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BOOK REVIEW



Karl-Heinz Gersmann and Oliver Grimm (eds.), Raptor and human – falconry and bird symbolism throughout the millennia on a global scale

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The Wachholtz Verlag's recently published monumental 4-volume conference proceedings, appearing in the „Advanced studies on the archaeology and history of hunting” series of the prestigious German publishing house, is a fresh contribution to international scholarship on falconry. The volumes are based on papers presented at the connected conference held in Schleswig in 2014 and contain 101 scholarly articles amounting to 1957 pages total. The papers are grouped into 12 topics (and correlating) chapters over 4 volumes. Even upon first glance, the reader is astonished at the all-encompassing breadth and thoroughness of the work. It embraces the results of several disciplines produced in the study of falconry in all concerned geographical areas from the Mesolithic to the present day. Given the breadth and interdisciplinary diversity of the volumes, it would be impossible to present all important findings in the same deepness or to offer a comprehensive and detailed description of all articles. Hence, the present review will take a somewhat irregular form with a double aim. Firstly, I have tried to present an overview of the volumes as a whole. Secondly, I singled out topics I felt relevant for early Hungarian history or the archaeological study of the Carpathian Basin in general. Underlining this, I start with a brief overview of the sources and the study of Hungarian falconry, to provide a background to which the results of the reviewed work can be inserted.

Why these volumes arouse special interest for the study of Hungarian prehistory and archaeology? Raptors already played a significant role in Hungarian prehistory. The earliest Hungarian narrative tradition (maintained only by the later chronicles) links the first Hungarian ruling house, the medieval royal dynasty of the Árpáds, to a mythical bird, the *turul*.¹ The bird in question appears in the story of the dream of Emese, the mother of Álmos, one of the leaders of the early Hungarians. The *turul* is described by the late (13–15th-century) chroniclers of the story evidently as a ‘falcon-type bird’ (*austur/astur*). The medieval Hungarian courtly tradition maintained the heritage of the Turul-legend and attributed a wide significance to raptor symbolism throughout the following centuries. Early chronicles often described princes and rulers for instance as carrying shields and flags embellished with shapes of birds. The Turul heritage was even projected back in time and the early traditions maintained its connection to the Hun king, Attila, who was claimed to be the ancestor of the Árpád house. Sources emphasize that ‘King Attila’s crest, which he carried on his shield, featured a bird – which in Hungarian is called *turul* – with a crown on its head.’ The depiction’s symbolism was even more consciously used later; the Renaissance Hungarian ruler, Mathias Corvinus, deliberately held on to this symbolism and even labeled himself as ‘Attila Secundus’.²

This is only one side of the coin, as parallel to the narrative tradition, 10th-century portrayals of birds of prey also show a certain respect for these birds. Avian creatures appear in several early artifacts, either in heraldic positions or embellished with additional details, for

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¹Vönöczky Schenk (1938); Sudár (2017, 2018).

²For an overview to the background of the question with further references, see: Langó (2017) 123–158.

instance, other birds between its claws or with a leaf in its beak.³ However, the Hungarians were not the only group of people in the Carpathian Basin who came from a steppe (Eastern) background and kept raptors in high esteem. The iconography of avian creatures lingers back to a long history in nomadic steppe cultures, and, in various forms, also surfaced in the culture of the Avars, a nomadic group inhabiting the Carpathian Basin in the 6th–9th centuries.⁴ Nevertheless, no raptor remains turned up so far among Hungarian grave finds of the period, which is in stark contrast to the contemporary Scandinavian and Germanic evidence.

Despite this, according to written sources, the practice of falconry was present in Hungary as early as the 11th century,⁵ and it is suspected that Hungarians brought their falconry traditions along from their earlier Eastern abodes.⁶ In the Árpád-Age, the widespread practice of falconry is well-represented in both elite and ordinary social circles.⁷ Statutes to regulate the practice of falconry indicate its popularity.⁸ In addition, the royal court was supplied with birds of prey regularly by coordinated castle folks, whose high importance and integration in power and economic structures are reflected by the fact that their taskmasters' designations (e.g. *comes falconariorum*, *falconariorum domini regis*)⁹ turn up even among contemporary toponyms (such as Solymár, Szokolár, Solymos... etc.).¹⁰ According to narrative sources and diplomas of the period falconry and related practices, the medieval Hungarian royal court did not differ from other regal courts in contemporary Western Europe. From the same period, archaeozoological data can also be supplied; the earliest find comes from the Árpád-Age (Tiszalök-Rázom),¹¹ while multiple examples are yielded by later, 14–16th-century, periods (Buda-Teleki-palota; Visegrád).¹² Depictions of falcon hunting scenes can also be detected in Árpád-Age iconography, they are carved both on stone carvings¹³ and coins.¹⁴

In the Anjou- and later periods of the Middle Ages, evidence of the general practice of falconry multiplies. The above-mentioned avian remains from these later periods are interpreted in light of external gift exchange or trade,¹⁵

which is confirmed by written sources as well.¹⁶ Even a textbook was produced at this time, the author being Ladislaus Hungarus, head falconer of the Hungarian king Louis the Great.¹⁷ Matthias Corvinus also used gifting of falcons as a diplomatic tool (just as he utilized the Turul for political needs).¹⁸ Trained birds of prey of Hungary were respected commodities in several European courts.

In 16th-century Ottoman Hungary and the independent Principality of Transylvania, trained raptors still enjoyed great popularity.¹⁹ Bird remains from contemporary sites confirm this statement.²⁰ Falconry and gifting of birds remained customary in all parts of the divided country.²¹ The tradition lasted even after the end of the Ottoman wars and survived until the first half of the 18th century.²² It was Emperor Joseph II who, in a decree, finally banned falconry.²³

During the 19th century, in parallel with the emergence and popularity of national sciences, interest in the history of the turul and falconry in general increased.²⁴ At around this time, a *topos* arose of equestrian falconry being an ancient Hungarian hunting method that spread and came into fashion in Central and Western Europe thanks to the Hungarians.²⁵ Poetry and prose, but also historical descriptions of this period found it indispensable to express the connection between falconry (and birds of prey) and the ancient Hungarians.²⁶ The turul even started to become a general national symbol (which indeed occurred after the end of the first World War).²⁷ Thus, the Hungarian scientific periodical of the auxiliary sciences of history, which dealt (and is still dealing) with heraldry and genealogy, chose the name Turul for itself. Falcon- and eagle-type depictions, claimed to represent the unique bird Turul, became commonplace in Hungarian symbolism of the period.

The practice of hunting with raptors was resurrected at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Traditional hunting textbooks urged the revival of the custom,²⁸ which indeed happened in 1902,²⁹ and since 1930 it is officially present among Hungarian hunting practices.³⁰ Historiography also started to devote attention to the phenomenon Sándor Takács (referenced above) and Adolf Balkay are among the

³Langó (2017) 149–155.

⁴Bálint (2010) 386–401; Langó (2008); Overlaet (2015). Even such motifs as a bird-flying falconer or the figure of an equestrian falconer can be found in the Avar material. Cf. Daim (2000) 119–120.

⁵Zolnay (1971).

⁶Vönöczky Schenk (1939 1958); Zolnay (1971) 28–29; Sudár and Krekács (2017); Duhay (2019).

⁷Zolnay (1971) 197–199, 212–214.

⁸Balkay (1926) 382, 384.

⁹Balkay (1926) 384.

¹⁰Györfy (1972).

¹¹Bartosiewicz (2012) 183; Gál (2015) 361.

¹²Gál (2008) 111–112; Gál (2015) 361.

¹³Zolnay (1971) 71; Cat. Budapest (1994) 81.

¹⁴Huszár (1961).

¹⁵Gál (2008) 112; Gál (2015).

¹⁶Vönöczky Schenk (1958) 164–167; Zolnay (1971) 212–222.

¹⁷Vönöczky Schenk (1958) 164–166; Zolnay (1971) 90–91, 215–216.

¹⁸Balkay (1926) 400; Zolnay (1971) 219–221.

¹⁹Takács (1914); Balkay (1926) 401.

²⁰Gál (2015) 361–363.

²¹Takács (1914); Demény (2004).

²²Takács (1914) 338; Vönöczky Schenk (1958) 167–171.

²³Duhay (2019) 73.

²⁴Langó (2017) 138–143; Duhay (2019) 73–74.

²⁵E.g. Z.H.F. (1883) 375.

²⁶Langó (2006) 85.

²⁷Voigt (1985); Nagy (1991).

²⁸Rodiczky (1902) 15–22.

²⁹Odescalchi (1902).

³⁰Vincze (2017) 1268.



noteworthy pioneers.³¹ The latter counted as an outstanding hunter of the era, whose reputation was further enhanced by him being the property manager of the Eszterházy entail, a noble family's estate which was considered a leading organization in the modernization of contemporary farming activities. His was the first comprehensive (schematic) summary of the history of Hungarian falconry.³² The other prominent scholar of the period, who addressed the subject was the noted ornithologist and zoologist Jakab Schenk Vönöczky. His articles are still the basic sources today for the onomastics of early Hungarian birds of prey and their cultural-historical background.³³ Another significant contribution to the subject was the overview of László Zolnay on medieval Hungarian hunting methods.³⁴ Zolnay, a distinguished archaeologist and medievalist, as in his other works combined narrative sources with the study of material culture.³⁵

By the 20th century, falconry became a more and more popular and acknowledged hunting method in Hungary. In 1939, the Hungarian Falconer Association was established,³⁶ which survived all 20th-century storms of history (although its name changed along with the changes of the political systems). The Association advocated falconry on multiple levels; it assured the regularity of this mode of hunting and nursed its tradition. Slowly, an increase in related literature also followed suit, as hunters and scholars started to take better care of the collection of connected historical material.³⁷ The most important forums of the subject were the *Vadászlap* (Hunters' Journal) from 1880, the periodical *Nimród* from 1913, and the *Aquila* (the periodical of the Hungarian Ornithological Institute). At present, it is the *Magyar Solymász* (Hungarian Falconer), the periodical of the Hungarian Falconer Association, which delivers the latest news about the subject.³⁸

Perhaps even this sketchy outline illustrates why the new Wachholtz Verlag volumes on falconry are attractive for anyone interested in either historical or archaeological studies concerning falconry in early Hungarian history, the medieval or early modern Kingdom of Hungary.

It can already be declared that many of the works directly concern current Hungarian research topics, while others

provide adaptable methodologies or, by utilizing sources from the same periods, offer suitable analogies for current and future domestic research. The presentation of the volumes should start with their structure, already alluded to by the chapter headings, a correspondence also noted by the editors in their introduction (otherwise written in four languages).³⁹ The chapter headings should be enumerated to give an immediate sense of the volume's systematic build-up: „1. Falconry in action and raptor propagation; 2. Raptors in zoology and biology; 3. Human evolution, history of domestication and the special role of the raptor-human relationship; 4. Raptors and religion, falconry and philosophy; 5. History of falconry: pioneers of research; 6. History of falconry: basic reflections and new perspectives; 7. Eurasian steppe: geographic origins of falconry? 8. Roman Empire: the West (Rome) and East (Constantinople) with very little evidence for falconry up to the 5th/6th centuries; 9. Case study: raptor catching, raptor trade, and falconry in northern Europe; 10. Raptors and falconry in pre-modern Europe: overall studies; 11. Raptors and falconry in pre-modern Europe: specific studies; 12. Raptors and falconry in pre-modern times in areas outside Europe.”

The first chapter contains 12 articles that introduce falconry's typical contact points to the modern age, and accordingly approach the topic from multiple directions. The reader gains a glimpse for instance of the Arabic practice where this type of hunting still occupies a high status or the traditional Inner Asian tradition of hunting with eagles as present still in contemporary Qazaq tradition.⁴⁰ Other papers provide insights into the nature of Turkmen, North American, or Japanese falconry. The geographical panorama of the first chapter is further widened by cultural heritage issues; such as the study of the ethical background of falconry, its role played in Scandinavian museum exhibitions, or the introduction of those initiatives which immensely promoted the rich heritage of falconry (*Deutscher Falkenorden*, The Archives of Falconry, Falconry Heritage Trust). The conference series will hopefully carry on, and, in a future event, and it is to be hoped that there may be an opportunity for the Hungarian Falconer Association to give a presentation to further colour the international palette of participants.

The second chapter discusses the zoological and biological characteristics of raptors. The two articles of this block form a smaller section, but they both devote wide and thorough interpretation of the subject and include the freshest results gained from modern methods (e. g. mitochondrial DNA analysis). Both papers support their argument with abundant series of data sets, diagrams, maps, and vivid (and carefully selected) illustrations. These are otherwise common traits of the whole volume.

The third and fourth chapters examine the relationship of humans and fauna, with a special focus on raptors. Studies within this section call attention to a plethora of relationships between raptors and humans based on variegated source

³¹The important literature on the subject is summarized in: Vönöczky Schenk (1958) 171–172.

³²Balkay, 1926.

³³Vönöczky Schenk (1938); Vönöczky Schenk (1939); Vönöczky Schenk (1942). About his work: Keve and Sági (1971).

³⁴Zolnay (1971).

³⁵His auto-biography vividly captures his methods and scholarly *habitus*: Zolnay (1986).

³⁶The Association was founded on the initiative of Lóránt Bástyai, who organized it on the influence of the *Deutscher Falkenorden*'s international meeting held in Berlin, in 1937. Later, it was him who acclimatized falconry on a wide scale in Hungary. Cf. Bástyai (1955). For the author's international impact, see: Bástyai (1968).

³⁷Vönöczky Schenk (1958).

³⁸For these beginnings: Bogyai (1972).

³⁹Grimm and Gersmann (2018) 18–50.

⁴⁰See also: Soma (2014).



material and criteria. One study, closest to our interest in early (pre)history, should be highlighted. Its author, Kristiina Mannermaa, presents the relics of raptors of Northern Europe and Northwestern Russia from the Mesolithic up until the Early Iron Age.⁴¹ Her results have a twofold relevance for Hungarian research; on the one hand, her findings bear relevance beyond the borders of the discussed area, on the other hand, she examines relics from territories that are usually looked upon as possible homelands of the Hungarians' ancestors.

Two other studies of early history within this section focus on hunting birds and their cults (i.e. religious notions connected to birds) in Egypt and Mesoamerica. Although these pieces could have been placed within the fourth volume's twelfth chapter as well, their inclusion here emphasizes the conscious editorial principle to illustrate the wide variety of approaches on the topic. This part is closed by the study of Daniela Boccassini, who takes us back to the golden age of falconry in medieval Europe, and presents the complex world of falconry with its intricate and colorful symbolism. Her study projects forwards the following section.

The fifth chapter introduces the biographies of two prominent figures whose research is still inevitable in the historical study of falconry. One of them is the enigmatic Hans J. Epstein, whose work published in 1943, was utilized by all significant studies concerning falconry in the next 50 years. His colorful life, rich in twists and turns, is not purely an exciting story, but it also brings to life the world of the early/mid-20th century. As a young man, Epstein was forced to leave the Third Reich and migrated to the U.S. leaving behind not only a scientific but also a diplomatic legacy to posterity. It is highly interesting in this regard that Epstein's original field of interest was not falconry but lepidopterology. His novelistic biography is a real treasure of the volume. Equally exciting is the biography of the other emblematic scholar of falconry, Kurt Lindner. His life illuminates another side of the story, namely how falconry became again a conventional and favoured form of hunting in Central Europe, especially in German speaking territories, during the early 20th century. Lindner (a renaissance man, who did not pursue falconry himself) became the motor of historical research and made the early German source material well-known in scientific circles. His monograph on antique falconry is still a basic work, as shown by references in Florian Hurka's article in the present volume.⁴² Other volumes edited by Lindner within the *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Jagd* series are held a similar esteem.⁴³ Lindner's fate was a typical 20th-century one worn by hardships of the Second World War and coloured with other communal losses experienced during the preservation of contemporary collections (e.g. the tragic fate of the

Bibliotheca Tiliána). The impact of the two noted scholars is appreciable in Hungarian research as well. Scholars dealing with the history of falconry knew and referenced their works for a long time, and Linder's achievements were not only highly acclaimed in scientific circles,⁴⁴ but were also well known by professional hunters aiming to popularize falconry.⁴⁵

The sixth chapter is specifically centred on the newest results of historical research in the field of falconry. The studies in this section describe new methods (such as stable isotope analysis), discuss new finds, or reinterpret earlier material (such as the Scandinavian C-bracteates depicting birds), and analyze several new questions. It was a vital intention of the editors to collect a wide range of case studies to draw attention to all possible source material that can be utilized for the study of the present topic. Accordingly, studies within the chapter rely on archaeological evidence, art historical material (book illuminations, seals, and tapestries), legal and literary narrative texts, and linguistic data. Among these, one study presents sources on the practices related to the healing of falcons, while another illuminates the changing circumstances of falconry in Central Europe in the Middle Ages and modern times through normative sources. The latter work will surely present a suitable comparative point to situate the Hungarian Kingdom's regulations in a wider perspective. Another study by Oliver Grimm has to be highlighted, which deals with the commercial milieu of the Moravian principality and the 9th–10th-century North, territories which also kept contact with the early Hungarians at the time.⁴⁶ The findings related to the Moravian principality deserve special attention by Hungarian researchers, as the state's collapse was facilitated by Hungarian attacks,⁴⁷ and its Eastern regions became part of the 10th-century Hungarian Principality and later the medieval Hungarian Kingdom.⁴⁸

The editors' principles were not solely to include studies built on various source materials and methodologies but also to prevent these to fall on the very same region, hence the variety of discussed territories in the chapter. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that the examples mostly focus on core territories of Europe (with the exclusion of the Balkan) in most studies. Northern Europe is discussed through bracteates and Viking-Age archaeological evidence, Central Europe is represented by the mentioned Moravian example and a discussion on German legal sources, and a study of grave goods from early medieval cemeteries including birds of prey. Southern Europe is represented by studies of the Hispanian treatises and the imagery of Emperor Fredrick II's book on falconry. Western European studies draw on

⁴⁴Gallus (1940).

⁴⁵Csőre (1976); Ádámfi (2012) 50.

⁴⁶Hedenstierna-Jonson (2012); Hedenstierna-Jonson and Holmquist Olausson (2006); Ilés-Muszka (2019); Katona (2017, 2018).

⁴⁷Bácsatyai (2016); Bácsatyai (2017); Kouřil (2019).

⁴⁸For the borders and extent of the Moravian Principality in the newer literature, see: Szóke (2014) 10. Cf. Langó (2016) 52.

⁴¹It is worth noting in this regard that the Hungarian zooarchaeological material was also examined with similar methods by Erika Gál. Cf. Gál (2007).

⁴²Lindner (1973).

⁴³Lindner (1962); Möller (1965).



sources of French wall carpets and related texts, and Dutch archaeological material. These studies naturally connect to works in the volume's ninth and eleventh chapters.

From a Hungarian point of view, it was rejoicing to see that the works of Erika Gál on Bajcsavár, and that of the overview László Bartosiewicz are organically integrated into international scholarship; here Wietske Prummel's study and methodological considerations on the Dutch archaeological remains of falconry draws on their findings.⁴⁹

In the next chapter, Eurasia comes to the forefront. The containing eight studies of the section attempt to address intriguing topics such as, for instance, the origin of equestrian falconry. The first article, entitled "The geographic origins of falconry?" already offers an essential answer to the question posed in the title. The analysis carried out by Pavel Kosinev and Aleksei Nekrasov unequivocally clarifies that falconry's appearance in the West Eurasian steppe can be securely dated to the Iron Age based on available archaeological data. This question is further elaborated by the posthumous publication of Leonid Yablonsky's work. The esteemed researcher, drawing on the Sarmatian material, analyzed whether the presence of falconry could be dated back to the 4th century BCE. His argumentation allows for pieces of evidence to be interpreted as signs alluding to the practice of falconry at this early stage, however, he stays reserved in his conclusions and carefully alludes to the scarcity of data which does not allow a firm conclusion (or far-reaching correlations) in the matter. The next article introduces remains related specifically to Inner Asia. The brief overview extends up until the 20th century and demonstrates the continuous use of hunting birds, and the (still) living tradition connected to them in the region. It is worth contrasting the work of Ulambayar Erdenebat with the work of the previously mentioned Kosinev-Nekrasov, and that of Takuya Soma dealing with the Altai region. All three works reference petroglyph depictions found in the area, however, they come to radically different conclusions regarding their dating. While Russian researchers consistently date the material discussed in their article to the early medieval period (5th–10th century), the Mongolian author puts his depictions to the Bronze Age (3000 BCE).⁵⁰ However, the Japanese scholar thinks the very same petroglyphs appearing in Erdenebat's study to be 2000 years younger. Although it could be accepted that petroglyph depictions were produced in different eras, however, it would have been desirable to read more about the origins of the tradition and briefly also the methodological assumptions which allow to date these relics. The authors refer to Z. Samashev's and V. Kubarev's (and other associated researchers') dating methods, but in neither of the cases they do justice to them. The matter is all the more important considering Erdenebat argued for the Bronze Age origins of hunting with birds based specifically on one of the petroglyph depictions.

⁴⁹Prummel (2018) quotes Bartosiewicz (2012) and Gál (2012). Newer research connected to Bajcsavár: Gál (2015).

⁵⁰Cf. also with Soma (2014) 14–16.

Ádám Bollók's paper gives an overview of research results connected to early Hungarian material. Its great virtue lies in the fact that it presents the results and suggested approaches formulated by a new wave of theories on early Hungarian history (most notably represented by Oleksiy Komar and Attila Türk).⁵¹ Bollók presents these results through a systematic study of the different source groups, and his reading captures the vivid research perspectives which arose in the field in the last one and half decades. Unfortunately, his discussion of the history of falconry was reserved to the final remarks of the article, as the author formulated important views and offered a fresh perspective on the 8th–10th-century Hungarian archaeological material of the Carpathian Basin in his other works. He devoted a separate study to the period's iconic find, a pair of metal discs from Rakamaz, which depict a raptor.⁵² This he later substantially supplemented in his book on 10th-century Hungarian ornaments.⁵³ Other studies by him, even if tangentially, also touch upon the avian depiction of the famous Nagyszentmiklós treasure (Sânnicolau Mare in present-day Romania).⁵⁴ The inclusion of the results of these works would have definitely enriched the present volume.

The short article of Claus Dobiát and Oliver Grimm could have been included in the methodological chapter since the authors aimed to illustrate possible explanatory caveats through the examination of a specific relic: a fibula from Xanten. The article is straightforward in illustrating the plethora of possible interpretations related to an emblematic artefact (which was previously the cover photo of an exhibition on the Franks in 1996).⁵⁵

The last two articles turn back to the importance of linguistic evidence. Hans Nugteren elaborates on the wide semantic scale of denoting hunting birds in the Kipchak language, while Jürgen Udolph deals with the linguistic connections of Eastern Slav and neighbouring Turkic communities concerning vocabularies of birds of prey. The first study is of interest for Hungarian scholars as in the 13th century a large group of the Kipchak population, the Cumans, migrated to Hungary as a result of the Mongol invasions.⁵⁶ Udolph's study also has a Hungarian link (although more concerning scientific history) as it draws substantially on the still enduring findings of the noted Hungarian ornithologist, Jakab Schenk Vönöczky about the *turul*, *zongor*, and *kerecsen* (all different species of hunting birds).⁵⁷

The eighth chapter unfolds the topic's antique background. Florian Hurka expounds on falconry in the period based on a rich selection of Greek and Latin sources,

⁵¹Türk (2012); Komar (2018).

⁵²Bollók (2010).

⁵³Bollók (2015a) 502–532.

⁵⁴Bollók (2015b).

⁵⁵Cat. Mannheim (1996).

⁵⁶Recently about the Cumans, see: Selmeczi (2011); Pálóczi Horváth (2014).

⁵⁷Vönöczky Schenk (1938).



through which he guides the reader with firm handling of the object. His piece may be amended with several newer works published after Kurt Lindner's otherwise excellent study on which Hurka mainly relies. These provide substantial additions by detailed descriptions of some of the individual finds of the corpus, such as the Argos mosaics.⁵⁸ This last piece of evidence is, which the next article takes up. The author, Andreas Külzer, builds only on the Byzantine material which, however, is no less challenging task than the previous one carried out by Hurka. The richness of the corpus is an obstacle in itself, something which the Austrian scholar nevertheless summarizes succinctly. He expounds on falconry's role in the hierarchy of various offices, its role in elite circles, its symbolism, treatises signalling its popularity, and even on the plentiful veterinary literature of the era. Concerning the Carpathian Basin, this vivid picture can be supplemented by an account (which Külzer obviously omits only due to the richness of his data). The source in question is connected to the life of Slavic missionaries; more precisely it is Methodius' biography of Constantine. In the vitae's third chapter, which concerns the youth of Constantine, Methodius writes the following: "As it was customary among the sons of the wealthy to take sport in the hunt, he one day took his falcon and went out to the fields with his companions. And when he released it, the wind rose by God's design, caught the falcon and carried it off."⁵⁹

The ninth chapter's focus is on North-European material. Given that the organizer of the conference was the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology, it is not surprising that this chapter is the lengthiest. There are 20 articles in the chapter, which break down the theme geographically, going from region to region (but keeping the modern state boundaries as units of analysis). The first articles, therefore, address Norway, within which the Viking period is discussed first. This is followed by a discussion on territories from where the use of birds of prey arrived in the region. The study of Terje Gansum on the Gokstad complex's animal (among them birds of prey) remains is outstanding, as it – similarly to other studies of the volumes – does not only yield information for those interested in falconry. It highlights other information of interest to non-specialists, such as the placing of dogs into Norwegian burials of the 10th century. The custom is also known from the Carpathian Basin in the period, albeit in a quite different context.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, a future comparative analysis would refine our understanding of this practice (perhaps) in both regions.

Ragnar Orten Lie's large-scale study (covering a period of a thousand years) is next. It is an overview of an abundance of historical and literary sources produced in the region concerning falconry. The collection of regesta appearing as an appendix to the article will be an excellent starting point for any future research, and it also illustrates the potential of

untapped material in any region. In addition, sources mentioning the capture of birds reveal that the custom might have gained importance in other regions as well.

As expected, the articles of this chapter do not lack the discussion on processing the toponymic evidence either. The data is discussed concerning Norway (Inge Særheim), Finland (Matti Leiviskä), and England (Eric Lacey). Several papers cover the difference in the roles and values of various raptor species (gyrfalcon, sparrowhawk, goshawk. . .etc.).

The Nordic tradition reconstructed from the archaeological and toponymic evidence can further be refined with the help of the rich Old Norse literary corpus. Based on the miscellaneous data gained from the different sources, birds of prey come into light also as grave goods and precious gifts. The examinations also address the extent of these birds being connected to contemporary elite culture and what symbolism they fulfilled in their cultural milieu. The Swedish data also sheds light on the time when falconry emerged in Scandinavia and the role of birds in wealthy burial goods in the early periods (such as the Rickeby grave). Nordic art also depicts raptors on sculptured stones, stone crosses, and rune stones. Figures of birds turn up on early finds, and not only depicted as attributes of hunters, but also in action when the bird strikes its prey. In the later medieval period, even the figure of the equestrian falconer appears on royal and aristocratic seals and coins – just as it happens in Central Europe⁶¹ The early and high medieval source material forms the evidence of the next two studies of Siegmund Oerlh and Åsa Åhrland. Their sources range from embellished carved knife handles through iron chest decorations to textiles and paintings. An intriguing parallel between Scandinavia and the Carpathian Basin is the appearance of the ruler as a falconer on minted coins; King Niels' coins minted in Lund depict the ruler as such, while in Árpád-Age Hungary, 13th-century coins portray similarly King Andrew II and King Ladislaus IV.⁶² Also important is Åhrland's observation on the connection between Swedish and Rus' territories, testified by 9th–10th-century scabbard chapes in the form of birds.

The next work in the series again has an indirect connection to the early history of the Hungarians. Although Joonas Ahola and Ville Laakso mostly build on linguistic and literary sources in their discussion on Finnish falconry, they also vaguely address the question of the animal style of Permian pendants. It seems to me, however, that these artefacts do not form an integral part of the article, and the authors also owe a concrete interpretation of them. The pieces mentioned in the article are mostly in the possession of Russian collections, and the republished piece of the

⁵⁸ Åkerström-Hougen (1974).

⁵⁹ Life of Constantine III. Cf. Lienard (2020).

⁶⁰ For its study, see: Bálint (1971); Vörös (1990, 1991).

⁶¹ The coins of Borivoj II from the beginning of the 12th century, and Béla IV's bracteates from the 13th. Tóth and Kiss (2020) No. 22. 6.1.1–22.6.3.1. See also: Huszár (1961); Langó (2008) 473.

⁶² Huszár (1961); Tóth and Kiss (2020) No. 22. 6.1.1–22.6.3.1, 22.6.1.1.1–22.6.3.1.1, 24.31.1, 24.32.1.1. Raptors turn up on coins already in Béla III's era. Cf. Tóth et al. (2018) No. 16.3–4. In relation to Andrew II: Tóth and Kiss (2020) No. 21.44.1.1–21.44.1.1. On raptors' role on coin depictions in general, see: Lindberger (2001).



Finnish National Museum (p. 914, Fig. 9) is not linked to more Eastern specimens.⁶³ Although the authors state that they are not experts of this material ('The authors of the present article are not aware of a survey of artefacts in the Permian style'),⁶⁴ however, this raises the question about the function of these objects in the article. This pendant type did not only extend to Perm (although as its name indicates its presence is decisive there),⁶⁵ but also to Western Siberia and the regions associated with the Samoyeds and Selkups; it is present in the territories of the Kulay Culture, the Usty-Ishim Culture, and Relkins Culture.⁶⁶ Since the article touched upon neither the archaeological material nor the later folklore of these communities, the pendants' connection to the Finnish evidence remains unclear.

The chapter then turns to the Danish evidence with the description of the remains of the Viking centre Schleswig-Haithabu and the investigation of the bone remains surfaced in 11th–14th-century Schild. The territory is not only exciting due to its presentation of one of the most important Viking centres, but also because the publications related to the sites through excavations and artefact assemblages are frequently cited in works contrasting the material of the Carpathian Basin with those of Northern Europe.

The next article deals with the gyrfalcon export of Iceland (a formerly Danish territory) and portrays how commerce worked and what its political background looked like in the early modern period. The following papers widen the geographical scope of study towards the West: they deal with early modern falconry in the Shetlands and Orkneys, followed by works on England's rich and diverse relics. Kristopher Poole analyses related zooarchaeological data from the Anglo-Saxon period to the end of the Middle Ages, while the historical aspects and sources of the matter are studied by David Horobin covering an ambitious timespan from 745 to the present day. These studies do not confine themselves to England but line up tendencies general to a wider Western area. From the side of material culture, Richard Almond's richly and colourfully illustrated study on the history of England and the islands closes the section. The chapter itself, however, ends with two pieces on Dutch falconry. One of them commemorates the settlement of Valkenswaard, where former customs and practices related to hunting birds are still nourished (such as the technique of capturing hunting birds). The other study investigates the symbolic meaning behind birds of prey depictions in medieval and early modern Dutch art.

The editors divided further parts dealing with falconry in pre-modern Europe into two subsequent chapters. The first

chapter contains studies embracing larger territories, while the second is more focused to case studies. Accordingly, in the first part, the reader gets familiar with falconry in the Iberian-peninsula, in early Russia, Estonia, and Lithuania. It is again apparent that the Northern regions are the centre of attention. José Manuel Fradejas Rueda's interpretative study of Iberian falconry closely connects to two studies of the eighth chapter (on Late Antique and Byzantine falconry), and also to Islamic falconry reviewed in the twelfth. The overview not only looks through the historical data but also devotes attention to Hispanic falconry manuals. The breadth of the topic is demonstrated by the fact that there remained no possibility for the detailed presentation of such notable remains as the equestrian falconer depiction of the Sante Fe monastery in Toledo, or the examination of the 10th-century mountain crystal prevalent in Madrid, the pomon on the surface of which raptor carvings were detected.⁶⁷ In the case of Lithuanian falconry, the readers get a glimpse of foreign impacts arriving simultaneously and from multiple directions to a given territory. Bones of birds of prey are already found in Lithuania from the Mesolithic, nevertheless using raptors for hunting is a later, medieval development. This example highlights that the custom of hunting with raptors in a given territory is subject to change in the light of new trends. It is also thought-provoking how these different layers built on each other and supplemented/alterd previous habits. It could be fruitful to examine in the future – maybe also in relation to the Hungarian material – that birds imported from other regions perhaps resulted in the introduction of new training or hunting methods. Birds of prey remains in Estonia can be dated to the Vendel period, and according to the investigation in the present article, they should be attributed to the Northern contacts of the territory, since the environment they surface from was populated by Scandinavian groups.⁶⁸ The study of Andrei V. Zinoviev dealing with the Russian material well supplements the data on the early Rus' (in chapter 9), and that of Kristiina Mannermaa's. The article reviews images, numismatic data, and artefacts related to falconry in Russia. The last part of the chapter summarizes the medieval Western European traditions of falconry and would serve as a suitable basis of comparison for Hungarian research if ever the Carpathian Basin's medieval or Renaissance material is to be contrasted with Western contemporaries.

The remaining articles in the 'specific studies' chapter further tincture our views on medieval Europe. The Quedlinburg grave goods form the subject of a paper in this section. The mentioned piece is not only a hallmark of the cognitive background of the issue but also on the relation of falconry to women. To what extent such assemblages may be regarded as part of power symbolics of the 5th–6th centuries, is an intriguing question. Another aspect of the same question is dissected by Cliff A. Jost in his study of a female

⁶³Based on Eero Autio's description, the Finnish specimen were acquired through purchase into the collection. Autio (2001) 165–67.

⁶⁴Frog and Laakso (2018) 915, n. 69.

⁶⁵Gribova (1975); Cat. Perm (1988); Oyateva (2003); Lepihin (2007); Belavin et al. (2009); Ignatieva (2009); Kulyabina (2013); Ehrenburg (2014).

⁶⁶For further information, see: Sedov (1987) 193–235; Chindina (1991) 59–62, 113–115; Chindina (2003).

⁶⁷García (2019).

⁶⁸See also: Price et al. (2016).



grave near Koblenz containing a disc-shaped metal brooch with a falconer depiction.

Ralf Bleile's and Wolf-Rüdiger Teegen's studies take the famous 10th-century finds of Starigrad/Oldenburger as a starting point. The former gives an overview of the material remains, while the latter summarizes the archaeozoological results. Ralf Bleile's article also contains the analysis of small-scale minted bronze bells used to hang on the legs of the birds. This object type is relevant also for Hungarian research, as is shown by the secondary literature produced on the subject some decades ago.⁶⁹ A newer comprehensive study of these specimens in the Carpathian Basin is still awaited,⁷⁰ however, Bleile's study perhaps will boost such endeavours, even if pieces in the Carpathian Basin are more connected to parts of the attire rather than to animals *per se* as the Oldenburger finds.

A Polish team, overviewing Poland's connected remains also takes place in the chapter. One of them is an iconographic interpretation of the tombstones of the Polish king, Władysław II Jagiełło, buried in the 15th century, and Agnieszka Samsonowicz's writing on the 10th–16th-century evidence. The analysis performed by Zbigniew M. Bochenski and his colleagues contains comprehensive statistical data sets and thus would rather belong to the overall studies section. Its inclusion here well demonstrates the editorial dilemma of how to arrange this large number of outstanding articles in intact units.

The next article on the mosaic fragments of the Late Antique Portugal Mértola is organically linked to Rueda's overview just mentioned above. Virgílio Lopes did not only supplement José Manuel Fradejas Rueda's work on the remains of the southern parts of the Iberian-peninsula but also called attention to the Mértola mosaics' Tunisian parallels, pursuing closer links with the North-African region referenced in the overview. Baudouin Van den Abeele's article is next, which addresses the oft-discussed topic of medieval Western European falconry but manages to provide a wider spectrum on the golden age of European falconry. There are separate papers on how French poems and Tristan romances treat this kind of hunting. Martina Giese's work summarizes and also amends current research dealing with Emperor Fredric II's writings on the subject. The paper indeed bears relevance to current research, as in the last one and half decades the emperor's actions received ample treatment in scholarly literature. In 2008, even an exhibition was organized around the emperor's life and his age in Oldenburg.⁷¹

From a Hungarian point of view the papers of Péter Kasza and Jürgen Udolph are especially relevant and should be addressed in detail. The Szegedian philologist continued Ádám Bollók's work and summarized the data from the Middle Ages of the Hungarian Kingdom. The article

introduces a parcel of the Árpád-Age evidence, briefly discusses a hunting episode preserved in the *Chronicon Pictum*'s miniatures featuring a falcon (which played a symbolic role in the feud between King Coloman the Learned and Prince Álmos), then moves on to toponymic data. Despite referencing the most comprehensive work produced on the history of hunting in the medieval Hungarian kingdom by László Zolnay, the author of the present piece failed to include many of the rich and colourful material discussed by the former. In addition, the authenticity of the ones he nevertheless included was already debated by contemporary medievalists in Zolnay's age. Such examples concern the toponymic data. In contrast to Zolnay, György Györfly (one of the most noted Hungarian medievalist of the mid-20th century) argued that villages named as 'Sólyomkő, Ölyven, Ölyved, Karvalyos, Kerecseny, Sasvár, Szakoly, Szakolcza, etc.' were in fact not falconer settlements.⁷² It would have been also fruitful to consult Györfly's other works concerning falconer settlements and toponyms.⁷³ The author briefly mentions the Bajcsavár find (investigated by Erika Gál), but does not address other remains from Tiszalök-Rázom and Pilisszentkereszt (discussed in László Bartosiewicz's work which is otherwise referenced in the article),⁷⁴ and more importantly omits the 14th-century Feldegg falcon surfaced in the Teleki palace of Buda.⁷⁵ In the author's defence, it has to be accentuated that his main focus did not lie on the archaeological evidence, but the international network of Hungarian falconry literature. This he captured through a 14th–15th-century and an 18th-century example, both of which help to situate this cultural tradition in a wider geographical framework. The earlier example elaborates on the master of falconers in Louis the Great's court, Ladislaus Hungarus, whose manual on falconry was mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Kasza thoroughly examines on philological grounds how the German medieval writer Eberhard Hicfelt got a hand on the Hungarian treaty, and what kind of relationship can be assumed between Hicfelt's *Aucupatorium heroidorum* and the Hungarian royal court. The second part of the article deals with the acclaimed historian, György Pray's didactic poetry on falconry as a form of hunting. The poetry was produced in the 18th century when this tradition eventually became less frequented in the country. This was a turning point, as falconry's literary and historical representations gave rise to a modern cult related to birds of prey. The fading hunting tradition thus reincarnated in symbolic terms, and hunting with birds of prey (and raptors in general) became enrolled in a national pantheon of Hungarian historical traditions.

The other article with a Hungarian contact point is Jürgen Udolph's summary of German and Slavic toponyms connected to falconry and the capture of birds. Despite the title, the author does not only investigate the mentioned two Indo-European languages, but the non-Indo-European

⁶⁹Szóke (1962) 59–61; Kovács (1988) 150.

⁷⁰For the object type's specimen from the Carpathian Basin (from graves) see the following collection: Kovács (2019) 402.

⁷¹Cat. Oldenburg (2008).

⁷²Györfly (1972) 275. n. 36.

⁷³In connection to this, see: Györfly I–IV; Györfly (1972) 302.

⁷⁴Bartosiewicz (2012) 183.

⁷⁵Gál (2008) 111–112.



Hungarian linguistic relics as well. In this regard, his starting point was Jakab Schenk Vönöczky's two-part article and György Györffy's study from 1976.⁷⁶ As it is apparent from the article, Udolph had no opportunity to consult fresher Hungarian literature on the subject, and accordingly could not touch upon several upcoming questions (for instance the above-mentioned problematics of falcon terminology in toponyms). In addition, it is questionable whether settlement names taken from Györffy's study, such as the allegedly Bulgarian *daróc*, the thought-to-be Slavic *vadász*, *Lóc* and *Lócs*, all marked on the map accompanying the article, have anything to add to the interpretation of evidence on falconry. By now, a consensus has been reached that these names cannot be linked to falconry, but only to hunting in general.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the paper's discussion on German personal names is an exciting experiment: he concludes that personal names etymologically related to falcons (e.g. Falke, Astfalk) are popular in areas with a long tradition of falconry. This comparative method could certainly be employed also to the Hungarian material.

The twelfth is the last chapter, which paints a panorama of falconry's past in the non-European world. Naturally, it could not touch upon all relevant questions, despite it ambitiously covering all important regions in 300 pages. The analysis starts with the remains of the Ancient Orient. Karin Reiter's three studies in this issue were published previously and are still among the classics of the field. The everlasting value of these works is demonstrated by the fact that it was still worth translating them to English even 30 years after their publications. Reiter's pieces well connect to (and supplement) David A. Warburton's Egyptological study mentioned above (chapter 4), which also included Anatolian examples. These could perhaps only be complemented with the newer archaeozoological study of Keith Dobney. Dobney's work further strengthens the assumption that falconry was already practiced in the Ancient Orient.⁷⁸ Reiter's analysis also highlights that during the 'first empires', birds' cultic role was more eminent in the region than in later periods.

Susanne Görke and Ekin Kozal, the authors of the next article, focus on Anatolia's relics in the times of the Hittites, and the period preceding it. They sometimes dispute Reiter's standpoint, and apart from acknowledging the cultic role played by birds of prey, also emphasize these animals' functional role in hunting.

The next in row is Paul A. Yule's monstrous piece (amounting to 75 pages with images) describing the roots of Arabic falconry. The almost monographic work does not only expound on the current state of research but renders a detailed overview of the geographic surroundings, the different modes of hunting, and the developments of how falconry became a status marker after the Islamic conquests.

Anna Akasoy examined the role of falconry in Arabic literature and other sources. She maintains that 'we need to be clear about terminology: falconry as hunting with birds is one thing, and falconry as part of the royal hunt – that is, high cultural practice – is another. Akasoy also illustrates how this complex system was built up and formed an integral segment of cultural practices, including (apart from hunting) several related tasks such as acquisition, upbringing, nurturing, and healing of birds. The following study, written by Touraj Daryaee and Soodabeh Malekzadeh, combines the focus on the Ancient Orient and the Islamic expansion and takes a look at the tradition in both places and eras. Their article makes important points, such as that raptors became the symbols of sovereign reign already during the reign of the Achaemenids or that falconry appeared only in the Sassanid period in the region. They also outlined the tradition's development during the Islamic era. The question was grabbed by Ulrich Schapka from a different angle. He examined linguistic data in various languages (Avestan, Pahlavi, New Persian) from a semantic point of view, and concluded that the vocabulary of falconry reflects historical processes in the area (e.g. an increase of falconry terminology upon the Islamic conquests likely equals with the custom becoming widespread in Persia). It is not incidental to highlight that the author is one of the most inaugurated experts of the topic, continuously dealing with it since defending his PhD dissertation on Persian bird names (*Die persischen Vogelname*) in 1972. The caveats of Sassanian sources are noted by the next study. Leor Jacobi focuses on one of the often-referenced accounts, the Babylonian Talmud, discussed also in Touraj Daryaee and Soodabeh Malekzadeh's paper. The latter argued that this source proves the existence of Sassanian falconry. Jacobi's opinion rather differs on the matter, illustrating that some of the questions are still open for discussion in the field.

Other studies of the chapter penetrate even further East. The next three articles are devoted to Chinese falconry. The work of Leslie Wallace concentrates on the examination of the early data. Her research persuasively argues that falconry in China was adopted from the steppe, and became popular first among Han-period elite circles. Wallace's writing follows the developments until the 5th century and the later events from the 6th up to the 14th century taken up by Fangyi Cheng. The last article dealing with China investigates the Chinese terminology of falconry. After China, studies focusing on Korean and Japanese falconry follow. The chapter closes with the dispel of a misconception; José Manuel Fradejas Rueda clarifies that there existed no pre-Hispanic, aboriginal tradition of falconry in America.

In most regards, one can only praise the four volumes in glowing terms. As far as my expertise allows me to judge, all authors and all articles evince a high scientific quality. The vast amount of processed secondary literature further directs the reader interested in detailed discussions of certain problems and themes. The volumes offer this further guidance in an almost equal covering of the different periods and geographical locations. Images in the volumes are carefully edited and chosen (especially in the case of

⁷⁶Györffy (1976).

⁷⁷Zolnay (1971); Györffy (2000) 240, 427–428.

⁷⁸Dobney (2002).



historical studies), and documentary photos vividly capture the beauty of the method of hunting with birds. Maps are usually handy however I sometimes felt that a bit more thoughtful editing would not have hurt. Two examples connected to the Carpathian Basin should suffice here. The map to Péter Kasza's study showing Árpád-Age (11th–13th century) place names is drawn on modern state boundaries and uses modern orientation points such as the present capital Budapest (established in 1873). It would have been more appropriate to utilize a map showing the boundaries of the Árpád-Age kingdom of Hungary, similar to the one used in Jürgen Udolph's article on page 1615. Nevertheless, even the latter article has pitfalls in this regard. On page 1604, the explanatory map contains a schematic geographic division of the different languages however it utilizes modern state boundaries which is incomprehensible with the article's focus on medieval linguistic evidence. Even more questionable is to mark modern state territories (such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Romania) as linguistically homogeneous when they are not, and were not either during the Middle Ages (enough to think about the number of national minorities living in one or the other of these places). Apart from these minor inaccuracies, good-quality maps are characteristics of the volumes in general: of these, the ones prepared for Agnieszka Samsonowicz's, Robert Nedoma's, and José Manuel Fradejas Rueda's articles are especially recommended.

All in all, the editors managed to come up with a manual-like series, without which no history of falconry can be written in the future. Their work probably had an international impetus, felt also by the publication of an also rich and meaningful Polish volume in the subject.⁷⁹ And the work has merely begun... In 2020, with similarly high-quality contents, the sequel of the presently reviewed volumes has been published.⁸⁰ We can only hope that it will be followed by newer and similarly rich and serious conferences and syntheses.

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⁷⁹Szymak and Sianko (2016).

⁸⁰Gersmann et al. (2020).



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