

## Chapter 23 HOW A MAN SHOULD LEAD HIS GROOM IN...

Then should his groom lead his lymere (tracking hound) in quest after him in the morning, and teach him to know what difference is between a hart's trace and a hind's. As I have said before, this word quest is a term of hart hunters beyond the sea, and is as much for to say as when the hunter goeth to find of a hart and to harbour him. For to know a great hart's trace from a young, and to know the trace of a young deer of antler from a hind's, and how many judgments and what knowledge there be, and for to make more certain thereof, he should have an old hart's foot and a young hart's and a hind's foot also, and should put it in hard earth and in soft, and once put it fast in the earth as though the hart were hunted and another time soft, as if the hart went a paise (slowly), thereby he may advise him to know the differences of a hart's feet, and he shall find that there is no deer so young if he be from a brocket upwards, that his talon (heel) is not larger and better and hath greater ergots (dew claws) than

THE MASTER TEACHING HIS HUNTSMAN HOW TO QUEST FOR THE HART WITH THE LIMER OR TRACKHOUND

(From MS. f. fr. 616, Bib. Nat., Paris)

hath a hind, and commonly longer traces. Nevertheless there are some hounds well traced, which have the sole of the foot as a staggard or a small stag, but the talon and the ergots are not so great nor so large. Also a great hart and an old one has a better sole to his foot, and a better talon and better bones and greater and larger than has a young deer or hind. And so in putting in the earth the hart's foot and the hind's foot as I have said, he shall know the difference and better than I can devise. And also the hinds commonly have their traces more hollow than a staggard or a stag, and more open the cleaves (toes) in front than a hart of ten, for of the others reck I never. The judgment is in the talon (when it is great and large; and in the sole of the foot)<sup>176</sup> when it is great and broad, and the point of the foot broad. And men have seen a great hart and an old one, the which had hollow traces, and that cannot matter so that he hath the other signs before said. For a hollow trace

and sharp cleeves betoken no other thing than that the country the hart hath haunted is a soft country or hard, and where there be but few stones, or that he has been hunted but little. And also if a man find such a hart, and men ask him what hart it is, he may answer that it is a hart chaceable of ten, that should not be refused. And if he sees an hart's foot that hath these signs aforesaid the which are great and broad, he may say that it is an hart that some time had borne ten tines, and if he see that the aforesaid signs are greater and broader he may say that it is a great hart and an old (one), and this is all he may say of the hart. Also he should call the foot of the hart the trace, and of the wild boar also. Also the hunters of beyond the sea call of an hart and of a boar the routes and the pace (path) and both is one. Nevertheless pace, they call their goings where a beast goes in the routes, there where he has passed, nevertheless I would not set this in my book, but for as much as I would English hunters should know some of the terms that hunters use beyond the sea, but not with intent to call them so in England.

176 The words in brackets have been omitted in our MS. but are in the Shirley MS. and G. de F. p. 129; they have been thus inserted to complete the sense.

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