

THE ORDEAL OF THE LYNX

RESTORING JUSTICE

AND

THE PURSUIT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE



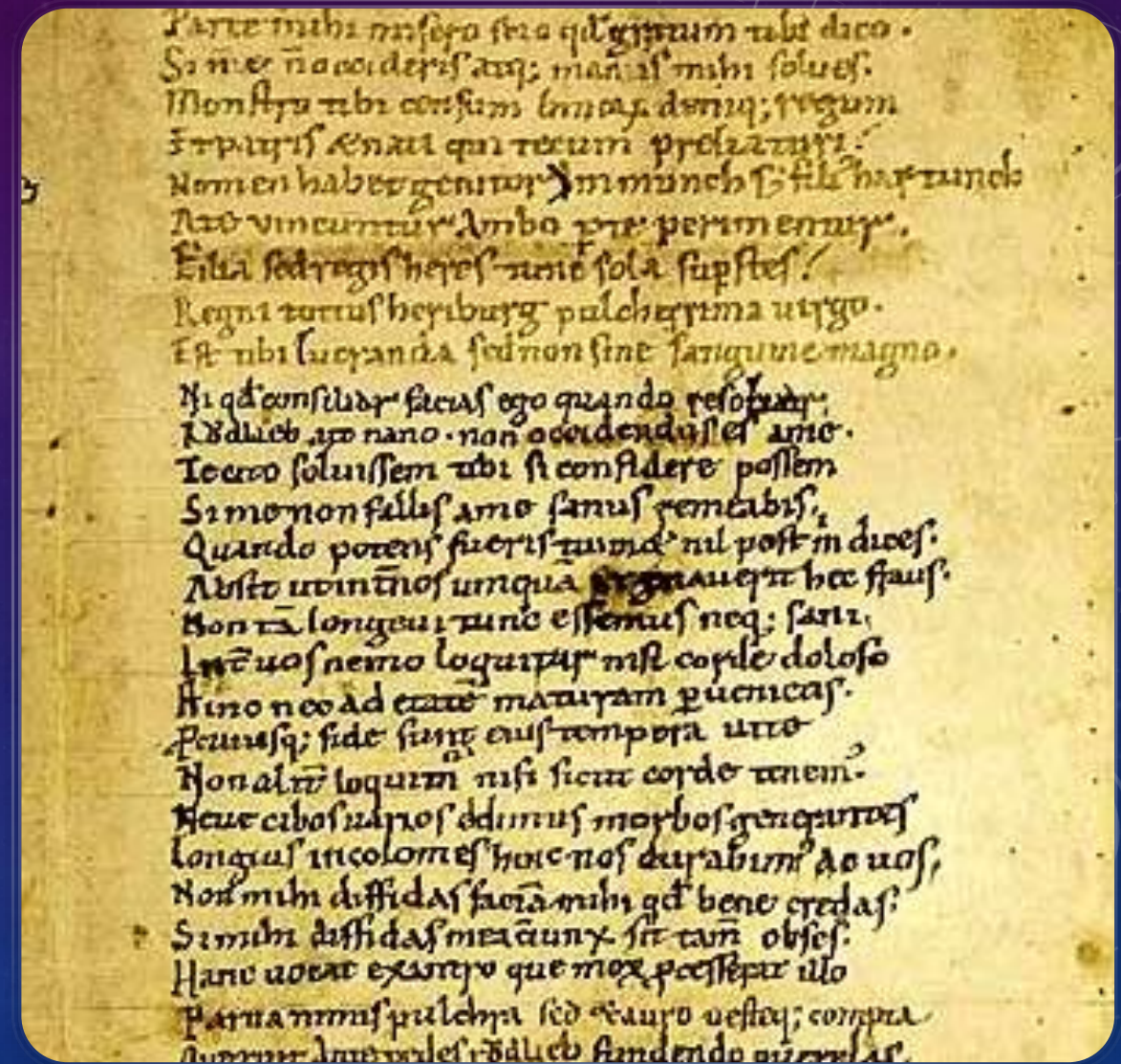


“A GIFT NOT
LACKING
HONOUR”

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, LAT. 6838B, FOLIO 4R

THE RUODLIEB

- Latin poem
- Composed c. 1050-1070
- Found in 19th century
- Survives as 12 fragments
- The author is unknown, but came from monastery of Tegernsee (Bavaria)



The Ruodlieb, Munich, Bavarian State Library, MS Clm 19486, f. 34

FRAGMENT V

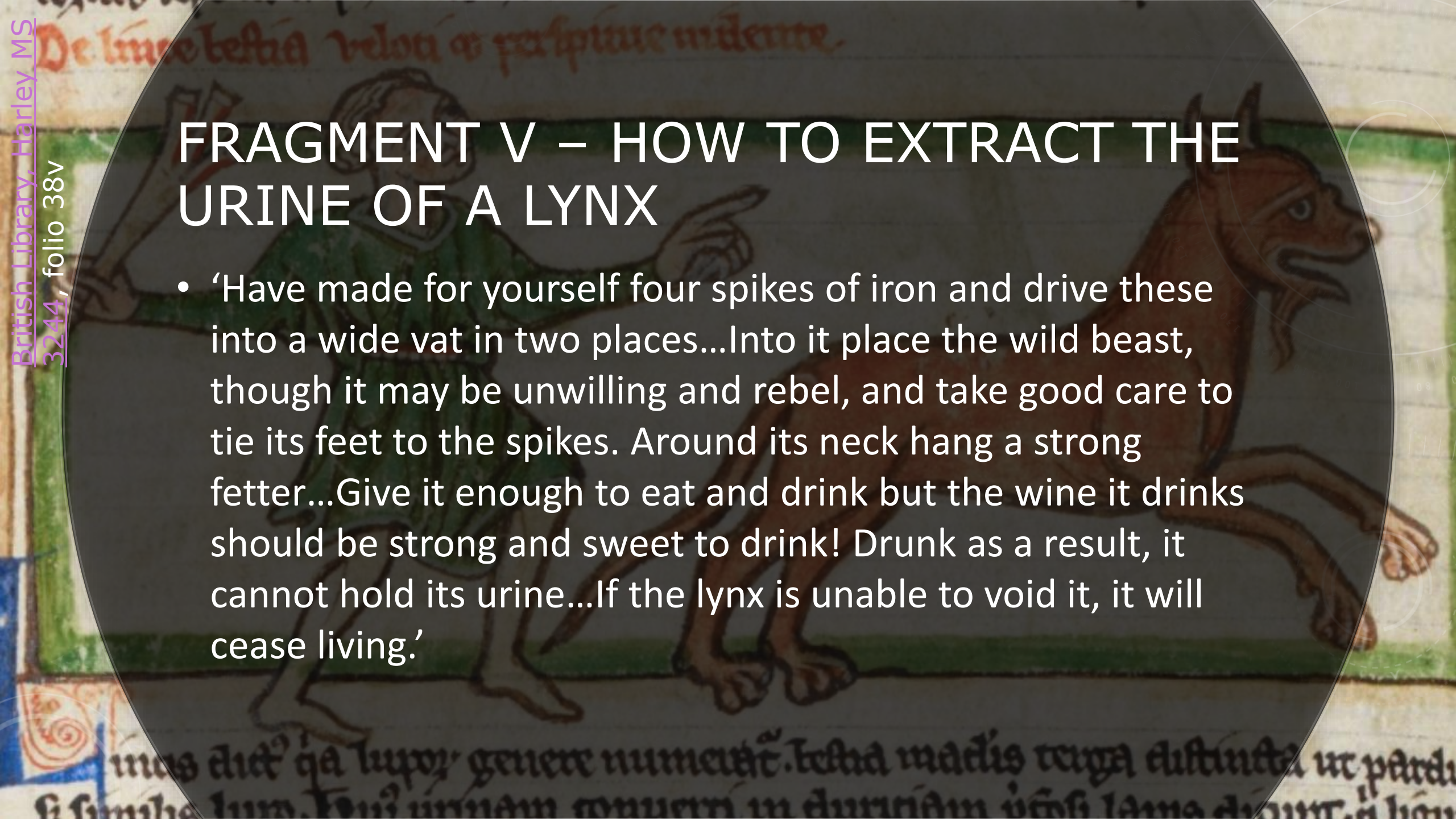
THE PEACE CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE 'GREATER' AND 'LESSER' KINGS:

- '...a lynx, the offspring of a fox and a wolf, not without value, because from its urine grows a bright gem, the brilliant lynx-stone (*ligurius*), like a precious carbuncle.'



FRAGMENT V – HOW TO EXTRACT THE URINE OF A LYNX

- ‘Have made for yourself four spikes of iron and drive these into a wide vat in two places...Into it place the wild beast, though it may be unwilling and rebel, and take good care to tie its feet to the spikes. Around its neck hang a strong fetter...Give it enough to eat and drink but the wine it drinks should be strong and sweet to drink! Drunk as a result, it cannot hold its urine...If the lynx is unable to void it, it will cease living.’





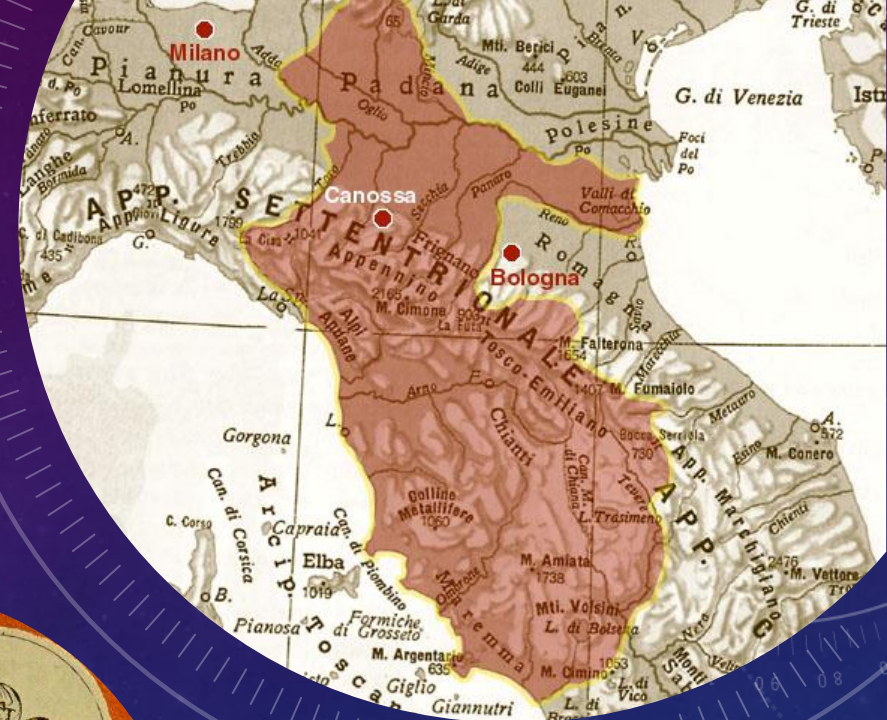
URINE EXTRACTION AN ORDEAL?

Similar features to
gestures of submission
(e.g. *deditio*)

Aspects of description are
christo-mimetic while
others resemble
procedure for rebels (e.g.
rope around neck)

HENRY IV AT CANOSSA, 1077

‘There, on three successive days, standing before the castle gates, laying aside all royal insignia, barefoot and in coarse attire’, the emperor did not cease with many tears ‘to beseech the apostolic [that is, papal] help and comfort’.



THE LYNX AND EXPULSION



- Lynx = wolf (the outlaw/exile) + fox (the trickster/rebel)
- Expulsion of those who had committed 'unemendable' crimes (e.g. treason, murder, arson, flight from judicial process)
- Expelled individuals are the biggest security threat to 'international' peace across space and time

EXILES, RECONCILIATION AND RUODLIEB

- The main character of poem, Ruodlieb, was an exile
- He redeems himself by providing good service to his new lord
- Service includes dealing with other exiles, 'poacher turned gamekeeper'





RUODLIEB AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

- The poem provides an example of ideal governance and lordship
- Assizes of King Roger II of Sicily, c. 1140: the king would “renew the paths of both justice and piety, when we see that these have become miserably crooked”.



CONCLUSIONS

- Ruodlieb provides a significant commentary on peace, peacemaking and justice
- Literature demonstrate the richness of culture and intellectual thought in the Middle Ages



Thank
you



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