

Band 3



TIERE IN DER GESCHICHTE  
ANIMALS IN HISTORY

NADIR WEBER (HG.)

# Hege und Herrschaft

HÖFISCHE JAGDTIERE IN DER  
EUROPÄISCHEN VORMODERNE



böhlau



# Tiere in der Geschichte | Animals in History

Band 3 | Volume 3

Herausgegeben von | Edited by  
Christian Jaser, Mieke Roscher, Nadir Weber

Wissenschaftlicher Beirat | Advisory Board:  
Etienne Benson, Martina Giese, Mark Hengerer,  
Gesine Krüger, Clemens Wischermann, Julia Weitbrecht

Die Buchreihe *Tiere in der Geschichte* versammelt historische Studien zur Geschichte der Mensch-Tier-Beziehungen. Die Werke beleuchten die Rollen von Tieren in Gesellschaften von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Sie untersuchen die vielfältigen Interaktionsformen zwischen Menschen und anderen Lebewesen und analysieren wirkmächtige Unterscheidungen wie die zwischen Wildtieren auf der einen und Haus- und Nutztieren auf der anderen Seite im historischen Kontext. Auch die sich wandelnden kulturellen Repräsentationen von Tieren werden in den Blick genommen, zugleich spüren die Studien der Materialität der gelebten Beziehungen nach. Der geographische Fokus der Reihe liegt auf dem europäischen Kontinent und seinen Verflechtungen mit anderen Weltregionen. Die ausgewählten Titel bereichern die methodischen Entwicklungen im neuen Forschungsfeld der historischen Human-Animal Studies und leisten damit zugleich einen Beitrag zu aktuellen Debatten der Sozial-, Kultur-, Politik- oder Umweltgeschichte.

The *Animals in History* book series publishes historiographical studies on the history of human-animal relations. The monographs and anthologies shed light on the roles of animals in societies from antiquity to the present. They examine the various interactions between humans and other living beings and historicise powerful categories such as the distinctions between domesticated animals and wild animals or between pets and livestock. They also look at the changing cultural representations of animals and trace the materiality of interspecific relationships. The geographical focus of the series is on the European continent and its interconnections with other world regions. The selected titles enrich the methodological developments in the new research field of historical human-animal studies and contribute to current scholarly debates in social, cultural, political, or environmental history.

Die Herausgeber | The Editors

Nadir Weber (Hg.)

# Hege und Herrschaft

Höfische Jagdtiere in der europäischen Vormoderne

**BÖHLAU VERLAG WIEN KÖLN**

Publiziert mit Unterstützung des Schweizerischen Nationalfonds  
zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der  
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind  
im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

© 2023 Böhlau, Lindenstraße 14, D-50674 Köln, ein Imprint der Brill-Gruppe  
(Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, Niederlande; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA;  
Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Deutschland;  
Brill Österreich GmbH, Wien, Österreich)

Koninklijke Brill NV umfasst die Imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh,  
Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau, V&R unipress und  
Wageningen Academic.

Das Werk ist als Open-Access-Publikation im Sinne der Creative-Commons-Lizenz  
BY-NC-ND International 4.0 („Namensnennung – Nicht kommerziell – Keine Bearbeitung“) unter dem DOI <https://doi.org/10.7788/9783412527235> abzurufen. Um eine Kopie dieser Lizenz zu sehen, besuchen Sie <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Das Werk und seine Teile sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung in anderen als den durch diese Lizenz erlaubten Fällen bedarf der vorherigen schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlages.

Umschlagabbildung: Jean-Baptiste Oudry: La chasse au chevreuil, Öl auf Leinwand, 1725, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen, © Foto: RMN-Grand Palais / Daniel Arnaudet / Gérard Blot.  
Einbandgestaltung: Guido Klütsch, Köln

Korrekturat: Rainer Landvogt, Hanau

Satz: le-tex publishing services, Leipzig

Druck und Bindung:  Hubert & Co, Göttingen

Printed in the EU

**Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | [www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com](http://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com)**

ISBN 978-3-412-52721-1 (print)

ISBN 978-3-412-52723-5 (digital)

# Inhalt

## Einleitung

<i>Nadir Weber</i> Sein zum Tode. Tiergeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die höfische Jagd.....	9
---	---

## Interaktionen im Park

<i>Amanda Richardson</i> Fencing the Wild. Hunting, Hunters, and Hunted in the English Deer Park, c.1300–1700.....	37
--	----

<i>Bruno Farinelli</i> A Beastly Court. Parks, Animals, and Power in the Duchy of Savoy, 1559–1633 ...	57
---	----

<i>Nadir Weber</i> Rechnen mit der dritten Dimension. Falken und Federwild im kaiserlichen Jagdpark von Laxenburg bei Wien.....	77
---	----

<i>Raphaël Devred</i> The Royal Stag. Governing Red Deer on the Estate of Rambouillet, 1706–1870 ....	95
--	----

## Praktiken des Regierens

<i>Severin Bruttin</i> Wie die Disziplin in den Körper kam. Machtbeziehungen zwischen Menschen und Tieren in der mittelalterlichen Falknerei .....	115
--	-----

<i>Jaroslava Hausenblasová</i> Von der Wildhege zur Pferdezucht. Jagd und höfische Tierhaltung in den böhmischen Ländern im 16. Jahrhundert.....	137
--	-----

<i>Maike Schmidt</i> Falkenhaltung und das Problem der Mobilität unter Franz I. von Frankreich.....	155
--	-----

*Adam Perłakowski*  
 Zwischen edlem Wettkampf und blutigem Schlachten. Zur Jagdkultur  
 in der polnisch-litauischen Adelsrepublik der sächsischen Ära 1697–1763 ..... 179

*Kristin Langefeld*  
 Gute Polickey im Wald. Jagdordnungen und Wildhege in Hessen-Kassel  
 im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert ..... 195

**Jagdtiere im Diskurs**

*Yannis Hadjinicolaou*  
 Cura publica. Falconry, Ruling, and the Agency of Images, c.1300–1600..... 219

*Julien Martin Bobineau*  
 „La Meute en fait curée“. Jagdtiere und literarische Agency in den *Fables*  
*choisies* von Jean de La Fontaine ..... 239

*Aline Vogt*  
 Tiere der Jagd zwischen philosophischem Diskurs und höfischer Praxis.  
 Biopolitik und der Wille zum Wissen im Sensualismus..... 257

*Marcel Berni*  
 Von der höfischen Prunkjagd zur weidgerechten Pirsch.  
 Deutschsprachige Paradigmen des Jagdwissens im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert..... 277

**Schluss**

*Grégory Quenet*  
 Parks in der *longue durée*. Überlegungen zu einer Umweltgeschichte des  
 Paradieses ..... 299

Danksagung..... 319

Register ..... 321

## A Beastly Court

### Parks, Animals, and Power in the Duchy of Savoy, 1559–1633

In March 1608, duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy was ready to strengthen two important alliances for his Italian policy. His two daughters, Marguerite and Isabel, were about to get married to Francesco Gonzaga and Alfonso d'Este, the eldest sons of the Dukes of Mantova and Modena. The House of Savoy was eager to exhibit all its magnificence for claiming its rightful place among the dynasties of northern Italy. The wedding feast took place in a hall of the castle in Turin adorned with many allegories of the Sabaudian states: “the most beautiful and the most elegant [...] both because of its size and its beautiful view, surrounded by the *Parco* and the Dora river, the mountain and the city, the fields and the gardens.”<sup>1</sup>

The two foreign delegations were welcomed at the Susa Gate and the park of the *Valentino* with the highest honours. A few days after the guests' arrival, Charles Emmanuel I had a huge fence erected in the castle square. The duke aimed to prove to all observers that the House of Savoy was able to provide a spectacle worthy of a royal court. Many animals were brought inside the fence: two lions, two tigers, a wild boar, a mule and thirty dogs. The exhibition consisted of a fight between animals of different species in a closed arena. Through this spectacle, the House of Savoy proved to be able to boast a large menagerie, performing an extremely violent fight that would have affected the imagination of the people attending the event.<sup>2</sup> However, expectations of a bloody show clashed with the terrified reaction of the animals in the fence: although the animals

---

1 “Il più bello e il più vago [...] si per l'impiezza d'esso come per la bellissima veduta, con cui d'ogni intorno signoreggiano il Parco, la Dora, la Montagna, la Città, i prati e i giardini” in Pompeo Brambilla, *Relatione delle feste, torneo, giostra, etc. fatte nella corte del Serenissimo Duca di Savoia, nelle reali nozze delle Serenissime Infanti Donna Margherita e Donna Isabella sue figliole*, Turin 1608, 15, ACTo, Simeom, Serie C, 44, 2377. See Pier Paolo Merlin, *Tra guerre e tornei. La corte sabauda nell'età di Carlo Emanuele I*, Turin 1991, 171; Clelia Arnaldi di Balme/Franca Varallo, *Feste barocche. Cerimonie e spettacoli alla corte dei Savoia tra Cinque e Settecento*, Turin 2009, 172.

2 The daughters' wedding was not the first time the duke showed the most wonderful, and evocative of sovereignty, animals from his menagerie. At the baptism of his eldest son Philip Emmanuel, in 1588, a winged cart carrying an ice column, drawn by *two lions*, was paraded before the ambassadors of the major European powers. Domenico Filiberto Bucci, *Il solenne battesimo del Serenissimo Principe di Piemonte Filippo Emanuele*, Turin 1587, 16; ACTo, Simeom, Serie C, 44, 2374. On baptisms and other court ceremonies in the Duchy of Savoy see Thalia Brero, *Les baptêmes princiers. Le cérémonial dans les cours de Savoie et Bourgogne (XVe–XVIIe s.)*, Lausanne 2005; ead., *Rituels dynastiques et mises en scène du pouvoir. Le cérémonial princier à la cour de Savoie (1450–1550)*, Florence 2018, 325–326.



were stirred up with fires and shouts, none of them dared to move. Yet even such an outcome was interpreted as a sign of auspiciousness for the newlyweds. According to an officious description, the animal peace celebrated the political agreement that was being consolidated on that day.<sup>3</sup>

The relevance of this event must be placed in the European and Sabaudian context. The House of Savoy exercised its power over a composite state a large part of whose territories was taken away in 1536 by the French army that occupied Savoy, with the capital Chambéry, and a large part of Piedmont.<sup>4</sup> This occupation lasted almost 25 years, until the Duke of Savoy Emmanuel Philibert (1553–80), the emperor's lieutenant-general in Flanders, succeeded in reconquering the ancestral territories after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. The occupation of the duchy convinced Emmanuel Philibert to move the capital to Turin, in Piedmont, but the complete handover of the territories was a slow process. Chieri, Chivasso and Turin were occupied by the French until 1563 and they returned Savigliano and Pinerolo only in 1574. Asti and Santhià, occupied by the Spanish, were returned the following year. When the Duke of Savoy entered the new capital, he was in a city that had established a constructive relationship with the French administration and without any buildings in which to set up his court.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Emmanuel Philibert had to start almost from scratch to rebuild his territorial power, a task continued by his successor Charles Emmanuel I (1580–1630), who tried to incorporate within his states the two enclaves that remained among his domains: the Marquisate of Saluzzo, formally led by France, and the Duchy of Monferrato, belonging to the Gonzaga. The Duke of Savoy managed to conquer the Marquisate in 1588 and obtained its formal annexation after the Treaty of Lyon in 1601. However, efforts to conquer the Monferrato were unsuccessful: after two wars, the duchy remained in the hands of the Gonzagas. The son of Charles Emmanuel I, Victor Amadeus I (1630–37), inherited a territory weakened by his father's wars. The marriages of 1608 were therefore a part of this long and unsettled process of power reconsolidation of the House of Savoy.

The impressive ceremony with animals fitted with Savoy's strategy to represent itself as a court reborn after the eclipse of the sixteenth century, showing its renewed strength and vitality. The creation and management of such a large menagerie was a prerogative of the greatest courts, revealing how, alongside the territorial and court reorganisation, there was a parallel construction of what can be called an "animal court". Within the

---

3 ACTo, Simeom, Serie C, 44, 2377, p. 24 and id., In *Serenissimorum Principum nuptiis, De Animantibus in Theatro exhibitis*, Turin 1608. Celebrations were also organised by the Gonzaga court, which in June made a great triumph in Mantova with a parade of elephants, rhinos, camels and giraffes, Federico Zuccaro, *Il passaggio per l'Italia, con la dimora di Parma*, Bologna 1608, 38.

4 Paola Bianchi/Andrea Merlotti, *Storia degli Stati sabaudi (1416–1848)*, Brescia 2017, 7.

5 Pier Paolo Merlin, *Torino durante l'occupazione francese*, in: Giuseppe Ricuperati (ed.), *Storia di Torino*, vol. III, Turin 1998, 7–59; id., *Il Piemonte e la Francia nel primo Cinquecento. Alcune considerazioni storiografiche*, in: *Studi Piemontesi* 45 (2016), 7–16.

human court, a large space was occupied by all those animals used as status symbols or for the daily performance and exhibition of sovereignty. It was a court within a court, consisting of assistant-animals – the “hunting trinity” of horses, hounds, and birds of prey –, exotic or unusual animals, and the game reserved for the pleasure of the prince that, although subject to the violence of the hunt, was placed under his high protection.<sup>6</sup> This court resided in spaces that the dukes made sure to put under their full control, such as parks and hunting captaincies. Moreover, it was closely intertwined with the human court, given the ever-increasing number of staff responsible for animal care. Huntsmen and falconers managed the packs of hounds and the birds of prey, the stable staff looked after the horses, qualified personnel was in charge of governing exotic animals, and gamekeepers ensured that reserved animals were not hunted by anyone else than the duke.

This chapter will trace the creation of the House of Savoy’s animal court in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It will reveal the importance of animals in the symbolic making of sovereignty and the centrality of hunting animals – as assistants, game or exotic and unusual – within this animal court. In the first section of the chapter, I will show how the wish to populate certain spaces with game contributed in the design of landscapes and the organisation of territorial rulership. Then I will look at the practices of game protection and the introduction of new species into the ducal parks and menageries that changed the practice of the hunt and the relationships to the country’s subjects. In the third section, I will analyse the essential role of the hunting trinity – horses, hounds, and falcons – in the changing composition of both the animal and human courts.

---

6 Horses were only partly used for hunting because their extensive use was reserved for riding and coaches. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify precisely which ones were used for hunting so the overall data will be analysed. Animals such as cats, lapdogs or farm animals are not included in my definition of *animal court* because, although some of them represented a status symbol, they are not connected to the enactment of sovereignty. About these other categories see Leila Picco, *Caccia, cavalli e potere nel Piemonte sabauda. Azienda economica della Venaria Reale*, Turin 2005 [1983]; Daniel Roche, *La culture équestre de l’Occident, XVIe–XIXe siècle. L’Ombre du cheval*, vol. 1, *Le cheval moteur. Essai sur l’utilité équestre*, Paris 2008; Nadir Weber, *Das Bestiarium des Duc de Saint-Simon. Zur “humanimalen Sozialität” am französischen Königshof um 1700*, in: *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 43 (2016), 27–59; id., *Liminal Moments. Royal Hunts and Animal Lives in and around Seventeenth-Century Paris*, in: Clemens Wischermann/Aline Steinbrecher/Philip Howell (eds.), *Animal History in the Modern City. Exploring Liminality*, London 2018, 43–45; Christian Jaser, *Racehorses and the Competitive Representation of Italian Renaissance Courts. Infrastructure, Media, and Centaurs*, in: Mark Hengerer/Nadir Weber (eds.), *Animals and Courts. Europe, c.1200–1800*, Berlin/Boston 2020, 175–195; Maria Aresin, “God be with you, Sir Squirrel!” *Pet Squirrels between Amorous Play and Animal Appetite, c.1100–1650*, in: *ibid.*, 287–322; Katharine MacDonogh, *A Woman’s Life. The Role of Pets in the Lives of Royal Women at the Courts of Europe from 1400–1800*, in: *ibid.*, 323–342.



Fig. 1 Map of the Province of Turin with the main cities and watercourses, eighteenth century.

## 1. Creating hunting spaces: river parks and captaincies

The budget of the Duke of Savoy's household in 1608 consisted of 75,633 *ducati*. Of this amount, 2,000 were reserved for the so-called *viaggi curti* (short trips) for hunting in the three main sites acquired during the previous fifty years around Turin: the Parco, Valentino, and Mirafiori.<sup>7</sup> The acquisition of these parks has been one of the first steps in the territorial reconstruction of the Sabaudian states and their position along the main road axes has suggested, perhaps overdoing it, even a defensive function.<sup>8</sup> By the sixteenth century, Europe's major dynasties had undertaken a progressive expansion and improvement of their hunting infrastructures.<sup>9</sup> Although such a development was a useful tool to extend the sovereign's control over the territory, in the case of the House of Savoy it was an effective reconquest of lands held by a foreign power for almost thirty years.

The first ordinances to establish a reserved area for the princely hunt were issued before the return of Emmanuel Philibert in Piedmont, when he was still in Nice. In February 1560, the duke appointed Bertone di Azeglio as his new Grand Falconer (*Gran Falconiere*), conferring to him also the charge of General Captain of the Hunts (*Capitano Generale delle Cacce*). This charge had been created with the express purpose of ensuring the observance of ducal orders relating to the territories "beyond the Dora river" ("di là da Dora").<sup>10</sup> This region corresponded to the territory between the rivers Dora Baltea and Sesia, among the cities of Santhià, Vercelli, and Biella. It was characterised by the presence of the *baraggia*, a land occupied by spontaneous vegetation typical of the

- 
- 7 Biblioteca Reale di Torino (BRT), Sommario del dietroscritto bilancio del presente anno 1608, Mss. Casa Savoia, I.1.
- 8 Costanza Roggero Bardelli, Il sovrano, la dinastia, l'architettura del territorio, in: Grazia M. Vinardi/Vittorio Defabiani/Costanza Roggero Bardelli (eds.), *Ville sabaude*, Milan 1990, 12–54; Vera Comoli, L'urbanistica della città capitale e del territorio, in: Giuseppe Ricuperati (ed.), *Storia di Torino*, vol. IV, Turin 2002, 431–463; Paolo Cornaglia, 1563–1798, tre secoli di architettura di corte. La città, gli architetti, la committenza, le residenze, i giardini, in: Enrico Castelnuovo, *La reggia di Venaria e i Savoia. Arte, magnificenza e storia di una corte europea*, Turin 2007, 117–184.
- 9 Jean-Michel Derex, Les parcs de Vincennes et de Boulogne au XVIe siècle, in: Claude d'Anthenaise/Monique Chatenet (eds.), *Chasse princière dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, Paris 2007, 251–269; K. de Jonge, Le parc de Mariemont. Chasse et architecture à la cour de Marie de Hongrie (1531–1555), in: *ibid.*, 269–289; John Robert Christianson, The Infrastructure of the Royal Hunt. King Frederik II of Denmark, 1559–1588, in: Andrea Merlotti (ed.), *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei Principi*, Florence 2017, 3–20; Anne Rowe, *Tudor and Early Stuart Parks of Hertfordshire*, Hatfield 2019, 45–50.
- 10 Archivio di Stato di Torino (ASTo), Sezione Corte, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, Serie rossa, 223bis, 71. Bertone di Azeglio remained Captain of the Hunts beyond the Dora for only one day. Then the charge was given to Agostino Avogadro of Valdengo; cf. *ibid.*, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, Serie rossa, 223bis, 74.

heath.<sup>11</sup> This area had already been used and protected by Charles II between 1547 and 1550. It was one of the few regions left under Savoy control: there, subjects were forbidden to hunt certain species of animals – hares, partridges, pheasants, and deer – only when the duke was engaged in hunting.<sup>12</sup> A statement sent to Emmanuel Philibert in 1559 mentions the many merits of this hunting space, mostly due to the presence of the Dora, which justified the choice of lands so distant from the temporary seat of Rivoli, where the court resided until 1563. The author emphasised the presence of buildings suitable for housing hunting staff and animals such as the castle of Moncrivello, “an actual princely palace”. From there, “a view of the Dora river valley can be enjoyed, with an abundance nearby of lakes and fisheries, beautiful vineyards and nearby hunts; going down the hill of the castle you are on the plain near Santhià where you can hunt big game.”<sup>13</sup>

The centrality of the lands beyond the Dora was short-lived. As of 1563, Turin became the new capital of the Duchy, acquiring a central role within the new hunting space. However, the *oltre Dora* retained relevance even in the next years. In 1577, the duke ordered the construction of a lodge in the wood of Brianco, near Santhià.<sup>14</sup> Three years later, the hunting captaincy of Santhià was mentioned together with that of Turin in the confirmation of Ardizzone di Montestrutto as “General Attorney for game conservation” (*Procuratore Generale per la conservazione della caccia*).<sup>15</sup> The Captains of the Hunt, officers in charge of controlling a single area through gamekeepers, were obliged to send a monthly report to the General Attorney about the infractions that occurred. However,

---

11 This type of landscape was made up of wet and clayey soils. It was not new to Emmanuel Philibert. The Castle of the Dukes of Brabant in Turnhout, used as hunting palace as Emmanuel Philibert was the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, was surrounded by a landscape – the *heide* – comparable to that of Piedmont. See Igiea Adami, *Terre di baraggia. Pascoli, acque, boschi e risaie. Per una storia del paesaggio vercellese*, Alessandria 2012.

12 Cf. ASTo, Sez. Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, Serie rossa, 175, f. 33 (18 January 1547) and 182, f. 167 (23 August 1550).

13 “Il Castello di Moncrivello, quale è proprio una vera habitatione da Principe [...] et ha la vista della Valle del fiume di Dora, con comoditate di pescarie et laghi propinqui, vignarezo bellissimo, caccie propinque; et discesa la collina del Castello si è in la total pianura et vicino di Santhià et alle caccie grosse”. The memorial, written in 1559 or 1560, was initially attributed to Niccolò Balbo, member of the council of regency and president of the Senate. Considering Balbo's death in 1552, this memorial was later attributed to Tommaso Langosco di Stroppiana or Cassiano dal Pozzo, see Giovanni Busino, Balbo Niccolò, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 5 (1963). The quoted version was published by Ercole Ricotti, *Storia della monarchia piemontese*, vol. 1, Florence 1861, 324.

14 Conto di Filippino Gillio per la fabrica d'una casa di S.A. a Santhià nel bosco di Brianco 1577, ASTo, Sezione Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Fabbriche di Sua Altezza, art. 179, 9.

15 ASTo, Sez. Corte, Materie giuridiche, Editti a stampa, mz. 1, 69.

in 1584, the captaincy of Santhià was excluded from this task, revealing its progressive marginalisation.<sup>16</sup>

Because of the great parks and hunting palaces built later, scholars have never given much consideration to this hunting area that, on closer observation, highlights the main elements of successive urban parks. The first is undoubtedly the river element. Rich watercourses were essential to ensure the presence of the so-called *bestie grosse* (stag, roe deer, and wild boar). The second element was the presence of such buildings as the Castle of Moncrivello or the new lodge in the forest of Brianco. The third and final element is the progressive inclusion of these parks within the captaincies.

The three urban parks were indeed located at the main waterways surrounding the city: the Parco between the Po, Stura and Dora Riparia; Valentino beside the Po; and Mirafiori along the Sangone. The first step to acquire them was the expulsion of competitors from these lands. The district of the Parco was owned either by individuals and by the Abbey of Rivalta. According to the ducal officers, private owners held 481 *giornate* of lands.<sup>17</sup> The Abbey's properties in and around the Parco amounted to 375 *giornate*, almost half of the total.<sup>18</sup> In 1568, Francesco Bergera, acting as a delegate of Emmanuel Philibert, and Francesco Spinola, the abbot of Rivalta, signed the cession deed of the lands belonging to the abbey "to start the work of a park or menagerie of beasts and other animals outside the walls of Turin."<sup>19</sup> In exchange, the abbey of Rivalta obtained rights to numerous revenues in Rivoli.

As regards the castles and annexed estates of Valentino and Mirafiori, the dangers came from the pro-French faction, including the cadet branch of the Savoy-Nemours.<sup>20</sup> For many years, there was a conflictual relationship between the senior branch and the Nemours line.<sup>21</sup> The Savoy-Nemours had actively collaborated with the French administration and had built strong ties with the court of Paris. Nevertheless, in 1540, Charles II had appointed Jacques of Savoy-Nemours as heir to the throne for the case of Emmanuel Philibert's death without any successor. The Nemours' closeness to the French court and their unchallenged domination in the Genevois ensured that their possessions were not invaded. After the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, they aimed at creating an

---

16 Cf. Felice Amato Duboin (ed.), *Raccolta per ordine di materie delle leggi, editti, manifesti, ecc., pubblicati dal principio dell'anno 1681 sino agli 8 dicembre 1798*, 38 vols., Turin 1818–1860, vol. XXVI, 1096. A liberalisation of hunting was granted to the territories beyond the Dora in 1603, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 687, 27, 301.

17 Approximately one Piedmontese *giornata* corresponds to 3,810 square metres.

18 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 807, mz. 1, 7.

19 "Dar principio all'opera d'un parco o sia serraglio di fiere e altri animali" in Ivi, mz. 1, 5.

20 Matthew Vester, Jacques de Savoie-Nemours. Lapanage du Genevois au cœur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVIe siècle, Geneva 2008.

21 Andrea Merlotti, *Dinastia e corte da Carlo II alla Guerra Civile*, in: Paola Bianchi/Luisa Clotilde Gentile (eds.), *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna*, Turin 2006, 236–248.

independent state. When the duke tried to reach an agreement with the Swiss for the restitution of the territories subtracted by them, Jacques of Savoy-Nemours claimed for a wider division of territories between the different branches of the dynasty. The claims of Nemours were supported by the French crown through another influential man in the region, Renato Birago, governor of Pinerolo.<sup>22</sup> Although Emmanuel Philibert was able to avoid the strengthening of his rival, more time was needed to disarm the threats of the pro-French faction. The urban parks played a role in this clash. Renato Birago was the owner of the Valentino castle and its surroundings near the Po river, whereas the construction of Mirafiori castle, alongside the Sangone stream, was commissioned by Jacques de Savoy-Nemours in 1583.<sup>23</sup> As concrete symbols of the power of his rivals, they challenged the public image of the sovereign in the new capital. The Valentino was therefore immediately bought by Emmanuel Philibert in June 1564.<sup>24</sup> The acquisition of Mirafiori became possible only after the death of Jacques de Savoy-Nemours in 1585, when Mirafiori was immediately converted for hunting purposes by Charles Emmanuel I.<sup>25</sup>

Once the Dukes of Savoy got control, however, they encountered difficulties and opposition – partly caused by men and partly by the natural circumstances. The agreement signed with the Abbey of Rivalta turned out to be a complete failure for the crown. A confidential memorial informed Charles Emmanuel I of the serious losses suffered. Francesco Bergera had ensured that the district of the Parco could provide significant incomes to the ducal estate. On the contrary, the lands were “always affected by fog and subject to storms, and also stony, barren and thin.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the duke’s untrustworthy agent had donated three times the agreed incomes to the abbot of Rivalta, “stripping Rivoli castle of its most secure and firm revenues.”<sup>27</sup> In any case, the revocation of the agreement would have endangered the continuity of the Parco, and although the acquired land was not as productive as expected, it fulfilled its hunting function.

22 Roggero Bardelli, *Il sovrano, la dinastia, l'architettura del territorio* (note 8), 16.

23 Vittorio Defabiani, *Castello di Mirafiori* in Vinardi, in: Vinardi/Defabiani/Roggero Bardelli (eds.), *Ville sabaude* (note 8), 158.

24 Costanza Roggero Bardelli, *Il Valentino*, in: Vinardi/Defabiani/Roggero Bardelli (eds.), *Ville sabaude* (note 8), 201.

25 A horseback hunt by Charles Emmanuel I and duchess Catarina Micaela, to whom he had donated the castle after their marriage, is attested in June 1588, but some woods were reserved for ducal hunting as early as 1587, *Alli 25 giugno in Mirafiores*, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 778. It is possible that the decision taken in 1607 to cede full hunting rights in the Genevois to the Savoy-Nemours could have served to prevent future breaches of the cadet branch into the reserved hunting district, Archives Départementales de la Savoie, 2B 215, f. 35v–36.

26 “Sono sempre offese dalla nebbia et sono sottoposte a tempeste e falle, oltre che sono predose, sterili et magre”, *Relazione sulle false informazioni date in merito alla cessione delle terre di San Secondo*, f. 1v, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 807, mz. 1, f. 3.

27 “Spogliando il castello di Rivoli delli più siguri et fermi redditi che havesse” in Ivi, f. 2.





Fig. 2 Detail of the Mirafiori woods with the Sangone riverbeds, 1698.

In the case of the parks surrounding the Valentino and Mirafiori castles, water was the first problem. The Valentino was too close to the Po, the main waterway of the city, and the boatmen crossing the river caused damages to the park to such a degree that Charles Emmanuel I decided to ban access to it.<sup>28</sup> While the proximity to the watercourses posed problems, their use presented additional challenges. As Robert de Salnové pointed out in the second part of his *Vènerie Royale*, in Piedmont “there are large and fast waterways that pass [...] and from these torrents come out several streams

<sup>28</sup> ASTo, Sez. Corte, Materie giuridiche, Editti particolari temporanei, 1, 124.



that [inhabitants] call *biaillieres* [...] which are an obstacle to the pleasure that His Royal Highness has in chasing the deer.”<sup>29</sup>

The term *biaillieres* is the translation of the word *bealera*, a derivation channel built for water to irrigate fields. Although they made hunting more complex, the construction of channels allowed more efficient use of river water. The water-sharing afforded by these channels was guaranteed by a strict time division. Participants in the *bealera* of the Valentino were guaranteed 168 hours of water per week, 28 of which were reserved for the park services.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, control over the water was frequently challenged by private persons trying to appropriate more of this valuable resource. According to a report of 1626, the misappropriations in Mirafiori were so intense that “in summer it remains without water and His Highness is devoid of his delights.”<sup>31</sup> These illegal uses of the water resources continued over the years, forcing Charles Emmanuel I to appoint armed keepers.

The entry of the three parks into the ducal domain was accompanied by the creation in 1584 of three hunting captaincies surrounding the capital. The hunting captaincy, as already explained regarding that of Santhià, was an administrative unit covering several localities under the leadership of a captain, sometimes assisted by a lieutenant, who commanded a group of gamekeepers. The administration of the captaincies was inspired by the French system that had been created in the first decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Unlike in France, they did not administer justice in the first instance, but each violation of the hunting laws was referred to the General Attorney for Hunts (*Procuratore generale per le cacce*) who forwarded the cases to the General Conservator.<sup>33</sup> He was completely independent and the pecuniary sentences were enforced without any appeal. The first captaincy was that centred on Turin and included the main neighbouring localities – such as Stupinigi, Moncalieri, and Leinì – and functioned as a link between all the urban parks. The second developed around the locality of Altessano Superiore, which in the second half of the seventeenth century housed the hunting palace of Venaria

29 “Il y a des torrens deauès qui y passent [...] et de ces torrens sortent plusieurs ruisseaux, qu'ils appellent biaillieres [...] mais qui fait un obstacle aux plaisirs que son Altesse Royale auroit plus parfaits à courre le cerf” in Robert de Salnove, *La Vènerie Royale, divisée en IV parties*, Paris 1665, 169. De Salnove was in the service of Victor Amadeus I for eighteen years as a *gentiluomo della venaria*.

30 Quinternetto de' partecipanti nella bealera del Valentino, f. 1, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 809.

31 “Nel maggior bisogno dell'estate li detti beni restano privi d'acqua e S.A. delle Delitie che ne sperava” in Memoria sul furto delle acque della bealera, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 778.

32 Henri Pinoteau, *Les chasses de Louis XVI. Splendeur et ruine des plaisirs de Sa Majesté (1774–1799)*, Paris 2020, 67–69.

33 Duboin, *Raccolta* (note 16), vol. XXVI, 1096.

Reale.<sup>34</sup> The last one was centred on Rivoli and extended to the entrance of the Susa Valley.<sup>35</sup> The construction of this territorial network, consisting of closed areas and reserved spaces, allowed the House of Savoy to obtain the necessary space to host its animal court and to place the territory of the new capital under its complete control.

## 2. A mirror of power: reserved game and exotic animals

The population of the new hunting parks with proper animals depended essentially on territorial protection and game preservation.<sup>36</sup> The ancient legislation of the Duchy of Savoy allowed subjects to hunt bears, wolves, and roe deer but expressly prohibited hunting stags between October and May and within the territories surrounding the ducal residences.<sup>37</sup> Gradually, as the hunting district expanded, the number of “reserved” animal species also increased. In 1584, the number of protected animals rose to four – pheasants, roe deer, red deer, and wild boars – and the ban was extended to the territories of the captaincies.<sup>38</sup> This broadening seems to be a legislative acknowledgement of a reality already existing. As demonstrated by a hunting franchise issued in 1569, Emmanuel Philibert rewarded the services of the inhabitants of Gassino by granting them the right to hunt any game on the banks of the Po, including wild boar and red deer, but no pheasants, which remained strictly reserved.<sup>39</sup> With the second general edict on hunting in 1612, the number of animals under ducal protection was confirmed, but the ban was now extended to all the territories on the Italian side of the duchy (“al di quà dei Monti”).<sup>40</sup> The reservation of the game reached its widest scope with the edict of Victor Amadeus I in 1633, which was then taken up by hunting legislation throughout the seventeenth century. The four previous species were joined by herons, evidence of the duke’s great interest in falconry, and bears, whose addition coincided with the extension of the reserved hunting district to the mountain valleys where the plantigrades were widespread.<sup>41</sup>

---

34 Davide de Franco, *Terra e popolazione in un luogo di cacce. Venaria Reale tra Sei e Settecento. Percorsi di ricerca*, in: *Popolazione e Storia* 2 (2012), 9–40.

35 Duboin, *Raccolta* (note 16), vol. XXVI, 1098.

36 The deer population may have been partially boosted by the import of animals from abroad as a deer payment from Sardinia to Nice would seem to suggest. Cf. ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti, art. 86, 26, 585.

37 Duboin, *Raccolta* (note 16), XXVI, 1095.

38 *Ibid.*, 1096.

39 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, *Protocolli dei notai della Corna*, Serie Rossa, 227, 108.

40 Duboin, *Raccolta* (note 16), XXVI, 1115.

41 *Ibid.*, 1122. About the bear hunting see Michel Pastoreau, *Lours. Histoire d’un roi déchu*, Paris 2007; Caterina Angus, *Il tempo dell’orso, l’orso nel tempo. L’esemplum dell’arco alpino occidentale*, in: Emilio Comba/Daniele Ormezzano (eds.), *Uomini e orsi. Morfologia del selvaggio*, Turin 2015, 15–41.

The increased protection allowed selected animals to inhabit parks where they were both preserved and hunted. The three parks were rich in the most varied game. Robert de Salnove described the woods of Mirafiori on the banks of the Sangone as populated by hares, pheasants, partridges, and many other birds like herons, “flying so incessantly that they can easily be hunted with birds of prey.”<sup>42</sup> On the other side of the castle, the woods that stretched over Stupinigi were preferred by deer because of the rich waters where they quenched their thirst. Even Valentino and the Parco, qualified by the *Theatrum sabaudiae* as “celebre ferarum vivarium”, was inhabited by large groups of deer, including fallow deer.<sup>43</sup>

The parks’ preservation function could, however, cause problems with local communities. The large quantities of game present for the sovereign’s pleasures damaged the crops and ruined the fields, causing serious damage to the rural economy. This is why the princes preferred to find compromises in order to maintain social peace within their states, especially around the capital. In the case of the Parco, Charles Emmanuel I chose this path. Because of the great damage that animals caused to crops, he decided to build a wall in 1603. The duke asked the main local communities to finance the wall and to cooperate in its construction. In return, he granted them the right to hunt animals causing damages. The communities could hunt deer and wild boar to protect their crops and had full rights to hunt foxes, wolves, and bears.<sup>44</sup> Although this agreement could satisfy many subjects, it did not please everyone. The inhabitants of the Valley of Lanzo, a few kilometres from Turin, presented a petition to Charles Emmanuel I asking not to be included in the terms of the agreement. Their valleys were not yet included in the ducal hunting reserve, and they argued that there were no deer or wild boar in their mountains. Awaiting the sovereign’s response, the subscribers of the appeal addressed their hopes to the duke for his forthcoming visit to hunt bears.<sup>45</sup> He decided to agree only partially to the requests of the valley, which were nevertheless expected to join in the effort. Its inclusion among the paying communities suggests that the enlargement of the ducal hunting district to the mountains was already part of Charles Emmanuel I’s ambitions.

During the examined period, therefore, the Dukes of Savoy built and raised to the largest extent the territory reserved for their hunt and the animal court. The integration of this territory and the already existing infrastructures also allowed the introduction of the exotic animals described in the animal battle above, which needed proper buildings, trained officers, and appropriate feeding. The lions, present from the last years of Emmanuel Philibert’s life, represented the core of the exotic menagerie. The pair

---

42 “Qui passent incessamment sur cette plaine, que l’on peut attaquer au passage” in de Salnove, *La Vénerie Royale* (note 29), 180–181.

43 *Theatrum Statuum regiae celsitudinis Sabaudiae Ducis*, vol. I, Amsterdam 1682, *Parcus Vetus*.

44 Duboin, *Raccolta* (note 16), XXVI, 1093.

45 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 807, mz. 1, 12, f. 1.

of lions used during the christening of Philip Emmanuel was housed at the castle of Moncalieri in 1582, and a third lion was brought to the citadel in 1592.<sup>46</sup> From the early seventeenth century onwards, the exotic menagerie was assorted with other species: tigers and cheetahs increased in number and temporarily replaced lions in 1611. Even lynxes, non-exotic but unusual felines, became part of the ducal menagerie.

Cheetahs, attested since 1609, may have been used as hunting assistants, as this was widespread in the Italian Renaissance courts but, in general, these animals had a theatrical function to express power.<sup>47</sup> In any case, the exotic beasts brought high maintenance costs and risks. Inexperience in dealing with such beasts led to the rapid replacement, due to the injuries suffered, of Giacomo Giordano, the first governor of exotic animals.<sup>48</sup> The trend in maintenance costs for lions in the first half of the 1590s shows that these animals tended not to live long, probably because of climate and bad governance. The expenses for the maintenance of the lions doubled from 700 to 1,500 *lire* per year in the twenty years in which they were kept at the castle of Moncalieri. The same cost was incurred for the tigers that remained at the Savoy court for the entire reign of Charles Emmanuel I. In the last years of Charles Emmanuel I's life, unlike the rest of the animal court, there was no increase in expenditure but rather a consolidation and progressive stabilisation.

Charles Emmanuel I was the actual creator of the part of the court consisting of exotic animals: this predilection cannot be detached from the personality of the duke. From an early age, he had dedicated himself to studying and deepening natural history with a great interest in a wide variety of animal species. His *Studi di storia naturale* are full of lists of exotic animals such as lions, panthers, tigers, and camels mixed with autochthonous animals.<sup>49</sup> They included also exotic birds, of which he ordered many specimens from Dutch markets for his aviary.<sup>50</sup> Surrounding himself with ferocious and

---

46 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 86, 28, 148; 39, 70.

47 Ibid., 57, 203. Thierry Buquet, Hunting with Cheetahs at European Courts. From the Origins to the End of a Fashion, in: Hengerer/Weber (eds.), *Animals and Courts* (note 6), 17–43.

48 Ibid., 35, 162.

49 ASTo, Sez. Corte, *Storia della Real Casa, Studi di storia naturale fatti dal duca Carlo Emanuele I, m.z. 15*, fasc. 5, 1, Elenchi di quadrupedi e rettili; 2, Quadrupedi divisi per specie; 5, Elenco di animali suddivisi per colore del mantello. Charles Emmanuel I's natural history notes cite Conrad Gessner's work mainly for the study of mammals, reptiles and fishes. Gessner (1516–65), a Swiss naturalist, published the *Historia animalium* between 1551 and 1558, whose first two books were devoted to viviparous and oviparous, and the last to fish and aquatic animals: Conrad Gessner, *Historia animalium libri IV, Tuguri 1551–1558*. The Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605) was the author of numerous ornithological studies at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae*, 3 vol., Bologna 1599–1603.

50 Ibid., fasc. 5, 8, Tutti uccelli bianchi; 9, Elenco di uccelli; 11, Elenco di uccelli, per alcuni sono indicate le pagine del libro; 12, Elenco di uccelli con penne bianche; 5bis, 2, Lista di tutte le cose che si devono comperare in Amsterdam o altri luoghi d'Olanda.

exotic animals was part of his attempts to give a strong image of himself as sovereign of an animal kingdom.

The menagerie also hosted exotic animals that were held for a more peaceful sort of representation. For instance, this is the case of the mongoose, named “rat of the Pharaon” (*ratta faraona*) in the accounts, which belonged more to the category of curiosities that Charles Emmanuel I loved to collect.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, fallow deer fell into this category but arguably they turned into hunted game animals as soon as the population was established. These animals, originally coming from the Far East, were introduced in the last years of the sixteenth century and they were assigned to a governor who took care of them. The value of the fallow deer at the Savoy court is testified by the continuity of their presence. Initially, they were placed in the fenced area of the Parco, but they were removed to the environs of the dukes’ preferred hunting lodges later, which underlines their transformation from exotic to preserved animals. In the first half of the seventeenth century, they were first moved to the Valentino and then to Venaria Reale.<sup>52</sup> In 1672, Victor Amadeus II ordered the liberation of these animals with the precise prohibition to anyone to cause them any kind of damage.<sup>53</sup>

### 3. The hunting trinity: housing falcons, hounds, and horses

Whereas preserved game animals populated the new ducal parks, animals that were trained as hunting assistants were hosted in special buildings at the court or near the hunting lodges. Since the medieval period, the “hunting trinity” of horse, hound, and falcon surrounded the image policy of princes, and the dukes of Savoy were keen to adapt to this image by populating their court with these representative companion animals.

The construction of the “inner” animal court was a slow process that began when Emmanuel Philibert was still in the Spanish Netherlands. He used to send dogs and birds of prey from northern Europe to his father Charles II. As their correspondence shows, the presence of the Prince of Piedmont in Brussels guaranteed useful contacts for buying valuable animals. In 1548, he was waiting for the English ambassador to bring him some

---

51 In his study about Louis XIV’s royal menagerie, Peter Sahlins presented the transition from ferocious animals used for fighting to exotic birds shown for their beauty as a process of civilisation of the French court. In the case of Charles Emmanuel I and the court of the House of Savoy we have a combination of these two symbols: the ferocity and wildness of the beasts and the beauty and curiosity aroused by the exotic and the unusual animal. See Peter Sahlins, *The Royal Menageries of Louis XIV and the Civilizing Process Revisited in: French Historical Studies* 32/2 (2012), 226–246.

52 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 809, Stato del Valentino Reale.

53 ASTo, Sez. Corte, Materie giuridiche, Editti originali, 11, 20.

hunting dogs that he intended to send to Piedmont together with some falcons.<sup>54</sup> It was a common practice, recommended in many falconry treatises also found in the library of the Dukes of Savoy,<sup>55</sup> to train birds of prey together with hounds, so that they could get used to each other's presence. As there were delays in the arrival of the dogs, Emmanuel Philibert decided to send the falcons earlier, as the winter season was approaching and it would no longer be possible later.<sup>56</sup> These falcons also had a political value. Knowing the passion of the Prince of Spain, Philip of Habsburg, for this art, Emmanuel Philibert was eager to give a few away "to offer him some entertainment."<sup>57</sup>

Housing birds of prey was an expensive enterprise. On average, the cost of caring for a single bird of prey was one *soldo* a day, which within a quarter amounted to around 4 *lire*, but the cost of maintenance depended greatly on the species of the bird. Duke Emmanuel Philibert's falconry hosted four sorts of birds: falcons, goshawks, sparrow hawks, and kites.<sup>58</sup> Given the huge expense of enriching the falconry, the duke sought to develop the local animal stock. An ordinance of 28 July 1570 prohibited any export of birds of prey and all those passing through the territory had to have a ducal licence, otherwise the birds would be confiscated.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the duke took care to protect local birds of prey, as evidenced by the order to the Savoyard falconer Pierre Viennois to check the nests of the goshawks in Savoy.<sup>60</sup> The duke's household normally paid two or three falconers, each of whom managed four birds.<sup>61</sup> Whereas under Charles III at least

54 Emmanuel Philibert to Charles II, Brussels, 13 November 1548 in ASTo, Sez. Corte, Lettere duchi e sovrani, mz. 8, 71.

55 ASTo, Sez. Corte, Biblioteca antica, JA VIII 2–JA VII 10. These are two important falconry treatises: *Degli uccelli di rapina*, a work of Giovanni Pietro Belbasso published in 1503, and the Italian translation of the *Moamyn*, edited by Sebastiano de Martinis in 1517. The *Moamyn*, together with the *Gathrif*, is the most famous falconry treatise of the Arab tradition, written in the ninth century in Baghdad and translated into Latin by Teodorus of Anthiochia by order of Frederick II. About the *Moamyn* and the influence of the Arab falconry in the Mediterranean countries see Daniela Boccassini, *Il volo della mente. Falconeria e Sofia nel mondo mediterraneo*. Islam, Federico II, Dante, Ravenna 2003, 71–120.

56 In November the trade in birds of prey from northern Europe came to a halt because weather conditions would damage the animals. See Benjamin Borbás, *Falcons in Service of the Teutonic Order at the Turn of the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Century*, in: *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 26 (2020), 133–149.

57 "Entendant que le Prince d'Espagne prend grant plaisir à la chasse d'oiseaux que seroyz bien de luy y donner quelques passetemps" in Emmanuel Philibert to Charles II, Brussels, 13 November 1548 in ASTo, Sez. Corte, Lettere duchi e sovrani, mz. 8, 71.

58 Among these, the kites were not trained as hunting-assistants because they are scavengers, but were used to train other birds of prey. See Baudouin Van den Abeele, *Falconry in Old French literature*, in: Karl-Heinz Gersmann/Oliver Grimm (eds.), *Raptor and Human. Falconry and Bird Symbolism Throughout the Millennia on a Global Scale*, Kiel/Hamburg 2018, 1525–1527.

59 ASTo, Sez. Corte, Protocolli dei notai della corona, Serie rossa, 227, 151.

60 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217, 10, 16.

61 Alessandro Barbero, *Il ducato di Savoia. Amministrazione e corte di uno Stato franco-italiano*, Editore Laterza, Rome/Bari 2002, 281.

a part of these falconers belonged to the nobility, Emmanuel Philibert preferred to select them among professional hunters known for their versatility in this type of hunting. Under Charles Emmanuel I, the ducal falconry grew exponentially, reaching 3,600 *lire* in annual maintenance costs (including the officers' salaries) under the direction of the Major Falconer Alberto Calvi and the Grand Falconer Giulio Cesare di San Martino.<sup>62</sup> To these expenses, those of the prince of Piedmont's household must be added. In 1620, the passionate hunter and future Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, already spent 6,685 *lire* for his falconry, five times the cost of the *vénèrie* managed by Robert de Salnove.<sup>63</sup>

The expansion of the ducal falconry depended essentially on the import of birds from abroad. A confidential and undated report sent by a falconer reveals the complexities of this trade. It records expenditure of almost 1,000 *lire* for ten birds because many falconers preferred to travel to northern Europe, particularly Flanders, to buy the best animals to bring back to Piedmont.<sup>64</sup> The report exposed the misconduct of some falconers and the author suggested some solutions to put an end to this behaviour. Indeed, the long voyages and the high cost of the animals allowed some falconers to take advantage, declaring higher expenses and thus receiving higher compensation. To contain these rises, the falconer advised the duke to move his trade to Switzerland, where he could find valuable animals at a much lower cost.<sup>65</sup>

The ducal *vénèrie* underwent a similar expansion process, although quantifying the number of dogs present at the court of Savoy is not easy. In the beginning, the management of hounds was still very fragmented. Whereas the largest packs of dogs were entrusted to chosen officials, many other dogs were in the care of the simple service staff of the court. The *gran levriero di Bretagna*, a dog breed mainly used in the deer hunt, was managed within the duke's household by a governor. The second group of hounds was located in Altessano Superiore, under the care of the Flemish Major Huntsman Dieudonné d'Englebert. This group consisted of dogs suitable for hunting wild boar and mountain bears. In 1575, d'Englebert led a pack of 10 bloodhounds and 12 Aragonese mastiffs.<sup>66</sup> Other dogs were entrusted to the assistants of the stable or to court staff. In 1581, a pack of 24 *chiens d'Artois*, a Picard bloodhound used for hunting small game, was first given to the court cook, Francesco Gilotto, and then handed over to the care of

62 Ibid., art. 86, 56, 151–152. The charge of Major Falconer existed only for a short period in the early seventeenth century. It was comparable to the office of the Major Huntsman and had the function of managing many of the payments for animals and falconers.

63 Stato della spesa fatta e pagata per la casa della gloriosa memoria di S.A.S. Vittorio Amedeo I, BRT, Mss. Casa Savoia, I, 1.

64 Memoria della Falconeria di S.A.R., f. 1, Archivio Storico della Città di Torino, Collezione Simeom, 8471. The report was very probably written at the end of the seventeenth century.

65 Ibid., f. 2.

66 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Patenti controllo finanze, 27, 21v.

a washerwoman (*bogandiera*) in the following year.<sup>67</sup> This fragmentation reveals that in the early years of Charles Emmanuel I, the court of Savoy still functioned like a medieval court in many respects, based on direct bonds of trust between the sovereign and the court staff. A possible quantification of hunting dogs can be derived from the amount of bread allocated for their maintenance. In 1578 the baker Vincenzo Vincedetto received 9,956 *lire* for the annual supply of grain for the duke's dogs.<sup>68</sup> On average, a single dog cost 3 *soldi* a day, making an annual cost of around 54 *lire*. This gives us an estimate of about 180 dogs in the last years of Emmanuel Philibert's court.

Under Victor Amadeus I the *vénèrie* acquired an increasingly specialised structure. An initial step in this process was the establishment in 1612 of a pack of 30 dogs for hunting roe deer. More than twenty years later, the duke's animal court housed five distinct packs of dogs: 150 hounds for deer, hares and wolves, including *limier* dogs, 15 *gran levrieri di Bretagna*, 12 little *susni* dogs for foxes, and two packs of 20 mastiffs each, that is almost 220 dogs in total.<sup>69</sup>

To get a clearer idea of the expenditure for birds of prey and hunting hounds, a comparison can be made with the expenditure for the *scuderia* (horse stables), one of the three branches of the ducal household. In 1568, the money allocated to the budget for funding this branch was equal to 22,466 *lire*. Twenty years later, the budget had already reached 36,414 *lire*.<sup>70</sup> A part of the expenses for hunting dogs fell under this branch of the court, but the main expense of the *scuderia* was that for the horses. They were undoubtedly the largest item in expenditure of the animal court. Horses were essential for the practice of both falconry and *vénèrie*, yet it is very hard to determine how many of the duke's horses were exclusively used for hunts. The choice of the most suitable horse for hunting itself required a considerable effort of selection and depended greatly on the type of hunt to be undertaken. The *chasse à courre* required specially trained horses, used to alternating trotting and galloping with long stops.<sup>71</sup> In the Piedmontese context, as stated above, horses with the necessary agility were also needed to jump over ditches and irrigation channels.

There was a steady trend towards expansion and differentiation in the management of horses, too. The budget of 1562 reported the presence of 30 mares, 4 stallions, and other 53 horses at the ducal stables, which were distributed over several locations.<sup>72</sup>

---

67 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217, 20, 282; ASTo, Sez. Corte, art. 259, par. 2, mz. 1, 21, Spesa dei nostri cani, f. 9v.

68 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217, 14, 1.

69 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 86, 60, 701; Patenti controllo finanze, 106, f. 151.

70 Stato della casa di S.A. per l'anno 1568, ASTo, Sez. Corte, Art. 259 Par. 2 Mz. 1, n. 8; *ibid.*, art. 259 Par. 2 Mz. 1, n. 32.

71 Mario Gennero, *Il cavallo da caccia. Razza e tipologie*, in: Paola Bianchi/Pietro Passerin d'Entrèves (eds.), *La caccia nello Stato sabauda. Caccia e cultura (secc. XVI–XVIII)*, Turin 2010, 88–89.

72 Bilancio della Casa di S.A. per l'anno 1562, ASTo, Sez. Corte, Art. 259 Par. 2 Mz. 1, f. 3. In 1565, in order to limit the dispersal of horses, Emmanuel Philibert commissioned the city of Turin to build a stable large





Fig. 3 The hunting trinity in Eugenio Raimondi's work dedicated to the cardinal Maurice of Savoy, 1626.

As of 1565, Emmanuel Philibert began to improve the organisation of the stables. In that year, the ordinary expenses for horses did not reach 1,000 *lire*, but two years later this figure exceeded 7,000 *lire*.<sup>73</sup> The number of grooms in charge of the stables also increased, from 12 to 21 in ten years. A turning point was the edict of 3 July 1575, issued to establish a stud farm (the *haras*) near Nice, essential to supply the best horses.<sup>74</sup> It was with Charles Emmanuel I that the ducal stables increased exponentially and

---

enough to house them all, Pier Paolo Merlin, Amministrazione e politica tra Cinque e Seicento. Torino da Emanuele Filiberto a Carlo Emanuele I, in: Ricuperati, Storia di Torino (note 5), 118.

73 Conto reso da messer Francesco Carbonato e Giacomo della Porta per le spese della scuderia di S.A., ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217, 1.

74 Mario Gennero, La rimonta nella Scuderia sabauda del Sei-Settecento, in: Bianchi/Passerin d'Entrèves (eds.), La caccia nello Stato sabauda (note 71), 113.

had their first internal division. In 1581, the stables underwent a division between great horses (*gran cavalli*) and horses to carry weapons and goods (*cortaldi*), which was followed by an identical division of the grooms. This subdivision probably affected the ducal hunts with the great horses employed as the most suitable animal for chasing and *cortaldi* serving to transport the hunting equipment, a service that used to be provided by mules.<sup>75</sup>

Charles Emmanuel I's activities in this sector were also evidenced by the fruitful exchanges of horses with other members of the House of Savoy and with the great stud farms of Mantova.<sup>76</sup> At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the expenses for ducal horses reached 30,000 *lire* annually. Over the thirty following years, these costs doubled, showing how under Charles Emmanuel I the ducal stables became effectively worthy of a great court;<sup>77</sup> a fact testified by the commercial exchanges with the English court, which in those years enriched its stables with many animals originating from the Duchy of Savoy.<sup>78</sup>

A clearer composition of the ducal stable emerged only in the years of Victor Amadeus I and even more during the Christine of France's regency. In the years following the civil war, the stable of the first *Madama Reale* was composed of 88 horses: 5 great running horses, 7 private horses of the duchess, 6 squires' horses, 43 coach horses and mules, and 27 horses for the court staff.<sup>79</sup> In the first years of Victor Amadeus I's rule, interest in the exotic faded, but the hunting trinity was strengthened again in the perspective of the French *chasse à courre* that spread out in the Duchy also thanks to his marriage to Christine of France. Such innovations were part of what Christopher Storrs described as the transition from the pro-Spanish to the pro-French phase in the politics of the Duchy of Savoy.<sup>80</sup> The transition shows once again that hunting was not simply an aspect of courtly life but a practice able to reveal, even more than others, deep changes in the identity of a court.

---

75 In the years when Emmanuel Philibert was in power many payments were recorded for mules used in hunts, ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217 1, 60v, 5, 294, 6, 63; art. 14, 86, 363.

76 Alice Blythe Raviola, "A caval donato ..." Regali e scambi di destrieri fra le corti di Torino, Mantova e Vienna (secc. XVI–XVII), in: Bianchi/Passerin d'Entrèves (eds.), *La caccia nello Stato sabauda* (note 72), 125.

77 ASTo, Sez. Riunite, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, art. 217, 43, 132; 83, 61, 153.

78 Andrea Tonni, *Allevamento e diplomazia tra Mantova, Torino e Londra. Lo scambio dei cavalli tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, Bologna 2008, 21–23.

79 *Bilancio della Casa di Madama Reale e Eccellentissime Principesse 1646–1647*, BRT, Mss. Casa Savoia, I, 1.

80 Christopher Storrs, *La politica internazionale e gli equilibri internazionali*, in: Walter Barberis (ed.), *I Savoia. I secoli d'oro di una dinastia europea*, Turin 2007, 5.

#### 4. Conclusion

Animals were present at all princely courts. Yet, the case of the Duchy of Savoy shows that the animal court undoubtedly represented an effective engine for the reconstruction of the sovereign power and for the modernisation of the court itself. The management of an increasing number of animals not only required efficient control of maintenance and purchasing costs but also demanded a process of specialisation of the officers in charge, making the structure of the court itself more complex. Through the animal court, the Dukes of Savoy pursued a systematic recovery of control over their former domains and a radical re-organisation of them. Parks and hunting captaincies were among the key instruments of this re-conquest that took place in a few decades. Reserved game animals that served as targets of ducal hunts; falcons, hounds, and horses that were trained for these events; as well as exotic animals, which like the cheetahs and fallow deer sometimes also became involved in the hunting activities of the court, were an essential part of the ducal politics of territorial control and self-representation.

#### Photo credits

- Fig. 1 Map of the Province of Turin with the main cities and watercourses, eighteenth century. Reproduction from ASTo1, Carte segrete, Torino 10 A VI rosso (Bruno Farinelli).
- Fig. 2 Detail of the Miraflores woods with the different Sangone riverbeds, 1698. Reproduction from ASTo2, Camera dei Conti, Feudalità, art. 778 (Bruno Farinelli).
- Fig. 3 The hunting trinity in Eugenio Raimondi's work dedicated to the cardinal Maurice of Savoy, 1626. Reproduction from: Eugenio Raimondi, *Delle caccie libri quattro*, Brescia 1626, 40. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Public domain.

#### Abstract:

The presence of animals at princely courts has attracted increasing interest among scholars in recent years. Research on royal hunts and exotic animals has undoubtedly represented a relevant contribution in this field. Similarly, the game protected by hunting legislation has also been the object of much attention because of its symbolic and ceremonial meanings. This chapter offers a study of the animal presence at the court of the House of Savoy from the return of Emmanuel Philibert to the early years of Victor Amadeus I's reign. It outlines the development of the *animal court*, a concept that includes all animal lives placed under the direct control of the duke and used as a way to enact his sovereignty.

#### Keywords:

animals | hunt | park | court | House of Savoy