Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen

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INTRODUCTION

Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen is considered to be the foremost falconer of all time (Burns 1944, others?). His major treatise on falconry and principal literary product of his life, *De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus*, was written during "the mature years of his reign" following "thirty years of preparation for the task" (Wood and Fythe, 1945). Created primarily between the years 1244 and 1250, the work has maintained not only a biblical stature among falconers worldwide but "has long been recognized as the first zoological treatise written in the critical spirit of modern science" (Shearer, 1935).
THEORY

Fundamental Premise

The Emperor’s fundamental belief about falconry is clear from the title of Book I, Chapter I of the text, *Falconry Is An Art More Noble Than Other Forms of Hunting*. Here he classified all hunting into three categories “that in which inanimate instruments are employed; that in which live animals are trained to catch other live animals; and that in which combinations of the first two are used.” The first category included the use of “nets, snares, slings, bows, arrows, and numerous other instruments.” The second employed “dogs, leopards, minks, and other four-footed beasts, as well as birds of prey.” Frederick gave numerous examples of the third category which employed combinations of the first two. He referred to the “noble character of falconry” and believed it, “more worthy than other forms of hunting.” He thought a practitioner of falconry “will in this way learn more about the secrets of nature than if he followed other kinds of venery” and further that falconry “does not commend itself to the majority because skill in it is difficult to acquire and because it is more refined.”

The birds used in falconry, Frederick wrote, “are indeed more noble instruments of the chase than inanimate objects or trained quadrupeds.” Other forms of hunting “are less noble because they depend merely upon the use of artificial implements,” “or they are carried on by means of more footed animals.” Quadrupeds, he pointed out, are slower, more easily domesticated, less “wild and shy,” “limited to the earth’s surface,” more “readily caught” than birds of prey which “can be captured and trained only by finesse.” He concluded, “not only that the art of falconry presents greater difficulties but requires more unusual skill than do other forms of venery.”

Frederick was keenly aware of the “inborn antipathy” birds of prey show toward mankind; “yet by means of this noble art one may learn how to overcome this natural aversion, to win their confidence, and to induce them even to seek those they previously avoided” (Book I, Chapter 1). He set forth the premise that birds of prey can be taught to go beyond what they do in natural conditions and “hunt and capture even such birds as cranes, bustards, geese, and other large game birds that are big and strong, and beyond those they capture alone in their wild state, as well as to take smaller quarry not only in their natural fashion but more often than is effected by other methods.”

For the above stated reasons, Frederick was a most passionate and dedicated falconer. He pointed out that: “Any dabbler in venery can readily hold in leash or let fly those types of quadrupeds but in the pursuit of falconery no tyro can so easily join in the chase, either to carry his birds or to throw them off at the quarry. Falcons and other hawks are rendered clumsy or entirely unmanagable if placed under control of an ignorant interloper. By using his hearing and eyesight alone an ignoramus may learn something about other kinds of hunting in a short time; but an experienced teacher and frequent exercise of the art properly directed no one, noble or ignoble, could ever overcome without an experienced teacher and frequent exercise of the art properly directed no one, noble or ignoble, could ever overcome this problem.” Frederick II obviously believed a complete knowledge of avian natural history and behavior was requisite to successful falconry. He once again affirmed, “it is not everyone who can qualify for the practice of falconry; only an indefatigable, enthusiastic lover of it, who is fitted for the sport at the same time by instinct and by training, can succeed in it.”

Chapter XLVII of Book II is titled, *Of Falconers and Their Qualifications,* and here he went into detail on the topic. Physical and mental attributes discussed include being “of medium size,” “moderately shapely,” “diligent and persevering,” and in possession of “marked sagacity.” Other essential qualities include “a retentive memory,” “good eyesight,” “hearing should be acute,” “a good carrying voice,” being “alert and agile,” “of a dar- ing spirit” and “able to swim.” The falconer “should not be too young” and “have reached manhood’s estate,” “not be a sleephead, nor a heavy sleeper” and “should not be the slave of his stomach.” “A drunkard is useless.” “A bad temper is a grave failing” and “laziness and neglect in an art that requires so much work and attention are absolutely prohibited.” As is true throughout his work, Frederick II provided ample reasoning to substantiate his claims.

Health

The ability of a falconer to maintain good health in his birds was of paramount importance to the Emperor “because their usefulness depends upon it; and he must learn how to treat birds that become ill” (Book II, Authors Preface). In Book II, Chapter 15, Frederick II wrote, “a work of this kind in its very nature involves a study of waterfowl, neutral birds, and land birds, captors as well as harmless species.” Frederick II obviously believed a complete knowledge of avian natural history and behavior was requisite to successful falconry. He once again affirmed, “it is not everyone who can qualify for the practice of falconry; only an indefatigable, enthusiastic lover of it, who is fitted for the sport at the same time by instinct and by training, can succeed in it.”

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The Primary Aspiration, and Aims of True Falconers

In one relatively concise, and brilliant piece of prose found in the *Author’s Preface* to Book II, Emperor Frederick II made what could well be the most profound statement ever written to identify the true essence of falconry. He wrote, “The falconer’s primary aspiration should be to possess hunting birds that he has trained himself, to his own ingenuity to capture the quarry he desires in the manner he prefers. The actual taking of prey should be a secondary consideration.” These direct yet eloquent words pierce straight into the heart of the falconry. According to the Emperor, is much more than taking quarry with a bird of prey. The hunting bird must be somehow convinced by the falconer to hunt not only the specific quarry he selects but also in a certain way, and...
which he favors. This is indeed a remarkable accomplishment, for it often runs contrary to the falcon’s natural propensities. The falconer must possess a deep understanding of the falcon’s physical and mental constitution, a similar thorough knowledge of the selected quarry and also recognize how both will behave and interact in a wide variety of hunting situations. We will return to a further discussion of this outstandingly simple but visionary statement when comparing the Emperor’s theory and practice with modern falconry.

Chapter XLVIII of Book II is titled, Of Classes of Falconers and of the Aims of the True Falconer. Here the Emperor focused clearly on his subject. The first five paragraphs are quoted in entirety below.

"Falconers may be divided into several categories. The chief object of some is to use as food the avian and (occasionally) ground game which their falcons capture. This quarry they eat avidly or make other profitable use thereof. Others think neither of their stomach nor of mere gain, but only of the enjoyment of securing a satisfactory flight for their birds. Others, again, boast and talk about the number of birds their falcons seize. Still others have no pleasure in such activities, but preserve them in good health and in proper training. He who realizes the essentials of a noble art. He is the one who realizes properly and, in doing so, touch upon the different instruments used by various people, as well as the diverse methods employed by them for training purposes. When we have emphasized this, I shall be able to select and adopt the best."

As with his emphasis on good health in birds used for falconry, the Emperor’s “primary aspiration” and “aims of the true falconer” identified above are apparent throughout the practice of his art. This will be seen more clearly when reading the section that briefly reviews methods used to develop gyrfalcons for flights at cranes.

The Nature of Gyrfalcons

There is no question that Emperor Frederick II valued gyrfalcons for use in falconry more highly than all other kinds of falcons. In the Author’s Preface to Book III he wrote: “And since the gyrfalcon is the most magnificent of its race, as was demonstrated in Book II of this work, we shall begin with a consideration of that falcon and, in doing so, make brilliant flights is difficult to imagine in mind a desire to see his birds make brilliant flights is difficult to satisfy and is tempted to spur them on to intolerable exertions that are sure to weaken them - a policy that is childish and not correct in its technique.

The third class must also be censured because they are likely to overstep the mark of good falconry and misuse their birds. It is only the fourth group that is to be fully approved. A falconer in this class secures the best hunting of merely gain, but only of quarry they eat avidly or their falcons capture. This

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At the very core of his art in both theory and practice stood the noble gyrfalcon. Perhaps the most revealing quote in the entire work regarding how the Emperor viewed gyrfalcons in relation to all others is found in Book IV at the end of Chapter XXXVIII that is titled, Of Coursers and How to Deal with Them. Here he wrote the following: “although we have singled out the gyrfalcon as the crane-falcon par excellence, the fact must not be overlooked that we are very easily taught to hunt everything that any other falcon can chase and with greater stiffness, since she excels in courage, power, and speed. By whatever method other falcons are taught to capture any bird the tracker be instructed even more expeditiously to do the same.”

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PRACTICE

Introduction

The monumental work of the Emperor Frederick II actually consists of six separate books, and Books II - VI dealt specifically with the practice of his art. Here we carefully but briefly deal with Books II - IV which cover precisely the topics that their titles proclaim: Book II, Of Falcons Used in Hunting, Their Furniture, Care, and Manning, 80 chapters; Book III, On the Use of the Lance; on Training Falcons to Fly in a Cast; on Educating Gyrfalcons to Fly at Cranes; and on Hounds Used in Falconry, 28 chapters; and Book IV, Crane Hawking with Gerfalcons and Other Falcons, 29 chapters. Selected from discussion are small bits of the Emperor’s practice considered most relevant to the focus of our current work on gyrfalcons. Readers are encouraged to refer to De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus by Emperor Frederick II, published directly for a thorough study of the Emperor’s theory and practice of falconry.

Proper Age to Take Falcons and Feeding

The Author emphasized obtaining young falcons from their eyries from taking eggs to various aged “nestlings and the so-called branchers” (Book II, Chapter XXX). He clearly believed the older they were taken from the eyrie the better in terms of proper development, strength, and overall health of the individual. He did not think man could raise young nestlings without impairing growth and causing other defects. Methods of feeding and raising young were used that simulated natural conditions as closely as possible, and he recommended that falconers “observe the feeding methods of the mother bird, for her system of nourishing her young is far better than any one man may devise, and it should therefore be adopted” (Book II, Chapter XXXIII). He also discouraged catching falcons on migration, their wintering ground, or when they return to nesting areas in spring, and noted that both hens and adult birds can be taken (Book II, Chapter XXXI).
Luring and Use of the Creance

The first fifteen chapters of Book III above and basic principles used throughout the Emperor’s practice are clear. During training, he provided meaningful rewards with confidence in the falcon, but also anticipation and eagerness to behave in the desired manner when given the opportunity to do so. For example, in Chapter II titled On Various Classes of Falcons Who, Reprehensibly, Do Not Use Creance. He listed several reasons why forgoing the lure misleads the falcon into problem behaviors. Employing live pigeons or chickens regularly to call back a falcon will, among other maladies, cause the falcon to come to the lure “more willing to return to her master than to attack a crane.” When training a falcon to come to the lure he used meat, “we have observed the falcon to enjoy most.” He tied this to both sides of the lure “so that no matter upon which side it falls to the ground there is meat in evidence,” and he took carefully outlined steps to make sure the falcon “will be fairly eager for food.” After establishing a pattern of consistent response, the Emperor strengthened desired behaviors with suitable rewards while guiding the falcon toward envisioned goals. He wrote, “owing to the favorable experience, she will come a longer distance to the lure.”

The basic technique of reinforcing actions that gradually merge and develop a certain course. In his steady focus on safety, health, and continual orchestration of favorable experiences that build confidence in the falcon, based on meaningful rewards that guide the developing hunting partner along a selected course.

Flying in a Cast

Considerable insight into falcon psychology and handling methods can be gleaned from the Emperor’s discussion of flying birds in a cast (Chapters XVI - XVIII). Gyrfalcons and sakers were “most frequently taught to take large birds, in whose capture cooperation is more necessary than in hunting small hares.” Falcons that few in a cast learned their lessons with the “hare train” and “crane train” more easily than others, but the Emperor pointed out that “Some birds can be flown together and some cannot,” and also “that there are fewer gryphalcons and sakers that fly well together than of any other species.” He further revealed that “neither her actions nor her appearance may indicate a falcon’s disposition to collaborate; because some birds will sit quietly together on the same perch yet cannot be flown in a cast and will not associate in other ways. On the other hand, falcons that fly well together do not always agree to remain on the same perch and to live harmoniously otherwise. They must be taught not to quarrel, and the best method of doing this is to fly them in unison to the lure.”

The Emperor explained how to recognize when the falcon is ready for her first free flight without the creance, how to lure from foot, horseback, and many other related topics. Countless other practices could be used for the purpose of illustration, but those outlined above are sufficient examples of his steady focus on safety, health, and continual orchestration of favorable experiences that build confidence in the falcon, based on meaningful rewards that guide the developing hunting partner along a selected course.

Regarding kinds of food to use he believed birds were more suitable “than quadrupeds” (Book II, Chapter XXXIII) and that: “Wild birds (especially those that feed on grain and fruit) furnish more sustenance and better food than those of the barnyard. Wild fowl that eat meat, particularly worms, are less nourishing. The flesh of birds that feed on fish is the least desirable. Young falcons should be given the flesh of domestic fowl, like hens and pigeons, only when it is impossible to secure birds of the fields, such as [wild] pigeons, doves, thrushes, larks, wrens, partridges, and other small birds that are generally considered good as food.”

He further wrote: “the flesh of domestic animals does not agree with the growing falcon as well as that of wilduder birds, which latter animals live in less pure air and contain no less suitable food than their wild counterparts. The former also get less exercise and searching for food, and have more superfluous fat.”

Handling Techniques, Equipment, and Influence

With few exceptions, most of the techniques and equipment identified in Book II have been well known to falconers since his reign and up to today.
view, he encouraged non-cooperative falcons to focus their attention on a hare “because a falcon bears greater resemblance to an avian lure than to a quadruped hare.” When confident on the hare train, he fastened the falcon and flew her at the crane at an experienced “make falcon” achieved the desired collaboration repetitively, lowered her weight once again, and then encouraged the falcon with an agreeable partner at cranes.

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Building Power and Courage

After explaining lure and teaching falcons to fly in a cast, the Emperor outlined his procedures for “instructing falcons to capture quary. As gyrfalcons always take precedence in our consideration, and as they must be taught by methods that vary according to their individual characteristics, we shall discuss the procedure of the gyrfalcon” (Chapter XIX). He reviews eyases and those “taken wild after leaving the nest” both before and after the moult and the training methods from long journeys are discussed; and he recommended several prerequisites on rest based on specified individual characteristics “so that they may recover their strength and keenness.” He noted that “An eyas is less harmed by hard handling than a wild caught falcon,” and this was “primarily because they are more accustomed to captivity.”

Key to success in his program was establishing a solid foundation of physical and mental health in the gyrfalcon, and this could require a full year or more of careful handling after acquiring the bird. The Emperor recognized that “Power and courage are two qualities required in gyrfalcons if they are to make good hunters. To be powerless they must be sound in health and must be and must have been well treated. Their courage is derived from a virile will power. For this, also careful handling is essential, for improper treatment may render them inactive and awkward.”

When the gyrfalcon was strong and big enough to begin training for hunting, the first step was to fly her at hares. Detailed instructions explain how to encourage pursuit of the hare train including using meat found at counterfeit hare, how to pull this dummy on foot and from horseback, and the employment of hounds. Skilled assistants were required throughout the process. The Emperor’s preference for using a hare rather than a goose, bustard, or other bird at this preliminary stage of development is that no other flight is more beautiful or more resembles the flight at a more than that learned with a hare.” He further explained that it is undesirable to have the gyr chase these other birds when hunting cranes. He recommended flying hares at small plants, and thicket,” which taught the gyr “to throw up to greater heights - a necessary accomplishment in crane hawking.”

The Crane Train

Chapter XXII to XXVII deal specifically with the highly refined process of instructing the gyrfalcon with the crane train. It began by lowering the falcon’s weight, and “Those birds that are naturally more eager and courageous have less need of being reduced than those that lack this spirit and keenness.” The gyrfalcon was adjusted based on her “eagerness to fly, taking care to maintain her strength. The Emperor explained it “necessary to have her thinner when flown at a train than when entered to free-flying hares or hares.”

The Emperor provided elaborate and specific instructions for how they may recover their strength and keenness as a train. The crane’s claws are blunted not with a knife but “are charred by means of a lighted wood.” The tips (needle-like) points are blunted and thickened; then when the crane strikes no serious injury is inflicted on the falcon.”

Frederick then described how to carry a strong crane in a close slist between two sticks and explained: “The crane’s efforts to escape, the carrying about, and the bending of its legs in the sling, which causes pain in the knees, all contribute to stupefy and weaken the bird to a point where it can be utilized in the train.”

The Emperor then provided specific instructions for placing leather straps like jesses on each leg which join to a two-foot cord: “the opposite end of which is fastened to a single cord at least ten paces long and the size of the shaft of a goose quill.” Further regulating an iron stake a foot in length with a sharp point and a head large enough and flattened laterally to provide a hole the size of a man’s thumb.”

After making all the above preparations, the Emperor described clearly how to set everything up in a “meadow or a flat grassy place where the herbage is short and sparse.” Meat to entice the falcon was tied to a “counterfeit hare,” and sometimes done before moult preparations, the Emperor described thoroughly how to proceed from this starting point in the use of the crane train for the gyrfalcon’s education. In gradual way, the train began to resemble a strong, wild bird as the gyrfalcon developed positive association with the crane’s quary and confidence in flying and catching cranes.

As a further exercise of the thoroughness of the Emperor’s methods, he clearly explained how to make a dead crane call “to teach a falcon to recognize the call of the crane.” After describing how to make the incision and draw out the voice box, he instructed “the falconer should then grasp the end of the pulmonary tube and blow into it, inflating the lungs and tracthea with air. Taking care not to allow the air to escape between his fingers, let him pinch the end of the larynx, near his mouth, and remove it from his lips. When he wishes to imitate the voice of the live crane, he can only compress the sides of the bird and release the end of the tube held in his fingers. The crane will then emit the same call as the live one.”
When being rewarded with a good meal following a successful flight at the train, this was done to build a positive association with the crane’s voice. He even had an assistant move the crane’s wing “to make her think the quarry is still alive and giving voice.”

The falconer was expected to release the gyr at the crane when it flew and not before. Assistants were instructed to remain still until the gyr passed by them, then chase and be ready to assist the gyr by restraining the crane’s feet. Movement from an assistant too soon could cause the gyr to fly to him for food. Falconers were advised to vary training spots and not use the same ground more than twice in a row to prevent them from becoming wary. The falconer was expected to fly the selected birds boldly and if necessary, assist the gyr by allowing them to do so. The gyr must never be given a weak train, for this leads to bad habits.

The Emperor’s procedure in using the crane train was clearly to make the gyr “become so habituated to good results that in case she fails, through lack of assistance or some accident, to capture a crane at which she is flown, she will not thereby be rendered overcautious without practice with a train, for she would then have no memories of former happy experiences.”

CRANE HAWKING

Primary Requisites

Following his discussion of the train and using hounds to assist the falcon, the Emperor began Book IV titled On the Education of the Gerfalcon. Here he pointed out that although some courageous falcons will attack wild cranes without preparing them with the train, it could be a big mistake to allow them to do so. The gyr may be injured, discouraged, and “the oftener she is flown at a crane in this fashion the less eager she will be to fly at such quarry.” This forced the falconer to revert to using a train, but the gyr quickly recognized the weakened and easy crane and had already learned that the wild crane is “much stronger.” He explained how “in this manner she develops the bad habit of refusing to fly at a wild crane, since she is able to distinguish it from that used in the train. For this reason it is only before they are entered to wild cranes or other large birds that the train is useful in giving instruction to both timid and courageous falcons.”

In the previous chapter, he had already pointed out that “having once flew her at a strong crane, she must never been a weak quarry; for this leads to bad habits.”

The system of the train was clearly to make the gyr “become so habituated to good results that in case she fails, through lack of assistance or some accident, to capture a crane at which she is flown, she will not thereby be rendered overcautious without practice with a train, for she would then have no memories of former happy experiences.”

These are the nature of the locality, the direction of the wind, the provision of dogs for co-operation in the hunt, and the nature of the aid he himself and his fellow falconers can bring to the falcon. The last-named assistance is indispensable because, though the crane, strong and dangerous, may inflict only a single wound on the falcon, that wound may prove to be a serious handicap. He continued: “In this form of the chase, there must be at least four men in addition to the falconer, or falconers, who are to fly their birds. If there are more, all the better. They must be mounted on fast horses, and each man should if possible be accompanied by a trained hound. It is absolutely necessary to have at least one dog; and any number up to four is desirable.” He pointed out that it is essential for the falconer to “first of all make himself familiar with the entire region in which he intends to go crane hawking.”

To Proceed

Chapters X-XII go into detail about posting assistants in various circumstances including: On the Posting of Assistants on an Open Plain, On hoe the Mounted Falconer Separates Two or Three Cranes from a Flock, On the Equipment Suitable for a Falconer Hunting Cranes, On the Position of the Falconer on a Plain Where There Are Impediments to the Hunt, Both in a Breeze and When the Air is Quiet, and On Posting Assistants on a Hillside Under Various Conditions of Wind and Terrain. Chapters XIII-XVI then explain where the falconer should position himself: On the Position of the Falconer in a Breeze on a Plain without Obstacles; On the Post of the Falconer in a Breeze on a Plain with Obstacles; On the Position of the Falconer on a
The gyrfalcon was rewarded well with food either for training, not crane hawking. The Emperor did not, as is commonly believed, routinely fly a cast of gyrfalcons at cranes. Flying birds together was done primarily to show a novice in training what was expected. Chapters XXIII and XXIV cover this topic in detail. The experienced make hawk was slipped at the cranes before the kill. Specific instructions on how to accomplish this successfully based on the experience and characteristics of each bird are provided. A primary concern, as always, was preventing harm to either falcon. The goal was to develop an admirable performer that would take cranes alone. He advised against flying birds "continuously together, for if they fly unintentionally in a cast they develop bad habits. When one falcon expects always to be assisted by the other she loses her desire to fly alone." Again he pointed out, "gyrfalcons and sakers are among those that are least willing to fly double." He recommended that neither, "should, as a rule, be flown in a cast." In comparison he mentioned, "peregrines and noble falcons, who are not so strong or competent in taking their prey as gyrfalcons and sakers, may be flown as many as three together with good results; and the cranes will be unable to escape." 

Flight Characteristics

In chapters XXV and XXVI, the Emperor described the various modes of flight displayed by falcons entered to, first standing cranes and then cranes on passage. He talked about a high, low, and moderate approach, flying fast or slowly, and following a "direct or an indirect line." The advantages and disadvantages of each were then analyzed. He concluded that "lusty flights over flying cranes are the most laudable and promising, for the falcon whose pitch is high dominates the crane wherever it may be and does not permit it to fly far off. She can stoop harder and, after the stoop, rebound to greater heights, giving an exhibition of beautiful and elegant flying. She is less exposed to injury, since she can dominate the crane and not allow it to fly wherever it pleases or to travel far from the falconer's assistants, from whom she may receive help." The gyrfalcon would either "bind to" its quarry or "force it to earth, but neither bird to nor hold it." Some falcons would circle above the grounded crane, others would land nearby and watch the quarry. Binding to and fighting with the crane was not preferred because "the falcon cannot battle with the crane without sooner or later receiving an injury from her quarry." Both favorable and unfavorable
The art of modern falconry has been practiced by Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, who is known for his great power of these magnificent birds as revealed during Frederick II’s reign became for the most part a lost art. It is ironic that the advent of captive breeding combined with the use of imprinted birds led to modern grand flights with gyrfalcons. These are new methods unknown to the ancients. Captive breeding and the employment of imprinted gyrfalcons for high, single-flights at game created a new paradigm in a truly ancient art. Related excitement inspired the renaissance in falconry with gyrfalcons.

**Use of Gyrfalcons and Handling Methods**

Although gyrfalcons are valued higher than all other species today in monetary terms, for practical reasons in the third group and judge their accomplishments by the numbers of quarry taken. This emphasis also can abuse birds by pushing them beyond healthy limits. Only a few falconers in modern times achieve the fourth level of practice where the primary goal is to have well-trained birds in peak condition that earn distinction and supremacy in the chase. The falconer’s reward at this prestigious level is deep appreciation of a magnificent predator interacting with challenging prey and is unrelated to social or material gain. It also has nothing to do with the kind of hawk flown and can be achieved with merlins on starlings, Cooper’s hawks on quail, goshawks on snipe, and peregrines on red grouse, and countless others as well as with gyrfalcons on sage grouse.

**Cultural Appreciation of Falconry**

Cultural appreciation of falconry has recently been showcased in a new paradigm in a truly ancient art. Related excitement inspired the renaissance in falconry with gyrfalcons.

**Modern Falconry Compared with the Emperor’s Art**

Modern falconers are typically not as discriminating nor refined in their aesthetics as Emperor Frederick II, who, as stated by Burns (1944), “combined the practical talents and experience of the expert falconer with powers of observation and insight that made him the most gifted naturalist of his time.” Prominent modern examples of falconer/naturalists include Frank and John Craighead. These identical twin brothers made many important contributions to wildlife biology, the conservation of wild and scenic rivers, and even as wilderness patrol trainers for the United States Armed Forces. Another good example is the falconer led recovery of peregrine falcons, the first bird ever to be removed from the United States List of Endangered Species. The Peregrine Fund founded by Tom and John Craighead was primarily responsible for the peregrine falcon recovery. Most persons involved with this effort were former falconers who merged thousands of years of applied technology from their art with modern environmental science. Their phenomenal successes worldwide confirm that falconry continues to advance the naturalist’s aims.

**Attributes and Aspirations of Falconers**

The attributes of good falconers outlined by Frederick II hold true in modern times. Far more than the basic requirements of imprinted gyrfalcons.

**Modern Falconry**

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**Attributes and Aspirations of Falconers**

The attributes of good falconers outlined by Frederick II hold true in modern times. Far more than the basic requirements of imprinted gyrfalcons.
gyrs were flown from the fist and numerous assistants were needed. Assistants are not necessary to hawk sage grouse, and gyrs are flown like never before in the long history of falconry, from a high, waiting-on pitch.

The Emperor Frederick II and his son Manfred flew gyrfalcons at cranes in the grandest and most sophisticated manner possible. Today we are expanding the employment of gyrs in falconry into new horizons and similar high levels of the art and practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express sincere appreciation to Tom Cade, Joe Vorro, and Kent Carnie for their review and help with this manuscript. Tom’s command of the English language, superior editorial talents, and knowledge of falconry were invaluable. Joe is a real scholar of Frederick II and made several significant additions. Kent is the curator of the Archives of American Falconry and very knowledgeable about falconry literature generally. He was especially helpful providing source material for reference and helped create the list of literature cited. Finally, I want to thank all the countless falconers who provided insight into Frederick II and the techniques that he pioneered, studied, and set down on paper for use by others. It is the falconers over the past seven and a half centuries that provide the true verification of validity to the premier significance Frederick II had on falconry. He is the granddaddy of our art.

LITERATURE CITED


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