stand near together. The latter has no tusks. Both the adults have raised trunks and tusks rising from the lower jaw. These illustrations must have been taken from the bestiary, as next to them are other bestiary subjects *aspido chelone* and the ship, with men cooking their dinner on the beast's back, and a bird resembling a heron, with nest of eggs.

## THE ELEPHANT AND CASTLE.

The popularity of the elephant and castle as a subject for illustration in the bestiariums has been commented on. [42] Some of the miniatures are very fine, being full of detail and richly coloured. They are especially interesting from the point of view of the anatomy of the elephant, and as displaying the artists' disregard for natural colouring.<sup>62</sup> The illustration in MS. Harl. 4751 is a typical one (plate VI, no. 1). It shows a green elephant of the same type as that in the illustration of Draco in the same manuscript. Its tusks stick up and ears are cocked. A large castle of lattice framing, set upon a platform, is fastened to its back with straps and buckles. In it is a party of five mailed knights armed with various weapons, who are in combat with another party on foot. The weapons are well assorted, consisting of swords, axes, cross-bows, and sling. The elephant is controlled by a cord passed through a hole in its trunk and held by its keeper, who is armed and stands in the doorway of the castle. The summit of this is dressed with shields bearing devices.

In MS. 12 F xiii. (plate VII, no. 1) the elephant is blue and a poor creature, entirely lacking the imposing appearance and ferocity which the description of its use in war would lead us to expect. With the exception of its feet it rather resembles a pig, and has the same short bell-mouthed trunk and upstanding tusks seen in the other two miniatures in this MS. It carries a stone-built castle with battlements, fastened by a single belly-band. In the castle are two mailed knights armed with sword and cross-bow, and behind them are others on horseback. The elephant faces a party of similar knights on horseback armed with lances. It is much smaller than the horses, but this may be due to lack of space. In MS. Add. 11283 the elephant is indifferently drawn, with foliated ears and lumpy feet without toes. It has a stone-built battlemented castle set upon a patterned saddle-cloth, and containing two men in tunics, one of whom discharges an arrow towards the rear, and the other throws a stone, of which he has a supply in a fold of his clothing. In MS. Harl. 3244 the elephant is better drawn and of a natural colour. Its tusks project from the upper jaw, but its legs are straight, 'like pillars,' and feet crude, although the toes are plainly shown. It bears a battlemented castle much [43] enriched on the face and dressed with two shields. It is fastened on by four bands and contains eight persons, who hold flags and shields. A man seated on the elephant's head blows a horn, and another at the rear prods the beast with a goad or stick. In MS. Sloane 3544 the elephant is of a yellow tint and shaped like a pig. Its tusks and trunk are fairly drawn, the former pointing up, but its legs are poor, with lumpy feet and no toes. The castle, which is battlemented, is set on a saddle-cloth with a green border, and has an internal domed roof with green tiles. The heads of two vizored knights look out back and front.

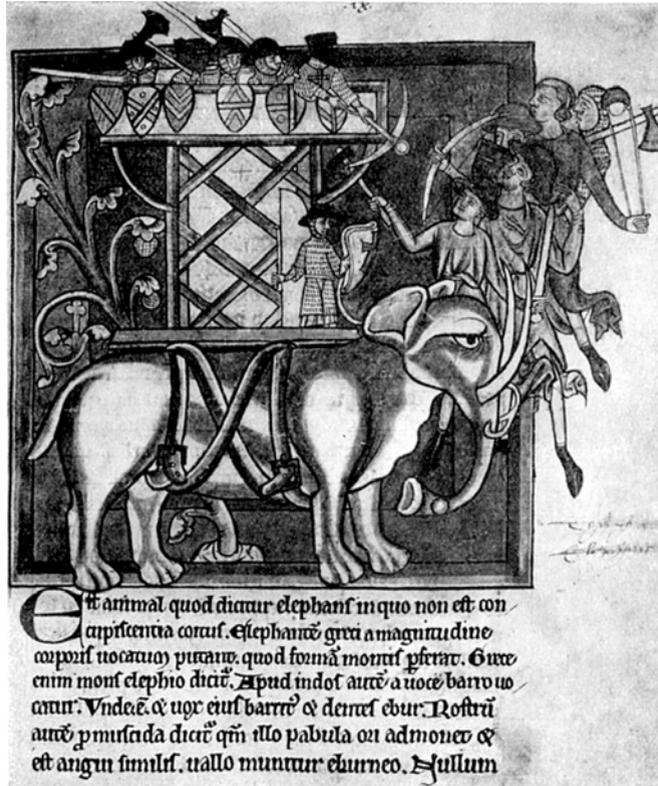
In MS. Vitellius D i. (B.M.) the elephant bears a single-storied battlemented castle set on a saddle-cloth and held by two bands. It has horses' legs and tail. This manuscript is much damaged and details of the trunk and tusks are lacking.

There is an interesting miniature in the Westminster bestiary (plate VI, no. 2). The elephant is naturally coloured, is hairy, and shaped like a pig, with spreading feet and fine foliated ears. The castle is large and is bound on by an elaborate arrangement of bands. It is constructed in two stages, the upper stage being supported on timber legs and struts rising from a platform on the elephant's back. It is battlemented and has large towers at the corners. A mailed knight is shooting

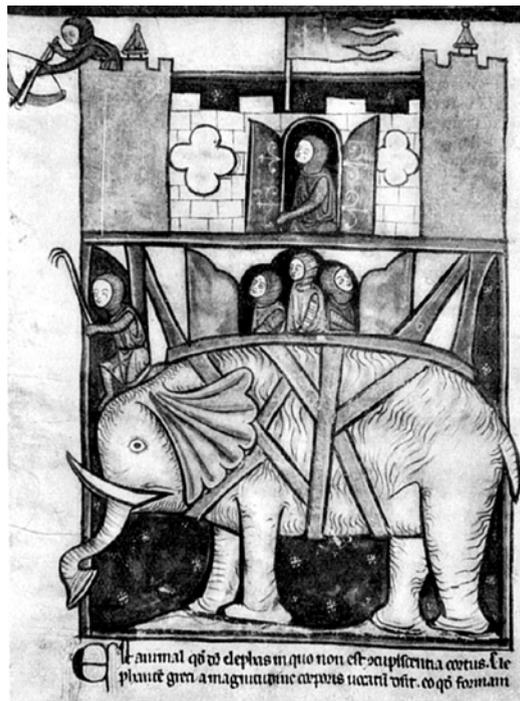
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<sup>62</sup> For instance, in MS. Harl. 4751, the artist has coloured the elephant green on f. 8 and blue on f. 58b.

PLATE VI



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : MS. 4751 (B.M.)



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : MS. 22, WESTMISTER CHAPTER LIBRARY

PLATE VII



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : MS 12 F XIII (B.M.).



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : MS. PARKER 53, CORPUS CHISTRI COLL. CAMBRIDGE.

with a cross-bow from one of the towers, while others look out from the doorways. The keeper, also in mail and furnished with a hook, kneels on the elephant's head.

The miniature in the Sion College bestiary shows a slate-grey elephant with foliated ears, trumpet-shaped trunk, and tusks rising from the lower jaw. On it is a pink and red castle set on a pink saddle-cloth, and kept in position with five straps. The helmeted heads of three mailed knights appear above the battlements. In MS. Ashmole 1511 (Bodl.) the elephant is red, and has a large castle in which are three mailed knights holding a flag and shields; another with a mace crouches on the elephant's head and holds a chain attached to the end of its trunk. In MS. Bodl. 602 the elephant is of an orange-brown colour, and has very short legs, cloven feet, horse-tail, large and fairly natural tusks, and blue trunk. It has a three-storied castle with round-headed openings, in which are visible the heads [44] of eleven knights. In MS. Bodl. 764 the elephant is pale green and has upon its back a lofty castle with nine knights in mail armed with spears, bow, mace, and stones. One has a whip for the elephant. Its head is crudely drawn. On right and left are five men armed with axes, bow, sword, and sling, who attack those in the castle.<sup>63</sup> In MS. Douce 88, f. 87, the elephant is a clumsy beast. The castle contains three knights and the keeper with a whip. In MS. Douce 151 the elephant is coloured red, and has no tusks. Two knights stand in the castle and in front of it is the keeper with a whip, who guides the elephant by a cord attached to the end of its trunk. In MS. 178 at St. John's College, Oxford, the elephant is of a yellow tint and has a large castle in which are three knights. Its trunk and tusks are well drawn, but its ears have folds like drapery and its feet are awkward and spread like camels' feet. In MS. 61 at the same college, the elephant is also yellowish, and fairly drawn. It has a castle bound on with straps, with five knights in it. This elephant has a keeper who is twice as tall as the beast. In MS. Ii-4-26 in the University Library, Cambridge, the elephant is badly drawn, and has upstanding tusks, trunk curved up, and cloven feet. It carries a battlemented castle, in which are four men armed with bow, sword, spear, and axe. Another man guides the elephant by a cord attached to its trunk, and wields a cat-o'-nine-tails.

In MS. Parker 53, about 1300 in date, at Corpus, Cambridge, there is a fine miniature in which the elephant is in an enriched bordered panel (plate VII, no. 2). In form it is very like a cart-horse, with distinctly hooved feet, foliated ears, and trumpet-shaped trunk. Its tusks are more naturally rendered than some. Upon its back is an octagonal stone-built castle set upon a saddle-cloth. Behind the battlements are three mailed knights. In the bestiary of the late twelfth century now in the possession of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, an elephant with castle containing three knights is illustrated.

The elephant with the castle also appears in the French bestiaries. In MS. Vesp. A vii. it is yellow and very awkwardly drawn. It has a fair trunk, ears with folds, and [45] widely splayed feet like slippers. The castle is in two stories with battlements, and is set on a red saddle-cloth. There are no warriors. The third miniature in MS. 14969 (Fr.) shows a large awkward green and drab elephant, with fair ears and trunk, and legs with hocks. On its back, fastened by many straps, is a battlemented castle upon a red and green saddle-cloth. The heads of five mailed knights appear at the top, one having a cross-bow. Outside the panel are three men partly in mail, one of whom is shooting with a cross-bow at the castle. The elephant has reins attached. MS. 14970 (Fr.) shows a

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<sup>63</sup> The miniatures in this manuscript may be compared with those in MS. Harl. 4751.

drab-tinted elephant with fairly drawn trunk, but the tusks distinctly point upwards from the lower jaw; its feet are expanded. Bound to its back, on a red saddle-cloth, is a blue circular castle with battlements and flattish knobbed roof. There are no warriors. In MS. 14964 (Fr.) the elephant is shaped like a bear and is hairy, with beast's ears, fairly drawn trunk, upstanding tusks, and horses' feet. It has a large castle on its back with battlements and tiled roof, but no warriors. In MS. 1444 (Fr.) the elephant is white and has horses' legs with hocks, expanding trunk, and tusks rising from the lower jaw. There are no warriors. In MS. Roy. 2 B vii. the heads of four knights appear above the parapet of the castle. In front of the elephant is a mailed knight with a spear, holding up his hand. In MS. McClean 123 at the Fitzwilliam Museum the elephant has a castle. In MS. Douce 132 (Bodl.) there is no miniature.

In Verner Dahlerup's paper on the Icelandic bestiary at Copenhagen the facsimiles of the illustrations include a full-page miniature of the elephant and castle. It is a curious creature shaped like a wolf, and has cloven feet. Its head is bent down and is protected by a large concave shield, so that only the tips of its ears and trunk are visible. Its back is arched and on it is a rectangular framed structure of wood, which is as large as the elephant and has battlements, above which appear the heads of seven mailed knights, and five shields. It has no resemblance to a castle. The elephant, its shield, and the other shields are coloured pink, and the mail green. The castle is uncoloured. [46]

### THE LEGEND OF THE MANDRAKE.

The introduction of the mandrake into the story of the elephants led to a description of the plant and its legend being incorporated with the account of the elephant. The French versions do much greater justice to it than the Latin, for the latter, almost without exception, confine themselves to the description. The mandrake has been the subject of much old lore, and is illustrated in the early herbals in accordance with its legend.

Of the many bestiaries consulted, the most useful perhaps is MS. Bodl. 764, in which a symbolic interpretation is given. A translation of the Latin text, with certain omissions made good, runs as follows:

'The mandrake is so called because it has sweet-smelling fruit of the size of the Martian apple, and because of this the Latins call it "earth-apple."<sup>64</sup> The poets (in some manuscripts erroneously "prophets") call this plant "man-shaped," because it has a root resembling the human form. The rind when mixed with wine is given as a drink to persons whose bodies are to be operated on for a cure, so that under its soporific influence they may not feel the pain (variant: is given as a drink in different cases of sickness. And its stem when thirty years old<sup>65</sup> is carefully gathered for the healing of many complaints). There are two varieties of this plant, the female with leaves resembling those of the lettuce, and producing fruit like plums, and the male with leaves like the beet.' Then follows the Sermo, which is based on the allusions to the mandrake in Canticles (vii, 13) and Genesis (xxx, 14): 'In the song of songs the bride says of the man-drake: The mandrakes have given forth a smell in our gates. The mandrake for its manifold uses in medicine is comparable with the virtues of

64 Pliny describes the different varieties of 'Aristolochia,' or 'malum terrae,' in bk. xxv, ch. 54.

65 post triginta annos.

holy men. The gates of the church are the holy doctors. In gates of this kind the mandrakes give a smell when spiritually minded men, one and all, scatter far and wide the fame of their virtues. And one may read in Genesis how Reuben the son of Leah went out into the field and found mandrakes and gave them to [47] his mother Leah; which signifies the good reputation which every diligent person acquires amongst men of this world. This may be applied to our mother church; as the apostle says of one about to be ordained bishop: he ought to be well testified of by those without; who, although they have had little learning, yet generally shed the lustre of praise and the odour of good opinion on the efforts of those from whom they obtain counsel.<sup>66</sup> MS. Bodl. 764 is the only manuscript in which we have found the symbolism on these lines.

The version of Hugo, instead of comparing the fruit with that of the Martian apple, says it is of the size ‘nucum avellenarum,’ that is of the nux abellana, or filbert.<sup>67</sup> The reference to the poets is evidently to Columella’s lines:

Quamvis semihominis vesano gramine feta  
Mandragorae pariat flores maestamque cicutam.<sup>68</sup>

The direction that the plant should be thirty years old when gathered does not appear in all versions, nor in Isidore or Rabanus and so far we have been unable to find the source of it. It sounds like an interpolation.

It seems likely that Isidore made use of Pliny’s account of the mandrake in bk. xxv, ch. 94, for the latter says that ‘there are two varieties, the white mandragora which is generally thought to be the male plant, and the black, which is considered to be the female. It has a leaf narrower than that of the lettuce, a hairy stem, and a double or triple root, black without and white within, soft and fleshy, and nearly a cubit in length. Both kinds bear a fruit about the size of a hazel-nut. . . . The leaves of the female plant are broader than those of the male.’

In the Latin bestiary at Leyden, which is based on Basil, the mandrake is treated differently. It is prescribed as a remedy for sleeplessness and for quieting patients who are suffering from madness<sup>69</sup> and severe sweatings. In addition the milk of poppies and hellebore are prescribed for soothing the most obstinate pain. And the moralist impresses on his readers that they ought to give [48] still greater praise to the Creator for all these things, although they may have regarded them as noxious and a cause for complaint. For he who established these troubles created also the remedies for them.<sup>70</sup>

Illustrations of the mandrake are scarce in the Latin bestiaries, and we are only able to point to the three manuscripts before mentioned, viz., Sloane 278, Stowe 1067, and Douce 167, as containing them. In the Sloane MS. a single mandrake appears, as a human figure, with a branch

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66 I. Timothy, iv, 1.

67 Mentioned by Pliny, bk. xv, ch. 24 (22).

68 Book x, 20.: ‘That soil . . . altho’ it may The mournful hemlock, and the man-drake’s flowers / Produce, whose root shows half a man, whose juice / With madness strikes, . . .

69 rabiem—probably here delirium.

70 Eustathius (Hexam. lib. v, 4) mentions the mandrake among other poisonous plants and alludes to its employment in medicine for inducing sleep. The poisonous qualities of the mandrake find a place in the bestiary in the account of the bear, which, after eating the fruit, becomes fatally sick, but counter-acts the poison by devouring ants.

of spiky leaves growing out of his head (plate II, no. 1). In the Stowe manuscript two mandrakes stand side by side in human form, their arms forming roots. From their heads spring plants with long sprays or runners. In MS. Douce 167 there are two conventional green plants side by side. The top of one is composed of a man's head with a kind of red halo round it, and the top of the other is a woman's, with a similar halo.

In the French versions the description and uses of the mandrake, and method of gathering it are much more fully treated, and form a picturesque little story. In Thaun's twelfth century bestiary the account follows immediately after the elephant and is contained in twenty-three lines, with three headings in Latin. The same two manuscripts, viz., Nero, A v. and 249 Merton College, have been used.

Heading: 'De mandragora et ejus natura et quid valet et quomodo cognoscitur.'

He<sup>71</sup> says of the mandrake—that it has two roots;  
Which have the forms—that man and woman are.  
The female root—for a woman is medicine;  
The female has leaves—like the lettuce,  
The male has leaves—like the beet.<sup>72</sup>  
By craft it is gathered—hear in what manner.'  
Heading: 'Homo qui eam vult colligere.'  
'The man who will gather it—must dig about it'<sup>73</sup>  
Softly and gently—so that he does not touch it. [49]  
Let him take a chained dog—let it be tied to it,  
Which is right ravenous—and three days fasted.  
Let bread be shown it—from far let it be called;  
The dog will pull it—the root will break,  
And will utter a shriek—the dog will fall dead  
Through the shriek which it heard—such force has this plant  
That no one can hear it—but at once he must die.  
And if the man hear it—on the spot will he die;  
Therefore he must stop—his ears and take care  
That he hear not the cry—lest he die just the same  
As the dog will do—if it hear its cry.'  
Heading: Radix mandragore contra omnes infirmitates valet.'  
'Whosoever has this root—it is potent as medicine,  
For every sickness—it can bring healing,  
Except only for death—then it has no force.  
Now I will treat of it no more—but will begin another.'

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71 Isidore.

72 Wright, in his *Popular Treatises on Science*, p. 101, has made an unfortunate mistake in translating the word 'beste' here as 'beast,' probably through insufficient acquaintance with the Latin versions.

73 Wright has here rendered 'fuir' as 'fly round,' but in view of the story it is clearly fouiller.'

There are no illustrations of mandrakes in these two manuscripts.

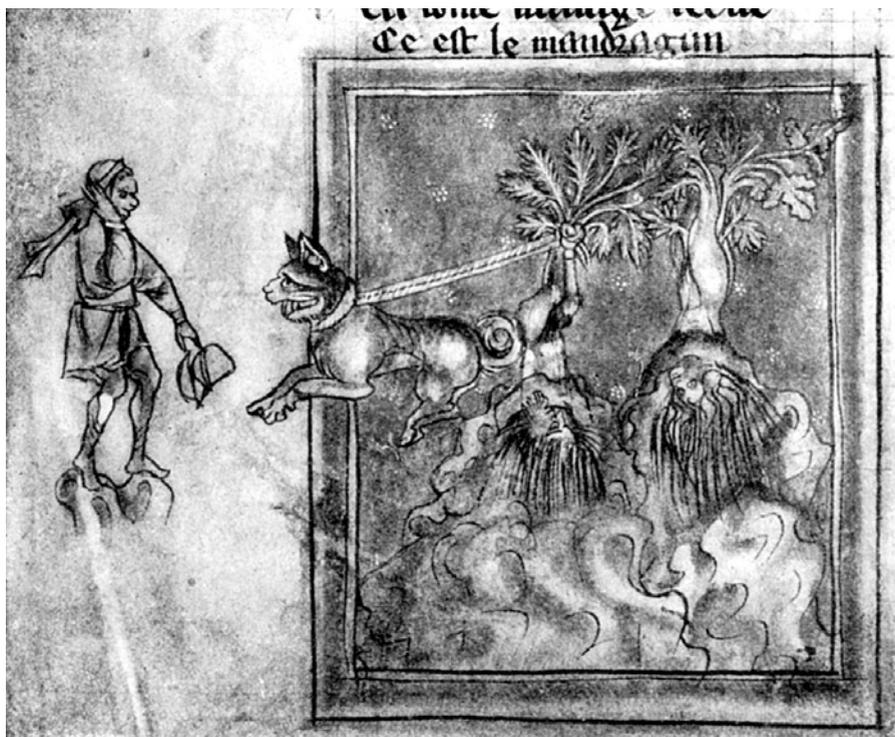
In Guillaume's version the account occupies thirty-six lines. In MS. Egerton 613 and the manuscripts transcribed by Hippeau and Cahier it follows immediately after the elephant. In MS. Vesp. A vii. it is separate. In the main the text of the last has been followed.

'The mandrake is a precious plant,  
None other of its kind there is;  
And I tell you that of its root  
One may make many a medicine.  
If you regard the root with care,  
You will find there a form  
Like the form of a man.  
Its rind is most useful;  
When it is boiled in water  
It is right good for many a malady.  
When this plant is thirty years old,  
It is plucked by those who practice medicine;  
They say when it is plucked  
That it moans and shrieks and cries,  
And if any one hear its cry  
Dead he will be and come to grief. [50]  
But they who pluck it do so  
So wisely that they take no hurt.  
When from the earth it is taken up,  
For many a thing is the body good;  
If a man suffer in his head,  
Or in his body, which should give him pain;  
Or in his foot or in his hand;  
By this plant shall he be cured.  
There where the man should feel the pain  
Shall he put on that very spot  
Of the plant when well bruised;  
And when the man has drunk of it  
Full softly shall he fall asleep  
And feel the pain no more<sup>74</sup>  
Of this plant which is so potent  
There are always two kinds;  
The one is male, the other female.  
The leaves of both are beautiful,  
The female is thickly leaved  
Like the wild lettuce.'

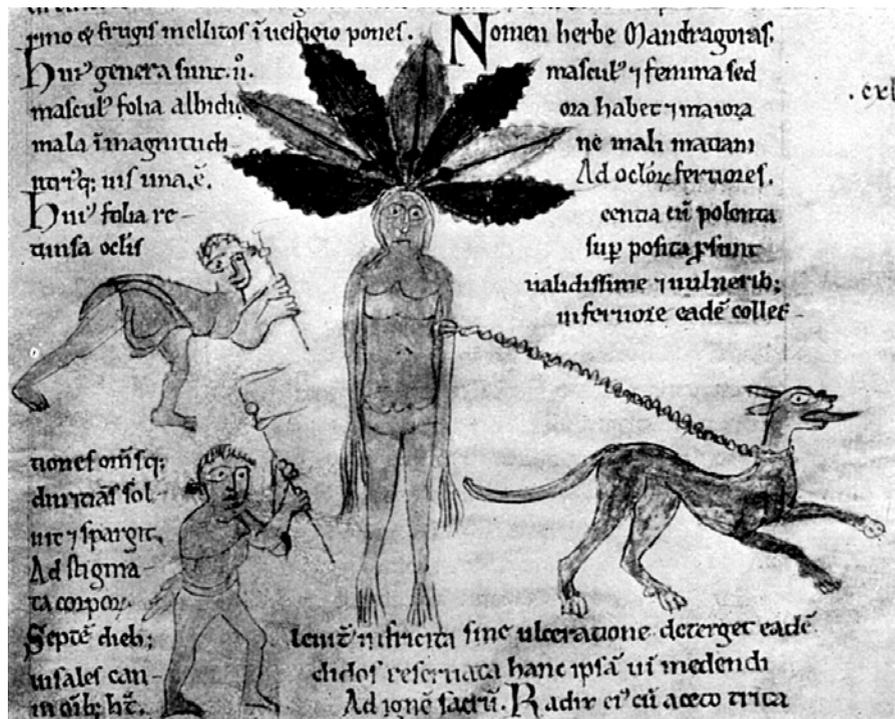
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74 There is some discrepancy in the texts here, but apparently the author intends that a salve made of the bruised root should be applied, and a drink taken as well to promote sleep.

PLATE VIII



NO. 1. LEGEND OF THE MANDRAKE : MS. 14969 (Fr.), BIBL. NAT. PARIS.



NO. 2. LEGEND OF THE MANDRAKE : MS. HARL. 5294 (B.M.)

There are miniatures of mandrakes in manuscripts of Guillaume, one of the best being in MS. 14969 (Fr.) (plate VIII, no. 1). The heading runs: 'Ce est le mandragun.' Two mandrakes, male and female, are growing on a hillock heads downward (in contradistinction to the Latin manuscripts), their hair forming the roots. Their bodies serve as stems and their legs terminate in large bunches of foliage. To the ankles of the male plant a rope is attached, the other end of which is tied to the neck of a large dog, which springs briskly towards a man standing outside the panel. He holds a knotted club and a lump of food, the nature of which is uncertain. The dog's ribs are indicated, perhaps to show its famished condition.

In MS. 14970 (Fr.) there is a small miniature with heading: *De la viertu au mand'*. On the left are two blue bushes, round one of which is passed a rope, the ends of which are attached to a pair of white dogs, side by side, which are running towards a lump of meat (?) on the [51] extreme right. In MS. 14964 (Fr.) the heading runs: *De la nature dune herbe qui a nom mandegloyre,* and the miniature shows a lofty yellow-brown hill, with two trees. Between the trees a pair of hairy human forms, male and female, stand side by side with their hands on their stomachs. From their heads sprout shoots or large leaves. In MS. 1444 (Fr.) a pair of three-quarter length human figures stand, drawn almost exactly alike, although meant for male and female. Each holds the left hand to the stomach and the right to the breast. The title is simply '*Del mandegloire.*'

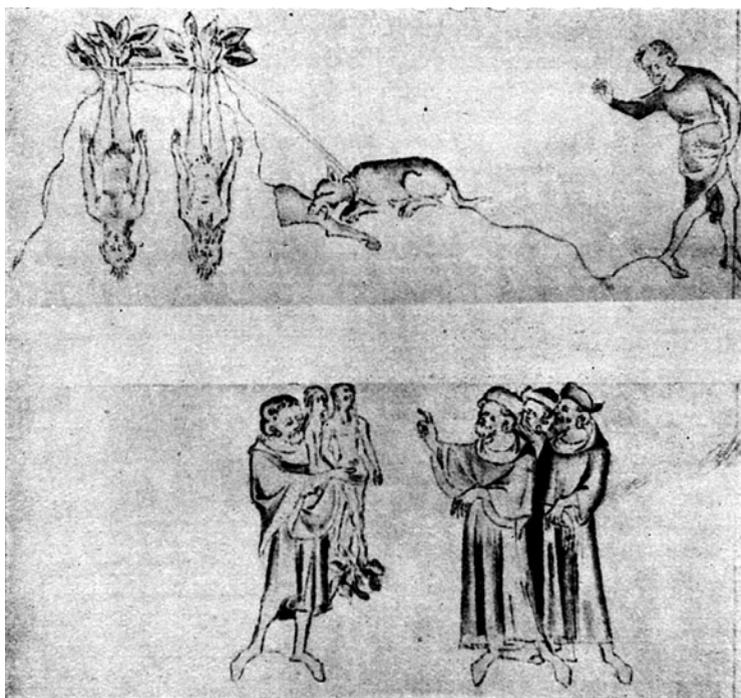


FIG. 2. LEGEND OF THE MANDRAKE: MS. ROY. 2 B. VII (B.M.).

In MS. Roy. 2 B vii. there are two illustrations of mandrakes (fig. 2). In the first they are human figures, male and female, deep in the ground, which is heaped up to accommodate them. Their hair forms the roots and from their [52] feet spring bunches of foliage. A rope is attached to their ankles,

the other end being tied to the collar of a dog which is seizing the food, consisting of an animal's leg. In the other a man is holding up the two mandrakes in front of three persons, the foremost of whom, with finger raised, is expiating on the virtues of the plants in medicine. In the Trinity College manuscript and in MS. McClean 123 at the Fitzwilliam there are two figures growing in the ground, with a tree between them.

In the two manuscripts of Gervaise and Pierre there is no account of the mandrake.

### THE MANDRAKE IN THE HERBALS.

The description of the mandrake and its curative powers in the bestiary brings us into connexion with the early medical treatises on plants. These are mainly based on the Herbarium of Apuleius; and the real or supposed works of Hippocrates (460-357 B.C.), Sextus Placitus (fourth century A.D.), and Dioscorides (second century A.D.) These herbals are of great interest, principally on account of the illustrations of the plants, which are by no means always formally treated, and of the birds and animals from which remedies are obtained. In some cases the plants or their roots are drawn to correspond with the forms of the creatures after which they are named, such as the 'basilisca' from the basilisk, as it was supposed to grow where these creatures are found. Figures are also introduced such as serpents, sometimes opposed by an armed man, in illustration of cures for snake bite; and dogs, in illustration of cures for the bite of mad dogs and hydrophobia. In the illustration of 'lactuca leporina' a hare is eating the leaf because it is supposed to feed upon it in summer when poorly. The centaur Chiron holds up the plant centaury, named after him as the discoverer; and elsewhere the goddess Diana presents Chiron with sprays of artemisia, named after her. Homer and Mercury also appear in connexion with the plant immolus. Needless to say the mandrake is drawn in accordance with its legendary form, and in certain manuscripts the legend is given in full. This is the case in MS. Harl. 4986, a twelfth century herbal in [53] the British Museum, which is entitled: 'Apuleii liber de medicaminibus herbarum.'

The following is a translation:

Heading: 'About the mandrake.'

'If you want to gather the mandrake because of its great health-giving qualities, you shall gather it in this wise. It shines at night like a lamp, and when you see it mark it round quickly with iron lest it escape you. For so strong is this power in it, that if it sees an unclean man coming to it, it runs away. So for this reason mark it round with iron and dig about it, taking care that you do not touch it with the iron; but remove the earth from it with the utmost care with an ivory stake, and when you have seen the foot of the plant and its hands, then you shall at once bind the plant with a new rope, and you shall tie the same round the neck of a hungry dog, and in front of it place food at a little distance, so that in its eagerness to get the food it may pull out the plant. Again you may get it out in another way. Make an apparatus like a mangonel instead<sup>75</sup> and fix in it a tall rod, to the top of which you shall tie a new rope to which also the plant is tied; and you shall make it work as a kind of mousetrap from a distance, when the rod springing back pulls out the plant by its own force. And when you have got it unbroken in your hands, presently store the juice of the leaves in

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75 'Fac vice manganum.'

a glass jar, and so will you keep it as a remedy for human beings.’

The list of cures which follows throws considerable light on the details given in Guillaume’s version. There are six described. The first is for a head-ache which prevents sleep. For this a salve is made with the juice and applied to the forehead as a plaster, ‘when the pain in the head is soon relieved, and sleep will come again quickly.’ The second is for pain in the ears. The juice must be mixed with oil of nard and the mixture poured into the ears, ‘when the patient will be cured with wonderful quickness.’ The third is for a severe attack of gout. You must take of the right hand and the right foot of the mandrake a scruple each and grind it to powder, and administer in wine for seven days, when the patient will be quickly cured; and it [54] causes not only the swelling but also the contraction of the muscles to recover themselves, and so ‘both these troubles are cured in a wonderful way as has been proved by the author’s experiments.’ The fourth cure is for epileptics, that is for persons who have fallen in fits or who suffer from spasms. One scruple of the body of the plant is ground up and given to the patient in hot water, ‘as full as the vessel can hold, and immediately he will be cured.’ The fifth is for cramp and contraction of the muscles. ‘Make a powder, very fine, of the body of this plant and mix it with sweet oil, and smear it upon those persons who have the troubles mentioned.’ The sixth cure is interesting. ‘If a cold in the head, of a particularly virulent kind, has appeared in the house, the mandrake plant—however little they have of it inside the house—drives away all the infection.’

The illustration in this manuscript displays a crude dark brown human figure, full-face, with large hands and feet ending in rooty fingers and toes. From the top of the head springs a bunch of five broad green leaves with fruits. Chained with a heavy black chain to one leg of the mandrake is a green dog, very lean, which leaps towards a circular object at the side, the food. The title ‘mandragora’ is written on the ground of the miniature.

Notice may be taken here of the well-known Saxon herbal at the British Museum (MS. Vitellius C iii), of eleventh century date, of which the text and translation are given in Cockayne’s Saxon Leechdoms, vol. i. It contains the Herbarium of Apuleius and corresponds closely with the Latin version in MS. Harl. 4986. In the account of the mandrake the legend is given, but it omits the alternative method of extracting the plant.

The list of cures follows that in the Harley manuscript, except that in the third Cockayne’s translation runs that one scruple of each hand should be taken, and omits the words relating to the author’s experiments. In the fourth the cure for epileptics in the Latin manuscript is expressed as for witlessness or devil-sickness (demoniacal possession). In the sixth there is a considerable discrepancy. In the Latin manuscript the trouble is a heavy cold in the head (gravedo) which may spread through the house, but in Cockayne’s translation of the Saxon manuscript it is rendered: ‘If any see some heavy mischief in his home, let him take [55] this wort mandragoras into the middle of the house, as much (of it) as he then may have (by him), he compelleth all evils out (of the house).’ It seems to us that the sense has been missed here. The illustration shows a dark purple root resembling the human form, the ends of the arms and legs forming clumps of roots. From the neck springs a bunch of about seven blue leaves, but the vellum is defective. By the figure’s left foot is a purple dog, with collar, straining to reach some food which is drawn as a small round ball.

The immediate sources of the story are to be found in Pliny and Josephus. The former says (bk.



FIG. 3 LEGEND OF THE MANDRAKE, MS. SLOANE 1975 (B.M.)

xxv, ch. 94): ‘Persons when about to gather this plant, take every precaution not to have the wind blowing in their face; and after tracing three circles round it with a sword, turn towards the west and dig it up.’ Josephus (37-c. 100) introduces the dog. In his Wars of the Jews (bk. vii, ch. 6), he says:

In that valley which encompasses the city (Macherus) on the north side, there is a certain place called Baaras, which produces a root of the same name with itself; its color is like that of flame and towards the evening it sends out a certain ray like lightning; it is not easily taken by such as would do it, but recedes from the hands nor will yield itself to be taken quietly.’ It is certain death to those that touch it, unless treated in a particular way, and even then he advises great caution in handling it. ‘But it may be taken in another way without danger. They dig a trench quite round about it, till the hidden part of the root be very small, they then tie a dog to it, and when the dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up, but the dog dies immediately, as it were instead of the man that would take the plant away; nor after this need any one be afraid of taking it into their hands. Yet after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked that enter into men that are alive and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them.’<sup>76</sup>

Several other illustrated herbals have been consulted. In MSS. Sloane 1975, Harl. 1585, and Harl. 5294, of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the legend is not given, but only a brief description of the two kinds of mandrake, and [57] a list of cures. MS. Sloane 1975 (fig. 3) is in fine condition and shows the male mandrake as a naked human figure, full face, with arms at sides as before; the fingers and toes are not extended as roots. The figure is meant to be flesh-coloured, with deep red face and neck, light hair, and a large bunch of broad green leaves and yellow fruits surrounding the head. The dog is at foot and is tied to the plant by a thick rope looped round the legs of the figure and its own neck in a conventional way. It is in the act of springing after food, which is not visible. The female plant is also illustrated and resembles a naked woman with long dark hair and arms at side. From her head springs a bunch of leaves of various green tints. In MS. Harl. 1585 the male plant alone is illustrated, and closely resembles that in the Sloane MS., both in detail and colouring. In MS. Harl. 5294 the illustrations are not so well drawn (plate VIII, no. 2). The male mandrake appears as the usual naked figure, full face, and with fingers and toes as roots. From the head spring seven large leaves and fruits. A brown dog of the greyhound sort is fastened by a chain to the left arm of the mandrake and is presumably springing after food. The dog is certainly not fat. But the interesting feature here is the presence of two men in green tunics tucked up, who are digging round the mandrake with iron forks. This is the only illustration we can point to showing this feature. The female plant also appears in this manuscript. It is crudely drawn, with rooty fingers and toes and a bunch of ten leaves and fruits springing from the neck instead of the head.

In these three manuscripts the cures differ from those in the Herbarium of Apuleius. Inflamed eyes may be benefitted by applying the fresh leaves ground up with meal;<sup>77</sup> pricks on the body

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<sup>76</sup> Whiston’s translation.

<sup>77</sup> Compare Pliny (bk. xxv, ch. 94).

may be rubbed gently with the fresh leaves for seven days.<sup>78</sup> For St. Anthony's fire, otherwise erysipelas, the root when bruised with vinegar is applied as a salve;<sup>79</sup> for the bite of a serpent (called Jecir) the root is applied with oil or honey;<sup>80</sup> for scrofulous sores the leaves ground up in water are applied,<sup>81</sup> and for pains in the joints [58] the same when ground up in meal. The last and perhaps the most important use of the plant is to promote sleep. If the fruit is applied to the nostrils or is eaten, it causes sufficient drowsiness or unconsciousness for the power of speech to be lost. Directions are then given for the collection and preservation of the juice.<sup>82</sup>

The female plant is also described. It is said to be called by some people 'appollinaris,' or 'earth apple.'<sup>83</sup> Its properties and cures are similar to those of the male plant, but the proportions of root and wine differ in the prescriptions, also the dose before an operation.

From this we may see the sources which were ready to hand for the authors of the bestiaries to draw upon. Canon Tristram in *The Natural History of the Bible*, p. 466, gives a useful description and illustration of the mandrake<sup>84</sup> in nature. He says 'it is a plant of very peculiar appearance. It sends up in early spring a broad disk of leaves, lying flat on the ground, somewhat like those of the primrose, but more than double their size, being a foot in length and four inches wide. In the centre of these come out the blossoms singly, some with a stalk two or three inches long, some with scarcely any stem. They are cup-shaped and of a rich purple colour. The fruit is the size of a large plum, quite round, yellow, and full of soft pulp. It has a peculiar but decidedly not unpleasant smell and a pleasant sweet taste. It is said to be a soporific, but I have often eaten it without feeling any somnolent effects. The root is a long tap, frequently forked.' He then refers to the legend, and states that the mandrake is universally distributed in all parts of Palestine. Its fruit is much valued by the natives, who still hold to the belief, as old as the time of Rachel, that when eaten it ensures conception.<sup>85</sup> [59]

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE HERBALS.

In addition to the remedies from plants given in the herbals there are others obtained from animals, including the elephant. This section is associated with the name of Sextus Placitus, whose work is entitled 'De medicamentis ex animalibus.' There are some curious illustrations, and those of the elephant display a complete lack of knowledge of its anatomy. The cures obtained from it are few in number, the principal one being a salve made of ivory, ground up, which is applied to

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78 Under this cure directions are given for the preservation of the leaves in brine; see also Pliny (bk. xxv, ch. 94).

79 Pliny mentions mandrake root as a remedy for erysipelas in bk. xxvi, ch. 74; it must be sliced like cucumber, suspended over must, hung up in smoke, and then bruised in wine and vinegar.

80 Compare Pliny, bk. xxv, ch. 94.

81 Compare Pliny, bk. xxvi, ch. 12 (5).

82 Pliny (l k. xxv, ch. 94) speaks of the narcotic effect of the juice and of its being given to patients before operations. In fact he says with some persons the smell is quite sufficient to induce sleep.

83 Henbane. Described by Pliny, bk. xxv, ch. 17(4).

84 *Mandragora officinalis*.

85 As an example of the survival of old superstitions, a letter in *The Times* of 29th January, 1908, relates the horror with which an old gardener and another man were struck on turning up a mandrake—in 1907. The gardener explained that it must be taken away at once and burned, as it would soon cause people who looked at it to become blind. The root was described as of a yellow-grey colour, 8 to 10 inches in length, and in form suggestive of the human figure.

PLATE IX



NO. 1. ELEPHANT : MS. SLOAN 1975 (B.M.).



NO. 2. ELEPHANT : MS. VITELL. C III (B.M.).

spots and lines on the face and for whitening the teeth. The blood is also to be drunk by those who suffer from haemorrhage.

The miniature in MS. Sloane 1975 (plate IX, no. 1) shows an elephant which has no resemblance to the natural beast, except perhaps in its tusks, which project from the nose and mouth. It may be compared with a wolf in form, and has small erect ears and clawed feet.

Another curious elephant is illustrated in MS. Vitellius C iii, the Saxon herbal (plate IX, no. 2). This creature resembles a bear to which tusks have been applied. It is dark brown and is coated with a chequer pattern, which may represent hair.

In MS. Tiberius C v, a Saxon description of Eastern places, their inhabitants and monsters, an elephant is illustrated, which is purple in colour, hairy, and resembles a polar bear. From its lower lip project upwards a pair of yellow tusks, and from its mouth a purple trunk like a small curled scroll. It stands between two rivers, and the text explains that the locality is Upper Egypt.

### **ELEPHANTS IN ECCLESIASTICAL CARVING.**

The illustrations of elephants in the bestiaries and herbals by no means exhaust the sources on which the ecclesiastical carvers and heraldic artists could draw for models. Manuscripts of Alexander's Romance, particularly the French, provided others. The principal occasions on which they appear are when Alexander fights against the elephants, and when he is presented with elephants by the people of the country.

In MS. Harl. 4979, f. 51, of early fourteenth century [60] date, three elephants appear, in a battle scene between the Persians and Indians. Their legs are purely horses', their trunks have bell-like tips and their tusks emerge from slits and point upwards. They carry low castles. The text relates how Alexander took 'ymages de laiton' and had them filled with burning coals and placed in iron vehicles, which were driven about in front of the elephants. And when these saw the flames and felt the heat of the fires, they ran away, 'whereby Porus was much discomfitted.' And on f. 74 Alexander, seated under a pavilion, receives a group of about nine elephants, of which two are ridden by their keepers, as a gift. All of them have hairy bodies and horses' legs and feet. In MS. 20 A v. of similar date, Alexander on foot faces three elephants which are quaintly drawn in various shades of blue. They resemble oxen in shape, and have horses' feet and tails, tubular corrugated trunks much too large for their heads, no tusks, and small foliated ears. On f. 75b Alexander stands before six similar elephants, which are brought as a gift by two men. Seven trunks are visible. In MS. 19 D i, f. 29, of similar date, in the battle scene a party of mounted knights face a single elephant. It is coloured chocolate-brown, and has horses' legs and feet, white tusks rising from the lower jaw, and a straight trunk expanding towards the tip. On f. 39b Alexander receives the 'Salandres,' or prophetic birds,<sup>86</sup> from a knight, behind whom is a very quaint pink elephant with shoes and a long tube-like trunk. It has no tusks. In MS. Add. 15268, f. 204, of the fourteenth century, there is a general melee between knights on horses and five elephants, some of which carry castles containing turbaned warriors. Their heads are fairly drawn, but they have horses' legs. On f. 226 a party of six knights on horses is seen with two elephants, one bearing a castle. Their heads

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<sup>86</sup> For an account of these birds in the bestiaries, see *A.J.* lxix, 381.

and trunks are fairly drawn, but they have tusks projecting upwards and horses' legs with lumpy hoofs. In MS. 16 G vii, f. 133b, of the fourteenth century, there is a beautifully coloured miniature of the battle scene. Five tusked swine, directed by soldiers, face four mauve-tinted elephants, whose heads and trunks appear amidst trees. They have small boars' tusks and expanding trunks.<sup>87</sup> In MS. 15 D iv, f. 50, two elephants [61] appear in the battle scene, one with a castle. The proportions are absurd, the elephant being about as large as a horse, and the castle too small for men to get into. One is covered with a cuirass through which its tusks project upwards from somewhere in the neck. In MS. 15 E vi, f. 16b, Alexander on horseback at the head of his knights attacks two elephants with spears and wounds them in the head and breast. They are flesh-tinted and shaped as

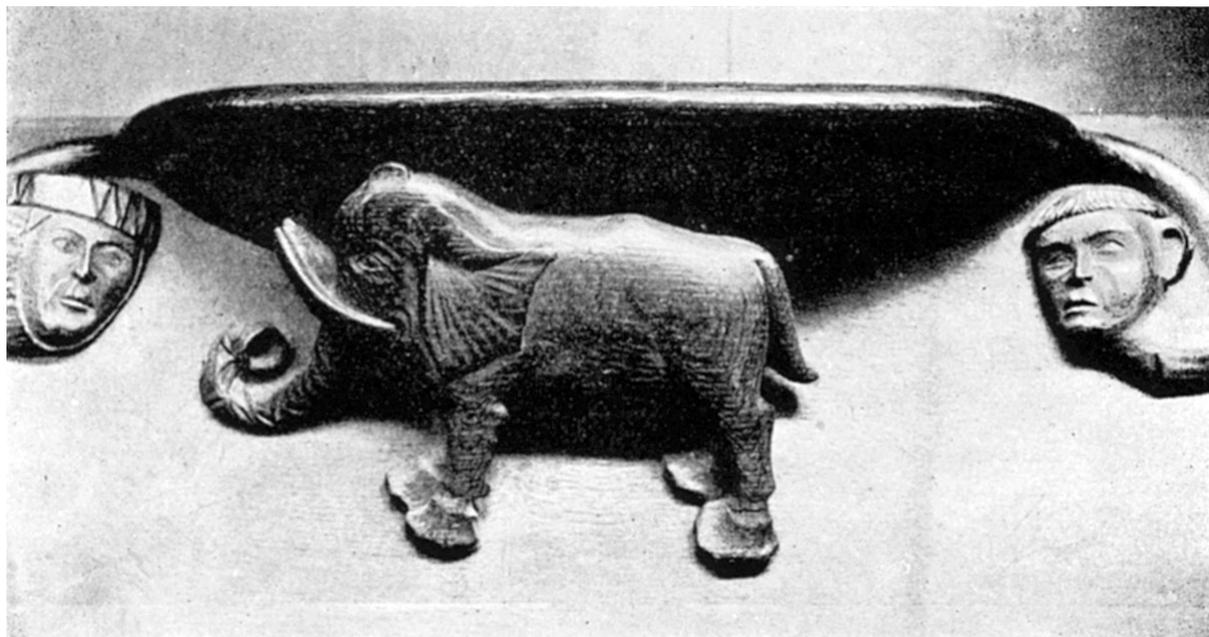


FIG. 4. ALEXANDER AND THE ELEPHANTS, MS. 20 B. XX (B.M.).

deer, with cloven feet, trumpet-shaped trunks, and tusks curled upwards from the lower jaw. On f. 21b there are two pictures of the presentation of elephants by the natives, in which five elephants appear drawn in the same way. In MS. 20 B xx. of the fifteenth century, there are three illustrations of elephants. On f. 41b Alexander witnesses a fight in which a very powerful dog, a present to him, kills an elephant. This beast has a claw-like end to its trunk, cloven feet, and tusks rising from the lower jaw. On f. 57 in the battle scene there are three very clumsy elephants with trumpet-ended trunks, otherwise the features are the same. Four or five tusked swine face them in advance of the men. On f. 82b, in the presentation scene (fig. 4) [62] the elephants have claw-ended trunks, cloven feet, and upstanding tusks. Their ears hang in folds like cloth. In MS. Burney 169 of the fifteenth century, there are two battle scenes, in which the elephants carry castles, and are bridled. They have distinct horses' legs and feet. In the second miniature the bridles have caused some displacement of the tusks.

<sup>87</sup> This episode of the swine is related in the Westminster bestiary. See ante.

PLATE X



NO. 1. ELEPHANT : EXETER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 2. DRAGON AND ELEPHANT ON FONT, DUNKESWELL CHURCH.

Elephants also appear in other manuscripts as decorative details, for instance in MS. Harl. 928, a small Book of Hours of the thirteenth century. On the margin is a small blue elephant not badly drawn, except its legs which are like horses' but thicker. The trunk is bell-mouthed. In MS. 10 E iv. the well-known Decretals of Pope Gregory, of the beginning of the fourteenth century, there is a blue elephant with castle of two stories and warriors in it. Its trunk is bell-mouthed, ears foliated, and tusks stick up straight from the lower jaw. It has thick legs, lumpy feet with hocks, and horse-tail. Elephants with castles also appear on the margins of the Metz Pontifical of the beginning of the fourteenth century.

These illustrations in manuscripts show in great measure what we may expect to find in ecclesiastical carving, that is if we accept the view that the carvers made use of them as models when carrying out their decorative schemes. We shall see that the anatomical defects in the elephants of the manuscripts are repeated in the carvings, and also that the elephant with the castle occurs much more freely than any other form.

It has already been remarked how few miniatures there are illustrating the legend of the elephants, considering its importance, but in the case of the carvings the position is much worse, for we are unable to point to a single example, and there are only two, or perhaps three, of the fight between the elephant and the dragon. There is upon a thirteenth-century misericord at Exeter Cathedral an elephant standing alone (plate X, no. 1), which points to the carver having worked from a bestiary, as there are other bestiary subjects, such as the lion, basilisk, syrens, and centaurs on these misericords. The elephant here is not so badly shaped in some respects, especially the trunk, but the tusks distinctly project upwards from the lower jaw, the ears are foliated, and the legs are those of a horse. The carver has made some [63] attempt to indicate the spread of its feet and its toes, but not very successfully.

Of the few examples in carving of the great fight between Draco and the elephant, that upon the twelfth-century font at Dunkeswell (Devon) is the most important (plate X, no. 2). It is the earliest carved elephant which has come to our notice in any ecclesiastical building in this country. The font is damaged and the details rather difficult to make out, but the scene appears to follow the legend, as the elephant is standing with the dragon underneath, apparently coiled round its legs. This elephant is a hairy creature with fairly drawn trunk, but the tusks are difficult to detect.

We should expect to find this scene on misericords, but the only example we can point to (with perhaps a duplicate) is at Carlisle Cathedral, and is of the fifteenth century (plate XIII, no. 1). There are many animal and bird subjects on these misericords, treated in a somewhat stereotyped fashion, especially as regards their feet. In this case the elephant has cloven feet and a very curious beak-like trunk, which closely resembles that in the manuscript at St. John's College, Oxford. It is attacked by a two-legged winged dragon, which has got its tail over the back of the elephant and is biting its back, as seen in so many miniatures, while the elephant's foot rests on the dragon's back. The composition corresponds very closely.

The only other early examples we can point to are in France. Three of them are upon twelfth century capitals in churches in the Charente-Inf., all close together. Perhaps the most interesting is that at Aulnay-de-Saintonge (plate XI, no. 1), in the south aisle, where the figures are accompanied by an inscription HI SUNT ELEPHANTES, incised below the abacus. Here are three elephants standing, with well-formed trunks, short tusks projecting from the lower jaw, and little dogs' ears

PLATE XI



NO. 1. ELEPHANTS : AULNAY-DE-SAINTONGE, FRANCE



NO. 2. ELEPHANTS : SURGÈRES, FRANCE

cocked. Their toes are divided like those of wild beasts. They have bordered saddle-cloths kept in place by three broad bands. At Surgères (plate XI, no. 1) upon a cap on the west front is a pair of elephants similarly treated, but they have lost their trunks. They are accoutered in the same way. At Loulay the treatment is different, the fore part of the elephants only being shown; and they have bent legs and large ears indicated by spiral scrolls. Their trunks are broken off. A man with a spear [64] appears with them. There is a pair of elephants on a twelfth-century cap at Montierneuf, Poitiers, whose trunks are yoked together by a band crossing them. The inscription at Aulnay may be merely explanatory, but it is possible that it was copied from the miniature which the carver worked from.

Turning now to the later woodwork, we find some curious elephants on poppy-heads at Denston (Suffolk) and South Lopham (Norfolk). At Denston (plate XII, no. 1) the elephant is seated on its haunches, in common with other animals carved in this church. Its trunk resembles a beak or snout, and it has no tusks. Its ears are foliated as in the miniatures, and the shape of its feet indicates that the carver worked from a picture of an elephant with horses' legs.

At South Lopham (plate XII, no. 2) the elephant is on somewhat similar lines, but is crouching down in a quite impossible attitude. Its trunk is even more curious than at Denston, as the beak or snout is longer and is marked with rings to form folds. It has no ears or tusks, and its body and legs are purely horses'. It carries a square castle.

This brings us to the elephant and castle. There are very few examples prior to the fifteenth century. The best is perhaps at Gloucester Cathedral, upon one of the misericords (plate XIII, no. 2). These are of special design, the whole board being worked to form a single foliated panel. The elephant in this case is distinctly a horse, head, tail, body, and legs. From its mouth projects a pipe with bell-shaped tip. It carries a rectangular stone-built castle of two stories, set upon a saddle-cloth and kept on by three bands.

There is another fourteenth-century example on a misericord in the stalls at St. Katherine's Chapel, Regent's Park (plate XIII, no. 3). These stalls were brought from the old St. Katherine's Chapel by the Tower. The elephant here is also a horse and a very poor creature. It has lost part of its limbs, but the trunk remains, projecting from its mouth like a medieval cannon. It bears a very heavy-looking octagonal stone-built castle on a saddle-cloth, kept on by two belly-bands. The head of a man or woman appears above it and it is flanked by a large spray of foliage on either side.

Of the fifteenth-century examples the elephant which [65] appears on a misericord at Beverley St. Mary (plate XVI, no. 1) is one of the best we have, although it is heavy looking about the legs. It really has the air of an elephant. Its feet and trunk approximate to nature, but when we examine the tusks, we find the same fault, for they project upward from the lower jaw. The castle is in two stages, the upper structure consisting of two towers. The ground on which the elephant stands is well indicated, and two large trees complete a well-composed subject.

At Willian (Herts) (plate XIV, no. 1), upon a poppy-head there is a quite attractive elephant, bearing a howdah rather than a castle. It is possible that some of the so-called castles may be intended for howdahs, but designed in the orthodox fashion. The elephant at Willian has a long body like a hippopotamus, otherwise its limbs are not so badly pro-portioned. Its trunk has no doubt been saved by the carver having attached the tip to the ground, and the whole figure has been strengthened by the block beneath it. The howdah is a simple structure in one stage, with foliated

PLATE XII



NO. 1. ELEPHANT : DENSTON CHURCH.

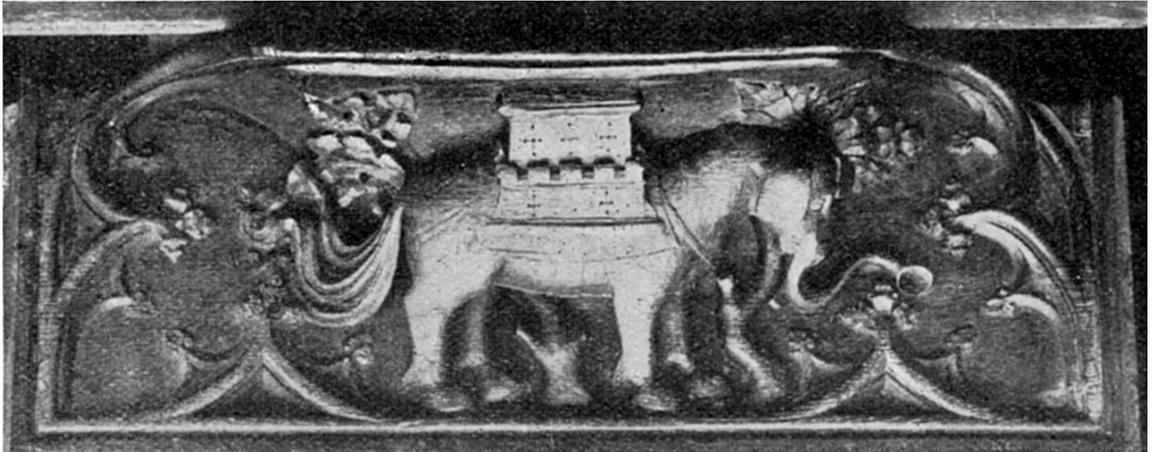


NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : SOUTH LOPHAM CHURCH.

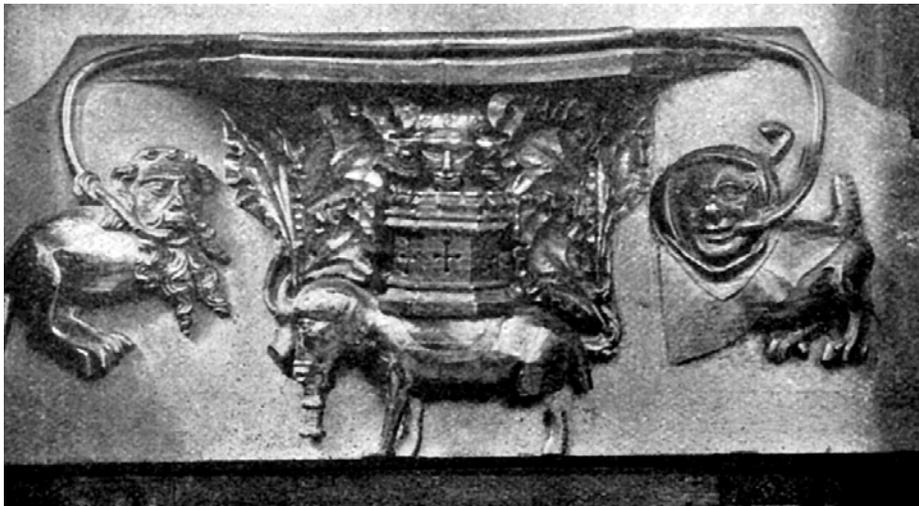
PLATE XIII



NO. 1. DRAGON AND ELEPHANT : CARLISLE CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 3. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : ST. KATHERINE'S CHAPEL, REGENT'S PARK.

window lights.

In the stalls at Chester Cathedral there is an elephant and castle forming a division (plate XV, no. 1). It has distinct horses' legs and feet, and ears in conventional folds. The trunk and tusks are broken off. The saddle-cloth is enriched with foliage, and the two stories of the castle are filled with a three-light traceried window and portcullis.

At Ripon Cathedral there is a fine elephant with castle, as a poppy-head (plate XV, no. 2). The whole is well-designed and of a decorative character. The elephant is one of the best that we have, being well proportioned, with natural head, trunk, tusks and feet, but the carver could not resist the temptation to form the ears in graceful folds. There is an exceptional feature that it is holding a man with its trunk and therefore may have originated outside the bestiary. On the other hand the heads of soldiers appear above the parapet of the castle, which is in three stages and set upon a highly enriched saddle-cloth.

In St. George's Chapel, Windsor, there are two elephants on misericords, one forming the central subject, the other a wing. Both have castles. The first, a bulky creature, has a horse's head, ears, and feet. The trunk is broken off, [66] but the tip may be seen below. Upon its back on a saddle cloth is a square castle with entrance gateway, corner towers, and buildings above. The background is composed to represent a fortified town, which the elephant may be attacking.

The other (plate XIV, no. 2) is much better done, but is ill-proportioned. It has fine foliated ears, a fair trunk, but inadequate tusks. Its legs are short, with widely splayed feet. It carries a fine castle, bound on by four straps, with entrance gateway flanked by lofty towers, between which is a steep approach. Clumps of trees complete the picture. Considering that this piece is only five or six inches across, it is a creditable piece of carving.

At Beverley Minster there are two elephants in the stalls, one on a misericord, the other on the shoulder of a bench-end. Both have castles. On the misericord (plate XVI, no. 2) the elephant appears to be driven by an ape. It is a clumsy beast, with quite inadequate legs, and a crudely formed trunk, but has a fine foliated ear. The castle is rather a plain structure, square with corner towers, and is damaged. The elephant on the bench-end is in a crouching or kneeling attitude. It has foliated ears, horses' legs, and a square castle set on a saddle-cloth with ornamental border. The bands are scalloped at the edge.

At Manchester Cathedral (plate XVII, no. 1), where the misericords correspond in date and in some other respects with those at Beverley Minster, the elephant is a clumsy beast with very poor legs, but has a fine foliated ear. The trunk and tusks are broken off. The best feature is the castle, which is an elaborate octagonal building in two stories, set upon a saddle-cloth with scalloped border. It has a tower at each angle and entrance doorway with pediment.

At Cartmel, on a misericord (plate XVII, no. 2), the elephant is distinctly a horse, with the addition of beautifully folded ears, trunk and tusks. The horse's mane, tail, legs and feet are particularly clear. The castle is a square structure with battlements and two bracketed projections and is kept on by five bands, two of which are scalloped to match the border of the saddle-cloth. The background is made up with foliage.

At Garstang there is a good elephant with castle upon a [67] misericord. It has curious foliated ears. The castle is a substantial structure.

At Christchurch Priory (Hants), where the stalls are late and show Renaissance influence, the

PLATE XIV



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : WILLIAN CHURCH.



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : CHESTER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : RIPON CATHEDRAL CHURCH.

elephant and castle forms one of the divisions on the north side (plate XVIII, no. 1). These are practically all composed of animals, including the lion, griffin, horse, dragon, dogs, and other creatures which cannot be identified. They point to the bestiary as a source. The need for uniformity in design has caused them all to be reduced to a common type, which has had a disastrous effect on the elephant, precluding any approach to natural treatment. It is seated on its haunches and is rather a graceful creature with body like a deer, dog's head with depending ears, and a snout instead of a trunk, the tip of which is broken. The castle is octagonal and of the kind seen on chess-men.

Occasionally the elephant and castle is found as a decorative item in unexpected positions. For instance, there are three pairs on the wood cornices of the nave roof of Burwell Church (Cambs.). Another is carved upon the desk of the lectern at Detling Church, Kent. This is a fine piece of church furniture, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century, and supposed to have come from Boxley Abbey. The desks are richly carved, and in one corner is the elephant and castle, balanced by an angel playing a pipe in the other. The elephant is crouching down and has a very crude and thick trunk with bell-mouth tip. The castle is square and is set upon a saddle-cloth with belly-band.

### THE ELEPHANT IN HERALDRY.

The elephant in common with other bestiary animals was adopted as a heraldic device and is illustrated in the early heraldic treatises. These manuscripts are practically heraldic bestiaries. In the *Tractatus de Armis* of Nicholas Upton, of the fifteenth century, in the third book entitled 'De animalibus et avibus in armis portatis et eorum proprietatibus,' there is a full description of the elephant. It commences with Isidore's etymological explanation of its name, and then gives a detailed account of its anatomy from [68] classical writers, which with the addition of a few fresh items, corresponds closely with the bestiaries. In addition to Isidore, Aristotle, Pliny and Avicenna are quoted. With regard to the joints in the elephants' legs, in the paragraph about their learning to recognise and honour their king, the text says that 'genua sua curvant,' and that 'stantes dormiunt pedes posteriores flectentes sicut homo.' The legend is not given, as it is not needed, but the hostility between the dragon and elephant comes in, and the guarding of the female by the male when giving birth.

There is a small illustration of the elephant and castle. It is a clumsy beast, coloured orange-buff, with blue up-standing tusks, horse's legs and other features of the manuscripts.

The heraldic treatise of Sir William Comings, Marchemont Herald of Scotland and Lyon King of Arms, dated 1494,<sup>88</sup> carries us farther, for it gives the symbolic interpretation, which is applied to the knight who first bore the device:

'The eliphant yat is callit barro be yaim of ynd for his cry is callit barritus of wham ye teith ar ywoir & for gueulle has growing<sup>89</sup> ande amang al ye othir bestes he is ye maistir of body and of vertu. Ande yairfor yai of medee and of perse puttis upon yaim toures de bost<sup>90</sup> in ye whilkis thai fecht ande ar of gud understanding ande of gude memour and ganges togidder in gret cumpany

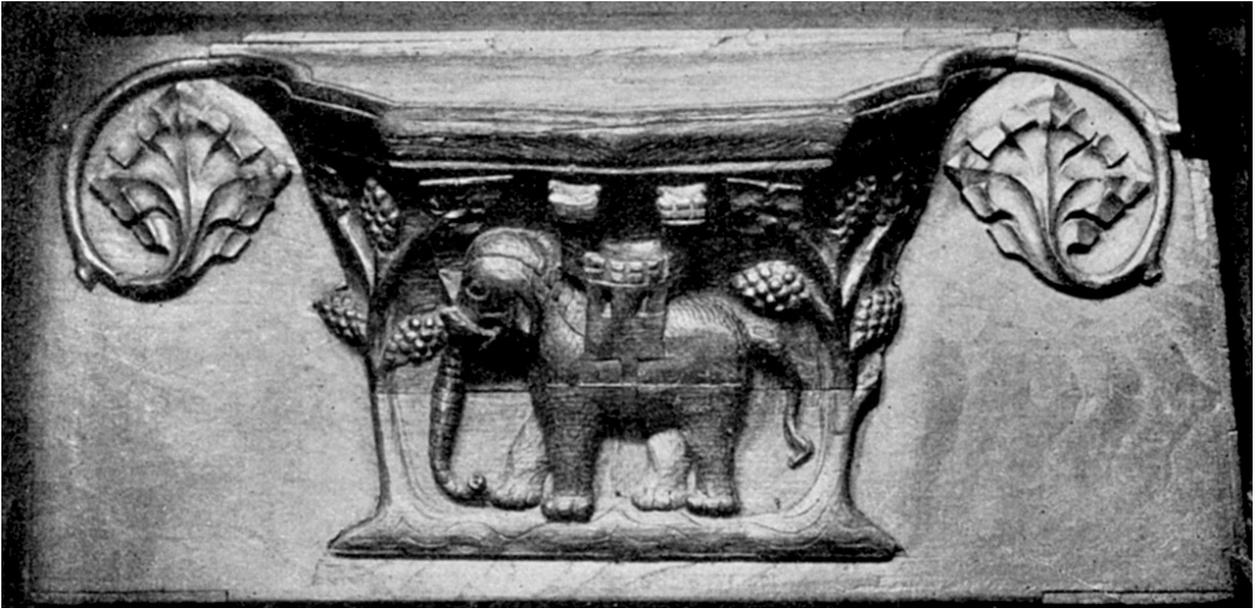
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<sup>88</sup> MS. Harl. 6149.

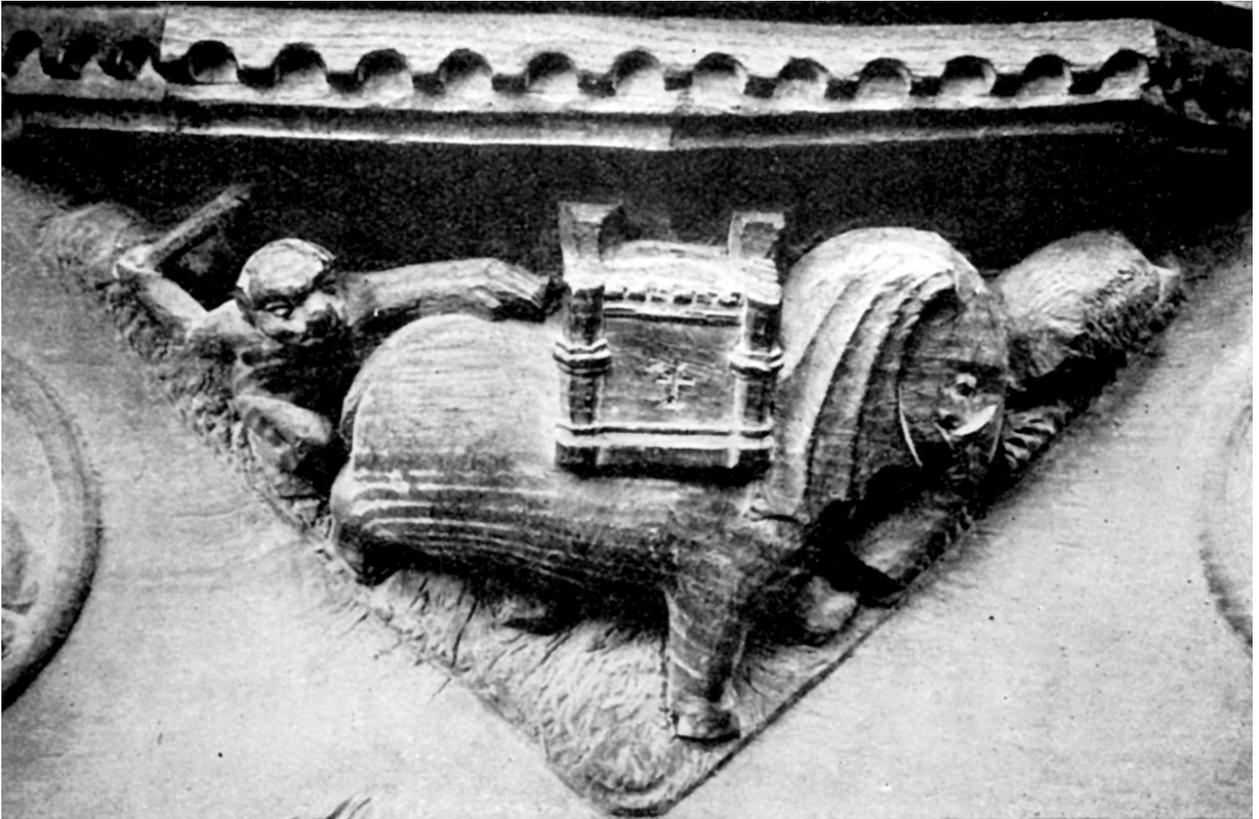
<sup>89</sup> Some words appear to be omitted here relating to the trunk or tusks.

<sup>90</sup> Wood.

PLATE XVI

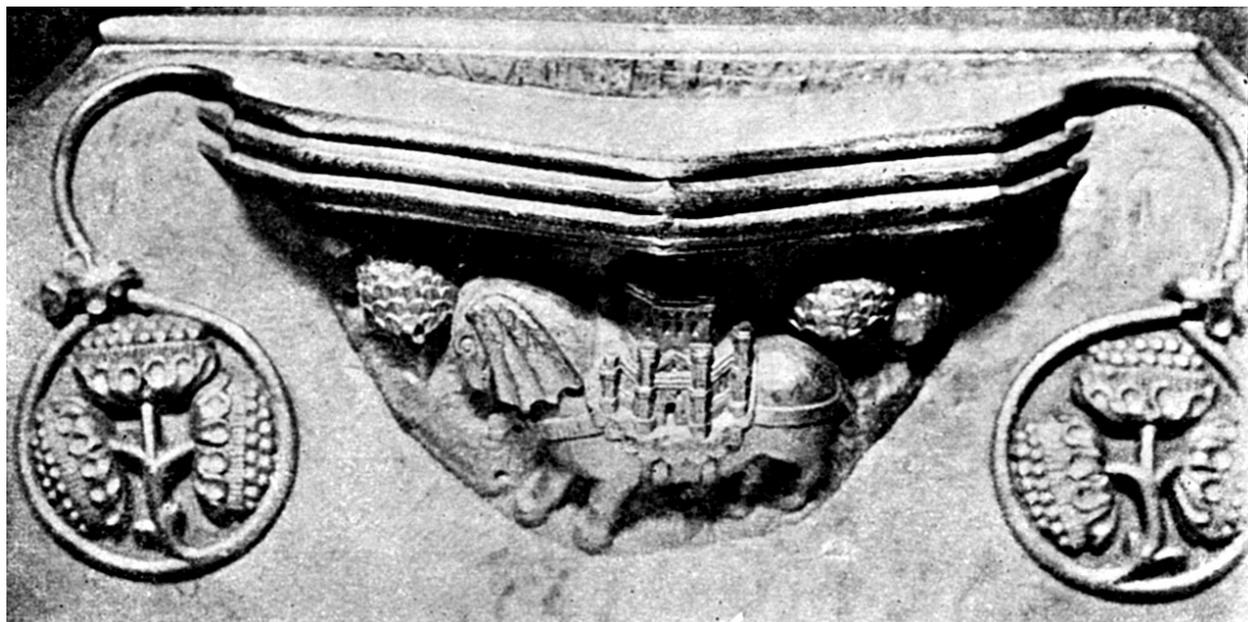


NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY.

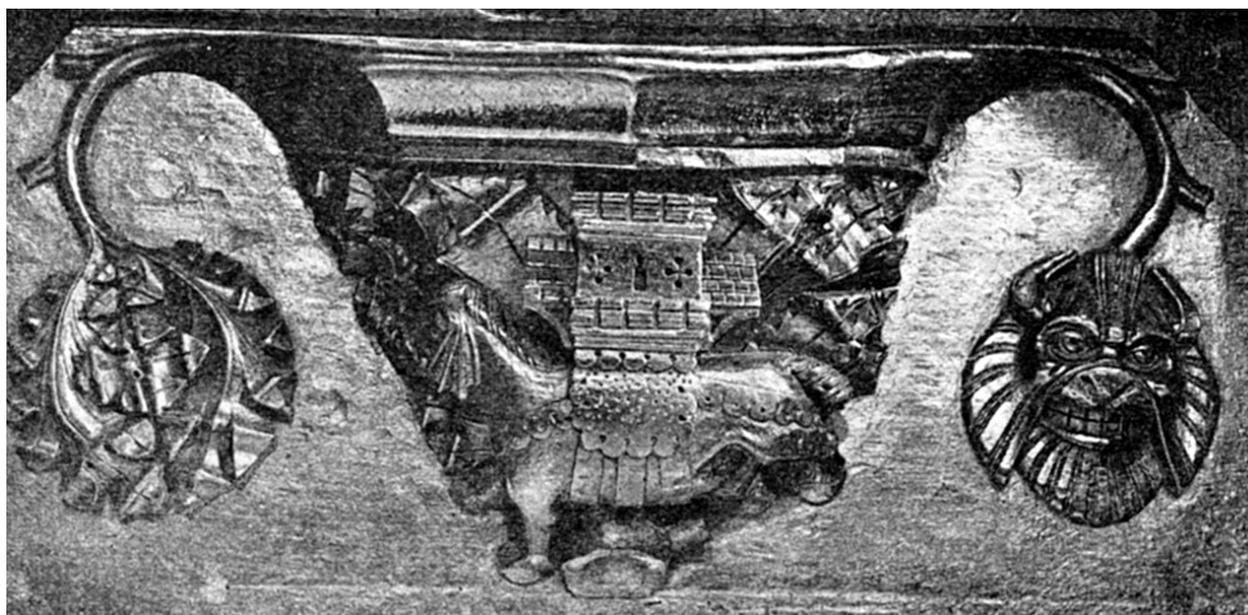


NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : BEVERLEY MINSTER.

PLATE XVII



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : CARTMEL CHURCH.

when yai gang in forestes ande in wateres. And ganges faner<sup>91</sup> in secret places and lewis yair fans in ye place whar thai fane at yai be nader tane<sup>92</sup> nader dragonys and bores thair fans two yeres or yai fane thaim. And liffes iic yheres as sais ysodre. And signifies he yat first bur thame in armes has voce & name terrible & wes of strang figour in his face gret of body & of vertu berand gret birdinges<sup>93</sup> and man of gret mynd and understanding. And in his dedes in wattir and in land starklie cumpaingnit with follres of his estate. And his generacioun wes born ii yheres & vas of lang lif and his generacioun wes langlestande<sup>94</sup> ande worthy of memour and yis may suffice of bestis to say. And gif it war demandit of yaim yat ar nocht heir men may get ye significacioun in ye [69] buk yat spekes of propirteis ye whilk may be gottin in mony places.’

A small coloured illustration of an elephant and castle accompanies the text (fig. 5). With the exception of its ears it is drawn exactly as a horse. Its nose is extended as a trunk and large tusks rise from the lower jaw. The castle is square, with corner towers, and is bound on with three straps.

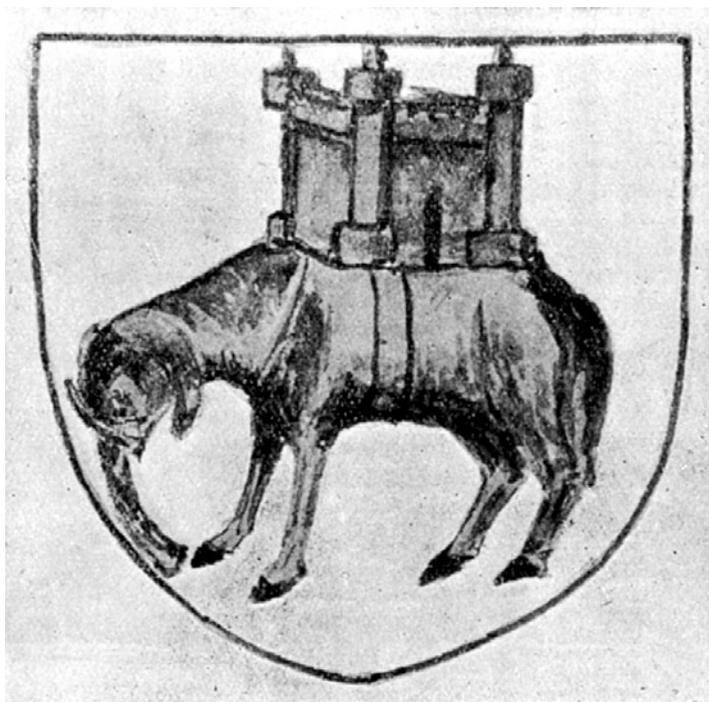


FIG. 5. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE (HERALDIC); MS. HARL. 6149 (B.M.).

Of existing examples of heraldic elephants by far the best known to us is that which forms a boss in the cloisters at Canterbury (plate XVIII, no. 2). It is of fourteenth century date. This elephant, which carries a fine castle, may be regarded as occupying an intermediate position between the bestiary and heraldic elephants, as it is not placed upon a shield but has a shield applied to it. It is

91 Old French: faoner, to give birth; faons, young.

92 toad.

93 bearing great burdens.

94 longlasting.

clearly based on an illustration in a manuscript, as it has all the usual features, but the trunk and tusks are broken off. The castle is rectangular, with a central gateway and large round towers at the corners. The shield bears the arms of Jerusalem.<sup>95</sup> [70]

There are also elephants on brasses. On the well-known brass to Sir Henry Vernon and his widow Margaret at Tong (Salop), 1467, the lady's feet rest on a recumbent elephant thirteen inches in length (fig. 6). It has been copied from an elephant with a castle, for it has two belly-bands. It has the usual foliated ears, ringed trunk, upstanding tusks, and horses' legs and feet.



FIG. 6. ELEPHANT (AND CASTLE): BRASS TO DAME MARGARET VERNON, TONG CHURCH.

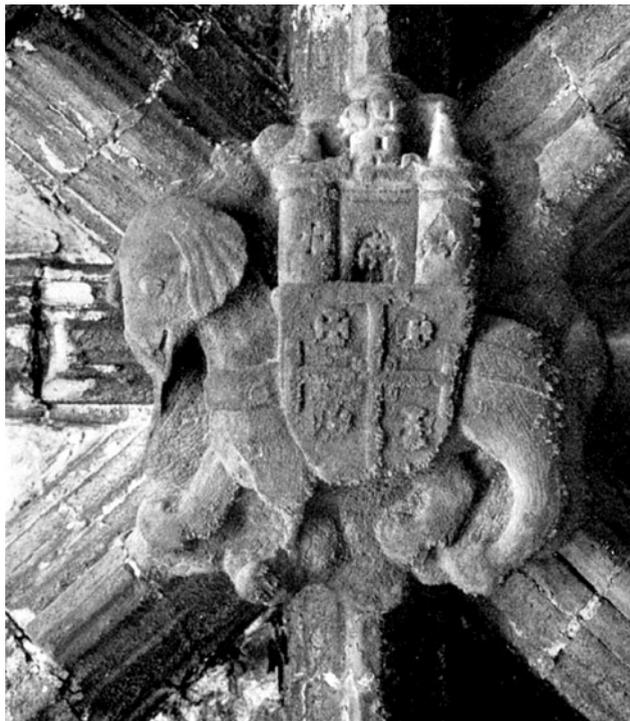
Another interesting brass is that to William viscount Beaumont and lord Bardolf, 1507, at Wivenhoe (Essex). (fig. 7). His feet, encased in armour, rest on a standing elephant, which bears a castle, set on a saddle-cloth. Three persons appear above the battlements. This beast is fifteen inches in length, and has large foliated ears, ringed trunk, and tusks more accurately drawn than some. Its legs are too short and end in podgy feet. The device also appears as his lordship's badge in the canopy and inscription (fig. 8). In this case the tusks rise from the lower jaw, and the legs are quite unworthy of an elephant. The castle is set on a large saddle-cloth and is in two stages. [71]

95 Illustrated in *Archaeologia*, lxxvi, pl. 33.

PLATE XVIII



NO. 1. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE : CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY.



NO. 2. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE (HERALDIC) : CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL CLOISTER.

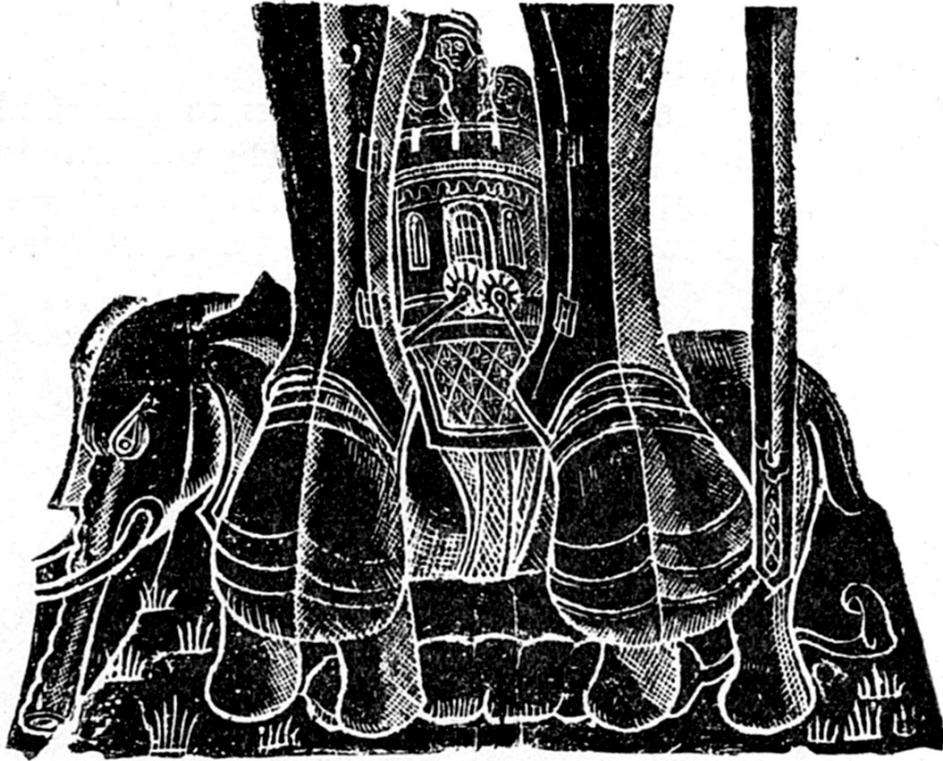


FIG. 7. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE: BRASS TO VISCOUNT BEAUMONT, WIVENHOE CHURCH.



FIG. 8. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE: BADGE IN CANOPY OF BRASS TO VISCOUNT BEAUMONT, WIVENHOE CHURCH.

[72] Another elephant appears on the brass to John Onley, 1512, at Withington, Salop (fig. 9). He was mayor of Coventry and adopted the device from the arms of the city. The shield is six inches high by five and a quarter inches wide, and shows an elephant of a distinctly horsy character, otherwise it has the same features as before, the foliated ears and upstanding tusks. The castle is a large building in two stages, and is set on a saddle-cloth with scalloped border, as on the misericords at Manchester and Cartmel.

In St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, there is a heraldic elephant and castle on a shield in the glass of a small light in the south porch, which agrees generally with the foregoing examples. It is almost certainly the crest of the Corbet family, which has been connected with Shrewsbury [73] and the neighbourhood for centuries. Tradition says that the crest was that of the Scottish Oliphants one of whom was taken prisoner by a Corbet, in a war between the two kingdoms.<sup>96</sup>



FIG. 9. ELEPHANT AND CASTLE: BRASS TO JOHN ONLEY, WITHINGTON CHURCH.

It only remains for me to tender my thanks to those who have helped me: to Miss Henrietta Auden; Mr. Jas. Barr; the Rev. R. R. Bell, Rector of Dunkeswell; Miss Kate M. Clarke; Mr. F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.; Mr. Ralph Griffin, F.S.A.; Mr. H. E. Forrest; Dr. M. R. James, F.S.A.; Monsr. M. de Lapouyade of Bordeaux; Mr. John Ritchie; Mr. L. F. Salzman, F.S.A.; and Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., for photographs or valuable communications; and especially to M. Henri Heuzé, General Secretary of the Société Française d'Archéologie, for the photograph of the capital at Aulnay, a very difficult subject to take; also to Mlle. Yvonne Dusser and Mr. F. Baden Fuller for help in connexion with the French and Latin texts.

<sup>96</sup> Blakeway's *Sheriffs of Shropshire*, p. 234.