

The bear as the emblem

The heraldic animal is an animal figure, which serves in a coat of arms as a common figure, sign holders or often referred to as crest. In Arms are all animals of the natural animal kingdom and even animals from the fairytale world (unicorn, dragon, etc.) used. With few exceptions, are in blazon the animals stylized (simplified adapted) shown. Especially the animals who have already found their place in the early days of chivalry on the shields are, been adapted through the centuries of fashion. Some heraldic animals only parts, such as head, wings, feet, paws or front part are displayed. Most are found the eagle, lions, bears, leopards and various mythical creatures.

In heraldry the bear (lat. Ursus) is known as Herald image since the Middle Ages and which reflects a common motif, the size, power, dominance and strength. Bear cults and myths in Celts and Germans leave the former worship of this large and powerful animals in our region recognize. The name of the root word "bear" can be found only in the Germanic languages (German: Bär; Dutch: beer, Scandinavian: Björn). Scientists believe that this certainly is a "substitute word". Uttering the actual animal names for the bear was of magical reasons strictly avoided. It was assumed that the pronunciation of the animal name could attract the mighty animal imploringly. Before that you feared. That's why they called him up not in his proper name, but with the replacement word "Bear", which is supposed to have roughly means "the brown". Also in eastern languages can discover a similar behavior ("honey eater"). The actual name you can from the names in other old Germanic languages not open (Greek: arktos, Latin: ursus; Hittite: hartaka). Also in some Celtic languages this root is included (Old Irish: art; Welsh: arth; Breton: arz). All this suggests that the bear has played an important and significant role in people's lives.

In the coat of arms bears the matter are always male, with jaws open, displayed visible fangs and tongue hanging out. Sometimes the genital is also emphasized in red. Often the bear is in so-called "speaking coat of arms" before, in coat of arms for individuals or localities, in their name like "Bear" sounding part occurs (Bern, Berlin, Bernau, Ursern, etc.). In various arms of the bear is represented stylized. In most crest but it is found in natural representation. Most brown bears are not displayed in their natural brown color, but mostly tinged in black, red or gold. Black Bear Arms represented in the artistic representations received mostly red tongues and white teeth and claws. The position of the animal in the coat of arms can be quite different. The brown bear is border, ascending, erect, catch ready, but also shown sitting and sometimes topped with chain, collar or extra characters such as cross beams, star or weapons. In various crest even body parts of bears are used as head, paws or torso of the animal. Often the Hintergrundtinktur at Bear Arms in yellow color (heraldic: Gold) presented what is intended to indicate the noble blood of the bear and thereby also the support of the emblem. Heraldic Gold is the kingdom of color and gold has always been considered noble (aristocracy), something especially valuable. Something rare is white (heraldic: silver) used. The bear as the heraldic animal of Bern is already registered for the 13th century, both on coins as well as on a seal of 1224, showing an obliquely upwards border bears. The coat of arms of the family von Moos of Ursern and Immoos of Morschach is on record since the 14th century as a seal.

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Sources:

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