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Wild Animals in the Byzantine Park

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In early autumn of 1996, before the true gravity of his heart condition had been publicly revealed, Boris Yeltsin entertained a visiting head of state at a country retreat sixty miles north of Moscow. According to the *New York Times*, on this occasion Yeltsin shot forty ducks and a wild boar weighing more than 440 pounds. Later, he and his guest, Prime Minister Helmut Kohl of Germany, along with their respective entourages, feasted on the spoils of their hunt in the halls of the rural estate.¹ In another notice three years earlier, the *New York Times* reported on the death of Pablo Escobar, drug lord of the Medellín cartel. The article included a description of Escobar's 7,000-acre ranch in the mountains of Colombia: "he landscaped it with artificial lakes and imported hundreds of exotic animals, including giraffes, camels, bison, llamas, a kangaroo and cockatoos."²

These two recent notices suggest that little has changed when it comes to the interests and pursuits of royal, or quasi-royal, personages. In this essay I investigate the types of preserve evoked in these modern accounts—the game park and the animal park or menagerie—in the Byzantine period. While our evidence for the former, Byzantine game parks, is scattered and that for the latter meager indeed, the popularity of animal preserves among Byzantium's neighbors and contemporaries makes us wonder whether Byzantium was really as uninterested as the scarcity of Byzantine sources on the subject might suggest. A closer look at the evidence is therefore in order. The material assembled here is limited for convenience to the middle Byzantine period and divided into three sections: game parks, menageries, and animal parks. This is still a preliminary study, however, and it should be stressed that the distinctions made here, if not downright anachronistic, were surely less clear-cut in the Byzantine period under review.

Game Parks

In Byzantium the major imperial hunts often took place, as one would expect, in wild territory at some distance from the city of Constantinople.³ Romanos II is said to have

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¹ *New York Times*, 9 September 1996, A9.

² *Ibid.*, 3 December 1993, A12.

³ On ancient hunting, see J. Aymard, *Essai sur les chasses romaines des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins*

hunted deer in remote mountains.⁴ Emperor John II Komnenos was fatally wounded, according to the chronicler Kinnamos, in an encounter with a boar in the Taurus mountains in Cilicia; his son Manuel I hunted wherever he could from Syria to the Danube.⁵ To be sure, fierce creatures might appear unexpectedly even close to home: once at Damatrys in Bithynia, Manuel encountered a monstrous unidentified feline after a severe winter snowfall; this beast he is said to have killed single-handedly after all of his men had fled in fear.⁶ Before he was emperor, Basil I killed a great wolf that had leapt unexpectedly out of a thicket during an imperial chase in the Philopation, just northwest of the city of Constantinople. Basil's success on this occasion was later viewed as a sure sign of his imperial qualifications and destiny.⁷

But these challenging hunts in open territory were often reduced to courtly stage-hunts within game preserves. The latter provided a concentrated and more controlled version of the same experience: the distances were smaller, the game more predictable—consisting mostly of small hoofed animals, hare, and boar—and since the park was often located

(Cynegetica) (Paris, 1951); J. K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985), and see note 7 below. On Byzantine hunts, see Ph. Koukoules, “Κυνηγετικά ἐκ τῆς ἐποχῆς τῶν Κομνηνῶν καὶ τῶν Παλαιολόγων,” *Ἐπ. Ἐτ. Βυζ. Σπ.* 9 (1932): 3–33, and idem, “ἡ θήρα,” in his *Βυζαντινὸς βίος καὶ πολιτισμὸς*, 6 vols. (Athens, 1948–57), 5:387–423; E. Patlagean, “De la chasse et du souverain,” *DOP* 46 (1992): 257–63. See also the 12th-century text by Constantine Pantechnes on the hunting of pheasant and hares: E. Miller, “Description d’une chasse à l’once par un écrivain byzantin du XIIe siècle de nôtre ère,” *Annuaire de l’Association pour l’encouragement des études grecques en France* 6 (1872): 28–52.

⁴ Leo Diakonos, *Historia* (Bonn, 1828), 30.22–23.

⁵ Ioannis Cinnami, *Epitome*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn, 1836), 24.10–24, 93, 189.2–6; trans. C. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* (New York, 1976), 27, 76, 144. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten (Berlin, 1975), 40.61–41.95; trans. H. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), 23–24. John nicked himself with one of his own poisoned arrows while fighting off the boar. See also R. Browning, “The Death of John II Comnenus,” *Byzantion* 31 (1961): 229–35. Basil I himself had died in 886 of complications resulting from a hunting accident.

⁶ Kinnamos, 266.9–267.13; Brand, *Deeds*, 200. See also S. Runciman (as in note 16 below), 222.

⁷ *Vita Basilii*, 14, ed. I. Bekker, *Theophanes continuatus* (Bonn, 1838), 231.22–232.47. On other unforeseen encounters with fierce beasts, see Patlagean, “De la chasse,” passim. Some of the character of these middle Byzantine hunts can be gleaned from the 11th-century illustrations adorning a manuscript of the Pseudo-Oppian’s famous manual for hunting with dogs, the *Cynegetica*, Venice, Marcianus gr. 479; see I. Furlan, *Codici greci illustrati della Biblioteca Marciana*, vol. 5 (Padua, 1988). The miniatures in the Venice codex elaborate on the early 3d-century text, and show a quite wonderful knowledge of the dangers posed by the animal kingdom, and the ruses employed to overcome even the most fearsome of creatures. For late antique hunting imagery, see I. Lavin, “The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and Their Sources,” *DOP* 17 (1963): 179–286. On late antique hunts as performances, and the reflection of such events in domestic mosaics, see C. Kondoleon, “Signs of Privilege and Pleasure: Roman Domestic Mosaics,” in *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*, ed. E. K. Gazda (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991), 105–15, and her *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca-London, 1995), esp. 271–314. See also A. Cutler, “Stalking the Beast: Art History as Asymptotic Exercise,” *Word & Image* 7 (1991): 234. On the use of hunting imagery for ideological and metaphorical purposes, as a counterpart to imperial panegyric, see the literature on works such as the ivory Troyes casket with its lion and boar hunts: *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, exhibition catalogue, ed. H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom (New York, 1997), no. 141 (with earlier bibliography), and H. Maguire, “Imperial Gardens and the Rhetoric of Renewal,” in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, ed. P. Magdalino (Aldershot, 1994).

close to a pavilion or even residence, there was always the gratifying possibility of having an audience following the course of the hunt from a nearby tower.⁸ Furthermore, much of the actual felling of the prey in such parks was done not by the huntsmen themselves or their dogs, but by falcons released to capture the hare or by a cheetah bounding from the back of a rider's horse to down a deer.⁹

This kind of park had to be laid out, landscaped, managed, and harvested with care. The Roman author Columella, writing his *On Agriculture* in A.D. 60, provided guidelines for the estate owner that would have been useful even centuries later:

Ancient custom placed parks for young hares, wild goat and wild boars near the farm, generally within the view of the owner's dwelling place, so that the sight of their being hunted within an inclosure might delight the eyes of the proprietor and that when the custom of giving feasts called for game, it might be produced as it were out of store. . . . Wild creatures, such as roebucks, chamois and also various kinds of antelopes, deer and wild boars sometimes serve to enhance the splendour and pleasure of their owners, and sometimes to bring profit and revenue. Those who keep game shut up for their own pleasure are content to construct a park (*vivarium*) on any suitable site in the neighborhood of the farm buildings, and always give them food and water by hand. Those on the other hand who look for profit and revenue, when there is a wood near the farm (for it is important that it should not be far out of sight of the owner), reserve it without hesitation for the above-mentioned animals, and if there is no natural supply of water, either running-water

⁸ On ancient and Byzantine game preserves, see A. R. Littlewood, "Gardens of the Palaces," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. H. Maguire (Washington, D.C., 1997), 35–38; idem, "Ancient Literary Evidence for the Pleasure Gardens of Roman Country Villas," in *Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*, ed. E. B. MacDougall (Washington, D.C., 1987), 9–30, esp. 15–17; idem, "Gardens of Byzantium," *Journal of Garden History* 12 (1992): 126–53, esp. 148–49; H. Maguire, "A Description of the Aretai Palace and Its Garden," *Journal of Garden History* 10 (1990): 209–13; idem, "Imperial Gardens," 181–98. There was a park of this sort outside the palace of the 10th-century Armenian king Gagik I, though the selection of animals might make spectators fear for their safety: "a hill from which one could look onto the plain down to the banks of the river Araxes. There herds of deer gambolled; there were lairs of boars and lions and herds of onagers, all ready for the pleasures of the chase"; Thomas Artsruni, *History of the House of the Artsrunik*, trans. and comm. R. W. Thomson (Detroit, 1985), 316. For the West, see the superb study of K. Hauck, "Tiergärten im Pfalzbereich," in *Deutsche Königspfalzen: Beiträge zur ihrer historischen und archäologischen Erforschung*, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1963), 30–74. On spectators at the hunt, see *ibid.*, 43–44. I thank Christopher Wickham for drawing my attention to this publication. In Russian the word *zverinets* referred to the forested areas for royal hunts outside Kiev, Novgorod, and Pereslavl' in the 11th and 12th centuries, though the word eventually came to mean a zoological garden.

⁹ Koukoules, "Κυνηγετικά," 27; E. Maguire, in Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, 261–64, 269. There is evidence for the use of felines in Slavic lands as well: Oleg, son of Prince Sviatoslav, gave to (or received from) Prince Iurii Vladimirovich Dolgorukii a leopard (*pardus*) when he visited Moscow in 1147, according to the *Hypatian Chronicle*, Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej 2, 2d ed. (St. Petersburg, 1908; repr. Moscow, 1962), cols. 339–40; *Der Aufstieg Moskaus: Auszüge aus einer russischen Chronik*, trans. P. Nitsche (Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1966), 41 (Nitsche thinks this gift was only a pelt). The current assumption that the hunting "leopards" were really cheetahs has been challenged by Pamela Armstrong, who notes the Byzantines had no word for cheetah: *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 71 (1997): 15. Physically, however, the creatures depicted in manuscripts and on pottery often have the long-legged, swayback frame of a cheetah, not that of a leopard. See the Pantechnes text cited above, note 3; the word translated by Miller as "once" is *πάρδαλις*.

is introduced or else ponds are dug and lined with mortar to receive and hold the rainwater. (9, *praef.*, 1–2, Loeb ed., vol. 2, pp. 421–23)

Columella recommends enclosing this wood with a stone or brick wall, or with a fence in the form of a lattice of oak wood. For large areas, he recommends a rail fence with posts every eight feet. The soil should have lots of springs, and the woodlands be rich with fruits and natural fodder—grass, acorns, and other wild fruits. In winter, the park keeper (*custos vivarii*) should come with barley or wheat meal or beans, or grape husks, and feed the mother animals by hand. Small animals like hare should be given grain and herbs, wild endive and lettuce, thrown upon small beds of earth at intervals. After four years, the antelope and wild boar are ready to be turned into cash, while deer can be allowed to live considerably longer.¹⁰

Columella then turns to a discussion of the raising of bees, a sure indication of the extent to which this sort of game park was seen as a form of animal husbandry. Though he uses the term *vivarium* for both, Columella suggests a distinction between the area near the house—where the animals are kept to “enhance the splendour and pleasure of their owners” and are fed entirely by hand—and the large enclosed wood where the animals run free but where a proper environment for them is created or maintained—plenty of water, trees that provide nuts, fruits, and roots, special herbs planted in clumps for the rabbits—and where extra fodder is supplied when necessary in the winter season. He advises introducing tame animals of each species into the larger park to encourage their hesitant wild cousins to eat the special diet provided by the *custos vivarii*.¹¹

We lack any prescriptive text comparable to that of Columella for the Byzantine period, but Byzantine game preserves there surely were. Some of the evidence is well known: Liudprand’s visit to a park in Bithynia, and descriptions of the Philopation, the park located just beyond the Blachernai walls, outside the city of Constantinople.

Liudprand, an envoy of the German emperor Otto I, was entertained in 968 at a state dinner in Constantinople by Emperor Nikephoros Phokas. Phokas could not resist asking Liudprand: does your master have *perivolia* (“id est briolia,” says Liudprand, later using the spelling “brolia”), and in them does he have onagers, that is, wild asses? Liudprand’s answer,

¹⁰ Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, *On Agriculture (De re rustica)*, 9.1–7, ed. and trans. H. B. Ash (Cambridge, Mass.–London, 1941), vol. 2, 420–26. From other sources, one learns that a fence of 4 feet 6 inches is needed to enclose cattle, one of 9 feet to enclose deer; embankments, waterways, and trenches were also useful for enclosing or dividing species. See S. Landsberg, *The Medieval Garden* (London, 1995), 65; P. Stamper, “Woods and Parks,” in *The Countryside of Medieval England*, ed. G. Astill and A. Grant (Oxford, 1988), 140–48, esp. 141.

¹¹ Here we should recall the famous story told by the Roman author Varro of his friend Q. Hortensius, who had on his estate an enclosed wood of around 30 acres, called a *theriotropheion*. Hortensius liked to dine with his friends in the midst of the wood, and for their amusement on such occasions a slave, carrying a lyre and dressed as Orpheus, would blow a horn and the denizens of the wood, especially boar and deer, would show up to be fed. Marcus Terentius Varro, *De re rustica*, 3.13.2–3; Varron, *Économie rurale*, ed. and trans. C. Guiraud (Paris, 1997), 34. A *theriotropheion* is apparently the Greek equivalent for Columella’s word *vivarium*. For the term θηριωτρόφος or “beast-rearer,” in the context of animal games in the East, see C. Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (London, 1993), 73. St. Basil the Younger confronted a *theriotrophos* who arrived with a lion to intimidate him (see note 45 below).

that naturally his master has a *perivolium* and in it he has every kind of animal *except* onagers, evidently gratified Phokas, for he then proposed that he take Liudprand to visit his park and see the asses. A few days later, Liudprand went riding in the park (its location is unspecified), but when he spotted the asses, who were in a herd along with wild goats (*capreis*), he was less than impressed and said to himself that they looked just like the donkeys he could see any day in the market in Cremona. When his escort suggested that the emperor might conceivably be persuaded to give him a few asses to take home to his master Otto, saying that the wild asses would “bring him (Otto) no small prestige, since he will own something which none of his noble predecessors has ever seen,” Liudprand’s disdain (along with his refusal to take off his hat while riding near the emperor’s line of sight) must have galled the Byzantines, for Phokas ultimately sent him back not with any of the precious asses but with a pair of goats instead.¹²

Phokas evidently took pride in his wild asses and deemed them the sort of animal one prince might give another in the endless one-up-manship of royal diplomatic exchange.¹³ The asses presumably reproduced in the park, or Phokas might not have been quite so generous with his offer—but one wonders to what extent, given that they were not native to the area, they served as regular quarry for the hunt or were actually eaten. Despite the clear evidence provided by a ninth-century fresco at Qusayr ’Amra in Jordan that wild asses were royally slaughtered by the Umayyads—they are shown being driven by dogs and men with torches into a paddock, where they are speared by the caliph, then bled and skinned¹⁴—there is no mention of hunting in Liudprand’s account. In fact, Phokas’ attitude bespeaks an emperor who was as much a collector as a huntsman.¹⁵

The other game park about which we have any information is the Philopation, a rolling landscape enclosed by walls, located north of Constantinople just outside the Blachernai walls. The sources relating to this park reveal that it was not all that heavily forested, since Odo of Deuil, a Latin chaplain who passed through the Philopation with King Louis VII of France in 1147, says diverse game animals (“speciosus multimodam venationem includens”) find hollows and trenches to hide in, instead of woods; this “deliciarum locus,” as Odo calls it, had waterways in the form of canals and ponds of the type considered essential by Columella, and pavilions, including the residence in which Louis was invited to stay.¹⁶

¹² Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. and trans. B. Scott (London, 1993), 37–38 (pp. 13–14, 42–43). On the meaning of *briolio*, *brogilus*, *brühl* as a hunting preserve, see Hauck, “Tiergärten,” esp. 34–37, and Patlagean, “De la chasse,” 261. On Otto I’s menagerie, see p. 77 below, and Hauck, “Tiergärten,” 53.

¹³ On animals as diplomatic gifts, see A. Cutler, “Les échanges de dons entre Byzance et l’Islam,” *Journal des savants* (January–June 1996): 51–66, and below, pp. 76–78.

¹⁴ M. Almagro et al., *Qusayr ’Amra: Residencia y baños omeyas en el desierto de Jordania* (Madrid, 1975).

¹⁵ According to R. Guiland, “Études sur l’Hippodrome de Byzance VI: Les spectacles de l’Hippodrome,” *BSI* 27 (1966): 290, in 963 Phokas had exhibited in the Hippodrome dogs dressed in costumes of people all over the world, wild beasts with their guardians, a chained crocodile, a mule with two heads, and a wise dog who could pick out the greediest man in a crowd. But the reference Guiland cites, C. Diehl, *Dans l’orient byzantin* (Paris, 1917), 381, is faulty, and I have not so far been able to locate the Greek source.

¹⁶ The sources on Philopation have been analyzed by Maguire, “Description of the Aretai,” 212; idem, “Imperial Gardens,” 184–86, 191–92; Littlewood, “Gardens of Byzantium,” 148–49. Odo of Deuil, *De projectione*

We have also a text describing Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos' (1042–55) attempt to rid this park of predators who were devouring his game animals. The text is a Georgian life of St. George Hagiorites, who came to Constantinople in the mid-eleventh century. According to this *vita*, the emperor, determined to protect his herds, resorted to calling upon gypsies, who, by imitating animal calls, managed to attract and then eliminate the predators.¹⁷ Curiously enough, these predators—wolves perhaps?¹⁸—more savage animals, at any rate, than the peaceful creatures inhabiting the preserve, were not themselves hunted down by the royal entourage, but had to be seduced by the gypsies (presumably specialists in animal behavior) instead. In his concern for the maintenance of his herds, Constantine Monomachos was in some sense acting as the proper manager of his estate, the *custos vivarii* mentioned by Columella. Similarly, it was said of Emperor Isaac I Komnenos, who ruled shortly thereafter (1057–59), that he went off to pursue game in its natural habitat since he was fearful of depleting the animals in his preserve.¹⁹

Parallels for Byzantine game preserves have been found in Islamic and Sicilian hunting parks, especially the haunts of the Norman kings of the twelfth century around Palermo.²⁰ According to Romuald of Salerno, a section of the hilly terrain above the city was enclosed by Roger II with a stone wall to contain fallow deer, roe deer, and wild boar; special trees were planted inside it, water was channeled to it, and a palace erected there.²¹ This is the area

Ludovici VII in orientem, 3, ed. and trans. V. G. Berry (New York, 1965), 48. Conrad of Germany had been invited to stay there somewhat earlier on, and had done considerable damage to the park. See also S. Runciman, "The Country and Suburban Palaces of the Emperors," in *Charanis Studies: Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis*, ed. A. Laiou-Thomadakis (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980), 219–28, esp. 223–24. Kinnamos, 74.20–75.2; also 83.4–6; Brand, *Deeds*, 63, 69. Nicholas Mesarites viewed the "place men love to visit," apparently referring to Philopation, from the roof of the Holy Apostles church, from which he claims one could see troops mustering and animals being hunted: "Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," 5, ed. and trans. G. Downey, *TAPS*, n.s., 47 (1957): 864.

¹⁷ P. Peeters, "Histoires monastiques géorgiennes II. Vie de S. Georges l'Hagiorite," *AB* 36 (1917): 69–159, esp. 102.23–104.4; cf. 140.17, 26. See Littlewood, "Gardens of the Palaces," 37 n. 176.

¹⁸ On the wolf killed at Philopation by the future emperor Basil I, see p. 70 above.

¹⁹ Michel Psellos, *Chronographie*, 7.72–73, ed. E. Renauld, vol. 1 (Paris, 1926), 128–29. According to Psellos, Isaac went off to stay in an imperial lodge in an unspecified area surrounded by the sea, where he could hunt bear and wild boar all day long and well into the evening.

²⁰ Maguire, "Description of the Aretai," 212; idem, "Imperial Gardens," 186. See also Hauck, "Tiergärten," 60–63. H. Bresc has underlined the importance of the hunt for the survival of forest lands in Sicily: "La chasse en Sicile (XIIe–XVe siècles)," *La chasse au moyen âge: Actes du Colloque de Nice, 22–24 Juin 1979* (Nice, 1980), 201–11, esp. 201. For later Sicilian gardens, see his "Les jardins de Palerme (1290–1460)," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome: Moyen Âge, Temps moderne* 84.1 (1972): 55–127, and "Palermo, Detto Paradiso Di Sicilia" (*Ville et giardini, XII–XX secolo*), ed. G. Pirrone, M. Buffà, et al. (Palermo, 1989). On remains of Seljuk pavilions in enclosed areas that may have been game parks, see S. Redford, "Just Landscape in Medieval Anatolia," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 20.4 (2000). On English game parks, see L. M. Cantor and J. Hatherly, "The Medieval Parks of England," *Geography* 64 (1979): 71–85; most game parks in England in the 13th century consisted of between 100 and 200 acres (p. 74).

²¹ Romuald of Salerno, *Chronicon*, ed. C. A. Garufi, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L. A. Muratori, vol. 7.1 (Città di Castello, 1935), 232.14–21; trans. Maguire, "Description of the Aretai," 212. Maguire has, I believe, confused the Altofonte with the Favara, which is described by Romuald in the previous sentence. The palace in the Parco was given to the Cistercians in 1307 and became the nucleus of an abbey. On the Sicilian palaces, see G. Di Stefano, *Monumenti della Sicilia normanna*, 2d ed. by W. Kroenig (Palermo, 1979), esp. 90–91, 95–97, 101–12,

known as Parco or Altofonte, up in the mountains seven or so miles southwest of Palermo; here Roger II went during the summer heat. Later, a continuous landscaped area in the plain below was carved out of Roger's other park nearer Palermo (the "Parco Nuovo") by William I and William II; this formed a belt of green around the city and connected the various royal *solatia* erected west of Palermo just outside the city walls (palaces such as William's Zisa and Cuba), and was known as the Genoard, or paradise of the Earth.²² The latter park was located right beneath the Palazzo reale of the Norman kings and contained elaborate constructions for channeling water to the various pavilions. When destroyed in 1194 by Emperor Henry VI, it was apparently full of exotic animals ("omniumque bestiarum genere delectabiliter refertum"), according to Otto of St. Blaise.²³ In contrast to the Altofonte, I have found no evidence to indicate that the Genoard was used for hunting.²⁴

Menageries

In addition to their stocked game parks, the Romans and early Byzantines had animal farms where beasts were raised for eventual use in the hippodrome.²⁵ Just how long animal combats continued to be staged in the Hippodrome in Constantinople is an open question.²⁶ Certainly al-Marwazi, the Arab physician who visited Constantinople in the early twelfth century, saw some such events taking place there: following concerts, wrestling matches, and races, all in the presence of the emperor and empress, he says "they set dogs upon foxes, then cheetahs upon antelopes, then lions upon bulls, while (the onlookers) feast and drink and dance."²⁷ Later that century, the traveler Benjamin of Tudela saw in the Hippodrome

and the fine study of the palaces and their connection to the landscape by H.-R. Meier, *Die normannischen Königspaläste in Palermo: Studien zur hochmittelalterlichen Residenzbaukunst* (Worms, 1994). On the Altofonte, see S. Braida Santamaura, "Il palazzo ruggeriano di Altofonte," *Palladio*, n.s., 2 (1973): 185–87. See also Hauck, "Tiergärten," 61, who suggests the choice of animals to be raised in the park would have necessitated some internal divisions.

²² On the relation of these various parks, see P. Caselli, "La Conca d'Oro e il giardino dell Zisa a Palermo," in *Il giardino islamico: Architettura, natura, paesaggio*, ed. A. Petruccioli (Milan, 1994), 185–200. It is not entirely sure that the Genoard included the Zisa palace, Caselli, p. 189; Meier, *Königspaläste*, 150. On the Zisa, see most recently G. Bellafiore, *La Zisa di Palermo* (Palermo, 1994); on the Cuba, G. Caronia and V. Noto, *La Cuba di Palermo* (Palermo, 1988).

²³ *Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, ed. A. Hofmeister (Hannover, 1912), 61.26–62.1.

²⁴ The piece of evidence most often cited for the presence of wildlife in the Genoard is a miniature captioned "viridarium genoard" in a late 12th-century manuscript of Peter of Eboli's *De rebus siculis carmen* (Bern, Bürgerbibliothek 120, fol. 98r). The miniature shows birds and an awkward sort of hare or feline (perhaps a lynx?). For a color reproduction, see, for example, Caselli, "Conca d'Oro," 187. Fazello, writing in the 16th century, says of the Genoard: "Ex una huius pomarij parte, nequid regij luxus deesset, animalia omnis fere tum ad voluptatem, tum ad Palatij delicias ferini generis abunde nutriebantur"; T. Fazello, *De rebus siculis decades duae* (Palermo, 1558), 174, cited in G. Bellafiore, *Architettura in Sicilia nell'età islamica e normanna (827–1194)* (Palermo, 1990), 60.

²⁵ J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.–London, 1973; repr. Baltimore, 1996); G. Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome* (Manchester, 1937); Aymard, *Chasses romaines*, 185–89.

²⁶ Evidence has been collected by J. Théodoridès, "Les animaux des jeux de l'hippodrome et des ménageries impériales à Constantinople," *BSI* 19 (1958): 73–84; Koukoules, *Βίος*, 3:73–80, 247–48. See also Jennison, *Animals*, esp. 99–136.

²⁷ V. Minorsky, "Marvazi on the Byzantines," *AIPHOS* 10 (1950): 462, repr. in his *Medieval Iran and Its*

“men from all the races of the world come before the king and queen with jugglery and without jugglery, and they introduce lions, leopards, bears and wild asses, and they engage them in combat with each other; and the same thing is done with birds. No entertainment like this can be found in any other land.”²⁸ Animal combats in the Hippodrome may well have continued into the late twelfth century, although they could conceivably have been no more than the staged wild animal encounters of our own circuses. The eleventh-century frescoes in the northwest and southwest towers of the church of St. Sophia in Kiev also suggest that some kind of animal hunts, if not animal combats, took place in the Hippodrome, although the relation between the hunting scenes and the various Hippodrome entertainments on the register below remains somewhat ambiguous.²⁹

Although some exotic species familiar to the Romans then disappeared from Europe for centuries, wild animals continued to be shipped across the Mediterranean throughout the Middle Ages and played an important role in the language of both diplomacy and royal ceremony.³⁰ Charlemagne requested and received his beloved elephant Abul Abbas from the caliph Haroun al-Rashid and was given in the course of his reign monkeys, a lion from Marmarika, and a Numidian bear.³¹ The royal menagerie in Tulunid Cairo (late 9th century) included leopards, panthers, elephants, and giraffes,³² and Byzantine ambassadors to Baghdad in 917 bore witness to the grand ceremonial role played by the lines of elephants, giraffes, leopards, and lions at the caliph’s palace along the bank of the Tigris River.³³ Caliph

Neighbors (London, 1982), no. VIII.

²⁸ *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, 21.2, trans. M. N. Adler (New York, 1907), 12–13. Benjamin says that the Hippodrome festivities he witnessed took place on Christmas day. Why Christmas? Public displays of this sort enlivened the Christmas day wedding of Manuel I to Maria in 1161, but this was not the year Benjamin was in Constantinople. Did a procession of exotic animals and birds with their keepers and trainers before the emperor in the Hippodrome evoke Magi bringing gifts? According to the *De Ceremoniis*, the emperor was acclaimed at the church of the Holy Apostles on Christmas day with the words: “May he who gives life, O rulers, exalt your horn in all the universe, may he enslave all the nations to offer, like the Magi, presents to your royal power,” 1.1, *Constantin Porphyrogenète, Le Livre des Cérémonies*, trans. A. Vogt (Paris, 1967), 33.21–24.

²⁹ O. Powstenko, *The Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev* (New York, 1954), figs. 170–200. In the southwest tower are a so-called bear hunt, squirrel hunt, and wild horse hunt, along with a possible boar hunt and cheetahs(?) pursuing and devouring a deer, figs. 170–71. In the northwest tower is another potential bear hunt, figs. 183, 188. Most of these take place in a landscape setting, possibly an artificial one; cf. Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine* (note 7 above).

³⁰ On menageries, see the classic study of G. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries, de l’antiquité à nos jours*, vol. 1, *Antiquité, Moyen âge, Renaissance* (Paris, 1912). See also Hauck, “Tiergärten,” esp. 45–47, 66–71; J. B. Lloyd, *African Animals in Renaissance Literature and Art* (Oxford, 1971); D. F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 2, *A Century of Wonder*, book one, *The Visual Arts* (Chicago, 1970), 123–85; C. H. Keeling, *Where the Lion Trod: A Study of Forgotten Zoological Gardens* (Guilford, 1984); S. Festing, “Menageries and the Landscape Garden,” *Journal of Garden History* 8 (1988): 104–17. The term *ménagerie* in its current use dates in fact only from the 17th century; see M. Conan, *Dictionnaire historique de l’art des jardins* (Paris, 1997), s.v. *parc, ménagerie*.

³¹ Hauck, “Tiergärten,” 45–46; D. Hennebo, *Gärten des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1987), 107; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 162–63.

³² G. Wiet, *Cairo: City of Art and Commerce*, English trans. S. Feiler (Norman, Okla., 1964), 5–6; see also 149–50 for later elephants and giraffes.

³³ *Book of Gifts and Rarities: Kitab al-Hadaya wa al-Tuhaf*, ed. and trans. G. H. al-Qaddumi (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), 152, 155. On the embassy, see G. Le Strange, “A Greek Embassy to Baghdad in 917 A.D. Translated from the Arabic MS of al-Khatib, in the British Museum Library,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1897: 35–45,

Abd al-Rahman III at Cordoba received large numbers of animals as gifts: lions, horses, twenty-three camels, two beautiful gazelles, and eight ostriches from one source in 930–931, and from another source another year ten dromedaries, twenty pregnant camels, a lion, fine horses, and other animals.³⁴ Such animals often arrived accompanied by their handlers, which added to their exoticism.³⁵ Otto I of Germany got two lions as an Easter present in 950 and owned camels, apes, and ostriches as well.³⁶ King Henry I of England kept lions, lynxes, leopards, camels, and a porcupine within a stone-walled enclosure at Woodstock, outside Oxford, around 1130.³⁷ Emperor Frederick II assembled a sizable menagerie in Lucera in Apulia in the first half of the thirteenth century; he traveled, even on campaign, with his elephant and giraffe, camels (which he bred), lions, leopards, and ostriches, and rode ahead of them in triumphal processions.³⁸

It would be surprising had the Byzantines been indifferent to what the rest of the medieval world was doing, from caliphs to petty French and English lords. And indeed special animals are occasionally mentioned in Byzantine sources. In 1053, Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos was sent a giraffe and an elephant from Egypt, presumably in response to a large shipment of wheat he had provided at a time of famine.³⁹ Michael

esp. 41. Cutler, “Les échanges,” 62. See also pp. 80, 82 below.

³⁴ Ibn Hayyan, *Crónica del Califá ‘Abdarrahman III An-Nasir entre los años 912 y 942 (al-Muqtabis V)*, trans. M. J. Viguera and F. Corriente (Saragossa, 1981), 201, 203–4. For other gifts, see also Cutler, “Les échanges,” 51–66; for “living” gifts, al-Qaddumi, *Book of Gifts*, esp. 63, 78, 79–80, 83–84, 91–92, 102–3, 105–6, 108, 110, 188. Henry III of England got a white bear in 1251, which was reportedly taken regularly on a leash to fish in the Thames, and in 1254 he received an elephant from his brother-in-law, Louis IX of France; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 155.

³⁵ See, for example, the 6th-century Barberini ivory in the Louvre, *Byzance: L’art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises*, exhibition catalogue, ed. J. Durand (Paris, 1992), no. 20, and the floor mosaic in the Old Diakonikon at the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo of the year 530, where the keepers of the animals are as exotic as their charges: M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1993), 135; cf. also 41, 260 (camel drivers), 241 (bear with trainer). The camels given Abd al-Rahman were accompanied by a “shepherd, a negro slave expert in the care of camels”; Ibn Hayyan, *Crónica*, 203. For later images of camels with their handlers, see p. 81 below, and a fresco in the northwest tower of St. Sophia in Kiev; Powstenko, *St. Sophia*, fig. 191.

³⁶ Hauck, “Tiergärten,” 52.

³⁷ H. Colvin, “Royal Gardens in Medieval England,” in *Medieval Gardens*, ed. E. B. MacDougall (Washington, D.C., 1986), 18; Hauck, “Tiergärten,” 67; A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1087–1216*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1955), 19–20, with sources.

³⁸ E. Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second, 1194–1250*, trans. E. O. Lorimer (New York, 1931; repr. 1957), 311, 358, 404; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 146; Hauck, “Tiergärten,” 66–68. Also mentioned are his lynxes, apes, bears, and peacocks.

³⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. W. Brunet de Presle and I. Bekker (Bonn, 1853), 48.11–50.11. *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin, 1973), 475.16–17; Michael Glykas, *Annales*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1836), 597.13–14. Timothy of Gaza mentions giraffes and an elephant being given to Emperor Anastasios I (in 496), and the author of a paraphrase of this text, writing apparently in the 11th century, adds: “This was seen in our times too: for also to the emperor (Constantine) Monomachos were these two animals brought from India, and were at each opportunity shown to the people as a marvel, in the theatre of Constantinople”; *Timothy of Gaza on Animals, Περὶ Ζῴων: Fragments of a Byzantine Paraphrase of an Animal-Book of the 5th century A.D.* trans. and comm. F. S. Bodenheimer and A. Rabinowitz (Paris-Leiden, 1949), 31; A. P. Kazhdan and A. W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985), 154. A giraffe presented in 1826 to King Charles X of France by Mohammed Ali, the viceroy of Egypt, was walked from Marseille to

Psellos noted that this type of diplomatic gift was now commonly being substituted for more traditional ones such as silks or jewels.⁴⁰ Around 1261, Emperor Michael VIII received a giraffe from Baybars, the sultan of Egypt, who was negotiating for slave trade routes on the Black Sea. The historian Pachymeres tells us that the giraffe proved a delight for those who saw it walked daily (?) through the agora. Its appearance so impressed him—he describes it in detail “to remind those who have seen it and to enlighten those that have not”—that we can presume that no such animal had been seen in Constantinople for quite some time.⁴¹

In his encomia to Monomachos, Psellos relates how the giraffe and elephant were brought into the Hippodrome, and how when the elephant reached the spot where Monomachos was sitting, it knelt before him.⁴² The honor paid the emperor was magnified, since this gesture of respect was being made by what Psellos terms the very largest animal in the world. However, Psellos does not stress the emperor’s dominion, like an Adam or even an Orpheus, over the animals,⁴³ but rather his influence in foreign territories of which the animals are a symbol and from which they are a precious gift. Psellos praises the idea of a wide-ranging peace: Constantine Monomachos has seen to it that his subjects can now walk freely and without fear in the remotest parts of the earth.⁴⁴ Possession of exotic animals, for Psellos, then, does not bespeak triumph and dominion so much as the success of agreements and treaties with other powerful foreign powers, and prestige in a competitive hierarchy of potentates.

There is one wild animal held in captivity in Byzantium about which we can collect a certain amount of further information, namely, royal lions: in this respect, at least, Byzantium seems to have kept up with the Joneses. In 896, we are told, Emperor Leo VI used a real lion kept in the palace to threaten an insubordinate saint, St. Basil the Younger.⁴⁵ In 1022, Em-

Paris, attracting large crowds along its way; for its story and the difficulties encountered in the transportation of such an animal, see M. Allin, *Zarafa* (New York, 1998).

⁴⁰ *Michaelis Pselli Orationes panegyricae*, ed. G. T. Dennis (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1994), Oration 1, (13.261–66).

⁴¹ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, 3.4, ed. A. Failler, trans. V. Laurent (Paris, 1984), 239.6–28. Baybars sent giraffes to the German emperor and to the Kipchak khan as well. On a giraffe given by a Fatimid caliph to the Zirid ruler of Maghreb in 1028, see Cutler, “Les échanges,” 64: a poem about the animal accompanied the gift.

⁴² *Orationes*, Oration 1 (13.267–77), Oration 4 (62.155–69).

⁴³ On Orpheus and the animals, see H. Stern, “La mosaïque d’Orphée de Blanzky-les-Fishmes,” *Gallia* 13 (1955): 41–77; Kondoleon, “Signs of Privilege,” 106; on Adam’s animals, see C. Hahn, “The Creation of the Cosmos: Genesis Illustration in the Octateuchs,” *CahArch* 28 (1979): 29–40; J. Lassus, “La création du monde dans les ocatateuques byzantins du douzième siècle,” *MonPiot* 62 (1979): 85–148, esp. 111–16, 121–22; H. Maguire, “Adam and the Animals: Allegory and Literal Sense in Early Christian Art,” *DOP* 41 (1987): 363–73. The animals depicted alongside Orpheus, or lined up before Adam in Genesis scenes, are an assemblage of traditional animal vignettes that smack more of the model book than the menagerie. See also Moses and the animals in a miniature in the 10th-century Leo Bible (Vatican, Reg. gr. 1, fol. Iiv); T. Mathews, “The Epigrams of Leo Saccellarios and an Exegetical Approach to the Miniatures of Vat. Reg. Gr. 1,” *OCP* 43 (1977): 94–133, esp. 111–18, and Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, no. 42 (for later bibliography).

⁴⁴ For French synopses of these encomia, and their date, see P. Gautier, “*Basilikoi logoi* inédits de Michel Psellos,” *Sicilorum Gymnasium* 33 (1980), esp. 746–48. Gautier’s encomia nos. 6 and 7 correspond to Dennis’ nos. 4 and 1, respectively.

⁴⁵ Life of St. Basil the Younger, ed. G. Vilinskii, “Zhitie sv. Vasiliia Novogo v russkoi literature,” *Zapiski Imperatorskogo Novorossiiskogo Universiteta* 7 (1911): 285–88; Littlewood, “Gardens of the Palaces,” 35. The con-

peror Basil II, according to Skylitzes, had a traitor in the service of Xiphias thrown to the lions, reviving a long defunct mode of execution, *condemnatio ad bestias*, though just where the event took place is not specified.⁴⁶ Additional evidence that Byzantine imperial lions were not only made of silk or gold can be found in Crusader sources.⁴⁷ One story concerns the English strongman Hardigt, who in 1072 burst uninvited into the court of the imperial palace, only to come face to face with at least three lions, which he managed, like Samson, to overcome barehanded (our source, needless to say, is a Latin one). The feat apparently so impressed the Byzantine emperor Michael VII that Hardigt was hired as a palace guard on the spot.⁴⁸

This story might seem a bit fanciful did we not find the same thing taking place again around thirty years later, when in 1101 the Lombard Crusaders approached the area of the Blachernai palace and camped outside the city walls. The Norman historian Ordericus Vitalis reports that Emperor Alexios I Komnenos at first dismissed the problem of this rowdy and obstreperous group that was clamoring for provisions and refusing to move on. “But when he realized that they were persisting in their efforts, he commanded that three fierce lions and seven leopards (“tres ferocissimos leones et septem leopardos”) should be driven between the middle and outer walls. He also posted guards on the third wall, against which the palaces of the nobility were built, and commanded that the gates be barred. So, derisively, he proposed to frighten away the westerners with wild beasts, and defend the imperial city without human force.” When the Franks broke through the outer gate, “instantly the fierce lions sprang on the first men to enter and injured some whom they savaged with teeth and claws, tearing men who were caught unawares and had no experience of fighting wild animals. But the attack of beasts could not defeat the wit of man for long. Armed champions sent spears and javelins whistling to strike down the wild animals and after killing the lions drove away the leopards, chasing them as they fled up to the middle wall. Then the leopards, creeping forward like cats, leapt over the wall, and the troops of westerners entered through the gate in the second wall and attempted to take the third by assault.”⁴⁹ According to a third source, Albert of Aachen, in the course of this raid on the

temporary lions at Cordoba were also used to terrorize criminals; Ibn Hayyan, *Crónica*, 41–42.

⁴⁶ Skylitzes, 367.68–70. The incident is illustrated in the 12th-century Skylitzes manuscript in Madrid (B.N. vitr. 26–2, fol. 196r), S. Cirac Estopañan, *Skylitzes Matritensis* (Barcelona-Madrid, 1965), fig. 486. On *condemnatio ad bestias*, see, e.g., Roueché, *Performers*, 78. Caliph Haroun al-Rashid had a lion pit into which he tossed his adversaries; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 185.

⁴⁷ On the famous Byzantine imperial throne with its mechanical roaring lions, see G. Brett, “The Automata in the Byzantine ‘Throne of Solomon,’” *Speculum* 29 (1954): 477–87; on lion silks, see A. Muthesius, “Silken Diplomacy,” in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin (Aldershot, 1992), 237–48, esp. 244 ff. On the royal imagery of lions and other exotic beasts in the fountain of the Court of the Lions at the Alhambra, see F. Bargebuhr, *The Alhambra: A Cycle of Studies on the Eleventh Century in Moorish Spain* (Berlin, 1968), esp. 107–30, 156.

⁴⁸ K. Ciggaar, “L’émigration anglaise à Byzance après 1066: Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à Constantinople,” *REB* 72 (1974): 301–42, esp. 323.95–102, 337–38.

⁴⁹ Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 10.4.123–24, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 1975), 330–32; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 143. The “leopards” are thought to have been cheetahs, because of their cowardice on this occasion.

palace the Lombards also killed the emperor's pet lion, which had been kept as a friend in the palace.⁵⁰

We would like to know just where these lions, which seem to have been used as a sort of backup palace guard,⁵¹ were ordinarily housed. The lion confronting St. Basil the Younger is said to have been brought from the "Oikonomeion."⁵² The Crusader sources suggest that the lions in those days were kept somewhere in or near the imperial palace at Blachernai.⁵³ In 1185 the despised Andronikos I was confined in the so-called prison of Anemas, a tower adjacent to the Blachernai palace; his chains are described as the iron collars used to fetter the lions in their cages.⁵⁴ In Turkish times, what Pierre Belon in the sixteenth century called the "bestes cruelles"—including lions, lynx, leopards, bears, and wolves—were kept near the Hippodrome, at first perhaps in what had been the Byzantine church of St. John of the Diippion, later surely in the lower story of the nearby "Arslanhane," once the church of Christ Chalkites erected by Emperor John Tzimiskes in the tenth century; Belon saw a lion chained to each pier of the ancient church.⁵⁵

Where the tamer animals were kept, no Byzantine source tells us; for all we know, the exotic gift animals may have simply been housed in stables, not outdoors at all. But the caliphs at Baghdad are reported to have added "zoological gardens" to their palaces in the ninth and tenth centuries.⁵⁶ The "zoo" at Madinat al-Zahra, the tenth-century palace of

⁵⁰ Albert of Aachen, *Jerusalem History*, book 8.4, trans. H. Hefele, *Geschichte des ersten Kreuzzugs* (Jena, 1923), 2:76. Pet felines were often found in royal palaces, down to the time of Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

⁵¹ Ciggaar, "L'émigration anglaise," 337. The 10th-century Samanid ruler Nasr b. Ahmad b. Nuh kept two lions by his very throne, resting their heads on his thighs. Visitors had to approach him along a route lined with lions and their trainers, and the lions turned to follow the visitors from behind as they made their way forward. The experience was so alarming to one set of envoys in 938 that they actually "fainted and soiled themselves"; they were to attempt and fail the approach six more times in the next months before the ruler took pity on them and called off the lion guard; al-Qaddumi, *Book of Gifts*, 160–61; see also 164–65.

⁵² On the Oikonomeion in the Great Palace, see P. Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," *DOP* 42 (1988): 99–100.

⁵³ In Moorish Spain, lions were kept in a ravine under a bridge in front of the Alcazar at Cordoba; in England, the royal lions were kept in the "Lion Tower" at the base of the Tower of London; in France, King Philip VI established them at the "hôtel des lions du Roi" at one corner of the Louvre palace garden in 1333. One of the lions at Cordoba escaped and wandered into a mosque, startling a holy man praying there, who ordered it out; Ibn Hayyan, *Crónica*, 41–42. On the Tower Menagerie ca. 1245–1832, see Keeling, *Where the Lion Trod*, 5–14. The menagerie was located near the entrance to the Tower, in front of the Middle Tower. Three leopards were given to King Henry III by Emperor Frederick II, and eventually lions were moved into the house 40 feet long and 20 feet deep that Henry had built originally for his elephant (see note 34 above). On the Louvre lions (later moved to the suburban palace of Saint-Pol), see Loisel, *Ménageries*, 169–72.

⁵⁴ Choniates, ed. van Dieten, 349, trans. Magoulias, 192.

⁵⁵ P. Belon, *Les observations de plusieurs singularités et choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Judée, Egypte, Arabie et autres pays estranges* (Paris, 1553), fol. 74r. See also C. Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959), 154–69; W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen, 1977), 81. The lions were frequently paraded around the city on leashes. A lion belonging to the count of Flanders was attached to a column in a crypt at Gand, in Flanders, in the 14th century; Loisel, *Ménageries*, 158.

⁵⁶ J. Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit, 1970), 266 n. 2 = palace of al-Ma'mun (813–833); 85 = palace of al-Muqtadir (908–932).

Abd al-Rahman III near Cordoba, has not yet been excavated; it appears on site plans as a rectangular area in the lowest terraced area of the palace complex, near gardens and the cavalry barracks, and is described as having been surrounded by a moat.⁵⁷

A poem by the tenth-century Byzantine author John Geometres offers an intriguing passage to the effect that in a park, which Henry Maguire has identified as the Aretai park west of Constantinople, the multitude of animals “having left every part of the world, has found this place here as its common home.”⁵⁸ This passage might suggest that species from distant lands inhabited the Aretai, although the only animals then mentioned by name are the usual hare and roe deer.⁵⁹ A canon table miniature in a small Byzantine Gospel manuscript of the late eleventh century (Paris, B.N. gr. 64 fol. 6r) shows an elephant, along with a camel and his handler, approaching a fountain, and this motif recurs in various other contemporary manuscripts.⁶⁰ The garden setting may be symbolic of Eden, but could conceivably reflect a real setting as well.

Animal Parks

The walled gardens of Byzantine literary romances are filled with songbirds, and with birds of signal beauty, such as peacocks,⁶¹ but the only animals present in these poetic gardens seem to be painted or sculpted ones. This absence of animals in the Byzantine garden is by no means surprising: rabbits, goats, and deer, no matter how graceful or how tame, would scarcely be welcome in a cultivated space that they were quite capable of nibbling away.

Yet one wonders whether there did exist reserved areas that were neither gardens nor menageries nor game preserves, areas in which valued species could be raised without caus-

⁵⁷ Ibn Khaldun, as in note 62 below; M. Barrucand and A. Bednorz, *Moorish Architecture in Andalusia* (Cologne, 1992), 65.

⁵⁸ Ὅρας τὰ πλήθη, θήρας, ὄρνεις, ἰχθύας; / Δοκῶ λιπόντα πάντα τοῦ κόσμου τόπον / Ὡς οἶκον εὖρον κοινὸν ὧδε τὸν τόπον; PG 106:913A. See Maguire, “Description of the Aretai,” 210–11.

⁵⁹ Belon saw elephants and other more placid creatures at Tekfur Sarayı, a Palaiologan palace structure in the northern part of the city (see above, note 55); Gilles too speaks of Tekfur Sarayı as housing elephants, Petri Gyllii, *De Topographia Constantinopoleos* (Lyons, 1561; repr. Athens, 1967), 4.4 (p. 201); P. Gilles, *The Antiquities of Constantinople*, trans. J. Ball, 2d ed. (New York, 1988), 190. R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1964), 129; Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 244–47.

⁶⁰ *Byzance*, no. 268. For an illustration, see M.-L. Dolezal and M. Mavroudi, “Theodore Hyrtakenos’ *Description of the Garden of St. Anna* and the Ekphrasis of Gardens,” in this volume, fig. 16. The repetition of the camel motif in two Georgian manuscripts done probably in Constantinople in the later 12th century (the Vani Gospels and Lapskaldi Gospels) suggests it carries some specific meaning: A. Saminskii, “Masterskaia Gruzinskoi i Grecheskoi knigi v Konstantinopole XII–nachala XIII veka,” *Muzei* 10 (1989): 184–216, esp. 192–93. However, the substitution in the Vani Gospels of a bull for the elephant, and the flanking of this paradisiac fountain scene by two seemingly unrelated figures—a Samson and a man with a bear—leave us currently at a loss for a more specific interpretation.

⁶¹ Littlewood, “Gardens of the Palaces,” 34. In the garden of the palace of Digenes Akritis on the Euphrates, there were tame peacocks, parrots, and swans; “the swans browsed for food in the water, the parrots sang in the branches among the trees, the peacocks paraded their wings among the flowers and reflected the flowers’ colours in their wings”; *Digenes Akritis: The Grottaferrata and Escorial Versions*, ed. and trans. E. Jeffreys (Cambridge, 1998), Grottaferrata Book 7:31–41 (p. 205).

ing damage to the garden itself and without danger of being hunted. The gifts sent by Emperor Michael VI (1056–57) to the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir bi-Allah, included, along with “huge bears which play musical instruments” and special dogs, rare species of birds: white partridges, white peacocks, white cranes, white ravens, and white starlings. Such birds strongly suggest the existence of an imperial aviary.⁶²

Even the practical Columella had spoken of the aesthetic value of certain animals to the owner of an estate, and had suggested setting aside an area near the house where the tamer animals could be enjoyed and fed by hand.⁶³ Cultures neighboring Byzantium maintained animal parks of just this kind. The Byzantine ambassadors to Baghdad in 917 visited not only the awesome display of lions but also the so-called Park of the Wild Beasts. “Then the envoys were led . . . to the passageways and vestibules of the [wild] animal enclosure (hayr al-wahsh). Here were herds of tamed animals of various kinds, which came up close to people, sniffing at them, and taking food from their hands.”⁶⁴ Marco Polo encountered a comparable park toward the end of the thirteenth century much farther east, in the palace complex of Kubla Khan in Peking: “Between the inner and the outer walls . . . are stretches of park-land with stately trees. The grass grows here in abundance, because all the paths are paved and built up fully two cubits above the level of the ground, so that . . . the moisture trickles over the lawns. . . . In these parks there is a great variety of game, such as white harts, musk-deer, roebuck, stags, squirrels, and many other beautiful animals. All the area within the walls is full of these graceful creatures, except the paths that people walk on.”⁶⁵ And in the medieval West too, we occasionally hear of an intermediate area between the hunting park and the domestic garden, a park replete with favored animals and birds located just outside the garden wall. Frederick I Barbarossa had erected by 1158 a new palace for himself at Kaiserslautern, according to the chronicler Rahewin. “On one side he surrounded it by a strong wall; the other side was washed by a fish pond like a lake, supporting all kinds of fish and game birds, to feast the eye as well as the taste. It also has adjacent to it a park (*[h]ortus*) that affords pasture to a large herd of deer and wild goats. The royal splendor of all these things and their abundance (which precludes enumeration) are well worth the spectator’s effort.”⁶⁶ The use of the word *hortus* for the area suggests that it was more a “Tiergarten,” or

⁶² al-Qaddumi, *Book of Gifts*, 110. The date in this source is given as 1053. For doubt about the color of the birds, see A. R. Littlewood, “Possible Future Directions,” in this volume, note 81. There was an aviary at Madinat al-Zahra: Ibn Khaldun, *Analectes*, 1. 380, cited in D. Fairchild Ruggles, “Madinat al-Zahra’s Constructed Landscape: A Case Study in Islamic Garden and Architectural History” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1991), 208.

⁶³ See above, p. 71.

⁶⁴ Le Strange, “Greek Embassy,” 41; cf. al-Qaddumi, *Book of Gifts*, 164. This tour given to the Byzantine envoys had a particular logic to its sequence: it started mildly enough, with a visit to a stable where a thousand caparisoned mares were arranged in two rows, progressed to the wild animal park, then to a pavilion with elephants and giraffes, and ended up at the palace where a hundred lions were displayed in two rows, “each held by a lion-trainer and having an iron chain around its neck.”

⁶⁵ *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. R. Latham (Harmondsworth, 1958), 126. At one corner of this park there was a fishpond, graced with swans and other waterfowl, from which the animals could drink.

⁶⁶ *Otonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris*, 4. 86, ed. G. Waitz, 3d ed. (Hannover-Leipzig, 1912; repr. Hannover, 1978), 345, trans. C. C. Mierow, *The Deeds of Frederic Barbarossa* (New York, 1953; repr. Toronto, 1994),

animal park, than a hunting park. The French park of Hesdin in Burgundy, begun in the late thirteenth century, is another such example: though we don't know just how large it was or how its various spaces were divided, it had forest and meadow areas, ponds, orchards, stables, an aviary, and a menagerie at one corner of the grounds. The nearer landscape was graced with flocks of peacocks, herons, and swans, and a large fountain was built close to the castle so that Duke Philip the Good could watch the deer from the windows of his palace as they drank.⁶⁷

In the work of Piero de' Crescenzi, a medieval author writing ca. 1305, we learn how this kind of park should be constructed. In his chapter "On the gardens of Kings and other illustrious and rich lords," he says:

The spot should be of 12½ acres or more, and surrounded by convenient and lofty walls; in the north part a grove of diverse trees should be planted, into which wild creatures placed in the garden may fly and hide. On the south part, let a handsome palace be built. . . . In some part of the garden a fish pond should be made in which diverse kinds of fish may be nourished; hares, stags, roebucks, rabbits, and the like harmless beasts may be put amongst the bushes, a shelter being made, the roof and walls of which are formed of closely woven boughs. In this too are to be put pheasants, partridges, nightingales, blackbirds, goldfinches, linnets and all other kinds of singing birds. If there are rows of trees close to the palace, they should run from the palace to the grove but not crosswise, so that one can see easily from the palace whatever the animals do in the garden.⁶⁸

The prescribed area is relatively small (12½ acres), and there is no question here of hunting. Illustrations to de' Crescenzi's text, combined with images in other late western medieval manuscripts reveal a parklike world just beyond the garden wall inhabited by stags, peacocks, and other elegant or rare fauna.⁶⁹ Terms such as "Little Park" (which in England is opposed to the "Great Park," or hunting park) or the "Petit Paradis" (as at Hesdin) refer to a space lying somewhere between game park and garden enclosure reserved for a variety of semi-wild creatures valued particularly for the rarity and beauty of their appearance.⁷⁰

333. The word translated here as wild goats (*capreolorum*) more likely refers to roe deer. On Kaiserslautern, see W. Hotz, *Pfalzen und Burgen der Stauferzeit: Geschichte und Gestalt* (Darmstadt, 1981), 44–47; Hauck, "Tiergärten," 59.

⁶⁷ A. H. van Buren, "Reality and Literary Romance in the Park of Hesdin," in *Medieval Gardens*, ed. MacDougall, 115–34. There were also animal automata in the park, including monkeys who waved at the guests (121). The Genoard in Sicily has been thought to have provided the inspiration for Hesdin. On Hesdin and Sicily, see Van Buren, "Hesdin," 125 (who is skeptical about Sicilian influence on Hesdin).

⁶⁸ *Liber ruralium commodorum*, book 8, chap. 3, trans. R. G. Calkins in his "Piero de' Crescenzi and the Medieval Garden," in MacDougall, *Medieval Gardens*, 157–69, esp. 165–66, 172–73 (with earlier bibliography). Although certain sections of de' Crescenzi's text were copied word for word from Albertus Magnus, his section on royal gardens is original. See also Landsberg, *Medieval Garden*, 12; C. C. Taylor, "Somersham Palace Cambridgeshire: A Medieval Landscape for Pleasure?" in *From Cornwall to Caithness*, ed. M. Bowden et al., BAR 209 (Oxford, 1989), 211–24.

⁶⁹ See Calkins, "Piero de Crescenzi," figs. 12–13 (wooded park), 20; Landsberg, *Medieval Garden*, 14–15, 22–23, 55, 71.

⁷⁰ On these various terms, see Cantor and Hatherly, "Medieval Parks," 74 ("Little Park"), 79 ("amenity

Whether such parks existed in Byzantium, even as a concept, is hard for us to determine at present. Certain images suggest that members of the Byzantine aristocracy may indeed have developed a taste for parks of this sort. Both the canon tables and the headpieces in manuscripts of the Gospels have from earliest times included lifelike images of birds, and eventually animals, above the arches or square carpet designs.⁷¹ These birds may be little more than a general reference to the flourishing of nature attendant upon the Word of God, and the fountains above the headpieces the Fountain of Life, the Source made available to all of creation.⁷² But in certain Komnenian miniatures of the late eleventh and the twelfth century we find carefully observed fauna of the kind usually associated with courtly gardens in the West: deer and gazelles, pheasants, peacocks and guinea hens, cranes and herons, parrots and finches, swallows and doves, foxes and even a monkey or so, along with the usual hunting creatures of the aristocracy: dogs, cheetahs, falcons, and their prey, the partridge and hare.⁷³ As the tightly controlled ornamental patterns of these headpieces evoke the garden, so one wonders whether these pairs of animals and birds might evoke the denizens of an aristocratic patron's park.⁷⁴ Animals inhabiting the ornamental borders of Renaissance manuscripts sometimes depict specific creatures that were owned by the patrons or that refer in a punning way to the family name.⁷⁵ In Byzantium the recognizable species are admittedly routinely joined by mythical ones, but the vivid creatures do suggest

park"); Landsberg, *Medieval Garden*, esp. 21–24 ("The Pleasure Park, or Little Park"); Hennebo, *Gärten des Mittelalters*, esp. 104–11.

⁷¹ C. Nordenfalk, *Die spätantike Kanontafeln* (Göteborg, 1938); K. Wessel, "Kanontafeln," *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1963), 3:927–68.

⁷² P. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life," *DOP* 5 (1950): 43–138, esp. 45–80; T. F. Mathews, "The Iconography of the Canon Tables," in his *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospels* (Washington, D.C., 1991), 166–76, and app. D, 206–11. See also the lions, birds, and hares nestled in vegetation at the base of the cross that adorns the back of the 10th- or 11th-century ivory Harbaville triptych, Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, no. 80; A. Cutler, *The Hand of the Master* (Princeton, N.J., 1994), figs. 152–53.

⁷³ These occur frequently in manuscripts of the so-called Kokkinobaphos school, and in other manuscripts of the late 11th and 12th century, e.g., the Codex Eberianus, Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. T inf. 1. 10, fols. 18r–22r, I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturhandschriften*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1977), no. 39, figs. 227–35; Paris, B.N. gr. 64, fols. 1r–8 (*Byzance*, no. 268); Parma, Bibl. Palatina 5, fol. 5r, G. Galavaris, *Ζωγραφική βυζαντινῶν χειρογράφων* (Athens, 1995), fig. 112; Melbourne Gospels, National Gallery of Victoria 710/5, fols. 3r–7v, H. Buchthal, "An Illuminated Byzantine Gospel Book of about 1100," *Special Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, 1961, 1–13, and M. Riddle in M. Manion, *Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts in Australian Collections* (Melbourne–London–New York, 1984), 23–26; Princeton University Garrett 2 and Scheide 70, *Byzantium at Princeton*, ed. S. Ćurčić and A. St. Clair (Princeton, N.J., 1986), nos. 180 and 174; the Georgian manuscripts mentioned earlier (see note 60 above). See also Z. Kadar, *Survivals of Greek Zoological Illumination in Byzantine Manuscripts* (Budapest, 1978). On the importance of such collections for aristocratic self-definition, see, for example, J. Dodds' entry on the 11th-century Jativa Basin in *Al-Andalus. The Art of Islamic Spain*, exhibition catalogue, ed. J. Dodds (New York, 1992), no. 49, p. 261.

⁷⁴ On Byzantine ornament in general, see J. Trilling, "Ornament," *ODB* 3:1535–37.

⁷⁵ *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450–1550*, exhibition catalogue, ed. J. J. G. Alexander (London–Munich, 1994), nos. 9, 11, 27, 48, 49, 64. In a late antique Orpheus mosaic from Piazza Armerina, the depiction of birds is so detailed that one scholar has suggested it must represent an aviary on the estate of the lord who commissioned the mosaic: Z. Kadar, "Über die Tiere um Orpheus auf einem Mosaik der Villa bei Casale (Piazza Armerina)," in *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Munich, 1988), 139–45, esp. 140–41. On aviaries on Roman estates, see Littlewood, "Pleasure Gardens," 14–15.

that these types of fauna were not unfamiliar to the Byzantine aristocratic household.

The poem by Manuel Philes devoted to the painted ceiling of the imperial bedchamber might also echo this intermediate kind of aristocratic park.⁷⁶ The poem passes from an evocation of the flowers of the trellislike ceiling to the animals present in the painted grove: carnivorous beasts, fowl, hares, deer, peacocks, and a lion. Antony Littlewood has quite rightly cautioned us against reading this poem too literally as a description of an actual garden.⁷⁷ But Philes' garden is not the usual metaphorical one either: it is neither replete with traditional allusions to Eden, nor is it presented as the Peaceable Kingdom of Isaiah, as is so often the case in garden poetry.⁷⁸ Its components remind us strongly of Hesdin and of de' Crescenzi (with whose writings this poem is virtually contemporary), even of a late medieval western tapestry, with its diversity of animals, its aviary, menagerie, and the roof of closely woven boughs. Here the theme is not so much the peaceful coexistence of beasts foretold by Isaiah, as it is that the isolation of the diverse species in the garden park and attention to what we would call a sort of balance of nature are clues to the harmony of the whole and the success of the garden. The meat-eating animals, says Philes, will eat only the herbivores, which in this way are kept from overgrazing the meadow; the fowl are kept in circular pens to keep them off the grass. The rabbits are confined for their own safety, and the lioness is kept in a woven pen to nurse her cubs and to keep her from chasing the deer. Philes attributes all this good sense to the painter, but of course the message is that the emperor himself should be as good a custodian, *epimeletes*, of the grove; he is implicitly encouraged to manage the empire and presumably its peoples in the same wise fashion.

The distinctions between the various kinds of parks described here can never have been entirely clear-cut. Many exquisite birds and beasts from the park, menagerie, or aviary doubtless ended up as food for the royal table, while herds maintained primarily for hunting gave aesthetic, as well as athletic, pleasure to their owners. Yet the material from the medieval cultures other than Byzantium surveyed here does show a certain widespread division between hunting park, menagerie, and garden, with the so-called Little Park or Petit Paradis sharing traits of all three and being everywhere the most difficult to define. If we can trace its existence at all in Byzantium, the implications of this kind of pleasure park for the study of the imperial and aristocratic self-image and taste, of patterns of international exchange, or of the state of zoological knowledge, could be of considerable interest. But first we need more sources.

⁷⁶ Manuel Philes, *Carmina*, ed. E. Miller, vol. 2 (Paris, 1857; repr. Amsterdam, 1967), no. 62, pp. 127–31, trans. C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972; repr. Toronto, 1986), 248.

⁷⁷ Littlewood, "Gardens of the Palaces" 34.

⁷⁸ On the Peaceable Kingdom, and the lion lying down with the lamb, see, for example, the poem "De imagine Tetrici" honoring Louis the Pious, composed in 829 by Walahfrid Strabo; M. W. Herren, "The 'De imagine Tetrici' of Walahfrid Strabo: Edition and Translation," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 1 (1991): 125–26 and 134–35; Hauck, "Tiergärten," 40–42. I thank Larry Nees for drawing my attention to this poem. On animals and the earthly paradise in the Early Christian period, see H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, Pa., 1987).

In the meantime it is important to keep two things in mind: royal animal imagery was still being reinforced, even in Byzantium, by the presence of real animals at the court; and whatever their character, all these areas enclosing animals, whether extensive game preserve or more intimate animal park, were areas that needed to be carefully laid out and maintained. Effective boundaries had to be constructed, whether through the digging of trenches or the erection of walls or fences. Trees were specially planted within the enclosure to provide cover, fodder, and even sight lines to ensure views of the animals; waterways, in the form of running streams, canals, ponds, or fountains, were constructed both to water the animals and birds and to divide and protect the individual species. Whether intended for the hunt or simply for the visual enjoyment of their royal owners, these parks were important elements in the designed landscape of the medieval world.

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