

Identification Design of the Emblem Pattern on the Official Robes of the Central Plains Dynasty — Taking the Ming Dynasty As an Example

Xin-Zhi Huang*, Chuko Cheng, and Yu-Che Huang

Abstract—These Identity design has been an important subject of human concern since ancient times. In ancient feudal society, the same group of people formed a pyramid structure. Taking the Qing Empire as an example, the emperor's robe is yellow with a dragon emblem embroidered on it, symbolizing the emperor's majesty, while the official robes are divided into bird patterns and animal patterns, forming a strict hierarchy. In addition to the level identification between the same groups, the power information and other information of different groups can also be clearly distinguished from each other. For example, the Japanese family crest shows the family information to which the individual belongs, while the European family crest is more of a multi-level presentation, which may include family, class, status and other information. In addition, both of them have a long history and culture and a well-structured and systematic emblem pattern. When later generations studied the totem emblem patterns in other regions, they invariably used the two as a reference for comparison.

What are these coats of arms and coats of arms used as a basis for judging status and class? This is the goal of this study, and it is hoped that the final findings will serve as a reference for other researchers.

Index Terms—Class, heraldry, identity design

I. INTRODUCTION

The Central Plains region has a long history and a unique cultural system. For example, the fictional mythical beast “Dragon” is regarded as the most noble symbol and thus used as the supreme emperor of a country, or there is a special worship of “Yellow”. Therefore, yellow glazed tiles are used in the highest-level buildings such as palaces, ancestral halls, and silos.

This unique cultural system is directly reflected in the design of class identity. In the ancient Central Plains dynasties, class identity mainly existed between the royal family or officials to distinguish each other, which may be influenced by the “ritual system”.

This study will focus on the logo design of Ming Dynasty official robes. Through various documents, classics, records, etc., to find reference for identification and design, the Ming Dynasty was chosen because it was the last dynasty ruled by the Han people in the Chinese imperial system, and we can see how the Han people have evolved over thousands of years. , ultimately incorporating their culture into the identity design. It is hoped that the results of the final study can provide reference and credible literature for relevant researchers in the future.

Manuscript received June 29, 2022; revised October 10, 2022; accepted December 15, 2022.

The authors are with the Department of Industrial Design-Design Artifact Culture Lab, Chaoyang University of Technology, China.

*Correspondence: king42529145@gmail.com (X.Z.H.)

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Flower Mirror

Coat of arms is one of the traditional western art forms, which are inherited, displayed and awarded through the study of heraldic symbols [1]. Coat of arms are color signs formed according to specific rules and are unique to an individual, family or group. It consists of two parts: pattern and color [2]. Coat of arms originated in Europe in the 12th century. At the time, kings and samurai added striking colors or coats of arms to the exterior of shields, guns and cannons for identification on the battlefield or arena [3]. Fig. 1 below shows the European emblem pattern. This time, the emblem pattern of the British royal family is used as an example. More broadly, the observation of logic and graphic symbolism expressed in heraldic design can also help us to understand more about the characteristics and thinking direction of Western culture [4].

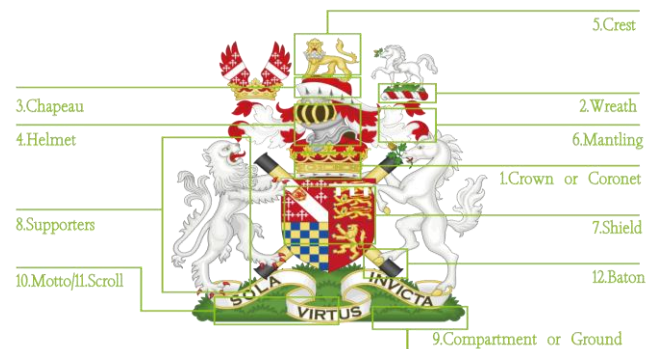


Fig. 1. Composition of European heraldry chapters and extension of issues.

B. Identity Design

The entire history of Identity Design shows how humans seek visual symbols and compete for themselves. It becomes a rich vocabulary database and also a resource for modern and future visual designers to study the context of the era [5]. Its identification will be reflected in the use of colors, symbols, structures, etc., and eventually become a complete system - Identity Design. Before the 20th century, contemporary identity design seemed to rest on simple symbols and symbolic drawing. With the vigorous development of economic activities, there is no professional design to speak of, and most of them are designed by users themselves. This has a lot to do with the fact that the profession of Identity Design has not yet formed, and it also lacks the ambition to use the logo image as a tool. The far-reaching development of totem symbols over thousands of years has indeed achieved different expressions and styles in each era. Of course, designs rise and fall with the trends of each era. If there is more professional and systematic design

guidance, different design thinking will be presented [6]. The Identity Design system is based on distinct visual symbols and systematic identification design. Its main purpose is to allow the public to distinguish and distinguish, and VI visual identification is the most influential and most direct part of the CIS system [7].

C. Ninth Grade Eighteen Grade

During the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-535), officials were divided into nine grades, and each grade was divided into formal and obedient. After Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the grades were divided into upper and lower grades. As a result, the situation of the ninth-rank sixty-order and the ninth-rank thirty-rank appeared. Song Shenzong Yuanfeng (1078-1085) reformed the system, abolished the distinction between upper and lower, ninth grade eighteen grade: positive (sub) 1, positive (sub) two, positive (sub) third, positive (sub) fourth, positive (slave) grade 5, positive (slave) grade 6, positive (slave) grade 7, positive (slave) grade 8, positive (slave) grade 9 [8].

D. Mandarin Square

Mandarin square is a kind of official uniform of Ming and Qing dynasties. The common ones are round-neck robes, with patches on the front and back, belts (divided into horn belts, jade belts, etc. according to grade), and a few have cross-collars [9]. At first, the official uniform did not have any special name, it was just called the official uniform. It was not called the Mandarin square until the Qing Dynasty, and it is still in use today [10]. In the Ming Dynasty, round-neck robes or cross-neck robes embellished with supplements were used as official uniforms. At that time, this kind of clothes was not called Mandarin square. The chest and back of official uniforms are decorated with patterns, civil officials have bird patterns, and military officers have animal patterns. As shown below Fig. 2.



Fig. 2. Ming Dynasty official clothes (https://kknews.cc/history/8kbk5rg.html)

E. Code of Great Ming Dynasty

Mainly administrative regulations, which formally revised and recorded the rules and regulations of the Ming Dynasty. It was written in March of the tenth year of Hongzhi (1497), with a total of 180 volumes. It was supplemented twice during the Jiajing period and revised again during the Wanli period, and was compiled into 228 volumes. It is an important document for studying the history of the Ming Dynasty.

F. Erya

It is the earliest biblical commentary in China and the earliest existing monolingual dictionary in the world. To this day, it is still a work that later generations will refer to when examining ancient characters.

III. RESEARCH PROCESS

From the big problem of identification design to the Chinese emblem pattern, and then taking the robes of civil and military officials in the Ming Dynasty as the research topic, the historical research method and the literature research method are used to find the identification basis. At this time, you can also refer to the design and regulations of the European coat of arms and the Japanese family crest. After the final research, education and suggestions can be made, which can be extended to the application of contemporary totems or research in other dynasties, or official robes such as imperial robes that have not been studied this time. The following Figs. 3, 4 are the flow chart of this study.

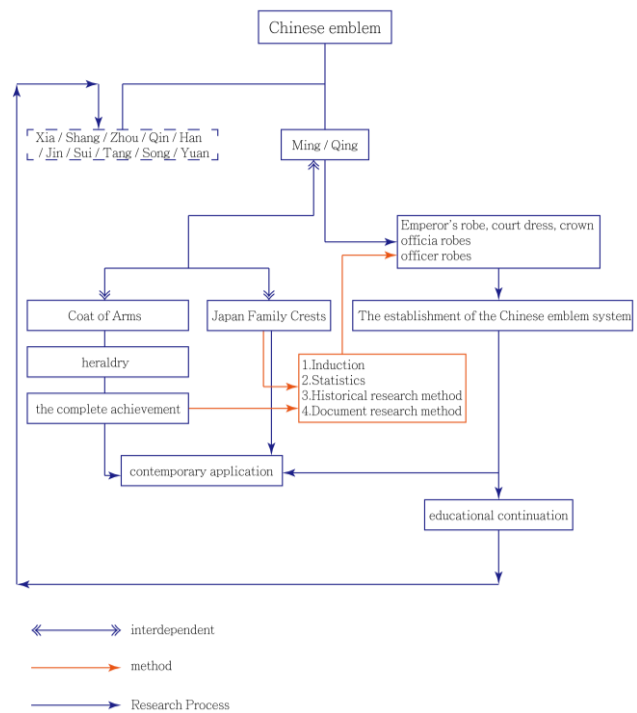


Fig. 3. Research flow chart.

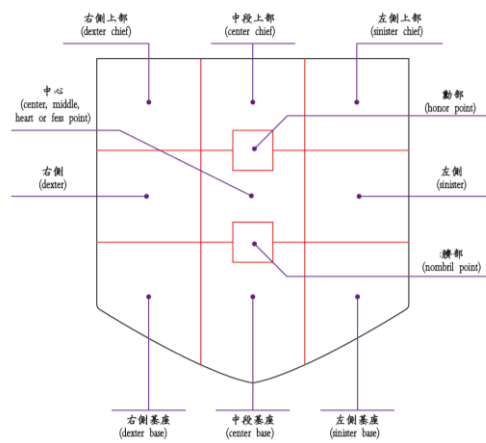


Fig. 4. Research flow chart.

Officials in the Ming Dynasty were mainly divided into the civilian system and the officer system, and there were some more special official systems, such as eunuchs, which were not discussed in this article for the time being. The hierarchy of civil and military officials in the Ming Dynasty was the

same, that is, the nine-rank eighteen system. The identification of the official rank will be determined according to the color of the official robe, the material of the belt, the embroidered totem on the official robe, etc., as shown in the following Table I:

TABLE I: MING DYNASTY OFFICIAL SYSTEM

Ming Dynasty official system										
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	
Robe color	Red				Blue			Green		
belt	Jabe belt	Carved rhino belt	Golden flower belt	Uncut gold belt	Silver flower belt	Plain silver belt		Black hom belt		
official	cranes	Golden pheasant	peacock	geese	Silver pheasant	egret	Creek duck	oriole	magpie	
officer	lion		tiger	leopard	bear	lion		rhino	horse	

As can be seen from the above table, in the totem, the civil servants are all birds, and the officials are all animals. This is because the civil officials pay attention to gentleness and elegance, so birds are used to represent the virtuous and virtuous, and the officers must be brave and agile. Therefore, the beast is used to represent majesty and bravery. Taking the first-level civil servants and military attachés as an example, the bird used by the first-level civil servants is “crane”. In the “Flowering Mirror, Appendix, Bird Law” of the Qing Dynasty, Chen Haozi mentioned that “the crane, the fairy bird, is also the head of the feather family. There are yellow, mysterious and gray. But everyone worships cranes with white feathers.” The cranes are all “red-crowned cranes”. They are elegant, quiet, and have white feathers. They have always been regarded as auspicious animals. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, they were endowed with cultural connotations of loyalty, integrity, and high morality. Therefore, it is regarded as the totem of the first-class civil servants, thus obtaining the honorary title of “first-rank bird”. The animals used by the first- and second-rank military commanders are a kind of fierce beasts in ancient legends. This fierce beast looks like a modern “lion”. As shown in Fig. 5. In “Book of the Later Han Dynasty: Emperor Zhang Ji”, it is mentioned that “the Yuezhi Kingdom sent envoys, lions”. The reason why this animal is used as the symbol of the first- and second-rank military commanders, rather than tigers and leopards, is because “the lion is like a big cat, eating tigers and leopards” is mentioned in “Erya Shibeast”. Lions can eat tigers and leopards. Naturally, it can also be considered as a relatively ferocious beast, so it is used as a symbol of the highest two ranks of officers. In addition, the totem used by the ninth-rank generals is the legendary sea beast. The sea beast looked like a horse, with red flames on its shoulders and hooves. (Song) Shaoxing eight years... There are sea beasts on the moonlit night. They look like horses. Hoofs and shoulders are red flames. They enter the houses of the villagers. People gathered to kill them, and at dawn, more than 100 households in the village drowned”, as shown in Fig. 6. Pin civil servants, cranes, golden pheasant Figs. 7 and 8 The third and fourth grades, peacock, geese. The fifth grade, silver pheasant, the sixth and seventh grades, egret, creek duck, the eighth and ninth grades, oriole, magpie. ... attache first second rank lion. The third and fourth grades are tiger and leopard Fig. 9. The fifth level, bear. The sixth and seventh grade, Catopuma temminckii. Eighth and ninth, rhino, horse. “He clearly pointed out the rules for officials at all levels.



Fig. 5. The pattern of the first-level and second-level military attachés. (<https://kknews.cc/zh-tw/history/5lk8nll.html>)

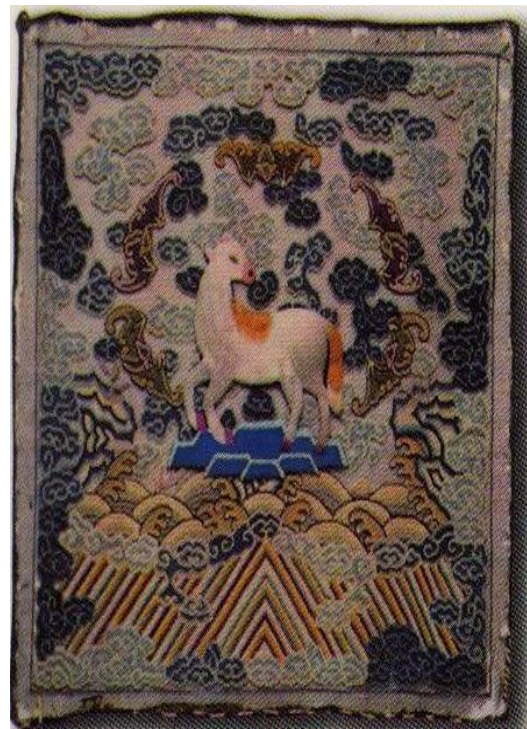


Fig. 6. The pattern of the ninth-level military attache. (<https://kknews.cc/culture/vk9454.html>)



Fig. 7. First-class official format.
(<https://kknews.cc/culture/yymy3zon.html>)



Fig. 8. Secondary official format.
(<https://kknews.cc/history/l24yon9.html>)



Fig. 9. The pattern of the third-level military attaché.
(<https://kknews.cc/zh-sg/history/28ebvxy.html>)

IV. SUMMARY

From the “Da Ming Hui Dian”, one of the laws of the Ming Empire, it can be clearly seen that the upper and lower systems of civil and military officials are strict and rigorous, and their logo design will use legends and myths. Describe the image, ecology and meaning of animals. as a judgment of identity. It can be seen how much influence these myths and legends had on the people of the Ming Dynasty.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Finally, future researchers can conduct inductive and unified studies on other dynasties in a specific region or in the Central Plains. There are many factors that affect the identification of logo patterns, such as culture, ecology, environment, belief, regional characteristics (continental countries, maritime countries, etc.), ethnic characteristics (nomadic people, farming peoples) and so on. The research process is as follows: Based on the above factors, a literature survey is conducted on the target area, and the above factors are verified one by one, and finally the law and basis of the emblem pattern and target design are determined. The era of obtaining the target area.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Xin-zhi Huang is the thinker and author of this article. The main work is to propose research directions, collect and analyze literature, and finally summarize and draw conclusions. Chuko Cheng is the main thesis advisor studied in this paper. Responsible for making suggestions on research directions, the rigor of research content, the correctness of research methods, and the contribution of research conclusions. Yu-che Huang is the second thesis advisor for this paper. Responsible for collecting information about various seminars, assisting in the correctness of the format of the paper, and giving suggestions on the layout of the paper.

REFERENCES

- [1] H. Chen, *Iconology: The Meaning and Interpretation of Visual Art*, Taipei: Published, p. 37, 2007.
- [2] P. Michel, *Heraldry — A Culture of Elephants*, Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, p. 13, 2002.
- [3] J. Chen and D. Yang, *Introduction to Visual Communication Design*, Taipei: Quanhua Technology, p. 94, 2003.
- [4] H. Chen, *Study on Heraldry Art and Heraldry Terminology Lecture Notes*, p. 1, 2006.
- [5] A. Cichocki and R. Unbehaven, *Neural Networks for Optimization and Signal Processing*, 1st ed. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley, 1993, ch. 2, pp. 45–47.
- [6] Y. W. Hsiao, “A study of family emblems and design creation,” National Taiwan Normal University, p. 2, 2014.
- [7] C. W. Chen, “The creative study of brand visual identity design of ‘Taiwan vintage clothes images’,” National Kaohsiung Normal University, p. 3, 2022.
- [8] Zhang Fuhua, *A Study of Song Shenzong's “Restructuring of Yuanfeng,”* Academia Sinica- Three Principles of the People graduate School graduate School, p. 10, 1988.
- [9] Z. H. He, “A Study of official uniforms in ancestor portraits in the Ming and Qing dynasties,” Fu Jen Catholic University-College of Fashion & Textiles, 1998.
- [10] W.-J. Chi, *Study on the Regulation of Officials Clothing and Houses in the Qing Dynasty*, 2019.

Copyright © 2023 by the authors. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited ([CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)).