1/1

Advanced studies on the archaeology and history of hunting

edited by the ZBSA

Karl-Heinz Gersmann · Oliver Grimm (eds.)

Raptor and human – falconry and bird symbolism throughout the millennia on a global scale

WACHHOLTZ
MURMANN PUBLISHERS

Raptor and human –
falconry and bird symbolism throughout the millennia on a global scale

Advanced studies on the archaeology and history of hunting, vol. 1.1–1.4

Edited by the ZBSA/Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology in the Foundation of the Schleswig-Holstein State Museums, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig (northern Germany)

Raptor and human –

falconry and bird symbolism throughout the millennia on a global scale

1/*1*

Edited by
Karl-Heinz Gersmann and Oliver Grimm

Publication in considerable extension of the workshop at the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA) in Schleswig, March 5th to 7th 2014

WACHHOLTZ
MURMANN PUBLISHERS

Cover picture: Skilled eagle master. Western Mongolia, August 2011 (photo used with the permission of Dr. Takuya Soma).

Top to the left: Seal of the Danish king Knud IV (late 11th century). Redrawing. Taken from M. Andersen/G. Tegnér, Middelalderlige segl-stamper i Norden (Roskilde 2002) 129.

Technical Editor: Isabel Sonnenschein
Layout, typesetting and image editing: Matthias Bolte, Jürgen Schüller
Print and distribution: Wachholtz Verlag – Murmann Publishers, Kiel/Hamburg 2018
https://www.wachholtz-verlag.de/raptor-and-human.html

ISSN 2511-8285
ISBN 978-3-529-01490-1

Bibliographical data of the German National Library. The German National Library catalogues this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographical information is available online under <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

The global perspective of the book. Orange: Eurasian steppe (presumed area of origin of falconry); green: the areas considered in the book (map Jürgen Schüller, ZBSA).

Falconry definition

Falconry is defined as the taking of quarry in its natural state and habitat by means of trained birds of prey (according to the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey [IAF] = www.iaf.org).

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen with a bird of prey. Miniature in his falconry book (folio 1v, Codex Pal. lat. 1071, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg/Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana). Redrawing. After: Hunting in Northern Europe (Neumünster 2013) 344 fig. 1.

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen was an early global actor in the 13th century, bringing together falconers and falconry traditions from far and wide.


United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has inscribed

Falconry, a living human heritage

on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
upon the proposal of the United Arab Emirates, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the Syrian Arab Republic

Inscription on this List contributes to ensuring better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance, and to encouraging dialogue which respects cultural diversity

Date of inscription
1 December 2016

Director-General of UNESCO
Irina Bokova

UNESCO recognition of falconry as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (cf. Hewicker in this book, Fig. 6).

Book sponsors

The Archives of Falconry
(Boise, Idaho, USA)

Association Nationale
des Fauconniers et
Autoursiers (France)

(Cultural Division, CIC/Headquarters, and
CIC/German Delegation)

Deutscher Falkenorden (DFO)

Emirates Falconers' Club

European Foundation
for Falconry and
Conservation

Hagedoorn Stichting
(Netherlands)

The Falconry Heritage Trust (Wales)

International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

Japanese Falconiformes Center

Club Mariae Burgundiae (Belgium)

Marshall GPS

Nederlands Valkeniersverbond Adriaan Mollen

North American Falconers' Association

Orden Deutscher Falkoniere

The Peregrine Fund (USA)

List of contents

Book 1

Book 2

Book 3

Book 4

Falconry as royal "delectatio": understanding the art of taming and its philosophical foundations in 12th- and 13th-century Europe

By Daniela Boccassini

Keywords: Falconry, courtly culture, falconry treatises, John of Salisbury, Adelard of Bath, Chrétien de Troyes, Theodore of Antioch, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen

Abstract: Hunting with raptors and hunting with hounds became distinctive features of the European elite's lifestyle during the Middle Ages. The association of falconry with the concept of nobility conceived as courtliness and inner discipline – rather than as training to physical aggression and combat – began to assert itself in Norman territory (both Sicilian and English) starting in the middle of the 12th century. It found its full theorization as a royal art under Emperor Frederick II. This paper presents and analyzes a number of texts that bear witness to this shift in perspective. The process is traced from texts by 12th-century authors such as John of Salisbury, Adelard of Bath, Chrétien de Troyes, up to the philosophically grounded theoretical statements of Theodore of Antioch (Frederick II's philosopher). The role played by falconry in the shaping of courtly culture, the author argues, is much greater than usually acknowledged.

An appraisal of the situation in Western Europe around 1100 AD

During the Middle Ages venery and falconry imposed themselves throughout the European continent, where they soon became the coveted prerogative of sovereigns and the nobility, their favorite sports or "delectations". The social and procedural pre-eminence of these hunting techniques remained unchallenged until the moment when firearms – initially employed only for warring purposes – also became widespread as hunting weapons. Through the 14th to the 16th centuries, these highly ritualized practices were complemented by an abundance of technical treatises, of iconographic representations and literary recreations of the most diverse kind, wherein the entire spectrum of the quest for meaning was variously engaged: from the literal and the merely instrumental levels, to the more complex epistemological dimensions of metaphor and allegory, with some remarkable, albeit rarer, incursions in the most rarefied area of symbolism and anagogy.[1] Surprisingly perhaps, it is in fact at this more subtle level that the art of falconry in particular succeeded in concentrating and maximizing the expression of its powerful potential for disclosing meaning, especially during the 12th and 13th cen-

1 The reader will find a more in-depth survey of these different dimensions of falconry in Van den Abeele 1994 and in my book on this subject: Boccassini 2003; for a survey of the treatises in Medieval and Early Modern France see Boccassini 2009.

turies – at a time, that is, when new configurations of knowledge originating in the Mediterranean area were largely reshaping the Continental European understanding of life. This transmission of a different way of looking at the world entailed providing new perspectives and opening new vistas on the enigmatic relation that human beings entertain with the specifics of the natural world around them and the mysterious vastness of the surrounding universe; falconry proved central to the enterprise. It is most specifically this crossroad of cultural implications pertaining to the art of "manning" (training and/or taming) raptors that I wish to explore in this paper, by briefly analyzing a limited number of exemplary documentary evidence.[2]

Unknown to Graeco-Roman Antiquity, hunting with raptors began to capture the imagination of European aristocracy during the Migration Period, soon becoming a distinctive feature of the elite's lifestyle (Prummel 2013) – the emblem of their nobility, of their social status and identity – which complemented the much older and well-established practice of hunting with dogs (Fischer 2013; Schmölcke 2013). The passion with which the aristocracy practiced both of these activities brought about a process of control and progressive restrictions of hunting rights, spanning the Middle Ages and affecting the entire continent (Zug Tucci 1983; Galloni 1993; Giese 2013). Any attempt to gauge the cultural significance of this phenomenon should therefore be set against the larger context of medieval nobility's lifestyle and values; in other words, we cannot limit ourselves to supposing that such extremely sophisticated, highly codified and often inordinately expensive hunting practices were intended merely to procure food, or as inconsequential pastimes. Given the notable amount of ritualization associated with these activities, and in consideration of the evidence provided by medieval burial sites (for Northern European evidence see e.g. Vretemark 2011), in order to assess their significance we need to delve into the concept of nobility and its foundational arguments as pertaining to traditional societies up to and including the Middle Ages, when the sacredness of all human actions in relation to the natural world, and their artful representation in visual and written form, still outweighed the modern, increasingly profane (if not profaning) outlook on life (Huizinga 1955; Eliade 1965; Servier 1994).

Given that our main focus will be falconry in the 12th and 13th centuries, we need to start by assessing the situation such as it had developed in the previous centuries. Both hunting with dogs and hunting with raptors are variously attested and solidly established throughout Europe well before the year 1150. However, the association of falconry with the concept of nobility conceived as courtliness and inner discipline – rather than as training to physical aggression and combat – began to assert itself in Norman territory (both Sicilian and English) starting in the middle of the 12th century. This peculiar phenomenon was accompanied by a sizeable production of manuals and recipe books that, to varying degrees, aimed at establishing falconry not just as a hunting practice but rather as the foremost art of training (and to an extent taming, hence "knowing") the mysterious and elusive wild raptors. The overall purpose was to promote the merger of this discipline with other arts whose

2 Wild raptors are trained by falconers to modify their instinctive behavior; although they will never become domesticated, through the process of their "manning" they do undergo a certain degree of taming, that is to say they learn to tolerate not only human proximity, but human agency as well. In this paper "training" and "taming" are used interchangeably to indicate this process of education of raptors, which never seeks to achieve full domestication. For an excellent survey of the origins and early practices of falconry see Dobiat 2013, who sets the introduction of falconry into Central Europe around 400 AD, and identifies the period from the 5th to the 11th centuries as a phase "during which falconry spreads across all of Europe and simultaneously expresses the need of a higher social class to display its prestige" (344). Dobiat agrees with me in seeing the 12th and 13th centuries as characterized by an intensification and modification of the practices and status of falconry (for a more in-depth analysis of these issues see Boccassini 2003). The shift occurs, I contend, in relation to the introduction into Europe of falconry techniques, values and conceptions developed through the centuries in the milieus of the Iranian and Arabic cultures – a *translatio* which happened simultaneously with the transmission of the large and varied body of speculative and scientific knowledge stemming from the so-called Aristotelian philosophy.

transmission in written and experiential form was being sponsored by avid, devoted patrons in that very same Norman milieu. The process culminated in Frederick II of Hohenstaufen's *De arte venandi cum avibus* (1220–1250), the unsurpassed lifetime accomplishment of a sovereign for whom the two parallel arts of governing a body politic and of training raptors virtually came to coincide (Giese in this book).

If we now turn to consider the technique of hunting with dogs, during this same period highly ritualized practices begin to be attested in Central Europe and especially France not only for the pursuit of game with dogs, but more specifically for the correct procedure to follow so as to deal reverentially with that most noble of quarries, the stag. This is attested, for example, by Tristan's artful knowledge of both music and hunting. According to various written versions of the legend, it was he who initiated the Cornish to the art of "breaking" the deer, thus turning their earlier savage hunting butchery into a refined courtly practice (Rooney 1993, 87–88). As has been subtly noticed, the performance of such rituals was not only perceived as proving superior discernment; at a deeper level, it was also understood as reflecting the rightfulness of a deeply inscribed *ordo mundi* – an *ordo mundi* assumed to be recognized and accepted by the animals themselves.[3]

Although we lack precise statistical data to this effect, it may be sensible to affirm that up to the end of the 14th century the "desport" of venery remained the preferred prerogative of a feudal, mostly war-oriented nobility, while the "desduit" of falconry met the taste of a court-based aristocracy that was generally also endowed with a higher level of literacy. This seems confirmed by the fact that all treatises illustrating the techniques of venery date from the 14th through the 16th centuries, and quite obviously intended to recreate – while they also ambitioned to outdo – the competing tradition of falconry treatises, which was not only older, but charged with the prestige of a higher cultural aura (Boccassini 2009).

By the first centuries of the second millennium these two aristocratic sports had become simultaneously complementary and antagonistic: while they shared many a trait, they differed radically in the manner in which they conceived of the basic purpose of hunting. The sport (from "desport") of venery – hunting the stag with trained hounds – was considered the noblest of all types of earth-based pursuits, a war-like activity intended to strengthen the physical vigor of the hunter and, accessorily, to provide food. On the other hand, falconry – hunting birds or small game with the help of hawks (trained raptors) – was deemed to be the noblest of all types of air-based pursuits: first and foremost an educational and contemplative "delectatio", bereft of aggressive action on the part of the falconer (let alone the use of weapons), and only marginally oriented towards procuring food.

In a nutshell, venery trained the hunter to develop a fearless embodiment of the soul, while conversely, falconry trained the falconer to acquire the subtler skills needed for achieving the ensoulment of the body. If training in venery proved necessary for the purposes of survival and defense, training in falconry would prove to be the means of opening the door to the refined arts of inner mastery, eventually culminating in the wisdom of self-sovereignty.

Chrétien de Troyes' romances: transitioning from venery to falconry

Literature of the second half of the 12th century attests that excellence in both venery and falconry was a necessary prerequisite for an accomplished knight belonging to the courtly milieu, that was

3 "Through the undoing [of the prey's dead body], the transition between the two states of respected and revered game and carcass for the table is effected formally. At the same time the hunter is exonerated from the blame he incurs through killing the beast and 'makes his peace' with nature. The deer must be systematically destroyed and broken down into parts which are in themselves separate and new entities; it is ritually "undone" and reconstructed" (Rooney 1993, 88–89).

then developing in Western Europe. The poetic works of the French poet Chrétien de Troyes (*c.* 1135–1181/91), whose narratives of knightly adventures and depiction of the Arthurian world immediately enjoyed a large success, provide us with some of the most significant references to the cultural practices of the times. For example, in *Cligès*, Chrétien systematically references Tristan as a father-figure to his characters, attributing to him legendary mastery in both venery and falconry (as well as in other complementary knightly activities such as fencing and archery), thus conforming to earlier oral and written traditions, according to which Tristan represented the paragon of knighthood on all accounts.[4] However, Chrétien declares, nowadays younger knights such as Cligès have become even more knowledgeable and skilled than their mythical master in each and all of the knightly arts:

> "Ce fu Cligés, qui en lui ot | Sen et biauté, largece et force. | Cist ot le fust o tout l'escorce, | Cist sot plus d'escremie et d'arc | Que Tristanz li niés le roi Marc, | Et plus d'oisiaus, et plus de chiens. | En Cligés ne failli nus biens" (Chrétien, ll. 2740–46).
>
> "Such was Cliges, who combined good sense and beauty, generosity and strength. He possessed the wood as well as the bark; he knew more of fencing and of the bow than did Tristan, King Mark's nephew, and more about birds and hounds than he; in Cliges there lacked no good thing." (Here and elsewhere translation by W. W. Comfort).

Not only *Cligès*, but all of Chrétien de Troyes' romances are among the richest and most complex literary witnesses to the status that venery and falconry enjoyed at the time when *courtoisie* was being introduced to Western Europe as a principle of cultural, moral and social refinement for an elite heretofore more adept at warring. *Erec et Enide* in particular, Chrétien's first *roman*, superbly thematizes the providential complementarity of venery and falconry for the European feudal society, while foreshadowing the ultimate superiority of falconry over venery – a proposition that the large majority of Chrétien's audience would likely have considered unacceptable if openly stated as such. Let us therefore take a closer look at the inner dynamics of this most revealing narrative, written around 1170 for one of Europe's most refined and interculturally self-aware courts: the court of Marie of Champagne in Troyes (incidentally, Chrétien's eponymous town).

Erec et Enide juxtaposes and intertwines falconry and hunting at the symbolic level in its opening section (ll. 27–1840), while apparently dropping all references to hawks and hounds through the rest of the poem. At a deeper level, however, such later neglect is only apparent. The subsequent sections of the narrative, in fact, intend to illustrate the profitable consequences that the introduction of the "falconry principle" as an educational tool may generate both at the level of individual self-realization, and as means of accomplishing a higher form of collective governance. This very first of Chrétien de Troyes' immensely popular *romans* is therefore one of the earliest visionary expressions of that process of a civilizing *translatio studii* which had originated in the Mediterranean basin and was soon to mobilize the cultural landscape of Continental Europe as well.

It is especially significant that Chrétien introduced the new values conveyed by the symbolism of the manned raptor by means of the more ancient topos, dear to his public, of the magic hunt of the otherworldly white stag. As the poet explicitly states in his introduction, this allows him subtly to extract from a traditional "conte d'aventure" the narrative of a new tale replete with wisdom, so as to produce an unprecedented cultural merger – a merger he famously calls "une mout bele conjunture".[5]

4 Older texts and legends, however, made of Tristan a master of venery only, as we have already seen (cf. note 3). To my knowledge, Chrétien is the first to describe Tristan as a skilful falconer as well, and the reason seems obvious: given that Tristan represents an archetypal figure for his audience, endowing him with knowledge of falconry would safely promote that practice among his readers.

5 "Et trait [d']un conte d'aventure | Une mout bele conjunture | Par qu'em puet prover et savoir | Que cil ne fait mie savoir | Qui sa scïence n'abandone | Tant con Dex la grace l'en done" (ll. 13–18 "he derives from a story of adventure a pleasing argument whereby it may be proved and known that he is not wise who does not make liberal use of his knowledge so long as God may give him grace").

This is how Chrétien's *roman* begins: with the evocation of Christ's resurrection and the announcement of an imminent new life. "Un jor de Pasque, au tens novel, | A Cardigant son chastel" (ll. 27–28 "One Easter Day in the Springtime | in his castle of Cardigant") Arthur shares with his court the wish to hunt the white stag in order to revive an ancient custom ("por la costume ressaucier", l. 38) – even though, as the wisest of his knights reminds him, that traditional hunt may entail ill-fated consequences: the ritual of the kiss attached to it, which entails the king publicly kissing the lady he will deem the prettiest, may cause irreparable antagonism among the ladies and knights gathered at Arthur's court. The king's desire for the traditional hunt's "desport", however, prevails over Gauvain's warning, and thus "le matinet par grant deduit | irons chacier le blanc cerf tuit | en la forest aventurouse | ceste chace est mout merveillouse" (ll. 63–67, "Tomorrow morning we shall all gaily go to hunt the White Stag in the forest of adventure. And very [marvellous] this hunt will be").

Soon King Arthur's inspired decision to re-enact the traditional magic hunt to the white stag proves far more "merveillouse" than anyone except Gauvain had anticipated. Initially, the king successfully pursues the fleeing stag with the help of his champions and their hounds (ll. 117–124; 277–284), while young Erec, alone among the knights, rather than participate in the belligerent competition for the elusive prey, elects courteously to accompany the queen without carrying any weapons. It is thus that Erec is drawn by the call of inexplicable, unsettling events into a magic chase of his own. As a consequence, after the killing of the stag by the king, while the court's wise men debate about how to defuse the conflict arisen among the knights, in her deep wisdom Queen Guinevre insightfully perceives the salvific potential of Erec's mysterious adventure for the court's present predicament. No action pertaining to the ritual conclusion of the hunt of the white stag, she declares, is to be undertaken until Erec's return.

Led by his pursuit of the inexplicably arrogant knight Yder into an unfamiliar "chastel", upon his arrival there Erec notices that the knights and ladies thronging its alleys are busy feeding and sporting different varieties of trained raptors, while others are intent on playing more or less exotic board games: "Li un paissoient par ces rues | Espreviers et faucons de mues, | Et li autre portoient fors | Terceus, oistors muez et sors. | Li autre jüent d'autre part | Ou a la mine ou a hasart, | Cil as eschas et cil as tables" (ll. 351–357, "Some were feeding in the streets their sparrow-hawks and moulting falcons; others were giving an airing to their tercels, their mewed birds, and young yellow hawks; others play at dice or other game of chance, some at chess, and some at backgammon"). Erec's fated adventure soon leads him to meet his future wife, the most beautiful and virtuous Enide, the only daughter of a poor vavasour, and thus to win – through his own prowess, combined with her beauty and her wisdom (in other words, through the power of the couple's inner nobility) – the coveted prize for the local yearly competition: a beautiful, masterfully trained and mature sparrowhawk ("Sor une perche d'argent | uns esperviers mout bien assis | ou de cinq mues ou de sis | li mieudres c'on porra savoir"; ll. 566–569, "there will be set upon a silver perch a sparrow-hawk of five or six moultings – the best you can imagine").

This very bird thus becomes the symbol of Erec and Enide's exemplary love, which soon brings about their union and their return to king Arthur's court in Caradigan ("Si estoient igal et per | De cortoisie et de beauté | Et de grant debonaireté, | Si estoient d'une matiere, | D'une mors et d'une meniere, | … | Onques deus si beles ymages | N'asambla lois ne marïages"; ll. 1500–1512, "A perfect match they were in courtesy, beauty, and gentleness. And they were so alike in quality, manner, and customs […] Law or marriage never brought together two such sweet creatures"). Celebrated at King Arthur's court, Erec and Enide's marriage is symbolized by the sparrowhawk that Enide carried with her as her only treasure ("Et delez lui sa douce amie, | Qui l'esprevier n'oblïa mie: | A son esprevier se deporte, | Nule autre richece n'en porte"; ll. 1437–1440, "Erec [has] beside him his sweetheart ever mindful of her hawk. She [rejoices in her hawk] having [taken along] no other riches"). But precisely that sole, apparently inconsequential property now reveals itself as the true quarry that

the traditional hunt to the white stag has brought back to the court as a whole: the event marks the accession of King Arthur's suzerainty to the new, foreign dimension of *courtoisie* as it eventually flourishes under the "falconry principle".

The social and cultural consequences of the new, civilizing rule immediately engage King Arthur's court in a powerful other manner as well: Erec's victory over his antagonist Yder under the aegis of the sparrowhawk brings about not his enemy's death, but a new life of his – a new life accessed by way of Yder's submission to loyal friendship and integration within the precinct of the court's rule, which in turn brings about a miraculous increase of collective *joie*.[6]

A close reading of the rest of Chrétien's *roman* would be off subject here, but a few general remarks may prove useful. The challenges that Erec and Enide are called to face in the second part of the narrative become highly revealing if, and only if, they are read in the light of the "falconry principle": their vicissitudes plainly exemplify the painful inner training that the two spouses need to face in order to achieve a higher level of self-realization. As all medieval falconers were taught by their masters, by their manuals, and by their own direct experience, there can be no hope to succeed in taming the outer wild bird (and ultimately no real purpose in attempting to do so) if the inner bird – one's own psyche – is not submitted to the same rigorous process of behavioral transformation.

The third and final section of Chrétien's narrative dwells extensively on the crowning ceremony of Erec and Enide. This is far from being the expected "happy ending" to an adventurous story though; structurally, the novel could have easily ended on the much simpler and natural reunion of the protagonists' hearts, with the two once again trusting each other after the challenges they successfully had overcome (ll. 5245–5248). It is certainly not by chance if the day when Erec and Enide are crowned new sovereigns of Erec's small kingdom by old King Arthur and his wise consort Guinevre turns out to be the day of Christ's Nativity. The two youths thus come to incarnate a newly-born type of sovereignty: the novel rule of inner mastery that, while complementing the old rule of outer supremacy, inevitably also supersedes it.[7]

It is in this way that the still unfamiliar institution of falconry triumphs over the time-honored tradition of venery; the ancient belligerent attitude is replaced by the as yet unfamiliar criterion of self-taming. Erec's ceremonial dress explicitly illustrates the principles that the young sovereign intends to "wear" as foundational to his kingship. Inscribed in the fabric, woven by four fairies "par grant sens et par grant maistrie" (l. 6737, "Four fairies had made it with great skill and mastery") are the images of the higher liberal arts: Geometry, Mathematics, Music and Astronomy. These were none other than the arts whose foundations were being renewed in the West by numerous treatises that committed philosophers were actively translating from Arabic into Latin, along with other manuals outlining the complex and intricate practices of falconry as practiced in the Middle East. The arts of the *quadrivium* were, in other words, the foundations of the new approach to nature, to knowledge, to inner accomplishment and sovereignty, such as the Norman kings of Sicily were in the process of

6 If, as has righly been noticed (Fassò 2003, 91), Yder can be said to stand for Erec's double, it does not seem especially helpful to read the relationship between the two in Freudian terms, precisely because such an interpretation is unable to do anything useful with the "falconry principle". I rather see Erec's relationship to Yder in Jungian terms: Yder in this perspective represents the outer projection of Erec's aggressive ego, whose wild, rapacious instincts need to be trained (rather than tamed) through an integration of the feminine principle. In line with both the essence of Jungian depth psychology and the precepts of falconry as the art of inner training, the end result of the process is neither a rejection, nor a repression, nor a triumph of the aggressive principle per se, but rather, a harmonius integration of it for the needs of justice through its training by, and union with, the feminine principle. The symbol of such miraculously transmutative *coniunctio* propitiated by the universal force of love is the trained falcon quietly sitting on Erec's fist.

7 Both Maddox (1978) and more recently Fassò (2003 [1981]) have recognized the importance of the new sovereignty principle and somehow related it to the symbolism of the falcon. However, not being sufficiently familiar with the inner aims of the "falconry principle", both fail to see in what way exactly the image of the falcon stands for the new philosophical and courtly ideals transmitted by Chrétien de Troyes.

discovering and promoting at their court, and such as their heir Frederick II would soon – to a large extent in vain – try to spread throughout his vast Empire.

Falconry from "sport" to "art": outline of a cultural shift

The change in perspective subtly charted by Chrétien de Troyes in his *roman* intervenes at a time when the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy – as presented, in particular, by the *De anima* and its commentaries – was beginning to convey a new understanding of the human beings' relationship to the natural world and their role in it. Seen as poised at the top of the earthly chain of being, humans were also conceived of as potentially connected to the transcendent angelic intelligences by the very way in which their minds were able to receive and develop the powers of reasoning and intellection. In such a perspective – labeled as Aristotelian, but in fact deeply imbued with concepts originating in Neoplatonic emanationism, where the soul's celestial nature was typically visualized in the shape of a winged creature – the education of the human beings' potential intellect could well be regarded as a process of training and inner transformation. This, as I will argue later, translated into a new preeminence of the feminine principles of knowledge as both Sophia and Nature, especially in connection with the nobilitating experience of love, such as courtly culture would later codify it. It is a fact that the study of philosophy, the exercise of courtly love and the practice of the art of falconry appear deeply intertwined in those milieus that conceived human nobility in terms of an inner transmutation rather than as an outer affirmation – an essentially speculative dynamic much more complex and sophisticated than had been the case in Europe during the early medieval, feudal period.

This revolution in perspective entailed the upholding of a heuristic principle never before promoted or encouraged within the boundaries of Christendom, namely: pleasure. In this particular world view, pleasure became the means of achieving nothing less than perfect happiness. In contrast to a centuries-old earlier tradition, which viewed happiness as the gross satisfaction of the base impulses transmitted by the external senses, the new "Aristotelian" (i.e. Aristotelian-Platonic) perception construed happiness as the unfailing result of a process of abstraction which is proper to the act of intellection.

While various Aristotelian treatises presenting a new, nobler view of humanity were beginning to be translated, commented upon and circulated on European soil (and shortly before Chrétien de Troyes wrote his romances illustrating the new ideal of nobility to which the literate elite could hope to aspire), John of Salisbury (*c.* 1120–1180) was busy compiling his treatise on political philosophy, the *Policraticus* (1159), a collage of *exempla* through which the English scholar and churchman, who had become familiar with most of the powerful people of his day, proceeded to discuss all aspects of contemporary ethical and political life. The first of the eight books of this lengthy treatise opens on an indictment of the mighty ones and of their lax ethics: absorbed in the pleasures afforded them by their rank, John argues, aristocrats neglect reason – the only attribute truly suitable for human beings and sovereigns – and thus turn into hideous brutes. Among the numerous "sensuum voluptates" decried by John as likely to cause such a monstrous mutation, hunting wins hands down. Let us read the entire passage, so as fully to grasp the specific terms in which the secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury, himself future bishop of Chartres, made his point:

> "The soul, deceived by allurements of many kinds, proving false to its own inner light, by a sort of self-betrayal goes astray as the result of its desires amid the deceptions of the outer world. […] Thus the creature of reason becomes a brute; thus the image of the Creator is transformed into a beast by virtue of a sort of similarity in character; thus man degenerates and falls from his pinnacle, having become like to vanity, for the reason that, swollen with pride because of honours acquired, pride has

destroyed his understanding. Who [is] more contemptible than he who scorns a knowledge of himself […]? Who more brutish than he who, by lack of judgment and lustful passion disregards his own interests in attending to those foreign to him and unceasingly occupies himself not merely with the interests but even with the diversions of others? Who more bestial than he who, neglecting duties, rises at midnight, so that with the aid of dogs keen of scent, his active huntsmen, his zealous comrades, and his retinue of devoted servants, at cost of time, labor, money, and effort, he may wage from earliest dawn till darkness his campaign against beasts? (*Policraticus* book I, ch. 1; translation Pike, pp. 11–12).

Is one then worthy of life whose sole interest in it is the trivial one of waging cruel warfare against beasts? Those who delight in that type of hunting in which birds are taught to pursue their kind, if you think that this sort of bird-catching is to be included in the term hunting, are afflicted with a milder form of insanity but with similar levity. Hunting on the ground, as it is more dependable, is also more profitable than that in the sky" (*Policraticus* book I, ch. 4; translation Pike, p. 16).[8]

As a victim to the world's illusions and to his own misguided desires, according to John of Salisbury the rational creature "perdidit intellectum" (which was his inner light) and "deformatur in bestiam": a beast who, due to some kind of behavioral likeness to his new fellow creatures, entertains no other desire than to chase other beasts.

Having thus launched his attack, the author of the *Policraticus* subsequently somewhat mitigates his positions. Given that bodily pleasures simply cannot be banned from the aristocracy's everyday life – he concedes – the alternate solution would be to have them coexist with reason. Physical activities deemed pleasurable should therefore be practiced in moderation, with the only aim of resting the spirit, worn out by the spiritual quest, "not for the purpose of giving up his pursuit of virtue but to acquire new strength and vigor". It befalls each individual to choose for themselves, and to face the consequences of their choice.[9]

John of Salisbury, therefore, weaves together ideas proceeding from different cultural backgrounds: on the one hand, he endows reason with absolute preeminence, to the point of espousing the theory of the opposition between *humana* and *brutalia*; and yet, the only activity he deems worthy of man as a being endowed with reason is not – as would be the case in an Aristotelian context – the philosophical quest, but rather the pursuit of a virtue that is utterly Christian, if not ecclesiastical, in character. On the other hand, it is also clear that the "virtutis exercitium" as John understands it rules

8 "[…] animus multiplici lenociniorum fraude captus, quadam alienatione sui, ab interiore bono deficiens, per exteriora mendacia variis concupiscentiis evagetur. […] Sic rationalis creatura brutescit, sic imago Creatoris quadam morum similitudine deformatur in bestiam, sic a conditionis suae dignitate degenerat homo, vanitati similis factus, eo quod ex honore collato intumuit et a tumore perdidit intellectum. Quis enim eo indignior, qui sui ipsius contemnit habere notitiam? […] Quid eo brutius, qui ex defectu rationis, et impulsu libidinis, dimissis propriis, aliena negotia curat, et non modo negotiis, sed et alienis otiis iugiter occupatur? Quid eo bestialius, qui omisso officio, de media nocte surgit, ut sagacitate canum, venatorum industria, studio commilitonum, servulorum fretus obsequio, temporis et famae iactura, rerum laborisque dispendio, de nocte ad noctem pugnet ad bestias?" (John of Salisbury [1909], 389b–c, vol. I: 18–19). "Quomodo ergo dignus est vita, qui nihil aliud novit in vita, nisi vanitatis studio saevire in bestias? Quos vero species illa venationis oblectat, ut aves avibus insequantur, si tamen hoc genus aucupii venationi censeas annectendum, mitiori quidem vexantur insania, sed non inpari levitate. Venatica tam terrestris quam aërea quanto solidior, tanto fructuosior est" (John of Salisbury [1909], 392c, vol. I, 24).

9 "Verum, si moderatio adhibeatur, in his interdum sensuum voluptate versari sapienti non arbitror indecorum; ut saepenumero dictum est, nichil decorum est sine modo. Nam et otiari interdum sapienti familiare est, non tamen ut virtutis exercitium evanescat, sed quo magis vigeat et quodammodo recreetur. […] Si enim modeste fiat ad recreationem, sub otiandi licentia excusatur; si ad lascivientis animi voluptatem, cadit in crimen" (*Policraticus* book VIII, ch. 12; John of Salisbury [1909], 761b–c–d, vol. II, 315–316). "If moderation is displayed, I do not judge it unbecoming a sage to dwell at times upon the pleasures of the senses; as has often been said, nothing is unseemly except that which is beyond measure. It is customary for the sage to rest occasionally, not for the purpose of giving up his pursuit of virtue but to acquire new strength and vigor. […] Modestly pursued for purposes of recreation <these pleasures> are excused under the license of leisure; but if for dissipation, they fall under the head of crime" (translation Pike, p. 373).

out all possible connections with pleasure: in a cultural milieu where the *Nicomachean Ethics* had not yet been rediscovered, pleasure could only be conceived in terms of blind, reckless submission to the call of the senses. So as to mitigate the rigor of such views (*humana* vs *brutalia*, *virtus* vs *voluptas*), John of Salisbury introduces what may appear as an approximation of the Aristotelian notion of *mediocritas*. Nevertheless, his condemnation of hunting – be it terrestrial or aerial "insania" – seen exclusively in terms of a sensual and brutal pleasure, is completely in line with the widespread practices of the pre-courtly feudal aristocracy, as well as with the traditional, disparaging positions of the Church on such matters (Zug 1983; Galloni 1993).

Undoubtedly, the author of the *Policraticus* would hardly have been able to imagine that anyone from any walk of life might want to compose a treatise dealing with hunting techniques. And yet, about twenty years earlier Adelard of Bath (*c.* 1080–after 1152), one of the most highly esteemed English scholars of his times, had gone to the trouble of authoring a hawking treatise. Having travelled to the Norman kingdom of Sicily and the Norman Principality of Antioch, where he says he learned his scientific methodology from "Arabic masters", Adelard spent the rest of his life at home as a tutor to the children of the English nobility, as well as a translator into Latin of various Arabic works, mostly pertaining to the arts of the *quadrivium*: mathematics, geometry, music, and astronomy. He also authored a few original writings such as his three dialogues on philosophy (*De eodem et diverso*), on nature (*Questiones naturales*), and on hawking (*De avibus tractatus*), all structured as a conversation between Adelard himself as the teacher and the figure of a young nephew as the pupil (Adelard 1998, xi–xlii).

The *De avibus tractatus* – one of the oldest hawking treatises ever composed in Europe – was prefaced by a lengthy dialogue between Adelard and his nephew, where falconry is introduced as an art conducive to the recreation of the mind, in terms much more positive than in the *Policraticus*, and in an outright philosophical perspective:[10]

> "Nephew: Since our mind has become quite sated with discussing the causes of things, something of delight rather than gravity should be interposed, to give joy to the mind and relieve its weariness. For the intellect which does not pause is just like a bow: if you never cease to stretch it, it will become slack. Therefore, in my opinion, something must be chosen that is agreeable as well as profitable. I think the right action is if you reveal whatever you feel is more finely expressed concerning the nature and handling of hawks, especially since we belong to the race of Englishmen and their judgment is approved beyond that of all other people, and it is an established quality of that judgment, that the more widely it is shared, the more it flourishes. Adelard: Certainly, let us do that, so that we are not accused either of ignorance or of spite. We shall, then, discuss what we have learned from the practice of the present-day masters and no less what we have found written down in the books of King Harold, so that whoever, being interested in this subject, has this disputation at hand, if he practices this activity, can become an expert. So let your part be to ask questions, but mine to explain."[11]

10 It is difficult to gauge whether Adelard of Bath ever came into contact with any of the Aristotelian treatises, and to what extent with his writings he consciously intended to break away from tradition. As he himself declared, he was however proud of conveying through his writings «what he had learned from his Arabic masters» (Adelard 1998, xxix).

11 Adelard [1998], 238–241; <Nepos>: "Quoniam in rerum causis disserendis animus noster admodum est fastiditus, ad eiusdem dilatationem et fastidii relevationem aliquid magis delectabile quam grave interponendum est. Intellectus enim non pausans sicut et arcus: si numquam cessas tendere, lentus erit. Quare meo iudicio tale aliquid quod et iocundum et utile sit, eligendum est. Id autem recte fieri puto si de accipitrum natura et usu quicquam elegantius sentis aperias, precipue cum nos Angli simus genere et eorum sententia pre ceteris gentibus sit probata, et eiusdem sententie constet qualitas ut quanto pluribus dividitur tanto magis efflorescat". Adelardus: "Sit sane, ne aut inscitia aut invidia arguamur. Ea igitur disseremus que modernorum magistrorum usu didicimus, et non minus que in Haroldi regis libris scripta reperimus, ut quicunque his intentus hanc disputationem habeat, si negotium exercuerit, peritus esse possit. Tuum itaque sit inquirere, meum verum sit explicare".

According to Adelard, the noblest activity in which man can engage is the enquiry into the causes of things (*rerum causae*)[12]; there is no reference here to religious morality, as Adelard intends to keep a rigorously philosophical approach. As for the conversation that the philosopher and his nephew carry out for the purpose of resting their weary minds after the efforts of their intellectual chase, it classically intends to be both an entertaining and a useful dialogical exchange.[13] Contrary to John of Salisbury's (later) point of view, this pleasurable ("delectabilis") conversation on the subject of "de accipitrum natura et usu" entails no risk of moral danger, even though it pertains to the sphere of hunting; quite the contrary, it even has the ambition to help those who engage in such a "negotium" to excel in it![14] That is to say: even though the conversation allows for the "delectation" of hawking to take place at the theoretical level, its references to the experiential side of the art is continuous and clearly spelled out. Noteworthy is also the term Adelard uses to define the activity that can "delight" the mind: "aliquid delectabile", in contrast with the "grave" pertaining to the philosophical inquiry, and in equal contrast to the term "voluptatem" used in a disparaging sense by John of Salisbury.

In about those same years, another among Europe's most ancient falconry treatises, known as *Dancus rex*, was making its appearance at the Norman court of Sicily in Palermo. In some of the manuscripts that have been preserved, this short manual is preceded by a narrative prologue, which tells of how king Gallacianus had travelled to the court of king Dancus for the sole purpose of being instructed in the art of falconry. The following is the speech that the traveler holds, once he is admitted in the presence of the sovereign he has searched for with such determination as to relinquish everything he possessed, except for the perduring awareness of his own royal status:

> "I come in my condition of king to see and hear if what people say is true, meaning that you are a wise man [sapiens], and that you know an art by which [or: in which] you have become even wiser [sapientior], that is to say you have a bird catch another bird, whereby I want to be your disciple."[15]

If king Gallacianus has decided to undertake a long, possibly dangerous, journey and has wished to humble himself to the point of asking Dancus permission to become his disciple, such an event could only occur because he has come to the realization that falconry has nothing to do with any ordinary activity ("negotium"), or worse, any contemptible form of base entertainment ("solatium"). Rather, falconry has been presented to him as an *art*, practiced by a sovereign of unequalled wisdom for the sole purpose of perfecting that very wisdom. There is no trace, here, of any association of falconry

12 See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982 b4: "and this is the knowledge of the most knowable, and the things which are most knowable are first principles and causes; for it is through these and from these that other things come to be known, and not these through the particulars which fall under them. And that science is supreme, and superior to the subsidiary" and ibid. 20: "therefore if it was to escape ignorance that men studied philosophy, it is obvious that they pursued science for the sake of knowledge, and not for any practical utility".

13 This is a *topos* of numerous prologues in the Western tradition, of Horatian ascendency (*Ars poetica*, ll. 333–334). However, Adelard has turned the traditional "dulce" into something "delectabile" and the useful is vaguely referred to, without ever being expressely named as such.

14 Although Adelard sticks to the traditional term "negotium", rather than employing the Aristotelian word "ars", it may be possible to understand his intention to dwell on "natura et usu" of the birds of prey as a reference to the acquisition of knowledge of the natural world in Aristotelian terms. Adelard's approach in fact aims at encompassing the domain of direct observation and experience as well as the sphere of codified practices. See also *Metaph*. 981 b5–10, where Aristotle declares that the love of wisdom does not consist in any practical achievement, but in the ability to teach and instruct: "In general the sign of knowledge or ignorance is the ability to teach, and for this reason we hold that art rather than experience is scientific knowledge; for the artists can teach, but the others cannot".

15 "Venio sicut rex ut videam et audiam si est verum, sicut homo dicit, quod sapiens homo es et artem unam scis qua sapientiores estis, scilicet quod facitis unam avem capere aliam, unde ego volo esse vester discipulus." (Dancus [1963], 48–50). The Medieval translation into French of this treatise and its prologue (BNF, fr. 2004) omits this passage – thus censoring precisely the sapiential aspect of falconry; I will return to this point. Given that no manuscript dates as far back as the 12th century, we simply cannot establish where and when the prologue to *Dancus* originated, whether it was composed at the same time as the treatise at the Norman court of Sicily (which seems the most plausible hypothesis), or whether (more unlikely) it was added later in a different cultural context.

with any of the "sensuum voluptates". Even Adelard's philosophical perspective is exceeded: falconry has now become the supreme form of royal schooling, since it is in it, or through it, that the sovereign can train and ultimately deploy his potential for wisdom.

"Sapiens homo es", Gallacianus avers to Dancus. How are we to understand this statement? Is Dancus really wise, or is he simply knowledgeable in an altogether technical sense? The hesitation pertains to us moderns only. In fact, knowledge and wisdom merge and become inseparable once falconry is promoted to the rank of royal art in a philosophical perspective. As we will see in a moment – and as Chrétien de Troyes' novel had already suggested through Erec's final crowning –, this art becomes truly royal once its technical knowledge is interiorized and actualized at a subtler level, thus allowing for the merger of the two dimensions, or rather for the actualizing of the technical knowledge at both the outer (particular, concrete) and the inner (universal, abstract) level. An accomplished artist reaches the level of wisdom in progressively understanding the inner workings of the art (*causas rerum*), thus accessing the dimension of true mastery, which in turn entails the ability to transmit that mastery, to become a teacher and a "sapiens homo".[16]

The temporal and geographical boundaries within which this promotion of falconry to the level of an art in Aristotelian, philosophical terms, took place – roughly from 1150 to 1250 – coincide with the golden age of its written codification in the areas of the Western world where the Norman presence was stronger. Through it, along with the school of Toledo and the remaining presence of the Arabs in Spain, the influence of practices, values and traditions originating in the Islamic world was to become sizeable. Whereas John of Salisbury's views were still steeped in the continental traditions of the cathedral and monastic schools, Adelard of Bath and the early philosophers of the Norman court of Sicily had discovered that the Islamic world cultivated a wealth of arts and sciences, which all intended to promote and achieve the realization of wisdom as the highest accomplishment human beings could aspire to. It is therefore not by chance that falconry played a major role in the Islamic world: there, this transformative art – understood as the art of training wild raptors and of civilizing their predatory instincts through manning – had the power to symbolize the very ideal that these philosophically-grounded disciplines strove to realize.

Falconry as cognitive dynamics: the philosopher's speculation

The next step in the succession we are tracing takes us to the itinerant court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1197–1250). It is here that the new views foreshadowed in Adelard's writings and in the prologue to the *Dancus* treatise find their fulfillment. It is, in other words, in that very peculiar Mediterranean crucible that we see achieved the project, almost a dream, of assimilating falconry

16 In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle defines knowledge as a progression involving five levels: sensation (*aisthesis*), memory (*mneme*), experience (*empeiria*), art (*teknne*), science (*episteme*), which all finally merge into the realization of wisdom (*sophia*). Art follows experience and precedes science; the discriminating factor is the knowledge and understanding of the causes, which allows one to reach a higher level of intelligence, to establish a deeper level of bonding with the object and instruments of the art: "we consider that knowledge and proficiency belong to art rather than to experience, and we assume that artists are wiser than men of mere experience (which implies that in all cases wisdom depends rather upon knowledge); and this is because the former know the cause, whereas the latter do not. For the experienced know the fact, but not the wherefore; but the artists know the wherefore and the cause. For the same reason we consider that the master craftsmen in every profession are more estimable and know more and are wiser than the artisans, because they know the reasons of the things which are done; but we think that the artisans, like certain inanimate objects, do things, but without knowing what they are doing (as, for instance, fire burns); only whereas inanimate objects perform all their actions in virtue of a certain natural quality, artisans perform theirs through habit. Thus the master craftsmen are superior in wisdom, not because they can do things, but because they possess a theory and know the causes" (*Metaphysics* 981 a–b).

to a type of wisdom and of pleasure deemed of royal importance. The determination with which the emperor himself pursued the practice, the inquiry, the study and the theorization of falconry during a lifetime of dedication and labor cannot, and should not, be underestimated (Boccassini 2003; Mandalà 2011). But Frederick II did not only operate by his own willful determination: it is thanks to the intervention of his philosopher (Arabic: *hākim*) Theodore, trained in the very best of the Islamic schools, that falconry fully developed its theoretical new status as art, or even more ambitiously, as "scientia". As we shall soon see in more detail, a philosophically-based conception identifies two main aspects in sovereignty. On the one hand we have falconry, relating to the ruler, which benefits from the civilizing interaction between the sovereign and his philosopher; on the other hand we find the "inventio civilium legum", which relates to the philosopher, but cannot be properly carried out without the ruler's intervention.[17]

It is at the Staufen imperial court, then, that falconry was to become endowed with a full-fledged philosophical dignity. There, on the basis of the Norman heritage and through the influence of Islamic premises and practices, falconry became the "delectable" aspect of that Aristotelian "perfection" (*entelekeya*) that all living creatures unknowingly strive to achieve, first and foremost the human being – a being whose role is one of "speculatio entium et ideo vocatur minor mundus" ("speculation of entities, and therefore he is called 'microcosm'"; cf. Theodore's Long Prologue, 6; Burnett 1995, 278). As the (self-declared) highest ranking of creatures, humans are responsible unto God for the lands they rule, at both the socio-political and the natural level; hence they are in need of a pleasure of their own, which will help them accomplish the perfections pertaining to their level of sovereignty. According to Frederick and his philosopher Theodore, falconry, conceived as "scientia venandi per aves et quadrupeds", is precisely such a royal pleasure ("solatium" or "delectatio").

Keeping in mind the general thrust of the argument, let us now turn to examine in some detail Theodore's Prologue, a unique text that weaves together falconry, sovereignty and philosophy. Not by chance, the context in which such unprecedented views were produced was the court of Frederick II: the only court on European soil where, in the first half of the 13th century, the sovereign aimed at embodying the practices of magnificence and wisdom current in the Islamic world, whose archetypal model remained, in a territory of Norman ascendency, the wisdom-figure evoked by the name and the mythic aura of Dancus rex.[18]

In 1240–1241, during the siege of the city of Faenza, Frederick II personally corrected the Latin version of a falconry manual known as *Moamin*, whose text he had entrusted his philosopher Theodor of Antioch to translate from Arabic.[19] This is not surprising. Frederick was well versed in both Arabic and Latin; his theoretical and practical skills in the art of falconry were superior; for years he had drawn on the expertise of both Western and Eastern falconers hosted at his court; and he had possibly already embarked on the project of composing his own exhaustive treatise on the subject. What is more surprising is the fact Theodore seems to preface his translation with a long Prologue of his own (no parallel text in Arabic or Persian has been found to this day), just as Frederick would later do for

17 Burnett aptly notes that «the preface to Frederick's law code, the *Liber Augustalis*, does have a philosophical tone and shows some similarity in concepts to [Theodore's] Long Prologue» (Burnett 1995, 251). Being dated 1231, however, the *Liber* may have been composed by someone other than Theodore of Antioch, the author of the Prologue to *Moamin*. This parallelism would deserve further analysis; I have attempted some preliminary considerations in Boccassini 2003, 189–200.

18 Surveying the archetypal principles on which the Frederician concept of imperial sovereignty rests would necessitate a discussion beyond the scope of this article. They are, however, more of Eastern than Western descent, and rooted in the concept of the spiritual function of authority discussed by Dumézil and Coomaraswamy in particular. For a useful overview see Benoist 2008.

19 Another short treatise known as *Ghatrif* was translated in the same years for Frederick and is also preceded by a short prologue. For further details on these texts see Boccassini 2003, 96–107.

his own treatise, with the intended purpose of asserting the superiority of the "scientia" of falconry (in the Aristotelian acceptation of the word, as defined above) over the vile "negotium" in which such an art would turn when mindlessly practiced by people ignorant of its principles. Theodore's prologue to *Moamin* was obviously meant for the benefit of practitioners in need of education: the Western rulers and nobles, for whose benefit the Arabic treatises were being translated in the first place.[20]

Was the emperor's project of *translatio studii* successful? There are reasons to doubt it. In fact, those rulers and nobles for whose benefit Frederick II and his sages were acting, in their great majority ultimately refused to acknowledge precisely the philosophical foundations of the ennobling of falconry (and of the art of ruling) which the emperor, having absorbed them through the teachings of his philosophers and interactions with Eastern rulers, had wished to teach them. We can be fairly confident of this because Theodore's long Prologue was to be replaced, in most extant manuscripts, with a shorter and rather anodyne text, highlighting the enjoyment and health benefits that the practice of falconry may bring about – without even singling it out, among a host of other sporting practices, as particularly therapeutic. As for Frederick's own scientific treatise, it is almost embarrassing to realize that it remained ignored in its totality until the 19th century.[21]

The theoretical foundations of the science of falconry as outlined by Theodore may have proven too challenging for the majority of the European nobility, still largely untrained in philosophical matters – but let us try to explore their admittedly complex articulation. Providential Nature, Theodore argues in Aristotle's wake, has granted all living beings the possibility to reach the aim of their perfection ("finem sue perfectionis") not through the tedious repetition of their respective operations, but through the arising of pleasure, a far more effective way of achieving the intended goal. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* in particular, Aristotle had further delved into these matters by stating that while each activity is endowed with its own corresponding pleasure (Book X, 1175b, 27–28), not all activities and pleasures are equally desirable, those pertaining to the senses being inferior to those, purely contemplative (meditative), pertaining to the intellect. Only the practice of speculative activities geared towards wisdom allows human beings to connect with and express the divine potential residing in their nature (Book X, 1177b, 16–28), and hence achieve their own perfection.[22] Such views

20 "Our Lord, the most serene Emperor Frederick II, always august king of Jerusalem and Sicily, considering that the nobility of this pleasure alone should be made their own by emperors and kings, and seeing that the kings who were his predecessors and his contemporaries were not anxious about the pleasure which was their own and shown to be so by natural truth, but on the contrary were negligent, has ordered the least of the servants within the bounds of his kingdom to translate the present book of falconry from Arabic into Latin, so that there may be a record of those things which the expertise of wise men has discovered by experience, and a basis for discovering things in the future." (after Burnett 1995, 284). Comparing this paragraph with John of Salisbury's condemnation of hunting as a base bodily pleasure allows us to measure the gulf that separated the European feudal world view from the refinement and awareness of the Staufen courtly culture.

21 For further comments on the systematic ideological censorship of Frederick's views practiced by anti-imperial Western rulers of the 13th and 14th centuries, see Boccassini 2003, 107–119.

22 "If among virtuous actions political and military actions are distinguished by nobility and greatness, and these are unleisurely and aim at an end and are not desirable for their own sake, but the activity of reason, which is contemplative, seems both to be superior in serious worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its pleasure proper to itself (and this augments the activity), and the self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness (so far as this is possible for man), and all the other attributes ascribed to the supremely happy man are evidently those connected with this activity, *it follows that this will be the complete happiness of man*, if it be allowed a complete term of life (for none of the attributes of happiness is incomplete). But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life". Burnett (1995, 242) has pointed out that "the passages from Book X alluded to by Theodore have not been found in any other source; they are the earliest citations of these passages in Latin", which therefore bear witness to Theodore's mastery of these texts in their earlier Arabic version.

had been further developed by Aristotle's Persian commentator Avicenna, and although Theodore never refers to the latter or his writings as he does to Aristotle's, the argument he puts forward is steeped in an Avicennian understanding of Aristotle's thought, especially in his reference to the weakening by repetition, the providential action of the Active Intellect through which solely intellection may intervene ("recipere de virtute fluente ex intellectu agente"), the distinction between outer and inner senses (Burnett 1995, 243–244), and above all his definition of pleasure and understanding of the Aristotelian *entelekheia* as "perfection" (*kamāl*). These last two points in particular are the foundation of his theoretical construct aiming at establishing the ethical value of the sovereign pleasure obtained through the exercise of the art of falconry ("Inasmuch as they are kings, [rulers] do not have any proper pleasure other than hunting […]. The nobility of this pleasure alone [scil. falconry] should be made their own by emperors and kings").

In the same way as philosophers of the Avicennian school saw the soul as being composed of "quod est" and of "quo est" – the individual human being and the human essence as it is actualized through the human being's own individuation (Hasse 2008) – Theodore distinguishes between, on the one hand, the entire spectrum of the "communes operationes" pertaining to man (from eating to intellection), and on the other, the "propriae operationes" pertaining to the specific functions which humans individually fulfill within society. It is through the exercise of these functions – such as "regnare, sacerdotizare, militare, iudicare" – that humans individuate themselves in life, while also striving to achieve the perfection of the function they fulfill, perfection being what gives actuality to what a thing aims to be (somehow, we could say, the full expression of the archetype pertaining to that function).[23] For each of the individualizing activities or functions Theodore further distinguishes two types of pleasures, "one pertaining to the art, another to the practitioner through which he comforts the labor coming from the activity".[24] He then proceeds to illustrate the specific double pleasures pertaining to the four figures in charge of guaranteeing proper leadership in any given society: the philosopher, the priest, the man of arms, the king.[25] Here is a comparative table of their respective double pleasures, as theorized by Theodore:[26]

23 According to Avicenna, "Perfection is something whose existence gives actuality to what a thing is supposed to be" (Inati 1996, 10).

24 "Et quilibet operans huiusmodi operatione habet duas delectationes, unam pertinentem ad artem, aliam ad artificem per quam compatietur laborem venientem ex operatione" (after Burnett 1995, 278–279). In *Nicomachean Ethics* 1176 a 4–29, Aristotle writes about the different kinds of pleasure pertaining to different activities of animals as well as humans, but without delving into the subtle distinctions operated by Theodore.

25 Peculiarly, Theodore then avoids specifying the pleasures pertaining to the priest: "Delectatio autem pertinens arti sacerdotis satis nota est". There is reason to wonder whether this was simply an ironical statement, or whether one should see in this a proof of the rejection, in the imperial milieu, of the autonomy (or even existence) of a spiritual authority other than that of the sovereign (see Boocassini 2003, 200–220; 389–440).

26 "Delectatio philosophi pertinens proprie arti sue est *comprehendere* quod ab intellectu suo non evadat quicquid potest humana natura comprehendere per nobilius argumentum et diffinitionem quae vocatur demonstratio, et quando loquetur veritatem dicet, et mentientem sciet arguere. Reliqua autem delectatio quae appropriatur ei est *imaginare* quod est in motu suo et in quiete et in dispositione. Consequitur id quod *rapuerat* virtus rationalis, maxime in regimine dominationis et in inventione civilium legum, cuius perfectio indiget auxilio dominii; nam philosophia indiget dominio cui indecet virtuositatem suam. Delectatio autem pertinens arti sacerdotis satis nota est. Delectatio vero militis pertinens arti sue <est> *imaginare* inimicos vincere, quod consequitur populi defensio et non tollerantia iniuriae. Reliqua delectatio ad ipsum pertinens est *imaginare* victoriam in ludo instrumentorum belli et in armis. […] Delectatio autem regis pertinens regno suo est *imaginare* quod preceptum suum sit transitivum in ovile suum secundum intentionem suam, et quod diligatur et quod timeatur a suis hominibus et a convicinis suis prout potest. Reliqua delectatio ei pertinens est species venationis secundum suam diversitatem, cuius nobilior pars est avicare aves." (after Burnett 1995, 279–280, and 283 for the English; my emphasis).

The pleasures of the philosopher	(1a) **pertaining to his proper art** "is to *understand* that whatever human nature can understand does not escape from his intellect, through the most noble argument and definition, which is called demonstration, and that whenever he speaks, he will tell the truth, and that he will know how to prove that someone is lying".	(1b) **which pertains to himself** "is to *imagine* what a thing is in its movement, its rest and its disposition. There follows that which the rational virtue had seized – especially in the management of rulership and in the drawing-up of civil laws – whose perfecting needs the help of the ruling power; for philosophy needs a ruling power which its virtuous state befits".
"The pleasure pertaining to the art of the priest is well enough known".		
The pleasures of the soldier	(2a) **pertaining to his art** "is to *imagine* defeating his enemies, which results in the defence of the people and the intolerance of injustice".	(2b) **which pertains to himself** "is to *imagine* victory in the game of instruments of war [i.e. chess] and in arms (or: even when unarmed)".
The pleasures of the king	(3a) **pertaining to his ruling** "is to *imagine* that his command is affecting his flock according to his intention, and that he is loved and feared by his people and his neighbours as far as possible".	(3b) **pertaining to himself** "is the kinds of *hunting according to their diversity, of which the noblest part is to hunt with birds*" (here and elsewhere in this table emphasis mine).

As we can see, in all cases except the first and the last, pleasure is generated by the act of "imaginare": a projection of the mind, which intervenes upon the activation of the imagination, one of the internal senses according to Avicenna. In other words: pleasure depends on playfulness in an utterly abstract, speculative sense (an Aristotelian concept, see *Nicomachean Ethics* X). As for the first of the philosopher's pleasures (1a), the term employed to define it is "comprehendere", while for the second of the king's pleasures (3b) no verb is used.

We now need to look more closely at the definition of pleasure Theodore gives just before he proceeds to illustrate it with the help of the above-mentioned specific examples: "The definition of pleasure is 'the grasping hold of the perfection appropriate to the virtue which is doing the grasping'" ("Diffinitio delectationis est comprehensio perfectionis convenientis virtuti comprehendenti", after Burnett 1995, 279, 283). The key term is here obviously "comprehension" – the same word used immediately afterwards to introduce the pleasure of the philosopher pertaining to his art (1a). Is this definition of pleasure Theodore's own, or is he following an established authority? As I have already mentioned, Theodore's theory of the "double" pleasures is entirely dependent upon a close reading of Aristotle's tenth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as other Aristotelian treatises, which as far as we know were not available in Latin translation in the 1240s.[27] And yet, the definition of pleasure closest to Theodore's is not to be found in Aristotle's writings, but rather in those of Aristotle's most authoritative Eastern commentator: Ibn Sīnā or Avicenna, with whose writings Theodore had become acquainted during his years of study in Mosul (modern Iraq), under the guidance of the great teacher Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Yūnus.[28]

A major definition of pleasure is to be found in Avicenna's *Kitab al-ishārāt wat-Tanbihāt* (*Book of the Remarks and Admonitions*), a "late, comprehensive and mature" treatise on ultimate happiness

27 This seems to prove that Theodore had familiarized himself with these concepts during his years of study in Mosul and Baghdad. But knowledge of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* at the court of Frederick II was not exclusively Theodore's; Michael Scot, coming from Toledo, was also absorbed by the contents of this and other Aristotelian treatises. Hence Burnett's enticing hypothesis that "Theodore at the very least was part of a team which, aside from translating Averroes' works, was engaged in completing a translation of the *Nichomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetorica*" (Burnett 1995, 242–245).

28 "Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Yūnus (1156–1242) was, by all accounts, the most learned and sought-after teacher in the Islamic world of his generation. […] It was not only mathematics that Theodore learnt from him; he also studied the works of the philosophers al-Fārābī and ibn-Sīnā" (Burnett 1995, 231).

(Inati 1996, 1), which had not been translated into Latin during the 12th–13th centuries, but was well-known among Sufis and philosophers of the Islamic world. Here Avicenna states that:

> "Pleasure is the apprehension (*idrāk*) of, and full arrival at [attainment of], that which, according to the apprehender, is a perfection and a good inasmuch as it is such […] Whatever is good in relation to a certain thing is the perfection proper to that thing and toward which that thing is inclined due to its primary [scil. natural] preparation. Every pleasure depends on two things: attainment of a perfection that is good and an apprehension of this perfection inasmuch as it is such" (Inati 1996, 71).[29]

As Avicenna's modern translator has remarked, "It is clear from the above that pleasure requires two necessary conditions: the apprehension or awareness [knowledge] of something viewed by the apprehender as good, and the acquisition or attainment [through experience and eventually habitus] of this good by the apprehender" (Inati 1996, 11, 13). Consequently, it is equally clear that Theodore focuses his attention on the apprehension (*idrāk*) factor (the only component human beings can strive to achieve), while fleetingly referring to the attainment, which depends on the intervention of the Active Intellect, as Theodore himself states, again in accordance with Avicenna's views.[30]

With regard to *idrāk*, Avicenna gives very circumstantial information about this activity, which fosters perception and apprehension both at the external level of the senses, and at the internal level of rational or intellectual understanding. The mechanism works by way of an inner representation of the object or perfection to be apprehended, as it takes place at the level of the imaginative faculty. What is more, for the apprehension to intervene, the *inner* image of the object or perfection is not only sufficient but, as we shall see in a moment, absolutely decisive, while "the presence of the *external* object is not necessary for producing the perfection" (Inati 1996 13; emphasis mine).

Now, Theodore builds his entire argument to demonstrate the nobility of falconry precisely on the Avicennian theory of the workings of the imagination. To understand and to imagine are, in his view, virtually synonymous: one understands through imagining, and the imaginative activity is in turn the pleasurable and playful process that helps the realization of the perfection or of the act in the individual. "Comprehendere" may be deemed as slightly nobler than "imaginare" in that it allows for a higher degree of abstraction and closeness to pure intellection as such – hence Theodore uses it only in relation to the pleasure of the philosopher pertaining to the art of philosophizing. But Avicenna had already clarified the reason why a playful activity fulfills the purpose of involving the imagination in a way that directly relates to and somehow simulates (or, we would say, "projects") the object to be apprehended in an intermediate dimension – the imaginal realm – which is therefore of cardinal importance for the attainment of perfection to intervene:

> "When we want to know something and the soul readies itself to receive such knowledge from the agent intellect by putting an end to the hindrances that are of impediment to its search, the prepara-

29 Tr. Inati 1996, 71. In the 9th Book of his *Metaphysics* (which soon became well-known in the West as well) Avicenna discusses pleasure in terms that are quite close to these, but I could not find there an equally straightforward definition of pleasure. It is of course entirely possible that Avicenna may have given various similar definitions of pleasure ("delectatio") in other works of his. This would require further research.

30 On the activity of the Agent Intellect in relation to the soul that is more or less prepared to receive its flux, Avicenna states: "the Agent Intellect is eternally agent and its action is unwavering when the receiving matter is appropriately prepared to receive its flux. And that, in any human being whatsoever. It is therefore necessary that humans strive to attain that preparation in this life" (*Kitāb al-Ta'līqāt* [*Livre des Gloses*] as quoted in Michot 1986, 107n.; my translation from French to English). Here is where Providential Nature has introduced pleasure as a more productive way to achieve that state of higher realization, as opposed to effort only, which would wear down the soul and cause it to despair of attaining its goal – such a goal being the *preparation of the ground* in view of a transmission which comes from the action of the Agent Intellect. All of this is quite remote from Aristotle's views of the workings of pleasure, given that the theory of the Agent Intellect is specifically Avicennian. See also *Ishārāt* (*Admonitions*) 8.10: "if you are in the body with its preoccupations and attachments, and you do not desire your proper perfection and are not pained by the presence of the opposite of this perfection, you must know that this is due to you and not to this perfection, and that in you there are causes of this" (Inati 1996, 75).

tion becomes befitting to the reception. This is why, in such cases, we strive to busy the imaginative faculty (*khayāliyya*) so as to prevent it from hampering the process. So, for example, when we wish to investigate a question pertaining to geometry, we busy the imaginative faculty with the figures of said question, which we trace out for it, so that it does not turn toward something else and become a hindrance. […] The learning process is accomplished by occupying the imagination and the senses with something similar to that which concerns the thought, so as not to hinder the soul in its search. Cogitation consists in this: the soul busies its faculties [vegetative, sensitive, rational] with something akin to what it is looking for, so as to carry out the groundwork necessary for it to receive the form it is looking for from the giver of forms [the Agent Intellect]" (*Kitāb al-Ta'līqāt* [Notes on Aristotle's *De anima*], as translated from Arabic into French by Michot 1986, 106–107 n.; my translation into English).

Falconry as the noblest of all hunting arts is thus understood by Theodore as one of the pleasurable activities which absorb the imagination and occupy it with an intermediate template (neither wholly physical nor entirely abstract, yet partaking of both dimensions) of the perfection the mind is striving to achieve (or, rather, to receive from the "giver of forms").

In each and all of the cases discussed by Theodore (the philosopher, the warrior, the ruler) the *delectatio* or pleasurable activity is an imaginative, playful pursuit which succeeds in resting the mind (as Adelard had stated) and in productively entertaining the imagination (as Avicenna had observed) by following its own rules and principles, thus facilitating the individuation process, the enactment of the particular kind of perfection each individual is engaged in.[31] Yet at the same time the "imagining" specific to the art of falconry also simulates, projects and enacts the process of intellection itself. This is the very process whereby, according to ancient philosophy, the human mind reaches its own *summum bonum* and ultimate perfection, and in doing so comes to experience an inexpressible *delectatio* or *voluptas intellectualis*: the felicity of union with the Agent Intellect, or the world of the intelligibles. Virtually all of the Aristotelians who in Europe during the 13th and early 14th centuries came to consider themselves philosophers elaborated on the theory of the *summum bonum*, even to the risk of their life in view of the Church's radical condemnation of their positions (Corti 1983; de Libera 1991). In the words of Egidius of Orleans, one of the Paris so-called "radical Averroists", or upholders of the pre-eminence of philosophy as the true accomplishment of the human experience on earth: "happiness consists in the operation or contemplation according to wisdom or metaphysics, pertaining to the supreme objects, such as god and the other [entities] separate [from matter]" ("felicitas consistit in operatione vel contemplatione secundum sapientiam vel metaphysicam, que est de optimis obiectis, sicut de deo et aliis separatis" (*Q. in Ethic.* I, 11 [ms. Paris, BN lat. 16089, f. 197rb], quoted from Bianchi 1990, 182). This was in fact the ultimate quarry in whose pursuit Emperor Frederick II and his philosophers, as Western heirs and transmitters of the ancient ideal they had received from the Islamic world, were single-mindedly engaged. But, as Avicenna had warned, the success of such a pursuit was dependent on one's own rigorous inner training much more than on the illusion of outer chasing – a lesson hard to learn for human beings in general, and for rulers in particular.

31 Theodore, and Avicenna before him, elaborate a theory of playfulness as pleasure leading to a psychological state that makes the individual receptive to the teachings of the Agent Intellect, or in any case, closer to reaching the perfection of their function. I am aware that these issues deserve to be analyzed in a far deeper manner than I can do here. The perspective of play as a function of culture is outlined by Huizinga through the *homo ludens* theory (Huizinga 1955).

Having followed Theodore's reasoning this far, one last surprise awaits us: his prologue states that falconry, as the noblest form of hunting, is the imaginative activity pertaining not to the warrior, as the majority of the European aristocrats of the time would likely have thought (and possibly most of us with them), but rather to the ruler, whose role in society Theodore severs from that of the man of arms. Falconry, in other words, is intended to project in the psychic dimension not the dynamics inherent to the art of warring (pursuit and aggression), but rather those belonging to the art of ruling (reciprocal acceptance and training, if not taming) – which in turn, according to Theodore's views, are deeply related to the art of rightfully judging and legislating, befitting the philosopher in his capacity as advisor to the ruler. As Burnett rightly pointed out, here «we have an echo of the Platonic ideal of the Philosopher-King» (1995, 274). While in the Western world of the time this pairing remained unique to the court of Frederick II, already in the 12th century a poet like Chrétien de Troyes had suggested to his readers, as we have seen, the deep connection between falconry and sovereignty as a courtly and sapiential alternative to the traditional, still predominant coupling of ruling and hunting as venery.[32]

To conclude, let us briefly look into the principles pertaining to falconry understood as the royal art of training and taming, and to its far-reaching cultural implications. As Frederick II stated in his own treatise, one does not undertake falconry for the purpose of capturing game; rather, this ought to be regarded as an almost accidental outcome of a process centered on the art of "manning" the raptor. It is in this perspective that falconry reveals itself akin to the art of ruling as intrinsically different from the art of warring: what falconry and ruling share is the project of transforming the instinctual predatory response of a wild creature by submitting it to an education, to a set of precepts and behavioral practices aimed at achieving a higher control of one's own nature. This is the essence of the art of (self-)training, which heedless human beings delude themselves in believing to be a one-way process, from human to raptor. Accomplished trainers (and rulers), however, know better. Based on their direct experience even more than on the principles of the art they have come to identify with, they see that the subtle art of training a wild bird is nothing but a mirror, in which the image of their own being is constantly reflected along with that of the raptor. As is the case in all traditional arts, a successful mastery of the principles belonging to falconry involves a constant double process: the transformation affects the trainer as well as the trained, and is effected *on* the trainer *by* the trained just as much as the reverse. No ruler can hope to achieve true mastery over his (wild) fellow creatures and hope to ennoble their behavior, until he or she has achieved full knowledge of, and mastery over, the mechanisms which govern his or her own instinctual behaviour. While Frederick II had become well aware of this universal truth through his practice of falconry, most Western rulers of his time never did.

32 In France in particular, venery was to remain the form of hunt symbolic of royal power and supremacy until the end of the 16th century. The humanist Guillaume Budé even attempted a Latin rendering of the technical terms and practices of venery in his *De philologia* for the benefit of his pupil, the young king Francis I. While this writing was intended as a cultural experiment, there is no trace in it of precisely the kind of conversion through acculturation that was the aim of falconry as imported and practiced by Frederick II. "So as to convince Francis I, and with him the French aristocracy, of the legitimacy of an antiquarian approach to knowledge (understood as an essential aspect of power), Budé finds himself forced to prove that Latin is a linguistic tool that can be adapted to fit the habits of the French nobility, and most specifically its preferred sport. We can gauge here the price that Humanism had to pay to the aristocracy and their traditional values: in order to fulfill the dream of literacy, Budé had to show the king how Latinity could converse with hunters and speak elegantly and appropriately in their gatherings" (Boccassini 2009, 212, here translated in English). As we can see from this revealing example, there is no question that for centuries Western sovereigns remained faithful to the traditional connection ruling-warring-hunting so harshly criticized by John of Salisbury and loathed by Frederick II.

King Gallacianus had said to king Dancus that the kernel of his wisdom resided in the art of knowing how to have a bird catch another one ("facitis unam avem capere aliam"). Man's desire to pursue and capture a flying creature – maybe, at a deeper level, as a means to identify with it – cannot be satisfied by employing the human physical organs as they are. There has to intervene a different process, the establishment of a relationship with intermediary birds through whose innate abilities man may become able vicariously to appropriate that elusive alterity. Hunting in this way becomes essentially an act of the imagination: a speculative process, which mirrors man's desire to attain the celestial dimension or, in Aristotelian language, the perfection, of everything that manifests at the earthly level. Above all, it is the desire to reunite with the most elusive part of oneself, the winged mystery of one's own soul. In its claim to generate "sapientiam", falconry is intrinsically a contemplative "scientia", and a powerfully transformative one at that; its subtle wisdom and arcane procedures are more akin to the "magical" esoteric arts (such as alchemy, geomancy and the arts of the *quadrivium*) than to any essoteric technique directed at the manipulation of matter in view of achieving man's utilitarian mastery over it. Falconry, in other words, is an initiatory art, which teaches the voluntary side of the self how to relate to the powers of its wild, unconscious side. Elusive and rapacious, yet noble and expansive, those powers are trainable in view of achieving a truly revelatory result: by learning how to reach out to and into the wild, the human mind opens itself to the awareness of its own untamed and ultimately untamable, yet utterly trainable, innermost self.

It is certainly not by chance that, through paths entirely independent of Frederick II's ethico-political project, falconry became associated with, and iconic of, the refinements of courtly love and of all of the ethical and psychological subtleties such a "game" implied. In that imaginal play of projections and introjections the lover, apparently engaged in the taming of a beloved seemingly distant and aloof, in fact acceded to the sacred inner space where the recovery of a relationship with his own soul and the *anima mundi* (or the Agent Intellect, the "giver of forms") became possible in a way other than that codified by the established norms of Christian spirituality. The (re)discovery of the ancient/new knowledge contained in the vast corpus of the so-called Aristotelian philosophy was occurring at the same time, and more often than not in the same social spaces and geographical areas, where the education of the lover to and through falconry-like training processes was taking place. The passion with which it was met in cultivated milieus immensely facilitated this process of psychic rediscovery and growth, in which the individual and the collective faces of the Western identity soon became equally engaged.

The subject is too vast and complex to be discussed here as fully as it deserves, so I will limit myself to a few, sketchy remarks, harking back to Chrétien's narrative of Erec and Enide's adventures. As we saw earlier, the "falconry principle" which Erec introjects via his fortuitous (but also fated and hence fatal) discovery of the land where Yder's pursuit took him, and via his subsequent marriage with Enide, inescapably leads to an arduous ethical training of both spouses, based on a self-sacrificial dynamic and the testing of their mutual love. Far from being a sterile goal in itself, this double training reveals itself as a powerful, fecund educational tool, whereby the old (masculine) axiom of aggression and coercion transmutes into the new (feminine) principle of bonding both at the inner and at the outer level. It is precisely the accomplishment of such a process of inner transmutation which eventually leads Erec and Enide as a couple to embody for their land and their people the manifestation of a new sovereignty, a new rule, a new wisdom.

While King Arthur's devotion to venery (in the form of the traditional hunt for the white stag) stands for the active, conquering and masculine aspects of man's relationship to the world, Erec's submission to the contemplative, unarmed presence to the world of Queen Guinevre already announces his fateful devotion to the feminine, transformative, wisdom-seeking principle embodied by the falcon peacefully perched on the falconer's fist. What Erec and Enide were poetically offering to the Western sovereigns was that same (re)integration of the feminine aspect of the world-soul within

the sphere of human awareness which Emperor Frederick II tried to achieve by (re)integrating the art of falconry as well as the rule of law.

In the early 14th century Dante Alighieri was to achieve yet another level of inner expansion by consciously identifying the cosmic wayfarer of his *Commedia* with the figure of the falcon joyously submitting to the hand of the divinely-sent falconer:

> "Quale 'l falcon, che prima a' piè si mira, | indi si volge al grido e si protende | per lo disio del pasto che là il tira, | tal mi fec' io; e tal, quanto si fende | la roccia per dar via a chi va suso, | n'andai infin dove 'l cerchiar si prende" (Alighieri, Pg 19, 64–69).
>
> "Just like a falcon, who at first looks down, | then, when the falconer has called, bends forward, | craving the food that's ready for him there, | So I became, and so remained until | Through the cleft rock that lets one climb above, | I reached the point at which the circle starts"
>
> (Translation A. Mandelbaum).

As I have extensively argued (Boccassini 2003, 335–388; 2007; 2010), the principal objective of the *Commedia* is to save humankind from its self-imposed and ultimately self-defeating rapaciousness. Dante came to espouse such an objective not least through his repeated contacts with the Ghibelline courts of Northern Italy, whose falconers were the only heirs, however residual, to Frederick II's high accomplishments in the art. In other words, Dante came to see in falconry the symbol most apt to express that process of inner training, surrender and ultimate taming of an individual's own nature which culminates in the wilful, knowing *return* of the winged creature (and hence of the soul) to that very "hand" on whose universal fist the whole world is unknowingly perched. For Dante, no art better than falconry could convey the sense of that sacrificial inner transmutation necessary for human consciousness to awaken to the vision of itself as a pure reflection of the transcendental source of all-encompassing love. No other art could as powerfully express the potential for universal salvation inscribed within a process meant to make human consciousness cognizant of its own divine origin – of its own participation in, and belonging to, the very substance offered by the falconer to the falcon as its only rightful meal, as that "bread of angels" Dante had already evoked in the opening pages of the *Convivio*: purely celestial food, on which life itself unsuspectingly keeps feeding (Boccassini 2007, 171).

Seven to eight hundred years later, our Western psyche is still caught in the dilemma of whether to follow King Arthur's lead in a reckless pursuit of the white stag, or whether to listen, like Erec and Dante, to the enigma of that inner vastness which is calling us to train so as to learn how to be trained; to tame so as to become tamed; to accept to be known so as to learn where real knowledge truly abides.

Literature

Alighieri: D. Alighieri, Divina Commedia. Both the Italian original and the Mandelbaum translation can be accessed at http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/comedy/index.html

Adelard: Adelard of Bath, Conversations with his Nephew. On the Same and the Different. Questions on Natural Science and On Birds. Ed. Ch. Burnett and I. Ronca, P. Mantas España, B. Van den Abeele (Cambridge 1998).

Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics: English translation available at http://catalog.perseus.org/catalog/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0086.tlg010, and W. D. Ross's translation: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.10.x.html.

Aristotle, Metaphysics: English translation by Hugh Tredennick available at http://catalog.perseus.org/catalog/urn:cts:greekLit: tlg0086.tlg025.

Benoist 2007: A. de Benoist, Spiritual authority and temporal power. In: TYR. Myth, Culture, Tradition. 3 vols (Atlanta 2007–2008). Digital version accessible at: https://ia601602.us.archive.org/6/items/SpiritualAuthorityTemporalPower/SpiritualAuthorityTemporalPower.pdf)

Bianchi 1990: L. Bianchi, Il vescovo e i filosofi. La condanna parigina del 1277 e l'evoluzione dell'aristotelismo scolastico (Bergamo 1990).

Boccassini 2003: D. Boccassini, Il volo della mente. Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo: Islam, Federico II, Dante (Ravenna 2003).

Boccassini 2007: D. Boccassini, Falconry as a Transmutative Art: Dante, Frederick II and Islam. Dante Studies 125, 2007 (2009), 157–182.

Boccassini 2009: D. Boccassini, Chasse et fauconnerie du Moyen Age à la Renaissance: les recueils cynégétiques français. In: J. McClelland/B. Merrilees (eds.), Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe (Toronto 2009) 199–226.
Boccassini 2010: D. Boccassini, L'ora che volge il disio: Comparative Hermeneutics of Desire in Dante and 'Attār. In: M. Gragnolati/T. Kay/E. Lombardi (eds.), Desire in Dante and the Middle Ages (Oxford 2012) 29–44.
Burnett 1995: Ch. Burnett, Master Theodore, Frederick II's Philosopher. In: Federico II e le nuove culture. Spoleto: CISAM, vol. 3, 225–285.

Chrétien de Troyes: Romans (Paris 1994). English translation by W.W. Comfort, accessible at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/831/831-h/831-h.htm#linknoteref-11
Corti 1983: M. Corti, La felicità mentale. Nuove prospettive per Cavalcanti e Dante (Torino 1983).

Dancus: Dancus rex, Guillelmus falconarius, Gerardus falconarius. Les plus anciens traités de fauconnerie de l'Occident publiés d'après tous les manuscrits connus: Ed. G. Tilander (Lund 1963).
De Libera 1991: A. de Libera, Penser au Moyen Age (Paris 1991).
Dobiat 2013: C. Dobiat, Early falconry in central Europe on the basis of grave finds, with a discussion of the origins of falconry. In: Grimm/Schmölcke 2013, 343–356.

Eliade 1965: M. Eliade, Le sacré et le profane (Paris 1965).

Fassò 2003: A. Fassò, Il sogno del cavaliere. Chrétien de Troyes e la regalità (Roma 2003).
Fischer 2013: T. Fischer, Hunting in the Roman period. In: Grimm/Schmölcke 2013, 259–266.

Galloni 1993: P. Galloni, Il cervo e il lupo. Caccia e cultura nobiliare nel Medioevo (Bari 1993).
Giese 2013: M. Giese, Legal regulations on hunting in the barbarian law codes of the Early Middle Ages. In: Grimm/Schmölcke 2013, 485–504.
Grimm/Schmölcke 2013: O. Grimm/U. Schmölcke (eds.), Hunting in Northern Europe until 1500 AD. Old traditions and regional developments, continental sources and continental influences. Schr. Arch. Landesmus. Ergbd. 7 (Neumünster 2013).

Hasse 2008: D. N. Hasse, The Early Albertus Magnus and his Arabic Sources on the Theory of the Soul. Vivarium 46, 2008, 232–252.
Huizinga, 1955: J. Huizinga, Homo ludens. A study of the play-element in culture (Boston 1955).

Inati 1996: S. Inati, Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism. Remarks and Admonitions Part Four (London, New York 1996).

John of Salisbury: Ioannis Saresberiensis Episcopi Carnotensis Policratici sive De nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum libri VIII. Ed. C. I. Webb., 2 vols (Oxford; rpt. Frankfurt 1965). English transl. by J. B. Pike available at http://www.constitution.org/salisbury/policrat123.htm

Maddox 1978: D. Maddox, Structure and Sacring: the Systematic Kingdom in Chrétien's "Erec et Enide" (Lexington 1978).
Mandalà 2011: G. Mandalà, Il falconiere di Ogödey, i giardini del Minse e le colombe di Federico II. Frammenti di storia aviaria siciliana. In: Memoria, storia identità (Palermo 2011) 437–457.
Michot 1986: J. R. Michot, La destinée de l'homme selon Avicenne. Le retour à Dieu (ma'ad) et l'imagination (Louvain 1986).

Prummel 2013: W. Prummel, Falconry in continental settlements as reflected by animal bones from the 6th to the 12th centuries AD. In: Grimm/Schmölcke 2013, 357–377.

Rooney 1993: A. Rooney, Hunting in Middle English Literature (Cambridge 1993).

Schmölcke 2013: U. Schmölcke, The evidence for hunting dogs from Mesolithic times up to the Viking Age from a zoological point of view – a survey. In: Grimm/Schmölke 2013, 175–183.
Servier 1994: J. Servier, L'homme et l'invisible (vol. 1); Les techniques de l'invisible (vol. 2) (Monaco 1994).

Van den Abeele 1994: B. Van den Abeele, La fauconnerie au Moyen Age (Paris 1994).
Vretemark 2013: M. Vretemark, The Vendel Period royal follower's grave at Swedish Rickeby as starting point for reflections about falconry in Northern Europe. In: Grimm/Schmölcke 2013, 379–386.

Zug Tucci 1983: H. Zug Tucci, La caccia, da bene commune a privilegio. In: Storia d'Italia Annali, vol. 6. Economia naturale e economia monetaria (Torino 1983) 397–445.

Prof. Dr. Daniela Boccassini
French, Hispanic and Italian Studies
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Canada
daniela.boccassini@ubc.ca